

# LEARNING CURVES

CONTINUING EDUCATION • JOB TRAINING

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## IS IT THE END OF WORK?

BY ANNE MCDONAGH

In our culture, work is probably the most important element in our lives. Our jobs give us the wherewithal to feed and clothe ourselves and our families; however, it gives us a lot more that we value very much: purpose and meaning to our lives; a feeling of belonging; self-esteem; pride in our skills; and sometimes recognition by society or by our peers for a job well done. If you have any doubts about how significant a job is to our well-being, just

ask someone who is unemployed.

Unfortunately, there is some bad news about the availability of work in the twenty first century. Work as we know it is disappearing

In 1995 Jeremy Rifkin published a book titled *The End of Work*. He argued that in the industrialized world, globalization and automation together were making the human worker obsolete. There was much disagreement about this claim at

the time, and there still is; however, the dismantling of manufacturing in North America in the years since the publication of the book suggests that Rifkin was right; moreover, other sectors besides manufacturing need fewer and fewer workers as automation and/or offshoring take over.

Globalization has made competitiveness among manufacturers much more ruthless

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# GOING BACK TO SCHOOL AS AN ADULT

BY WENDY TERRY

**G**oing back to school as an adult is not the same as going to school as a child or youth.

Unless you need to upgrade your skills, you can avoid starting at basic levels.

Save time and money by learning how open admissions, transfer credits and prior learning assessment allow you to start at your existing skill level.

For international education assessment services, contact Comparative Education Services at U of T, 416 973-2400 or World Education Services, 416 923-0070.

Go to [www.learning-curves.ca](http://www.learning-curves.ca) for back issues of Learning Curves, or to [www.learning-curves.org](http://www.learning-curves.org) to find articles posted by subject.

Unlike school-age children and youth, adults have unique educational backgrounds, complemented by individual work experiences. Just as adult students' backgrounds are heterogeneous, so too are the ways in which they can go back to school.

For adults, there is no equivalent to the friendly high school guidance counselor. Added to this, some adults have families to look after while studying and often need an immediate payback in increased employability. Deciding what to study in today's ever-changing labour market can be difficult and frustrating.

It doesn't have to be. Adults do not need to discount their life and work experience. Often they are under the impression that they have to climb back on the educational ladder exactly where they left off. Newcomers, too, might think they have to discount everything they did before arriving in Canada.

You can avoid making costly mistakes in time and money by following two simple rules:

## **RULE # 1:**

Before enrolling, speak to a program coordinator or a student services counselor. Explain your previous experience and education and employment goals. Don't undervalue your previous work and education

## **RULE # 2:**

Take your time. You could save years and thousands of dollars! Educational institutions can be big, multi-faceted organizations that require time to figure out which courses suit your needs.

Going to college or university is easier than you think!

Enrolling as an adult can be much easier than you think. And the good

news is that an adult is defined as anyone over the age of 19 (sometimes 21).

## **Before making your appointment with a counselor:**

Pick up a Part-Time or Continuing Education calendar. Colleges print two calendars. One is for full-time programs, usually offered during the day for which you must be admitted. Another one is for part-time studies, or continuing education. It outlines courses that are offered at night or on the weekends. All you need to do is register. (Note: Seneca is the sole college in the Toronto area that provides only an online calendar).

Write down your questions as you browse. (Note that print calendars let you browse, whereas web site "browsers" only allow you to drill down into the data to find a specific course or program area or service).

A print calendar will give you a better overall picture of what is available.

Every college's calendar is different. If you see a course in one calendar that is not in another, ask if it is available. Chances are it is!

## **OPEN ADMISSIONS**

### **Community Colleges: Enroll in courses without having to be admitted to a program**

Calendars list Programs, Certificates and Diplomas, as well as individual courses. Generally, adults enroll in individual courses that are part of a program. When you have the course credits needed for a program, you apply to get the Certificate or Diploma. This is different from enrolling in full time-studies where you first apply to be admitted to a program, and then enroll in individual courses.

### **Reading the Calendar and Registering:**

Part-Time calendars often list a prerequisite under the course description. Under Accounting 11 in the George Brown calendar, the prerequisite says you must have completed Accounting 1, or an approved equivalent.

Understanding what "approved equivalent" means is key to saving you time and money. It can be a course from another educational institute in Canada, or another country, or work experience. It is important for you to know about Course Exemptions and Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition.

In a calendar's General Information section, you can find out how to apply for a Course Exemption. Credit for a course will be given "... if you have completed the equivalent course at another

accredited post-secondary institute."

Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) "gives you a chance to obtain a credit...by demonstrating that you have acquired the necessary skills and knowledge through work experience or related volunteer work." (George Brown)

Never assume that your credits from another country will not be accepted! Educational institutions not only recognize courses from all over the world, they are more likely to know and understand your background than many Canadian employers.

Departmental and student service contacts are listed in part-time calendars. Even if contact names are not listed, phone and ask to speak to one.

Don't miss out on possible financial aid! Ask to speak with a financial aid officer. Government programs like OSAP (loans and grants) may apply to your situation, even as a part-time student. There are also numerous other grants like bursaries (based on need) and scholarships (based on marks).

Once you have paid your course fees, you are registered in the course.

If the registration clerk insists that you need a prerequisite, explain why you don't think it is necessary. Ask to speak with a program officer.

Register for the courses at your level. While working on them, apply for official course exemptions and/or prior learning recognition. Generally, you

will need your Course Exemptions and PLAR credits when you have fulfilled the course requirements and are applying for your Certificate or Diploma.

## **Professional Associations**

Many newcomers think of professional associations as licensing bodies that assess your qualifications to be licensed. However, most are membership-based organizations - a network of people with equivalent work and educational experience. If your education and work experience meets equivalency standards, professional associations are happy to welcome you (and your membership money).

A membership fee is money well spent. It will connect you with a network of people who can give you advice and information on the "hidden job market." Job openings are posted on association web sites and on-line job banks. Many of these associations have Certification programs that work in partnership with the colleges so you can earn college credits that lead towards professional certification.

College programs that are partnered with professional associations are noted in the calendar. Check out the associations to learn what is accepted in the field and about jobs that you would never hear about otherwise.

**CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE**



*Jack Henshaw received the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal on June 27, 2012. Jack was recognized for over seventeen years of advocacy for adult and seniors' education General Interest programs. Pictured with Jack is his spouse Alice Foster. The awards reception was hosted by Donna Cansfield MPP for Etobicoke Centre at St. George's Golf and Country Club. Congratulations Jack.*



# GOING BACK TO SCHOOL AS AN ADULT

The Associations Canada Directory is found in the reference section of most libraries. It lists thousands of associations in every possible field.

Go to our web site [www.learning-curves.org](http://www.learning-curves.org). Click on "Skill Transfer for Internationally Trained" for articles on professional associations in engineering, computer technology, medicine, business, and law.

## Career Colleges

Career Colleges often advertise in employment newspapers. Colleges such as Robotech, Durham Business and Computer College, and Access Business College, have ads in this issue of Learning Curves. They are small, privately-run colleges that are licensed by the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. Go to MCTU's web site, or the Ontario Association of Career Colleges website, to find other colleges.

These colleges have admission criteria based on your skill levels. They do have prior learning assessment processes. The good news is that because these colleges are small, you can get personalized help along with information about financial assistance. Since career college programs are not funded by the government, and cost about two-thirds more than college programs, it is in their interest to help you find funding.

Over 60% of Second Career funding goes to adults taking training at career colleges.

## Community-based Programs

Community-based programs approved by MCTU are offered by community associations like Micro Skills, Working Women, and Skills for Change. They can be found in the Find Help 211 Directory.

These community programs have admission criteria based on your skill levels. As they are small, you will get personalized help immediately. Depending on the funding the association receives, some programs have no tuition.

## Universities

Unlike colleges, universities require that you be accepted into a program whether you are going part-time, full-time, during the day or in the evening.

It is important to note that all universities also have departments that have open admissions programs. Among them are:

U of T's School of Continuing Studies, Ryerson's G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education, and York's Continuing Education Division.

See the complete article on open admission programs: "Why not U?" Learning Curves, Summer 2012.

## Laddering up: College to University

Unlike in many countries, colleges and universities in Canada work in partnership. Many college programs are partnered with a university. George Brown has partnered programs with Ryerson, Sheridan with U of T at Mississauga, Humber with Guelph, Durham with UOIT, Seneca with York, and Centennial with U of T's Scarborough Campus. Other universities like UOIT and Guelph-Humber have similar arrangements. Just ask!

You can start your return to school by taking a night course at college. If it is equivalent to a day-time course, you will earn a credit in a day program. Most college calendars indicate course equivalencies. If not, ask.

By earning a credit which counts towards a Certificate or Diploma at a college, a Degree at a university, and even Certification with a professional association, your one credit could end up counting for three!

For a full description of university open admissions programs, go to [www.learning-curves.ca](http://www.learning-curves.ca). Look for the front-page article entitled: "Why Not U? University Access for Adult Learners at Ryerson, York and Uof T."

## Learning Online

The possibilities for learning online are limitless. See "On-line Learning"

in the chart to access the complete article on these opportunities in our Summer 2012 issue. Even though the article was written for summer, these opportunities are available year round.

