

LEARNING CURVES

CONTINUING EDUCATION • JOB TRAINING

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DEFINING PERSEVERANCE

BY MARTHA DAVIS

I've been asked to write a bit about my own journey as an adult learner and the importance of perseverance. My first degree took me 27 years, four universities and three different majors to complete. The first two attempts – in 1969 as a Music major at University of Maryland for one term, and then the following year as a general studies student at Grinnell College in Iowa – were curtailed for financial reasons. Full-time employment became my immediate goal.

In the mid-70's, I married, moved to Detroit, and ended up working for Wayne State University. It wasn't long before I was again a student, my interests having shifted once more to fine arts courses taken on a very part-time basis. The early 80's saw my

family and I moving to Canada where I spent several years as an at-home mom. It wasn't until my children were a bit older that I again found myself working at a university and beginning what I hoped would be the final step toward completing that long sought-after degree, this time in Anthropology.

Although each new attempt was fragmented and slow, with each foray into a new university I asked for and was granted credit for the academic work I'd done previously. By the time I began that final stage at an Ontario university, I discovered I was already more than halfway to completing my degree. Since that time I've been fortunate enough to work as an Academic Advisor at a post-secondary institution. Having lived some of the same

experiences that many adult learners share has shaped the advice I offer them.

The ability to continually re-engage with the educational process when things aren't going smoothly is critical. It means learning to acknowledge obstacles and to develop the strategies needed to work through those obstacles. It's about setting goals and being flexible enough to reset them when situations demand that. It means breaking the big goals down into smaller ones and intentionally looking at each educational success as a way to stay motivated.

There are, always, several factors that contribute to the start and stop progress many

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HUBBUB ABOUT HUBS: FINDING ENRICHMENT AND EMPLOYMENT THROUGH LEF AND THE CAREER FOUNDATION

BY AYESHA TALREJA

Hubs - Multiple Services at One Location

What is a Hub? In the 2015 Fall Issue of Learning Curves, we talked about the fact that community hubs are one of four initiatives the Premier has proposed that will make Ontario successful and prosperous once again. The word “hub” means “centre”, “core” or “focal point”. A community hub, then, is the centre or the core of a community. The government has started using community hubs to deliver services. That means that many of those services will be in one location; for example, a community hub may have a Community Health Centre, an Early Childhood Centre, a seniors program, some continuing education classes and community dining. All hubs would not necessarily have the same services; it will depend upon the needs of the community. The LEF (Learning Enrichment Foundation) and Career Foundation are two such hubs.

Locating multiple community services at one centre in a hub has become popular as it convenient for members of the community to use, instead of TTC hopping from one service to another and it creates a sense of community a feeling of neighbours going to the local centre to meet and mingle instead of the mothers going to child care in one spot and the seniors going to a drop in in another, and youth going to a homework club in another.

The Learning Enrichment Foundation and the Career Foundation have been building community hubs long before it became popular to do so

Learning Enrichment Foundation

At its largest location at 116 Industry Street, the Learning Enrichment Foundation (LEF) is full of people of all ages making use of the host of services offered onsite, from youth, employment, childcare and settlement services to English as a Second Language classes and a weekly marketplace.

Serving the Weston, Mount Dennis and Rockcliffe-Smythe areas in the former city of York since the 1970s, when a small grant launched such programs as youth counselling and training to address local job losses, LEF has steadily grown with its many volunteers and staff, and now has satellite locations at 1267 Weston Road and 55 Emmett Avenue to help community members to contribute to their neighbourhoods socially and economically.

Perhaps best known for their LINC language classes, which are all free, LEF also offers cooking classes, serving up an affordable lunch at \$2.00, a great way to involve the community and offer a reasonably priced meal. Their hub at 1267 Weston Road provides a space for youth, while adults of all ages can benefit from their settlement services and a job bank. Some LEF parents have described their childcare support as dependable, impactful, helpful, and reassuring.

Entrepreneurship Program

LEF has recently launched a free small business training program for people who want to start their own business. Participation is open to adults 18 and up, and includes workshops from professionals, peer networking, business consulting and developing skills for succeeding in the business world, including researching, designing and launching a business plan. Youth aged 20-29 who participate could be eligible for grants of up to \$3,000 upon completion. The program is divided into a two-week session and a six-week session, both tackling different levels of business ideas. There are two information sessions coming up soon: September 13th at 1 PM, and September 15th at 10 AM. Please call 416-769-0830 ext. 2093 for more information.

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DEFINING PERSEVERANCE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

adult learners experience. For me, one of these was realizing that there is a great deal of difference between learning in the tightly structured environment of high school and the more free-range atmosphere of colleges and universities. What I've called the hidden course, "University 101", means understanding the need to be aware of institutional rules and regulations about what can or can't be done as you work toward your certificate, diploma or degree – the deadlines, correct forms, offices and services where answers can be found. It means developing new study habits and time management skills, and learning to aggressively seek out needed resources and to advocate for your own needs.

For many post-traditional learners, the acquisition of a life outside of school can be a huge hurdle. When work, financial pressures, relationships and the ever-increasing "stuff" that fills each day begin to impact your ability

to get your academic work done, it is important to remember that there are resources available to students within the school or in the community and that an Academic Advisor will often be able to direct you to those. An Advisor can also help you connect with people who can make sure you're gotten all the credit possible for your previous academic work or life/work experience.

So, how do we keep encouraging ourselves to sit down at 10:00 p.m. after the tasks of daily living are completed and there's finally time and space for reading, thinking, writing and citing? One important strategy I found was to just focus on the next step. My mantra became, "one term at a time, one month at a time, one week at a time, one day at a time" – and sometimes simply "one course at a time". And remarkably enough, one day you look up and you're holding that diploma in

your hand, – having incorporated the knowledge you sought and having been transformed by the process of your education and the content of your classes.

As I mentioned, that first degree took me 27 years, and that is a bit of a record. But the real definition of perseverance was demonstrated for me at that first convocation in 1996. Because I'd heard the story beforehand, I was able to appreciate the moment when a fellow graduate, 80 years of age, crossed the stage. She had first enrolled at university in 1939, the same year she developed tuberculosis and left school to have a long life filled with work and family and, eventually, a long delayed return to academia. So, when I've needed to remember another good reason to persevere, I think back to hearing her cheering section yelling from the balcony, "Way to go, Grandma!"

"one term at a time, one month at a time, one week at a time, one day at a time" – and sometimes simply "one course at a time".

*Martha Davis is an Academic Advisor for the Centre for Adult Education and Community Outreach at the Faculty of Education At Brock University
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DON'T WAIT TILL AFTER LABOUR DAY TO REGISTER FOR THE FALL TERM CLASSES.

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2. We have over 700 distribution points including all Toronto and GTA libraries as well as schools, colleges, universities, community programs and employment resource centres, apprenticeship offices and many neighbourhood, community and recreation centres and other sites.
3. Our readers are new Canadians, youth returning to school, working and unemployed people trying to upgrade or change careers, seniors, employment counsellors, teachers, and employers.
4. Our editorial is informative and insightful – profiling programs and learners and government policy for adult learning. Our articles are posted and handed around.
5. Our rates are affordable



ADELE'S NEW LIFE DIRECTION

BY MINA WONG

a short story by Mina Wong, August 2016, with permission from Adele George.

