

# LEARNING CURVES

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## NEW! SECOND LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT NOW CENTRALIZED WHO, WHAT, WHERE AND WHEN

BY JOANNE MACKAY-BENNETT

If you have ever wanted to learn a new language, you will soon discover that it takes time and patience just to decipher the pages of online information, let alone to figure out how to register for a class. In fact, sometimes I think that labyrinth-like websites should come with this warning: User may experience bouts of frustration and brain fatigue!

What follows is a basic guide to recent updates in government-funded second language assessment, referral and programming – complete with a growing list of acronyms.

Prior to enrolling in a provincially-funded or a federally-funded ESL or FSL program, students need to have their language skills assessed. This is nothing new. The YMCA has offered a free language assessment service for federally-funded language classes since 1992. Assessment for provincially-funded classes has been available at both the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) and the Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB). What is new is that starting in January, the assessment process for enrolment in

provincially-funded courses will change.

As of early January (precise date to be confirmed), the YMCA of Greater Toronto Language and Assessment Referral Centre will be the only assessment centre in the City of Toronto. Adults who wish to register in a government-funded ESL or FSL class must initially be assessed at one of the Y's language assessment and referral centres. Once you have been assessed, you will be informed of a class time and location that suits your particular needs.

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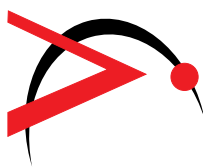


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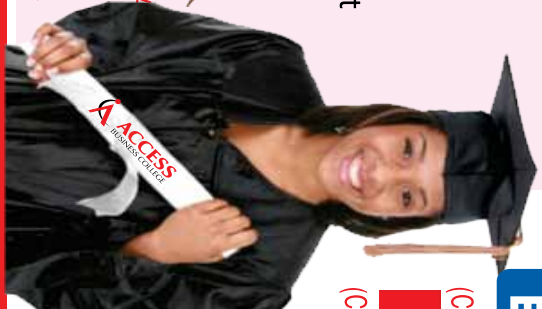
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# IMMIGRANTS AND REFUGEES

BY ANNE MCDONAGH

Every year about 250,000 newcomers arrive in Canada for many reasons. There are four categories: family class (relatives of people already living in Canada, economic immigrants (skilled workers and business people), others (people accepted as immigrants for humanitarian or compassionate reasons) and refugees (people who are escaping persecution, torture or cruel and unusual punishment). [From Wikipedia]

Since coming to power in Ottawa, the Conservative government has made a number of changes to the legislation governing many aspects of immigration. The most significant, both positive and negative, include the refugee and economic classes. The new laws seem to be about building the economy, making the system efficient and protecting the country from fraudulent newcomers.

## REFUGEES

The Toronto Star recently published a story of a family who in 2008 were refused refugee status in Canada and deported to Libya where the father was imprisoned and tortured. They escaped to Malta where they lived in a shipping container in a refugee camp. Eventually the immigration officials were ordered by a Federal court to let the family come back to Canada as refugees. However, immigration officials told them they had to pay back the government the over \$6,000 it had cost the government to deport them to Libya! (After this story appeared in the Star, the repayment was canceled.) Although it is an extreme example, this story illustrates lack of compassion. Canada used to have a reputation for compassion towards the refugees of the world.

When the Conservatives took over government in Ottawa, the number of people claiming refugee status was overwhelming. The many changes in refugee law that the government has since enacted have been

partly the result of trying to deal with this backlog and prevent backlogs in the future. At the same time, there are far too many changes which alarm many Canadians.

One of the biggest criticisms is the speed of the refugee claimant process. It greatly lessens the time from applying for refugee status to the time of a hearing, and introduces a limited appeal process. In fact, the number of successful claims by refugees living in Canada fell to less than half of what it was when the Conservatives came to office.

The government has labeled certain refugees (like the Tamils who arrived by boat in 2009 and 2010) “irregular arrivals”. If they are so labeled, they will be arrested and can be held for up to a year. Moreover, they cannot apply for permanent resident status; sponsor family members or acquire refugee travel documents for five years even if their refugee claims are accepted

Another troubling practice is the use of the Designated Countries of Origin list. The government has compiled a list of democratic countries who look after their citizens; therefore, the government assumes there should be no refugees from those countries. As a result of this assumption, most refugee claims from Designated Countries of Origin (most of the EU) are rejected almost from the start. However, there are the Roma of Europe, who are persecuted in Hungary and other European countries

just as the Jews were in pre-war Europe.

The persecution is real, but the Roma are from DCO countries and, therefore, according to the government, anyone from one of the DCOs claiming to be a refugee must be making a fraudulent claim. Since the reform of the refugee system, 95% of refugee claims from DCO countries have been denied.

There are many more changes to the laws regarding refugees. The most heartless is the denial of healthcare to refugee claimants.

## ECONOMIC IMMIGRANTS

For would-be economic immigrants, a point system has been in effect for many years. To be eligible to emigrate in the economic class, you need 67 points out of 100. There are six elements in the point system. The number of points for each of these elements has changed from time to time usually for political or economic reasons but the total adds up to 100 and 67 points is the pass mark. The six elements in the point system are: skills in English and/or French, education, work experience, age, a job offer and adaptability. The Conservative government is looking for young skilled tradesmen who are ready to work, and so emphasis in several areas of the point system has changed. Here are some of the important changes:

**Greater emphasis (more points) on facility with French or English.** More points will be given for good language skills. This change will not be welcomed by ESL

teachers; however, it will save a lot of money for the government which will not have to finance as much language training as in the past and will also avoid a lot of anguish for immigrants who have not mastered the language and will live in poverty until they do.

**More points allotted to the young up to age 35.** After age 35, fewer and fewer points are allotted for age until no points are awarded after age 47.

**Whether you have employment to come to:** The government has determined that our greatest labour market need currently is skilled tradesmen/women and so most points are given to applicants with that skill set. Employers will be able to choose “potential candidates from a ready pool of pre-screened skilled workers”. (Pre-screened in their own countries.) In the past, skilled immigrants did not have to have a job offer in order to emigrate.

The government has streamlined the system in such a way as to develop and use immediately a younger workforce to replace the aging workforce Canada currently faces. Ideally these skilled tradesmen/women will start their jobs the day after they land in Canada. As Minister Kenny said recently, “They will hit the ground running.”

Similar requirements are made for the Canadian Experience Class (CEC), that is, temporary foreign workers or students who want to become permanent residents.

