

LEARNING THROUGH PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

BY ANNE MCDONAGH

What do accountants, information technologists, fundraisers, interior decorators, law clerks, quantity surveyors or administrative assistants have in common? The answer is that, like most professions, they all have a professional association. Wikipedia defines a professional association as “an association of practitioners of a given profession. It is a non-profit organization seeking to further that particular profession, the interests of individuals engaged in that profession, and the public interest.” Most professionals belong to a professional association because it:

- Creates the opportunity for members to exchange knowledge



- and experience with one another
- Shares the latest research and expertise with its members
- Provides lifelong learning through

various continuing education and professional development programs,

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CONFINTEA VI

The Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI) closed on December 4, 2009, with a call for governments to “take forward, with a sense of urgency and at an accelerated pace, the agenda of adult learning and education” and to redouble the efforts to meet adult literacy goals.

“Now is the time for action, because the cost of not acting is too high,” states the final

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LEARNING THROUGH PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

recognizing that up-to-date knowledge is necessary for a successful career

- Advocates for their profession
- Lobbies to change public opinion and/or to affect government policy.

Apart from the above reasons for joining a professional association is the opportunity to network or to access the job boards that most associations have. Over the past several years, Wendy Terry has written a series of articles for Learning Curves on the value of professional associations for networking purposes—especially for newcomers. She noted that you do not have to have finished your training or to be certified in a particular profession in order to join and participate in its association. Many associations have student and associate memberships and these are usually available at a lower cost than the regular membership fee. Only a limited number of associations have licensing restrictions as the PEO (Professional Engineers of Ontario) does, whereas there are many membership-based associations. In other words, you do not have to have earned the certificate or completed the degree to join a membership-based association. In the case of engineers, there are membership-based associations for many specialties: chemical, electrical, electronic, civil, mechanical and so on.

Wendy wrote a total of five articles featuring associations for engineers, computer professionals, business support professionals, lawyers and health professionals. She contended that by joining associations and networking, newcomers could find job leads and use the associations' job banks. She concluded that it is one of the best ways for professionals to find a job. These five articles will be featured for the next little while on our website at www.weacanada.ca and click on Articles.

There is another reason to join an association in your field and that is the educational and training opportunities it makes available to its members. A professional association monitors the formal education its members receive, provides continuing education for its members and offers many opportunities for its members for informal learning.

Many associations offer certification programs through universities and colleges. The most valuable certification programs are profession-wide such as the Chartered General Accountants of Ontario. These programs may be delivered by an educational institution such as a community college or university but the content is developed and monitored closely by the professional association although, as you will read in our interview with a CGA, the entire CGA program can be done by distance learning through the CGA association. Another example is CIPS, the Canadian Information Processing Society, the information technology professional society in Canada. The society certifies and regulates the Information Systems Professional (I.S.P) designation in most provinces. The society also performs accreditation of computer science and software engineering programs at Canadian universities. CIPS is responsible for defining the Canadian IT body of knowledge.

These two associations—like most associations—thus maintain a uniform standard of competence and are constantly upgrading the courses in order to increase the level of practice. The certification is portable to all places where the certificate-holder might work. Earning the certification from a well-respected association such as the CGAs of Ontario or from CIPS is a great achievement and is in fact a passport to good jobs in the future. This is the formal education/training that an association provides.

To continue to hold a good job and to advance in your career using the skills you learned in a certification program require constant—or lifelong—learning. The professional associations offer professional development courses. For instance, the Canadian Payroll Association this year offers many two-day three-day and five-day professional development seminars on topics such as Complex U.S. Payroll Issues, Employment Standards or Payroll Administration in Quebec and many, many more.

Professional development can also be in the area of soft skills like stress management or developing assertiveness or in the area of generic skills like managing employees or conducting

interviews. Continuing education and lifelong learning are extremely important to professional associations. For most associations a certain number of professional development courses per year are mandatory or you may lose your certification.

Then there is the informal learning that takes place when you meet someone in your field at an association meeting who is willing to share information or expertise, perhaps become a mentor. Needless to say, you learn from guest speakers, who are experts in the field. There is the opportunity to learn from newsletters. There may be a discounted price

on national magazines and other “perks.”

Organizations like professional associations are always looking for volunteers. You can learn to be a leader yourself by volunteering to head up a fundraiser, for example, or perhaps you can hone your writing skills by contributing an article to the newsletter. Volunteering is a way to advertise your skills—your energy and your willingness to go the extra mile—to the right people, those in your profession. It can also be a tremendous learning experience.

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UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO DISTANCE EDUCATION • AN INTERVIEW WITH A QUALITY ASSURANCE SPECIALIST • AN INTERVIEW WITH A CGA • LEARNING THROUGH ASSOCIATIONS CHART • TASA AND INTERNATIONAL LEARNING • LEARNING WITH ILC • REAS YOUR WAY TO SUCCESS • RICK GREEN AND ADHD

ACCESS BUSINESS COLLEGE SUCCESS

It has been a whirlwind year for Yolanda Alonzo. Her journey began on January 9, 2009 – the day she received a pink slip.

“At first, I was lost and didn’t know where to begin,” said Alonzo. “I didn’t even know how to make a resumé after working for 15 years.”

Alonzo decided to return to school. After a visit to an assessment office, Alonzo learned she was eligible for the Second Career program. Access Business College caught Alonzo’s eye after she completed research on three institutions.

“I was interested in Access Business College because it was the right environment for mature status students,” said Alonzo. “I could start any time of the year and would be able to finish the

course of my choice within 10 months. It meant I could go back to the work force within a year.”

Alonzo’s Second Career application was approved by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities in May 2009. She began classes on May 25 and is scheduled to finish on January 29, 2010. Her program at Access Business College included Microsoft Office software, Financial Accounting, Quick Books, Simply Accounting, Sage Accpac and Canadian Payroll.

“I learned the hands-on experience with the computer software but also the logic behind it,” said Alonzo.

After passing the first segment of the payroll course, Alonzo started to apply for jobs. Her resumé landed on the desk of the Human Resources Manager for Girl Guides Canada – which led to an interview for a position in the Finance Department.

“I was very excited when I was invited for a second interview,” said Alonzo. “After a week, I was offered the job in the Finance Department doing accounts payable and payroll. It was the best birthday and Christmas gift I received in December!”

