

# LEARNING CURVES

CONTINUING EDUCATION • JOB TRAINING

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## WHY NOT U?

### UNIVERSITY ACCESS FOR ADULT LEARNERS AT RYERSON, YORK, AND U OF T

BY JOANNE MACKAY-BENNETT

Adult students are starting to make their numbers known and Toronto's universities are responding. Part-time, full-time, certificate, degree, in class or online, adults have more choice than ever before to find a university program that suits their life choices.

Traditionally, admission to universities

was based solely on the successful completion of a secondary school diploma; 'mature' or 'special status' students formed a relatively small cohort who gained access through standard admission procedures. Not any more. Today, non-direct-entry students are welcomed, even solicited, to sign up for university courses.

Technology, stiff competition amongst post-secondary institutions to provide relevant education, and a rapidly-changing economic marketplace, mean that universities are building flexibility into their programs at an unprecedented pace. Removing barriers to access and

CONTINUED ON 2



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## UNIVERSITY ACCESS FOR ADULT LEARNERS AT RYERSON, YORK, AND U OF T

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equity in higher education are now crucial to the economic viability of universities. It's a practical response to today's demands for higher education but it's also one that empowers adults with the ability to choose how they want to learn.

### RYERSON UNIVERSITY

The Chang School of Continuing Education takes the practical needs of adult learners seriously. What sets the Chang School apart from Ryerson's regular stream is its open admissions policy. That means that you can register for a single course or more without needing prior acceptance into a particular degree or certificate program.

Like many of the students who are enrolled at The Chang School, Dean Gervan Fearon's own pathway through post-secondary education has included time for work. He understands the need to integrate work and school. Fearon stressed that continuing education at Ryerson is about encouraging adults to take that first step into a world of possibilities. Even without previous post-secondary experience, adult learners can enroll in a continuing education course and gain a sense of achievement.

Perhaps Toronto's most inspiring program for adults is The Chang School's Spanning the Gaps. Designed by Rona Abramovitch, its inclusive mandate radically alters staid notions of who gets to go to university – and when.

Bridges to Ryerson, one of the most successful components of Spanning the Gaps, is designed for adults who have not completed high school, or have been out of school for a few years, or simply not had the time or the resources to consider anything other than paying the bills. Didn't John Lennon say that "Life is what happens when you're busy making other plans?" Mentors are there to help students make intelligent choices, to assist them with their selection of courses, and to help them bring the long-range view into focus even if that means suggesting that another college or university program might be better suited to a student's immediate needs.

If academic upgrading is what you need before being accepted into a degree or certificate program, advisers will help you enroll in one of their Academic Bridging Courses, or ABC's.

New this Fall, is a Certificate in Social Sciences and Humanities Foundations. A collaborative effort between the Faculty of Arts and The Chang School, the program is aimed at the adult market and will allow participants to transfer all 6 credits to a future degree program. Learn how great ideas grow.

For adults who are less able to attend in-class lectures, online and Distance Education provide an ideal way to combine further studies with the demands of everyday life. Signing up for an online course allows you to pursue your educational goals on your own time.

Understandably, Dean Fearon is proud of The Chang School's contribution to online and distance learning. With more than 1,475 courses, seminars, and workshops offered online, including more than 83 certificate courses (15 of which are entirely distance ed.), they are the second largest provider of university-based online education.

Even though online learning is hugely popular, Fearon recognizes that technology-enhanced learning can often be an isolating experience. Ideally, what The Chang School strives to achieve is a learning environment that combines the latest digital resources with the vital (often overlooked) component of human social interaction.

Today's adult learner can be any age from 20 years old and up. Aware that there is a contingent of older adults who are searching to broaden their personal interest horizons, The Chang School's Programs for 50+ in partnership with The Life Institute, offers an intriguing spectrum of courses at a reasonable cost, and you can still register for some of The Life Institute's summer courses. Newfoundland 101 (May 28-June 25; \$30.00) will give you a new appreciation of "The Rock;" Introduction to Anthropology (June 6-27; \$35.00) illuminates the work of four outstanding anthropologists, while Spring and Summer Walks (May 1-September 14; \$20.00) is precisely what it bills itself as: a popular series of nature and city walks in spring and summer!

Creative, intellectual engagement characterizes programming for the 50+ age group at The Chang School. At The Silver Screens Arts Festival (May 31st

-June 3rd), for example, speakers such as CBC's Michael Enright, Prisoner of Teheran author Marina Nemat, documentary film screenings, and theatre and jazz performances light up this four-day festival geared to adult learners.

### Ryerson info:

[www.ryerson.ca](http://www.ryerson.ca) 416 979.5000

**Registration for Chang School: Online up to 24 hours before classes begin**

**In person 24 hours before 2nd class begins (space permitting)**

[ce@ryerson.ca](mailto:ce@ryerson.ca) 416 979.5035

**Spanning the Gaps: [spanningthegaps@ryerson.ca](http://spanningthegaps@ryerson.ca) 416 979.5000 x 2291**

**Programs for 50+ [mena.carravetta@ryerson.ca](mailto:mena.carravetta@ryerson.ca) 416 979.5103**

**Silver Screens Arts Festival:**

[silverscreens@ryerson.ca](mailto:silverscreens@ryerson.ca) 416 979.5103

### YORK UNIVERSITY

If you have an undergraduate degree but are looking for a certificate program or professional development, York University's Division of Continuing Education (now part of the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies) likely has a course that suits your needs.

As Art Noordeh, Director of the Division of Continuing Education explained, York's Certificate Programs are specifically designed to meet the latest marketplace needs. Although most require an undergraduate degree in order to enroll, some will accept adults with educational and work experience that meet equivalency standards. Their certificate in Dispute Resolution, for instance, requires an undergraduate degree or two years of paid or unpaid work that involves mediation skills. Like all certificate courses, this one recognizes that adults aren't always able to commit to a semester-long course. Enroll in the 7-8 week course for Fall 2012 or register for its full-time equivalent this summer. It's your choice.

Beginning in November 2012, a Certificate in Refugee and Forced Migration Issues (in collaboration with York's Centre for Refugee Studies) goes online. A degree, or two years of post-secondary schooling, plus one year of paid/unpaid employment with refugees or displaced persons, gets you in the door.

I was intrigued when Program and Logistics Manager, Marina DeBona, told me about French for

Public Administration, a professional development course that takes place over 12 evening sessions this summer (July 5th-August 16th). Anyone who needs French at work but can never find the time to practice their oral skills will appreciate the boost to one's level of French proficiency that a few hours a week provides.

Not everyone who has been out of school for a while is ready to take a university-level course without preparation. York has a number of excellent bridging programs that will help you get back into the right mindset. Their Transitional Year Program, a pan-university program for adult students, offers a supportive hand with its small, non-threatening, university-level courses and workshops that cover the range of issues that many students face when they find themselves in a new environment. It's a full-time, two-term program designed for adults who are at least 19 years of age and have either not completed or been out of high school for a minimum of two years.

