

# LEARNING CURVES

CONTINUING EDUCATION • JOB TRAINING

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## NOTE TO SELF:

### REGISTER FOR FALL COURSES THIS SUMMER!

**D**on't let yourself get caught in the all-too-familiar trap of waiting until your children have gone back to school before thinking about your own continuing education. Too often, waiting can result in disappointment: finding out that a course is full, for instance, or that it has been cancelled simply because it was short a few registrations needed to be given the go ahead.

Registration for fall adult education courses begins in July or early August. Rather than running a schedule that is separate from day programs, as was typical in the past, adult education programs are now generally

synchronized with day programs. This means that all classes start right after Labour Day.

Why is this so? For one thing, more and more "traditional" full-time day students are now choosing to study on a part-time basis. They often do this to cover the cost of increasing tuition fees. For another, "non-traditional" students, those who typically attend classes part-time during the evening or on the weekend, are now choosing to register for full-time studies during the day.

The number of full-time students has increased in step with the increasing number of

people who have been laid off, or whose so-called 'life-long' job has suddenly disappeared. As the traditional full-time day and non-traditional part-time night students start to look more and more alike, school schedules are becoming unified. Since many fall courses now start immediately following Labour Day, the registration process begins in the summer.

Interestingly, there is one way that traditional and non-traditional students are

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# NOTE TO SELF: REGISTER FOR FALL COURSES THIS SUMMER!

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becoming increasingly different. Baby boomers, the large post-war demographic cohort that drove the part-time degree market during the seventies and eighties, now drives the second-career market. As new technologies and changes in the labour market have taken hold, many baby boomers are choosing to retire but adding learning for interest courses to their resumes. Some take a general interest (non credit) course offered by a community organization, or school. Others register for one course in a credit program perhaps on an audit basis (no course work required) purely for interest's sake. Getting the paper work done for this option may take more time. In some cases, you may have to be admitted to the program to take that one course. So start now!

There have been several recent changes to the registration process for English classes for newcomers. If you are new to ESL, LINC or ELT classes, you must be assessed at a central testing site before you proceed to your local site

to register for a class. It is a good idea to sign up for the assessment in the summer when the centres are not as busy. Then you will be ready on September 8th when classes start. Even though these programs have continuous intake, starting at the beginning of the term is far less disorienting than joining a class later.

Make sure to give yourself time to shop. Unlike high school students, who have the advantage of career counseling services on site and education fairs where several post-secondary education providers come to their schools, adults have to go out and shop alone. Shopping around is more complex for adults because of their varied work and educational experiences. Get ahead of the game and start the process in the summer!

By starting early you have time to go to orientation sessions or to contact a program officer. This not only helps you find a course that better fits your plans but could also help you understand how you could get credit for prior education and work experience. This is especially

important for newcomers. The educational institutions need more time to evaluate your prior learning. Give them the time they need to help you by starting to shop in the summer.

Many continuing education programs have open admissions so you do not have to go through an admissions process to register. Open admission courses are easy to register in. You just have to pay the course fees. But if you want to take a course in a program that requires you to be admitted, you will need more time to gather information such as transcripts from previous education.

Giving yourself time will also allow you to track down and apply for financial assistance for your tuition. Yes! Even part-time students are eligible for assistance. General interest courses, such as TDSB Learn 4 Life courses, offer a \$10 fee for those on social assistance as well as discounts for seniors. In the spring, 2013 issue of Learning Curves, Joanne MacKay-Bennett outlined some of these options in a front page

article called, "Ask and You May Receive." See: [www.learning-curves.ca](http://www.learning-curves.ca)

Although distance education courses used to compose a small percentage of course offerings, they now make up a good percentage of available courses. Some of these have term start dates, some continuous intake. Do remember to check that information on the provider's website. Here your choice includes not only the Toronto providers of distance education but all providers of distance education in Ontario and Canada. If you are taking a course from a distance education provider towards a program of study (certificate, diploma, degree) at what is called your "home" program, make sure the home program will accept the distance education course before you sign up. This takes time! Can you guess what I am going to say next? Right! Start the ball rolling in the summer months!

*See page 10 for List of Registration Start Dates*

## REMEMBER SPRING TERM START DATES RUN THROUGH JUNE, JULY AND AUGUST.

**Call the program department for  
courses you are interested in  
to see what courses they have  
starting in June, July and August.**



## DON'T WAIT TILL AFTER LABOUR DAY TO REGISTER FOR THE FALL TERM CLASSES.

If you wait, the class may be full or cancelled for the lack of a few more registrations.

**Registrations for the Fall Term 2015 start in July  
and some in August**

Information Sessions for the 2015-2016 year are  
held in August

**Call to find out dates now!**





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\*additional assessments may be required

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**Contact:** 416.491.5050 ext. 44762  
irene.demian1@senecacollege.ca

Youth to Postsecondary is supported by the Catherine & Maxwell Meighen Foundation.

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# SENECA PROVIDES PATHWAY TO YOUTH



The Jane and Finch community is a vibrant, racially and culturally diverse community in northwest Toronto. With a population close to 100,000, more than 62 per cent of residents are newcomers whose first language is not English. For many of these residents, limited English language skills and the inability to find work in their field of international training leave many with few options beyond "survival", minimum-wage jobs and long hours of work. The impact on families with such work schedules manifests itself in an increased incidence of "latch-key kids". These children return from school to an empty home, because their parent(s) are away at work, or when children are at home with little parental supervision. With many parents doing shift work or several part-time jobs to make ends meet, this leaves little time to help their children at home to acquire the essential academic skills necessary for school success. As a result, many children from these families struggle academically.

Due to the challenges experienced in the home and at school, many students from this community may not consider, or have the opportunity to attend, a post secondary institution. Instead, they are at risk for street-engaged lives, chronic unemployment or, at best, low paying and unskilled positions in the labour market.

Seneca and its partners in the literacy sector recognize that through collaboration, opportunities may be created which provide the upgrading and life skills training that make it possible for young adults to achieve their goal of a college education and improved career and life prospects. The Youth to Post Secondary (Y2P) project was created as the solution to this situation—an intervention to

address an identified gap in academic supports and services and to re-engage youth from economically disadvantaged communities.

Y2P is a project geared to preparing young adults who are out of school and out of work, to be successful in a college bridging program. The project provides a variety of activities for youth, primarily between the ages of 18 and 25, focused on strengthening their foundational academic skills and providing the essential life skills needed for working, learning and living.