The first time I met Adele was on Burrard Street in Vancouver on a rare sunny April afternoon. I was reading newspapers after final exams when a woman mumbled, "Can you spare a quarter? I'm really hungry."

Seeing her unsteady gait, I slipped two quarters into her palm. To my surprise, instead of leaving with the money, she sat down on the far edge of my bench. Having no more cash to spare, I offered her a banana from my backpack.

She shook her head. "No, I want the newspaper."

Taking a section of newsprint, she asked, "You live around here?"

I wasn't sure how much to volunteer to a stranger. "Well no. I was just enjoying the sun and the view."

Somehow she chuckled at my response. "Well I live at Lum Sun Hotel with this guy Ray."

So she lives with a man at an old East-side rooming house, I thought with a smile.

When I didn't say much more, she moved closer. "I took ten dollars from Ray's drawer last night for fried chicken and he kicked me out this morning", her chuckles suddenly turned to sobs.

Not knowing how to respond to intimate domestic grief, I took the

simplest route. "What's your name?"

"Adele. I'm from Enoch's Band far away", she dried her tears as I recognized that Enoch was close to my hometown in Alberta.

But instead of disclosing my own roots, I asked, "So what happens to you now?"

"This is the last time. No more. Every time I take money for food, he beats me up", Adele was thinking out loud while I thought of a safe place for her.

As if able to read my mind, Adele said, "I can stay at the 365 or Friendship Centre. This time won't go back to Ray."

Without saying, "Yes, if these shelters are safe and supportive", I let Adele tell me more about herself.

At 28, Adele had lived with Ray at Lum Sun Rooming House for a year after meeting him there while looking for housing. Out of the blue appeared Ray who lived upstairs. He seemed nice and offered Adele his room for half the rent because he was away most days. Somewhat desperate for a place to stay, Adele accepted Ray's kindness and moved in before the two became romantically involved.

However, while Ray left Adele alone much of the time, he was physically violent when angry. He yelled a lot about

Adele's lack of money even when she was almost eligible for public assistance in British Columbia. Whenever Adele took money from Ray for food, she would end up with a black eye or nosebleed.

However, knowing Adele could receive help at two different shelters, I left her with my phone number as just another source of support. I even looked for her the next time I was near Burrard Street.

Before I moved to Toronto, Adele called to say she was at another rooming house with her own space, and that she was attending literacy classes and volunteering at Goodwill. "School's really hard, but my social worker thinks I have more self-esteem now and I just need to push on."

Adele felt sad that I was leaving Vancouver, but promised to let me write her.

Over the next two years, Adele's letters showed more optimism. She was finally ready to try high school. "I had no self-esteem coming out from Enoch. My family was depressed and unhealthy. You know I almost became like them? The social workers signed me up for assertiveness training and I have learned so much about myself."

Before losing touch with Adele, I asked if her story could be shared with

women who had similar experiences, to which she answered, "Sure, what the heck, I was thinking of going back to Enoch and help the women there. I didn't know how to help them then, but I have skills now like from math courses and the Goodwill part-time job."

One day, my letter to Adele was returned citing "No such person". Her Vancouver social worker confirmed that Adele had moved but wouldn't disclose her new address without permission.

I could look for Adele at Enoch Cree Nation, but I also respect her privacy and her people's right to seclusion. I continue to hope that Adele George's resilience has strengthened her self-direction, and that these days, she is making a difference in her community with skills gained from adult learning. It was during a very low point when Adele decided to turn her life around using help from others.

An adult educator, Mina likes to celebrate the achievements of learners using their own stories.

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*Best wishes to
all students
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IT'S ALL GOBBLEDYGOOK

BY ANNE MCDONAGH

Gobbledygook is the stuff that someone once said politicians use to paper over the cracks. It's also been called barbarous or debased language, jargon, double speak, twaddle, hogwash, flapdoodle, and baloney. Yet it's freely used, not only by politicians, but also by high tech gurus, doctors, scientists, lawyers and those who are supposed to educate us.

Whether they know it or not, those who use gobbledygook do not want to communicate clearly and honestly. Sometimes they use long, esoteric words instead of simple, short ones, thinking that even if they are not understood, at least they will be thought clever. They are trying to impress others instead of trying to communicate. The other possibility is that they misuse the language in order to hide the truth from others and even from themselves.

Every day we hear "appropriate" or "inappropriate" instead of "right" or wrong" as in "It was inappropriate for him to defraud the shareholders" A patient dies and the doctor writes, "Patient failed to fulfill his wellness potential." A boys' camp advertised that it was "deliberately designed with individual attention for the minimally exceptional." A teacher informed parents that, "There will be a modified English course offered for those children who achieve deficiency in English." U.S. Senator Orrin Hatch said that, "Capital punishment is our society's recognition of the sanctity of human life." The American Army calls them "vertically deployed anti-personnel devices," most of us would call them bombs.

The "plain language" movement promotes

the use of clear and concise communication in all forms of documentation because gobbledygook is confusing, time-wasting and expensive. George Orwell, the author of 1984 and Animal Farm, created a wonderful example of gobbledygook. Here he is mocking the pretentious prose of his contemporaries; he says he is exaggerating but only slightly:

He takes a well-known verse from the Book of Ecclesiastes in the Bible (the 17th Century King James Version):

"I returned and saw under the sun, that the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong, neither yet bread to the wise, nor yet riches to men of understanding, nor yet favour to men of skill; but time and chance happeneth to them all."

Then he turns it into modern gobbledygook (Orwell's satirical version):

"Objective considerations of contemporary phenomena compel the conclusion that success or failure in competitive activities exhibits no tendency to be commensurate with innate capacity, but that a considerable element of the unpredictable must invariably be taken into account."

Here is how it would look in "plain English:"

"Success or failure today depends as much on chance as on your capabilities." Sometimes gobbledygook is amusing and relatively harmless. George Orwell, however, saw the misuse of language as worse than confusing, time-wasting and expensive. He saw it as corrupting public discourse and a threat to democracy itself. In his famous

essay Politics and the English Language (1947), he declared that the use of language in order to disguise disagreeable information has far-reaching implications for society.

Think of the current expression 'collateral damage' meaning civilians killed by accident in war, or, closer to home, the Ontario Tenant Protection Act, which abolished rent controls and sent rents sky high and some former tenants into the streets. Expressions like these distort reality, desensitize us to brutality and dull our sense of right and wrong.