Once you have graduated from the TYP program, you are good to go on to a degree. Applications were due May 1st but apply anyway – late applications may be considered.

If you are planning on going back to university but need some brushing up on your academic skills, Pre-University Courses in Social Sciences and The Humanities are offered through York's Division of Continuing Ed. You need to be at least 20 years old when you apply and have received a 'B' in your course in order to enter a degree program the following year as a 'mature student.' One evening a week this summer (Social Sciences: May 29th-August 21st), plus \$649.00, will reduce the anxiety that might be holding you back. Both courses will be offered during 2012-2013 Fall and Winter terms.

York's Bridging Program for Women, addresses writing and speaking skills along with issues that are particularly relevant for women. Students must be 21 years old and out of school for at least two years. Like the pre-university courses, a 'B' standing in the program gives you the key to a degree program either with the Faculty of Liberal Arts and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4



# LEARNING IN THE SUMMER:

## AN OVERVIEW OF COURSES AVAILABLE IN JUNE, JULY AND AUGUST

**S**ummer is a great time to take a course! Although the selection is more limited than in the fall, winter and spring terms, most educational providers offer courses during the summer months. You just have to look harder and register early to make sure you get a spot.

This year we have found the process of helping you shop for courses more difficult. A couple of colleges have changed the way they organize their calendars (see Seneca and Humber). Please read our comments and let these colleges know what you think.

**Toronto District School Board (TDSB)**  
General Interest courses at the TDSB are easy to shop for since they put out a calendar that is completely devoted to their summer programs. Courses and sites are reduced in number during the summer months, so remember to register early.

Registration starts May 22 for July classes. Calendars will be out a week before that. Mark the date!

www.learn4life.ca Call 416-338-4111

Unfortunately, the TDSB Summer calendar was not published in time to be considered for this issue of Learning Curves.

ESL courses are offered at numerous sites. Take note: Students who are currently registered in the Spring term get first priority for July courses. Register now for ESL classes to be sure of getting a course for the July term.

www.esltoronto.ca . Call 416-338-4300

TDSB's Next Steps offers a range of Skills Training and Employment Preparation Services in Toronto and the GTA all year long. This year, due to federal government cutbacks, they will not be offering LINC (Language Instruction for Newcomers) during the summer months.

**Toronto Catholic District School Board**  
This school board offers English

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 10**



# more

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The **School of Social and Community Services** can meet your learning needs with maximum part-time study flexibility. Our part-time offerings are all tailored to suit busy lifestyles. Courses are offered in a variety of formats, including online, in-class, independent study, full-day intensive, weekend intensive, hybrid (online/in-class combination), evening and weekend. Our offerings are affordable. You pay for each course – one at a time – as you take it.

Our **Private Investigation Certificate** is based on training standards from the Private Security and Investigative Services Act of Ontario. Each of the six online courses is six weeks in length. You can complete the entire certificate in one academic year or less.

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# WHY NOT U?

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Professional Studies or Glendon College.

Bridging for Internationally-Educated Professionals is a relatively recent program that responds to the numbers of skilled immigrants who have immigrated to Canada with international post-secondary education (a Bachelor's degree), professional credentials, and work experience but who may be lacking in Canadian experience. Courses, such as Experiential Education, are tailored to the needs of the individual and provide a blend of theory and coursework with practical, hands-on, Canadian experience with local profit and not-for-profit organizations.

**York University general information:** [www.yorku.ca](http://www.yorku.ca)  
**Division of Continuing Education:** [www.coned.yorku.ca](http://www.coned.yorku.ca), [dce@yorku.ca](mailto:dce@yorku.ca) 416 736.5616  
**Transitional Year Program** [www.yorku.ca/transitionyear/](http://www.yorku.ca/transitionyear/) 416 736.5782  
**Bridging Program for Women** [cirvin@yorku.ca](mailto:cirvin@yorku.ca) 416 736.2100 x77818  
**Bridging Program for IEP's** [makemore@yorku.ca](mailto:makemore@yorku.ca) 416 736.5620

**Atkinson Centre for Mature and Part-time Students (ACMAPS)**  
[acmaps@yorku.ca](mailto:acmaps@yorku.ca) 416 736.5770

## UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Although many of the courses at U of T's School of Continuing Studies are expensive, there are always ways and means to lower the costs. Their non-credit English Language Program, for example, designed for general, professional, or academic purposes, is offered on a part-time basis for ten weeks this summer (\$590.00).

There isn't much that's FREE any more but the English Language Program's Personal Consultation is! You don't have to be enrolled in the program to book an appointment with a counsellor for advice on your language, career, and academic goals.

Full-time enrolment in Woodsworth College's TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) Certificate will definitely set you back a few bucks (\$5,400.00+) but it has earned an excellent reputation and includes

lecture hours, practice teaching and observation. You can spread out the cost by taking the course part-time as long as you have finished it within six years of admission. Sound less onerous?

The Millie Rotman Shime Academic Bridging Program at Woodsworth College is open to adults (19 years +) who need a year to upgrade academic skills before proceeding to a degree. Upon completion of the course, students can transfer one credit towards a future degree in the Faculty of Arts and Science. Academic Bridging students meet once a week for 8 months (\$1500.00 +). Several info sessions are coming up: May 14th and 29th, June 4th and 19th, and July 4th (confirm reservation). Deadline for Fall admission is July 20th.

Like Ryerson and York, U of T has its own excellent Transitional Year Program (TYP) to offer support to anyone who has the desire to go to university but because of social and/or economic reasons has not had the opportunity to do so. This is a program that works to remove barriers to higher education. Students are provided with a supportive learning environment, an adviser, space to work, and counselling on a range of issues including funding options. The catch is that you have to be at least 19 years old in the year that you are admitted. Seniors welcomed: there is no upper age limit! School of Continuing Studies: [www.learn.utoronto.ca](http://www.learn.utoronto.ca)

English Language Program:  
[learn.english@utoronto.ca](mailto:learn.english@utoronto.ca) 416-978-5104  
 English Language Personal Consultation: [scs.consult@utoronto.ca](mailto:scs.consult@utoronto.ca)  
 Woodsworth College:  
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 Academic Bridging:  
[academic.bridging@utoronto.ca](mailto:academic.bridging@utoronto.ca) 416 978.7487  
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[typ.info@utoronto.ca](mailto:typ.info@utoronto.ca) 416 978.6832

Remember that all three universities:

- allow you to painlessly transfer College credits towards a University degree ([www.ocutg.on.ca](http://www.ocutg.on.ca)).
- provide bursaries, scholarships, and flexible payment schedules upon demonstration of need.
- permit course auditing (attend without evaluation). U of T charges \$150.00 for a half-course and up to \$400.00 for a full course; York charges a nominal fee (\$10.00/credit), and Ryerson's sole stipulation is that auditing be restricted to daytime lecture courses.