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# NEW CHARITABLE CAREER COLLEGE NETWORK

Adults are generally used to looking to community-based organizations for tuition free programs. Often, however, the criteria for admission, as defined by the organization's government funder, are restrictive: an adult's individual situation may not be represented or the government funder may have reduced funding to the point that spaces are very limited and thus quickly unavailable.

**R**ecently, some community-based organizations have developed courses for which an individual student pays a tuition fee. By charging tuition these organizations can expand their program offerings and students, who take these courses, are eligible for financial assistance through such programs as Ontario Works, ODSP, Employment Insurance etc. As well, often the community based organization has done fundraising to create a scholarship (based on academic achievement) or a bursary (based on financial needs).

Adults are used to paying fees at career colleges and community colleges on the understanding that, at these colleges, they can access financial help based on their individual situation. OSAP, EI, ODSP, WSIB, Second Career are examples of some financial assistance programs. Learning Curves always tells our readers to ask if there is financial assistance as the number of financial assistance possibilities are often too numerous and varied to easily list.

Tuition-based organizations must be monitored by the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. Consequently, since 2008, community-based organizations that offer tuition-based programs must now register under the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005.

Four community-based organizations that now offer tuition-based courses have formed the Charitable Career College Network, an association that is distinct from the career colleges who are members of Career Colleges Ontario. The four organizations are: Working Skills Centre, Mothercraft, Pathways Skills Development Centre in London, and the Learning Enrichment Foundation. This article will profile the Toronto-based organizations and provide our readers who may have interested friends or relatives in London with a contact for the London-based organization.

Community-based organizations that are registered as charitable organizations are subject to higher compliance expectations

than other non-profit agencies. Hence the name: Charitable Career College Network.

**WORKING SKILLS CENTRE (WSC)** has been a community-based training organization for the past 35 years. As a multi-service agency, WSC offers settlement services, language improvement courses, career assessments and counseling, job search, WSC Staffing Services, citizenship test preparation and, since 2008, a private career college, Academy of Computer & Employment Skills (A.C.E.S.).

On September 25, 2013, A.C.E.S. held its largest graduation to date with 39 candidates receiving Diplomas in front of over 50 guests. A.C.E.S. offers registered diplomas for Office Clerk, Medical Receptionist, Administrative Assistant with Desktop Publishing, Supply Chain Clerk/Analyst, and Computerized Accounting. Corporate donations support the WSC Scholarship and Bursary Fund to ensure that no one is denied service because of financial need. The college also offers over 50 part-time programs and is constantly developing new programs, such as SAP-Finance and SAP-Supply Chain, Electronic Medical Records Administration, and Desktop Publishing using Adobe Suite.

WSC organizes their programs and services on a Track to Employment pictured on their website starting with arrival in Canada to employment.

*WSC is located at 55 Eglinton East, Suite 703, a block away from the Yonge Eglinton intersection; the site is fully accessible. WSC's website is <http://workingskillscentre.com> Phone 416-703-7770. WSC is open Monday-Friday 8:30-5:30 and Saturdays 10:00-4:00, as well as some weeknights. WSC has weekly free information session on Thursdays at 9:00am.*

**MOTHERCRAFT** has been a community based organization for the past 75 years. Mothercraft College started in 2008. Here you can earn an Early Childhood Education Diploma, which makes

you eligible to register for the College of Early Childhood Educators.

Not only that, agreements between educational institutions allow graduates to start at an advanced level in advanced level programs. For instance, Mothercraft College graduates who have also a B.A. are eligible to apply to the Consecutive Program at York University leading to a B.Ed. and an O.T.C. (Ontario Elementary Teaching Certificate in Primary-Junior Education). Other articulation agreements are with Ryerson University, University of Guelph Humber, Seneca College and Athabasca University.

Mothercraft College also offers a bridge training program for internationally trained early learning or childcare professionals. Mothercraft offers customized educational courses in collaboration with an agency/organization, including workshops and seminars on site.

*Mothercraft is located at 646 St. Clair Avenue West. [www.mothercraft.ca](http://www.mothercraft.ca) Phone 416-483-0511. Grant and funding opportunities are available depending on the individual's situation, so ask about financial help.*

## THE LEARNING ENRICHMENT FOUNDATION (LEF)

has been a community based organization for the past 30 years. It is located in the former city of York in northwest Toronto. It offers settlement services, employment services, skills training, language training, youth services and entrepreneurship.

LEF's training programs, which are approved under the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 include Bicycle Assembly and Maintenance, Janitors, Caretakers and Cooks Training.

The Bicycle Assembly and Maintenance (BAM) program (eight weeks) meets a growing need for skilled bike mechanics. As more and more people seek to reduce their carbon footprint or just stay fit, bikes have become more

popular and the need for professional care of them more in demand. The organization is certified and supported by the Bicycle Trade Association of Canada.

There is hardly any need to list all the buildings: residential, commercial, and industrial that hire janitors, caretakers, cleaners or the restaurants, hotels, health care institutions, schools that hire cooks. The cooks' training is a 17 week program; the janitors', caretakers' and cleaners' training are 8 week programs.

Other programs approved under the Private Career Colleges Act, 2005 are Industrial Skills (warehousing and logistics) and Early Childhood Educational Assistant.

LEF has a loan fund for students to finance their training, the Community Skills Development Fund. At the completion of training and upon finding employment students begin affordable monthly payments. As well there are spots reserved for those on Ontario Works or Employment Insurance.

*LEF is located at 116 Industry Street, or 1657 Weston Road. Website <http://lefca.org>. Phone 416-769-0830. The Weston Road location is open till 9:00PM and Saturday, their number is 416-244-8982. For our readers who have friends or family in London, Ontario or may be thinking of moving from the highly competitive Toronto labour market to an Ontario community where the cost of living is more affordable, check out*

## PATHWAYS SKILLS DEVELOPMENT CENTRE.

*<http://pathways.on.ca>. It offers training in Light Industry, Property Maintenance, Construction Technologies, and Administrative and Clerical Training.*

# A TRANSFORMATIONAL EXPERIENCE

BY HEATHER JUNKE

**P**ersonal and professional curiosity led Corporal Sheldon Pancham to Brock University's Adult Education program.

Several years ago, he enrolled in the first of the Adult Education core courses with the opportunity to attend classes at CFB Borden.

"I wanted to prepare myself for an opportunity to be an instructor at one of the training institutions on my base," he says. "I felt that this was somehow going to enable me to be a better 'teacher' when that opportunity came around."

And now, as he continues to study part-time toward a Bachelor of Education in Adult Education degree, he recognizes the experience has been "transformational" in scope.

