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THE EMPLOYEE WITH EPILEPSY

BY LEARNING ABOUT FREE TOOLS, RESOURCES AND AVAILABLE TECHNOLOGY, CAREER PROFESSIONALS WILL BE BETTER PLACED TO ADVOCATE FOR CLIENTS WITH EPILEPSY

BY CARTER HAMMETT

Here is a typical refrain from clients who find themselves in my office. An employee has epilepsy but has never disclosed their condition. They have always had a fairly good performance history when they have a seizure on the job. A well-managed, yet invisible disability quickly becomes “visible” and the employee becomes vulnerable in the process. Suddenly, there is an increase in worries about “performance on the job,” from superiors where no similar concerns existed before. Terms like “liability” and “concerns about productivity” enter the dialogue. That is an unfortunate place to be for both employer and employee. Employers are concerned about productivity, absenteeism, accommodation costs and health and safety among other issues. Employees worry about discrimination, misunderstanding and accommodation and a host of other concerns. And they are frequently brought up as issues on both sides, especially by young graduates with epilepsy entering professional careers, unsure of whether to disclose their condition or not. Career

professionals can play an important part in helping young graduates with epilepsy become more confident while helping them understand both their rights and how their disability might impact career choices. The reality is, with a few exceptions, that most employees with epilepsy can do just about any job. There are a lot of successful actors, engineers and nurses living with epilepsy and some of them might be working with you. Let’s first start with a few words about what epilepsy actually is. For the uninitiated, “epilepsy” is a chronic, neurological condition characterized by recurrent seizures. A seizure happens when abnormal electrical activity in the brain causes an involuntary change in the person’s awareness or behaviour. Epilepsy is diagnosed when a person has had two or more seizures that cannot be attributed to some other condition. Anyone can develop epilepsy at any time during their life. Usually the cause is unknown, although it has been related to brain tumours, acquired brain injuries

and infections. The condition is an “equal opportunity” disability affecting about 1 in 100 people from all cultures and ages. Generally, there is virtually no difference in the performance between a worker with epilepsy and their non-disabled counterparts. Productivity is often equal to or better than employees without epilepsy and both workplace accidents and absenteeism are usually lower as well. There are always a few exceptions of course, and the usual reason given for discouraging certain careers is the risk of injury to the worker with epilepsy or the lives of others. Examples of this include but are not limited to: school bus driver, armed forces or pilot. For other situations, it’s best to assess each case individually. Workplace accommodations will be determined by the employee’s seizure type, frequency and intensity. I always ask if a person owns their epilepsy or if their epilepsy owns them? In other words, how much knowledge and

self-acceptance does the individual possess about their disability that can help guide employers to the best accommodations? Consider some key questions:

- What parts of the job are creating issues for the employee?
- How do they impact the employee’s performance?
- Can the job’s essential duties be performed? What accommodations has the employee identified?
- Are there possible side effects from medications to consider?
- Are there co-morbidities (conditions like dyslexia or attention deficit disorder that sometimes accompany epilepsy) that need to be addressed?

Job analysis
By placing emphasis on the job’s fundamental requirements and overall details, the position will become more

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

HOW CAN I FORGET YOU?

Poem by Musarrat Zaidi

The love showered by you
The help provided by you
Understanding developed by you
Tough time made happy by you
How can I forget you?
Tears wiped off by you
Smiles brought forth by you
Motivation done by you
Hopes enlightened by you
How can I forget you?
Scenario changed by you
Whatever is now is done by you
I wish all the best for you
I pray a happiest life for you
I can't forget you



WILL I SURVIVE?

Poem by Maria Pirbhai

As the Country of Quaid lay in tatters;
Robbed, looted and plundered____
Of every splendour and grandeur.

As the cries of the people drown,
In the roar of the fire around;
A fear of death settles down.

As blood of innocents seeps in the ground;
Many’re orphaned, widowed ‘n’ left alone.
As the injured cry out in pain;
Men with evil hearts rejoice their night gains.

As the Country of Quaid lay battered;
With its heart completely shattered,
And its feet bound in fetters,
It asks a question in Bold Letters:
Will I Survive?
Will I Survive?