Looking for a reason to celebrate turning 60? York and Ryerson cover the costs of an undergraduate degree for anyone 60 years of age or older!

Contact a university adviser. Ask lots of questions. It's a practical response to today's demands for higher education but it's also one that empowers adults with the ability to choose how they want to learn.



**Kathleen Wynne, MPP**  
 Don Valley West

Please contact  
 me with any  
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### Constituency Office:

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# Advocating for Seniors' Learning and General Interest Programs at the TDSB

In February 2003, the Toronto District School Board announced the discontinuation of General Interest courses. Clearly, they did not expect learners to organize and fight back, but fight back they did. Two seniors, Jack Henshaw and Gerry Lang, along with others, took the lead in organizing Citizens for Lifelong Learning. They organized community meetings, lobbied TDSB school trustees and provincial politicians, got media attention, and secured over five thousand signatures on a petition. Thanks to their advocacy, the program was reinstated in August 2003.

But the story doesn't end there. It has taken nine years to rebuild the program to where it was in 2003 when the program was discontinued. In the meantime, the demand for General Interest courses has grown. Three years ago, when the Board moved to deliver the calendar to every household, 6000 students could not be accommodated by the courses offered. In spite of its obvious popularity, the program was not expanded to meet the demand.

To be fair, the TDSB receives no support from the Ontario government for General Interest learning for adults. In 1986, the Ontario government cut funding support for these programs and has never reinstated even a portion of this. Even so,

the TDSB has continued to support General Interest programs for the community. The Ontario government needs to do the same.

Although General Interest programs are suited for all ages, seniors make up over twenty-five per cent of the students. Newcomers, low-income adults, and seniors study a wide range of courses such as art, business, communications, computers, crafts, dance, languages, music etc. Whole program areas - liberal arts, history, cultural studies, sociology, literature, art history, music appreciation and political science - have remained untapped.

TDSB General Interest programs are well-suited for seniors. They are organized for the sake of lifelong learning, rather than for credit towards a certificate, diploma or degree. They are both accessible, since they are offered in local schools, and affordable, when compared to college and university programs.

In reality, General Interest courses are ideal for many adult learners who want to learn something new just for the sake of learning something new: newcomers, who want to move beyond English as a Second Language classes and establish friendships through shared interests; low-income earners, who want to learn something new but can't afford the fees for

credit courses; or those who simply want to broaden their educational horizons and participate in a community of learners.

Given that the aging of the baby boomers means that the number of seniors will be increasing every year over the next decade, that the Board is closing underutilized schools and selling them off, and that the General Interest programs are oversubscribed, one might well ask why the program is not growing exponentially.

Jack Henshaw and Gerry Lang continue to lobby for the expansion of the program. Both Jack and Gerry currently sit on the Continuing Education Advisory Committee of the TDSB. Adult students at the TDSB are lucky to have two such dogged advocates. Jack was the Co-op Coordinator for the Engineering program at the University of Waterloo and Gerry was the Human Resources manager at the LCBO. They are exceptionally astute advocates, but at this point they are also very frustrated.

The merits of the program - keeping seniors engaged with learning and with the community, allowing newcomers to move from ESL classes into mainstream learning, opening up learning opportunities for low-income learners - have been presented over and over again. The benefits of lifelong learning to the health of older adults are

now fully recognized. Research, such as that undertaken by Brock University's Community Health Sciences Professor Miya Narushima, endorses the view that for seniors, learning really is the best medicine.

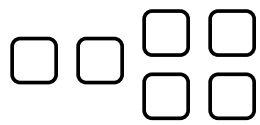
So what is to be done? How can the public, seniors, newcomers, and low-income earners convince the Board to actively grow the General Interest program? First of all, you can contact your school trustee and tell him or her that you would like more General Interest programs. Let your trustee know what programs you would like, and where you would like them. Secondly, you can ask your Member of Provincial Parliament to advocate for funding for General Interest programs.

Go to [www.tdsb.on.ca](http://www.tdsb.on.ca). Click on About Us. Look on the right side and click on Wards and Trustees. There you will find a map and contact information for all Board Trustees. Or call 416-397-3000, explain where you live and ask to speak to your trustee.

Go to [www.ontario.ca](http://www.ontario.ca). Put Legislative Assembly in the Search engine to find your MPP. Or call 416-326-1234 and ask for help in identifying your MPP.

**JUNE IS SENIORS' MONTH.**

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*Sonia Nerses of Access Business College presents Diploma to Maria Teresa Kiil. In the background are pictures of and thank you cards from former graduates.*

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# RESPONDING TO THE SENIORS' EDUCATION MARKET

BY WENDY TERRY

Schools, colleges and universities have responded in part to declining enrollment by marketing to international students and newcomers who are internationally trained, but they have yet to see marketing to seniors as, if not a potential gold mine, at least as a source of revenue. The TDSB has just decided to sell off underused schools instead of expanding learning programs for seniors.

There are several reasons why the Board is ignoring the lucrative seniors' market.

First of all, seniors are used to receiving a discount on fees. Giving discounts is not as financially pleasant as charging international students a hefty fee for educating them. However, a reduced fee could still bring in enough money to keep some schools open. Given that the boomers are aging, what they don't pay in fees will be made up in their numbers.

Secondly, seniors are interested in learning for the sake of learning, not in taking courses to get a credit towards a degree, a diploma or a certificate in order to get a job or to get a better job. For the most part, our educational programs are not organized for learning for its own sake, for example, through discussion. Rather they are organized for students to earn credits through tests, presentations, exams etc. Understandably, public policy directs tax money to support educational programs so the young can get a job and the economy has skilled, knowledgeable workers. On the other hand, seniors need and want entirely different programs. For example they are concerned about health, (keeping an active mind helps ward off mental decline).

Thirdly, educational institutions are organized to deliver a pre-determined curriculum, whereas adult education is about developing programs to answer the needs and wishes of learners in a particular community. It is bottom-up curriculum development not a top down delivery. And this approach goes "against the grain" for educational institutions. But surely our educational institutions could learn to deliver the curriculum in a different way.

Canada does not have a learning for learning's sake culture nor, despite the talk,

a commitment to lifelong learning as many other countries have. Finland, for instance, sees lifelong learning as a citizenship issue: the more knowledgeable the citizens the better the public policy. And the government is willing to invest in this type of learning. Such a commitment does not seem to be the case in Canada. Offering learning for its own sake to seniors would be a step in the right direction.

The Ontario government will save some money on education because of its recent streamlining of post secondary credit granting (see March 2011 Learning Curves) and the limiting of high school credit courses.

If seniors paid a reduced fee, the government could take some of its savings and provide the rest of the financial support needed for seniors' programs for health and citizenship reasons rather than economic ones.