The Y2P project addresses the academic under-preparedness of participants who wish to take those first steps towards post secondary and apprenticeship programs by providing students remediation in math and English, as well as helping them to develop essential life skills. The program operates out of Seneca's York Gate Campus in northwest Toronto. Supported by a donation from the Catherine and Maxwell Meighen Foundation, learning resources, workshop facilitation, program coordination and mentoring support are all part of the program. Seneca provides instructional support, facilities, administrative support services and access to a computer lab at the York Gate Campus. The Toronto District School Board provides a qualified literacy practitioner to support academic learning activities. One unique feature of the program is the involvement of senior Seneca students from the Social Service Worker program who provide support to learners as mentors and tutors. The Y2P program is free for participants.

Inquiries concerning program eligibility and the September intake may be directed to: 416.491.5050 ext. 44762  
irene.demian1@senecacollege.ca

# LIFELONG LEARNING AND COMMUNITY HUBS

BY GRAHAM HOLLINGS

It is exciting to see that the Community Hubs Advisory Group, established by Premier Kathleen Wynne and chaired by Karen Pitre, is currently engaged in consultations across the province. Let's hope it leads to a fulsome discussion of the ways the province can further support opportunities for lifelong learning. If we are talking about schools as community hubs – and many of our schools are great community hubs – lifelong learning has to be part of the picture. We cannot meaningfully discuss lifelong learning in our schools – and community hubs – without discussing funding and policy barriers.

In the Spring issue of Learning Curves, I wrote a piece entitled “Uncounted Adults: Toronto’s ‘Under-utilized’ schools”. That article focused on one issue and its ramifications: Adults are not counted by the provincial formula for determining school utilization rates. This “omission” is worrisome in the context of pressure to close “under-utilized” schools. The Community Hubs Advisory Group needs to be talking about this issue.

Many schools across the province provide

a wide range of lifelong learning opportunities. And many of these schools are recognized as great community hubs in their neighbourhoods because of the additional programs – on top of elementary and secondary school programs – offered. These “additional” programs include: school-based childcare centres; Parenting & Family Literacy Centres (which serve both pre-school children and their adult caregivers); Adult English as a Second Language programs (Adult ESL, Language Instruction for Newcomers, and Enhanced Language Training); Adult Literacy & Basic Skills (aka Essential Skills Upgrading); Adult high school credit programs; and General Interest/Seniors’ Daytime programs.

At the Toronto District School Board alone, programs that serve adults are the core of a number of great community hubs. It is important to keep in mind that adult learners are often the parents and/or caregivers of the children and youth in our schools. Here are a few examples of these community hubs:

Alexander Muir Gladstone Public School has a childcare centre, a Parenting & Family Literacy Centre and

three full-time Adult ESL classes

John Polanyi Collegiate Institute accommodates a high school, the North York Harvest Food Bank and, in a separate wing, both Adult ESL and Adult Literacy classes

Overland Adult Learning Centre, closed as an elementary school around 1980 and then “reopened” as an adult learning centre, offers both Adult ESL and General Interest/Seniors Daytime programs six days a week

Mimico Adult Learning Centre, another “closed” school, accommodates a childcare centre, Adult ESL, Adult Literacy, and General Interest/Seniors’ Daytime programs

While community hubs have been discussed for many years, the discussion has often focussed on different terms. The current dialogue seems to focus more on the co-location of services. The webpage for the Community Hubs Advisory Group asks, “What is a community hub?” and provides this definition: “A community hub can be a school, a neighbourhood centre or another public space that offers coordinated services such as education, health care and social services. Delivering

coordinated public services through community hubs will ensure these services better meet the needs of children, youth, seniors and others”.

While co-location of services is an important goal, adult education does not figure prominently in this framing of the issue. Adult education should be at the core of the discussion. There are already many shining examples of community hubs – such as the schools listed above – and these community hubs could probably be improved by also offering health care and social services. But it would be tragic if we lost sight of the lifelong learning opportunities at the core of many wonderful community hub schools and failed to address the funding and policy barriers that can jeopardize these lifelong learning opportunities.

To learn more about, and provide input to, the Community Hubs Advisory Group, visit [www.ontario.ca/communityhubs](http://www.ontario.ca/communityhubs)

You can also send a written submission to: [community.hubs@ontario.ca](mailto:community.hubs@ontario.ca)

*See sample written submission on page 15*

## Adult Continuing Education Programs for the



### DURHAM CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

Check out the following learning  
opportunities – Serving Durham Region

[www.con-ed.ca](http://www.con-ed.ca)

**High School Credit (OSHAWA CAMPUS; AJAX CAMPUS)**

**Personal Support Worker,  
ESL, Linc, Computers for ESL**

**Correspondence (at home learning)**

**Adult Upgrading - Literacy and Basic Skills (MTCU Funded)**

**Night school, Summer school, E-Learning, Computer Courses**

**Microsoft Office Specialist Training**

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

**Re-engagement Program - 905 438-0570 Ext. 8448**

**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**

## Happy Canada Day!



**Kathleen Wynne, MPP**  
Don Valley West

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# SONIA’S APPRENTICESHIP

A SHORT STORY BY MINA WONG

Written with permission from Sonia Neumann.

For several years, I would see Sonia’s welcoming smile behind a local library’s reference desk. A young woman who loved reading and assisting people, Sonia would talk about literature and music with me when checking out my loans.

She asked me one day last spring, “Do you know anything about working as a counselor?”

Wanting more clarity, I probed, “What type of counselor?”

She asked tentatively, “How about, church counselor?”

Knowing her Lutheran roots, I asked, “What kind of church? Like yours?”

With more conviction this time, Sonia explained, “Yeah, like helping people who need someone to talk with.”

Sonia’s thoughts reminded me of chaplains offering solace to people in distress, including one I had seen praying with a tearful traveller at Pearson Airport.

I suggested, “Some people study theology.”

A year before that, Sonia had cared for her sick mother. Instead of exhaustion from palliative demands toward the end of Joan’s life, Sonia actually felt grateful for her apprenticeship in life and death. From nursing Joan, she had learned a lot about the human experience.

That insight had given Sonia the

resilience to care for others through her own grief: “I helped Mom go peacefully, and I comforted everyone when she went.”

Sonia also told me about her unusual upbringing. “Since my father left when I was ten, there was just Mom, me, and two gals who were like mothers.”

About the two women, Sonia explained, “When we lived together, Nat and Julie had already done the ‘marriage thing’ – in their own words. They never remarried, and I got two additional smart moms who really loved me.”

That day, I learned more about her three doting mothers with good careers, and who had always let her make her own decisions as long as she could live with the consequences. Having always been drawn to the arts, Sonia chose English literature at Victoria University after high school.

Then came Sonia’s very first mention of a husband. “But I didn’t graduate. Two months into my last year, I got married.”

