The Transition from High School to University: An Analysis of Advice for Students, Faculty and Administration

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---— **Abstract** —————————————————————————

The research and theoretical literature recognises the first year university or college freshman experience as an identifiable period of transition. In order to make a successful transition from high school to university, students need to make their own adjustments and to be supported by the people and systems around them. Vincent Tinto explains that students need to negotiate three separate stages: separation, transition and incorporation. This paper reviews the literature from Western (predominantly English-speaking countries) on this transition phase and analyses the advice that is given to students, institutions and faculty involved in this crucial period of transition.

Introduction

The transition from high school to university marks a distinct step in a student's academic career. The step denotes the move from a dependent to independent learner, from studying in a carefully monitored environment with a highly regulated timetable to students learning to manage their own time and make decisions in a more adult and responsible manner.

This paper reviews the literature from Western (predominantly

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English-speaking countries) on this transition phase and analyses the advice that is given to students, faculty and administrators involved in this crucial period of transition. The literature confirms the significance of student adjustment, especially during the first year, but also signals that students need to be supported by faculty and university systems. Faculty need to understand students'prior learning experiences, prepare them for university style learning and teaching and help students become part of their subject or discipline's" community of learners" Administrators need to ensure that the university has smooth functioning systems and appropriate student support programmes.

Although university faculty place a high value on academic content knowledge, the literature emphasizes that students will be more successful if they have the skills to learn independently, to think critically and adjust confidently to the new expectations. It is important then, that faculty provide some of this skill development, along with their subject matter teaching, as these skills are best learned in context and when their purpose can be clearly demonstrated.

The Transition Phase

" Transition" is different from change. Change is external and visible. A transition is internal and less visible, the process you go through mentally when you face a big life change.

The research and theoretical literature recognises the first year university or college freshman experience as an identifiable period of transition. Vincent Tinto draws on anthropological models, viewing this phase as one of the" rites of passage" to adulthood. His model explains that students need to negotiate three stages: separation, transition and incorporation. In order to make a successful transition from high school to university, students need to

make their own adaptations and to be supported by the people and systems around them.

Tinto, from Syracuse University in the US, is, in fact, the most widely cited writer in the transition literature, especially in relation to research on student retention issues. His 1975 literature review highlighted academic and social integration as the two factors most likely to influence students' decisions to continue with their studies. Over the years he has conducted further research and comes to the following conclusions:

> To sum up, students are more likely to persist when they find themselves in settings that hold high expectations for their learning, provide needed academic and social support, and actively involve them with other students and faculty in learning.

He elaborates further on the factors that cause students to withdraw from their studies as: academic difficulty (mostly because of insufficient academic skills or poor study habits); adjustment difficulties; goals; uncertainty; commitments; finances; incongruence; and isolation but concludes that," after more than a decade of research in this field, I am persuaded that the roots of successful student retention lie in better education during the first year."

Tinto acknowledges, and indeed commends, the range of innovations in some colleges and universities he cites summer bridge programmes, transition programmes, freshmen seminars, collaborative groups, learning communities, frequent feedback, and academic assistance programmes   but he still laments:

> Despite recent innovations, it remains the case that most students experience university as isolated learners whose learn-

ing is disconnected from that of others. They continue to engage in solo performance and demonstration in what remains a largely show-and-tell learning environment. The experience of learning in higher education is, for most students, still very much a" spectator sport" in which faculty talk dominates and where there are few active student participants.

University of Glasgow academic, Stephen Draper, considers there is merit in much of Tinto's work but that there are new theories worth considering alongside Tinto's original model. He cites work by Braxton, and Thomas, who take notions from Pierre Bourdieu such as social capital and *habitus* to expand the notion of integration. From this work Draper proposes that the notion of integration (how well a student fits the role he/she is taking) has two perspectives internal and external (that is, how the student feels in the role and how others see them in this role). The role still has two main aspects, as per Tinto, academic and social. As Draper explains," the academic is about learning, and the activities necessary for that. The social is about the fit with the groups that the student cares about, both inside and outside the university".