"I came to the slow revelation that this personal journey was not about teaching; it became a journey about learning, knowledge, motivation, people, politics, relationships, and leadership," he says. "I credit Brock's Adult Education program with making a difference in my thoughts and actions. It takes into consideration my entire performance as soldier, technician, supervisor, team leader, instructor, and community volunteer."

"This program challenges and encourages practitioners to emerge as highly motivated leaders in their respective fields and communities."

Pancham has served 17 years in the military, both reserve and regular forces, and in various roles. He has been stationed in CFB Borden for six years as an electronic optronic technician. More recently, Pancham was promoted and posted to the Canadian Forces School of Electronics

and Engineering as an instructor."

"As a technician my main role was working with others to maintain the military's technical equipment," he explains. "The most interesting part of the job is working with others, teaching, and learning in small groups unique challenges present themselves. The role is dynamic requiring a technical background and a critical mind to provide the best solution and advice to those we serve."

He has excelled in this role and is one of the top electronic-optronic technicians at the rank of Corporal in Canada. Last year, he was awarded a Queen's Diamond Jubilee Medal in recognition of his contributions to the Defence community.

"The adult education courses have helped me understand principles of leadership that reaffirm that facilitators' and leaders' main purpose is to influence a desired outcome that involves learning to improve behaviours, skills, understanding, and even, social conditions," he says.

"My most important takeaway is to appreciate that different people have different learning styles, and there are many suitable alternatives to enable teammates to learn best in order to make their contribution to the effort."

*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>*

# GRANDPA SPRUCE

BY PATRICIA REID

**T**he one thread running through my childhood was isolation on father's trapline. We lived a nomadic lifestyle often moving on father's whims. We were hunters and gathers not farmers. Father hated farming.

How I yearned for friendships in my youth. I did have an older sister and a younger brother whom I sometimes liked but mostly fought with too much.

I wanted an independent friend that I could lean on when life became almost too hard to survive. I wanted someone to be on my side no matter what happened. I wanted an independent adult in my life. So in my anguish to have support in my life I turned to nature for companionship. In the end I adopted a spruce tree to help me in my life and to be my grandpa. I picked the largest defender I could locate.

I didn't know what a grandpa would be like as I had never had one in my life. I did know that I wanted a big support in my life. I adopted the largest spruce tree that I could find in the forest. It had large roots showing above the ground and the girth was so big that it would have taken three or four people to circle its trunk with their arms.

Sometimes I would visit it when food was so absent in my life that I needed to know someone was looking out for me. In winter, I would stand by it and put my arms around it as far as they would go and half crying ask it to help me survive. It gave me great

comfort to hug it. In summertime I would sit on the ground in between its large roots and lean my back against its strong trunk.

He was my safe place. It was as if he were hugging me. He was my protector and the one who loved me unconditionally no matter what I did or what was happening in my life. Sometimes he came to me in my dreams when I was so famished and he reassured me that I was going to survive.

If only I had known more about him I would have suffered less. I did learn that I could count on him to give me spruce gum which came in various colours and added joy to my life. If I had only known when I was little that his spring buds held vitamin C, he would have prevented the scurvy I suffered with as a child.

When I left father's trapline I entered a world of deciduous trees. I found them to be quite foreign to me, and so I searched out spruce trees. I would touch the tip of the trees when I was alone to get strength from them. I never told anyone what I did. It was between me and Grandpa Spruce. I still do that to this day. When I touch the tips of the spruce boughs I not only feel more strength coming into my body but it washes away my stress and like meditation, my body calms. Then I am able to make better decisions about what is happening in my life.

*Patricia Reid is a member of University in the Community alumni writing group.*



**Kathleen Wynne, MPP**  
Don Valley West

*All the best for the coming  
Holiday Season and a  
Happy New Year!*



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# SAEED TRANSFERS ELECTRICIAN SKILLS FROM IRAN TO CANADA



**R**ecently Canada has changed immigration policies to favour those in the skilled trades such as electricians, mechanics, plumbers etc. instead of professions such as doctors, engineers, lawyers. This is a story of Saeed who had electrical experience from Iran and is now an electrician here in Canada.

Saeed came to Canada in March 2008 from Mashhad, Iran. He had worked as an electrician's helper at the International Airport Mashhad right after high school. He went on to university and studied agriculture in Jorift, Iran before coming to Canada.

When he came to Canada he started to study English at Level 3 at Overland Learning Centre. Saeed studied at Overland for a year. One day when he went to Skills for Change with a friend, he saw an interesting program on their bulletin board. The program was Maintenance Elector Mechanic.

The program had three sections: job search, practice and work placement. He learned how to search for a job, write a resume and prepare for interviews. He learned some of the differences in being an electrician in Canada. He had a six week volunteer placement. Gaining Canadian work experience through volunteer work is invaluable as every company asks for Canadian work experience.

Like all those wanting to apprentice as an electrician, Saeed had to find an employer who would hire him and teach him on the job, how to be an electrician. So he sat down

with the Yellow Pages and starting calling. He called between fifty and sixty employers.

Since April 2010 he has been working. He needs to have about six years work experience before he can write the exam to become a licensed electrician. He was given about two years credit for his work experience at the International Airport Mashhad. He started in a basic position now he is a supervisor.

Like many newcomers, Saeed had put in time working at low paid jobs unrelated to his career, such as working at No Frills, before he found the program at Skills for Change which got him on his way to a skilled trade earning a good income.

The best news is Saeed has just bought a house. It took Saeed five and half years to settle into life in Canada. He gives thanks to God for his teachers, and the people who gave him the chance to show what he can do his boss.

*For the past 31 years, Skills for Change has pioneered programs that respond to the shifting immigration and workplace trends. For Saeed it was providing Canadian workplace experience; for others it is providing a mentor. The mentoring program matches internationally trained educated professionals (mentees) with individuals who have a strong background in the same professional field (mentors). Call Skills for Change at 416-658-3101 or go to their web site [www.skillsforchange.org](http://www.skillsforchange.org). They have four locations.*



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# LITERACY STUDENTS PETITION AGAINST CUTS TO LABOUR FORCE FUNDING: SECOND CAREER STUDENTS, ADD YOUR VOICE!

Our readers may be aware that the federal government has proposed a Canada Job Grant program which has received a lot of press recently, and has raised concern among most provincial governments. Provincial governments are against it because over \$600 million in federal funding would be pulled out of existing federal-provincial programs and redirected to the proposed Canada Job Grant Program.

For adult students this would mean that funding for very successful programs like Second Career and much needed literacy programs is at risk. These programs would shrink dramatically or might cease to exist if Ontario cannot come up with replacement funds.