Sonia laughed at her own ‘marriage thing’. “I married Josh against everyone’s advice. We probably needed just a month to skinny-dip in the Caribbean, but no, we thought we were in love, and then love went poof after the trip.”

After annulling her marriage, Sonia settled down to be an adult.

“I was too embarrassed to move back home. Mom didn’t push me either way. So, at twenty-two, with no degree, I found this library job and an apartment.”

Sonia’s uneventful life went on until a phone call from Joan.

“I was twenty-seven when Mom was diagnosed with breast cancer, ten years before her retirement”.

As Joan’s aggressive tumors received radical surgeries and rounds of invasive drugs, Nat, Julie, and Sonia cared for her around the clock.

Sonia was proud of her mother’s courage until the end. “She was so washed out after the operations and chemo. She never really got better, but she fought for five years.”

After Joan’s burial, Sonia started visiting the pastor who had baptized her.

“He didn’t push religion. We just talked. But I started to feel a power somewhere bigger than myself.”

One afternoon, Sonia found herself reaching out to a stranger sobbing quietly in church.

“I got close enough to ask if I could help in any way. I asked if he wanted me to pray with him, and we ended up singing hymns together.”

Being able to console an aggrieved soul too distraught to speak taught Sonia that perhaps

she could assist others in their anguish.

“If I am here for sixty, seventy, or eighty years, there is a purpose somewhere. Maybe I can help people in their suffering. I’m thinking of training to be a church counselor.”

That was Sonia’s career decision during one of our last conversations.

After returning to Victoria University for theology, Sonia has been leading inter-faith addiction support groups for young people. From her e-mail last winter, she was a serene apprentice, grateful to accept an unusual calling:

“I learn the importance of service as I serve to learn the mysteries of life and death.

I have been given the gift to make a difference: to respectfully listen even to strangers, to support those in need, and to humbly serve this higher power that I don’t yet completely understand.”

This is the story of Sonia Neumann whom I will always remember as an unassuming, compassionate, and helpful young woman. I am pleased she has found a meaningful career in spiritual guidance that examines life, death, and the human journey.

*Mina Wong is a teacher of adult education, Mina enjoys celebrating learners’ achievements using their own stories.*

# LEARNING TO LEARN

BY LISA TRUDEL

Do you prefer to learn using images and pictures? Or do you like to learn using sound and music? Or do you prefer to learn in groups with other people, or by yourself?

Whatever your learning style, understanding how you learn can help in the decision-making process before committing to tuition-based learning or free learning.

To discover your learning style you might want to check the Learning Styles Inventory available at [www.careercruising.com](http://www.careercruising.com) The results can help confirm if you are a learner that is visual, auditory, hands-on, social or solitary. There is no right or wrong answer when it comes to learning styles, only a freedom in understanding how you collect and retain information that is correct for you and your personality. For example, knowing your learning style can help with decisions about taking an online course in a self-directed module or participating in a traditional classroom lecture.

If you are a lifelong learner who wants to boost career marketability, it is important to know that learning is an essential part of career development. One of the best parts of learning today is that it does not mean you have to be physically present in a classroom. The world has now become a classroom and many universities and other learning institutions offer free online courses. These include:

[www.coursera.org](http://www.coursera.org) This is an education platform that partners with top universities

and organizations worldwide to offer courses online for anyone to take, for free.

[www.alison.com](http://www.alison.com) This is a global online learning community, offering 600+ free courses to help develop essential workplace skills. It includes various diploma courses in topics ranging from “Workplace Safety and Health”, to “Construction Safety”, to “Customer Service”.

[www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com) Often referred to as Ted Talks, this site offers 100+ short videos and resources on a wide range of topics including “How to Build Creative Confidence” and “The Career Advice You Probably Didn’t Get”.

There are many more institutions and online resources that offer free online courses in a variety of disciplines. This list is just the tip of the iceberg. To boost your learning experience once you know your learning style, try exploring these online courses and discover that learning to learn can be fun, profitable and cost-free!

If you want to find out more about learning and sites such as [www.careercruising.com](http://www.careercruising.com) contact the Centre for Education & Training Employment Services ([www.tcet.com](http://www.tcet.com)) and ask to speak to a Career Specialist. Learning is not just for high school students. Everyone can discover the value in learning and the path it can take you on toward career success.

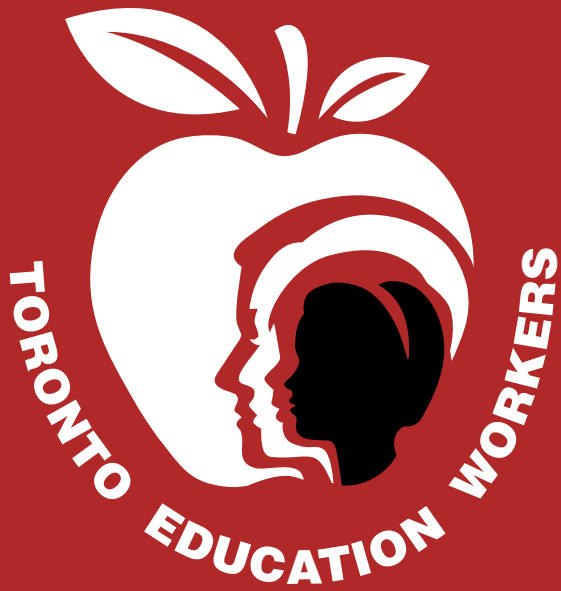
*Lisa Trudel is a Career Specialist with the Centre for Education & Training. She works at their Toronto Parliament Services location and can be contacted at: [ltrudel@tcet.com](mailto:ltrudel@tcet.com)*

# Learning Curves wants your writing.

If you have written poetry or a short story, share it with us and our readers. For further information or to submit some writing, email us at [learningcurves@hotmail.com](mailto:learningcurves@hotmail.com)

*Priority given to previously unpublished work of new writers.*





# WHO we ARE



## EDUCATION MATTERS

Not all of our members are employees of the TDSB. Our newer members include employees who work for the Viamonde French School Board, the Bloorview School Authority and at various early education/daycare centres across the GTA.

Toronto Education Workers (Local 4400)

is made up of approximately **12,000**  
**EDUCATION WORKERS**  
who primarily work for the TDSB  
(Toronto District School Board).

At the TDSB alone, there are over

**400** <sup>JOB</sup> **CLASSIFICATIONS**  
and over **1,000** <sup>WORK</sup> **SITES.**

**We believe in well-funded community-based  
education and resources for ALL ages!**



# THE JOYS OF AGING

BY ANNE McDONAGH

Most of us probably agree with the playwright Tom Stoppard that “age is a very high price to pay for maturity.” Nobody wants to get old, but what has often been pointed out, it sure beats the alternative.