Though historical details have changed, the following excerpt from Politics and the English Language is as relevant today as it was in Orwell's day:

"If thought corrupts language, language can also corrupt thought... In our time, political speech and writing are largely the defense of the indefensible. Things like the continuance of British rule in India, the Russian purges and deportations, the dropping of the atom bombs on Japan, can indeed be defended, but only by arguments which are too brutal for most people to face, and which do not square with the professed aims of the political parties. Thus political language has to consist largely of euphemism., question-begging and sheer cloudy vagueness. Defenseless villages are bombarded from the air, the inhabitants driven out into the countryside, the cattle machine-gunned, the huts set on fire with incendiary bullets: this is called pacification. Millions of peasants are robbed of their farms and sent trudging along the roads with no more

than they can carry: this is called transfer of population or rectification of frontiers. People are imprisoned for years without trial, or shot in the back of the neck or sent to die of scurvy in Arctic lumber camps: this is called elimination of unreliable elements. Such phraseology is needed if one wants to name things without calling up mental pictures of them."

(from Politics and the English Language 1947)

Orwell shows us that ultimately, the words we choose have moral significance and shape how we see the world around us. Orwell was one of the great practitioners of the English language; the following six deceptively simple rules of his devising are a standard worth aiming for in our own writing.

Six Rules for How to Write

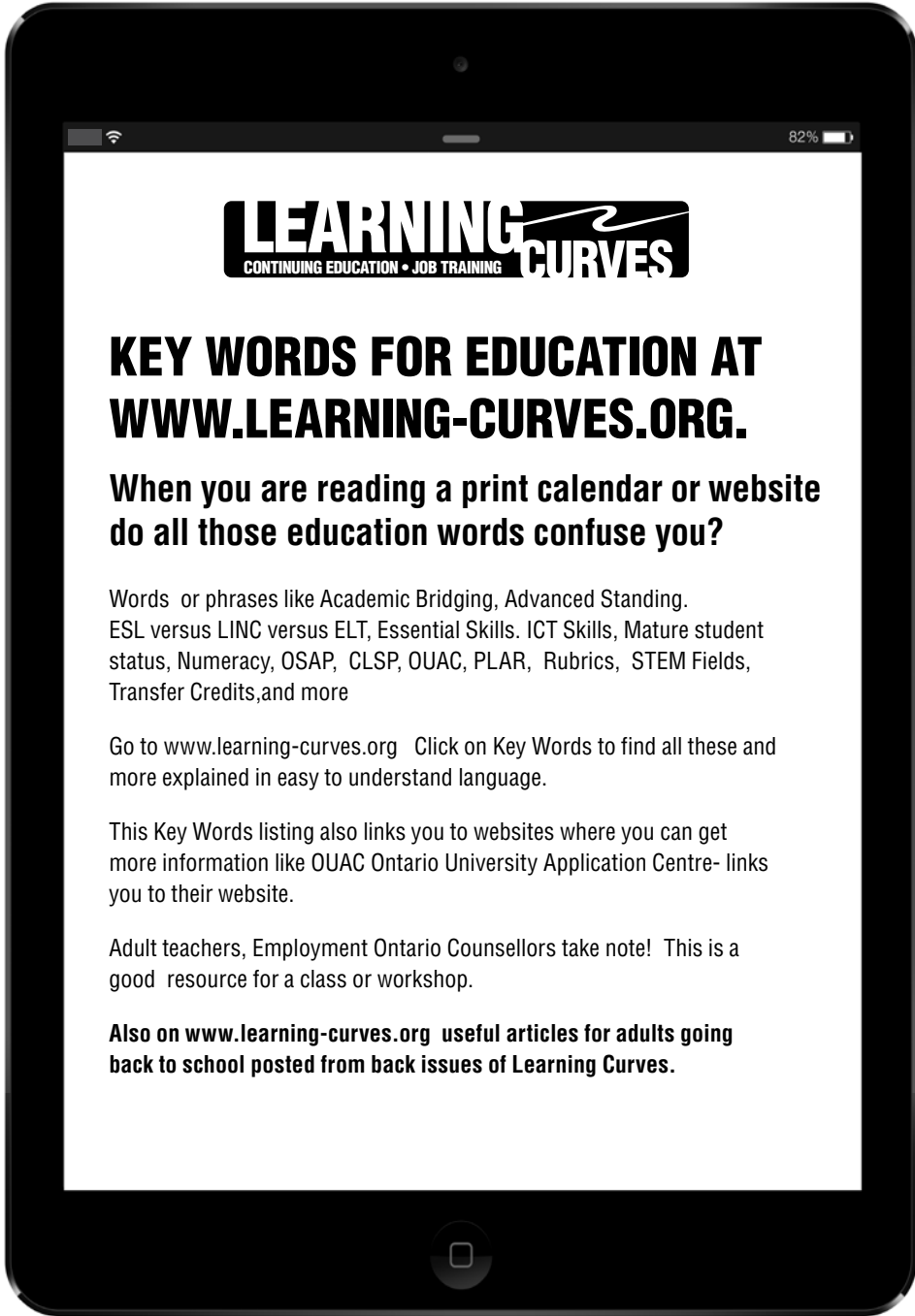
1. Never use a metaphor, simile or figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.
2. Never use a big word where a short one will do.
3. If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.
4. Never use the passive where you can use the active.
5. Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.
6. Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.

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WHERE ARE THE DOORS AT TORONTO UNIVERSITIES?

Often when you look at the website of a large educational institution or the building or a calendar you are confused as to where to start. Check this Learning Curves chart.

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	These are credit programs so you have to be admitted and the best thing to do is talk to admission counselors.	These programs help you qualify for university- bridge you in- even though you do not have the required credentials to be admitted.	There are many ESL programs in Toronto but usually if you get a certain grade, the ones at the universities will exempt you from and doing an English admissions test.	Usually you have to look up each faculty – full time listings- then enquire which ones offer a Continuing Education –post degree courses.	These are some of the largest programs at Ryerson's G. Raymond Chang School and the University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies. There is a smaller program at York University's School of Continuing Studies.	
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THE WEA NEEDS NEW BOARD MEMBERS

The Workers' Educational Association, which publishes this paper, Learning Curves, and is a partner in University in the Community, is looking for two new Board members who are committed to lifelong learning. We would like someone with a background or interest in journalism and someone with a background or interest in liberal arts.

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RYERSON UNIVERSITY'S NEW EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING EXCHANGE: CONNECT, ENGAGE, LIFTOFF!

When employers repeatedly advised Ryerson University that their priority in a new hire is someone with skills-based experience, university administrators took their advice seriously. Aware that attaining and maintaining a job in today's highly competitive marketplace requires practical competence in addition to academic credentials, they responded by launching the Experiential Learning Exchange (ELX) at The G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education.

As leaders in the field of experiential education, Ryerson has always been ahead of the curve. But ELX, a learning model that has been designed for the 21st century marketplace, sets a new high bar for hands-on, heads-up learning.

In a recent conversation, Marie Bountrogianni, Dean of The Chang School of Continuing Education, spoke enthusiastically about the new program. As someone who has changed jobs five times in her career, Dean Bountrogianni personally understands how adaptability and experience are key components of today's hiring practices. "Now more than ever," she explained, "our competitive marketplace demands experience. ELX provides a fast track to the very real advantages of experience."