Alonzo is looking forward to the opportunity at Girl Guides of Canada. She is grateful for all the people who have helped her in the past year.

“Thanks to all of the people who have supported me – including the people I met at Access Business College,” said Alonzo.

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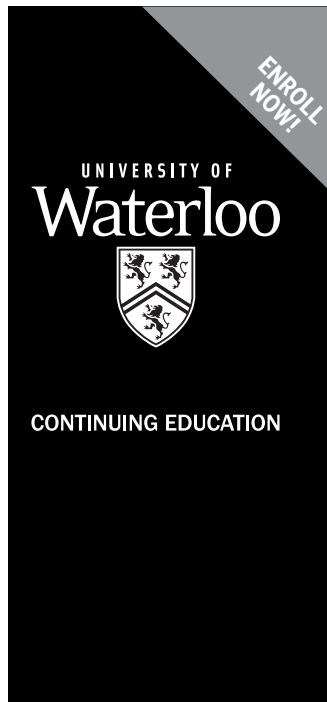
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UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO STUDENTS CAN LEARN ALMOST ANYWHERE

Peter Carr of the Management Sciences Department at the University of Waterloo recently conducted an interesting pilot project with some students in the Project Leadership Program. He used BlackBerry smartphones to push out Microsoft PowerPoint presentations with audio of course lectures. He also published video content, which included panel discussions with top CIOs (Chief Information Officers) on each week’s topics of interest. He came up with some remarkable conclusions:

- Students were able to study and be more productive in their downtime.
- Valuable course content was shared in a variety of ways including by smartphones.
- There were more opportunities for project and team collaboration.
- Professors were able to gauge what was being viewed in order to improve course content.

Four students in their thirties leading busy lives juggling careers and

young families along with the Project Leadership Program participated in this pilot project by using their BlackBerrys to learn some of the course material. They listened to course lectures and weekly panel discussions with CIOs discussing project leadership issues in the real world. Because these elements of the course were mobile (on their phones), they were able to learn anywhere and while they were doing other things; for example, while on the commute back and forth to work or while attending a child’s hockey game etc. In other words they were able to make use of their downtime.

This innovation also gave them more opportunities to communicate with each other.

As a result, they believed their online interaction improved.

The pilot project has been so successful that mobile learning will be used with all new students when they start the Project Leadership Program this March.

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Learning Curves Interviews a Quality Assurance Specialist

As part of our ongoing profiling of careers and the people who work in them, we interviewed Gerard N. who works for a global engineering company based in Oslo, Norway. It has a 100,000 square foot engineering-manufacturing facility in Pickering to which it has just moved after fifty years in Don Mills.

L. C. What was your first job?

G. N. Working for the Post Office—the Eglinton/Kennedy Postal Station, which is no longer there—as Christmas seasonal help.

L.C. Could you describe that job a little?

G.N. I worked the evening shift after school, in secondary sorting, i. e., manually sorting mail into pigeon-hole boxes. It was a very tedious job that I'm sure is now fully automated.

L.C. What education did you have at that point?

G.N. I was still in high school at that time as a full-time student, but I knew I didn't want to do that job for the rest of my life.

L.C. What is your current job?

G.N. I am Quality Assurance Manager for an engineering/manufacturing company in Pickering, Ontario.

L. C. How did you get from there to here—from the post office to engineering?

G.N. I went to college for broadcasting (a 3-year program). Following graduation and a few years working in television Channel 13 in Kitchener and radio CKJD in Sarnia and CFBK in Huntsville, I realized that the money to be made in the Canadian broadcasting industry was pitiful, and I wasn't interested in being poor all my life. (Very few people make really decent money in broadcasting in Canada.)

I was fortunate enough to get a job in the shop of the company where I now work, an international company that designs, manufactures and services pressure equipment for sulphuric acid and oil and gas industries. I started at the bottom – “B” Class Helper. Regardless, I was making more than twice what I made in my previous job in radio—and with full benefits. The job did not require any specific skill-set. I worked in the shop at night with personnel for whom English was a second language. They were good guys, but it was hard to communicate with them not only because of language, but because they were quite happy with their lot in life and had no ambition to do anything other than what they were currently doing.

About a year after I started, I was laid-off. Since the shop had a union and I had the least seniority, I was the first one out. During the lay-off, I was able to use my broadcasting background to get a temporary media position with the

Workers's Educational Association (WEA).

After about 3 months, I was called back. Once there, it became obvious to me that much like those I worked with, I would never have control over my future if I did not upgrade my skills. Ninety-five percent of shop personnel learned the job they did from someone else, without formal training, and were quite limited in what they could do or where they could go.

L.C. So did you get more formal training and how did you end up in Quality Control?

G.N. Not long after coming back from the lay-off, an opportunity came up in the Quality Control (QC) department for a junior inspector, as there was soon going to be a retirement. Though I was less experienced than most of the shop personnel, I was comfortable with technical reading and writing as a result of my broadcasting background, so I was asked if I would be interested in the position. I worked in that position for about five years, mostly on the afternoon shift, while at the same time taking courses in Nondestructive Testing. The company sponsored my participation in those courses.

L.C. How did you benefit from participating in these courses?

G.N. I have benefited in so many ways. My career has been varied, interesting and filled with opportunities to use my skills and learn new ones.

The opportunity to work internationally came in 1990, when I was asked if I would be interested in an opportunity to work for the company on a project in Taiwan for six months. At the time, I was single and very interested. For six months I worked as a Quality Assurance Inspector (QA) on the company's behalf. This opportunity turned into an exceptional learning experience.

Following the success that I had in Taiwan, I was immediately sent to Belgium on a project that lasted over a month. In the years following, I not only worked in the office as a Senior QC Inspector, but I was also sent on numerous global assignments to provide QA oversight as well as technical service for our proprietary equipment. During this time, I did not take many upgrading courses since I was doing so much travelling.

In 1998, I was appointed the QC Manager, with a staff of 4 inspectors. The frequency of my travel was reduced which gave me more opportunity to go back to college to upgrade. As the position is both administrative as well as technical, it was imperative that I improve my skill-set in both areas. I spent the next nine years doing that. Perhaps the most difficult education was the one that I received as a result of taking a company sponsored Project Management program.