Draper emphasises that there are a range of complicating factors such as the match between goals, the methods of achieving these and the manner of assessing their success and that each of these has an intrinsic and extrinsic dimension. Overall, he feels, however, his adaptation of Tinto's 1975 model remains true to the spirit of the original and claims," the metaphor of integration is about fit; it is not about one party adapting to the other but whether they go together well." This implies that it is not only the students who need to make adjustments but also faculty and university administrative systems.

In their review of the literature, US academics Bette Eriksen and Diane Strommer highlight the importance of the following is-

sues: the nature of students and the learning culture they have come from; student expectations and aspirations; adaptations students need to make; and the role of faculty in supporting the transition. In understanding the nature of this transition time, they suggest, we must first understand where the students have come from, that is the culture of the high school and the nature of secondary education. As they explain:

> To know how to teach them better, we must understand our freshmen better. We must have a clear-eyed view of who they are, where they have come from, how they have been instructed, what values they hold, and what their expectations or goals are.

Eriksen and Strommer argue that, in the US, freshmen are less engaged and more difficult to reach than their predecessors. The reasons are varied: changing social patterns (including family structures); students spending more time in leisure pursuits (especially watching television); lower academic expectations at high school; and more students engaged in part time employment. They also state that the culture of high schools does not encourage students to manage their own time:

> Time, high school style, does not seem to have changed very much over the years. Class days are still controlled by periods, begun and ended by ringing bells, with brief respites for study hall, phys. ed., and lunch. New freshmen, used to having every minute of their days controlled, feel very anxious when confronted by the relative freedom of college life.

Eriksen and Strommer suggest that the goals, expectations, values and attitudes of freshmen differ markedly from those of their parents' generation but that they have two main objectives to achieve academically and succeed socially. Their overarching goal,

Eriksen and Strommer claim, is that students want" preparation for careers and they want assistance in helping them learn whatever is needed so they can make it as' successful' adults in what they persist in calling' the real world'." Eriksen and Strommer cite research by Ruddock and Wilkinson that claims that the greater the discrepancy between their expectations and the reality they encounter the more stress students experience. It is important that this is understood by the institutions that students are coming from, and those they are going to. This leads us to ask the questions," What is the role of high schools in preparing students for university study?" and" What more can universities do to help students achieve their goals?"

According to Eriksen and Strommer, the adaptations students need to make to be successful in the transition phase are: adapting to change; becoming familiar with new ways of teaching and learning; accepting differing classroom norms; managing time; and integrating socially. Eriksen and Strommer also stress that students will not achieve a successful transition on their own but require the support of knowledgeable and caring faculty:

> If we understand students' critical need to find a niche socially and to experience early academic success and if we are aware of the difficulty the college environment can pose for freshmen, especially women, minority, and adult students, we are better able to become sensitive to student needs and concerned for their academic success. Faculty who understand what freshmen are going through are, in short, in the best position to put those events into a larger context and to help students focus on the academic aspects of their freshmen experience.

Another review of the literature by Glenda Crosling and Graeme Webb from Monash University, Australia, considers that

students in the transition phase need support with three major aspects: social, structural and academic.

Crosling and Webb explain that life has become even more complex since the 1990s and the "massification" of higher education has increased the both the number and diversity of students seeking higher education. They list the range of "non-traditional" students that now attend institutes of higher learning as:

- adults over the age of 25;
- part-time students;
- women (particularly in non-traditional areas);
- students from rural backgrounds;
- students from ethnic and minority groups for whom the language of instruction is not their first language;
- international students;
- students with disabilities;
- students who are first generation in higher education.

Crosling and Webb agree with Eriksen and Strommer about the transition phase being a difficult one and state, "Cutting across the different groups, it is now recognised that academic culture and its expectations and assumptions differ from those of secondary education and that *all* new students need to make what may be an uneasy transition". Crosling and Webb summarise the literature they reviewed as follows:

> The literature suggests that the period of transition to higher education study is problematic for many students regardless of their background. At this time students should be encouraged and assisted to make friends with other students so that they belong to their institution, faculty and/or department. They also need to become familiar with institutional structures and procedures, and teaching and learning processes, especially appreciating the independence expected of them in

their own study. In this period, to encourage them to persist with their studies, students need to be motivated to perceive a purpose for their studies and have some awareness of the academic standards of their discipline.