Of course, there are drawbacks to getting old. Over a number of years we lose our youthful looks and sometimes our minds. On the other hand, although we mourn the loss of our physical beauty, we feel less stress around looking good, smart and attractive to the opposite sex. Physical activities we took for granted in our younger years have suddenly become more challenging. We often feel invisible to the rest of the world, and our opinions are frequently dismissed because of our age. The upside is the limited expectations people have of us because of our age. When we do a decent job on something we are likely to be praised excessively. We also seem to get an unwarranted respect just because we have managed to live so long. Our youth-obsessed society treats old-age as if it were a disease that can be cured by plastic surgery diets and denial. Some of us try to ignore the fact that we are aging with expressions like, “You’re only as old as you feel.” Or “You’re not getting, older you’re getting better.” Both expressions try to deny that we grow old. The reality is that like all living things we are born, bloom, fade and die. We are mortal after all.

However old age has its rewards – and not just senior citizen discounts! One of its greatest rewards is time. Provided we have enough money to live on, the time we have as oldies is a gift beyond measure because it’s our time. We are in control of it. When we don’t have to go to work, every day is a holiday. We can do what we want to do or nothing at all. Moreover, we need less sleep as we age, so we seem to have even more time – even if we take frequent daytime naps.

On the other hand, some might say our time is running out. All the more reason to concentrate on living in the present and

learning what the Buddhists have told us for years – living deeply in the moment makes our lives very rich and precious.

As we age we often become less egotistical and less concerned with other people’s opinions, and so we have a greater sense of freedom to do what we want to do – take a course, learn to play the piano, attend a swimming class or volunteer with an organization we really believe in – as well as the time to do it. Many of us tackle new careers based upon our experience and our newfound freedom from what people think. Some experience a surge of creativity, which they express in the arts; others in philanthropy; still others in community or political activism.

Because we have a lot of knowledge and experience of the world we now have wisdom as well as the time to find out who we really are. We think we know what is important and what isn’t and so many of us regard aging as an opportunity to revitalize ourselves and find an inner purpose.

Other joys in our lives are our grandchildren and friends. If we are lucky we have friendships which have lasted a quarter to half a century; we have a strong feeling of comradeship with others of our age because we are all living and struggling with the biggest issue there is and that is our mortality.

We are grateful that we have survived the romantic traumas of our youth, and that our “significant other” is either out of our lives or in our lives in a comfortable “old shoe” sort of way. What we have to offer the world is ourselves, what we have learned and what we believe, a sense of proportion, our opinions and our wisdom. With any luck we have mercifully achieved a sense of self acceptance. With all these gifts we have much to offer the young.

*We value your opinion. Please let us know what you think about this article. Let us know at [learningcurves@hotmail.com](mailto:learningcurves@hotmail.com).*

# JUNE IS SENIORS' MONTH

**BABY BOOMERS, YOU ARE A BIG MARKET FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION.**

**SO DON'T BE SHY. (WERE YOU EVER?)**

Call the Continuing Education head at your local, school, university, college, library, community centre and tell them what programs you would like to see offered.

**LEARNING CURVES**  
CONTINUING EDUCATION • JOB TRAINING

# IN PRAISE OF RETIREMENT

BY JANE ROZELL

It’s Monday morning, and another week of work begins. Upstairs I hear my neighbour stirring. It is five o’clock and soon he’ll be on his way to his job as a subway train operator. At seven my next-door neighbour will leave for his work as a waiter in a downtown restaurant. Then at eight, the teenager upstairs will be off to school. The last exit will be at nine when the new tenant in our little apartment building hurries past my window to her car, laden down with a huge backpack and a bulging tote bag.

How glad I am that I am no longer a prisoner of the nine-to-five workweek (in my case, it was eight-to-four). It’s wonderful to not be part of the hurrying, scurrying crowd of people fighting for a seat on public transit. It’s wonderful to not be at the mercy of seemingly tyrannical department heads and so-called important people from the New York head office. Most of all, it is wonderful to not be required to do mind-numbing irrelevant work

on outdated equipment day after endless day. At last, I am reasonably free to choose what I want to do, when I want to do it and how I do it.

It is hard for me to fully comprehend that for at least 48 weeks of every year of my 20 working years, I was a prisoner of the local transit system. I spent my early mornings rushing to the bus stop, clattering down the stairs of the subway station, jostling for a seat or even a space to stand, on a train and then running a block to my office, my workplace, always sure that I was going to be late for work. At the end of the day, there was the same procedure but in reverse. It turned me into a sheep, numbed by the constant waiting for a bus, waiting for a train, waiting in line to purchase transit tickets or tokens, standing in the stifling heat of summer, freezing in the winter.

So much of my work involved counting, listing and checking. There are files to update, charts to fill in and reports to make up. Makeup,

fabricate, those are the right words. No matter what the facts were, we were always expected to prepare material that head office wanted to see and hear material that spoke only of success. Not that they were really interested. After all, we were merely the Canadian branch of an American company. We used antiquated methods and outdated technology and this was true at all levels, not just in my bottom-of-the-ladder clerical department.

I had a supervisor who came to work early and left late, never took breaks and usually ate lunch at her desk. I know she took work home in that battered black briefcase of hers. I’m sure she would deny this as it was against company rules, but all upper-level staff did it. I’m sure she expected me to do the same though again would no doubt deny it.

Why did I take this job and then why did I stay in it? A lack of confidence in my abilities and a lack of money to get further

education definitely were a huge part of the story. But in simplest terms I took this job and stayed in this job because I needed money to help finance a family of three children and one alcoholic husband. Once I was accepted as a permanent employee by the company, I was afraid to risk anything by moving on to set up something else. That’s all over now. I’m long retired and able to see what I might have done differently. Of course, hindsight gives us 20/20 vision. What matters now is that I’m not trapped in that endless cycle. I am free to structure a life plan that is, as much as is possible, my choice and then live it.

*Jane Rozell is a student in the University in the Community. This past year, she has been working on her writing.*

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# SECOND CAREER AT ACCESS BUSINESS COLLEGE: NEW SKILLS, NEW LIFE. BY WENDY TERRY



Pictured from left to right: Aslam Shah, Peter Kotsionis, Maheswaran Ganapathipillai, Vladimir Lungu

One of the joys of being newly retired is that I can now attend all the graduations at Access Business College. I was present at the May 8th graduation ceremony where, in recognition of Mothers' Day, those graduates who were also mothers were presented with roses. That personal touch and the attention paid to the students as individuals, distinguishes Access Business College. Access is one of the Career Colleges

that are licensed by the Ontario Ministry of Colleges, Training and Universities.