The Project Management program was held in Houston, TX, hosted by our parent company. The curriculum was a collaborative effort between the University of Calgary and the Norwegian University

of Science and Technology. Students came from as far away as Chile to attend. It spanned almost eight months and required the participants to be in Houston for week long classes every few months with most of the seminars presented as webinars with everyone back at home-base. We were split into project teams of three in order to work on project tasks and presentations. My team consisted of a member in Houston, another in Vancouver and myself in Toronto. To work full-time, work on the assignments and participate in e-learning was very demanding. Even our final exam was done online. (four hours long). In the end, it was a tremendous experience and an exceptional example of how the classroom has changed and maybe, more to the point, how the mode of information transfer has become instantaneous.

In 2007, our Vancouver office (projects and engineering) needed a QA Manager who was familiar with the company and its procedures, since they had many projects on the go at the same time and not a lot of time to get someone new and get them up to speed. I was asked to be the QA Manager for Vancouver while still retaining my position as QC Manager in Toronto. Until March of 2009 I held both positions. Once the level of work subsided in Vancouver, I was able to focus

on just the Toronto operations. In June 2009, I was appointed QA Manager for the Pickering operations (the company moved from Toronto to Pickering in June 2009).

I am now responsible for the company's Quality Management System as well as the pursuit of Nuclear Design and Manufacturing Certification (along with the Business Development group). The position requires continuous training along with accreditation.

L.C. What satisfaction do you get from your current career?

G.N. The challenge and opportunity to improve myself against past successes and failures.

L.C. Do you anticipate any more changes?

G.N. Yes. Manufacturing in Canada is constantly evolving, and not always in a good way. Being flexible in technology and in expectations, as well as viewing change in a positive way, allows you to deal with challenges effectively. At my present company, I believe I have been successful by being receptive to new opportunities and developing through continuous education. It isn't by any means a guarantee of success, but it decidedly improves your chances. In today's economy that's as good as it gets.



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These professional associations working in partnership with the Continuing Education programs at the colleges and universities are only a few of the thousands of professional associations listed in the Associations Directory for Canada found in every library. The information in this chart was compiled by reading CE calendars, but there may be partnerships we missed. Ask the CE department about one you are interested in. The Charity Village website has a listing of hundreds of associations as well. There are other associations that are partnered with full time programs, which we have not dealt with here.

CONFINTEA VI

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

document, adopted at the end of the Conference that gathered over 1,500 participants from over 156 Member States in Belem, Brazil, during the four days of Confintea VI.

UNESCO has organized the CONFINTEA series of international meetings on adult education, which take place every 12 - 13 years, since the late 1940s.

The Belem Framework for Action stresses that "adult learning and education have a critical role [to

play] in responding to contemporary cultural, economic, political and social challenges," and underlines the need to place adult learning and education in a broader context of sustainable development

Reflecting the Conference's special focus on literacy as a key to lifelong learning and an "inherent part of the right to education," the Belem Framework for Action calls for "redoubling of efforts to reduce illiteracy by 50 percent from 2000 levels by 2015."

The document notes that adult learning and education remain chronically under funded and undervalued without adequate resources, either nationally or internationally. "This is a wake-up call to governments and the international community that without a greatly reinforced effort, the Education for All goals will never be achieved.

Two Canadian groups were particularly visible at CONFINTEA VI. The Toronto Adult Student Association (TASA) participated in the

video presented in a plenary round table that focused on the Learners' Charter. TASA also exhibited a patchwork quilt and manual, and spoke at the workshop where the newly launched Global Adult Learners' Network and the Charter were discussed.

Most of the information in this article is taken from UNESCO's International Adult Learners' Week publication OPENING UP THE POSSIBILITIES.

International Adult Learners' Charter

A charter is a document that defines the rights and privileges of a group. The International Adult Learners' Charter is a document which has been developed over the past few years by adult learners from around the world (See article in this issue: Adult learning goes international.) The Charter is detailed and

far-reaching. And since it is a charter it sets out the rights of adult learners. The following are some of those rights that are developed in far more detail in the actual document. All adult learners have a right to

Participate in developing policies for adult education and lifelong learning.

Take advantage of learning

opportunities that meet their needs and aspirations


Obtain educational counseling and comprehensive information so they can make good choices around their learning

Expect high quality learning programs

Assume there will be continuous research and innovation in learning systems

Rely upon national and international institutions to encourage their participation in education and lifelong learning and to protect their rights to do so.







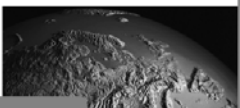
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Adult learners go international

Since the early 90's groups of learners across the world have been meeting with providers and policy makers to contribute to the development of adult learning locally.

Later in that decade the Pan Africa Adult Learners' Network was established to bring learners from Africa together to discuss key issues facing adult learning and to establish local networks and groups.

The launch of the International Adult Learners' Week movement across the world in 2000 helped consolidate this

work. A central feature of the Week is to ensure that adult learners take a central role in the delivery of local and national learning festivals. Supported by national Non-Governmental Organizations, many countries developed learners' networks or forums to ensure that learners could talk to policy makers and politicians.

By 2005 the International Adult Learners Week Conference hosted by Norway considered "Education for All in an Era of Increasing Mobility: The Implications for Adult Learning".

During the conference learners called for a more proactive approach to engaging learners at a global level and many began to create partnerships with other countries to help take this forward.

In 2007 the International Adult Learners' Week Conference held in Manchester, learners began discussing the possibility of creating an International Adult Learners' Charter for the forthcoming Inter-governmental conference, CONFINTEA VI. Following the Manchester conference learners began

discussing the idea at a national level.

The 2009 international conference held in Scotland resolved to set up a Global Adult Learners' Network and produced a draft International Adult Learners' Charter for consultation. The charter has been endorsed by many of the UN Member States and many of the actions called for have been included in the draft Belem framework.

The information in this article is taken from the website: www.globalleadersnetwork.com

THE INTERNATIONAL ADULT LEARNERS' QUILT

Piecing Together a Better Future

The quilt in Kenya



CONFINTEA VI, in December 2009. The quilt represented the progress adult learners have made in the 12 years since



Recently, a Toronto group of adult literacy and basic skills students gave a lovely hand-crafted quilt to a group of adult literacy students in Kenya, Africa. The Toronto students had created the quilt pieces as a way to share information about their city and country with students who lived far away. The Learners' Quilt Travelling through Kenya, the pictures are taken from Naivasha and Narok Districts. The community involved are the Maasai, the dresses they are wearing are traditional attire worn for special occasions.