## Apprenticeship Learning

Who wouldn't like to get paid as you learn? If you would like to learn a skilled trade - mechanic, electrician, plumber, or cook, etc. - you can learn while you work with someone who is already licensed. Based on your previous work experience in the trades, you could even be granted a temporary license. Simply Google, "I want to work in the trades." You will be directed to the Ontario's MTCU website.

## Preparing for College or University

For many students, the idea of going straight to college or University can be overwhelming. There are many ways to prepare. See "The Basics" in the accompanying chart.

## College Prep

For college entry programs that prepare you in math, science and language, check out Occupational Specific Language Training for Newcomers (OSLT), and College

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# IS IT THE END OF WORK?

BY ANNE MCDONAGH

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

than it was forty years ago. At that time competition for the consumer's loyalty was limited to manufacturers who were operating from the same or similar circumstances—within the same country or with countries that had similar economies.

Globalization has meant world wide competition even with countries that pay slave wages with little or no environmental or labour regulations. For workers and employers it was an unattainable challenge. How could North American workers compete? Yet many employers have tried very hard to lower their labour costs by attacking unions and lowering wages, sometimes by as much as fifty percent.

Some corporations have moved their operations to these jurisdictions to take advantage of the low wages/no regulations environment. This has been a serious blow to workers in the industrialized world because it has meant job loss. However, to date the number of jobs lost to offshore production has been a small percentage of the economy.

The major reason for job loss in the manufacturing sector has been automation, which has been going on for many years. No human being can compete with a robot for productivity, and so automation has become the best solution for manufacturers who want to compete with the rest of the world.

Automation can certainly be useful to help workers do their jobs better or to do heavy or dangerous work that could be harmful to workers. But as technology continues to 'progress' more and more jobs are being automated. All we need to do is look around our city to see the effects of automation; for

instance, every ATM machine represents a bank teller who no longer has a job. The gas jockey is no more as we fill our gas tanks ourselves and so on. Every area of our lives has been affected to some degree by automation.

Although the North American economy is recovering from the recession, jobs have not come back as expected. Many employers have simply invested in automation instead of people. Recently Edward Learner of the UCLA Anderson School of Business spoke of the "jobless recovery" in this way, "If you have nothing to offer the job market that cannot be supplied better and cheaper by Robots, Far-away Foreigners, Recent Immigrants or Microprocessors, expect it to be exceedingly difficult to find the job to which you aspire, and plan on doing low-wage service work at the end of a long and painful road of diminished aspirations, no matter what your diploma may suggest."

It has been an article of faith among most economists for many years that the invention of new technologies creates new jobs and that has been the case historically. For example, when the car replaced the horse and buggy, the blacksmith was replaced by the auto mechanic. They call it "creative destruction," a necessary component of a capitalist economy. Creative destruction describes the way a new economic order replaces an old one. It usually causes temporary economic distress though eventually an innovating economy generates new and more interesting jobs. We are now undergoing a major shift in our economy from an industrial economy to a knowledge-based economy, but we are not creating

enough new jobs. Will the laid off factory workers of today become the knowledge workers of tomorrow? Probably not.

First of all the knowledge economy requires a very different set of skills than the skills of a factory worker. More important is the fact that it requires far fewer workers than the assembly line required. The knowledge economy is not likely to provide work for all the displaced workers even if they have or acquire the skills. Automation and information technology have created a workplace which can more or less run itself.

More jobs than most of us can imagine have been automated. The office has been revolutionized by machines like the computer, the printer and the fax machine. Automated warehouses staffed by robots and remote-controlled delivery vehicles fill orders in a matter of minutes without the assistance of human physical labour.

What are the consequences of an economy that does not need workers? If we continue on the path we are on, the connection between work and income will be severed for most people. Wealth will be in the coffers of the owners of technology. The gap between the rich and the poor will increase to the point where the poor will not be able to support themselves or their families while the rich will be wealthy beyond all imagining.

The poor are not likely to accept this fate without a protest. When they can no longer afford to consume, the wealthy will have to reconsider the distribution of wealth or lose it all. Social unrest would be widespread.

There are other ways to proceed. We

will explore alternatives to social chaos in the next issue of Learning Curves.

## SIDEBAR:

Jeremy Rifkin is president of the Foundation on Economic Trends and the bestselling author of nineteen books on the impact of scientific and technological changes on the economy, the workforce, society, and the environment. His books have been translated into more than thirty five languages and are used in hundreds of universities, corporations and government agencies around the world. His most recent books include *The Third Industrial Revolution*, *The Empathic Civilization*, *The Hydrogen Economy*, *The European Dream*, *The End of Work*, *The Age of Access*, and *The Biotech Century*.

