

Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre Annual Report 2024-2025

Prepared by Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre (RGASC) Staff and Faculty

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UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO
MISSISSAUGA

ROBERT GILLESPIE
ACADEMIC SKILLS CENTRE

Executive Summary

The Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre (RGASC) is the learning and teaching hub at the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM). We support the development of academic skills for student success and the development of instructors' pedagogical practices. The RGASC is housed within the Institute for the Study of University Pedagogy (ISUP). Our team of full- and part-time staff and students is dedicated to meeting the needs of our diverse student and instructor populations at UTM, working productively with campus partners and in alignment with UTM's Strategic Framework and Academic Plan.

In 2024-2025,

- 948 unique students received writing, math and numeracy, study skills support in our one-on-one appointments, Writing Studio drop-ins, and dedicated course drop-ins
- 57 students attended the Caribbean and Black Writing Collective
- 372 students passed the Professional English Language Skills (PELS) program
- 3201 students attended Facilitated Study Group (FSG) sessions
- 68 courses were supported by FSGs
- 65 in-class writing workshops delivered
- 676 students attended course-specific Dedicated Drop-ins for writing
- 52 students attended the core modules of the Program for Accessing Research Training (PART)
- 82 unique instructors and 14 unique staff had individual consultations with Educational Developers
- 18 teaching observations were conducted by Educational Developers
- 37 unique instructors and staff from 7 staffing units participated in 9 Pedagogical Reading Groups
- 2 new workshops in Indigenous Curriculum and Pedagogy were delivered by the Special Projects Officer, Curriculum and Pedagogy

In 2025-2026, the RGASC team will

- Expand our student and instructor programming in the area of generative artificial intelligence
- Expand our online Student Resource Hub with updated resources in the areas of study skills and writing
- Expand our workshop offerings for instructors
- Launch RGASC30, our 30th anniversary year in 2026

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Land Acknowledgement

We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron-Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississaugas of the Credit. Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

About the RGASC

The Robert Gillespie Academic Skills Centre (RGASC) is UTM's hub for learning and teaching. We support the development of academic skills for student success and the development of instructors' pedagogical practices.

Mission

- To provide a full range of individual consultations, workshops, and programs to help students identify and develop the academic skills they need for success in their studies.
- To work collaboratively with University of Toronto Mississauga faculty and teaching assistants to help them create the best possible environments for learning in their classes, labs, and tutorials.

Organizational Structure

In 2024-2025, the RGASC employed 15 permanent staff (listed in alphabetical order by last name):

- Dianne Ashbourne – Senior Educational Developer & Team Lead (on leave)
- Corrine Bent-Womack – Educational Developer, Anti-Racist Pedagogies
- Jessica Bailey – Graduate Student Support Strategist (until July 2024)
- Amanda Brijmohan – Educational Developer, Assessment and Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
- Louis Busch – Special Projects Officer, Indigenous Curriculum and Pedagogy
- Karl Cheung – Interim Program Administrator
- Adriana Grimaldi – Acting Senior Educational Developer & Team Lead
- Rob Huang – Educational Developer, Instructional Practices and Student Engagement
- Kerrie Martin – Learning Strategist and Program Manager
- Laura McKinley – Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Accessible Pedagogy Coordinator
- Linda Duong – Learning Strategist
- Louis Nguyen – Program Administrator (on secondment)
- Brooke Ramsey – Administrative and Communications Assistant
- Laura Smith – Outreach and Engagement Coordinator
- Olivia Tenn – Administrative and Communications Assistant (until November 2024)

RGASC was supported by ISUP Administrative Staff:

- Aimy Lieu – Associate Director, ISUP
- Bukky Okege – Business Officer

RGASC employed 12 part-time Writing, Numeracy and Math, and Study Skills Instructors:

- Tara AlHadithy – Writing
- Joel Benabu – Writing
- Monica Gagnon – Writing
- Monique Kampher – Writing & Study Skills
- Marvin Lam – Writing
- Patti Luedecke – Writing
- Carter Man – Math and Numeracy
- Sean McPhail – Writing & Study Skills
- Erfan Nazari – Math and Numeracy
- Nigel Petersen – Math and Numeracy
- Paul Raymont – Writing
- Yulia Smirnova – Writing

We employed students in various part-time roles: 8 Work Study and 25 Program Assistants.

RGASC programs were designed and/or delivered by ISUP Faculty and Staff:

- Sheila Batacharya – Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream
- Michael De Braga – Associate Professor, Teaching Stream
- Jordana Garbati – Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream
- Sheliza Ibrahim – Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream
- Rita Karrass – Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream
- Michael Kaler – Associate Professor, Teaching Stream
- Amanda Paxton – Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream
- Mitchell Pedicelli – Program Assistant, ISUP
- Nelesi Rodrigues – Assistant Professor, Tenure Stream
- Janine Rose – Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream
- Laura Taylor – Associate Professor, Teaching Stream
- Oguzhan Tekin – Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream
- Jonathan Vroom – Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream

RGASC Director is:

- Jordana Garbati, Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream

Notable Achievements in 2024-2025

In 2024-2025, the RGASC staff developed goals and programming that aligned with our 2023-2026 strategic plan.

Notable Program Improvements

In 2024-2025, our team made notable improvements to our program offerings. Some of these changes were as follows:

- Pilot of Mathematics and Numeracy Drop-ins
- Three new Caribbean and Black Writing Collective Initiatives:
 - First-year outreach at UTM Orientation
 - Collaborations with Black@UTM and UTM Librarians for Black on Shelf
 - Inaugural vision boarding event funded by the Black Opportunities Fund
- Two new Facilitated Study Group projects:
 - exemplar mapping
 - a training module for new facilitators
- Development of the Promoting Academic Skills for Success (PASS) Dashboard in collaboration with the Office of the Registrar
- Hiring a Teaching Assistant for the Professional English Language Skills (PELS) program
- Study skills resource development
- Offering a first generative artificial intelligence session at Head Start
- Initiating a Game Café research project
- Hiring our first Special Projects Officer, Indigenous Curriculum and Pedagogy

Future Directions

In 2025-2026, we will:

- Continue to develop programs for target populations, including graduate students.
- Continue to collaborate with UTM and tri-campus partners.
- Continue to advocate for additional staff support in the area of Learning Strategies and Game-Based Learning
- Pilot outreach projects for mathematics and numeracy engagement.
- Develop resources in the area of generative artificial intelligence (writing, study skills, instructor support).

Undergraduate Support

Writing Appointments

Overview

One-on-one writing support is a significant RGASC program for UTM students. Undergraduate and graduate students can book 50-minute appointments with our writing instructors in person and online (synchronous and asynchronous). Scheduling is done through the WCONLINE platform, and online appointments use Zoom. Students also have access to daily drop-in hours through our Writing Studio.

In 2024-25, we offered 1629 hours of in person, online, and drop-in general writing support. Writing appointment distribution was as follows:

- 36% of total writing hours were in-person appointments (instructor and student meet face-to-face at the RGASC)
- 51% of total writing hours were online synchronous (instructor and student meet over Zoom) appointments
- 8% of total writing hours were asynchronous (students upload drafts for feedback) appointments

The remaining appointment hours (83 hours or 5% of the total) were allotted to Writing Studio Drop-in. These were offered in the RGASC Boardroom four days a week in the Fall and Winter semesters.

The total utilization rate for our writing appointments in 2024-25 was 81% used by 561 unique students.

Summer 2024

In Summer 2024, we offered a total of 270 hours of writing appointments:

- 34% of total writing hours were in person appointments
- 56% of total writing hours were online synchronous appointments
- 10% of total writing hours were asynchronous appointments

Demand for these writing appointments was modest with 64% of hours used by 73 unique students. We did not offer a Writing Studio drop-in hours during the summer semester.

Fall 2024

In Fall 2024, we offered a total of 631 hours of writing appointments:

- 42% of total writing hours were in person appointments
- 9% of total writing hours were asynchronous appointments
- 49% of total writing hours were online synchronous appointments

Online asynchronous appointments were particularly popular, with 93% of offered appointments (59 hours) used. Writing Studio drop-in hours were also popular, with 86 unique students attending the 48 hours offered over the semester.

Demand for writing appointments was strong with 88% of hours (558 hours) used by 282 unique students.

Winter 2025

In Winter 2025, we offered a total of 645 hours of writing appointments:

- 35% of total writing hours were in person appointments
- 6% of total writing hours were asynchronous appointments
- 59% of total writing hours were online synchronous appointments.

The 35 Writing Studio drop-in hours offered attracted 47 unique students. Many of these students made the drop-in hours a regular part of their weekly schedules.

Demand for writing appointments was strong with 78% of hours (505 hours) used by 247 unique students.

Writing appointment and Writing Studio Drop-in utilization rates for fall 2024 and winter 2025 are on par with trends in recent years as noted in Table 1.

