

# A modern attrition strategy that's surprisingly easy to act on — Academica Forum

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New school. New city. New structure.

It can all feel so daunting. Especially if you're 18 years old, not really sure what program you should be in and unprepared for the demands of what your new post-secondary education reality truly is.

Many students lack the right knowledge, tools and resources to make an informed decision when choosing their higher ed path. Universities see about 14% of first year students drop out, in comparison to an even higher 20% at college, simply because it's just not the right fit.

Despite efforts to decrease attrition in North America, a PSE attrition rate of 30-40% has persisted for over 30 years. That means post-secondary institutions are suffering financial losses as first year students continue to drop out. But why aren't students finding the right fit?

## The root of the issue.

Many students will argue that high school does not adequately prepare graduates for one of the most challenging and stressful changes they will face in their lifetime - the transition between high school and post-secondary.

That's where careers class, introduced back in 1998, aimed to fill in those gaps. The curriculum was designed specifically to introduce students to self-assessment and the ability to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses, in order to help them plan their future.

In theory, careers class should be of utmost importance to students but engagement levels in career courses are taking a significant hit all across Canada. It is the *most* failed course in Ontario and tied for the *most* failed course in Alberta. Grade 12's are often making uninformed decisions when selecting a PSE institution. No wonder most students feel so inadequately prepared for post-secondary.

But what if there was a way to engage high school students and ensure success in their post-secondary career?

## Let the chatter begin.

Students want to communicate in a fun, engaging and competitive manner. That's where a new gaming software is making huge traction, finding success in helping students find their right PSE fit and career path.

[ChatterHigh](#) is a platform that makes career education fun by gamifying the exploration of post-secondary education options. It gets every high school student talking about their future and making informed decisions.

Students receive a 10 question, daily quiz, with question topics ranging from higher ed programs to student services to scholarships, all relating back to helping students find the right pathway for *them*. They complete the quiz, receiving points for correct answers, which can be redeemed for personal prizes or can be converted to funds for their high school or donated to WE Charity.

"Our ChatterHigh experience was of great benefit to us," says a student from British Columbia, "the questions

motivated us to learn more, and exposed us to a variety of post-secondary and career pathways that we would *never* have considered before."

The more students learn in Grade 10, the more informed decisions they can make in their senior years. ChatterHigh even hosts "[Canada's Most Informed Student](#)", a national competition beginning April 10, where Grade 11's can test their PSE knowledge and win scholarships. ChatterHigh helps increase student success and decrease attrition rates in first years by creating real awareness of the higher ed options available, a win-win for students, educators and institutions alike.

## **How does this help attrition rates?**

The platform helps universities and colleges build brand awareness and begin a dialogue with potential and future students. ChatterHigh hosts a [moderated forum](#), where students connect with one another, as well as higher ed recruiters and counsellors. This forum allows higher ed institutions to have a conversation with their future students *before they even arrive* and helps students find that perfect fit.

"The ChatterHigh approach is very targeted and relevant to our market. It is an interesting way for us to get brand exposure in markets where we don't have recruitment presence today, and the platform is cost effective since it caters to our target market," says Michelle Beauchamp, Director of Recruitment and Admissions at University of Ottawa.

Quiz questions are supplied by post-secondary institutions, along with a link to a webpage where the correct answer can be found. This allows institutions to highlight information about specific programs, facilities or services that students may never have discovered otherwise.

The more a student learns in advance, the more prepared they will be as they begin the transition into their new adventure. Students are more aware of the services, facilities and support networks available to them right from the get go, and how to best utilize these tools to their benefit. This means students will experience less stress, less anxiety and more confidence in the pathway they've chosen.

"For universities and colleges this not only raises awareness about the programs we offer but also results in more highly engaged students who know how to better navigate their postsecondary education upon arrival," says Jody Gordon, VP Students at University of the Fraser Valley. Gordon believes, "this has the potential to increase student retention and student success."

## **A win-win situation.**

In this unique format, the platform creates a guided tour of an institution's brand, website and the specific programs and services they want students to learn about, at the exact time and place when they are being best supported by schools to explore these higher ed options.

In 2016, ChatterHigh quiz questions were answered 1,710,122 times and higher ed websites received 1,578,215 visits from high school students in both Canada and the United States, while completing the daily quiz. Additionally, national competitions such as *Canada's Most Informed School* and *America's Most Informed School* help increase engagement through fostering school spirit and cash grand prize incentives.

"We have noticed a marked increase in the traffic to our site since partnering with ChatterHigh," says Kari Sackney, Student Communications Coordinator at the University of Lethbridge, "Students are clearly engaged based on the quality and quantity of questions we receive in the forums."