Craig McInnis, Richard James and Robyn Hartley from the Centre for the Study of Higher Education at the University of Melbourne surveyed first year university students in Australia in 1999 and compared the results to a similar study conducted in 1994. They found that overall 63% of students are' satisfied' with their initial university experience and that:

- students' reasons for coming to university remained stable (that is, an intrinsic interest in the subject area combined with a desire to improve job prospects);
- some students continue to have difficult transitions to university (related to inaccurate information and expectations, inappropriate course selection, and underestimating study requirements and time);
- two thirds of students direct from high school felt unprepared for university study but overall more students found university study more fulfilling than school work (61%);
- satisfaction and motivation levels had decreased slightly over the years; and
- there was a 9% increase in full time students with part time jobs and a 14% increase in hours of employment.

The themes to come through clearly in this brief examination of the literature are:

- Beginning university or college, whether the student is coming from school or other situations, is a recognised period of transition requiring separation from the previous setting and lifestyle, and incorporation into, and identification with, the new environment and its unique culture.

- Better preparation for the transition and continuing support are needed if students are to proceed smoothly through this phase.
- Students need to make a range of adaptations to fit in socially and academically.
- Students need to adjust their modes of learning and study, paying special attention to working independently and managing their time effectively.
- As more students combine part time work with their studies this leads to different time and commitment pressures.
- Faculty need to understand the nature of the transition phase, to have some knowledge of the learning culture students have come from, to find out what their expectations and aspirations are, and to be sensitive to supporting them through this phase by providing accurate information, enculturation into the discipline, and guidance regarding university level teaching, learning and study.
- Institutions need to hold high expectations for all students but also be aware of the particular needs of this group and provide support for their uniqueness and also for the increasing diversity of students within this group, especially during the first year.

Advice for Students in the Transition Phase

With the research literature in mind it is now interesting to turn to the wealth of advice available to students regarding this transition phase in their lives. The author of this paper undertook an analysis of 300 Internet sites offering advice to new university or college students. The largest category was the advice provided by faculty professors, deans, lecturers, advisors, counselors usually as part of an orientation package on an authorised university website. The advice ranged across the spectrum from

planning a course of study, getting know your way around campus and keeping a balanced lifestyle, to a range of study tips. This advice will be summarized to put the main focus of the paper that of advice to faculty and institutions into context.

Advice from Faculty to New Students

The top twenty tips for new students are displayed below in Table1.

Table1: The Top Twenty Pieces of Advice from Faculty to New University Students

Order	Advice	Percentage of sites mentioning advice
1	Plan and manage your time	95
2	Get involved and feel included	72
3	Get to know faculty, advisors, career counselors	68
4	Develop good study habits	68
5	Learn the prerequisites, regulations, requirements and expectations for your course of study	53
6	Know your way around campus and use its facilities	38
7	Look after your health and balance your lifestyle	33
8	Be prepared	32
9	Don't be afraid to ask for help	30
10	Organise a study group	27
11	Have a positive attitude	25
12	Create a purposeful study environment	23
13	Go to class	23
14	Take time to socialise (but don't overdo it)	20
15	Participate actively in class	20
16	Organise finances, set up and keep to a budget	20
17	Set personal and academic goals	15
18	Be prepared for life to be different	15
19	Be an active listener	13
20	Schedule yourself breaks and find ways to reward yourself when you have achieved a goal	13

The advice can be grouped under six headings: time management; important things to know; study habits; involvement; collegiality; and life skills.

In the transition from high school to university or college the

ability to manage time was considered a high priority by faculty. Most advice suggested students construct different kinds of schedules. There should be a long-term overview, a weekly planner and a daily schedule. It was also mentioned that a student needs to realise that the time between, before and after classes is much more important than at high school and needs to be used more effectively.

Faculty referred to the important things a student must find out about. High on the list of advice was to know all the relevant rules and regulations such the university's code of conduct. They suggested students read their institution's regulations regarding enrolment, withdrawal dates, course or major pre-requisites, rules about plagiarism, graduation requirements and so on. Next, a student should know the syllabus for each of their courses with its attendance requirements, assigned readings, assessment tasks and due dates. Students should become familiar with their assigned texts. Knowledge of the campus and its facilities was also important.