The advantage that literacy students in Ontario have over students in programs like Second Career is that there are literacy networks throughout the province which include students as members as well as providers. Because of this, the voices of literacy students can be organized to protest whereas the Second Career students have no such networks.

Second Career funding has helped thousands of Ontarians, many of whom had been laid off from our shrinking manufacturing

sector, to re-train in new careers.

In a letter dated October 28th the Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy, one of the Ontario regional literacy networks, presented the Protect Literacy Funding Petition, pictured here, with over a thousand signatures on it to the federal Minister of Employment and Social Development Canada., the Hon. Jason Kenney.

You can make your voice heard by sending an email to the Minister at [jason.kenney@parl.gc.ca](mailto:jason.kenney@parl.gc.ca). detailing how you have benefitted from Literacy and Basic Skills programs, Second Career programs and others, requesting that the federal government continue its funding support for these important programs.

How would you know if your program comes under the current Canada-Ontario Labour Market agreement? Ask your program provider, or your local Member of Provincial Parliament. Each year Ontario receives \$195 million from the federal government for these programs. That would be lost if Canada Job Grant came into effect.

The Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy has a website that can help you find a literacy program in Toronto and York Region. [www.mtml.ca](http://www.mtml.ca) You can also call the Literacy Access

Network at 416-961-5557 or 1-877-464-0504. Programs available include help with basic skills, in reading, writing, math and computers. They are offered at colleges, school boards and at community centres and literacy agencies.

Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy

Protect Literacy Funding! Please Sign Petition

- The federal government has announced plans to take millions of dollars from literacy and other valuable training programs in Ontario to finance its “Canada Job Grant”
- Literacy is a foundational skill needed to succeed in skills training, to gain employment, and for participation in all areas of life
- We need more funding for literacy programs, not less!

We the undersigned call on the federal government to invest in literacy and to continue current Labour Market Agreement (LMA) funding with Ontario that supports valuable literacy and other training programs.

NAME	ADDRESS	CITY	POSTAL CODE	SIGNATURE

# THREE ESSENTIALS FOR CAREER SUCCESS: MENTORS, SPONSORS AND COACHES

BY LISA TRUDEL

If you are a job seeker, a question you might be asking is ‘how do I fit into a workplace that seems to be resistant instead of accepting?’

If you are a student, a question you might be asking is ‘how do I secure a job by the time I graduate?’

Both of these questions can have the same answer: understand the difference between three new essentials for career success and consider using all three as you move forward in your career. These three essentials are: mentors, sponsors and coaches. They are more important than ever before, especially in the current workplace where the reality is that there is an increase in contract part-time employment, while permanent full-time work seems to be more complicated to secure.

For example, in an article in the Toronto Star on October 26, 2013, which focused on how the retail sector is a growing part of Canada’s economic future, it was noted that “*retail work is now the largest employment sector in Canada*” and that “*82% of retail and sales clerks are over-educated for their jobs*” and that “*at least 1 in 4 part-time retail workers are classified as involuntary part-time meaning they would like to be working full-time.*”

In addition to understanding the reality of the local labour market, developing

networking skills, and learning how to target resumes and cover letters, job seekers can profit by learning the following definitions:

**Mentors: these are role-models that talk with you.** They have been vital for many years and often work in the same occupation you are aiming for. The relationship can be formal or casual and is basically a mutually beneficial relationship for the purpose of developing yourself or your career. Mentorship is sometimes defined as learning in a purposeful way, with the mentor providing valuable advice, building self-esteem and being a sounding board so you can make well-informed career decisions.

For example, mentors can be there for you if you are rejected after a job interview. They can help you gain back motivation and revive your self-worth. Rejection can be hurtful and mentors can help to ease the emotional pain by affirming the aspects of yourself you value and the best qualities you possess.

**Sponsors: these are role-models that talk about you.** They are very different from mentors. While mentors give, sponsors invest. They are usually someone influential at a more senior level within the company where you might have

an entry-level or mid-level position. Sponsors can help to persuade the decision-making process and they often take an interest in your career. Sponsors are powerfully positioned champions and can make a measureable difference for your career progress because they advocate on your behalf connecting you to important key players and promotions. In doing so, they make themselves look good.

Sponsors are not easy to find and sponsorship only works when it is a mutual relationship. In other words, you have to demonstrate that you will deliver an outstanding performance as your career advances within the company.

**Coaches: these are people who talk to you.** They are career navigators who can guide you with ideas for your resumes, cover letters, job search methods and educational choices. Career coaches offer instruction, either on an individual basis, or in a group format, focusing on specific goals in order for you to develop and attain your objectives. Many coaches assist you by creating achievable career plans and encourage you by monitoring your progress on a regular basis.

Unlike sponsors, career coaches are easy to find and for the job seeker who is

unemployed and fits the eligibility for service, Employment Ontario funds dozens of career centres in the GTA where you can meet with a career coach or career specialist free of charge. For example, the Centre for Education & Training, [www.tcet.com](http://www.tcet.com), offers 6 locations, with career specialists ready to coach you toward employment, provide information about the Youth Employment Fund, offer details about Second Career training and answer questions about your career planning.

Whether you are a mature job seeker, a recent graduate or a youth with no work experience, gaining knowledge about mentors, sponsors, allies and professional connections in the workplace is all valuable. The workplace might seem complex as it shifts between the demands for part-time and full-time workers, however a career coach can help you to plot a course and follow a new map using a vast range of career essentials.

*Lisa Trudel is a Career Specialist with the Centre for Education & Training. Lisa can be contacted at: [ltrudel@tcet.com](mailto:ltrudel@tcet.com)*





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16655 Yonge St., Unit 3  
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1. 76% of property administrators work full time.
2. Average pay per year is good
3. 51% of the jobs are in the Toronto GTA area.

So in the age of part work, minimum wage jobs and a very competitive labour market in Toronto and the GTA, Property Administrator jobs are worth an educational investment. Full time work, good pay, high demand!

### WHAT WOULD I LEARN IN A PROPERTY ADMINISTRATION COURSE?

1. Business Law focused on the *Residential Tenancies Act.* and *The Commercial Tenancies Act.*
2. Computer software applications for administration, bookkeeping and marketing.
3. Customer service, human resources management

Given the size and growth of many property management companies, and their work cannot be outsourced or affected by recessions. This training would get your foot in the door, where you then could move into more senior or specialized positions very quickly.

### WHERE WOULD I LOOK FOR WORK?

1. residential- apartments, condominiums,
2. commercial-retail malls, office buildings,
3. institutional- hospitals, nursing homes, seniors residences
4. industrial, government buildings

### WHAT WOULD I DO?

1. rent or lease property
2. contract cleaning, security
3. hire superintendents, contracts.
4. banking, accounting, payables.