The platform increases exposure, creates brand awareness and builds knowledge of an institution's offerings and services available, through one simple tool, a quiz question. This unique approach has helped many higher ed

institutions revitalize their recruitment process as both the student and the institution are able to find the best fit, resulting in decreased attrition rates, plus happier and more successful first year students.

Help get every high school student talking about their future by submitting your quiz questions to ChatterHigh and begin an early dialogue with your future student body. The more questions asked, the more options students will discover. Meaning first year students find the perfect fit, and so does your institution.

Get high school students talking about your institution, today. [Try ChatterHigh for free.](#)

*ChatterHigh is a new communication channel for higher education and career organizations to engage with high schools. The 10-minute edu-game drives students deep into your webpages to find the answers to your institution's questions. Get to know [ChatterHigh in 60 seconds.](#)*

*For more information about how your higher ed institution can become a partner of ChatterHigh, [contact Founder Lee Taal.](#)*

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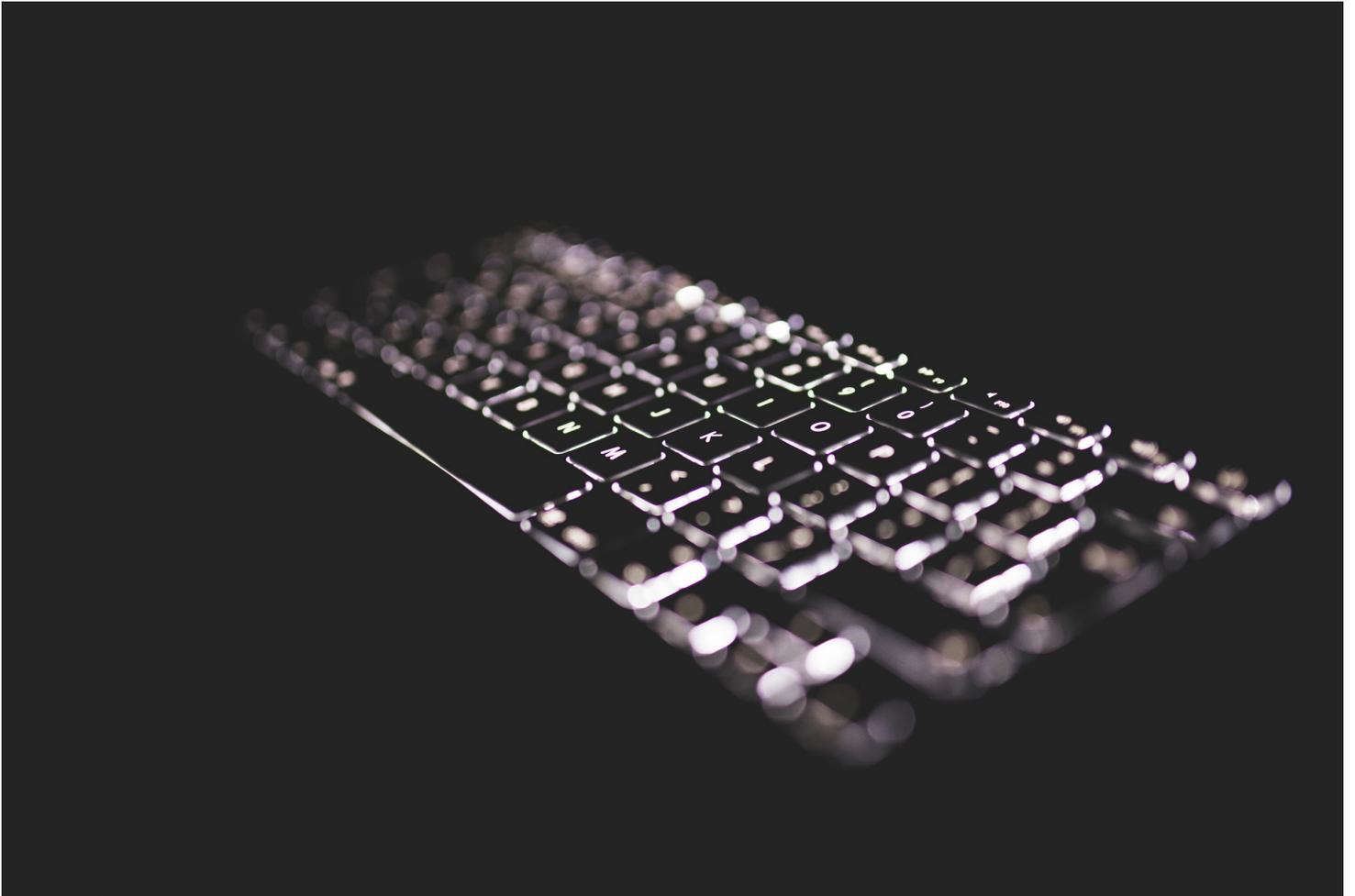
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