Faculty recommended that students should use the opportunity at university or college to" get involved". Students should make the most of the orientation events to get to know their way around the campus, to understand the particular philosophy, expectations and regulations of the university, to meet some of the faculty (both academic and support staff) and to get to know other students. By attending university and taking a major, students are entering an academic community and a particular field. It was suggested that students should become part of their discipline's" community of learners" by attending events sponsored by their department or school.

Getting to know faculty was seen as important not just for helping with study but with showing their commitment to their

studies, gaining a sense of belonging and setting up future networks and contacts. Getting to know other students was another key suggestion. These people would not just be friends for the social aspects of university life but could be study partners or support networks when stressful situations arose.

There is a wealth of advice related to student study habits. The aspects discussed here are preparation, organisation, participation, note taking and study time.

Being adequately prepared started from the time students received the first communications from their institutions. It was considered important for students to read this documentation carefully, organise the relevant materials ahead of time and check out the textbooks. Once at university, preparation included making good use of the student's schedule or planner to review important lecture notes, pre-view new topics, complete homework tasks and assemble materials for the next week's/day's classes.

Finding a way to organise notes and handouts is a high priority if students are to effectively manage their time and be able to retrieve information quickly.

Under participation, the strongest message was to stress to students the importance of going to class, not just for the content gained but also to get updated information on course or date changes, to demonstrate an interest in and commitment to the subject, and to become part of the learning community. Along with going to class was the importance of punctuality, attentive listening and active participation. Learning how to take clear concise notes, whether in lectures or during independent study is a skill that students needed to practice.

Outside class up to two hours study per hour spent in class is

expected. The most effective use of study time also requires the students to understand their preferred learning style and the most effective method of study for them. Allied to this is setting up a suitable study environment. Finding a quiet space that is physically conducive to study in terms of light, temperature, noise and access to materials is important. It should also be free from interruptions. Faculty suggested students form study groups where students have common subject interests and build up a climate of mutual trust and support. These could serve two functions academic and social.

The advice given relating to life skills fell into several categories: adjusting to change; making and accepting responsibility for one's own decisions; managing finances; maintaining a healthy life style; managing stress; and keeping a positive frame of mind. Many advice givers focused on the new found responsibilities that go hand in hand with the new freedoms. Students would face many choices and would need to develop strategies to make sensible and safe decisions.

Advice for Faculty Working with New Students

An important point emphasised by the advice givers was that while students could develop good study habits and become independent learners, there were also ways in which faculty could improve their teaching or knowledge of adult learning principles to enhance student learning.

The most commonly cited advice for improving teaching was that compiled by Joyce T. Povlacs (1998) from the Teaching and Learning Centre, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. The advice is titled" 101 things you can do in the first three weeks of class."
These tips are given under the following headings: helping students make transitions; directing students' attention; challenging students; providing support; encouraging active learning; building

community; and getting feedback on teaching. Below is a selection of tips that if used by teachers would support the advice given to students in earlier sections.

- Show students how to handle learning in large classes and impersonal situations.
- Elicit student questions and concerns at the beginning of class and list these on the chalkboard to be answered during the hour.
- Have students write out their expectations for the course and their own goals for learning.
- Let students see the enthusiasm you have for your subject and your love of learning.
- Tell students how much time they will need to study for this course.
- Hand out study questions or study guides.
- Allow students to demonstrate progress in learning with a summary quiz of the day's work or a written reaction to the day's material.
- Help students form study groups to operate outside the classroom.
- Give plenty of opportunity to practice before a major test.

Jefferson Community College has a similar list of 63 ideas under the headings: faculty-student interaction, general classroom management, student initiated activities and faculty initiated activities. Some of their suggestions include:

- Have students set specific goals for themselves throughout the semester in terms of their learning and what responsibilities they will undertake.
- List and discuss your objectives on the first day. Let students know how your course can fit with their personal/career goals.

- Circulate around the class as you talk or ask questions.
- Return tests, quizzes, and papers as soon as possible.
- Conduct a personal interview with all students at some time during the semester.
- Confer with other faculty members who have the same students in class. Help reinforce one another.