Table 1

Writing Appointments (individual appointments and Writing Studio drop-in) Yearly Comparison

	2021/22	2022/23¹	2023/24	2024/25
Unique Students	464	643	538	561
Total Available Appointment Hours	1991	2180	1708	1629
Total Utilization Rate	84%	86%	70%	80%

¹Excludes summer data

Course-Embedded Writing Support

The RGASC offers additional writing support embedded in a wide range of courses. Because the support is customized for each course, it can take a variety of forms, including:

1. Presentations/workshops
 - These can cover a wide variety of writing topics and genres (e.g., lab reports, thesis statements, argumentative writing, first-year writing, research essay introductions, research proposals).
2. Dedicated drop-ins
 - Blocks of time where students from particular courses can drop in to the Centre (without an appointment) to receive writing support on specific assignments; the blocks of time correspond to each assignment's due date, and the writing instructors familiarize themselves with the assignment instructions prior to each session.
3. Benchmarking and TA training/harmonization
 - Sessions specifically designed to help TAs with providing feedback about writing.
4. Writing Retreats
 - Course-specific sessions facilitated by faculty are scheduled (in person or virtually) for students to work on and get support from their peers on specific writing assignments.

In 2024-2025, we offered 65 in-class or in-tutorial presentations and workshops (68 in 2023-2024). We saw 676 students attend 57 Dedicated Drop-In sessions for 39 courses (740 students in 2023-2024).

Writing Development Initiative

The RGASC also offers the Writing Development Initiative (WDI), which provides resources, support, and financial assistance, for innovative course- and discipline-specific projects to enhance students' use of writing in the target course.

In 2024-25, over 30 courses had WDI-supported projects, involving roughly one-third of UTM's overall student population. All of these projects were provided funding for Teaching Assistant (TA) hours, and many projects benefited from planning support by RGASC and ISUP faculty.

In 2024-2025, we offered 13 (12 in 2023-2024) in-class or in-tutorial presentations and workshops. We held 8 (8 in 2023-2024) benchmarking sessions for specific courses.

We also offered the Writing Development Initiative TA Training program; a total of 46 TAs participated in the training (33 in 2023-2024), and they received seven hours of instruction on writing pedagogy.

Responding to the expressed needs of our partners, we reintroduced online writing office hours for some WDI-funded courses; these were augmented by in-person dedicated drop-ins.

We designed and led five writing workshops for departments, student groups, and specific student cohorts in addition to our course-specific workshops and presentations.

Finally, we are in the process of revising the way we assess the efficacy of WDI-funded projects, so we can efficiently collect meaningful data.

Caribbean and Black Writing Collective

The Caribbean and Black Writing Collective (CBWC) began in 2022-2023. The CBWC gives students who identify as Caribbean (Black, Indo Caribbean, Chinese-Caribbean etc.) and/or Black (African, Caribbean, Canadian etc.) an opportunity to work on their assignments and engage deeply with their studies in a collaborative environment with faculty, supportive friends and peers who identify with the collective. The CBWC aims to build community, motivation, and accountability. Check-ins, networking, reflective discussions, writing/reading/numeracy support, visits by Caribbean and Black identified UTM faculty members are all available components to enhance the session experience. This year CBWC was led by Sheliza Ibrahim and Nelesi Rodrigues with support from Efe Eghujovbo, Jordana Garbati, Aimy Lieu, Olivia Tenn, and Brooke Ramsey.

In 2024-2025, the CBWC team refined program logistics, developed social media and on campus promotional materials, developed the objectives of the collective, collaborated across units, and connected with student associations (e.g., African Student Association, Caribbean Student Association) and departments (e.g., English & Drama Department and Black@UTM) to develop collaboration and collegial connections.

In Fall 2024 and Winter 2025, we offered 10 sessions of two and a half hours and two special event sessions (details below). 57 students (new and repeat attendees) participated in CBWC sessions.

Two events continued in 2024-2025:

1. We co-sponsored the Black Harlem World Building, Paint & Poetry Exam de-stressor event on April 7th in collaboration with the English and Drama Student Society. The event featured Black and Caribbean speakers who are UTM poets & artists. There were more than 25 participants, including 20 students, 2 alumni, 2 faculty, and 1 faculty family supporter.
2. We continued the Black and Caribbean Scholar Speaker Series. In this series, members of the collective connected with faculty members across UTM. Guest speakers included Simone Walker, Assistant Teaching Professor, Psychology; Wanja Gitari, Associate Professor, OISE/UT; Amanda Brijmohan, Education

Developer, Institute for the Study of University Pedagogy; and Efe Eghujovbo, 4th year UTM undergraduate student.

Three initiatives began in 2024-2025:

1. We delivered an outreach opportunity to first-year students at the UTM Orientation on August 30, 2024. Approximately 25 new undergraduate students attended.
2. We collaborated with Black@UTM and the UTM Librarians for the Black on the Shelf and book reading/ signing with Zalika Reid-Benta Event on February 13, 2025. Approximately 40 students, faculty, and staff attended.
3. We hosted and curated the inaugural Vision Boarding Event funded by the Black Opportunities Fund. 17 UTM students attended and created vision boards for their academic futures.

Plans for 2025-2026 include:

- Continuing the Black and Caribbean Scholar Speaker Series
- Continuing outreach to first-year students through Orientation events
- Increasing graduate student outreach
- Continuing outreach with the SEE@UTM program for Peel grade 12 Black students, and classes which include sizable numbers of Caribbean and/or Black students
- Continuing to provide Co-Curricular Accreditation (CCR)
- Applying for the Access Programs University Fund (APUF)
- Hosting Vision Boarding events
- Developing consistent measuring and assessment practices

Mathematics and Numeracy Support

Mathematics and numeracy are critical for students' academic development. The RGASC offers one-on-one appointments and drop-in hours in mathematics and numeracy instruction. While we target students who are taking first-year math courses, our instruction is not limited to them.

Appointments

In 2024-2025, we offered 336 hours of in-person and online synchronous mathematics and numeracy appointments. The utilization rate of these appointments was just over 50% which is consistent with the previous academic year but indicates that there is much room for improvement in student awareness and outreach. Similarly, only 61 unique students used these appointments which is low compared to our writing appointments.

In Summer 2024, 13 unique students used 72% of the offered appointments (36/50 hours). In Fall 2024, 30 unique students used 51% of the offered appointments (73/143 hours). In Winter 2025, 27 unique students used 52% of the offered hours (62/119 hours).

These numbers indicate that our math appointments attract a small, dedicated group of students who access this support regularly, often making weekly appointments throughout a given semester. In 2024-2025, 87% of our booked appointments were made by just eleven students. Four of those students booked more than 10 appointments over the course of the academic year.

Drop-ins

In Winter 2025, we piloted 12 two-hour Math Drop-ins on Tuesday afternoons. The intention was to offer students just-in-time support.

Except for the first session, all sessions attracted at least one (and often more) students. Twelve unique students attended these sessions, with a number of them returning on multiple occasions.

Math and Numeracy appointment utilization rates for fall 2024 and winter 2025 are on par with trends in recent years as noted in Table 2.

Table 2

Mathematics and Numeracy Appointments Yearly Comparison

	2021/22	2022/23¹	2023/24	2024/25
Unique Students	68	86	63	68
Total Available Appointment Hours	376	298	457	336
Total Utilization Rate	61%	66%	57%	57%

¹ Excludes Summer 2022 data

Our forthcoming Summer 2025 collaboration with ISUP, Math Background Tutorials, will extend that support to incoming students as well as current students who need additional support in first-year mathematics.

Learning Strategies

Overview

The learning strategy portfolio focuses on providing study skills support through peer-led programming. Our three primary programs are:

- Facilitated Study Groups (FSGs)
- Promoting Academic Skills for Success (PASS)
- Peer Mentor Learning Communities (PMLCs)

In addition, we offer:

- Study skills workshops for the RGASC's Head Start program
- Study skills workshops for departments and academic societies upon request
- Study skills support to wider UTM initiatives and programs including Exam Jam, the Summer Academic Skills Institute (SASI), and the Support, Engage, Experience (SEE) UTM program
- Individual study skills appointments with a part-time Study Skills Instructor and piloted study skills drop-in sessions

Details of our programming follow.

Facilitated Study Groups (FSGs)

FSGs are rooted in the Supplemental Instruction (SI) model developed by the University of Missouri at Kansas City. SI is a non-remedial approach to learning enrichment that uses peer-assisted study groups to integrate essential academic skills with course-related material. FSGs are only offered in support of courses in which there is active collaboration between the course instructor and the RGASC. The sessions are led by a team of facilitators, model volunteer students who have been successful in the course and who have had approval from or been hand-picked by the course instructor. Facilitators are intensively trained by the RGASC in Supplemental Instruction techniques and proactive study strategies before leading FSG sessions.