THE EMPLOYEE WITH EPILEPSY

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

accessible to the worker with epilepsy. One of the ways of doing this is performing a job analysis, which breaks a job into its essential functions. It also serves as a useful template for creating an accommodation plan. The first step should be to collect data on the following areas:

1. Duties and Tasks: The basic unit of a job is the performance of specific tasks and responsibilities. Data to be collected at this stage can include, effort, skill, equipment needs and standards among others. Questions to be asked include, "can specific elements of the job be reassigned or traded so the person can perform tasks more effectively?"
2. Environment: The physical layout of the workspace may present issues. Are the edges of desks and tables jagged or rounded? Can padding be placed on the floor? Is there glass around? All of these elements may have an impact on the physical requirements of the job. Is the environment hot? Cold? Noisy?
3. Tools: What tools are needed to effectively function on the job? These can include hardhats and work boots, but also assistive devices.

4. Relationships: This includes supervision given and received and the nature of the relationships with people inside and outside the workplace. Mentoring and coaching opportunities can also be helpful.

5. Requirements: What skills and abilities are needed to perform the job? What are the job's minimum requirements? What are the performance expectations?

After these steps a list of accommodations are considered, including apps, coaching and environmental changes (including working from home and job carving as options) and implemented. The last phase is a review and follow up and opportunity to adjust accommodations that might not be effective.

Some seizure types require no accommodations at all. Others like tonic-clonic (grand mal) may mean

that an employee will need sufficient time to recover from a seizure. The Job Accommodation Network suggests creating a private space for employees to regain their composure or possibly a place where a change of clothes can be stored.

Memory issues can be a tricky area for workers with epilepsy. Accommodations can include memory apps like Any.do task list, Remember the Milk or Evernote which can be tremendous assets for managing tasks and jogging the memory. Tried-and-true methods like chunking, which involves breaking tasks down into their step-by-step components can help reduce the risk of being overwhelmed in some workers with epilepsy. I like to recommend that the steps be placed on sticky notes and removed as each task is completed. This way the worker watches the workload shrink before their eyes. Most people carry phones these days but don't think of utilizing the camera, notes, scheduling and voice notes features, all of which can have a great impact on enhancing a person's productivity.

Perhaps you've noticed that a common thread running through these

suggestions is how inexpensive they are to implement. Indeed, most of these ideas are either low cost-or-no cost, which busts another myth that the disability is expensive to accommodate. With diversity and inclusiveness, a key part of most employment and retention strategies these days, jobseekers need to feel confident they have skills and talents to bring added value to a pluralistic workforce. Career professionals should educate themselves about epilepsy so that they can play a vital role in reinforcing that message.

Do you want to know more about assisting clients with epilepsy? Visit Epilepsy@Work, a free online, interactive, certification resource at epilepsyatwork.com.

Carter Hammett is the Employment Services Manager with Epilepsy Toronto. He holds a Bachelor of Community Studies degree along with diplomas in journalism, social work and adult education. His work has appeared in National Post, Toronto Star and Toronto Sun, among others. He is the author of three books including Benchmarking: A Guide to Hiring and Managing Persons with Learning Disabilities (ALDER, 2005). He can be reached at carter@epilepsytoronto.org.