A site compiled by Lee Haugen at the Centre for Excellence in Learning and Teaching at Iowa State University has an annotated bibliography of the student development literature as it relates to 18 25 year olds. Citing Chikering Haugen explains that the developmental stages of freshmen include developing competence, managing emotions and developing autonomy. Citing intellectual development theories, Haugen uses a table devised by Widick, Knefelkamp and Parker that sets out what can be expected of students, such as freshmen, at earlier stages of development. These include the notions that they can only cope with two or three different points of view on one topic, that they need structured processes, that they need experiential opportunities and that they will be analytical rather than abstract in their reasoning. Further reading on this topic would ensure that faculty adjust to the stages of their students and ensure the transition time is a positive experience.

To help faculty understand their students better, Reed Mencke from the University Learning Centre at the University of Arizona has summarised the relevant literature on freshman study skills and compared it to the Freshmen Survey data from his university. He lists the crucial skills that students are lacking as follows: time management; learning in a large lecture situation; reading challenging lengthy assignments in college textbooks; preparing for and taking college level examinations; and thinking critically about what they are learning. Important research, and the implications for faculty if they are to help their students, as sug-

gested by Mencke, is reported below:

- Research suggests that good study habits (Bliss, 1993) and one's level of the mastery of the art of short term time management (Briton and Tesser, 1991) is predictive of GPA (Grade Point Average). Few students are used to operating on a self imposed time schedule or to using the short term time management skills Britton and Tessor found to be related to success.

- Research shows that, at best, learning is challenging in a large lecture session. One frequently quoted study... found that students got only 41% of lecture material into their notes during the first 15 minutes of class... and less yet (20%) during 45 minutes. Many students arrive at college passive learners. Most do not know how to take an excellent set of notes.

- About 2/3 of freshmen seen by the University Learning Centre staff... report having no experience at all with a voluminous textbook... Most college students (about 75 per cent) know and use only one text reading strategy: namely underlining... despite the fact that the research by Peterson (1992) showed that underlining... may actually interfere with comprehension and retention of material.

- The most used exam preparation strategy... is cramming. Few freshmen have developed an organized method of study and review.

- Attempts to get freshmen to approach problems with an attitude of open scientific inquiry are likely to produce resistance. To make matters worse the learning style of the majority of college learners is passive and *grade oriented* rather than *learning oriented*.

Mencke concludes," Currently, little occurs to help freshmen acquire the above cognitive skills. We seldom show freshmen how to think out what is important in a text, or provide tips about

how to organize complex material into meaningful schematics or maps."

In answer to such concerns, Lee Haugen has prepared material for faculty on creating and using a learner-centred syllabus. He explains the concept as follows:

> The concept is simple but its implications are far reaching: students and their ability to learn are at the centre of what we do. This means that we focus on the process of learning rather than the content, that the content and the teacher must adapt to the students rather than expecting the students to adapt to the content, that responsibility is placed on students to learn rather than professors to teach.

Haugen advises faculty to first spend some time in" thoughtful preparation" in which they think and talk to their colleagues about why, what, who and how they teach. Faculty then need to consider the developmental stage of their students and progress from a primarily instructor-led approach to a student-initiated approach in which the aim is to produce independent learners and critical thinkers. Haugen continues to give specific advice on how to construct, use and evaluate a learner-centred syllabus and ends with advice on improving teaching. He suggests that teachers use a variety of methods, promote active learning, allow for group discussion, provide problem-solving opportunities and get to know and advocate for their students.

Tinto advocates learning communities as a way of strengthening students' social and cognitive development during their first year. Learning communities are formed by linking students taking similar courses, or by linking courses with complementary content and facilitating smaller group learning opportunities and discussion alongside the lecture schedule. The aim is to make the learning

more holistic and the progression more coherent. It also provides opportunities for developing skills of deep learning and critical thinking. As Tinto explains:

> Nearly all the experiments [in learning communities] have two things in common though. One is *shared learning*. Learning communities enrol the same students in several classes so they get to know each other quickly and fairly intimately and in a way that is part of their academic experience. The other is *connected learning*. By organizing the shared courses around a single theme or large single subject, learning communities seek to construct a coherent first year educational experience that is not just an unconnected array of courses...