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# PRECARIOUS EMPLOYMENT THREATENS ADULT EDUCATION

BY WENDY TERRY



*Jenny Carson and Supriya Latchman of Ryerson University highlighted cleaners as one of the most precarious forms of employment at the Toronto Workforce Innovation Group AGM October 24, 2013.*

On October 24th I attended the Annual General Meeting of the Toronto Workforce Innovation Group. The topic of the meeting was the Cost of Precarious Employment to the Community Well Being and included a panel presentation on this topic.

What is TWIG? What is Precarious Employment? How does it affect adult education?

The Toronto Workforce Innovation Group is Toronto's Workforce Planning Group, one of 252 Workforce Planning Boards across Ontario funded by the Ontario Ministry of Training,

College and Universities. In the December 2011 issue of Learning Curves, in the article "Toronto Group Offers Latest Information on City's Job Trends" Twig's Executive Director Karen Lior, said "Our job is to tell the story of our labour market. We focus on issues specific to Toronto, give resonance to labour market changes and issues, and we strive to make sure that information is accessible."

By going to TWIG's web site [www.workforceinnovation.ca](http://www.workforceinnovation.ca) you can find a wealth of labour market information, and looking at this is a good place to start when deciding what educational programs to take. The TOP Report, Toronto's Opportunities and Priorities Local Labour Market Update 2013 is found here. Also their Routes To Employment Resources which has Toronto-specific labour market information in Toronto's 10 leading employment sectors, and includes programs that help people into these sectors including training and employment.

In the TOPS report section, Overview of Labour Market Conditions, it was noted that "Toronto's labour force continues to face higher unemployment numbers rates than other Canadians (9.3% to 7.8%), due to the steady increase in part-time, contractual, employment." This is one definition of precarious work.

That brings us to the panel of at TWIG's AGM. Dr. Wayne Lewchuck, of McMaster University presented some findings from the report "It's More Than Poverty" prepared by the Poverty and Employment Precarity in Southern

Ontario (PEPSO) research project. Wayne is one of the report author. and TWIG is part of this joint university-community (ICURA) project. You can find this report on [www.pepsoc.ca](http://www.pepsoc.ca)

What is precarious work – temporary, part-time, on call, contract, no benefits jobs – not permanent not full-time. These are some of the findings: only 60% of GTA workers today have stable, secure jobs; precarious employment has increased by nearly 50% in the last 20 years. The report notes that "participants in precarious employment often report uncertainty about having work in the near future, what it will pay and what their hours will be."

The report goes on to say that "this type of uncertainty can affect household income, well-being and community connections." The report did not identify participating in adult education as a community connection that would be affected but I made the connection while listening to the presentation.

Adults have participated in adult education largely as part-time evening students since the 1960's. In fact there are more part-time students taking one course, one night a week, than full time students taking four or so courses a week. The parking lots are fuller on campus at night than they are during the daytime. Going to school part-time was a way to move on up at work, to do better.

This adult student lifestyle requires that you had the same night free for several months, some disposable funds to pay for

tuition, books, transportation, babysitting and some food between work and class. If you are working on call and have low and unstable income, how can you manage this.

It has always puzzled me that although we talk about a lifelong learning society we rarely if ever see the costs and benefits of adult learning as a factor in studies on employment or well-being.

The cost of educating one's children is regularly factored into household income and expenditure studies but not the costs of continuing to educate yourself throughout the years. Lifelong learning despite the necessity of continuing to learn is not factored into these studies.

In fact, adult education is often seen as a default if you can't find work not as an ongoing activity despite the rhetoric about lifelong learning.

Adult students rarely have associations that lobby for them but educational providers have associations which lobby. They need to think about what their income would look like without the tuition from adult students, and speak up, facilitate forums for their adult students to speak up and work with community groups to help those adults, who can't afford the time and money to go to school, to be heard.

The continued growth in precarious employment threatens adult education.

## SECOND LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT NOW CENTRALIZED

### WHO, WHAT, WHERE AND WHEN

CONTINUED FROM 1

#### WHO?

Anyone who is 18 years of age or older, who was born outside Canada and whose first language is neither English nor French, is eligible to make an appointment for assessment.

That includes Canadian citizens who were born outside Canada whose first language is neither English nor French, permanent residents, landed immigrants, convention refugees, refugee claimants, protected persons and holders of a letter of initial approval of permanent residence from Citizenship and Immigration Canada.

You are ineligible if you are a Canadian-born citizen whose first language is English or French.

#### WHAT?

Assessments (in either English or French) are based on an evaluation of your listening, speaking, reading and writing skills. Your assessment can take anywhere between one and a half and four hours so you'll need to plan your time with that in mind.

The most current information on the assessment process is available on the Y's main page: [www.ymcagta.org/language](http://www.ymcagta.org/language). Recently, they have added a very helpful FAQ section that lists a number of commonly asked questions and answers: [www.ymcagta.org/en/newcomers/you-arrived/language/faq/index.html](http://www.ymcagta.org/en/newcomers/you-arrived/language/faq/index.html)

To book an appointment, please call 416 925-5462 between 9 am and 5 pm, Monday to Friday.

Once your assessment is complete, you will be referred to a government-funded program at your level and at a time and

location that is convenient for you.

Programs to which you might be referred include government-funded ESL or FSL instruction offered by the Toronto public and separate school boards, Language Instruction to Newcomers in Canada (LINC) or LINC Home Study. FYI, LINC Home Study is a program for those who cannot attend regular classes. The curriculum allows students to study online or by correspondence and to work one-on-one with a certified teacher.