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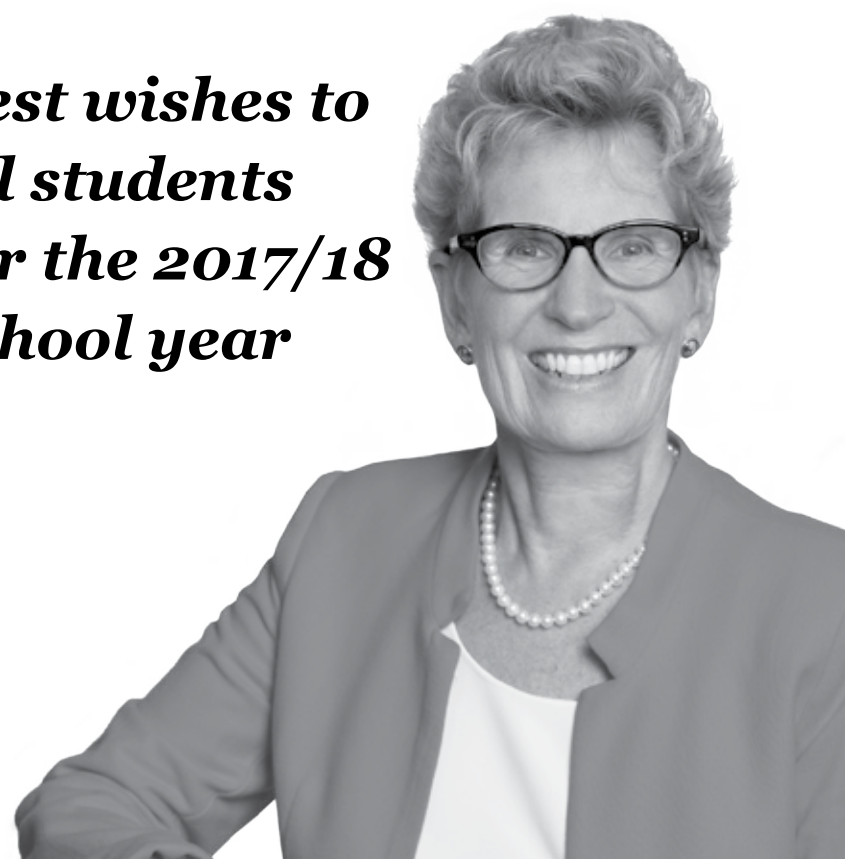
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*Best wishes to
 all students
 for the 2017/18
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OVER 45 AND LOOKING FOR WORK?

BY LISA TRUDEL

If this headline caught your attention, you might know the expressions “mature worker”, “experienced worker” and “older worker”.

You probably never thought that being over the age of 45 would label you “older”. Experienced maybe, but not older and especially not unemployed. Yet the reality for many job seekers is that the current Canadian workplace often focuses on age as a hiring factor. It is a genuine barrier such as classism and lookism, that is seldom discussed yet often happens.

Even though age is only an attitude, there can be an assumption by many employers that job seekers over the age of 45 are more set in their work style and thus are not as easy to manipulate. Other assumptions include taking more days for sick leave or elder care, not being current with technology, and having less energy and enthusiasm for the job.

If you are a job seeker over the age of 45, the following 6 solutions might be possibilities to consider:

1) Think young and revise your social media presence: statistics prove that if you are serious about job searching having a LinkedIn profile is mandatory. According to the Society for Human Resource Management, more than 90% of employers use LinkedIn

and social media to find employees. Be sure to keep your LinkedIn profile current, and improve your network by checking suitable groups and events found through www.meetup.com and www.eventbrite.ca

2) Focus on the positive to reduce the negative of your age: on your resume, be careful of dates. For example, unless your educational degrees are recent, leave out the date of when you graduated and instead add in current self-directed online learning such as a Diploma in something relevant through www.alison.com Another resume tip is to divide your experience into two categories. One category can be titled “Experience” and you can add in all the dates for the past 10 years. Another category could be titled “Previous Experience” with no dates listed. This way you can still show you are proud of your past accomplishments and can discuss with confidence skills developed at positions from pre-2007, without disclosing your age.

3) Create a positive first impression: pay attention to your clothing, shoes, grooming and posture. Your visual image and body language including the way you hold yourself and the self-assured style of your handshake will say a lot about your positive outlook on life.

4) Get involved and do something: try not to stare at your phone hoping it will ring or for an email to appear. According to LinkedIn research, 42% of employers state that they view volunteer experience as equivalent to formal work experience. So try volunteering. It can improve your networking skills, it can fill in resume gaps and it might lead you to a job opening elsewhere. Research www.charityvillage.com and www.volunteertoronto.ca for volunteer positions.

5) Be strategic: despite the media focus on youth, there are still some employers who prefer to hire older workers. Instead of being a barrier your age can be an advantage. For example, some companies do not have the time or financial resources to train new hires so they actually want to employ someone who can immediately improve productivity. Research www.canadastop100.com/older_workers/ for examples of the best employers for Canadians over the age of 40. Instead of wasting job search time applying for jobs with companies who have a preference for hiring youth, aim for a positive result by creating a strategic plan.