Like the demands of the current job market, ELX's central feature is its built-in flexibility. It offers hands-on, project-based activities with coaches, expert advisers and peers that are tailored to the needs of individual learners.

Let's say that you are a student about to start a career, an internationally-educated professional, or your job requires competency

in a new skill. ELX's customized learning model puts your needs first by connecting you to the expertise of a professional.

That connection is ignited in one of three ways: via master classes, one-on-one coaching sessions or in networking events. While master classes are composed of a group of 10-15 people in interactive 90-minute "tutorials" with an expert, individualized coaching sessions allow you to engage with a mentor for a period of 4 hours delivered in the way that suits your schedule and preference – over the phone, online, face-to face or a combination of all three modes. As Dean Bountrogianni noted, ELX takes curated learning even one step further by agreeing to be a match-maker! You name the skill that you would like to be coached in and they will find you a mentor. This is exchange without the guess work or the time! Providing a forum for informative exchange, ELX's networking events (free and open to the public), open the door to a third way of engaging with peers

Readers of Learning Curves are no doubt aware that the experience of finding (and keeping!) a job can be fraught with insecurity. But as Dean Bountrogianni so clearly pointed out to me, it doesn't have to be. ELX cannot eliminate all the challenges of acquiring a new skill but by connecting people and experts they go a long, long way towards making those challenges exciting!

For more information about Ryerson's new Experiential Learning Exchange, please visit: <https://elx.blog.ryerson.ca/contact/>

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“LIVE LIFE LARGE”

JASON BURKE'S REFLECTION ON HIS GRADUATION DAY AT ACCESS BUSINESS COLLEGE BY MINA WONG



Jason Burke (centre) with Mom, Marguerite (right), and
Sonia Nurses (left) at Access Business College

For most of Jason's career, he has lived life large.

As both an athlete and business owner, Jason enjoyed the finer things in life such as first class air travel. Hotels and exclusive events were an ongoing part of his career. As recently as five years ago, he owned and operated a million-dollar plus business that had taken him less than five years to build. However, that was when things changed.

Sometime between early 2009 and late 2010, Jason began to lose his hearing. Compounded by other significant changes in his life, this hearing concern put a great deal of strain on his business in which he was totally immersed, and that he was profoundly passionate about. Jason's life came to a grinding halt when hearing loss crept in like a thief in the night. As a result of these unplanned life changes, he was no longer living life large. Instead, he was forced to both rethink his business model and re-engineer his life.

For a long time, Jason was a successful self-employed entrepreneur. During those years, there was no need to participate in boardroom or town hall meetings. There was even little concern for hallway banter or face-to-face negotiations as in most organizations.

However, when Jason re-entered the workforce in 2012, he would find himself sitting in meetings with three or more people. That situation became a culture shock when he realized he was unable to hear, take notes, or correctly interpret what people were saying. Hearing loss made him feel like a fish out of water in a new, confusing reality. He was certainly not living a large life. In fact, he was forced to avoid all of the trappings associated with living life large.

Jason's day of reckoning came last year like a blank wall at every turn when he struggled through a series of interviews with only unfavorable results. Not being able to hear effectively was subtracting large chunks of success from his life.

Eventually, in consultation with an audiologist, Jason decided to consider a change of career that led him to examine alternate modes of navigation in a new, hard-of-hearing world. He needed to adapt to this changed landscape in order to regain a semblance of the large life to which he was accustomed.

Jason serendipitously found himself on Access Business College's (ABC) doorstep after evaluating several private and public post-secondary options available through the Ontario Second Career Program.

He chose ABC because of its family-like, intimate atmosphere that allowed him to accelerate a diploma in graphic/web design. ABC's educational approach embraced a digital tutorial teaching style that was the perfect fit for Jason because he had recently been fitted with a

set of Widex Unique hearing aids from Widex Global. As a result, the combined new adaptive tools and self-directed curriculum let Jason readily add new skills to his existing marketing ones, and to land a sponsorship with the Widex and Quantum Sports Learning Association.

With an interest to become a high school teacher, Jason is teaching media studies and sports to students in Grades 10 to 12 through the Quantum Sports and Learning Association. Jason realizes that this opportunity was made available by Accessibility Works, a program offered through the Ontario Chamber of Commerce to help people with disabilities secure long-term employment.

Jason's connection with Widex Global also requires deep commitment when he is the first global ambassador of Widex Unique, a new initiative in the form of a digital hearing aid that uses Bluetooth for more "handsfree" functions. In addition to public speaking and sharing his personal story with hearing loss, Jason creates digital content for Widex through his own digital platform made available by Mount Sinai hospital and the Canadian Hearing Society.

With all the support he receives, Jason still feels like a baby finding his way out of the woods. He realizes that he is far away from the million-dollar plus business he ran in the past. However, Jason is confident that he is on track to making this year his best one since 2013. He also feels certain that his ABC education and diploma will open doors for him in the digital marketing arena.

Having been gainfully employed his entire adulthood, and having enjoyed the largeness of entrepreneurial and corporate life, Jason has eagerly returned to work. This fall, he will continue to gain theories and skills for a career as Creative Director with a specialization in UX Design. To get there, he is registered for community college courses that will further enhance his credentials.

In Jason's own words, "There is no question that life is far from large, but the potential and opportunities are there for my perusal, and I intend to grasp them all, so that I could Live Life Large again."

For Sonia Nerses, ABC's job developer/admissions who has tremendously supported Jason, she and the school celebrate every graduation ceremony as "a miracle": something wondrous, out of the ordinary, and definitely celebratory. By encouraging all ABC learners to be their own change agents, Jason's achievements are also Sonia's success.

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UNIVERSITY IN THE COMMUNITY: COME LEARN WITH US!

As regular readers of Learning Curves will already know, adult education programs are as varied as the interests of the people who sign up for them. University in the Community (UitC) is a small, free-of-charge, adult education program consisting of 10 weeks of lectures held at the University of Toronto. Are you wondering whether UitC for you? Read on and find out!

What exactly is University in the Community?

UitC is exactly what its name implies: university education in community. It is a tutorial-based program that the Workers' Educational Association, the publisher of this newspaper, initiated in 2003. UitC provides access to university-level education for adult learners who love to read, think and ask questions. Our students are people who, due to life circumstances, would have difficulty paying tuition fees or meeting university admission requirements. If you have always wanted to go to university but thought that it was out of your reach, UitC is for you.

Where and when is UitC held?

Classes are held on Wednesday evenings over a period of 10 weeks (October 5th – December 7th) from 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm at Innis College, on the St. George campus of the University of Toronto. The college is located one block south of St. George and Bloor (Bloor line, St. George subway stop). Our classroom is accessible.

Who can register?

In order to participate in discussion, an intermediate level of English language comprehension is advised. Most of our students have completed secondary education. Some face personal barriers or may have been unable to complete post-secondary studies due to life circumstances. To a person, all of our students are passionate about learning.

What is the topic of the Fall 2016 lecture series?