Table 3 shows a comparison of overall attendances, number of courses, and number of FSG sessions between 2022 and 2025.

Table 3

FSG Attendance Data

	Fall 2022	Fall 2023	Fall 2024	Winter 2023	Winter 2024	Winter 2025	2022/23 Total	2023/24 Total	2024/25 Total
FSG Leaders							162	200	183
Student Attendances	1042	2603	2074	1208	1443	1127	2250	4046	3201
Number of Courses	26	29	36	31	28	34	57	57	68
Number of FSG Sessions	354	503	458	485	469	448	839	972	916

In 2024-2025, FSG increased the number of course offerings to 68 (from 57 in 2023-2024). We offered 906 FSG sessions, attended by 3201 students.

The increase in courses offered reflects the effort to offer supplemental instruction programming to more students across different disciplines.

In 2025-2026, the FSG Program will focus on optimizing FSG scheduling by better aligning sessions with course offerings. This strategy is intended to enhance student access.

FSG and SEE UTM

The FSG program continued to support the Support, Engage, Experience University of Toronto (SEE UTM). SEE UTM aims to make post-secondary education more accessible to students who come from communities historically underrepresented at UTM. Three co-facilitators led 12 FSG sessions for Black high school students from the Peel District School Board throughout the Fall Term with over 12 students in attendance each week.

Collaboration with EDS325 H5

The RGASC continued to collaborate with Language Studies to run EDS325 H5: Supplemental Instruction in Higher Education, a credit-bearing course that introduces students to the theory and practice of Supplemental Instruction in higher education. EDS325 incorporates the RGASC's FSG program as a mandatory internship for every student on the course.

In 2024-2025, 52 students were enrolled into EDS325 (57 students in 2023-2024), with all students being directly placed in the FSG sessions. The decrease in students placed reflects the continued changes made in the vetting process, which focused on being more selective regarding the course backgrounds of the incoming students and raising

the minimum CGPA requirement for placement. In addition, we continued to streamline our communications with incoming EDS325 students as part of their intake process and re-affirm the placement expectations.

FSG Session Mapping Improvement

In Winter 2025, one of the FSG Program Assistants audited the exemplar session plans provided on Quercus to ensure consistency in the formatting and structure as there were some legacy items from previous academic years that did not reflect recent updates. As part of this process, additional annotations were added to provide facilitators with greater guidance on session plan expectations.

FSG Training Materials Improvement

FSG Program Assistants created a new Quercus training module for new facilitators that aligns videos of sample sessions with corresponding session plans, session maps, and Program Assistant feedback. This project aimed to help new facilitators develop a richer understanding of how the different elements of mentoring and feedback work together in the FSG program and ultimately result in enhanced facilitation skills.

Promoting Academic Skills for Success (PASS)

The PASS Program provides dedicated support to academically “at-risk” students. The program’s goal is to rebuild students’ motivation, model successful behaviors, and raise students’ self-awareness (i.e., to build students’ resilience). The PASS program typically comprises a six- to seven-week course (non-credit-bearing) in one term (PASS Term 1) followed by supplemental support and mentoring in the subsequent term (PASS Term 2).

In 2024-2025, total attendance for PASS Term 1 was 155 students (an increase from 148 in 2023-2024). Student retention increased to 66% from 63%. Total attendance for PASS Term 2 decreased to 35 students (from 56 students in 2023-2024). We did not run the PASS Term 2 program in Summer 2024 given the low program registration. Retention decreased from 50% to 38% between these years.

PASS Student Data project

In Winter 2023, the PASS team launched a two-phase, collaborative project with the Office of the Registrar and Divisional Research to refine the process for collecting student data, reporting on student progress, and aligning PASS data with Office of the Registrar student records. Phase 1 of the project was completed in May 2023.

Phase 2 started in November 2023 and was completed in January 2025. Phase 2 focused on integrating PASS data with student demographic data from the Office of the Registrar to better understand how PASS impacts the academic outcomes of different

segments of our at-risk student population. All the data for PASS Term 1 and Term 2 was cleaned in preparation and populated into a Tableau dashboard. Following Phase 2 completion, a screencast video, one-page summary, and a user guide were produced. Initial findings suggest that there is a statistically significant association between PASS completion and improvement in both students' post PASS GPAs and academic standing.

Peer Mentor Learning Communities (PMLC)

The Peer Mentor Learning Communities (PMLC) program is a joint initiative with Accessibility Services, which serves to offer a series of study skills workshops rooted in the Supplemental Instruction approach in addition to group study sessions, and social gatherings to help build a sense of community amongst all UTM students who are registered with Accessibility Services.

RGASC Program Assistants provide facilitation and study skills training for Accessibility Services peer mentors, who lead study skills sessions for Accessibility students. The RGASC Program Assistants also provide logistical support to schedule and book the sessions and provide feedback on the peer mentors' facilitation during and after session delivery.

In August 2024, RGASC Program Assistants provided training in workshop facilitation to the Accessibility Services peer mentors and provided planning support to the Summer Academic Skills Institute (SASI). SASI aims to equip incoming students registered with Accessibility Services with the academic skills and strategies to make a successful transition to postsecondary education. Table 4 shows the attendance data of SASI and PMLC since 2020, with PMLC attendance reflecting total attendance at workshops, group study sessions, and socials. While more PMLC sessions were offered to better serve the student community, in comparison to the 2023-2024 academic year, attendance at PMLC events decreased by 13.18% in 2024-2025. This decrease was partly due to social connections activities not running in the Fall 2024 term.

Table 4

SASI and PMLC Attendance

	SASI Attendance	PMLC Sessions	PMLC Attendance
2020-21	21	24	196
2021-22	22	35	178
2022-23	28	28	153
2023-24	20	27	311

Study Skills Appointments

We continued to offer 30-minute Study Skills appointments through the WCONLINE platform. In Fall 2024, we offered 53 hours of appointments, and in Winter 2025, 43.5 hours of appointments. This year, we piloted a new mix of online and in person appointments. Despite this adjustment, and frequent requests for this type of support from students, these appointments continue to be in low demand.

In Fall 2024, 34 unique students booked 34% of the available appointments (18/53 hours). While in Winter 2025, 21 unique students booked just 29% of the available appointments (12.5/43.5 hours). Notably, a small contingent of students (8) returned for a second or third appointment.

Study Skills Drop-ins

The learning strategist team offered three 1.5-hour Study Skills drop-ins each in Fall 2024 and Winter 2025 with an additional 2-hour drop-in in the Winter 2025 Exam Jam. The intent was to provide students with a flexible space that met their diverse needs for effective studying prior to exams and during a time of peak stress. The drop-in space was organized in three sections to give students the flexibility to access general study skills handouts and chat with peer facilitators, work independently, or consult one-on-one with a learning strategist. In Winter 2025, no peer facilitators were available to support the sessions. The Fall 2024 sessions were attended by 1-2 students each. The Winter 2025 sessions were attended by 2-7 students each.

Study Skills Materials Development

In Winter 2025, a Research Assistant (RA) was hired to review study skills resources at the RGASC, while conducting an environmental scan of materials at Ontario colleges and universities to help update RGASC's materials. The RA also conducted a literature review and interviewed faculty, staff, and students to find out what resources UTM students need most. One important outcome of this project is a collection of updated study skills resources.

Additional Specialty Programs

Head Start Program

Head Start, our first-year transition program, was offered in a hybrid format over three days at the end of August 2024. Two days were in-person with live streaming to an online audience, and one day was fully online. Sessions ran from 9am until 5pm and offered incoming first-year students workshops in foundational academic skills

development; an orientation to UTM's academic support services; and opportunities to connect with senior students, RGASC staff, and faculty through panels and tabling. For the first time, we offered a session on generative AI, "Contextualizing Generative AI at the University Level".

Head Start sessions attracted 202 unique students, 64 of those students attended sessions on all three days, 48 attended two days, and 89 one day. In-person attendance was manageable with 50 students attending each in person day. Online sessions were more popular, with a total of 275 attendances, or an average of 90 attendances per day. The three days attracted a total of 379 attendances.

The most well-attended sessions, as in recent years, were:

- Writing for University with Dr. Mark Blaauw-Hara (ISUP), 93 students attended
- Time Management with Kerrie Martin (RGASC), 89 students attended
- Note Taking Strategies for University with Linda Duong (RGASC), 111 students attended
- First Year Math 101 with Dr. Andie Burzain (ISUP), 98 students attended online

In Summer 2025, Head Start will be offered in hybrid delivery mode to ensure greater student access. To increase attendance, a dedicated marketing campaign on social media and through email will be executed in the weeks leading up to the program. We will update and expand the asynchronous content hosted on our Quercus shell, to provide additional support to students who cannot attend the program.