Numerous other sites offer useful advice and support for faculty. The Centre for Teaching at the University of Massachusetts Amherst offers the "Ten best articles on teaching and learning", The Teaching and Learning Centre at Eastern Kentucky University offers a vast array of tips and links relating to teaching, course preparation and adult learning. The National Teaching and Learning Forum site offers an annotated bibliography, and in some cases, full text versions of articles containing teaching advice.

Both the research literature and the advice available *from* faculty *for* faculty suggests the importance of interactive teaching methods, sound curriculum design and student skill development. If this advice is used in a manner that promotes and facilitates learning, the transition experience for students will be more positive and the teaching experience for faculty more rewarding.

Advice for University Administration

Because of the importance of students' first impressions and experiences, students need to encounter positive and helpful adminis-

trative systems. Studies in the United States highlight one of the most significant causes of student dissatisfaction as " getting the service run-around." The service run-around is where student administrative problems are not dealt with promptly or appropriately, students are given inaccurate information or advice and, at worst, their concerns are ignored. The Noel-Levitz research claims that, while the service run-around sounds like a single problem, it isn't. It's a *symptom* of *several* problems and their research report outlines these:

- Staff may lack knowledge of campus systems, policies, and procedures.
- Staff may be too busy to help.
- Staff may not take responsibility for customer problems.
- Staff may have poor access to information from other offices.
- The institution may have fragmented processes without concern for how students and other customers use them.
- Staff may not be empowered to seek solutions.

Other studies highlight concerns about the quality of academic advising and the mismatch between student expectations and institutional values. In Australia, the study of the first year experience highlighted the concern over lack of accurate initial information, which led to poor course choices and unrealistic expectations. These studies indicate the need for the following:

- more accurate pre-entry publicity available from universities;
- better links with high schools;
- more flexibility to change a course of study if it does not suit;
- pre-entry study preparation seminars and on-going study support;
- coherent university-wide planning; and
- improved staff training, especially where giving advice is concerned.

Low offers this six-step approach for institutions wishing to improve aspects of their performance and this could easily apply to enhancing the transition process:

> Assess readiness:" This begins with a shared understanding of common goals among key campus constituents who are speaking with one voice."
>
> Set goals:" Carefully examine all sources of data as well as input from faculty, staff, students and administrators."
>
> Integrate strategies:" It is far better to begin by focusing on existing programs and services as the delivery vehicles for any new initiatives. In other words, build on your current successes."
>
> Develop evaluation strategies:" For each strategy identified, the campus unit responsible must identify appropriate measures to demonstrate the effectiveness and the impact of the strategy."
>
> Establish reasonable timelines:" Realistic timelines and the availability of resources must be considered."
>
> Recognise, reward and celebrate success:" The most successful institutions are steeped in long and time-honored traditions of celebration that signal the accomplishments of their campuses."

Discussion

There is remarkable coherence between the academic literature and research on the transition to university study and the anecdotal advice given by other university faculty on the Internet to help students, faculty and institutions negotiate this phase.

The analysis of 300 websites supported the themes from the literature. The first, or freshman, year was seen as being a distinct period of time with its own characteristics. The wealth of advice

confirmed the need for social and academic support. The sites recognised and articulated the many adjustments students needed to make and suggested how faculty and institutions might support this transition period.

The synthesis of advice highlighted the ways incoming students could make adjustments to their new environment. The highest priority was given to learning to manage time effectively. Becoming involved in campus life and getting to know faculty and fellow students was also important. Gaining familiarity with the campus and its services, the university's regulations, academic expectations and course requirements were also important. Making decisions on all aspects of life including health, safety, employment, finances, relationships and careers was an important part of developing independence and responsibility. A final key focus was on gaining a range of important study skills to make the most of classes, textbooks, individual and group study, and examinations.

The literature review suggested that faculty had a role to play in supporting students through the transition phase. The web sites advised faculty to become familiar with the relevant theoretical literature to help them understand the developmental and maturational stages of their students. They were also advised to adjust their teaching strategies to explicitly teach important skills, and to build a sense of community.