More advanced students may be eligible for Higher-Level Language Training (HLLT), an umbrella term for two federally-funded language programs: Occupation Specific Language Training (OSLT) and Enhanced Language Training (ELT). Their provincial 'equivalent,' is called Specialized Language Training (SLT). For comprehensive information about higher-level language training, go to: <http://torontowestlip.ca/learning-english/>

Generally speaking, to qualify for OSLT you must be assessed at an intermediate level and have training or experience in one of several 'high-demand' career sectors, including: Business, Health Sciences, Child and Youth Worker, Construction Trades, Automotive Trades, Policing and Security. Note that OSLT courses are also offered free-of-charge at workplaces and colleges. Check this website for the most up-to-date information: <http://co-oslt.org>

ELT courses offer advanced-level language skills that are job-specific. These courses are ideally suited for internationally-trained professionals and tradespeople. Further information on ELT can be found at a number of public sites including

the Toronto Public Library, TDSB and the TCDSB. Here's the website for ELT courses at the TDSB: [www.tdsb.on.ca/AdultLearners/LearnEnglish/EnhancedLanguageTraining.aspx](http://www.tdsb.on.ca/AdultLearners/LearnEnglish/EnhancedLanguageTraining.aspx)

#### WHERE?

All assessments will take place at one of the Y's four Language Assessment and Referral Centres in Greater Toronto. Remember to call 416 925-5462 first to make an appointment. Central YMCA (Downtown Toronto): 20 Grosvenor Street, 3rd floor  
North York YMCA: 4580 Dufferin Street, 2nd floor  
Scarborough YMCA: 10 Milner Business Court, Suite 600  
Etobicoke YMCA: 1530 Albion Road, Unit 83

#### WHEN?

Depending upon where your assessment will take place. As of the end of November, hours are as follows:  
Central YMCA: Mon. Tues. Thurs. Fri. 8:30 am - 4:30 pm; Wed. 8:30 am - 8:00 pm; Sat. 10 am - 2 pm.  
North York YMCA: Mon. 8:30 am - 8:00 pm, Tues. to Friday 8:30 am - 4:30 pm.  
Scarborough YMCA: Mon. Wed. Thurs. Fri. 8:30 am - 4:30 pm; Tues. 8:30 am - 7:00 pm.  
Etobicoke YMCA: Mon. to Fri. 8:30 am - 4:30 pm.

It is no secret that provincial and federal government spending is under scrutiny. By centralizing how clients access government-funded second language programs, Citizenship and Immigration Canada and Ontario's

Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration will be better equipped to measure and evaluate second language instruction programs.

Keep in mind that even if you are unclear about the new, single assessment and referral system at the Y, you can still walk into your neighbourhood community centre, or a local, government-funded ESL/FSL class. They will help you make an appointment.

The YMCA also provides a wide range of settlement services for newcomers, including community programs and/or educational and training institutions. Contact The Newcomer Information Centre: <http://www.ymcagta.org/en/newcomers/you-arrived/newcomer-info-centre/index.html>

For those who are interested in postsecondary studies but want to upgrade their language skills, remember that colleges and universities offer bridging programs and transitional year programs. See back issues of Learning Curves: <http://weacanada.ca/articles.asp> or contact:

**University of Toronto:**  
Millie Rotman Shime Academic Bridging Program: 416 978-7487  
[www.wdw.utoronto.ca/bridging](http://www.wdw.utoronto.ca/bridging)  
Transitional Year Program: 416 978-6832 [www.utoronto.ca/typ/](http://www.utoronto.ca/typ/)  
**Ryerson University:**  
Spanning the Gaps: 416 979-5000 x 2291  
[www.spanningthegaps@ryerson.ca](mailto:www.spanningthegaps@ryerson.ca)  
**York University:**  
Transition Year Program: 416 736-5782  
[www.transitionyear.info.yorku.ca/](http://www.transitionyear.info.yorku.ca/)





**University in the Community** is a free, humanities-based program for low-income residents in the city of Toronto. It is an initiative of the Workers' Educational Association (a non-profit, non-partisan, charitable organization that has

promoted life-long learning since 1918) and is supported by Senior College and Innis College at the University of Toronto. On October 30th, UiC students visited The School of Graphic Communications Management at Ryerson

University where Professor Ian Baitz presented a fascinating introduction to the history and development of print.

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**Oshawa Campus 905 438-0570 & 905 626-6631**

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**Ajax Campus 905 683-7713 & 905 626-6631**

**Whitby Centennial Building Campus ESL & Linc – 289 481-1226**

**Welcome Centre ESL & Linc - 289-481-1336**

**Adult Upgrading LBS Program 905 438-0570 Ext. 8444**

**International Languages 905 683-7713**

**Interest Courses - 905 683-7713**

# PROFESSIONAL NEWCOMERS TALK TO CANADIAN PEERS

**M**entoring for Change is a Skills for Change program that matches newcomer professionals with a Canadian peer. A mentor is one who shares knowledge with a less experienced colleague. Although newcomers have lots of experience, knowing how things work in Canada is not always clear; thus being matched with a Canadian peer is an invaluable opportunity.

Mentors provide information on labour market trends, accreditation and licensing procedures, and they offer support and guidance to help newcomers settle in Canada and ultimately find employment in their profession.

This program uses e-mentoring, which allows participants to email back and forth as questions come to mind.

Skills for Change also offers a mentoring program for those who want to start their own business, Seniors Mentoring Entrepreneurs. Seniors with

experience in small business, retail, business to business (B2B) provide specialized support in areas such as e-Business or small scale manufacturing.

Mentors who have experience in business start-ups and entrepreneurship help internationally trained professionals who have a business idea or a draft business plan to bring their plans to life step by step. This personal mentoring is supported by legal workshops, and business start-up workshops.

Through workshops and mentoring, participants will be able to determine risks and develop tactics to alleviate them, to determine market trends and potential competitors, to set goals and priorities for business stability, growth and prosperity.

If you want to be mentored or become a mentor contact Jin Olberg, [olberg@skillsforchange.org](mailto:olberg@skillsforchange.org) or 416-658-3101 ext 242.

# HOW TO GIVE THE GIFT OF LEARNING FOR CHRISTMAS

## GIVE YOUR LOVED ONE

- books or a tech gadget for a course.
- a coffee gift card for an after class pick me up.
- Give your loved one time to learn
- Promise to babysit while they work on a project.
- Provide a few homemade meals to help save time
- Proof read their papers or tutor them in your speciality

**Adults learners, tell your loved ones  
what would help you learn**

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lack of enrollment.**





The many faces of the stories behind ILC as they have their Graduation photo taken on June 2013. Image taken by CanGrad Studios.

# STARTING ANEW WITH INDEPENDENT LEARNING

BY GELEK BADHEYTSANG

**L**iving in a new country can sometimes mean more than leaving your friends or personal belongings behind. For some, it means starting their careers from scratch and leaving their original aspirations behind as well.

Such was the case for Ilda. After arriving in Toronto in 2009 from Cameroon, Ilda felt a need to reassess her career goals. “I wanted to be an accountant at first,” the 28 year-old, mother of two says. “But I changed my mind and decided to become a nurse because I felt that I could have a more flexible work schedule, and be available to look after my family.”

Even though Ilda had a Bachelor's Degree from her native country, she found out that in order for her to pursue her nursing studies, she needed to fill in those gaps with Ontario high school courses.

She checked her Cameroonian credentials

with the International Credential Assessment Service of Canada (ICAS) and was told that she needed high school Science and English credits. Unsure about how to proceed, a friend pointed her to the Independent Learning Centre (ILC).