Automation is the use of computers to control a particular process in order to increase reliability and efficiency, often through the replacement of employees. For a manufacturer, this could entail using robotic assembly lines to manufacture a product.

Offshoring is a business activity that involves the relocation of a company's business process or processes to a foreign country. This can entail moving manufacturing, centers or operations to a different country. Offshoring is often used to reduce the cost of business, with the company seeking to move parts of operations to countries with more favorable economic conditions.

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-Organized by articles

[www.learning-curves.ca](http://www.learning-curves.ca)

-Organized by back issues

# KNOW YOUR LEARNING STYLE

LISA TRUDEL

**A**re you an adult learner returning to school this year? Are you worried about taking notes, completing assignments and obtaining good grades? Or are you a job seeker learning new ways of finding employment?

If you answered “yes” to any of these questions then a solution might be to understand your learning style. Knowing how you learn is important because it deals with how you manage information, how you prefer to study and how you solve problems.

Everyone learns differently. Some students learn using one dominant style and others learn with a combination of styles. Your preference might be very similar to your best friend's or it could also be distinctive and atypical. Researchers have developed many learning style assessments to categorize styles and several are available at no cost online. For example, there is Service Canada's “How Do I Learn Best?” assessment at: [www.jobsetc.gc.ca](http://www.jobsetc.gc.ca) under the “Training & Learning” section.

Discovering if you are a visual learner, auditory learner or hands-on learner can help immensely if you are an adult returning to school. Adult learners are often balancing busy personal and professional lives. Therefore, finding ways to manage limited time might eventually be the difference between a passing and failing grade.

Squeezing in study time at midnight using the same traditional method you applied when you were 16 years old might not be the answer to achieving today's goal. Instead, you might want to establish how you learn and how you hear information, so you can accomplish the most from your college or university courses.

Learning styles are significant not only in educational settings but also in informal learning settings including understanding how to conduct a job search

in 2012. Both Ann Luedeke and Andrea Davis, Career Specialists with Centre for Education & Training, Employment Services agree that knowing one's learning styles are essential for job seekers.

Luedeke states “Learning styles can be unique as finger prints. Everyone is slightly different but if you know you prefer to learn using sequential order than you can organize your information in a linear, step-by-step approach.”

“On the other hand,” states Davis,

**“if you are a person who likes to think outside-of-the-box, your mind might gather information in chunks with no particular sequence. Some people can learn without following a plan and instead rearrange the order of the sequence while still arriving at the correct answer.”**

It is critical to note that no single learning style is better than the other. Each is just a different blend of abilities and strengths. Research concludes that everyone has at least one dominant learning style even though we might often use more than one.

For example, sometimes you might like to learn using an organized routine. At other times you might like to learn in a more adventurous and original way preferring to focus only on what is absolutely needed. However in times of stress, such as preparing for an important closed-book exam or job interview, your dominant style usually takes over.

Returning to school or looking for a job can be incredibly stressful. Thus, understanding your learning style can dramatically change your anxiety level and help maintain balance between all the responsibilities in your life.

Learning style also refers to the best time of day to absorb concepts or complete projects. For example, some adult learners are not able to function at full-speed first thing in the morning, while others may struggle in the early evening. Awareness of your peak learning times will enable you to complete your goals more successfully and might ultimately improve your projects or assignments so you can receive higher grades.

Another benefit of knowing learning styles is that it can be a transferable awareness you can use in school, volunteering, networking, or in the workplace. For example, if you have not been to school in a long time, you might be surprised by the number of assignments that are done in groups instead of individually.

Just like in the workplace, teamwork is a common trend so by knowing the value of learning styles you can become aware of the learning preferences of your colleagues and then find appropriate ways of working efficiently

and effectively with them in order to accomplish organizational goals.

Whether you are learning in a traditional classroom environment, online through a distance education course or during one-to-one job coaching sessions, identifying your learning style can be an excellent bonus to add to your self-assessment. As an adult, learning should be fun so finding the right vehicle can be one of the keys to success.

Additional tips for successful learning include:

- Designate a study area in your home
- Create a daily study routine
- Participate in class discussions and learn from your peers
- Let your teacher know when you need assistance
- Choose an accredited school
- Choose a course of study, degree or diploma that meets your goals
- Set realistic targets
- Block out distractions
- Plan weekly recreational and relaxation time
- Don't underestimate or overestimate yourself
- Take your learning seriously
- Use the knowledge of understanding learning styles to work smarter, not harder

To learn more valuable career steps, join the 90 Day Job Challenge, being launched in September at the Centre for Education & Training, Employment Services located at 595 Parliament Street.