In the past, educational organizations have restructured to respond to changes in their markets. When the baby boom generation as adults wanted to go part-time to get a degree, Continuing Education Departments grew rapidly. Lately, the need has been for accelerated degree programs for the internationally trained and a demand for MBA programs. Adult Day Schools in the school boards were set up in response to a need for higher literacy levels in today's work force. In a globalized world the demand from international students for a North American degree has been met with enthusiasm by our educational institutions. Without this financial incentive, what will motivate educational institutions to respond to the aging baby boomer educational market?

Programs targeted to seniors like Ryerson's Life Institute are filled up hours after registration opens leaving many would-be senior learners excluded. (See side bar for contact numbers for many of these programs.)

Currently, public policy focuses on dealing with the problems of seniors such as home care, end of life care, nursing homes, etc. We also need public policy that focuses on seniors' abilities, so they can stay able longer.

Expanding existing learning programs for seniors and developing new ones should be an institutional and government priority.

We urge seniors to get on the phone and talk to their MPP, school trustee, city councillor and educational institution. After all you pay taxes that go to these educational institutions. Schools, you should listen.

If you serve seniors who, by the way are likely to vote, they will support education. Institutions, pay attention. Many of these seniors could become donors or leave a bequest. Those working with seniors, pepper the government with proof that an active mind is a healthy one. It is accepted that investing in children's education will save money for the justice and social service budget big time. In the same way, we need to accept that investing in seniors' learning will save money for the health care budget.

## LEARNING OPTIONS FOR SENIORS

### Toronto District School Board

Many seniors take the TDSB General Interest Courses: [www.learn4Life.ca](http://www.learn4Life.ca)

There are also special day time programs for seniors. Seniors who are 60 years old and over pay half price.

### COLLEGES

Many colleges allow you to audit a course – that is, to participate in a class without having to complete assignments. In choosing to audit a course, you also forfeit the right to a grade or a credit. Auditing a course is a good option for seniors.

### George Brown

Seniors 65years and older are entitled to a discount of 20% on tuition for all Continuing Education courses, including Distance Education.

You may audit a course with no requirement to complete assignments or take the final exam with the understanding that you formally waive the credit value of the course. Full course fees apply.

For information on courses, events, and activities, contact: Seniors' Association of George Brown College: 416 425-5000 x 2416.

### Seneca College

Auditing a course is not listed as

an option in the calendar.

### Centennial College

Auditing permitted. No course credit. Full fees apply.

### Humber College

To audit a course, written permission from the appropriate Associate Dean must be presented at the Registration Centre. No course credit. Full fees apply.

### Sheridan College

Auditing a course is not listed as an option in the calendar.

### Durham College

Auditing permitted. No course credit. Full fees apply.

### UNIVERSITIES

#### Ryerson University

The Life Institute  
[www.thelifeinstitute.ca](http://www.thelifeinstitute.ca)  
416-979-5000 Ext 6989

This is a collaborative program run by The Life Institute and The Chang School for Continuing Education.

#### University of Toronto

Academy for Lifelong Learning  
[www.alto.ca](http://www.alto.ca)  
416-946-5185

This program is run in partnership with the School of Continuing Studies.

Both of these university programs are member-based, voluntary associations and belong to the Third Age Learning Network: [www.thirdagenetwork.ca](http://www.thirdagenetwork.ca)

Here are some other lifelong learning groups that belong to the Third Age Learning Group. Unfortunately, many of these programs are oversubscribed.

Later Life Learning  
[lll.innis@utoronto.ca](mailto:lll.innis@utoronto.ca)  
416-978-4921  
Living and Learning in Retirement  
<http://llir.ca>  
In partnership with Glendon College, York University  
Learning Unlimited  
[www.learningunlimiteddetobicoke.ca](http://www.learningunlimiteddetobicoke.ca)  
416-410-6204  
Fairfield Seniors Centre.

# YOU'RE NEVER TOO OLD TO LEARN

BY PAUL OXLEY

I'm a Torontonian. Having lived in this city for sixty years, I have been witness to many changes here. My first memories go back to the early fifties; in the streets it was a city of immense steam-shovels, belching black smoke and horse drawn delivery services. Then later with the immigration from the late fifties to the present, the face (and faces) of Toronto changed.

Then came our ever-changing city skyline—the first commercial towers and now the new condominium slyscrapers. Toronto's become more cosmopolitan and I have grown to love it even more; long gone are the days of the waspish, 'never on Sunday' Toronto of the fifties and sixties.

Some of the latest changes haven't been so pleasant such as municipal, provincial and federal austerity measures. We're being told by our civic leaders that the city is broke; I have become aware that the number of low income people around me, including myself, has increased, prompting me to ask why? What's happening in this city?

An opportunity to understand the whys jumped at me when Anne McDonagh, a volunteer on the board of the Workers'

Educational Association, which runs University in the Community, sent me an invitation to attend a free lecture series sponsored by Senior College at the University of Toronto and the Workers' Educational Association. The series has focused on Toronto, from its early history to current governance with much else in between. It is a nine-week series put together by Peter Russell, professor extraordinaire, a professor emeritus of political science and former Principal of Innis College and current principal of Senior College..

The first lecture began with a moving and realistic film on the Irish immigration to Toronto in 1847 titled 'Canada or Death' followed by a discussion. It was a fascinating film. Although most of the class was aware of the Irish Potato Famine, few of us had realized the extent of this tragedy, and how it affected early Toronto. We had the feeling that there was a lot more written between the lines than we had realized about this city.

The lectures have been held every second Wednesday to a class of approximately thirty students. The students come from diverse backgrounds, with many never having had the

opportunity to expand their knowledge earlier in their lives because of economic or cultural hardships or for any number of reasons. We have one thing in common and that is that we believe learning is a life long process.

The second lecture of the series dealt with how the city is governed. The students received a very well-written, easy to understand booklet on the City government. In the same lecture it came to light how one city councillor may have to look after as many people in his or her ward as a small town mayor and his council, , the point being that some city councillors may be overworked—and this on the heels of our present mayor wishing to downsize the size of council.

The next time the students met we were lucky enough to have Councillor Adam Vaughan explaining to the group what it takes to be a councillor and the responsibilities involved., again a fascinating open discussion, giving us an understanding of how our city works.

We were lucky to have Dr. David Hulchanski speak to us on his well-known and researched study 'The Three Cities

within Toronto' the story of Toronto's rich and poor neighbourhoods' and the shrinking middle class areas of Toronto.

Why are the rich getting richer while most of us are having a harder time making ends meet? We also looked at the projected income growth by 2025, and it's not a very good picture of Toronto: The lower income group will have increased to 60% of the population. It's a bleak picture, unless the governments react to this income polarization before its too late.

The University of Toronto lecture series has demonstrated how the city's growth has left some people behind and how in the past we've managed to overcome other hurdles. Once we have the facts in front of us, we can use our knowledge to make positive change on the issues that we feel need changing. We need to become more involved and connected to our community, which will help other people, but more important, by being part of the community, we will learn more about who we are.