This Fall, our topic is "Site Specific: Exploring Toronto's Local History." From the sky above our heads to the ground beneath our feet, students will learn about the distinguishing features of Toronto as both a natural space and an historical place.

Who teaches the classes?

UitC is fortunate to be supported by the University of Toronto, Senior College and Ryerson University. Classes are taught by university professors and by subject experts.

How much does UitC cost?

There is no charge to attend UitC.

How many students are in the class?

In order to facilitate discussion, registration is limited to no more than 30 students.

Is homework required?

Weekly reading is required.

Will I be able to get a university credit for a UitC course?

Although UitC is a community-based program offered on the campus of U of T, we are unable to offer university credits. Those who regularly attend the 10-week session will receive a UitC graduation certificate.

How can I find out more?

Please get in touch with us! We'd love to tell you more! By phone: 416 923-7872. By email: universityinthecommunity@gmail.com

We value your opinion. Please let us know what you think about this article. Send email to learningcurves@hotmail.com.

Time to Register for Fall 2016 Classes

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RESUME
REALITY

BY LISA TRUDEL

- 1
- Customize every resume: all resumes and cover letters should be targeted for specific positions using the language or key words and expressions from the job posting or job description. One size does not fit all with ATS scanners, and instead, the more phrases you incorporate into your resume, the better.
- 2
- Edit carefully: ATS scanners will not recognize misspelled words. If your resume survives the ATS screening, it will eventually be reviewed by a human being so it must be error-free.
- 3
- Think of the ATS as a matrix: ATS scanners are programmed for a fixed amount of characters and are preset to count each character, so less text is best. For example, do not waste a character by putting brackets around area codes. Instead of (416), simply use 416.
- 4
- Font and style: ATS scanners cannot read a mix of style sizes or fonts, and usually they only read size 11 or 12. So use only one size and one style throughout, not a mix. Safe readable styles are Arial, Calibri, Georgia and Tahoma.
- 5
- Do not use templates: Most ATS scanners only read standard Word documents and do not read headers or footers, borders, lines, symbols or anything in shading, so use simple formatting. They will read bullet points, but some ATS scanners cannot read PDF formats.
- 6
- Resume length: The ATS won't penalize you for length, but when it is read by a person it could be, so be smart and keep it to a maximum of 2 pages. With your cover letter the total application will be 3 pages.
- 7
- First line of the resume: ATS scanners are preset to read letters first, not numbers, so have your first and last name on the first line. Do not add degrees or certifications or letters after it. To keep your brand messaging seamless, use the same name on your resume that you use on your LinkedIn profile.
- 8
- Write for the reader: Initially the reader is the ATS scanner yet eventually the second reader will be a person, so be ready for one of the most important interview questions: "walk me through your resume". Know your resume intimately and be prepared to answer this question without even glancing at your resume.

Applicant tracking systems might not be used by every company, but be ready to create applications that can pass these pesky machines. They are sophisticated pieces of technology that are being used by many Human Resources department, so aim for reality in order to succeed.

This article was submitted by Lisa Trudel, Career Specialist with the Centre for Education & Training. She works at their Toronto Parliament Employment Services location in Cabbagetown and can be contacted at: ltrudel@tcet.com

We value your opinion. Please let us know what you think about this article. Send email to learningcurves@hotmail.com.

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WHAT'S NEW?

BY WENDY TERRY

Often when we set out to pick a course for the Fall term, we think we know what we want and put that in the search engine or scan a print calendar looking for it. But every year the schools offer new courses and a few have special listings in the calendar or website to highlight new courses. You could even call up the department area you are interested and ask “What’s new?” Sometimes something just strikes you as being new and different.

The following overview will give you an idea of some things that are new this fall. You should find out what is new before you register, you may find a better course for yourself this way.

New courses are usually developed in response to a change in the labour market. So, instead of trying to understand those often contradictory labour market and job trends websites, check out the new courses. Colleges have program advisory committees that are made up of employers who would hire graduates from specific programs and they advise the college on how the program should change to meet their current labour market needs. So often the new courses reflect current labour market needs.

Computers

It was flipping through the George Brown College Continuing Education 2015-2016 print calendar when it struck me that Microsoft Office Applications were now listed with “Computer Basics” – no longer framed as specialty skills, but basic skills you are assumed to already know. So what is the latest? Try looking at Digital Analytics or Social Media Marketing.

Job Search Skills

In George Brown’s continuing education web site www.coned.georgebrown.ca on the home page, in the bottom right corner you will find a box to click on titled “New Courses and Certificates”. This refers to courses added since the publication of their last print calendar. By scanning this extensive listing I found under “Community Services” a set of four new courses in Supported Employment. This caught my eye as community workers are increasingly helping their clients to find work, so these new courses would be useful. Even for the general adult learner they would be useful. For example, “Labour Market and Work Trends” would be a good course to take as often it is hard to know what to study given the fast changing job market, not to mention that labour market web sites often contradict one another and tend to confuse rather than inform, or they do not relate to your region. Unfortunately not all schools list new courses so you have to ask your program department what is new.

Early Morning Classes

Seneca has been offering an early morning scheduling option for a few terms but this is the first time we have brought it to the attention of Learning Curves readers. Go to www.senecacollege.ca/ce/early-morning for listings. Once a week you can go to a 7:00AM to 8:30AM class and then spend another one and a half hours on-line. This early morning option is intriguing. After a full day’s work, going to class is often pushing

yourself to the point where you are not taking in the class material. Starting your day with the class seems a better time to learn.

Also, most daycares open early so you could drop your kids off at day care before class and would not have to arrange for child care after regular day care hours, as you do when you attend those three hour, after work classes that often start at 7:00PM. So, doing the early morning classes could save you the hassle of taking your child over to a babysitter after daycare and then rushing off to class.

Durham College

On the inside front cover of Durham College’s print Continuing Education calendar you will find two sections, “New Courses” and “New Programs”. In the 2016-2017 calendar under New Programs there is Emergency Communication, Health Care Administration, Retirement Communities Management. Under New Courses there is Environment Services, Financial Practices for Health Care Organizations, Financial Management, Food Nutrition and Hospitality Management, Happy “Fall” Gardener, Health Care Operations, Health Care Policy, Healthy Adult Aging, Human Resources Management and Labour Relations, Law and Health Care Administration, Operational Overview, Organic Gardening-Intro to Soil, Resident Centered Care, Sales and Marketing, Senior Management, Statistics for Health Care Professions. You can see the labour market trends in these new offerings – services for an aging population, for example. On the home page of their website www.durhamcollege.ca/academic-schools/school-of-continuing-education is a link to the Continuing Education Calendar. So you can easily access this list on line.