*Lisa Trudel is a Career Specialist with the Centre for Education & Training, Employment Services [www.myjobto.com](http://www.myjobto.com)). She can be contacted at: [ltrudel@tcet.com](mailto:ltrudel@tcet.com)*

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# ACCESS BUSINESS COLLEGE: THE ABC'S OF SUCCESS

BY JOANNE MACKAY-BENNETT

In June, I had the pleasure of attending a graduation ceremony at Access Business College. Many of us have come to associate graduations with a somewhat uninspiring spectacle – a seemingly interminable queue of recipients walking across a stage to receive a diploma or degree from an unknown school administrator.

Not so at Toronto's Access Business College! It's a small business college with heart. As graduates received their diplomas, Admissions Director Sonia Nerses spoke personally to each recipient, recognizing both the personal obstacles overcome and the discipline that went into his or her well-deserved success.

When was the last time you went to a graduation ceremony and heard the graduates speak? At Access, those who had successfully completed the program spoke movingly to fellow students about the necessity of high personal standards, of not wasting time, and of believing in themselves.

Large or small, not many business colleges can claim, as Access can, a

100% retention rate or have 90% of their graduates pass with honours. As Nerses explained, what distinguishes Access is the team effort of both faculty and students. While teachers are there to support their students, Nerses underlined the fact that in the end it is the students' individual commitment and perseverance that sees them through. Along with teaching staff, she is there to celebrate that accomplishment with them.

With the recent proliferation of business colleges in Ontario, I left the ceremony thinking that although success at Access may be measured by its own rigorous set of ABC's – to provide students with a program that is Affordable, a curriculum that is based on Best-practices, and the assurance that graduates will be Career-Ready – their belief in, and consistent support of, their students is an integral part of their record of achievement.

Congratulations and best of luck in your new careers to Alexandra, Amanda, Jose, Lilia, Nailia and Sherika.

# Welcome

students and families to  
your Catholic schools!



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# MENTORSHIP IN ADULT EDUCATION

BY HEATHER JUNKE

**M**ina Wong recalls meeting Liz Wright for the first time on a cold January day in 1999 at Seneca College. Mina was a new student in Brock University's Bachelor of Education in Adult Education program and was enrolled in classes being offered at Seneca College. Liz, who was facilitating the courses at Seneca, "warmly" welcomed Mina as she stepped inside the classroom on that winter day.

That class, says Mina, galvanized the important values that create an enriching mentorship relationship for teacher and adult learner — kindness, trust, generosity, and mutual respect.

"Liz created many learning opportunities for all her learners, including me," says Mina. "We genuinely felt that she cared about our education and success. As we reciprocated her trust and respect in us, she celebrated our achievements with collegiality and optimism."

For Liz, being a mentor to Mina and other adult learners is an equally rewarding experience.

"A facilitator is shaped by each student," says Liz. "Mina came to Brock as a young woman accomplished both in the world of education and in the world of work. She brought a sophistication and enthusiasm to the community that was a model for all of us."

"It is in the very nature of the Adult Education program that we make every effort to create a community of learners. The concept of community implies that we do our best to support one another as learners. Implicit in this is that we each, in an informal way, act as a mentor to one another."

### Liz and Mina

Shortly after completing her degree, Mina started to teach college students and to facilitate in Brock's Adult Education program. That's led to a meaningful relationship for Liz and Mina as professional colleagues.

Here are some other thoughts Mina and Liz share about the importance of mentorship in contributing to the dynamic community of adult learners.

*How important is the relationship of mentor/mentee in shaping professional experiences and contributing to success as Adult Education facilitators?*

**Liz:** Facilitator and learner make an investment of trust in one another. The joy for me is that from each learner and each

learning community I grow in experience and I learn things I did not know before.

**Mina:** From working with Liz, I realized that compassion, generosity, and respect for others came from a teacher's self-knowledge, self-reliance, and self-confidence. From her, I also learned a lot more about the importance of optimism that characterized courageous teachers in the face of multiple challenges.

Most notably, Liz showed me that courage in leadership was not about knowing all the answers. Rather, it was about being there to identify barriers with her community of learners, to break down those obstacles, and to build new knowledge together.

*What do you regard as important mentorship qualities for Adult Education teachers?*

**Liz:** A facilitator/teacher who is excited about learning almost inevitably becomes a mentor/energizer for some people. An open mind helps. Given the diversity of backgrounds, work experience and interests, some people are more drawn than others to what I see as models of adult learning. We each have a "sympatico" with certain people. I am drawn to people who see learning as a great adventure, who get excited when they come upon a concept that is new to them and who are willing to take the risk of changing.