Toronto is one of the great cities of the world. The city motto 'Diversity is Our Strength' refers to the seven municipalities that make up Toronto, but I prefer to think it refers to a city that's made up of people from all parts of the world. The future is who we are!



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or contact us at 905 688 5550, x5547 email: [adulted@brocku.ca](mailto:adulted@brocku.ca)

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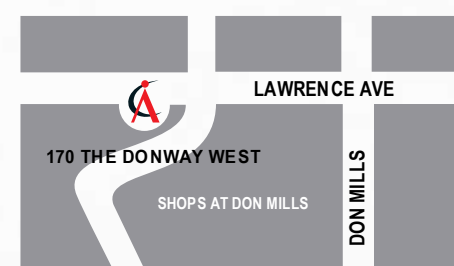
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# LEARNING IN THE SUMMER: AN OVERVIEW OF COURSES AVAILABLE IN JUNE, JULY AND AUGUST

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

language instruction for newcomers year round. [www.tcdsb.org/adulted](http://www.tcdsb.org/adulted)

### Community Colleges

To find courses which start in June, July, and yes, even August, it's better to scan the course calendars by start date under the subject area that interests you. Then when you find one that starts in the summer, scroll up to see what it is. Otherwise, you can spend a lot of time scanning course descriptions only to find out they are not offered in the summer. We used this method to research this Summer Learning article.

Colleges offer condensed courses in the summer, labeled Workshops, Intensive, Accelerated, or Boot Camp. You can take your holidays, or a couple of days in lieu time, or even a couple of Saturdays or Sundays, and complete a course.

Summer offerings can be grouped into two categories: general interest/broadly available courses like Computer courses, or general interest courses that are less widely available. This article gives you a sampling of both. Some are designed for particular professions. If a Nursing course is offered, for instance, people in that profession will probably know about it. Remember, you can often find interesting courses listed in areas where you might not think to look.

Distance Education courses are now part of the mainstream offerings and often have monthly intakes.

Every college has a core of similar courses, like computers, along with others that are the particular specialty of that college.

Often you will see a summer course you want but it lists a prerequisite – a course you need to have completed before registering – that you discover is not available in the summer. Don't let that put you off! Phone the registration desk and explain that because of your work experience or previous education you are certain that you will be able to manage the coursework. In reality, most of the time nobody even asks for proof of having completed the prerequisite when you are registering. After all, it's your money. If it turns out that you can't do the course work, the money is yours to lose.

Subject areas are bolded and courses are italicized.

### George Brown 2011-2012

#### Continuing Education Calendar

General interest and broadly available courses include **Computer Applications (Basics)** such as *Computer Keyboarding*, for those who are tired of hunting and pecking their way around a key board, or *Computer Literacy* and *Windows*, for those who finally want to organize their files into folders: *Microsoft ACCESS I and II* *Excel I and II*, *Word I and II*. **Accounting** lists more specialized areas such as *ACCPAC- Accounts Payable* and *General Ledger II*. Under **Digital Publishing**, you'll find Adobe courses for MacIntosh and Windows. If **Web Design** interests you, consider an *Introduction to Web Design and Development* as well as more advanced courses in *Dreamweaver* and *Java/Script*. Under **Business and Legal Studies**, I

found a new course that could interest retiring baby boomers looking for a new career but who might never have thought to look for it here: *Starting a Pet Care Business*. You can do this course on weekends in June.

**Liberal Studies** usually lists college preparation courses such as *Math Essentials*, *Biology* and *Speaking with Confidence*.

**English and Communications** and **ESL** offers a variety of courses: *Canadian English and Culture*; *Essay Writing*; *English for Office Workers*; *Language Test Preparation*; *Reduce Your Accent I* and for *Interviews*; *Spoken English and Writing*. Under **English Foundations**, designed for native as well as non-native speakers, look for: *College English*; *English Essentials and Skills for College English*. Under **Business Writing**: *Professional Communications*.

Under **Languages** there are numerous courses with late May starts dates: *French*, *German*, *Greek*, *Spanish*, *American Sign Language*.

In the **Distance Education** section, there were some interesting courses with June start dates: *Novel Writing I*, *How to Start Writing Your Own Novel*; *Medical Terminology*; *Business Law*; *Human Sexuality*; *Introduction to Psychology*; *Introduction to Sociology*

For professionals, there are summer offerings under **Community Services**, **Fashion and Jewellery** (a program unique to George Brown) **Film and Photography**, **Hospitality and Culinary Arts**, **Information Technology**, and extensive offerings in **Technology and Trades**.

Some of the general interest in these professional areas include numerous courses in *Image Consulting*, *Basic Sewing*, *Jewellery I*; *Digital Photography*, *Photoshop Basics*; *Baking Arts*; *Carpentry for Women* *Home Maintenance and Improvements* Call 416-415-2000

### Seneca College

This year, Seneca College has published their summer courses in an online calendar format only. As a result, it is onerous to browse their calendar for summer start dates. You have to search from subject area to course title, then back to the schedule. Our strategy for this article was to scan for summer start dates then look back up on the page to read the description of the course.

The powers that be at Seneca should read Lisa Evans' essay in the Globe (March 28, 2012), **I'm a continuing-education junkie**. She talks about her excitement in sitting down with a continuing education calendar, spending hours browsing through it and highlighting courses of interest. Lisa is no baby-boomer technophobe. She is 29 years old.

To quote Karen Ferguson, the first editor of Learning Curves, computer browsers "drill" down into the data, they do not let you browse around. Adult learners are browsers. They enjoy shopping around for courses that are of interest to themselves, family members, friends, co-workers and so on. This client type will grow as the boomers move into their third career and/or leisure learning market.

We hope Seneca goes back to printing a calendar. In the meantime, if you go to our web-site, [www.weacanda.ca](http://www.weacanda.ca), you'll find a list of what Seneca offered in the Summer last year in our May June 2011 issue. Start into their

on-line catalogue for Spring 2012 from there.

If you would like Seneca to print a calendar, call 416-493-4144. Ask for the office of the Dean of Continuing Education. [www.senecacollege.ca/ce](http://www.senecacollege.ca/ce)

### Centennial College

General interest and broadly available courses are listed under **Computers and Information Technology**. Whereas George Brown lists application courses and computer professional computer courses under different subject headings, Centennial lists them together. There are numerous professional courses in *Software Quality Assurance and Testing*, *Unix/Linux Systems Administration*. You can advance your computer skills through *Microsoft Word*, or *Excel* or *Access Advanced*. Courses are all offered in July.

Under **Lifestyle and Leisure**, boomers might find *Caring for those with Alzheimer's*, or *Sandwich Generation 101* interesting. Or maybe you're ready for a course in *Home Renovations* or *Time Management*?