Game-Based Learning

Game-Based Learning (GBL) uses board games to aid learning in and out of the classroom in both academic development and student wellness. The RGASC's houses UTM's largest board game collection with 261 unique games. This collection is made up of acquisitions from the RGASC and donations from the community, with a majority donated by Tom Klubi.

In 2024-2025, we worked with RGASC's Promoting Academic Skills for Success (PASS) program where we guided Program Assistants (PAs) on how to play and facilitate games (e.g., Pandemic, Concept) used in the PASS program. We also supported CCT419 and UTM118 by providing copies of board games, consulting on game choice, and soliciting volunteers for playtesting. We currently do not offer extended course support in game-based learning.

Our primary contribution in GBL is our Game Cafés. These Cafés use games to encourage students to socialize and de-stress to avoid isolation and burnout. The Game Cafés also provide peer-to-peer learning opportunities whereby volunteer facilitators teach games to student attendees. Game Cafés occurred four times per semester,

averaging over 135 students in attendance per session. An additional Exam Jam Game Café occurred at the end of each of the Fall and Winter semesters with an attendance of 45 students per event. Game Cafés do not run during the summer.

We have also collaborated with many student groups on campus such as Erindale Gaming Organization, UTM Chess Club, UTM E-Sports, University of Toronto Trading Card Game Club, and UTMD&D. These clubs provide volunteers and assist with advertisements for the Game Cafés. Groups on campus have been invited to use games from our collection and get advice on how to incorporate games into their programming. Some examples include Accessibility Services, the Academic Integrity Unit, and the Department of Political Science.

In 2024, we initiated a research project to investigate students' perceptions of Game Cafés on their academic skills development. Data collection and analysis will continue in 2025-2026.

English Language Learner (ELL) Support

Overview

In 2024-2025, English as an Additional Language (EAL) support was provided in the Professional English Language Skills (PELS) program. This supplemental instruction allowed for extra marks in the following credit-bearing courses: Fall 2024 & Winter 2025 for RLG101, and in Winter 2025 only for CCT110, VCC101, and WGS102. Additionally, PELS is credited by the Co-Curricular Record (CCR) Office for validation and transcript notation. Although PELS is designed to support EAL students, all UTM first-year students are encouraged to participate to develop their academic and writing skills.

PELS is an asynchronous program offered over eight weeks in Fall and Winter semesters. Successful completion of PELS is credited once, either for bonus course marks in one course or CCR transcript notation. Students in courses were added to PELS and instructed to accept the Quercus invitation for bonus marks or merely to access PELS content for self-learning without doing the assessments. This strategy encourages one-click access instead of redirection to a form registration link. Students who enrolled in the CCR section of PELS used the registration form on the PELS webpage; however, next year CCR students will be referred to the instructor to avoid confusion about PELS section registration as some registered for CCR but wanted course bonus marks.

In 2024-2025, PELS hired a TA for the first time. Lynn Lingyao Shu, Master of Arts Candidate, OISE/UT, was instrumental in the success of PELS Student Hours that boasted attendance of 6 students in Fall 2024 and 10 attendees in Winter 2025. Lynn took a lead role in organizing Student Hour special events such as guest talks by Kaitlin Phillips, Special Projects Officer at the Office of Indigenous Initiatives, and a

presentation by M. J. Singleton, artist and Anishinaabe and two-spirit University of Toronto Mississauga student. Lynn shared her graduate studies experiences with PELS Students, and online discussions facilitated by Lynn increased substantially. Lynn also provided grading support that allowed for prompt submission of PELS marks at the end of term. Other Student Hour activities include an online guest talk with Shawna Shapiro (2022) about Critical Language Awareness and game collaborations with Mitchell Pedicelli, as well as nature walks and Blackwood Gallery tours. In sum, 2024-2025 student engagement increased dramatically from the previous year with the addition of a teaching assistant and robust attendance at PELS Student Hours.

Another innovation was that successful Fall 2024 PELS students offered information and assurances about the program structure and expectations in visits to CCT110 and VCC101 in Winter 2025. This model was replicated from the UTM Orientation event in September 2024 that featured successful PELS students from prior years. Peer-to-peer interaction and leadership has been integral to the success of PELS in 2024-2025, and students who participated this year have volunteered to promote PELS in 2025-2026. Furthermore, PELS students were invited to ISUP research events in December 2024 and April 2025 to promote scholarly engagement and RGASC community building.

The enrollment numbers for 2024-2025 are consistent with previous years (see Table 5). The pass rate reflects a 5% decline since 2021. However, pass numbers have increased since 2021.

Table 5
PELS Student Enrolment and Completion Yearly Comparison

	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023/24	2024/25
Student Enrolment	756	999	1909	1371
Student Completion	240	316	577	372
Completion Rate	32%	32%	30%	27%

Strengths and Challenges in 2024-2025

PELS continues to grow, and collaborations with other offices at UTM have been productive. In addition to collaborations with the Office of Indigenous Initiatives since 2020, PELS was featured at UTM Orientation in Fall 2024. The session titled, “Academic English Language Learning and Confidence in First Year with PELS -

Professional English Language Skills” was a great success with approximately 25 students attending. The session was facilitated by the PELS instructor, teaching assistant, and second-year students who were successful in PELS the previous year. PELS was presented as an opportunity for students, both international and domestic, multilingual and monolingual, to meet and have fun. PELS students talked about the transition to university studies from the perspective of language and cultural diversity, and students introduced themselves and participated in small group activities. This session was intentionally interactive and informative. Students were encouraged to understand that English language learning and writing development is a process that occurs with effort and that writers have more to learn. Several students who attended this session joined PELS and attended Student Hours regularly.

PELS continues to offer academic English language learning and writing development to first-year students – both EAL and non-EAL students – and assist them in the transition to university expectations. The strengths of the program include:

- peer-leadership and community building (teaching assistant & Student Hour activities and events)
- a model of delivery that offers asynchronous self-study
- formative and corrective assessment feedback
- encouragement to use supports at the RGASC
- course marks that reward students’ participation through successful completion of at least seven PELS modules; however, many students complete all eight modules

Meetings with faculty to debrief course offerings of PELS indicate that the online design of PELS supports students without skewing course grades or creating additional labour for faculty and teaching assistants. Students are motivated to participate in PELS, and survey responses consistently indicate that assessments are fair and allow students to demonstrate their learning.

In 2024-2025, PELS was presented at several conferences to promote the RGASC. For example, PELS was shared at the Digital Pedagogy Institute Conference ([DPI](#), 2024) Centre for Educational Research on Languages and Literacies Symposium ([CERLL](#), 2024), the Northeast Modern Languages Association ([NeMLA](#), 2025), the Conference on College Composition and Communication([4Cs](#), 2025), the University of Toronto Writing PD Event (Spring, 2025), and in the 2025 publication, [*Writing & Power: Policies and Position Statements for Social Change*](#).

Assessing written assessments continues to be challenging due to the frequent use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and ongoing curricular revisions will be necessary to address high enrolment and AI use in quiz responses. This will likely require assessments with greater complexity for students to demonstrate critical thinking and writing

metacognition. Assessments that are auto graded must be used in PELS; however, AI detection also offers teaching moments to give corrective feedback and engage students in discussions about writing skills and ethical academic expectations.

A program challenge emerged in PELS for WGS102, and this will be addressed in 2025-2026. Only 64% of WGS102 students passed PELS in Winter 2025, and this is because many students did not participate. Since PELS was mandatory in WGS102, and worth 5%, the low pass rate is concerning. Going forward, PELS will be offered as an extra mark option for 3% bonus toward the course final mark, and an alternative extra mark option will be offered to students in WGS102. PELS as optional and worth (3%) is equitable to students, and furthermore, the PELS instructor does not have the capacity to meet increased interactions with WGS102 students who required additional support given the course weight of 5% for PELS.

Administration (student emails and tracking assignments) continues to be labour intensive. However, we continue to experiment with the best way to enrol and track student participation and success in PELS, and there are plans to create a data management system that allows for easier reporting and analysis. Overall, counselling to students was provided online (emails, discussion boards, assignment feedback), and during in-person student hours.

Program for Accessing Research Training (PART)

Overview

The Program for Accessing Research Training (PART) is an online research training program designed to prepare UTM undergraduate students for possible participation in research opportunities on campus and an opportunity to acquire foundational skills needed for graduate studies.

In previous years, PART was coordinated by RGASC's Graduate Support Specialist. In Summer 2024, this position was moved to the Dean's Office, which meant that we did not have staff to coordinate the program. In Fall 2025, an ISUP faculty (Dr. Michael DeBraga) took over PART, and re-launched it in Winter 2025 after a pause in the Fall. We offered the redesign version of PART (from 2023-2024) in the Winter 2025 term and in the PART Summer Institute in May 2025.