It was at the ceremony on May 8th that I met Maheswaran Ganapathipillai, a recipient of the Property Administrator Diploma. Talking with him, I couldn't help but admire his remarkable 'can-do' attitude.

Before coming to Canada, Maheswaran worked as an irrigation engineer in Sri Lanka. One of his responsibilities involved

negotiating his way past Tamil Tigers and government soldiers in order to bring fresh water from the highlands to the coastal areas. Then, in the tsunami of 2004, he lost everything. Since coming to Canada, Maheswaran has worked in production at a cosmetic company. Now that he has earned his Property Administrator Diploma at Access Business College, he is looking for an employer who would benefit from his skills, his work ethic and his experience.

Having coordinated a co-op program for newcomers, I am aware of the multiple skills and knowledge that someone like Maheswaran brings to a job. Firstly having earned the Property Administrator Diploma at Access, he has become adept in all the latest computer applications needed for an administrative job today. Secondly, with his wealth of technical engineering knowledge, Maheswaran understands the complex systems needed to keep a modern property running. Thirdly, but no less important, his consummate people skills and practical know-how gained through life experience, would surely resolve almost any property administrative crisis that confronted him.

From my conversation with Maheswaran, it was clear that with his newly-acquired skills from Access Business College and his wealth of transferable experience and skills, he would make a wonderful asset for any property.

If you miss out on hiring Maheswaran, here are some equally-skilled graduates of the Property Administrator Diploma at Access. In the photo above they are (l-r): Aslam Shah; Peter Kotsionis, Maheswaran Ganapathipillai, Vladimir Lungu.

Property Administrator is one of the programs that Access offers that has good labour market prospects. Other high-demand diploma programs include: Banking and Financial Services, Business Administration, Computerized Accounting and Canadian Payroll, Hospitality, Food and Beverage, Medical Office Assistant, and Graphic/Web Design. See [www.accessbuscollege.com](http://www.accessbuscollege.com).

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# SEWING CLASS MOM ATTENDED AT WESTERN TECH IN 1971 STILL RUNNING IN 2015

BY WENDY TERRY



Winnie in sewing class in 1971

When people think about the TDSB Learn4Life program, they may not realize their parents took courses in adult education; in fact, their grandparents probably did too and maybe their great grandparents! Yes, even their great, great grandparents since this adult program has been running for over 150 years.

When I look at our family picture album (remember those?), I see a picture of my mother, Winnie, from 1971 (Thank heavens they dated photos in those days!). She is modeling a dress she had made in the sewing class at Western Technical-Commercial School That is over 44 years ago. She was 55 years old then and lived right across the road from Western Tech with my Aunt Ethel at 155 Glendonwyne Road.

I deliver Leaning Curves to the TDSB Learn4Life programs and have often wondered about the students who take this sewing course today. Having just retired, I have more free time, and so I dug out the photo album and asked Claire, the site supervisor, if I could do a story and pictures about the sewing class relating it to my mom's picture and her participation in the class. Claire asked, Elsy McCormick, the teacher, and on Thursday, May 28, I met the students of 2015. To my astonishment, one of the students was named Winnie, the same name as my mother's, and another student was named Ethel, my

aunt's name. How is that for serendipity?

That evening Elsy was teaching alterations to the students such as hemming, taking waists in, and so on which would save them money by not having to pay the dry cleaners to do these basic tasks. In my day, as they say, we used to learn alterations in Home Economics class but those classes are long gone—except in the TDSB General Interest courses on evenings, weekends and some week days. Flipping through the Spring Learn4Life calendar, I saw sewing classes in Pattern Drafting, Sewing Alterations and Repairs, Sewing Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced, Tailoring, in various locations around the city like Central Tech, Mimico Adult Learning Centre, Agincourt Collegiate, Danforth Tech, Overland Learning Centre, Joseph Piccininni Centre, Dixon Hall and of course Western Tech.

Elsy has taught many of these courses over the years at many of the locations. You might be interested in visiting her web site [www.personalstylewithelsy.com](http://www.personalstylewithelsy.com) to see some of her designs.

Registration for the fall term Learn4Life classes starts August 19th. Don't wait to register till after Labour Day as the classes could already be full or cancelled for the lack of a few more enrollments. [www.learn4life.com](http://www.learn4life.com)

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 10**

# Continue to Dream.

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# REGISTRATION START DATES JULY AUGUST FOR FALL TERM

The following list gives you an overview of registration start dates and orientation sessions for the Fall Term. Not all the schools or programs are listed but you see the idea from the ones we have been able to contact that registration for the Fall starts in July and August. Check with your school now for Fall Term registration starts in July and August

## UNIVERSITIES

**Ryerson University** – G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Studies Starts June 22nd for new students Prior registration for Certificate students starts June 13th.

Open House – Talk to a program representative. August 27th

### York University

School of Continuing Studies Academic Bridging program. Registration deadline September 8th.

### The University of Toronto

Woodsworth College Academic Bridging Program-a program for students to qualify for university studies Deadline for fall admissions is July 24th.

School of Continuing Studies Open now for Fall term classes

### Brock University

Center for Adult and Community Outreach Deadline for Fall Programs is July 15th.

## COLLEGES

### Seneca College

Continuing Education Starts July 27th

### George Brown College

Continuing Education Starts July 6th.aprox.

### Centennial College

Continuing Education 1st week of July aprox.

### Humber College

Continuing Education Starts early August

### Sheridan College

Continuing and Professional Studies Starts of July beginning of August

### Durham College

Continuing Education Starts first or second week in July

### SCHOOL BOARD PROGRAMS

See Winter Issue 2015 of Learning Curves pg's. 10 & 12 at [www.learning-curves.ca](http://www.learning-curves.ca) for detailed overview of School Board Programs, websites and phone numbers

All language programs (ESL, LINC) require a language test before you register. See [www.language.ca](http://www.language.ca) the Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks which has city by city listing of language assessment centres.

### Toronto Catholic District School Board

Need Assessment before registration if you are a new student YMCA 416-925-5462

ESL Register September 8th  
LINC Register September 8th

Monseigneur Fraser Adult Day Schools –earn high school credit.

### Toronto District School Board

Learn4Life Program General Interest August 19th.

ESL August 31st  
LINC Continuous

Adult Day Schools- earn high school credits. August 31st

### Durham Catholic School Board

ESL @Citizenship Prep classed for Summer Ajax Welcome Centre Registration June 16 &18 11:15 Am -12:15 PM  
ESL Session 1 July 6-23  
ESL Session 2 July 27-August 13

Assesment 1-855-330-8655 for new students Fall Term Register if assessed 289-481-1336- September 8th.