Many of our readers are teachers and counsellors with a reduced work load in the summer. You might want to think about doing some PD by picking up courses like *Assessment and Evaluation in ESL*, or the *Pedagogy of On-Line Learning* listed under **Teaching and Learning**.

Under **Transportation** (an area that Centennial specializes in), there are courses for professionals like *Driving Instructor Training* but you'll also find General Interest ones like *Car Care Clinic for Women* – a Saturday morning well-spent. And don't forget the *Motorcycle Courses*!

In the **Distance Education** section, there are many courses with monthly start dates (June 1, July 1, August.1). These include **Academic Upgrading** courses ACE in Math for Apprenticeship or Business or Technology; Biology, Chemistry, Computers.

There are numerous offerings in *Accounting* and *Financial, Management and Marketing, Microsoft Applications*. Under General Education, you might want to take a look at *Principles of Psychology* or *Sociology*. Given our increasingly globalized world, two courses listed under Relocation Specialist caught my eye: *Introduction to Relocation* and *Essentials of International Relocation*.

Professionals can look under **Engineering Technology**, or **Health**, or **Hospitality**. Call 416-289-5300

### Humber College

Humber still publishes a hard copy print calendar but does not publish the schedule in the calendar. Go online and scroll down through subject and course to find scheduling. Even the Distance Education course listings require "drilling down."

This might work for Fall and Winter Terms when start dates are consistent (early September and early January). For the Spring/ Summer Term, when start dates are spread out anywhere from March to August, it does not.

You can waste a lot of time looking for courses in June or July and having to scroll down to find the schedules for each one.

For adult learners, dates, days, and times are often as important as the content since they have to fit courses into hectic schedules. On a visit to Ireland in 1996, I

saw a calendar for an educational association that was organized according to the day of the week. You could scan what was available on the nights of the week that you were free. I remember thinking that this group really understood how to organize courses for adults.

If you would like Humber to put the schedules back into their calendars, call 416-675-5005. Ask for the office of the Dean of Continuing Education. [www.humber.ca/continuingeducation](http://www.humber.ca/continuingeducation)

### Google Analytics-the driver or the learner?

A note about why educational institutions might drive adult learners to their websites instead of providing them with a hard copy calendar. Other than saving paper, they want to track "conversions." If you go to their website and buy a course, your visit has been "converted." They can track this through programs like Google Analytics just the way that corporations like Master Card can draw up your personal profile by tracking your purchases.

This robotic focus on tracking visits and conversions misses the point about how adults buy courses. Buying a course is not an impulse buy. Nor is it one where you buy the weekly necessities of life, like bread and toilet paper. It is a decision that is usually pondered for some time. Students mull over topics, costs, times, the fit with their interests and career ideas, etc. You may see a course highlighted in Learning Curves or a summer calendar one year but not have the time to take that course until the following year.

Maybe one of these educational institutions should consider asking their marketing students to study how adults truly shop for and buy courses. Then, instead of computer technology determining how courses are sold, the real shopping patterns of adults would drive College marketing strategies.

In the meantime, please let Learning Curves know how you shop for courses by going to our Facebook site: LEARNINGCURVES –WEA. You can also go to our Twitter account: LEARNINGCURVES1.

### GTA Colleges

#### Sheridan College

Sheridan's calendar lists courses alphabetically, according to the letters in their course codes along with their schedules, rather than listing courses under a program area. If you find a course that interests you listed under a specific program area, you'll need to go to the course listing section to see the schedule. Going from the course listings to the program area is more difficult as it is unclear where a course code like VDES fits. FYI, it is a photography course in Arts and Design.

Adults generally shop for courses rather than programs since they are often rounding out or adding to their education. Youth are more likely to shop for a program since they are building their educational base. If these program and course schedules were listed together, it would result in a whole lot less flipping back and forth



# LEARNING IN THE SUMMER

## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

If you would like Humber to combine program areas and course listings in the calendar, call 416-905-845-9430. Ask to speak to the Dean of Continuing Education.

Under **Computer Studies**, there are Adobe courses offered on the weekends in July. Besides *Adobe Photoshop Fundamentals*, there are numerous advanced courses.

Also under **Computer Studies**, there are a number of Saturday courses in July and August such as: *Excel Macros and VBA Level 1, or 2 or 3*.

Considering today's focus on change, under **Business-Management** there is a course on May 26th, called *Managing Change*.

Under **Arts and Design**, you'll find a weekend course in June called *Niagara-on-the-Lake Travel Photography*.

Under **Arts and Design**, there is a one-week course in June on *Landscape Painting with Len Aguanno*.

Under **Manufacturing Technology and Trades**, there are *AutoCAD Level 1 or 2 or 3* courses offered on a Saturday or two nights a week in July.

A number of *Communication Skills Assessments* dates are scheduled in August. It is necessary to attend one of these sessions if you want to enroll in *Basic Communication Skills* or *Essential Communication Skills* listed under **Communications and Languages** in the fall.

Under **Recreation and Leisure**, you will find the *Motorcycle courses*.

Courses offered as Distance Education are listed as such under the title. None of the ones offered in June, July, and August were offered this way. Call 905-845-9430

### Durham College Winter Spring 2012

This Calendar makes two things really easy to find. First of all, the one day workshops are listed right in front of the calendar and are highlighted in the course offerings rather than being embedded in program and

course offerings which one assumes are all one term long. Secondly, they also highlight college preparation programs offered in the summer at the front of the calendar.

In June, there are a series of one day workshops detailed under **Computers** in *Excel Macros and VBA Level 1, or 2 or 3*.

Under **Management**, there is a one-month-long course running from June to July, called *Individuals at Work*. Maybe it will help you understand your co-workers?

Under **Leisure and Learning**, you can find a number of *Motorcycle courses*.

Durham offers an extensive number of online courses which have monthly intake. They are organized alphabetically by course title. I have grouped a sample of them in related areas. **Business:** *Accounting, Accounting, Auditing, Report Writing, Cost Accounting, Economics, Human Resources Management, Managerial Accounting, Marketing*. **Computers:** *Access, Excel, Word, Windows, Java, Power Point, Quick Books*. **Teaching Adults:** *Adult Learning, Developing Across the Lifespan*. **Languages:** *French*. **Liberal Arts:** *Sociology*. Call 905-721-3052

### Universities

See our front page feature story, *Why Not U?* for these offerings.

### Community Based Programs

Community organizations offer courses year round and have continuous intake. Go to [www.211Toronto.org](http://www.211Toronto.org). Select Employment, Education, and Training. Then select Vocational Training.

### Career Colleges

Career Colleges run programs year round and have continuous intake so summer is not a down time for them either. Go to the Ontario Association for Career Colleges' website: [www.oacc.on.ca](http://www.oacc.on.ca)



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# LEARNING IN THE SUMMER BY DISTANCE EDUCATION

Just as there are in-class courses to attend in June, July, and August, there are distance education courses too. Some are print based (correspondence), many are on-line, which could include video conferencing as well as blogging with the teacher and fellow students. Through Distance Education you can earn high school, college and university credits.