Although the most advice (in terms of volume) was around specific study skills it is important that this advice is taken in context with the findings from this research, prior research and the theoretical literature. Improving study skills will not solve all student learning problems, it will only that enhance the academic progress that comes with the successful integration into the new environment. It is important that skills are introduced in context, that is, when they are needed and in relation to relevant content.

Students also need to be assisted to transfer skills from one setting to another and to understand the differences in conventions between various disciplines.

In order to move from separation, through transition to incorporation as outlined by Tinto, this study has shown, through a synthesis of the literature and an analysis of the advice offered, that transition is not a passive state. For a successful transition it must be an active and interactive time in which all personnel involved play a role and for which they accept their share of responsibility. Students should do their part by making adjustments to the new environment. Faculty and administrators should be aware of the characteristics of students in this phase and consider how administrative systems, pedagogical practices and support mechanisms (both academic and social) could be enhanced.

Notes

http://students.reg.sfu.ca/makingthegrade/headout2.html, p. 1.

Tinto, V. (1988) " Stages of Student Departure." *Journal of Higher Education 59* (4), 438-453.

Tinto, V. (1975) " Dropout from Higher Education: A Theoretical Synthesis of Recent Research" *Review of Educational Research 45* 89 -123.

Tinto, V. (2002) " Promoting Student Retention: Lessons Learned from the United States" Paper presented at the 11th Annual Conference of the European Access Network, Prato, Italy. June 19, p. 4.

Tinto, V. (2004a) " Rethinking the First Year of College" retrieved from http://soeweb.syr.edu/Faculty/Vtinto, p. 4.

Tinto, 2002.

Tinto, V. (2004b) " Learning Better Together: The Impact of Learning Communities on Student Success" retrieved from http://soeweb. syr.edu/Faculty/Vtinto, p. 1.

Draper, S. (2003) " Tinto's Model of Student Retention" retrieved from http://www.psy.gla.ac.uk/ steve/localed/tinto.html

See, for example, Braxton, J. M. (2002) *Reworking the student departure puzzle*. Vanderbilt University Press; Thomas (2002)" Student Retention in Higher Education: The Role of Institutional *Habitus*." *Journal of Educational Policy 17* (4) 423-432; and Bourdieu P. & Passeron, J. (1977) *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture*. London: Sage.

Draper, 2003, p. 5.

Draper, 2003, p. 12.

Eriksen, B. and Strommer, D. (1991) *Teaching College Freshmen*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

Eriksen and Strommer, 1991, p. 4.

Eriksen and Strommer, 1991, pp. 13-14.

Eriksen and Strommer, 1991, p. 19.

Ruddock, M. and Wilkinson, C. (1983)" Retention-What happens during the Freshman Year?" Paper presented at the 23rd Annual Forum of the Association for Institutional Research, Toronto, Canada. May.

Eriksen and Strommer, 1991, p. 45.

Crosling, G. and Webb, G. (2002) *Supporting Student Learning*. London: Kogan Page.

Crosling and Webb, 2002, p. 2.

Crosling and Webb, 2002, p. 3.

Crosling and Webb, 2002, p. 6.

McInnis, C., James, R., and Hartley, R. (2000) *Trends in the First Year Experience in Australian Universities*. Canberra: Department of Education, Training and Youth Affairs.

The sites were found by using the search engine Google and search terms such as: transition to university, tips for freshmen, first year university, new undergraduate students, study tips for students, freshers, and combinations of these. These terms found sites in the US, UK, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and one site in Fiji. From these sites, 300 were selected that focused primarily on providing advice to students entering university study for the first time.

Some selected sites are listed below:

http://venus.atlantic.edu/ capc2002/keys.htm

http://web.grcc.edu/biosci/studyski/forbstud.html

http://www.ucc.vt.edu/stdysk/stdyhlp.html

http://www.dushkin.com/online/study/studymain.mhtml

http://www.ccis.edu/departments/writingcentre/studyskills.html

http://www.wou.edu/provost/aalc/learning/studyskills.html

http://www.adprima.com/studyout.htm

http://www.uni.edu/walsh/linda7.html

A full set can be retrieved from

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