Sheridan College

In the brochure for Sheridan’s Faculty of Continuing and Professional Studies, they indicate their new programs by placing a “New” tag beside the relative program. The new programs cover a vast area of topics. There are quite a few new programs in the business section: Fundraising, International Business Management, International Trade and Global Logistics, Retail Management, Cultural Diversity in Canada, Dispute Resolution, as well as Health and Safety Risk Management. There is a new program called: Siemens Mechatronics Systems Certificate under the engineering science and environment section. If you are interested in learning about Food Systems; you only have to take 3 courses to achieve a certificate. Whether you want to teach or just practice yoga, you can take Teaching Hatha Yoga. Have a look at the ones tagged “new”. www.caps.sheridancoollege.ca

Humber College

The School of Social and Community Services at Humber put me onto two new Certificate programs. One was the Cyber Crime Specialist Certificate. Given that cybercrime is the latest in criminal activity this sounds like a good bet for today’s labour market. You will learn what cyber security is, what is required to protect

information, the types of attacks and techniques used by criminals and most importantly the tools and techniques used to prevent the attacks. The second one was a Mindfulness Studies Certificate. In this four course certificate program you will find out about the histories of mindfulness from ancient traditions to current neuroscientific research. This is an interesting field that has applications in psychotherapy, medical, educational and corporate settings. Mindfulness-based interventions (MBI’s) can be used both personally and professionally and include breath awareness, meditations, body scans, walking meditations, mindful eating, and mindful movement. Sounds interesting. <http://communityservices.humber.ca/programs/continuing-education/ceprograms/certificates>

Centennial College- Celebrating its 50th year this fall.

Centennial College has four campuses, most of which have new offerings. New part time programs include Social Media and Volunteer Management. Centennial’s Hospitality, Tourism and Culinary Arts School, has new part-time programs in Wine, Spirits and Beer Appreciation, Healthy Baking Arts, Healthy Culinary Arts, and Restaurant Operations. The Story Arts Centre in East York has new part-time programs in Public Relations, Content Creation for the Web, and Interactive and Digital Media. New individual courses include Graphic Storytelling, Adobe After Effects, Live Sound Productions, Writing for Children, and Songwriting Bootcamp. www.centennialcollege.ca

Seneca College

With Seneca I tried a new tactic – I just asked their search engine “What is new?” I received a list of press releases which lead me to a set of half day and full day Leadership Seminars on new developments. There was one on Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act – Compliance. In 2005, the Ontario Government passed the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act to make Ontario accessible by 2025. There are now standards and rules that businesses and organizations in Ontario need to follow to identify, remove and prevent barriers so that people with disabilities have more opportunities to participate in everyday life. In this Seminar through the use of a self-audit tool, you will have a better understanding what is required for compliance, the timeframes the compliance is required, the reporting obligations and the liability exposure for failing to comply. Sounds like a good one. There are others, like Disabilities in the Workplace, Workplace Conflict. www.senecacollege.ca/ce/training-services/leadership

University of Toronto

There are many doors into university for adult learners, credit part-time, bridging programs and continuing studies. The School of Continuing Studies at the University of Toronto codes their NEW courses with a red bar in their print calendar. Out of many this is what caught my eye: E Learning, Cyber

Security Management, Data Science & Predictive Analytics for Big Data, Record and Information Management, Global Business Management, Brand Journalism & Multimedia Storytelling, Digital Journalism all under Business and Professional Studies. Under Arts and Sciences these caught my eye out of many,

How Your Brain Works Part X: Mental Disorders. How Your Skin Works, Researching Canadian Local History, Censorship and Free Speech Today, the Impressionist Revolution. Have a look yourself. I could not see where courses were designated as new on their website so you need to get a print calendar.

York University

The School of Continuing Studies at York U does not stand out when looking at York’s web site but it is worth finding for a new program called N.O.W. Plus Degree Pathway. N.O.W. stands for night, online and weekends and most important, personalized admission guidance and advising throughout your program. They help you earn a degree faster by sticking with you from admission to graduation to make sure you know all your choices. No more discovering too late that you could have shaved a year or two off your program if only you had known.

Pathways

Literacy and Basic Skills Program Managers have been telling me about their student transition possibilities to the many different Pathways Programs in adult education centres in school boards and various community learning centres for some time. Recently I was made aware of the expected growth in these programs not only in the School Boards but also through the Employment Ontario Centres, given the recommendations in the Building the Workforce for Tomorrow report. What is a pathways program? Basically it is one that leads you through an education and life spanning process. Your pathway could lead you to goals such getting a High School Credit, Employment, Apprenticeship, Post Secondary (college, university) and independence.

Youth take a required Career Studies course in Grade 10 and if you go to an adult basic skills program at the schools- Literacy Basic Skills, Essential Skills, (each Board of Education has a slightly different name) you will go through a pathway process. After you have the basics in English, Math, computers and other skills, a Pathways program helps you answer the question “What are your goals now?”

We often remind our readers that the adult credit programs in schools- adult day schools- are one of the few places adults can get career and educational counseling. See www.learning-curves.org. Choose “Where to Learn” in the left hand column and chose any one of the following stories. Literacy and Basic Skills, Adult Learning in the GTA and Toronto Schools and others.

So keep looking for new programs, courses and services, and let Learning Curves know what you find.

We value your opinion. Please let us know what you think about this article. Send email to learningcurves@hotmail.com.

FINALLY LEARNING AND WORKFORCE INFORMATION SERVICES FOR ADULTS!

BY WENDY TERRY

Building the Workforce of Tomorrow:

A Shared Responsibility

The Premier's Highly Skilled Workforce Expert Panel

Report submitted to the Honourable

Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario

June 2016 www.ontario.ca/page/building-workforce-tomorrow

As an adult learner, Learning Curves recommends you read this thirty-nine page report. You will get an idea of how the Ontario government plans to help build the workforce of tomorrow and in so doing help adult learners. Or, you could just look at the Appendix A. Summary on Recommendations which is nine pages.

The Premier's Highly Skilled Workforce Expert Panel "was asked to develop an integrated strategy to help the province's current and future workforce adapt to the demands of a technology-driven knowledge economy – with a goal of doing so by bridging the worlds of skills development, education and training." Executive Summary pg.2 para 2

Look at the language. Often such reports talk about secondary and post secondary education as though they were just considering youth but this report actually includes adults as well in a lifelong learning continuum of work and learning. The following phrase "secondary, post-secondary, and adult learning environments" first appears in the Executive Summary pg. 3 Recommendation 4 Later on in the report under the Foundational Theme: Partnership and Local Leadership pg.21 we found this phrase, "for students, new immigrants and adults transitioning within the workforce..." This phrase is used often in the report. Yet again in Recommendation 1-2 Establish a Workforce Planning office, the third bullet describes the role of this office, "Monitoring policy files that intersect, economic growth, and talent development, including adult education, immigration, employment and training,... pg. 22

Language that describes lifelong learning for real not just uses the phrase as a rhetorical flourish is a welcome change to see in a government report. .

In the Introduction section, the report even gives figures just specific to adult education participation rates.

"The Conference Board of Canada found that, in 2009, 31% of adult Canadians aged 25–64 participated in some form of non-formal job-related education. While this is slightly higher than the OECD average (28%), it is well behind leading European countries such as Sweden (61%), Norway (47%), and Finland (44%), as well as the United States (33%).