Susan Nielsen, executive director of the Toronto Adult Student Association (TASA), packed the patchwork quilt in her luggage when she headed to Belém, Brazil, for the International Civil Society Forum (FISC) and UNESCO's sixth international conference on adult education,

CONFINTEA V was held in Hamburg, Germany. Although adult learners were the focus of the 1997 conference, Susan says, "The learners were not integral to the debates or discourse. There was no discussion with learners about their desires or aspirations." In the intervening years, adult learners have worked to make their voices heard and to become active participants in decision making.

Global Adult Learners' Network Launched.

The Belém conference created its own quilt of ideas and accomplishments, showcasing the progress of adult learners and of lifelong learning as a catalyst for change. An estimated 150 learner delegates from all over the world joined more than 800 participants from governments and civil society organizations. CONFINTEA VI participants presented the

International Adult Learners' Charter and were part of the launch of the Global Adult Learners' Network. Individual learners and their representative organizations from more than 50 countries had already signed up to join the network, which promotes learner involvement and participation in all aspects of learning, from policy to practice.

Susan says that TASA has been part of the emerging network, exchanging information and learning experiences since 2003, adding that TASA was the only participant from North America. The exchange has provided many benefits, including support in Toronto for a Kenyan project that provides income for Kenya Adult Learners Association (KALA) students who otherwise might not be able to remain in school. For more than two years, TASA has supported the "Earn to Learn" project, where adult students learn literacy and numeracy through ordering materials and creating and selling the resulting crafts. TASA is now discussing how to expand this program to other Global Adult Learners' Network members in the hope that one day there will be a website to support this kind of learners-helping-learners activity.

One of the programs that emerged from these international connections was a letter-writing exchange that TASA established with KALA. "Members of our association exchange letters with members of KALA. Together we learn about each other's countries and exchange knowledge and information," says Susan. The patchwork quilt that Susan took to Brazil was the result of student interest and involvement in this letter-writing project. TASA members, along with

students from the Toronto District School Board connect with their pen pals by more than letters. That led to the idea of a quilt. Students created individual quilt squares using designs that reminded them of some aspect of their city, Toronto, or their country, Canada. The squares were sewn into three quilted panels by TASA volunteer Carol Podchashinsky under the guidance of Lillian Brasseur, a 97-year-old master quilter. Each square tells a story. Along with the quilt, Susan packed a colourful 62-page booklet titled From Rags to Riches. This booklet was written by Grace Santeramo Beckles, the Literacy and Basic Skills Program Manager (South) at the TDSB, who championed the project. The publication contains an account of the project as well as a short description of each square by those who contributed them.

In Brazil, the quilt and booklet were displayed at the International Council for Adult Education's booth during CONFINTEA VI and then students in Kenya. Local adult learners' groups have set in motion a global collaboration of learners and learning. This story shows how adult learners around the world are sharing ideas and knowledge, cooperating toward a common goal—education for all—with no exceptions.

Adult learners enrolled at the Bickford Centre creating their individual quilt pieces.

Most of the information in this article is taken from UNESCO's International Adult



The quilt in Brazil
From left to right:
Sue Nielson, Magdalene Moisi,
and Grace Santeramo Beckles



Student works on quilt

Learners' Week publication OPENING UP THE POSSIBILITIES.

MULTI-LEVELLED BENEFITS TO CONTINUING YOUR EDUCATION ONLINE

In today's world of technology and innovation, education takes on a new identity. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the area of distance education. Gone are the days of traditional correspondence courses. Today, students electing to continue their education and study independently access online tools and resources that are integral to the course and are designed to enhance the learning experience and help them succeed. Courses that integrate printed material with web-based components are often referred to as 'blended learning' models.

While the credits earned and diplomas awarded get all the glory, often times, the skills that are developed by using digital resources and studying at a distance get overlooked.

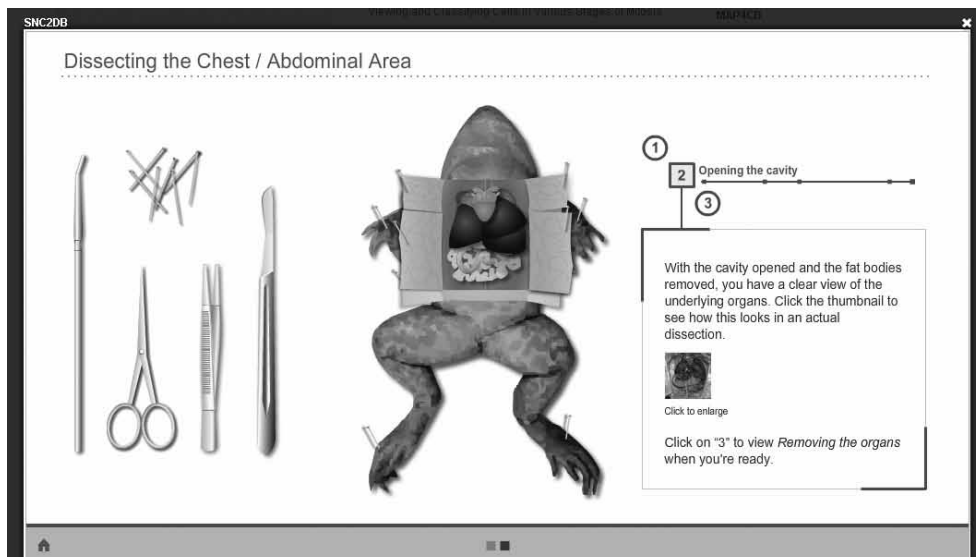
One of the questions to be answered when considering a blended learning environment is "what about science labs?" The Independent Learning Centre (ILC) has developed innovative, online, interactive tools that allow students who study at a distance to participate in time-honoured education traditions, like dissecting a frog or observing cells under a microscope.

Integrated into the ILC courses, these digital course components not only support the student's learning experience, but simultaneously satisfy the Ontario Ministry of Education curriculum expectations for the use of technology and labs.

These tools, some unique to the ILC's program, enhance technical and problem-solving skills without setting foot in a classroom.