**Mina:** Mentorship involves sharing meaningful professional experiences. It is about leadership through listening, helping, sharing, guiding, supporting, and critiquing. It means caring about each other's success and setbacks with respect, kindness, and presence. Successful mentorship is the type of leadership that says, "I trust you to make good choices. Here are helpful tools if you need them. Please let me know how else I can be of help. You have my blessings."

Brock University is located in St. Catharines, Ont. The Centre for Adult Education and Community Outreach offers a Bachelor of Education in Adult Education degree program and a Certificate in Adult Education program in online delivery and site-based delivery at venues across Ontario including the GTA. Find out more by visiting <http://brocku.ca/education/futurestudents/adulted>



# ADHD IN THE WORKPLACE

BY CARTER HAMMETT

A recent infographic on edudemic.com outlined some interesting shifts in the future labour market. Generation Y—“Mellennials,” those born between 1976 and 2001—occupy centre stage in the work place and bring with them a completely different mindset than previous generations of workers. Some of the shifts are radical, projections like:

By 2014, over 1/3 of the workforce will be millennials (i.e., born between 1976 and 2001).

By 2020? Almost half.

Millennials switch their attention between devices 27 times per hour, up from 17 times from previous generations

Diversity is also on the upswing, with just under 60% of millennials white, compared to 72.5% in previous generations, and Hispanics increasing the most, from 12% to 18.5%.

People with disabilities also play a major role in diversity, but not all disabilities are visible. In fact, the great majority of disabilities, including epilepsy, mental health, dyslexia and other learning disabilities (LD) and Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder are invisible. Fortunately, a service offering solutions to people with LD and ADHD in the workplace is just around the corner.

People often confuse LD and ADHD. The two conditions frequently co-exist and exhibit similar characteristics. Furthermore, many people living with ADHD also live with some form of learning disability. Until recently, ADHD was more frequently diagnosed in men. In women, the disability may manifest as behaviour that appears “spacey” or daydream-like in nature.

Like many persons with learning disabilities, workers with ADHD often remain un-or-under-employed. Executive functions like planning, memory, teamwork, multitasking and organization are skills expected in today’s workplace, but many of these traits remain huge problems for workers with ADHD.

Kathleen Nadeau, editor of A Comprehensive Guide to Attention Deficit Disorder in Adults (1994) identifies a number of “crisis points” she suggests may be “typical” in the work lives of adults with ADHD. These include:

- a new position requiring tracking, prioritization, multitasking and rapid processing of detailed paperwork
- a promotion requiring supervision and management of others
- an organization taken over by a new management team that is inflexible and detail-oriented
- supervision which is critical, detail oriented and inflexible

The common theme running throughout these situations appears to be an “overload” reaction for the ADHD employee, where competencies in activating, sustaining, shifting attention to, remembering and finishing a task, exceed the worker’s ability to cope.

But, it’s not all doom and gloom. Many folks with ADHD, including singer Justin Timberlake, Virgin Mobile’s Richard Branson and chef Jamie Oliver have gone on to become successful, and many even flourish in their positions. Furthermore, boundless energy and incredible social skills in those with ADHD, can find them flying high in media, social work, marketing and sales, recreational, and emergency response careers. It’s true that planning and long-term follow-through can be difficult for many ADHD adults, but some are able to respond superbly to situations calling for crisis intervention or immediate problem solving.

## ACCOMMODATIONS FOR ADHD

Some employers may resist hiring people with disabilities because they think accommodations might be required and therefore too expensive. The good news is that most accommodations for those with ADHD are cheap. These can include:

- providing a non-distracting work space
- allowing opportunities to work from home or through telecommuting
- checklists and written instructions to assist with auditory memory issues
- removal of nonessential duties at the start of a new job
- more structure and deadlines. Two fifteen-minute meetings a week can help the employee stay on track.
- job coach/mentor through whom all information and instructions flow
- more frequent, informal performance appraisals

Many of these accommodations are useful for people with learning disabilities as well, and these are present in about 70% of all people with ADHD. Accommodations can significantly enhance work performance and productivity. Salisbury University estimates that for every one dollar spent on accommodations for people with disability, \$29 are generated for the company. That’s a pretty good return on investment and another reason why employing people with invisible disabilities like ADHD makes good business sense.