### PSW Orientation

Ajax and Oshawa Campus Daytime program July 2 and August 6 10:00 Am- 12:30PM  
Ajax Campus Evening Program July 16, Aug 20 6:00 to 9:00 PM  
Oshawa Campus Evening Program July 16, Aug. 2 6:00 pm to 9:00Pm

Literacy Basic Skills Continuous Intake – Class begin Sept. 9  
Credit Courses- Classes begin Sept. 9

### Durham District School Board

Durham Continuing Education (Adult and Continuing Education Programs):  
Oshawa Location:  
E. A. Lovell School  
905-436-3211 or toll free 1-800-408-9619

Pickering Location (Beside Pickering Go Train Station):  
1400 Bayly St., Unit 1  
905-831-3118

Adult Day School Credit Course Information Sessions:  
June 17, August 26 and August 31 – all at 10 am in Oshawa

Computer Training Division:  
Continuous intake program – start dates every 6 weeks  
3 and 6 week programs available (MS Windows, Outlook, Word, Excel and PowerPoint)  
Start Dates for 2015: July 13, August 24, October 5 and November 16  
Targeted Initiative for Older Worker (TIOW) funding available for qualified candidates  
Call Rob at 905-440-4505 for program and registration information

ESL and Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) - September  
Daytime Classes in Oshawa:  
Registration Dates: September 1, 2, & 3 in Oshawa  
Call Sharon at 905-440-4489 for information or to register

ESL and LINC - September Daytime Classes in Pickering (1400 Bayly St., Unit 1):  
Registration Dates: September 1, 2, & 3 in Pickering  
Call 905-831-3118 for information or to register

ESL and LINC – Night School in Oshawa:  
Registration Dates: September 1 & 3 in Oshawa  
Classes begin September 8th, 2015  
Call Sharon at 905-440-4489 for information or to register

ESL and LINC – Night School in Pickering:  
Registration Dates: September 2 in Pickering  
Classes begin September 9th, 2015  
Call 905-831-3118 for information or to register

Literacy Basic Skills  
Fall Program starts mid-September  
Call Brigitte at 905-440-4507 for program information or to register

Pathway Programs (Hospitality, Office Assistant and Building & Maintenance) Information Sessions:  
June 9, June 17, August 26 and August 31 – all at 10 am in Oshawa  
Call 905-436-3211 for program information

Personal Support Worker (PSW) Information Sessions:  
July 7 and August 26 – all at 10 am in Oshawa (Full Day, Part Time Day and Evening Classes Available)  
Call 905-436-3211 for program information

### York Catholic District School Board

Call 416-221-5051

### York Region District School Board

Dr. Betty Stephenson Centre for Learning  
Call 905-884-2046

Uplands Learning Centre  
Call 905-731-9557

### Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board

St. Gabriel Adult Learning Centre  
Call 905-362-0701

Brian J. Fleming Adult Learning Centre  
Call 905-891-3034

### Peel District School Board.

Brampton Call 905-791-7600  
Mississauga Call 905-270-6000

ESL LINC start September 8th  
LBS Literacy Basic Skills – book assessment on August 19th and 20th for week of August 24th  
LBS classes start September 15th.

### Halton Catholic District School Board

Call 905-7555. Ext 223

### Halton District School Board

Call 905-845-7542

## PRIVATE CAREER COLLEGES

See the Ontario Ministry Training, Colleges and Universities web page  
Continuous Intake

## COMMUNITY BASED PROGRAMS

Call 211  
Continuous intake.

## SEWING CLASS MOM ATTENDED AT WESTERN TECH IN 1971 STILL RUNNING IN 2015

### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

There are many program areas to chose from Art, Business and Finance, Communications, Computers, Crafts, Dance, Fitness and Wellness, Food, Games and Hobbies, Handiwork, Health and Safety, Interior Design, languages, Music, Self Development, Sewing, Sports, Theatre, Film &TV.

Mark your calendar August 19th to go to [www.learn4life.ca](http://www.learn4life.ca) to register for the fall term. There are senior discounts.



Pictured above: Lavern, Elsy, Ethel, Lily, Winnie, Aleksandra and Keisha in sewing class in 2015



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# LEARNING IN THE COMMUNITY: ST. ANDREW'S SOCIETY OF TORONTO

BY ELIZABETH MERCHANT



Rory Sinclair, President of St. Andrew's Society

**T**he St. Andrew's Society of Toronto celebrates Scottish culture and heritage, but welcomes anyone, regardless of

background, with an interest in learning more. "When it was formed back in 1836, the original reason was to help Scottish people

coming over," explains Rory Sinclair, President of the St. Andrew's Society. "Since then, the organization has expanded its mandate; women were eventually accepted, as well as people of different backgrounds. One member is a Chinese gentleman who loves Scottish culture and wears a kilt everywhere."

There are a variety of exciting and interesting events that take place throughout the year such as concerts, seminars, dinners and dances; one of which is the elegant and much anticipated St. Andrews Charitable Ball, a black-tie affair which takes place at the Fairmont Royal York Hotel and supports several local charities. Last year's Ball had special Guest of Honour, the Honourable Elizabeth Dowdeswell, Lieutenant Governor of Ontario in attendance, and spoke of the importance of the work of the St. Andrew's Society. For a taste of Scotland, guests enjoy is a four-course meal accompanied by the music of the Pipes of the 48th Highlanders of Canada, Highland dancers performing and ceilidh (pronounced kay-lee) dancing, which is similar to square dancing, but with fancier footwork. There are practice dance sessions for those planning to attend the ball.

You can become a member of the Society and your annual charitable donation to the St. Andrew's Charitable Foundation goes back into the community helping those in need. You can join a committee and be part of many events. "There are get-togethers such as bar nights where we bring in new members," says Sinclair. One can keep up to date for past as well as up-coming events by browsing the 'Newsletters' section on the website ([www.standrews-society.ca](http://www.standrews-society.ca)).

Thinking of learning Gaelic? The Society provides a link for The Toronto Gaelic Learners Association, and for more information on Scotland's history, tourism and educational programs, the Society provides many resources in the 'links' section of the website.

It was a pleasure speaking to Mr. Sinclair, and when I asked if there was anything else he would like to add, he said, "in this digital age, when everything you can join is online, to keep something like this (the St. Andrews Society) going for 175 years is quite something."