In the Vision section this bullet caught our eye, "People feel empowered to take responsibility for their own educational and career decisions and are committed to developing their own talent and skills at all stages of life and learning. "

How does the report say people can be empowered?

Labour Market Information.

Well for one, better labour market information would help and is addressed as the second foundational theme, Labour Market Information. Going back to school is often preceded by the question What should I study? Yet right now labour market information is a hodge podge of contradictory information that does not reflect local regions.

In Appendix C What the Panel Heard, under "Local labour market information is needed to inform decisions" in the second bullet they summarize what they heard, "Multiple bodies distribute labour market information, including government ministries. This creates a complex web of information that is difficult to navigate." pg 67

No kidding. A number of years ago, the Learning Curves Editor Anne McDonagh, gave up on doing articles on labour market trends as we were not confident in what we found. We did not want to mislead our readers. We gave up on doing articles on the "What Should I Study?" question. We thought that for many individuals, they were best suited to answer that question at the micro level of their lives, rather than be steered by macro level information developed for a workforce sector.

Our goal is to help adults go back to school, so articles which give overviews of learning sectors has been our editorial focus, which brings us to another point the panel heard.

Learning Information.

Again in Appendix C What the Panel Heard under Individuals are not aware of the full array of education and career options available to them, second bullet "There are opportunities to better promote all career paths (including colleges and apprenticeships) and entrepreneurial pathways in K-12/Adult credit system (over and above the mandatory Grade 10 Career Studies course at Employment Ontario service providers and another intermediaries." Pg.68

Lets look at the language first, they use a phrase K-12/Adult Credit system. K-12 means kindergarten to Grade 12 the youth and yes joined as equal by a slash the Adult Credit system. The adult credit systems are the Adult Day Schools run by the public and Catholic boards. See www.learning-curves.org under Where to study in the left column and chose "Adult Learning in the GTA and Toronto Schools" for an overview article of these programs.

In this article and past ones we have pointed out to our readers that one of the advantages of going to an adult day school is they actually have career and education counseling services. They will even help you fill out college and university application forms.

The key part of that second bullet is "There are opportunities to better promote all career paths...at Employment Ontario service providers and other intermediaries" Yes!

Historical Backgounder

First some background on the WEA's work on the need for career and education counseling for adults learning. The WEA, The Workers' Educational Association, a registered charity, is the publisher of Learning Curves. It was founded in Canada in 1918.

In the late 1980's, post NAFTA and the resulting workforce dislocation, the Workers' Educational Association of Canada was funded by the Ontario and Canadian governments to do a Cross Canada study of Learning Information Services for Adults in Canada. The report from that study was titled Unraveling The Tangle, Learning Information Services for Adults in Canada (January 1992). It was cited in Learning Well, Living Well, a federal government consultation paper. Then in the early 1990's, Wendy Terry, at that time the WEA's rep to the International Federation of Workers' Educational Associations and past Executive Director of the WEA was appointed to the Premier's Task Force on Lifelong Learning, Ontario. Their report Lifelong Learning and the New Economy (1994) focused on the need for career information. The following quote comes from a section on Flexibility:

"Perhaps the most important step forward would be the building of a more coherent infrastructure for providing career information and counseling services for people of all ages in Ontario, so that they can develop their own learning and career strategies and put them into action for themselves: Summary Report pg. 7

So what happened from these studies and reports?

Employment Centres were launched by the federal government in the mid to late 1990's, alas not learning information centres. The federal government can deal with employment and training but not learning and/or education. But these centres have only been for the unemployed and only if the clients could not find work with their existing skills, would further training be supported. And even then clients were set off to develop a learning plan that first showed what they wanted to study was rated as a high labour market need (labour market information problem here), Then they were to find and detail the relevant education they would like funding for. That "individuals were not aware of the full array of education and career options available" was the problem here to quote today's Building the Workforce of Tomorrow report. We might add neither were their counselors trained or mandated, or given information to help their clients in these labour market and learning searches. Both learned through experience.

The Ontario Alliance of Career Development Practitioners grew out of the working group memberships of the Task Force on Life Long Learning. As well George Brown College launched their Career and Work Counsellor, part time program, shortly after the Task Force discussions.

In the early 1980's through to 1997 the WEA ran an Adult Learning Line, and small group workshops in the community where they could give individual help with finding learning information. We were the first agency to organize community information workshops and information sheets for foreign trained professionals. Then labour adjustment funding for post NAFTA workforce dislocations was discontinued so the Adult Learning Line was closed. In 1999 the WEA started to publish Learning Curves funded as a social enterprise, advertising revenue is solicited from educational providers, in Toronto and the GTA.area. It is also largely published by volunteers. Learning Curves does overview articles of adult education sectors but cannot do individual counseling. However, many counselors at Employment Ontario centres have told us that many Learning Curves articles are "invaluable."

So almost twenty five years after the WEA recommended learning information services for adults in Unravelling the Tangle, 1992 which resulted in Employment centres through federal funding, this Ontario government report, Building the Workforce for Tomorrow, 2016 recommends that the Employment Ontario centres would be a place to provide career and education information to adults.

Well finally, WEA says - thank heavens!

We have concerns about the proposed workforce and learning information services. For example, will all adults be able to use services or just those who are unemployed?

Then there is the question of eligibility for funding for training, will it still be largely limited to those who have been on Employment Insurance? Many do not qualify for E I and therefore do not qualify for training. The Building the Workforce of Tomorrow notes this problem.

Will retraining only be supported if a student chooses a designated growth sector? Even now in Employment Ontario centres, adults have trouble getting approval for Second Career funding if their learning plan would not be in a designated labour market need. And we know the problems with labour market information. Maybe sometimes the individual knows best what path is good for themselves.

How will institutional bias be overcome? One of the biggest biases today is how public and community providers see private schools. Some adults prefer the environment of a small career college than a large public institution. For one, in a career college they know your name, in a college you constantly have to give them your student number. Then, if adults choose a private school, and then choose to carry on their education in a public institution, they are not given credit for courses earned at the private school. The student pays twice. If the government supported the student through Second Career funding or other funding at a

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

FINALLY LEARNING AND WORKFORCE INFORMATION SERVICES FOR ADULTS!

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS

private school, then when that student has to repeat those earned courses at a community college, the government pays twice, too.

A lot of newcomers come from countries where there is no network of community colleges but there are educators who set up private schools to train adults in specific skills. To come to Canada to find this private/public divide is a puzzle to them. Maybe it should be to us too. After all Microsoft Office is Microsoft Office wherever you learn it. Either you are competent or not.

That second bullet quoted above said “There are opportunities to better promote all career paths...at Employment Ontario service providers and other intermediaries” So, who would be other intermediaries? Well, CLARS Language and Assessment Referral Services would be one. These centres assess newcomers and refer them to programs in the community. They are a place where newcomers may find about programs that they never thought about as they start taking English classes in Canada. It is better than discovering a good course years later or never learning about such.