“The ILC was perfect,” Ilda says. “All of the prerequisite credits that I needed were offered by the ILC, so I registered right away.”

With help from her husband, Ilda registered with the ILC to take the four high school courses she needed to enter University. She completed her courses in eight months, with an average in the mid-eighties.

“I was so happy!” exclaims Ilda. Even though the courses were new to her, the way the courses were designed and the support from ILC's staff helped her excel in her distance learning.

“I thought the science courses

would be really hard, but the way ILC broke down the materials helped me understand what I was studying and reflect on what I'd learned,” says Ilda.

“The courses we offer and the independence that comes with the ILC model is a tremendous opportunity for many Ontarians, especially those who are new parents or new Canadians,” says Sarah Irwin, Managing Director of the ILC. “Our students are proof that getting a high school diploma is possible. Regardless of your circumstance, you don't have to turn your life upside down to complete your high school education.”

With her Ontario high school credits in hand, Ilda was accepted into the nursing program at Toronto's George Brown College. She will eventually graduate from Ryerson University. University and her goals won't

end with a nursing degree. “I want to become a nurse practitioner,” says Ilda. “My hope is to work in the pediatric unit of a hospital.”

Sometimes, it turns out, starting from scratch isn't as bad as it seems.

The ILC is Ontario's designated provider of distance education. Courses are designed to help individuals of all ages seeking to complete their high school qualifications or upgrade their marks for post-secondary enrolment. Additionally, the ILC is the sole provider of the GED Test, which awards successful test takers with an Ontario High School Equivalency Certificate. ILC high school courses are available in English and French. Registration fee is \$40 per course.

Visit [www.ILC.org](http://www.ILC.org) for more information.

\* Last name withheld upon request



*Lourdes B graduated from Business and Technical Training College in the Computerized Accounting program and happily found work in the accounting field.*

# BUSINESS & TECHNICAL TRAINING COLLEGE DIPLOMAS, CUSTOMIZED TRAINING BOTH AT BTT AND ON-SITE TRAINING

**O**ne of the advantages volunteering for Learning Curves is you get to find out about educational opportunities that you would otherwise never come across. In fact, our mission is to pass these findings onto our readers so they can better choose a course that meets their needs.

Recently I spent one Saturday morning with Ashton Persaud of Business & Technical Training College which is a career college registered under the Private Career Colleges Act in Ontario. They run courses on Saturday mornings because often this is the time when students are free to study.

Business and Technical Training offers Diplomas in Computer Networks, Network Engineer Specialist. Ashton is a trained network engineer, having studied at

the University of New Brunswick, Ryerson University. In between, she worked in the US and then in Toronto. Like many who start their own school, Ashton's passion for his field and teaching comes shining through.

Not only does BTT offer certified Diploma programs but they do customized training for individual students on site and most interestingly customized worksite training. Like myself, our readers have no doubt taken courses that while useful are limited in helping us understand the system at work which never seems to quite work the same as the one in class. The Diploma is not what we really want and we need to understand what we have to work with every day.

BTT will come on site, train your staff individually and clear up problems with your

computer systems that could be making it difficult for your staff. Wow. Ashton clearly takes great satisfaction in this aspect of BTT's training. To help a student learn what has frustrated them, to go on site and help an employer and clear up systems and train the staff, raises job satisfaction all around.

BTT not only offers Diplomas and training in Computer Networks but also in Accounting (QuickBooks, SAP Financials, Simply Accounting), ACCPAC, Medical Office Assistant and Business Administration. So they will be able to help you get certified, customize training for you or your worksite.

# LEARNING THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Meet Laurie, David, Elaine, Leanne, Shuqing and Dawn – just a few of the people who have achieved inspiring success with the help of our Continuing Education courses. The skills, connections and confidence they gained made it possible for them to achieve their goals. Read their stories on our website, and see the difference you can make in your own life with George Brown College.

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PLUS DISTANCE EDUCATION



**Laurie**  
Social Media Marketing



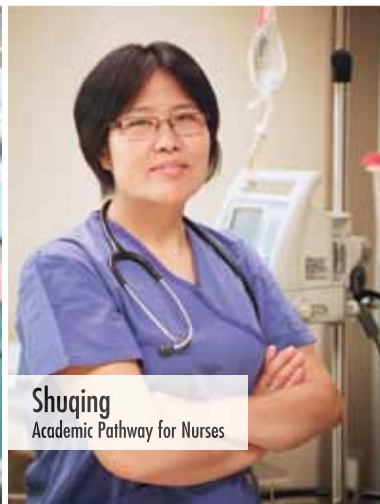
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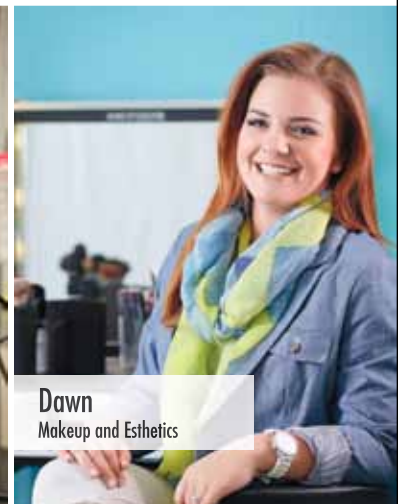
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Makeup and Esthetics



[coned.georgebrown.ca](http://coned.georgebrown.ca)  
Register now for courses!



# DIGITAL PHOTOGRAPHY IN THREE SHORT LESSONS

By Andrei Sajeniouk

## Lesson 1 - Digital Cameras

You got a camera? Be proud! It is a powerful and versatile state-of-the-art electronic device. It takes pictures and stores them in its internal memory as a long sequence of numbers (digits). Hence the name – “Digital Camera”. Because the picture in its pure form is just a lot of precise numbers, it can be copied or transferred to other digital devices (computers, printers, CDs/DVDs, the Internet Servers) without quality loss. There is also a lot of software to do digital photo processing: you can organize, crop, edit, improve and merge pictures you've taken. A digital camera itself can be considered as a small computer; it has its own video processor (CPU) with control buttons and LCD screen.

Despite the fact that it is rather complex and sophisticated from a technology point of view, it is easy to use from the users' perspective. Actually, a camera is as complex as you need it to be: you can learn your camera in ten minutes if your needs are simple and basic; at the same time, you can spend months trying to comprehend its controls, menu options, shooting settings if you are willing to get the most from it.

However, a digital camera is just a portable device, an accessory; the main part of your digital photo lab is a Personal Computer; the digital camera is connected to the PC; actually, it is a PC's small brother.