*We value your opinion. Please let us know what you think about this article. Let us know at [learningcurves@hotmail.com](mailto:learningcurves@hotmail.com).*

## Adult Education Program Directory



**TCDSB**  
Continuing Education Department

### ENGLISH & FRENCH COURSES FOR ADULT IMMIGRANTS

#### LINC Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada

- Literacy
- CLB levels 1-8

#### ESL English as a Second Language

- CLB levels 1-8
- Academic Preparation
- TOEFL/IELTS Preparation
- Workplace Language Preparation
- Courses for Visitors

#### Citizenship Preparation

- CLB levels 4-7

#### FSL French as a Second Language

- CLB levels 1-7

#### LBS Literacy and Basic Skills

#### ELT Enhanced Language Training for ESL Instructors

#### Other Services

- LINC Care for Newcomer Children
- ESL Nursery Program



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[contact.adulted@tcdsb.org](mailto:contact.adulted@tcdsb.org)



# BROCK UNIVERSITY FACILITATORS ENHANCE YOUR LEARNING

BY WENDY TERRY



On May 23, 2015, I attended CAECO's annual Facilitators' Day. The program, housed in the Faculty of Education at Brock University, offers in class, on site, and online programming to a variety of learners.

The in-class and on-site courses are the most familiar to students, as they are the most traditional options, despite the potentially overwhelming nature of a large campus or the technical aspects of registering for classes, seeking resources, or navigating busy schedules. The Centre for Adult Education and Community Outreach (CAECO) has developed an online learning environment that eases those anxieties and offers an online option; ideal for distance learners.

In the winter of 2014 I was student in a course called The Foundation of Adult Education, my first university experience online. The material presented in the online courses is developed and presented by an online teacher, or facilitator.

When I think of an in-class course, the dynamics are much different from those of an online class. Conversations with fellow students and instructors are not recorded as they are online and cannot be viewed and commented on by fellow students to help further discussion. I noticed that in-class courses failed to extract even half of what I was thinking, let alone that of my fellow classmates.

I do believe this is a great loss in the overall experience of adult learning, as the students themselves are bringing with them a wealth of personal and professional experience to the program. And that is why my online course experience was so memorable; it offered conversation and debate amongst fellow students and allowed for questions and thoughts on course material to be raised as we moved along. I noticed that we often learned as much from fellow students as we did from the material. In addition, having to write out your thoughts, knowing they

would be seen by the entire class, required a more thorough reflection on the assignment itself.

As an adult learner the technology – constantly changing – required to succeed in the online courses can be somewhat intimidating. My fears however, were quelled during CAECO's Facilitators Day, as I witnessed several presentations from those in the program who are specialized in various technological areas and are more than willing to assist you with anything you need.

During an online course a task such as blogging can pose enough difficulty with working out what exactly to write, let alone ensuring you are clicking the right buttons to get your post live and in the right spot. Your course facilitators can assist with you but they also come equipped with additional support.

Nick Contant, Camille Rutherford, and David Potts highlighted ways during Facilitators' Day that Office 365, instructor-created videos and voice threads can turn your blog into a conversation and offered insights on how to best utilize the tools available.

Regardless of location, online or on site, library searches are going to be part of the game. The challenge that library searches used to pose was whether you could find out which shelf the book you required was on. Now, with seemingly infinite library resources, the challenge becomes finding the best resource for the task at hand.

Thankfully, for those in CAECO programs, Jennifer Thiessen, who works in the library, is a specialist dedicated to assisting you sort through the information overload; a much appreciated help these days.

For adult learners there is always the challenge of knitting together previous courses and programs, maybe taken elsewhere or taken at Brock, into a package that will get you to the Certificate, B.Ed. or M.Ed. Felicity Harrison will help you with this. Often, adults overlook their previous education or take a course they don't necessarily need, but with the cost of tuition fees these days, it is a good idea to get value for previous learning.

Unfortunately I did not get to meet Andrew Han, the facilitator for my 2014 course as I discovered he lives in Alberta. However, in this discovery, I gained a new insight: not only can the students in an online course be located all over Ontario or Canada but the facilitators can too. I did however get to meet the facilitator for the next course I would like to do at Brock, Adult Education in the Global Context, and like all the other facilitators, he is a helpful type.

The one presentation during the day that particularly drew my attention was Mina Wong's presentation on Learner Narrative, in that often what sends us back to school is a crisis in our life, something that changes our thinking about what we want to be or do. Mina also contributes learner narratives to Learning Curves. In understanding the learner's narrative, Mina is much attuned to what her students want and need from the course, one of many great mindsets for CAECO course facilitators.

The application deadline for the fall term is July 15th.

For further information about the BEd in Adult Education, please contact, Laurie Jackson at the Centre for Adult Education and Community Outreach, Faculty of Education at [adulthood@brocku.ca](mailto:adulthood@brocku.ca) or [www.brocku.ca/education/departmentsandcentres/caeco](http://www.brocku.ca/education/departmentsandcentres/caeco)

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# MANY PATHWAYS TO A DEGREE THROUGH WOODSWORTH'S BRIDGING PROGRAM

BY CURTIS NORMAN



Sean successfully completed the Academic Bridging Program and is now working towards his degree in English, Philosophy and Literature and Critical Theory, with plans to pursue a Master's program afterward.

For many people, attending university after high school can be an intimidating task – especially at an institution like the University of Toronto. There are many reasons why students do not attend post-secondary studies after completing high school: they may have had challenging experiences in formal education previously, they may not have done well in high school or completed it at all or they may have wanted to focus on other priorities such as work, travel or starting a family. The reality is, though, that there are opportunities to enter university studies at the University of Toronto for students who find themselves in positions such as these.

The Academic Bridging Program at Woodsworth College at the University of Toronto provides a pathway, for students who have been away from formal education for some time, to enter degree studies in the Faculty of Arts and Science. This unique program offers small class sizes, more individualized attention and support, and a greater focus on academic skills to ease the transition into university studies. There are also a number of financial supports that help make an opportunity that seems impossible, fully accessible to students in different circumstances.

The Academic Bridging Program has seen a number of changes over the years including changing demographics of students and a renewed focus on offering different options to meet the needs of students. Recently, a full-time option was launched allowing students to take three courses, including an academic skills course and a small group seminar course, and become more fully immersed in the university experience. This year, a fall intensive program will begin in September that will allow students to complete the program in the fall academic term for the first time. In addition, the program is launching a new course on Environmental Studies to meet the needs of students interested in this emerging field. There are now so many different ways to enter university through Academic Bridging.

Anyone considering university unsure if they qualify or would be considered should get in touch with the staff at the Academic Bridging Program. The team is happy to meet with any interested student and outline their options at the University of Toronto. For more information, please visit: [www.wdw.utoronto.ca/bridging](http://www.wdw.utoronto.ca/bridging)

*We value your opinion. Please let us know what you think about this article. Let us know at [learningcurves@hotmail.com](mailto:learningcurves@hotmail.com).*

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UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
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## CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

# STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND COUNSELLORS MAKE YOUR OWN SUBMISSION TO THE COMMUNITY HUBS ADVISORY GROUP.

