

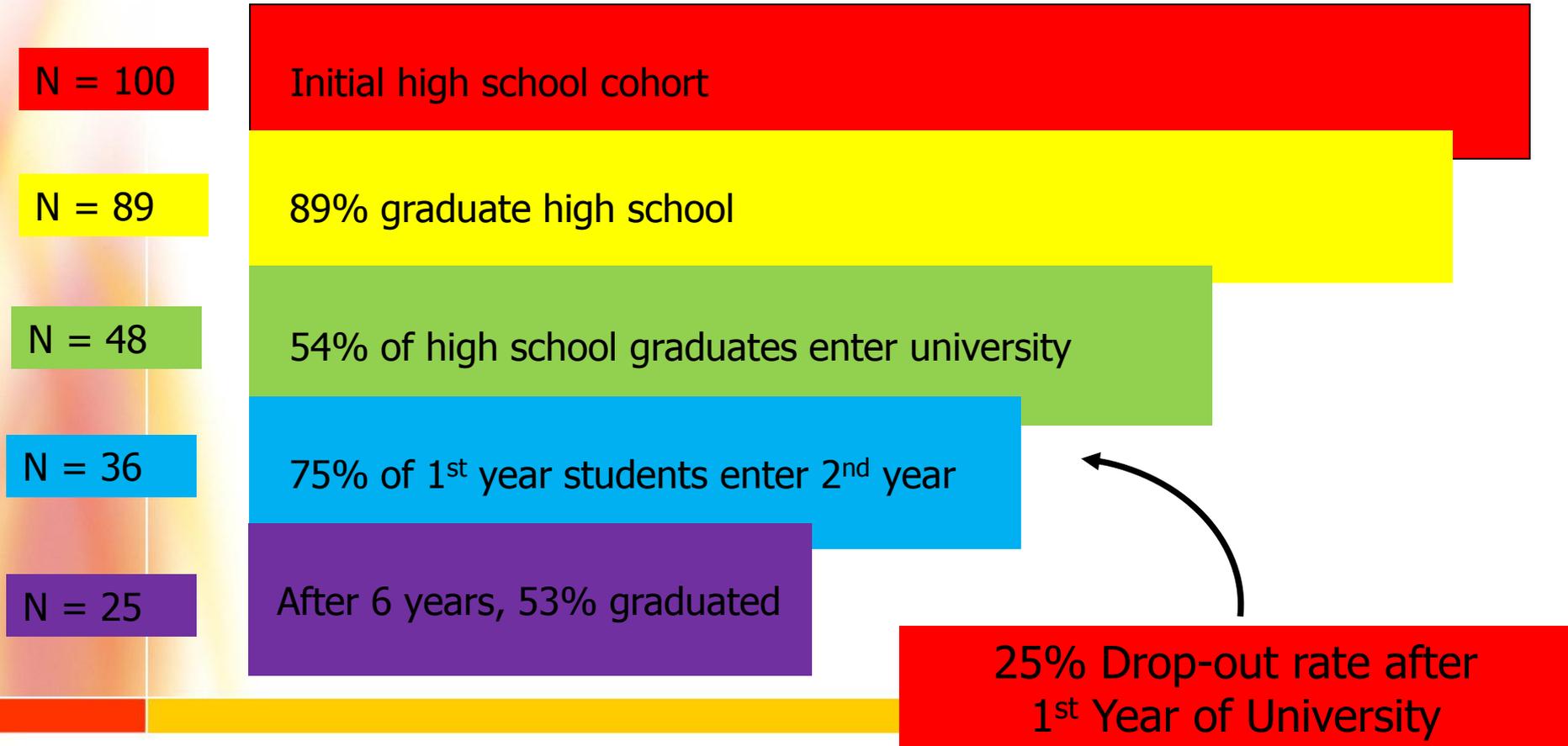
# **Outreach & Student Persistence: An Essential Component**

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# Persistence in Canadian Universities



[www.ulaval.ca](http://www.ulaval.ca)

Grayson & Grayson (2003). *Research on retention and attrition*. Montreal: Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation.  
Shaienks & Gluszynski (2007). *Post-secondary education in Canada: Strategies for success*.