PART includes 18 modules. Each module is included in one of five categories: (1) Core (e.g., conducting literature searches), (2) Special Topic (e.g., in STEM, Humanities, Social Sciences), (3) Method (e.g., conducting interviews), (4) Data Analysis (e.g., descriptive statistics), and (5) Communication (e.g., communicating your research). Each module comprises of up to four hours of instruction with a module facilitator and a homework exercise or assessment. Modules include both conceptual discussion and hands-on practice. Each module is offered in the Fall and Winter semesters and again in a compressed format in the summer as the PART Summer Institute.

As of 2023-2024, students are eligible to receive up to three CCR annotations designated as Core, Intermediate, and Advanced. Students must complete the CCR requirements within one academic year (i.e., Fall, Winter, and condensed PART Summer Institute).

Attendance Data

In Winter 2025 and Summer 2025, a total of 171 students registered in PART. Of these, 28 students (16%) attended PART). These 28 students attended 203 sessions. 112 of 203 attendances took place during the PART Summer Institute (April 28th to May 2nd, 2025).

Attendance by Module is as follows:

- 54 total attendances for the Core Modules with 52 completed
- 14 total attendances for Special Topics Modules with 13 completed
- 15 total attendances for Methods Modules with 14 completed
- 10 total attendances for Data Modules with all completed
- 11 total attendances for Communication Modules with 10 completed

In total, five students completed the CCR Level 1.

Future Considerations for PART

Students regularly asked for on-line asynchronous options, and we will need to consider whether a return to on-line is appropriate. In-person attendance for the Summer Institute accounted for 55% (112/203) of total attendances for both Winter and Summer sessions.

There are challenges with registration – notably there is currently no easy way for students to register for specific modules. This should be a priority focus going forward as it allows presenters of modules to determine attendance numbers prior to hosting module.

We should also reinstitute an introductory session for PART to review with registered students the specific criteria for successful completion of the CCR level achievements.

Finally, the Quercus Shell needs revision as the attendance tracker should be accessible by the instructor delivering the module. This would ensure accurate and real-time attendance monitoring, which in turn would facilitate CCR confirmation.

Graduate Student Support

Prior to July 2024, graduate student support was primarily coordinated by the RGASC's Graduate Support Specialist. In July 2024, this position was moved to the Dean's Office. As such, our graduate student programming was negatively impacted.

In 2024-2025, in addition to TA training and RA opportunities and in-class writing instruction noted elsewhere in this report, we attempted to continue to offer graduate student programming in writing, mathematics and numeracy, and study skills. We had weak outreach strategies for graduate students because of the staffing change.

Graduate Student Appointments

Graduate students can book appointments for one-on-one appointments related to writing, numeracy, and study skills. Only two graduate students booked a writing appointment in the Fall 2024 semester, and six students booked in Winter 2025. These students were looking for support as they prepared grant proposals or statements of intent for graduate degree programs.

Graduate Student Workshops

We were invited by the Dean's Office to offer writing workshops for graduate students in the areas of scholarship proposal writing and writing for publication. Zero and one student attended these sessions, respectively.

In 2025-2026, we will review and revise our graduate student program offerings.

Instructor Support

Indigenous Curriculum and Pedagogy

The Special Projects Officer for Indigenous Curriculum and Pedagogy (SPO-ICP) joined the RGASC in January 2025 and has since developed a range of initiatives aimed at supporting instructors and departments across UTM in respectfully and effectively engaging with Indigenous knowledges, perspectives, and pedagogical practices. This work is grounded in relationship-building, ethical collaboration, and alignment with the University of Toronto's 36 Calls to Action outlined in its report on Truth and Reconciliation, *Wecheehetowin*.

Building Relationships

A core focus of the SPO-ICP role this year has been building working relationships across UTM and with colleagues at other campuses. Since January, the SPO-ICP has built connections with UTM's Office of Indigenous Initiatives and established regular contact with counterparts at St. George and UTSC to share resources, align projects, and explore collaborative opportunities. On campus, relationship-building has included informal meetings, email exchanges, co-planning sessions, and collaborative workshop development with faculty, staff, and administrators across a range of departments and units. These relationships have supported the development of new curriculum, informed the design of workshops and pedagogical reading groups, and contributed to a more coordinated approach to Indigenous curriculum and pedagogy work across the university.

Individual Consultations

Throughout the Winter 2025 term, the SPO-ICP engaged in individual and department-level consultations with faculty and staff from a wide range of disciplines, including Biology, Philosophy, Geography, Geomatics and Environment, Political Science, Sociology, Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies, Mathematical and Computational Sciences, the Centre for Child Development, Mental Health, and Policy and the Institute for Management and Innovation.

These consultations focused on:

- Supporting course development (e.g., "Truth and Reconciliation in Biology" LEAF-funded course)
- Comprehensive review of curricula for IMI 2002H: Leadership for a Sustainable Future
- Providing guidance on community engagement and respectful knowledge integration (e.g., research consultation)
- Advising on Indigenous perspectives in assignment design, research ethics, and course material selection

Workshops

The SPO-ICP developed and delivered multiple workshops:

- *Finding the Trail: A Primer on Indigenous Pedagogy in Higher Education* (delivered to Geography, Geomatics and Environment in March 2025).
- *Towards Ethical Spaces of Engagement in Higher Education* (delivered UTM-wide in April 2025).
- Additional workshops are in development (anticipated delivery in Fall 2025):
 - *Indigenous research Methods and Respectful Research Partnerships*
 - *“But I’m a Scientist!” How Indigenous Knowledge Systems Enhance the Natural Sciences*
 - *Living Assessment: Indigenous Approaches to Knowing, Growing, and Showing Learning*

Pedagogical Reading Groups and Educational Development Collaborations

- In March 2025, the SPO-ICP facilitated a Pedagogical Reading Group on Shawn Wilson’s *Research is Ceremony* in collaboration with the Senior Educational Developer. Feedback from the nine participants was very positive, with reflections on the applicability of relational research principles to diverse disciplines.
- The SPO-ICP collaborated with the Educational Development team to contribute to the *Ready, Set, Reflect* workshop series, designed to foster iterative and reflective teaching practices.
- The SPO-ICP collaborated with the Educational Development team to contribute to the *Inviting Constructive Dialogue to the Classroom* workshop.

Research and Resource Development

Key projects in 2024-2025 included:

- Initiation of an environmental scan of Indigenous curriculum and pedagogy practices at Canadian postsecondary institutions (in collaboration with a Work Study student and UTM Library)
- Development of a protocol for a scoping review protocol to map the current landscape of Indigenous pedagogical literature in Canada (in collaboration with a Work Study student and UTM Library)
- Initiation of a compilation of Indigenous curriculum resources for eventual integration into the RGASC website

Institutional Collaborations and Strategic Initiatives

The SPO-ICP supported multiple cross-unit initiatives including:

- Consulting on assessment practices aligned with Indigenous pedagogies.
- Supporting LEAF-funded projects, including *Learning Through the Landscape* in collaboration with Earth Sciences and the ISUP EDI committee
- Partnering with the Office of Alumni Relations to develop an Indigenous scholars webinar, titled *Braided Paths: Exploring the Transformative Power of Indigenous Knowledge Systems Across and Beyond Disciplinary Lines*, launching in Fall 2025

Educational Development

The RGASC Educational Development team provides pedagogical support to UTM Instructors of all ranks through individual consultations and programming. The overarching goal of the Educational Developers is to help UTM function effectively as a teaching and learning community.

Individual Consultations

The Educational Development team supported instructors in over 220 individual consultations, 82 unique UTM instructors and 14 unique staff members were supported. The scholarship of teaching and learning (18% of all consultations) was the most common consultation topic, followed by teaching dossiers (14%), assessment and academic integrity (10%), and course design (8%). Most consultations were with Assistant Professors, Teaching Stream (28%), Assistant Professors (14%), sessional instructors (13%) and Associate Professors, Teaching Stream (10%). The RGASC supported instructors across departments at UTM. Instructors from ISUP: Institute for the Study of University Pedagogy, Historical Studies, MCS: Mathematics and Computational Sciences, GGE: Geography, Geomatics and Environment, Language Studies, and Historical Studies most often sought one-on-one consultations. Most of our consultations continue to occur online (73%) despite offering both on campus and online options.

The RGASC Educational Developers conducted 18 teaching observations for UTM instructors this year. Each teaching observation consisted of a pre-observation meeting, a teaching observation either for one or two hours, and a post-observation consultation meeting where feedback was provided along with formative questions to help guide the instructor's pedagogy. This feedback averaged two to four pages in length.