"By the time a student has completed a blended learning course, they will have not only acquired the knowledge associated with the course, but also enhanced their technical acumen, online research skills, and they will have acquired the sort of personal discipline that is useful in all walks of life," says Sarah Irwin, Managing Director of the ILC (ILC.org), Ontario's designated provider of distance education.

Whether applying to a post-secondary institution, or a job-training or second-career program, being intellectually and technically self-sufficient are valuable and marketable skills. Learners should keep this in mind when they are evaluating the different distance education programs being offered.



ILC CHANGED YVETTE'S LIFE

International Adult Learners' Week, March 1st through March 7th, celebrates adult learners across the country and the joy of learning throughout life. The 2010 theme for International Adult Learners' Week in Canada is "Opening Up the Possibilities", a sentiment that many adult learners can relate to.

Yvette Sturge from Oshawa, Ontario was a busy single parent working as a Human Resources Manager. She would spend her days counselling others to complete their education and reach for their goals while she herself had never completed her high school education.

Between her work, family obligations and trying to make ends meet, Yvette let her education fall to the bottom of her priority list. "For years, I was on my own fighting to survive so education was not top of my list. I was a single parent, work kept me very busy and that took precedence over everything else."

It was only after being laid off and faced with trying to find work without a high school diploma that Yvette re-examined her options and set firm goals for herself. She knew she wanted to continue to work in her chosen field but that would require her to get the credentials employers demanded – which started with a high school diploma.

With her schedule Yvette needed to find a way to learn on her own terms. She

knew about the Independent Learning Centre's (ILC.org) distance education model and decided to enrol. "Doing my courses online was ideal as it allowed me an open schedule to take care of other obligations." Without classes to attend Yvette was able to study when and where she wanted or could, and at her own pace. As an adult learner Yvette found herself more motivated and engaged than ever before. "I found school much more interesting and relative to the outside world than I did when I went to school in the past!"

After completing five courses with the ILC, Yvette earned her Ontario Secondary School Diploma and attended the ILC graduation ceremony in November. That was just a stepping stone for her. In 2009, Yvette achieved many of the goals she had set for herself, including graduating from the Human Resources Graduate program at Durham College and making the President's Honour Roll. "I am now looking for work in my chosen field of Human Resources and I can proudly put my education credentials on my resume."

Yvette reports that education has changed her life and she is eagerly waiting to see where it will take her. "My life is still changing and I'm waiting for the next challenge to take on, but the possibilities are vast."



Making dreams possible

Growing up in Nakina during the early 70's didn't leave Brenda Towedo with many educational options. Like many others in the small community located on one of the last roads into Northern Ontario, she left school before completing her grade 12 education.

Eventually, Brenda moved to Geraldton, Ontario, hoping to make a better life for her family. As a single parent, Brenda struggled to raise her two daughters and care for both her mother and grandmother while working at low-paying odd jobs with little or no prospect for advancement. She knew that she had to make a change.

When Brenda first heard about the Independent Learning Centre (ILC.org) she was skeptical. She was a high school drop-out, and even though a high school education was important to her, she was insecure about going back. In 1982, Brenda enrolled in her first course

and "became an independent learner by choice." She did not realize it at the time, but Brenda had taken the first of many steps in her journey as a lifelong learner.

For over 20 years Brenda chipped away at her education. She was determined to make her dream of completing her high school education a reality. "ILC became a part of my daily struggles... life was never perfect." She faced many challenges including knee replacement surgery, followed by a broken femur three months later. But, whenever she could, she would complete a course and earn another credit. There were times she wanted to give up, but her deep relationship with her grandmother who had mentored her and the support she received from ILC's principal Gerry Pigat motivated her to continue. "I had made a lifelong commitment with the Independent Learning Centre. It sure made a difference in my life."

Finally, in 2009, Brenda was ready

to write the exam for her final credit, but the story wasn't over. Two days before the exam was scheduled to take place, Brenda was diagnosed with cancer. Still, she wrote the exam and, at the age of 50, graduated from high school.

At ILC's annual graduation and awards ceremony, Sarah Irwin, Managing Director spoke about Brenda's determination. "Adversity takes many forms... Brenda you have reason to be proud of realizing your dream... We commend you."

Looking radiant and proud and with family looking on, Brenda walked across the stage and accepted her high school diploma.

In that same ceremony, ILC presented Brenda with the Robert Hogan Award. Named in honour of a former student, the award provides ILC the opportunity to recognize adult

learners who have overcome challenges to earn a high school diploma.

ILC is proud to be a supporter and educational partner of the 2010 International Adult Learners' Week. As the province's designated provider of distance education and the sole provider of the GED tests in Ontario, the ILC is dedicated to supporting adult learners in their efforts to earn educational credentials.



READ YOUR WAY TO SUCCESS

By Lisa Trudel

According to the Conference Board of Canada's Employability Skills 2000+ chart, available at www.conferenceboard.ca, one of the most important fundamental skills that Canadian employers demand in employees is the ability to communicate by reading and to understand information. Research proves that the skills of reading and writing are the basics that everyone needs for education and eventually employment; so giving the gift of life-long reading enjoyment to children is probably one of the best career practices a parent can bestow. Statistics show that children who learn to read at home are fond of school, have stronger self-worth, and are better prepared to be successful in life.

Reading to children and listening to literature read aloud is not only valuable and pleasurable but when accompanied by supportive and relaxed discussions, children and parents can extend their world views and start to develop critical thinking skills. Another fundamental skill required by Canadian employers is the ability to think and solve problems using creativity to explore possible solutions. Reading can set the groundwork for developing this ability.

Recently the Office Workers Career Centre, the non-profit organization that I work with, had a baby shower for Diana Zhu, the Client Intake Coordinator, who is expecting her first child in 2010. I went in search of children's books to encourage Diana to read to her child and found an abundance of Canadian authors and illustrators who have used their creativity to help inspire a new generation. Two of these books are:

"M is for Maple" written by Mike Ulmer and illustrated by Melanie Rose. This alphabet book is full of Canadian history and trivia such as A is for Anne of Green Gables, and B is for Banting and Best the scientists who gave the world insulin, the lifesaver for diabetics. It also includes P is for Peterson as in Oscar Peterson the great jazz pianist, U is for the Underground Railroad and Z is for Zipper, my personal favourite invention that was originally created by an American but was perfected and patented by a Canadian in 1913.