These CLARS services, Canadian Language and Assessment Referral Services, help newcomers settle faster and save the government money as the student gets into

better suited courses that will help him or her transfer skills into the labour market faster, like a Bridging program or SLT specialized language training for a specific job area. Often a newcomer would wind up taking general language classes that his/her friends told him about in the neighbourhood when there was one more suited to helping them get back into the labour market, in a job that is better suited to their previous skills and experience.

Such comprehensive learning information services can also address the problem of provider self-interest. Adult education is really a market system, if you are taking a class at one school, they get the government funding support, so often it is not in their interest to let you know about another program that might be better suited. They might not even know themselves because they do not keep an overview file of all programs. Having an overview of courses is invaluable.

Pathways (career counseling)

This is new term, which I think we would have called career paths before but that seemed to limit consideration to the professions. Pathway programs are offered at school boards both in high school and adult programs. What is a pathways program, basically it is one that leads you through an education and life planning

process. Your pathway could lead you to destinations such as apprenticeship, college, community living, university or the workplace. The Building the Workforce of Tomorrow found that, “Students, new immigrants, and adults transitioning within the workforce need a greater awareness and a real understanding of all the career possibilities, traditional and non-traditional, that are available to them, including the steps to get there.” So we can expect to see an expansion of pathways programs from the schools to intermediaries like Employment Ontario Centres, or CLARS centres and others.

Visions for the Future

At the beginning of this article we cited a quote from the Building the Workforce of Tomorrow report which noted that an OECD report found that adults who participated in some form of non-formal job related education was higher in some countries like Sweden (61%), Norway (47%) and Finland (44%) compared to Canada (31%). In past the WEA has commented in Learning Curves and in published letters to the Globe and Star that Canadians only look at Finland for their children's education but they need to also look at their adult education system. Finland sees adult education not only for workforce development but as strengthening society, citizenship development.

They have learning information centres for all- no restrictions and for all programs- not just limited to workforce training. From the Finnish National Board of Education web site the objectives of adult education are as follows, “The main objectives of adult education policy are ensuring the availability and competence of the labour force, providing educational opportunities for the entire adult population and strengthening social cohesion and equity. The objectives should support efforts to extend working life, raise the employment rate, improve productivity, implement the conditions for lifelong learning and enhance multiculturalism.

Adult education comprises education and training leading to a degree or certificate, liberal adult education and staff-development and other training provided or purchased by employers. In addition, it includes labour market training, which is mainly targeted at unemployed people.”

“Liberal adult education” which in their words is “extensive” is a subject barely touched when we discuss adult education in Canada. We should.

See the WEA's University in the Community, www.universityinthecommunity.ca

We value your opinion. Please let us know what you think about this article. Send email to learningcurves@hotmail.com.

HUBBUB ABOUT HUBS: FINDING ENRICHMENT AND EMPLOYMENT THROUGH LEF AND THE CAREER FOUNDATION

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

Community Partners

The LEF Industry Street hub space also houses a number of different community agencies and services to support enrichment and employment, including a large team of employment counsellors and job developers as well as Building Up, a social enterprise that connects workers who face barriers with employers in the trades, the North York Harvest Food Bank, and the North York Women's Centre, which provides supports, workshops and other services to vulnerable women facing issues at home or elsewhere.

An onsite bicycle workshop teaches bicycle assembly and maintenance for people wishing to fix their own bikes or build career skills, while Red Propeller hires people who face employment barriers to operate its recycling service to divert discarded VHS videos from landfills. Community members can also sign up for knitting, arts and crafts

classes, health workshops, resume creation and other ways to get involved and build skills. Please call 416-769-0830, or visit www.lefca.org, for more information.

The Career Foundation

Started in 1988, the Career Foundation is an Employment Ontario service provider that offers supports and opportunities and multiple programs for those needing work, building skills and connecting employers and job seekers. Five hub locations and outposts across the GTA offer employment services for all ages and skillsets, with numerous offerings catering to youth, including Career Focus, Youth Job Link, and Youth Job Connect.

Other services include workshops, skills assessment and help with resumes, interview preparation, matching job seekers with employers, as well as such

programs as Second Career and resource and community referral services.

The Career Foundation's employment opportunities can provide financial support to the employers and employees. These programs range from providing services to underserved/unemployed youth, as well as to new graduates with limited to no job experience, and youth who are interested in specific trade jobs. Some of their newer programs include one specifically tailored to people leaving the military who would like to find a job, as well as a new disability program that ensures dignity, independence, equal opportunity and integration for all of its participants. Other programming varies from hiring events, to referrals to other organizations, to one-on-one employment counselling. Please call 416-920-5144, or visit www.careerfoundation.com, for more information.

One Career Foundation hub can be found at Jane Alliance Neighbourhood Services (JANS) at 909 Jane St. Also located here is a branch of Career Dynamics, an organization that helps job seekers with disabilities. JANS also offers programming for seniors and adults, including computer classes and workshops; they can be reached at 416-249-6742.

To find community hubs, Call 211, the community information help line, and ask if there is a community hub of services near you. Or ask your local librarian who will be very knowledgeable about the community their library serves.

We value your opinion. Please let us know what you think about this article. Send email to learningcurves@hotmail.com.

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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 about to go back to school for the first time in 20 years! I plan to start a brand new career in the healthcare field as a Personal Support Worker. What are your feelings about this field? And, do you have any tips for the mature student?

Eager in Etobicoke

Dear Eager

Congrats! Going back to school is both scary and exciting. A career in the healthcare field is a good choice by all labour market indications. We have a population that is aging and there is a great emphasis on ensuring high quality care both in independent living and in supportive housing. I would recommend doing some research on this field on the website jobsincanada.gc.ca and that will give you an idea of trends in this field along with average pay scales. The field of Personal Support can lead you into a variety of areas so I would really recommend doing volunteer work to see which client type you enjoy working with. I would also recommend taking as many extra courses available in the community to keep your skills upgraded and give you that “edge”. The Alzheimers Society and many other non profit organisations often offers low-cost training to supplement your skills.

Mature students do very well in post-secondary, and you won’t be alone. Mid-life career transitioners are returning to school in droves! Some of my tips for the mature student include;

Most adults have a variety of competing responsibilities so it can be easy to put off studying and homework time. Block out time for studying.

If you aren’t computer literate

already brush up on your computer skills. Most colleges now allow you to submit homework online and expect that your assignments will be done on the computer. You will also want to be able to do research online. Make the computer your best friend.

Take advantage of all the resources the school offers you. Are there study groups? If not, start one. Is there tutoring available? Many people returning to school may need to brush up on math or science. Be sure to ask the local student office what they offer.

I always recommend that people visit their campus ahead of time. It takes away a lot of anxiety if you already have a map in your head to take away those first day jitters.

Finally, remember to take deep breaths, and enjoy your journey. Bon Voyage!

*Dear ELCEE is written by Deborah Noel, deborahjnoel@gmail.com
Send her your questions.*

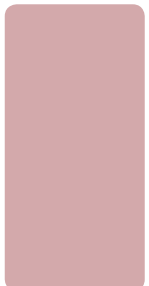
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