Educational Development Programming

Assessment of Learning Series

The Assessment of Learning Series was a four-part series designed to support instructors in rethinking their assessment methods to ensure they are effective, purposeful, inclusive, and aligned with their learning outcomes. Thirty-two instructors

participated in four sessions scheduled two per semester: Fall 2024 and Winter 2025. The sessions were facilitated by the Educational Developer, Assessment and Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, with Session 2 done in collaboration with the UDL and Accessible Pedagogies Co-Ordinator, and the Acting Senior Educational Developer and Team Lead. The session titles were as follows:

- Session 1: A Brief History of Educational Assessment (online)
- Session 2: What do we mean when we say: “Inclusive Assessments”? (in-person)
- Session 3: Educational Assessment Practices and Student Identity Formation (online)
- Session 4: Assessing Collaborative Learning and Group Work (in-person)

Generative AI Lunch and Learn Series

The Generative AI Lunch and Learn Series was a six-part series designed for instructors at varying levels of comfort and experience with incorporating generative AI tools into their teaching practice. The sessions were structured to provide thought-provoking samples and examples of what was possible with each tool and then provide space for how they might apply to discipline- and course- specific context. Seventy-three instructors participated in six sessions scheduled three per semester: Fall 2024 and Winter 2025. The sessions were facilitated by the Educational Developer, Instructional Practices and Student Engagement, and their session titles were as follows:

- Session 1: “Microsoft Copilot” (online)
- Session 2: “Claude” (online)
- Session 3: “Perplexity” (in-person)
- Session 4: “Revisiting Microsoft Copilot” (online)
- Session 5: “Revisiting Claude: Data Analysis” (online)
- Session 6: “Notebook LM” (in-person)

Re-thinking Rubrics in the Age of Generative AI (Online)

The workshop was designed to support instructors in scaffolding the integration of Generative AI use by linking assessment outcomes with rubric design and then provide opportunities to apply that knowledge to revise an existing assignment rubric. Thirteen instructors participated in this workshop which took place in Fall 2024, and was facilitated by the Educational Developer, Assessment and Scholarship of Teaching and Learning.

Designing Inclusive Classrooms: How to Create Meaningful Learning Experiences (Online)

The workshop was designed to provide updates to the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) guidelines and how they differ from previous iterations, offering participants the opportunity to practice its application to a learning activity, assignment or assessment strategy and reflect on how the framework might change how we teach. 11 instructors participated in this workshop which took place in Winter 2025 and was facilitated by the UDL and Accessible Pedagogies Co-Ordinator.

Ungrading: Why Grades Can Sometimes Compromise Student Engagement and What You Can Do Instead (In-person)

This workshop was designed to invite reflection on the pedagogical impact of grading and introduce participants to a variety of ungrading strategies that can be customized according to practice and discipline. This workshop was offered twice in Winter 2025, with 19 unique instructors participating in total. Both workshops were facilitated by the UDL and Accessible Pedagogies Co-Ordinator.

Pedagogical Reading Groups

The Educational Developers facilitated nine pedagogical reading groups: four in Summer 2024 (14 participants), two in Fall 2024 (15 participants), and three in Winter 2025 (23 participants). The groups of faculty and staff met weekly or biweekly with assigned chapters to discuss. Participants were encouraged to share how the readings intersected with their pedagogical practice or how they could implement the suggested strategies from the readings in their courses.

A total of 37 unique participants from 9 different UTM departments and 7 different UTM staffing units participated in the pedagogical reading groups. This year's reading groups focused on the following books:

- *Grading for Growth* by David Clark and Robert Talbert
- *Co-Intelligence Living and Working with AI* by Ethan Mollick
- *Hope Circuits: Rewiring Universities and Other Organizations for Human Flourishing* by Jessica Riddell
- *My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending our Hearts and Bodies* by Resmaa Menakem
- *Race Talk and the Conspiracy of Silence: Understanding and Facilitating Difficult Dialogues on Race* by Derald Wing Sue
- *Feel-Good Productivity: How to Do More of What Matters to You* by Ali Abdaal
- *Small Teaching: Everyday Lessons from the Science of Learning, 2nd Edition* by James M. Lang
- *Undoing the Grade: Why we Grade, and How to Stop* by Jesse Stommel

- *Hidden Potential: The Science of Achieving Greater Things* by Adam Grant

Participants expressed that they enjoyed the opportunity to create new learning communities with members outside their discipline, and that the reading groups offered a generative learning space. They also noted, and appreciated, the curated, inclusive and thoughtful spaces provided by the facilitators.

Communities of Practice

Scholarship of Teaching (SoTL) Community of Practice

The Educational Developer, Assessment and Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, launched the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning Community of Practice (SoTL CoP) at UTM, in collaboration with the Associate Chair, Academic, from the Department of Sociology in Fall 2024. The SoTL CoP at UTM aimed to bring together instructors who are interested in connecting, discussing, and learning more about the practice of scholarship in teaching and learning research. Through a combination of facilitated community discussions, and invited talks, these meetings provided an opportunity for participants to engage in conversations ranging from where to begin, how to develop research questions, how to navigate SoTL research ethics, and exploring the “students as partners” framework in SoTL research.

Geography, Geomatics and Environment (GGE) Community of Practice

The Education Developer, Anti-Racist Pedagogies launched the pilot Community of Practice (CoP), in collaboration with an Assistant Professor from the department of Geography, Geomatics and Environment in September 2024. The pilot CoP successfully achieved two key learning outcomes: instructors significantly enhanced their confidence in facilitating difficult conversations about race through both collaborative sessions and peer support, while collectively developing a practical toolkit of teaching strategies adapted from the principles of Derald Wing Sue’s book *Race Talk*. Due to the success and sustained interest from the instructors, the Education Developer, Anti-Racist Pedagogies has been invited to facilitate another CoP for the department in the Fall of 2025, which will emphasize hands-on application of anti-racist pedagogies and practices in diverse classroom settings.

Celebration of Teaching Excellence

In collaboration with the Interim Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning, the RGASC Educational Developers coordinated the third annual celebration of UTM’s recent teaching award recipients. This year we celebrated Spyridon Kotsovilis, Karen Woodall, Ken Derry, Tyler Evans-Tokaryk, Leila Farzinpur, and Paula Sanchez Nuñez de Villavicencio, as well as the team of the D2L Award Winners: Fiona Rawle, Nicole Laliberté, Christina Makkar, Abigail Eastman, Jennifer Ross, Dianne Ashbourne, Daniel Guadagnolo, Krystal Nunes, Maria Dasios, Mairi Cowan, Ken Derry, Jackie Goodman.

We had an excellent turnout for this event with over 50 people joining to celebrate the teaching and scholarly achievements of the award winners.

Resource Development

With help from the Outreach and Engagement Coordinator (Laura Smith), the AODA Officer (Ben Poynton) and the Web Accessibility Specialist (Chris Sabatinos), the UDL and Accessible Pedagogies Co-Ordinator updated the RGASC resource document “Inclusive and Unbiased Language” designed for English Language Learners (ELLs), completed in Winter 2025.

The UDL and Accessible Pedagogies Co-Ordinator completed a draft of a UDL 3.0 Resource and is currently ensuring full accessibility before submitting for a final review. The resource builds on the workshop developed for the Winter 2025 term and offers instructors an asynchronous option to learn about key highlights from the July 2024 UDL 3.0 update, with examples and strategies for implementation.

Collaborations and Outreach

The Educational Development team engaged in several collaborations and outreach activities in 2024-2025.

Outreach Activities

The Acting Senior Educational Developer and Team Lead reached out to all UTM department/unit and associate chairs in August 2024 inviting them to meet and discuss how the Educational Development team could support their faculty and instructors. Nearly 70% department/units responded, and this resulted in the Acting Senior Educational Developer providing an overview of RGASC to five departments/units during regularly scheduled meetings: Biology, Historical Studies, Mathematical and Computational Sciences (MCS), and Language Studies. In addition, this led to a request for 3 department/unit workshops.

The Education Developer, Anti-Racist Pedagogies conducted an Environmental Scan of UTM Departments with EDI committees, reaching out 7 of the 18 Chairs and EDI Committee leaders to meet and explore customized programming opportunities in inclusive pedagogies tailored to the departmental specific instructors’ needs. This strategic outreach yielded partnerships with Visual Studies and Mathematical & Computational Sciences – expanding into departments where direct programming was previously limited.

The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) and Accessible Pedagogy Coordinator initiated a conversation with Accessibility Services to investigate opportunities for collaboration. The possibility of sharing information on student accommodation needs, failed and successful interventions, and greater alignment between student and

instructor facing programming around access (i.e. with co-led workshops for instructors on understanding Accessibility Services) were identified as potential sites for crosspollination.