*Carter Hammett is an employment counselor with JVS Toronto’s Project GOLD and a freelance writer/editor. He is the author of Benchmarking: A Guide to Hiring and Managing Persons With Learning Disabilities and the editor of Communiqué, a twice-yearly magazine published by The Learning Disabilities Association of Ontario.*

# DEAR ELCEE



**Dear Elcee is a feature in every issue of Learning Curves. Send your questions about education, training, careers, jobs to: Elcee  
The WEA of Canada  
157 Carlton Street, Suite 205  
Toronto, On M5A 2k2**

*Help! I am going back to school in September for the first time in 20 years. I am thrilled to finally be making the leap to turn my dreams into reality, but find I am having nightmares at night. Any advice and/or tips to help me make this move a little less scary?*

*Diandra*

Dear Diandra:

Good for you to be taking that big step. Making any kind of change in your life is bound to bring about a certain amount of anxiety. It is what keeps us on our toes! However, if as you say, you are losing sleep I have some tips to ensure you get some restful nights again.

**KNOW YOUR SPACE** - If it’s possible try to make a couple of trips to your new place of learning. Make the trip on a weekday so that you get a sense of how long it will take you to get there. Become familiar with the bus route or the parking. Check out where the Registrar’s Office, the coffee shop and the libraries are. Walk around the campus and become oriented to your new space. If you can, do this more than once. Then, on the big day, you won’t have to deal with locating where to register and, most importantly, where to get your coffee!

**BRUSH UP ON YOUR TECHNICAL SKILLS** – You didn’t mention how up to date you are on your technical skills, so this may not apply. I went to school pre- personal computer days and when I went back to night school a few years ago the whole scene had changed. There was a website we could log into to get our homework assignments, PowerPoint presentations to develop and emails from my professors. I can’t sing the praises enough of free online computer skills upgrading. (See last Dear Elcee for a whole range of websites with free learning options).

**FIND A SUPPORT SYSTEM** – You may know someone going back to school (it’s becoming more and more common these days) or the school may have a group for adult students. Your group may be online or in person but it is important to have a support group around you that understands what you are experiencing.

**REMEMBER TO LAUGH** – Everyone makes mistakes! I will never forget the moment in

a second year English class at MUN when I asked a Professor how many books were in the Trilogy (3). May not have been funny then but it is now.... Actually, it was funny even then! There are many more, too numerous for here but rest assured, everyone makes the occasional mistake.

**WHAT YOU HAVE LOST IN ENERGY – YOU MAKE UP FOR IN WISDOM** – When I was going back to night school to study Adult Education I remember thinking to myself – what am I doing? I don’t have the energy level at 45 that I had at 20. Ironically, I got the best marks of my life in that program. Finally, I was studying what I was passionate about. I also found I had the patience to sit and study... I wasn’t thinking about going to the Campus Pub. Well, I thought about it a little. Envisioning myself putting the theories into action was easy... my future career wasn’t so far off... it was just around the corner!

**NEVER FORGET WHY YOU ARE THERE!** The goal you make at 6 pm the day before may not be so easy at 6 am the next morning. When the times get tough and you are second guessing yourself remember this... you decided to do this for a very good reason! Also, colleges and universities are rarely in the habit of accepting people they don’t believe will be successful. Schools are invested in your success. You are invested in your success. Take advantage of all the resources available to you. Write the occasional nice letter to yourself. Be your own best friend.

Diandra, you are embarking on an exciting journey! Good luck. This is my favourite quote and I keep it close by.

*"Change has a considerable psychological impact on the human mind. To the fearful it is threatening because it means that things may get worse. To the hopeful it is encouraging because things may get better. To the confident it is inspiring because the challenge exists to make things better."*

- King Whitney Jr

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# GOING BACK TO SCHOOL AS AN ADULT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Entry Programs for Adults on our websites. Some of these programs are tuition-free.

Further information about tuition-free programs, like ACE programs at the colleges, is available at:  
George Brown School of Work and College Preparation 416-415-5000 x2427  
Seneca Academic Upgrading 416-491-5050 x4772  
Centennial Career and Work Transitions 416 289-5000 x7022  
Humber Academic Upgrading 416 675-5000 x4842  
Sheridan Workforce Development Program 905 845-94330  
Durham Academic and Career Entrance 905 721-2000  
ACE programs can also be completed online at: [www.acedistancedelivery.ca](http://www.acedistancedelivery.ca)

University Bridging

Information about university bridging programs is available at:  
Ryerson University: Spanning the Gaps, 416-979-5000 x2291.  
University of Toronto: The Millie Rotman Shime Academic Bridging Program, Woodsworth College, 416-978-7487.  
York University: Transitional Year Program, 416-736-5782.  
For more info on university entry programs that prepare you for university, check out our article, “Why Not U?” on Learning Curves websites.