"Canada Counts" by Charles Pachter. Author of "M is for Moose" one of the bestselling illustrated children's books of 2008, in this 2009 book Pachter has illustrated numbers using uniquely

Canadian images. For example: caribou, loons, purple martins, Nanaimo bars, the Group of Seven and the Fathers of Confederation. A member of the Order of Canada, Charles Pachter is one of Canada's leading painters, sculptors, designers and historians. It is his distinctive mural titled "Hockey Knights in Canada" that adorns the College subway station. Pachter created this mural in 1984 when the Toronto Maple Leafs played at nearby Maple Leaf Gardens.

Whatever the book title and whoever the author and illustrator, reading children's books can be fun because it lets your mind escape, explore and travel. Reading is also powerful because it gives you information and it opens up your mind to the world of knowledge.

The Toronto Public Library offers a no-excuse way of reading a story and hearing a story. If you visit www.torontopubliclibrary.ca and click on "Kids Space", and then "Books and Stories" you will find "Hear-a-Story" which is a terrific way of hearing new books. Also at "Kids Space" if you click on "Grown Ups" you will find the phone number for "Dial-a-Story", a 24/7 service that offers children's stories in a variety of languages.

For adults, joining a Book Club can be a practical approach for combining reading, learning and social time. Participating in a Book Club offers a way to share books and experiences and to develop language skills. Book discussions help to practice verbal skills and encourage the use of language to analyze issues and make predications. Most of all it provides opportunities to try new vocabulary which in turn helps communication, one of the skills needed to enter, stay in, and progress in the world of work.

If you have ever wondered why some people are more successful than others or why some people can read fast and often obtain the best career opportunities, it could be because of their reading skill. Get caught reading and possibly read your way to career success.

Lisa Trudel is a Career Consultant with the Office Workers Career Centre in Toronto (www.officeworkers.org) where she designs and delivers career discovery and employment preparation workshops for unemployed administrative professionals. She can be reached at: lisa@officeworkers.org



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AN INTERVIEW WITH A CGA

For this issue of Learning Curves, which looks at the educational advantages of professional associations, we interviewed a young woman, Sarah M., who has the CGA designation also known as a certificate. (CGA stands for Certified General Accountant.)

LC: You are a CGA. What kind of accounting does a CGA do?

SM: A CGA does most kinds of accounting: finance, tax, costing, controllership. You tend to specialize though.

LC: What kind of accounting do you do?

SM: I do analysis of financial results.

LC: What is the difference between a CA (chartered accountant) and a CGA?

SM: It used to be that only a CA could perform audits, but now CGAs can as well.

In the past a CGA did not need a university degree while a CA did; however, a CGA now requires a university degree as well. While CGAs and CAs do much the same work, the CA seems to have more status.

LC: Why did you choose to get a CGA instead of a CA?

SM: When I was studying for my CGA, you did not have to have a university degree. Now you do. But I decided to do the CGA because I wouldn't have to go to university. In fact, I worked full time the entire time I was studying for my CGA.

LC: How many years did this take you?

SM: I did the whole program by Distance Ed and it took me about six years. But the system has changed since I got my designation. Now you cannot get your CGA designation until you have a university degree. That doesn't

mean you need the degree when you enter the CGA program. You can get it along the way or after you have completed the courses for the CGA, but you won't actually have the CGA until you have a university degree.

The CGA Association has partnership agreements with several universities so that CGA students can get their university degree as well as their CGA designation. They are SAIT Polytechnic where you can earn a Bachelor of Applied Business Administration; Laurentian University, where you can earn either an Honours Bachelor of Commerce (B.Com.) or a Master of Business Administration (MBA); and Athabasca University where you earn an Executive MBA for CGAs.

Now that the degree is necessary, I plan to get my B.Com from Laurentian. I get a lot of credits for the CGA courses I have taken. So I don't think it will take me long to get the degree.

LC: What would a person do who wants the CGA but does not want to do Distance Ed?

SM: Many colleges and universities offer accounting courses that count as CGA courses. These courses are developed and monitored by the CGA Association but delivered by educational institutions.

LC: Who do you work for and what is your job?

SM: I manage the accounting department of a multinational freight forwarding company. I manage the information systems and prepare financial statements. This is my sixth job in four companies since I started working in accounting.

LC: Are you happy with your career choice?

SM: I am. I enjoy it very much.

Rick Green: Dancing With One Leg Shorter

by Carter Hammett

Wikipedia got it all wrong: Rick Green is alive and kicking having just finished a new documentary, thank you very much.

The Canadian actor-writer-director, perhaps best known for his work on the long-running comedy series *The Red Green Show*, got a chuckle months ago when the citizen-owned online encyclopedia greatly exaggerated the rumour of his demise by announcing his premature death.

"Several people were actually rather upset by it," Green chuckles over the phone. "But the mistake's been corrected."

If anything, it's Rick Green's aliveness that makes him such an engaging conversationalist. He speaks with passion about his ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder), its impact on his life as an artist and with the child-like joy of discovery he describes some of the content of his documentary, *ADD and Loving It?*, which aired on Global this fall.

Hosted by Canadian funny guy –and frequent Green collaborator—Patrick

McKenna, the hour-long film depicts the condition as a disposition rather than a disability. It features interviews with successful people living with the condition from all walks of life, while acknowledging "all the bad stuff as well," says Green. "We were surprised at all the things we discovered, The amount of misinformation out there is incredible. Even experts were surprised."

One of the myths swiftly dispensed with is that meds are bad. He says. "These

meds have been prescribed since 1937 and are effective 80 per cent of the time. For the remaining 20 per cent there are either no results or poor results. Teachers say kids flourish when they are on the right meds, especially when compared to the kids whose parents choose the drug-free route."

Green's own medication regime includes Ritalin and Concerta. "Both are amazing and have made a big difference, he says. "What I got was that this helped turn down the noise." But it was actually less than a decade ago when Green, 55, was diagnosed with the condition. Acceptance of the label was strictly a Kubler-Ross (or, grieving) process he says.

"At first, I was relieved at the diagnosis because I finally had an explanation for everything. Then I felt anger, then more anger after talking with friends and family who said the behaviour was associated with creativity. Then, sadness at 'had I but known.'"