UTM Committee Work

The Educational Developer, Anti-Racist Pedagogies sits on the [Anti-Black Racism Operational Group](#) as assembled in 2021 as a local response to the University of Toronto's Anti-Black Racism Task Force Recommendations. The group secured a permanent space that prioritizes Black student groups, faculty and Librarians on campus – the Centre for Black Excellence and Belonging (CBEB). Additionally, updates to the Black@UTM Dashboard from each unit at UTM for the 2024/25 academic year. In terms of research, the group further developed the Black Flourishing Framework to advance policies and practices that centre the Black voice and experience among Black stakeholders at UTM. Additional initiatives that were worked on this year include the Black Table Talk, Black faculty and staff social initiative, and the development of Black Spaces and Belonging Committee, as well as the inaugural Black staff PD Day, scheduled to be hosted in June of 2025.

The Educational Developer, Anti-Racist Pedagogies also sits on the [Black Leadership Table](#), at UTM facilitated through the Office of the Vice President and Principal. This year the Table hosted the second Black on the Shelf event in collaboration with the UTM library and offered the third Black Opportunities Fund providing up to \$10,000 per project for the 2024/25 academic year.

The Educational Developer, Assessment and Scholarship of Teaching and Learning, contributed to the UTM Teaching Development and Innovation grant adjudication committee.

The Educational Developer, Instructional Practices and Student Engagement chaired and coordinated the Active Learning Classroom Operation Committee (ALCOG). ALCOG discusses issues and implements solutions that can improve the experience of active learning classrooms from pedagogical, accessible, and technological perspectives.

Workshops

The Acting Senior Educational Developer and Team Lead collaborated with the UTM EDIO and the TATP/CTSI office to design and facilitate a 2-hour workshop in October 2025 for the UTM Department of Anthropology, "Building Inclusive Classrooms; Practical Strategies for Belonging, Engagement, and Design."

The Acting Senior Educational Developer and Team Lead collaborated with the Interim Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning to design and facilitate a workshop on course design for UTM's New Faculty Orientation.

The Acting Senior Educational Developer and Team Lead collaborated with the Senior Research Assistant (CDRS) to design and facilitate a 1-hour workshop for Historical Studies on how to consider, navigate and/or incorporate Generative AI.

The Educational Developer, Instructional Practices and Student Engagement collaborated with the Centre for Teaching Support and Innovation (CTSI) to design and facilitate a 90-minute workshop “Creative and Critical Thinking with Generative AI” highlighting and emphasizing the need to continue to foster capacity in creative and critical thinking even with Generative AI becoming a ubiquitous part of life.

The Educational Developer, Assessment and Scholarship of Teaching and Learning also collaborated with colleagues from CTSI to deliver two workshops. The first was a 2-hour workshop, “Developing Surveys in SoTL; Guidelines and Considerations” providing an introductory overview of design principles and data collection strategies for survey tools used in teaching and learning research. The second was a 2-hour workshop on SoTL Research Methodologies, delivered as part of the newly launched SoTL TATP certificate program.

The Educational Developer, Instructional Practices and Student Engagement designed and facilitated Generative AI workshops geared toward instructors in the Department of Sociology and the Institute for Study of University Pedagogy (ISUP), and for staff and instructors at the Institute for Management and Innovation (IMI), and Master of Management and Professional Accounting (MMPA).

The Educational Developer, Instructional Practices and Student Engagement presented at IT@UoFT 2025 with a presentation that focused on reviewing a year of supporting genAI at UTM.

The Educational Developer, Assessment and Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and the Acting Senior Educational Developer and Team Lead designed and delivered a 1-hour workshop on incorporated Generative AI into annotated bibliographies and literature reviews for the Department of Sociology.

The Universal Design for Learning and Accessible Pedagogy Coordinator was a featured conversationalist for CTSI’s UDL Conversation Series in Winter 2025. A video of the presentation portion of the event will be housed on the CTSI UDL website as a tri-campus resource.

The Educational Developer, Assessment and Scholarship of Teaching and Learning presented at the 2025 ISUP Colloquium on a presentation called “A Brief History of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning: Where We Came From, Where We are Going”. The presentation was done in collaboration with an ISUP faculty member.

External Collaborations

The Educational Developer, Anti-Racist Pedagogies co-facilitated a virtual two-day planning retreat for the National Community of Care for Education Developers of Canada (NCCEDC) in August of 2024. This is a CoP for Canadian Education Developers that primarily focuses on anti-oppressive pedagogies. The Anti-Racist Pedagogies Educational Developer co-led and facilitated 1 session on each day. The Education Developer for Anti-Racist Pedagogies also serves as a Co-Chair of the NCCEDC.

The Education Developer, Anti-Racist Pedagogies co-presented with a colleague from McMaster University to host three transformative roundtable discussions on "Dismantling White Supremacy through Anti-Racist and Decolonial Pedagogies." This innovative session engaged 60 participants in dynamic dialogue and progressive research that sparked critical conversations about systemic change in higher education.

The Educational Developer, Assessment & Scholarship of Teaching and Learning collaborated with a colleague from Dalhousie University to design and facilitate a 2-hour workshop hosted by SoTL Canada/STLHE, "Debating the Role of Generative AI in SoTL Research; A SoTL Canada Community Discussion." The facilitated conversation was wide-reaching, inviting participants to debate the potential uses of AI in SoTL research including conducting literature reviews, research writing, analyzing data and conducting peer reviews.

Other Key Projects

In addition to the programming and resource development described above, the Educational Developers worked on a number of key projects. These projects included the:

In collaboration with the UTM Library, Education Developer of Anti-Racist Pedagogy led the launch of an additional section to the Anti-Black Racism Pedagogical Collection, titled: [Risks and Rewards: Inviting Constructive Dialogue in the Classroom](#), which includes an annotated bibliography (3 new books added); journal article references (11 new articles added); and online media resources.

The Education Developer, Anti-Racist Pedagogies continues to work on the "Equity Considerations and Gen AI" document which aims to function as a personal equity considerations checklist for educators. It is currently under review by the Interim Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning and the Director of the EDIO as of September 2024.

The Educational Developer, Instructional Practices and Student Engagement and the Acting Senior Educational Developer and Team Lead collaborated with the Program Manager and Learning Strategist at the RGASC to conduct a Generative AI

Environmental Scan. The scan was conducted by a Research Assistant (funds provided by RGASC Special Funds Project) and it focused on higher education AI policies and how they supported students with Gen AI use/literacy. The environmental scan spanned North American, UK and Australian institutions. This will help inform the programming and resources provided by the Educational Development Team in the upcoming academic year.

Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities

Rebuilding a strong teaching and learning community on campus was identified as a challenge last academic year, and the Educational Development team has met that challenge by providing a robust offering of UTM-wide programming via workshops, Communities of Practice (CoPs) and Pedagogical Reading Groups. The topics of these offerings responded to the most salient pedagogical topics relating to equity-focused teaching and generative artificial intelligence. These program offerings were, overall, well attended, and we identified some promising outcomes that offer us a direction for the 2025-26 academic year. We will continue to offer opportunities for UTM instructors to connect with colleagues within and across departments, and to identify new pathways to connect with them. We continue to work with the Interim Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning to help identify the role that the Teaching and Learning Collaboration (TLC) can play in this capacity.

In addition to this UTM-wide programming, we personally connected with Chairs and Associate Chairs to identify unmet pedagogical support and to share an overview of the supports. The UTM-wide programming and departmental outreach efforts provided an entry pathway as invitations to individual consultations. These efforts continue to be helpful for outreach and relationship building between our educational development team and the UTM community. Through this pathway, we are continuing to provide contextualized pedagogical support that meets the unique needs of the department, particularly for generative artificial intelligence.

We have already begun to collaborate with the newly hired Special Projects Officer, Indigenous Curriculum and Pedagogies on “Ready, Set...Reflect!” and “Inviting Constructive Dialogue to the Classroom.” The latter workshop was delivered in collaboration with UTM’s Equity Diversity and Inclusion Office as well. Both of these events took place in May 2025, and we look forward to reporting on this in next year’s report.

Challenges this year included some ebbs and flows in the members of the Educational Development team. We spent most of the summer term, and nearly all of the fall term with four educational developers. By the winter term we were back up to five educational developers. We continue to work on refining our program offerings to include practical examples of how to implement anti-oppressive pedagogies, anti-racist

pedagogies, and accessible pedagogies, as well as multiple offerings of the same workshops that give participants an opportunity to connect either online or in-person.

We recognize that the landscape of higher education is experiencing a paradigm shift with generative AI technologies highlighting the need to prioritize and better support student learning. We understand this shift is rapid, uncomfortable, and ever-changing, and the Educational Development team commits to providing responsive pedagogical support to the UTM teaching and learning community because of it.