High School Diplomas or Credits

There are four Adult Day Schools in Toronto for adult students over 21 can talk to a career counselor. See full article on our websites. Given today’s volatile labour market, this is an especially valuable service that can help students select what college or university program to take. Their co-op programs, which helps students gain work experience, are another route to consider:  
  
Scarborough: SCAS 416-396-6921  
Toronto: CALC 416-393-9740  
Etobicoke: BCALC 416-394-7130  
North York: YALC 416-395-6505

For equivalent programs in the GTA, Peel, York and Durham regions, go to our websites and look for Learning in the GTA, school board programs.  
You can earn a high school diploma or credits online or by correspondence through the Independent Learning Centre [www.ilc.org](http://www.ilc.org). ILC is the only place authorized to do GED testing. The General Education Development test is one you can study for and if you pass you get a high school equivalency diploma. ILC’s website lists community programs that will help you prepare for the test.

Literacy or ESL Upgrading

College prep, university bridging, or adult high schools will assess your educational levels. If they think that you need more basic upgrading, they can refer you to an ESL or LINC program, an LBS program, or a special needs program.  
Small community programs are listed with the Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy. Call Literacy Access Network at 416-961-5557.  
For Literacy Basic Skills upgrading in reading, writing, numeracy and basic computer skills at the Toronto District School Board, contact:  
EAST: 416-396-6904  
SOUTH: 416-393-1995  
WEST: 416-394-3809

For an overview of English as a Second Language programs see “Shopping for Courses” on our website.

Learning Disability Help

Often adults have not done well in previous courses because of an unidentified learning disability like dyslexia, or attention deficit. See Carter Hammett’s article on page 7.  
We are fortunate to have a special program for adults with a learning disability in Toronto. Contact Project Gold at 416 649-1619 for information about free weekly orientation sessions. You can also call the Learning Disability Association of Ontario at 416 929-4311.

# GOING BACK TO SCHOOL ARTICLES

	www.learning-curves.ca by issue of Learning Curves	www.learning-curves.org by subject
GENERAL OVERVIEWS		
Shopping for Courses	August September 2011 pg. 7	Where to Study
Neighbourhood Learning	August September 2011 pg. 2	Where to study Metro Toronto Neighbourhoods
THE BASICS		
Adult Day Schools in Toronto	December 2011 pg. 4	Where to Study Getting your OSSD
What is the Toronto District School Board’s LBS Program Literacy and Basic Skills Learning in the GTA-School Board Programs Learning in the GTA Occupation Specific Language Training for Newcomers (OSLT) and College Entry Programs for All Adults	December 2011 pg. 10	Where to Study
ESL	Spring Issue 2011 pg. 10	Where to study
Learning ESL in the Community	December 2011 pg. 12 August September 2011	To be posted To be posted To be posted
HIGHER EDUCATION		
Why Not U? University Access for Adult Learners at Ryerson, York and U of T.	Summer Issue 2012 pg.1	To be posted
ONCAT and the Transfer of Credits	Winter Issue 2011 pg. 13	Where to Study
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SKILL TRANSFER FOR INTERNATIONALLY TRAINED		
Skill Transfer for Internationally Trained	Series of Articles Archived Under 2010 Joining a Professional Association	Legal Engineers Computer Business Support Staff Health Care.
INTEREST COURSES		
Finding Liberal Arts Courses March	April 2011 pg 5	What to Learn Finding Liberal Arts
Courses for Creative Self-Expression at the TDSB	December 2010 pg.7	Where to Study Getting to Creative
Learning for fun	August September 2011 pg.12	Where to Study Learning for Fun
FINANCING STUDIES		
Funding Options are Abundant for Career College Students Grants for Apprenticeship	December 2010 pg. 5 March April 2011 pg.3	To be posted Where to study Apprenticeship Grants



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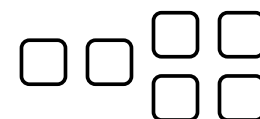
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1 Danforth Ave, Toronto, ON M4K 1M8

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3395 Weston Rd, North York, ON M9M 2V9

Scarborough Centre for Alt Studies Adult  
720 Midland Ave, Scarborough, ON M1K 4C9

Yorkdale Adult Learning Centre  
38 Orfus Rd, North York, ON M6A 1L6





A photograph of a man with dark hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt, sitting at a desk. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. His hands are clasped on the desk in front of him. The background is a kitchen with wooden cabinets and a stainless steel refrigerator.

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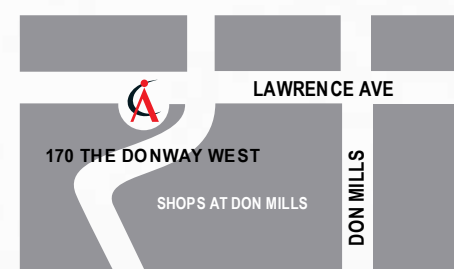
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