*The following questions are on the [www.ontario.ca/communityhubs](http://www.ontario.ca/communityhubs) website. The answers are Graham Hollings' submission to the Community Hubs Advisory Group. The answers are examples of what you might write to the government.*

**If you would like to explain your interaction with community hubs, please do so here.**

I have been an Adult ESL/LINC with the TDSB for over 20 years, and an adult education activist for many years. Many TDSB schools – whether operational elementary or secondary schools, or "closed" adult learning centres – accommodate adult programs: Adult ESL, LINC, Adult Literacy (aka Essential Skills Upgrading), General Interest/Seniors Daytime programs, Parenting & Family Literacy Centres (the latter serve both pre-school children and adult caregivers). These programs have long been part of what makes many schools successful community hubs.

**Are you aware of any examples of community hubs? Please describe them.**

Here are several TDSB examples:

Charles G. Fraser Elementary School: It has two full-time Adult ESL classes (during the regular school day) and a Parenting & Family Literacy Centre

Alexander Muir Gladstone Public School: It has a childcare centre, a Parenting & Family Literacy Centre and three full-time Adult ESL classes

George Harvey Collegiate Institute: along with its high school program, it has 4 daytime Adult Literacy classes (aka Essential Skills Upgrading)

Overland Adult Learning Centre: It was closed as an elementary school around 1980 and then "reopened" as an adult learning centre. Overland offers Adult ESL and General Interest/Seniors Daytime programs six days a week, days and evenings.

John Polanyi Collegiate Institute: The same building accommodates a high school, Adult ESL and Adult Literacy classes (in a separate wing of the building), and the North York Harvest Food Bank

**What kinds of programs/services should community hubs offer (e.g. education, health, social)? Are there any programs/services that should be excluded?**

Community hubs should offer a wide variety of services (adult education, childcare, health services, etc). My main interest is adult education, particularly, current policy barriers to including adult learning opportunities in our schools. There are several intersecting policy barriers: While many schools currently accommodate adult learning, the provincial formula for determining school utilization rates does not count adult learners. Because of this, some schools appear to be under-utilized and so may be at risk of closure. Because of provincial funding policies, school boards also do not receive Accommodation Grants for Adult ESL, nor for other adult programs (e.g. Seniors' Daytime programs). This is a major funding gap. It works against the mantra (and the mantra is not new) of "schools as the hubs of our communities". While there are currently a number of very successful "schools

as community hubs" in Toronto, provincial policy barriers make their existence, and the existence of some of the classes/programs that make them great community hubs, unnecessarily but inevitably precarious.

**Are there any particular spaces you think should become community hubs (e.g. schools, neighbourhood centres)? Please list them and explain why.**

As I've mentioned, many schools already function as great community hubs. Alexander Muir/Gladstone Public School is an example of an existing community hub: It accommodates an elementary school, childcare, Parenting & Family Literacy Centre, and several Adult ESL classes – and there might be opportunities to include other programs and services. When a school is no longer needed (in the near future) for elementary or secondary programs, they can be repurposed as adult learning centres (TDSB: Overland Adult Learning Centre, Terraview Adult Learning Centre, Mimico Adult Learning Centre) or go back to being elementary/secondary schools if/when there is another demographic shift (over longer periods of time, demographics do shift).

**What do you think the barriers are in creating community hubs (e.g. policy, funding, relationship)? How can these barriers be overcome?**

The adult education piece is essential. Here is a partial list of intersecting policy and funding barriers that both jeopardize existing "schools as community hubs" and prevent more of these hubs from being created:

1. School utilization rate formulas don't count adult learners: While many schools currently accommodate adult learning, the provincial formula for determining school utilization rates does not count adult learners e.g. Adult ESL, Adult Literacy, Adult Credit learners over 21, adult caregivers in Parenting & Family Literacy programs, learners in General Interest/Seniors' Daytime programs. Because adult learners are not counted, some schools appear to be under-utilized and may be at risk of closure.
2. School boards do not receive Accommodation Grants for Adult ESL, nor for other adult programs (e.g. Seniors' Daytime programs). This is a major funding gap that works against the mantra (and the mantra is not new) of "schools as the hubs of our communities". School boards are under increasing pressure to close (and often, sell) "under-utilized" schools. When boards do not receive the funding they need to maintain (never mind create more) schools which accommodate adult learners, vital programs – and great community hubs – are jeopardized. How can these barriers be overcome? One way would be to count adult learners in determining school utilization rates. Another way would be to provide Accommodation Grants for Adult ESL (and perhaps other school-based adult educational programs).

# 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 62 year old recent retiree. I so looked forward to long, lazy days of no schedules or agendas but find that I am BORED, BORED, BORED!*

*I know the internet offers lots of websites to learn online but I am eager to meet new people and have stimulating discussions.*

*Can you suggest any learning opportunities for me? Please keep in mind that I am on a fixed budget.*

*Young(ish) in York*

Dear Young(ish),  
I wholeheartedly agree with you. You are not the first person to leave a busy life and find the transition to retirement leaving you with more time on your hands than you initially wanted. Retirement can be a great time to learn and explore.

While the Internet has a myriad of possibilities for learning online the Greater Toronto Area also has a number of options in classroom and workshop settings.

One of the most interesting I found is The Academy for Lifelong Learning. They offer a wide variety of peer led workshops. There is an minimal annual fee. Check out their website at [www.allto.ca](http://www.allto.ca).

Ryerson has the Life Institute, a great program for 50+.through the Chang School (you can even get a certificate to be a "Caring Clown"). Beyond trips, classes and workshops they even sponsor a 50+ festival in June of each year.

Throughout Toronto there is a great network of senior programs and it can get confusing. The Third Age Network (<http://www.thirdagenetwork.ca>) offers a simple to use website which has all the information you will need on one site.

Learning offers both physical and mental health benefits. Enjoy.

## Correction

In the Spring issue of Learning Curves Dear ELCEE suggested that if you wanted to finally get your high diploma as an adult, the first thing to do was get your high school transcripts. This depends on how long you have been out of school. If you are young and only out of school a few years, your transcripts are acceptable. However if you have been out of school for years, transcripts are not necessary, but you will be tested to see what your academic skills are now and what level of upgrading you will need. You will also be given maturity credits and a path of courses will be outlined for you to earn a high school diploma irrespective of your high school transcript.

The best strategy is to find out what the academic requirements are for the educational program you want to take. Work from your goal back. Don't think you have to start where you left as a teenager.

Whichever path you choose you are making a wise choice both for yourself and your children. Good luck!

*We value your opinion. Please let us know what you think about this column. Send comments to [learningcurves@hotmail.com](mailto:learningcurves@hotmail.com).*

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