Promotion and Outreach

Outreach Activities

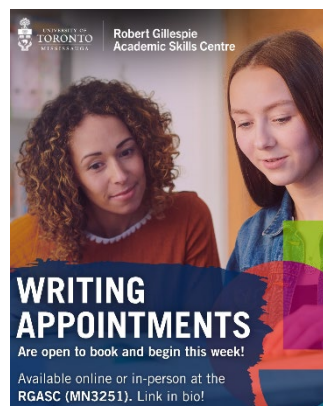
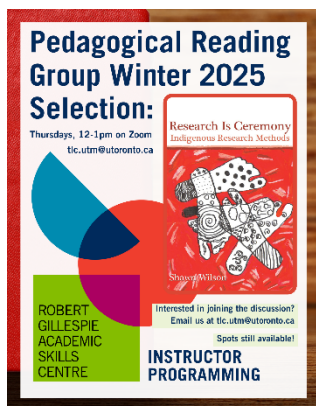
We continued to be active at large UTM-wide events, for prospective students, incoming students, and current students. These large-scale events included Fall Campus Day, March Open House, Resource Fairs for September Orientation, as well as Exam Jam and the Be Well UTM fair. We interacted with more than 1200 students at 35 events across the academic year. We were also active in department-level events that catered to specific cohorts of students, such as the Graduate Student Welcome BBQ and the IMI Orientation event. Additionally, our Director and learning strategists offered a number of on-demand workshops for academic departments and student groups.

Print Materials and Digital Screens

In 2024-2025, the RGASC continued to expand its communications and marketing initiatives using the new, cohesive look and feel designed with the external marketing company STC during the previous year. This new look and feel, featuring multiple arrangements of brightly coloured shapes that represent the RGASC as building blocks for academic success, has given us a strong and recognizable identity within the university



We have continued to enhance STC's initial concept by designing new print and digital material including: new postcards for programs such as PART, Head Start, and Math Background Tutorials, updated student brochures, PowerPoint presentation templates, social media content, physical posters, and digital screen content posted across campus. Print and digital material was targeted for specific programming or groups such as Math and Study Skills Drop-Ins, Facilitated Study Groups, Caribbean Black Writing Collective, Game Café, and instructor programming.



Our print materials and digital screen content increases our presence in the UTM community and makes it easy to connect with students, faculty, and parents during multiple events including Fall & March Open Houses. Our print materials are available throughout campus, including at the new Student Services Hub. To continue expanding awareness of the RGASC, we distributed posters, and brochures throughout campus and consistently post promotional materials on the UTM campus digital screens.

In 2025-2026, we plan to create engaging video content for our social media, design digital and print materials to guide student engagement with the RGASC, work closely with program partners to design promotional materials that suit their needs, and continue to develop attractive and engaging designs with our new look and feel.

Website

In 2024-25, we updated the Faculty & Instructor pages on our website with a particular focus on combining all events for instructors in a single, easy to read page. Past events were bundled into collapsible menus to allow continued access to recordings and slides.

We also refreshed the web presence of the Pedagogical Reading Groups with the addition of a colourful header and the poster for the current semester's offerings.

We also released a new Math section for our Student Resources Hub. This process involved the conversion of our math handouts to screen-readable html, including all LaTeX equations. This process used the math module in LaTeX developed in collaboration with the AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act) Office, the Office of Communications, and I&ITS which was implemented into UTM's content management system Drupal, in March 2024. Our new and improved math resources are now organized by subject area rather than program of study (Life Sciences, Computer Science etc.) to reduce duplication and improve searching.

Web Analytics

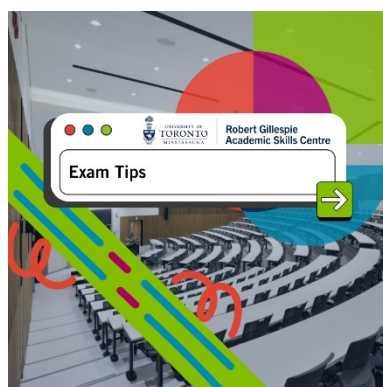
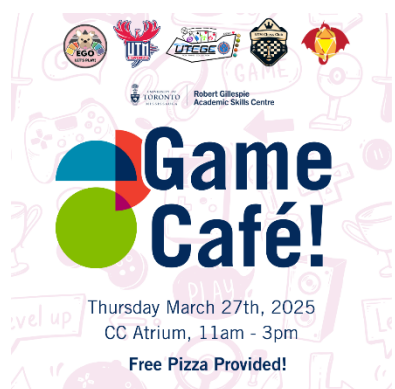
Our website has seen an increase in engagement with our top viewed pages including the home page (12,387 views), the appointments page (10,803 views) as well as the Writing Resources - Six Effective Tips to Write a Summary page (10,547 views) compared to 2023-2024.

The device breakdown demographic data shows us that 26.5% of our users access the website via their mobile device, 72.2% access via desktop, and 1.3% access via tablet. This means that as we continue to update our website and audit for accessibility, we must consider the mobile user experience. Furthermore, the top of the week demographic information conveys that users are the most active during weekdays, especially Monday-Thursday. Therefore, weekly website updates should be scheduled accordingly.

In 2025-2026, our primary focus is to increase our engagement with the Teaching and Learning Resource Hub and Student Resource Hub, and to continue to refine the Faculty & Instructor pages while ensuring the website remains accessible and informative.

Social Media

In 2024-2025, the RGASC increased its output of video content and continued to deploy a cohesive social media strategy using our new look and feel.



We continue to use a content scheduler to schedule and organize social media content. We created multiple Instagram Reels including content like 'What do you know about the RGASC?', and targeted reels to explain and advertise individual programs like Professional English Language Skills and Caribbean & Black Writing Collective, which help us to connect with the UTM community. We streamlined the communications work-study program and gave students individualized portfolios for their content creation. This division of workload helped us to increase our reach and grow our audience.

From May 1, 2024, to April 30, 2025, our cumulative reach increased by 7.5% by connecting with 15.9k accounts throughout the year. Our cumulative content interactions including likes, saves, and comments totaled 1.96k. We expanded RGASC's awareness within the UTM community and grew in metrics including our lifetime followers of 1.7k. In the future, we plan to produce additional video content to help promote the RGASC and create novel resources for academic skills by implementing a comprehensive video strategy including Instagram Reels and YouTube shorts.

Additional Projects, Partnerships, and Research Activities

UofT Writing Instructor Professional Development

In April 2025, RGASC hosted the University of Toronto Writing Instructor Professional Development Day. This event was co-hosted by Jordana Garbati (Director, RGASC), Michael Cournoyea (Interim Director, Health Sciences Writing Centre and Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream), and Marci Prescott-Brown (Director, New College Writing Centre and Assistant Professor, Teaching Stream). Approximately 80 writing instructors from across University of Toronto attended.

Research Activities by Staff

RGASC staff contribute to knowledge creation and dissemination in their areas of expertise through conference presentations and publications.

Conference Presentations

Duong, L. (2024, June 6-8). *Re-Developing In-Person Affordances into SI Training* [Conference presentation]. 13th International Conference on Supplemental Instruction, Baltimore, MD, United States.

Huang, R. (2024, October 17-18). *Toward AI-Driven Knowledge Building Analytics to Assess Idea Paths and Potential for Idea Transformation* [Conference Presentation]. Knowledge Building Summer Institute, Hybrid.

Martin, K. (2024, June 6-8). *Building a Professional Development Framework for SI Student Leaders* [Conference presentation]. 13th International Conference on Supplemental Instruction, Baltimore, MD, United States.

Tran, A. (2025, March 21-22). *Harnessing Digital Tools to Facilitate Engaging Study Groups* [Conference Presentation]. Global SI Leader Summit, online.

Publications

Djerbal, Y., **Bent-Womack, C.**, Lewis-Sutherland, Saatia, A. (2024). *Hyper In/Visibility: An exploration of racialized identities as educational developers. Through the Lens: Perspectives of Educational Developers of Color*. Stylus Publishing.

Busch, L., Thomson, K., Powless-Lynes, M. Y., Ng, O., & Spiker, S. (2025). *Towards Ethical Spaces of Engagement in Behavior Analysis*. *Behavior and Social Issues*, 1-21.

Bruno, G., **Busch, L.**, Landon, W., & Makokis, L. (in press). *Reclaiming neurodiversity: Indigenous perspectives on autism, relationality, and inclusion*. *Wicazo Sa Review*.

Busch, L., & Kotsovilis, S. (in press). Reinforcing injustice: A systems analysis of the criminalization of Indigenous life. Behavior and Social Issues.

Grimaldi, A. and Coulson E. (2024). Signature Pedagogies in Leadership Development: Comparing Two Curricular-Based Undergraduate Experiential Learning Courses. Cross-Disciplinary Dialogues: Festschrift in Honour of Michael Lettieri. Legas Press.

Woodall, K., Moore, M., **Brijmohan, A.**, & Childs, R. A. (2025). The Benefits of Choosing to Let Students Choose. In Redefining Education With Pandemic Pedagogies (pp. 149-166). IGI Global.