As soon as you transfer your pictures to the PC, your possibilities are endless: you can edit photos, share them through the Internet, print, display on a big TV screen, create your own video discs and much more.

## Cameras Specs

There are three essential digital cameras parameters you should pay attention to: Optical zoom, Resolution and LCD



CameraAd

## Digital Camera Ad

Resolution is, basically, the picture quality; it is measured in MP (megapixels); mega means million. So, the higher the MP number, the sharper your photo. You can see from the picture that this particular Kodak camera has 8.2 MP resolution. Optical zoom is 3X. This number is quite typical for entry-level affordable cameras. That means you can bring the object three times

closer to your eyes than it is in reality. More expensive and professional cameras may have their zoom from 5X to 15X. Digital Cameras have also digital zoom, which allows you to move objects even closer, but the quality will be worse. So, digital zoom is not as important as optical zoom. Finally, the LCD screen is usually used as a viewfinder; you see through the picture preview before you shoot. That's why the bigger it is, the more detailed and sharper the preview. Also the LCD screen works for the camera as a monitor for a computer; you use it to access the camera menus and options. Pay attention, please, there may be also a normal viewfinder (it is very similar to the old film camera viewfinder). A normal old-fashioned viewfinder is optional; many modern cameras don't have it. However, it is a nice-to-have feature, because LCD screens may look dim in very sunny outdoor conditions. The other nice-to-have feature is the digital camera's ability to shoot movie clips with sound.

## Memory Cards

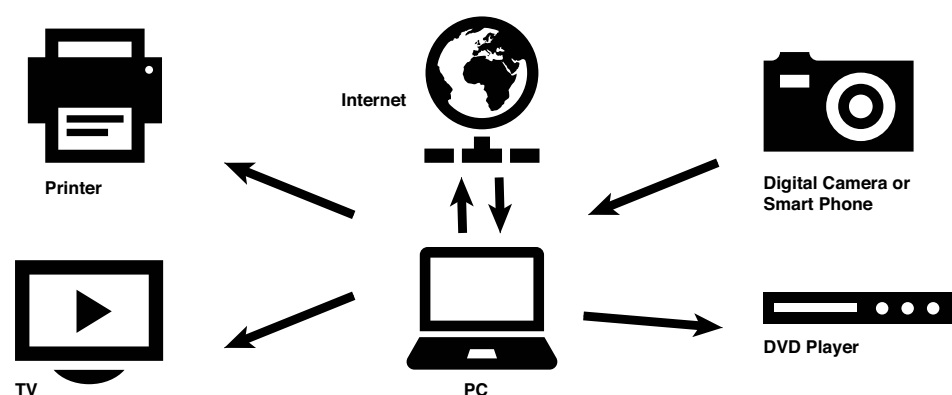
Any camera may have a built-in memory to store the pictures; however, the size of this memory is rather limited and you can usually save about 40-50 pictures only. So, you need to buy a separate memory card and insert it into your camera's special slot. The size of those memory cards varies from 1 GB to 32 GB. Let's say, the average size photo taken is 1 MB. You can easily calculate that you can have from 1,000 (1 GB card) to 32,000 (32 GB card) photos at the same time in the camera memory. If you don't travel a lot, or if you don't leave your computer with your camera in it for a long period of time, even a 1 GB card would be satisfactory. If, later on, you feel like it is not enough, you may upgrade the memory card (replace it by a bigger capacity card), because it is a removable component. Digital Camera Memory Cards are not standardized; different camera manufacturers produce different types. The most popular type of card is called SD.

## Cameras vs. Smartphones

Many students ask me, “Do I really need a digital camera, if I already have a smartphone?” My answer is you need both. Those two devices complement each other. A digital camera photos usually have higher resolution. Also you have optical zooming on a camera (a smart phone doesn't have lenses and optical zooming). The disadvantage is a digital camera's physical size – quite often it is a lot bigger than your pocket. A Smartphone is always with you, so, it is an excellent device to take “quick and hot” shots.

*Lesson 2 will be in the next issue of Learning Curves*

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# 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**

*Dear Elcee*

*I am finally back in school after a twenty year absence. I am attending a two year college program in Early Childhood Education and I love it. The only "fly in the ointment" is that I have to write essays. My instructors tell me that I don't have a good understanding of the essay format and along with that my poor spelling and grammar skills are bringing my average down. I really need some extra help.*

*Lisa in Leaside*

Hi Lisa;

Wow, the dreaded ESSAY! You are not alone in finding writing essays to be a challenge in college. Many college students suffer from "essayphobia" (note; made up word!). The good news? There is help out there.

Every public college and university in Toronto has a student department that offers both one on one and group tutoring in a variety of subjects (English and Math based being the most common). The best way to access this is to contact your local Student Services office. You decide if you wish to do one-on-one or group tutoring or maybe both!

Think about forming a study group. Have you ever seen the TV show "Community"? They formed a study group but don't worry. The hijinks they get up to are for TV only! Study groups are often formed in college to tackle a particular subject area. You may find that other people in your class could also use the support of a study group.

For those readers who are attending secondary school or have children in secondary school there are free tutoring supports available. The Toronto Public Library has Homework Help Clubs throughout the city and TV Ontario offers online tutoring at [www.ilc.org](http://www.ilc.org).

There are private tutors who charge an average of \$25 per hour for support and if you can manage this on your budget it may be an option for you but I strongly recommend that you ask around and get references from other students before going this route.

There are many online writing supports;

I love the website Grammar Monster ([www.grammar-monster.com](http://www.grammar-monster.com)). It's a great site to brush up on your spelling and grammar. It's full of little tips and tricks which make it fun to use. (Want to know the difference between except and accept? Think of the EX in except as Excludes...).

An essay site I recommend is [www.essaywritinghelp.com](http://www.essaywritinghelp.com). Another is <http://lklivingston.tripod.com/essay>. Be sure to check out her links to other sites. The University of Toronto also has a great page for writers, [www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/further-resources/reference-tools](http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/further-resources/reference-tools).

For help in other subjects including math, chemistry and physics, nothing beats [www.khanacademy.org](http://www.khanacademy.org). I have recommended this site before and now even U of T is recommending this.

On a final note, please do not use essay-writing services. I can certainly understand the temptation but there is nothing to gain and possibly everything to lose. Developing good writing skills is a skill for life. A good writer is an asset to any organization and employers will often look at these skills when considering promotion.

Good luck. With a smidgen of the above, a dash of patience and a tad of determination your phobia of essays, will be a thing of the past.

Elcee



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