# Determinants of persistence

Gender

Motivation

Race and ethnicity

Career guidance

Class size

SAT

Mentoring

Loan

Student

**And a lot more....**

Grant

Classroom instruction

Study program

High school grades

# Confronting Students droupout : Response strategies from colleges and universities (Barefoot, 2004)

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- Retention programs such as convocations from program director, clubs etc..
- Early-alert initiatives—intrusive attention to students who perform poorly on assessments during the first few weeks of the term.
- First-year seminars are offered to increase, among other things, study skills, habits, time management and use of campus resources.
- Supplemental instruction—offering students the opportunity to spend more time on difficult content and clarifying misconceptions.

# Confronting Students droupout : Response strategies from colleges and universities (con't)

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- Career guidance and counselling services
- Transition assistance program
- Financial aid (work study program, grant)

## A different look at the problem

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- We have a very strong tendency to attribute students' persistence to characteristics of the students. As we have seen, most response strategies from our institutions are directed to help students to remedy their problems.
- However, recent research demonstrated that instructors/professors play an important role in students' persistence.

# Effective classroom instruction and persistence: The Pascarella et al. (2011) study's conclusions

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- « .....overall exposure to organized and clear classroom instruction during the first year of college has a net positive influence on the probability of reenrolling at an institution for the second year of college (Pascarella et al., 2008). Such a finding is of considerable consequence in that it suggests the importance of classroom instructional practices and teacher behaviors in student persistence».

# Constituent Items for the Instructional Organization and Clarity Scale used in Pascarella's et al. (2011) study

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1. Presentation of material is well organized
2. Teachers are well prepared for class
3. Class time is used effectively
4. Course goals and requirements are clearly explained
5. Teachers have a good command of what they are teaching
6. Teachers give clear explanations
7. Teachers make good use of examples and illustrations to explain difficult points
8. Teachers effectively review and summarize the material
9. Teachers interpret abstract ideas and theories clearly
10. Teachers give assignments that help in learning the course material

# Instructors could help students to have better attributional thinking

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- Perry et al. (2008) “school-to-university transitions” study found that students typically endorsed multiple attributions to explain poor performance just after making the transition to a new learning environment and that over 40% showed some form of dysfunctional attributional thinking.

# Effective classroom instruction: Helping students to use adaptative attributions for success and failure

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- Induces controllable attributions for academic FAILURE
  - “I am stupid” instead....
  - “I failed this test because of a lack of effort or because I used the wrong learning strategies”
- Induces controllable attributions for academic SUCCESS
  - “I succeed this test because I worked hard not because I have been lucky”

## Did not do as well on a test as you wanted? Feeling frustrated, depressed, angry?

Here are some suggestions as to how you can change the way you think about negative experiences in your life.