Green likens ADHD to being on a dance floor with someone and grooving the night away on one leg that's about three inches shorter than the other and shifts to the left. "So there you are, out on the dance floor, and suddenly, you've knocked over your date, and she's knocked over someone else, and they've knocked over the punch bowl, and suddenly you're left with this big mess all over the floor, and you're left feeling like a bad person. It's a relief to realize you're not, but it doesn't explain or excuse anything because you're still out there on the dance floor and you start thinking

about all the costs. So then you say, 'Let's see what happens with a three-inch heel in my shoe,' and for the first time things are even and you're arriving on time."

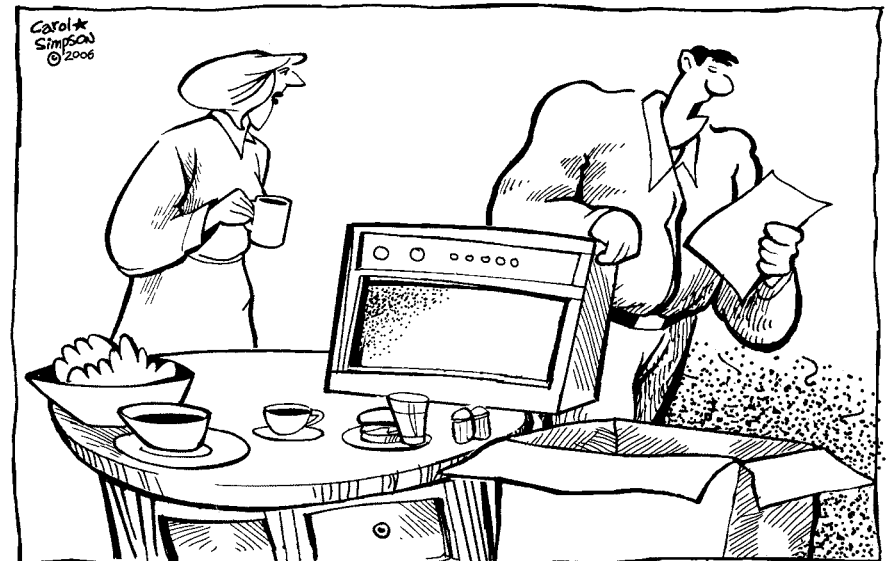
Has ADHD helped his creativity at all? "It's helped me be trusting, to allow ideas to flow," he says, reflecting on a long career that's included high water marks in Canadian television—acting, writing, directing and producing stints on *The Red Green Show*, which ran for the better part of a decade.

Green's also known for creating, writing and acting in shows like TVO's *Prisoners of Gravity*, and *History Bites* for The History Channel. For several years he was a key player on CBC Radio's long-running *Frantic Times* featuring Toronto comedy troupe *The Frantics*. Along the way he wrote articles for The

Globe and Mail, recorded comedy albums, acted in the odd movie, and received accolades and awards. Not bad for a youngster who started out as a teacher with the Ontario Science Centre.

"Creativity is a muscle that you build" he says. "One of the most satisfying things about being an artist is seeing something obvious nobody's ever noticed before. You are able to do something without being exploitive and show the truth as we know it."

That creativity and trademark humour were front and centre in *ADD and Loving It*, which aired in September on Global TV. "Of all the diagnoses, this one brings so much hope," says Green. "The brain is flexible and you can play to strengths and work around your weaknesses. If you can do that, you can soar."



"It's a message from the worker who assembled our microwave...
'Working for tips. Please send one.'"

Canadian Commission for UNESCO Announces International Adult Learners' Week 2010

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO announced that International Adult Learners' Week (IALW) 2010 will be celebrated across Canada from March 1 to 7.

This annual celebration provides partners in adult education with an opportunity to share success stories and best practices, to gain greater insight into challenges, and to plan future collaborative efforts.

A particular focus of this year's events will be the call to action issued at the Sixth International Conference on Adult Education (CONFINTEA VI) in Belem, Brazil, in December 2009. CONFINTEA participants from around the world, including Canada, unanimously called for equal access to education for all

people, even the most vulnerable, in order to develop a just, inclusive and economically sustainable society in the 21st century. The CONFINTEA VI Framework of Action calls for partnerships between governments, civil society and the private sector to mobilize broad political support and resources for adult education, particularly in the area of literacy.

As part of the IALW celebration, the Commission has prepared a special publication, titled *Opening up the Possibilities*, which reports on key ideas and issues from CONFINTEA VI. The magazine also features success stories by adult learners in Canada as well as ideas and perspectives of partners within the adult learning community. We encourage partners to prepare an

insert for this magazine with local information relevant to learners.

David A. Walden, Secretary-General of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, wishes to thank all partners across the country, including governments at all levels, non-governmental organizations, community-based groups and educators, for their support of this Week and for their commitment to adult learning. "Each successive celebration has witnessed increased partner participation and greater outreach to a wide variety of groups," he said.

Information about the Week and a PDF version of the magazine is posted at: www.unesco.ca/en/activity/education/AdultLearners.aspx

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Lisa is an ESL teacher and a TESL Ontario approved teacher-trainer who loves travelling, drawing, power walks and Starbucks. She completed her **Certificate in Teaching English as a Second Language (CERTESL)** from the Centre for Continuing & Distance Education and now teaches international students and ESL teachers-in-training at the University of Saskatchewan Language Centre. Congratulations Lisa—on all your successes!

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THOUGHTS ON CHANGE

Everything changes, nothing remains without change.

-Buddha

Be the change you want to see in the world.

-Mahatma Gandhi

Every time I find the meaning of life, they change it.

-Anonymous

Change is the only constant.

-Proverb

We change, whether we like it or not.

-Ralph Waldo Emerson

Everything flows and nothing stays.

-Heraclitus

Things do not change; we change.

-Henry David Thoreau

If the facts don't fit the theory, change the facts.

-Albert Einstein

Change your thoughts and you change your world.

-Norman Vincent Peale

Life is change. Growth is optional. Choose wisely.

-Anonymous

Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.

-George Bernard Shaw

"Change the way you look at things, and the things you look at will change."

-Dr. Wayne Dyer

If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude.

-Maya Angelou

Things alter for the worse spontaneously, if they be not altered for the better designedly.