Although many online courses are offered on a term basis, some are offered on a continuous intake basis or on a monthly intake basis. Some have a class-based schedule while others have an individualized schedule. With an individualized schedule, you can work at a speed that suits your commitments to work and family. You could spend your summer sitting on your balcony doing a course.

### Independent Learning Centre

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The Independent Learning Centre (ILC) is designated by the Ontario Ministry of Education to offer high school credit courses online and by correspondence. Since ILC has continuous intake and an individualized schedule, you can start as soon as you register, go as fast or as slowly as you can manage, and take time out to deal with a family or work crisis. You can earn your whole high school diploma this way.

ILC is the only provider of the GED test in Ontario, which is another way to get your high school equivalency. Adults who successfully write the GED test will be granted a high school equivalency Certificate. GED stands for General Educational Development.

### ESL

ILC offers ESL courses online, both for credit and not for credit. For these courses, you will need a volunteer tutor. Perhaps someone who has been helping you informally may be willing to help you work your way through one of these courses. Call 416-484-2704 or go to [www.ilc.org](http://www.ilc.org)

### Community Colleges

Term and Monthly intake.

Please see Learning in the Summer: June July and August for a sampling of courses offered by Toronto and GTA colleges.

In fact, you can take courses from any of the twenty-two Ontario Colleges through Ontario Learn. See [www.ontariolearn.com](http://www.ontariolearn.com). On this website, courses are organized by monthly start date. When you click on Course Inventory, you will notice that the courses are organized by monthly start dates: June 1, July 1, August 1.

If you need to do Academic Upgrading in math, sciences or English before you undertake a college course, you can do these online as well as in class. The online ACE courses have continuous intake and run through the summer months. See [www.acedistancedelivery.ca](http://www.acedistancedelivery.ca). Note that you must register through a college, not on the website.

### Universities

Term-Based and Continuous Intake.

Please see the front page story *Why not U?* for information about the three Toronto universities.

University courses are offered both in-class and online but many of them require that you be admitted to a program of study whether you go part-time at night or part-time in the day. This is unlike the colleges which generally have open admissions for their part-time evening courses. While many of these courses are term-based with their pace of study being set by the class, some have continuous intake and are taught according to the pace of each individual.

That being said, universities also offer evening courses with open admissions through their Departments of Continuing Education. See front page story, *Why not U?*

It's important to realize that your choice of university is not limited to Toronto, the GTA or even Ontario. You take courses from universities all across Canada. See Canadian Virtual University [www.cvu.uvc.ca](http://www.cvu.uvc.ca)

Athabasca University, for example, located in Alberta, offers continuous intake, "independent" schedules as well as term-based, class-paced courses. In fact, you can earn an entire BA or Masters online. Athabasca is an open university, as in open admissions, so you can always take one course that catches your eye without going through an admission process for a program. The key criterion for undergraduate programs is that you must be 16 years of age. For Masters programs, there are more criteria.

By going to [www.athabascau.ca](http://www.athabascau.ca), you can choose an undergraduate degree in Commerce, Health Administration, Nursing, Science, or a broad range of other subject areas. You can also pursue a graduate degree in Business Administration, Counselling, Distance Education, Health, or another field.

### Transferring Credits

Experienced adult learners know that even if you find a course that you like online, but you are working on a program of study at another educational institution, your home institution will often not credit that course to your program. Before enrolling in an outside course, make sure you have a written agreement from your home institution stating that the outside course will be accepted and credited towards your program.

The Ontario government is starting to work on the credit transfer issue. In the Spring 2012 issue of Learning Curves, [www.learning-curves.ca](http://www.learning-curves.ca), you will find two articles on this initiative: one on page 5, "Certificate, Diploma, Degree: Ontario's plan to give credit where credit is due," and one on page 13, "ONCAT and the Transfer of Credits." ONCAT stands for Ontario Council on Articulation and Transfer. [www.ocutg.ca](http://www.ocutg.ca). Keep an eye on this site since OnTransfer will be regularly posting guides about course equivalencies among post-secondary institutions.



# SOCIAL MEDIA AND JOB SEARCH SUCCESS

BY: LISA TRUDEL

**D**uring the 1980s recession, some job seekers used a popular job search method that involved self-promotion and pounding the pavement. Remember sandwich boards?

Before the Internet, emails, Facebook and I-phones, job seekers used self-marketing ideas that now seem incredibly old-school and low-tech. With only land-line phone numbers for contact information, it was difficult to stand out from the crowd. Donning a sandwich board to bring resumes to life was considered an innovative and creative technique to capture the attention of potential employers.

Now that job seekers have contact information that includes not only phone numbers, but also emails and links to online web pages or profiles, job searching is even more complex.

For example, at some companies, cover letters and resumes are initially read by resume scanners, not people. Other employers prefer receiving applications in a pdf attachment while others prefer the standard Word format. According to recent statistics, the influence that social media exerts on the job market is increasing at an incredibly fast pace. A study published in 2011 on [www.jeffbullas.com](http://www.jeffbullas.com) reported that 45% of companies used Twitter to find talent, 24% of managers found “fit and personality” from a social media profile and 1 in 3 employers rejected candidates based upon something they found online.

One thing that has not changed since the 1980s is the dilemma of how to stand out from the crowd. In 2012, the topic of whether or not Canada is in a recession is a controversial one. Results of a new online survey sponsored by the Economic Club of Canada stated that Canada has not been in a recession since 2009 even though 70% of Canadians say the country is in the middle of one. What is true is that in order to secure interviews, job seekers now need more than a resume.

Today, job seekers are required to apply for every job with a targeted resume and cover letter, ensure they can provide current references, present an acceptable image and have strong communication skills. Using a variety of job search methods is considered essential including utilizing the traditional approaches of applying directly to job ads, conducting cold calls, attending

Job Fairs and volunteering with the aim of increasing networking contacts and skills.

New job search techniques that have worked successfully for many people begin by recognizing if you are an extrovert or an introvert. Since many extroverts tend to discover what they think by discussing their ideas with others, they like to build networking contacts by conducting face-to-face informational interviews, meeting as many people as possible, and attending events armed with business cards.

On the other hand, introverts process by reflecting and thinking through their ideas, and often have a predisposition to watch and gather data. Thus using social media tools to develop networking alliances can be a very successful approach for the introvert.

For those who are a combination of both extrovert and introvert, one of many successful methods is to combine old-school ideas with social media trends. For example, instead of a sandwich board with a phone number on it, put your QR code on the sandwich board. With one click of an app using your I-phone, potential employers can quickly link to your essential contact information: your LinkedIn profile or another online promotional presence.