### Rather than thinking ...

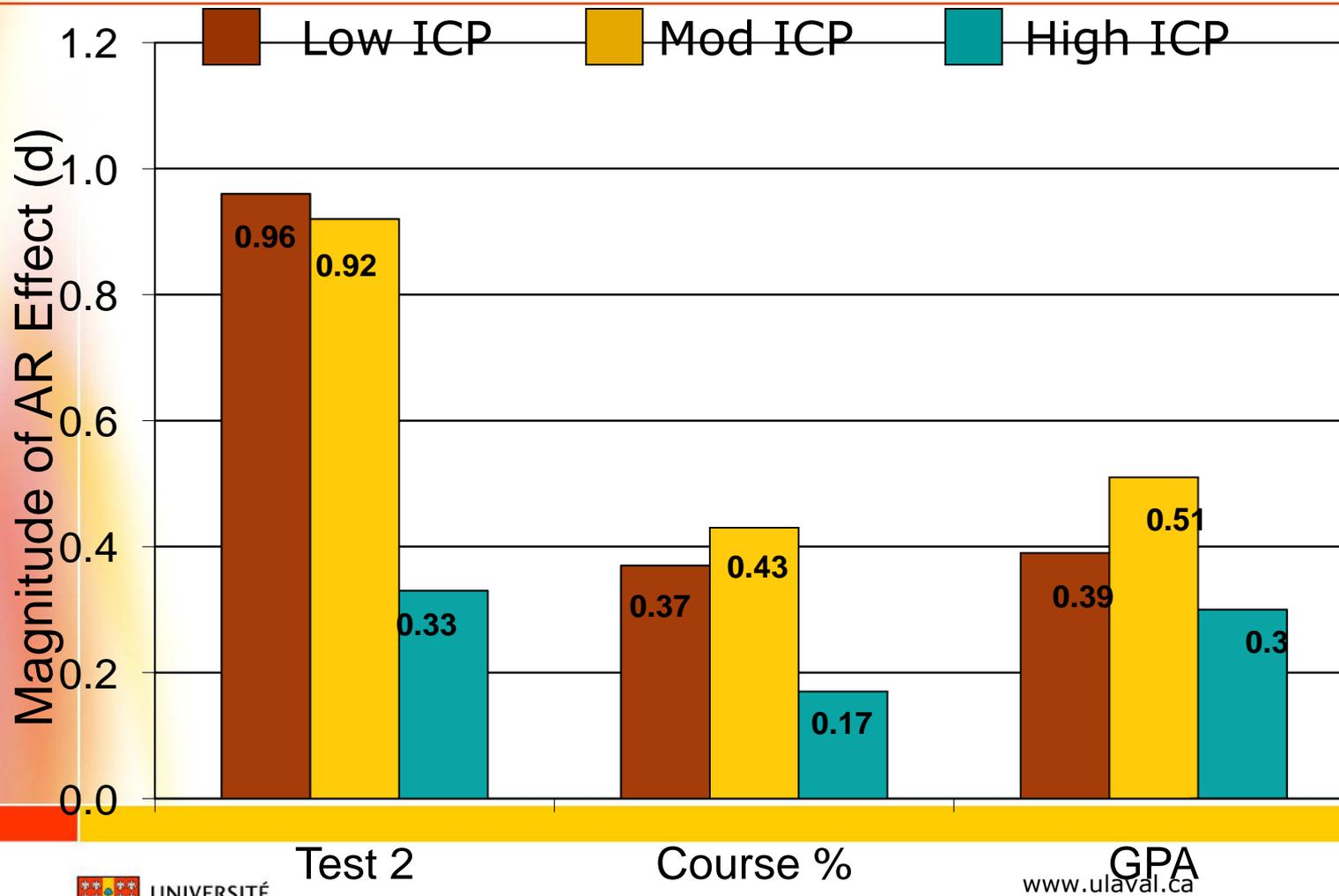
- I am stupid.
- The test was too difficult.
- My professor is lousy.
- I had a bad day.
- I panicked.

### Instead ...

- Everybody can succeed – you just have to work at it. Here are some examples as to how you can study more effectively:
  - Read chapters several times.
  - Review notes several times.
  - Use your study guide.
  - Study with someone.Note: Counseling Services offers various study skills courses
- Tests can appear difficult when you are not well enough prepared. Study more for the next text.
- If you are having problems with a professor, talk to him or her about your difficulties. If that does not help, you may have to work extra hard to do well in the course.
- We all have bad days once in a while, but make sure that you study enough for the next text to improve your grade.
- If you have a problem with text anxiety, try to relax under stress (see your psychology text for relaxation methods or check the Counseling Services for courses on stress management).

*The next time do not do as well on a test or assignment as you wanted, remember that most reasons for doing poorly are under your control and can be changed.*

# AR x Initial Performance on GPA



# Possible “solutions” or best practices from your own institution

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- Do you believe that these pedagogical practices (as well as others) could be used effectively in our institutions?
- How could our institutions “motivate” professors/instructors to use better pedagogical practices that will facilitate students’ persistence?
- How could we help new faculty members to be not only exceptional researchers, but also exceptional teachers?