-Francis Bacon



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**EMPLOYMENT
ONTARIO**

Neighbourhood Learning

PEEL REGION & HALTON REGION

OAKVILLE

Sheridan College Trafalgar Road
Campus and Skills Training Centre
905-845-9430
www.sheridaninstitute.ca/ce

Halton Catholic District School Board
Oakville Adult Learning Centre
905-849-7555
www.haltionalc.com

MISSISSAUGA

UTM University of Toronto Mississauga
905-828-5400
www.utm.utoronto.ca

Erindale College
School of Continuing Studies
416-978-2400
http://learn.utoronto.ca/utm

**Peel District School Board
Adult Education Centre –South**
905-270-6000
X420 Credit
X400 ESL
www.peelschools.org/adult_ed

**Dufferin Peel Catholic
District School Board**
905-890-1221

Brian J. Fleming Centre
905-891-3034
www.dpcdsb.org/CEC

Apprenticeship Office
905-279-7333

BRAMPTON

Sheridan College -Davis Campus
905-459-7533
www.sheridaninstitute.ca/ce

**Peel District School Board
Adult Education Centre North**
905-791-6700
Dial 1
X6400 Credit X6300 ESL
www.peelschools.org/adult_ed

**Dufferin Peel Catholic District
Board of Education
St. Gabriel**
905-890-1221
905-362-0701
www.dpcdsb.org/CEC

**Centre for Education and Training:
HBI College**
905-949-0049
905-949-9900 X2005
www.tcet.com
www.hbicollege.com

YORK REGION

**York Region District School Board
Adult Day School**
905-884-2046
ESL
905-731-9557
General Interest
905-884-3434
www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca

York Catholic District School Board
905-713-1211
www.ycdsb.ca/departement/ACE

**Seneca College
Markham Campus**
416-493-4144 Dial 3
www.senecac.on.ca/ce

DURHAM REGION

PICKERING

Durham District School Board
905-831-3118
www.durham.edu.on.ca

Apprenticeship Office
905-837-7721

Durham Business and Computer College
905-427-3010
www.dbcc.on.ca

AJAX

Durham Catholic District School Board
905-683-7713
www.con-ed.ca

WHITBY

Durham College
905-721-3300
coned@durhamcollege.ca

OSHAWA

Trent University
905-721-3003
www.trentu.ca/oshawa

**University of Ontario
Institute of Technology**
905-721-8668
www.uoit.ca

Durham College
905-721-2000
coned@durhamcollege.ca

**Durham District School
Board Adult Day School**
905-436-3211
ESL
905-440-4480
www.durham.edu.on.ca

Durham Business and Computer College
905-443-3010
www.dbcc.on.ca

TORONTO

University of Toronto
416-978-4444
www.learn.utoronto.ca

**Woodsworth College
School of Continuing Studies**
416-978-2400
www.wdw.utoronto.ca

Rotman School of Management- MBA
416-978-5703
www.rotman.utoronto.ca

Ryerson University
416-979-5035

**G. Raymond Chang School of
Continuing Education**
Part-time Degree Programs
416-979-5036
www.ryerson.ca/ce

George Brown College
Part-time Programs
www.coned.georgebrown.ca

**Centre for International and
Immigrant Education**
416-415-2000
www.georgebrown.ca/centres/
immigranteducation

**Centennial College
The Centre for Creative
Communications**
416-289-8683
www.ce@centennialcollege.ca

**Toronto District School Board-
Continuing Education**
416-338-4300
www.coned@tdsb.on.ca

City Adult Learning Centre-Credit
416-393-9740
www.calconline.net

Bickford Learning Centre-ESL
416-393-0528
www.ESLtoronto.ca

Jones Avenue Centre-ESL
416-393-9645
www.ESLtoronto.ca

Central Tech- General Int.
416-338-4111
www.learn4life.ca

Toronto Catholic District School Board
416-222-8282 Ext.2499
www.tcdsb.org/continuinged/

Ontario College of Art and Design
416-977-6000
www.ocad.on.ca

Michener Institute of Technology
416-596-3117
www.michener.ca/ce

Apprenticeship Office
416-326-5800

ETOBICOKE

Humber College
Rexdale Campus
Lakeshore Campus
416-675-5000
www.humber.ca/continuingeducation

Humber Guelph University
416-798-1331
www.guelphhumber.ca

Toronto District School Board
416-338-4300
www.coned@tdsb.on.ca

**Burnhamthorpe Adult Learning
Centre-high school**
416-394-7130
schools.tdsb.on.ca/burnhamthorpe

**Etobicoke School of the Arts-
General Interest**
416-338-4111
www.learn4life.ca

**Mimico Community Learning
Centre- General Interest and ESL**
416-338-4300
www.learn4life.ca
www.ESLtoronto.ca

NORTH YORK WEST OF YONGE AND EAST OF YONGE

NORTH YORK –WEST OF YONGE

**York University
Atkinson College Centre for
Mature and Part-time Students**
416-736-5770
www.yorku.ca/acmaps

York University Admissions
416-736-5060

Schulich School of Business MBA
416-736-5353
www.schulich.yorku.ca

English Language Institute
416-736-2100
www.yueli.yorku.ca
Toronto District School Board
416-338-4300
coned@tdsb.on.ca

Emery Adult Learning Centre-high school
416-395-3225
www.emeryadult.com

Yorkdale Adult Learning Centre-high school
416-395-3350
www.yorkdale.net/web

**Bathurst Heights Adult
Learning Centre-ESL**
416-395-4980
www.bathurstheights6sl.ca

NORTH YORK –EAST OF YONGE

**York University
Glendon Campus**
416-736-2100 (Admissions)

Seneca College
Newnham Campus
416-493-4144
www.seneca.on.ca/ce

**Toronto District School Board
Overland Learning Centre**
416-395-5080
www.learnatoverland.ca

Access Business College
416-510-2739

SCARBOROUGH

**U. of T. Scarborough Campus
School of Continuing Studies**
416-978-2400
www.learn@utoronto.ca

Centennial College
Progress Campus
HP Science and Technology Centre
416-289-5300
www.ce@centennialcollege.ca

Toronto District School Board
426-338-4300
coned@tdsb.on.ca

**Scarborough Center for Adult
Studies-high school**
416-396-6921
www.scasonline.com

Highbrook Learning Centre-ESL
416-396-6909
www.highbrookesl.ca

Durham Business and Computer College
416-724-1053
www.dbcc.on.ca



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