A word of caution: social media networking is not suitable for all job seekers, but for some it could be the missing piece of a career success puzzle. According to a 2011 survey, 89% of companies worldwide used social media networks for recruiting and 86% of employers say candidates should make their profiles more employer-friendly.

To learn more job search ideas, or to discover how to tailor applications in order to pass the resume scanner test, job seekers can use the free services offered by the Centre for Education & Training. See [www.mytojobs.com](http://www.mytojobs.com) for more details. Visit us in person at 595 Parliament Street, Main Floor. Hours are Monday to Friday, 9am to 4pm. Or call 416-964-9797 for more information about employment preparation, career assessment and how to transform your job search by combining traditional approaches with the necessary essentials needed in 2012.

*This article was contributed by Lisa Trudel, Career Specialist with the Centre for Education & Training Employment Services, 595 Parliament Street. She can be contacted at: [ltrudel@tcet.com](mailto:ltrudel@tcet.com)*

# 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**

*I am a devoted lifelong learner but I live on a limited income. Are there any places where I can learn for free in the GTA?*

**Farida**

Dear Farida:

You didn't say what you wanted to learn so I am just going to assume you would like to soak up all kinds of knowledge. You also didn't say if you have access to the Internet so I am going to give you a variety of options to choose from. There are many online options for free learning.

The first site to check out is [www.freelearning.ca](http://www.freelearning.ca). This website links you to the latest in online free learning. However, some of the best sites online you can access are;

MIT Open Courses – yes, that is the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. They offer free courses in everything from Physics to Psychology. <http://ocw.mit.edu/index.htm>. Many other universities offer some free learning options (non accredited).

University of the People offers 4 undergraduate degree programs however this is not an accredited institution. You can, however, participate in the courses and take exams. If you are thinking of going to college or university this is a great way to try it out risk-free. <http://www.uopeople.org>

GFC LearnFree has a variety of programs from improving your vocabulary to MS Office applications. Even better, many of the courses have built in games so it's a fun way to improve your skills.

Khan Academy is the newest sensation on the Internet. It started out as a way for the founder to teach his niece and nephew math on the Internet but after catching the attention of Bill Gates (and a lot of his dollars) it has its own website and has expanded to Art History, Philosophy and Physics. You can check out Khan Academy at [www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org).

[www.alison.com](http://www.alison.com) also offers a variety of diploma programs free and online. You have to register but there is no cost. Check it out for a variety of subjects.

Within the GTA area there are a variety of in-class options;

The Toronto Public Library has free ESL conversation classes, computer classes and free lectures by authors. [www.torontopubliclibrary.ca](http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca)

Throughout Toronto there are also

Employment Centres which offer free workshops and seminars on everything from resume writing, social media and financial management. The best place to check out what is happening is [www.poss.ca](http://www.poss.ca)

Throughout the GTA the United Way sponsors eight Community Hubs in priority neighbourhoods. The Hubs will bring people in communities together, connect them to the services they need, foster the development of resident organizations and grassroots groups, and grow volunteer leadership. You can check out where your local Hub is at [www.unitedwaytoronto.org](http://www.unitedwaytoronto.org). They offer a number of classes from computer basics to yoga.

Museums often offer lectures and informational packages. You often have to check out the individual sites. Prices vary and some organisations have discounted days or Pay What You Can (PWYC). You can also check out the Sun Life Financial Museum + Arts family pass. These are distributed through the Public Libraries, often on Saturday mornings; however, some libraries have different hours of distribution. These passes include the Royal Ontario Museum, the Toronto Zoo and the Bata Shoe Museum among many more.

Of course there is University in the Community sponsored by the Workers' Educational Association, which also publishes this paper, Learning Curves. It is not running for the summer but will start up in the fall. For dates and topics of courses go to the WEA website [www.weacanada.ca](http://www.weacanada.ca).

The Toronto District School Board offers a discount on continuing education for low-income. You can take one course per semester at a discounted rate. For more information on this program visit [www.tdsb.on.ca](http://www.tdsb.on.ca).

The City of Toronto has an events calendar showing what is happening in Toronto! Many of these events are free, Check this out at [www.seetorontonow.ca](http://www.seetorontonow.ca).

As you can see Farida, there is no better time than now to learn to your heart's content. Enjoy!

A man with dark hair, wearing a light blue button-down shirt, is sitting at a desk. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. His hands are resting on a stack of papers on the desk. In the background, there is a kitchen with wooden cabinets and a stainless steel refrigerator.

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# PLAN CAREFULLY BEFORE RETURNING TO SCHOOL

By Heather Junke

“Returning to post-secondary education as an adult is not a one-size-fits-all proposition” says the academic advisor with Brock University’s Adult Education program.

Felicity Harrison counsels as many as 500 new students each year who begin studies in the Bachelor of Education in Adult Education and Certificate in Adult Education programs.

Harrison’s goal is to work with each new student to develop a personalized program plan that will fit their needs from their first day of studies to when they walk across the stage at Brock’s convocation ceremony to accept their degree or certificate.

“Students ask me similar questions but the answers always depend on their own circumstances and interests,” she says. “Probably the most common question that students put to any academic advisor is about the time commitment required. I

tell our students to approach budgeting their time in the same way they would work out a financial budget, being sure to consider all the variables in their lives.”

She says many students are attracted to the Brock’s Adult Education program because it offers many choices such as studying part-time, and taking courses online or face-to-face. It also provides students with the flexibility to step in and out of the program.

“Those are big factors as people make a realistic assessment of how they can best manage their time both in the short and long term,” explains Harrison. “Many of our students are currently in careers and are pursuing studies to advance their careers. At the same time, they have family commitments and are busy people with many interests and activities. They need to think carefully about how many courses are realistic for them to fit into very active lives. You have to accommodate

the time that is needed for the class hours as well as the time that is needed to complete readings and assignments.”

If students think they may need to interrupt their studies, Harrison recommends they talk to an academic advisor about what may be involved in terms of re-entering the program smoothly without incurring any penalties.

“From time to time, programs will change requirements for completion and you want to be sure that those changes won’t complicate your progress should you need a break from studies for an extended period,” she says.

Planning ahead is well worth the time and effort for any prospective student. In addition to time management and study outlook, Harrison offers a few other tips as follows:

Give careful thought to the program and how it meets your interests. Consider utilizing self-assessment

tools to determine your strength, skills, interests, values, sources of motivation and preferred work environments.

Find out about career opportunities in your field of interest. Spend some time on websites of specific organizations that you’re interested in working for and review their organization. Also, take a look at job postings to get an idea of what employers are looking for in terms of skill sets and qualifications.

Above all, your motivation in returning to education should be rooted in the joy of learning that will allow you to accomplish personal goals — the rewards will more than make up for your investment of time and finances.

*For information on Brock’s Adult Education programs visit <http://brocku.ca/education/futurestudents/adulted>*

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