6) Become your own best friend: try to be as kind to yourself as you would be to your best friend when emotionally supporting them through a transition. Coping with change is not easy and professional loss can include anger, denial, sadness and withdrawal. Give yourself permission to have a bad day, accept the reality of your situation and avoid dwelling on things you cannot change. You might want to seek job search assistance by contacting a local Employment Ontario funded Career Centre such as www.tcet.com

In summary, by refreshing your social media skills, updating your resume, modernizing your visual image, increasing your networking contacts and being strategic, it is possible to find the inspiration and information needed to find a new purpose again.

Being over the age of 45 and unemployed is not rare in 2017, so join forces with other mature job seekers and connect with a Career Specialist who will help facilitate a new plan of action as 2018 approaches.

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

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LEARNING CURVES
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ACCESS BUSINESS COLLEGE HELPS LAURA, A SYRIAN IMMIGRANT

BY WENDY TERRY

Learning Curves has written about ABC Access Business College and their students in previous issues. This time we want to tell you about Laura who is a high school student who has been working in a volunteer coop placement as a receptionist over the summer at Access.

What is special about a high school student working in a volunteer position to gain work experience? Well Laura is a Syrian immigrant who just came to Canada in February 2016. She is 18.

In one short life she has lived many and she has been helped in this by Sonia and Berj at Access Business College. Berj is a cousin of her father's and Sonia is a member of the Armenian Church, Laura and Berj are Armenian. The Armenian community has been part of the Canadian effort to help Syrian Immigrants.

The picture opposite is one of Laura, centre in front of the birthday candle, surrounded by members of the an Armenian

youth group who has helped Laura settle in Canada and as this picture shows is celebrating her birthday with her.

Laura's first life was living in Syria, in Aleppo, with her Dad, an engineer, her Mom, the homemaker, and her older sister who wanted to be a pharmacist. Laura wanted to be a dentist and enjoyed spending time with her close friend Armani.

Then the war, so Laura's second life was leaving their home and her school in Syria, which is still standing, to go to Lebanon to live for 10 months while her Dad's friend in Canada worked through the sponsorship application process. In Lebanon Laura worked as a clerk in a store.

Then Laura started her third life in Canada, starting school in George Vanier in Grade 10, then being promoted to 11 and now Grade 12 this year. Then she wants to go to study health sciences. She stays in touch with her friend from Aleppo through the Internet. Her sister is yet to start Accounting courses. Her Dad and Mom are



Laura centre with her birthday and her friends from the Armenian youth group

working in a factory that makes venetian blinds.

With her friends from the Armenian Youth Group, she has learned to skate, ski and curl- Canadian sports all. Canadian Ice and snow, she has learned to live with through two winters now and play ice, snow based sports.

She has gone on trips with family, friends and the youth group to Niagara Falls, the CN Tower, Wonderland, the Blue Jays game. She is fitting in as we say.

School, going on outings, learning sports and volunteering at Access under the helping presence of Sonia and Berj have all helped Laura to improve her English. She is multilingual. She knows Armenian, Turkish, Arabic and English. And two of these languages do not use the English alphabets, Armenian and Arabic have their own different scripts.

She misses her grandfather and grandmother who are still in Aleppo, sad to be away from them but happy to be in Canada.

Remember, Laura is only 18, we are sure

she will become a dentist in Canada as she is well ahead in health sciences studies. In Syria her high school curriculum was Chemistry, Physics, Biology, Math, French, Armenian and English. Most newcomer youth are ahead of Canadian youth in Math and Sciences and are already multilingual as is Laura.

I have often written that going to ABC Access Business College is a day brightener, to meet the teachers, the students who are learning new skills to get better jobs. But this time, the day brightener was to meet Laura, a Syrian immigrant youth, so positive after so much she has lived through in only 18 years.

I know Sonia and Berj always work to help ABC Access Business College students, it is their school after all but Sonia and Berj are working to help Laura, just because they are caring people.

Call ABC Access Business College at 416-510-2739 to see how they can help you learn new skills and get a better job. Let Sonia and Berj help you.

DATA IS THE NEW BLACK GOLD!

WORLD'S MOST VALUABLE RESOURCE IS IMPORTANT FOR YOUR SMALL ORGANIZATION TOO BY SAL AHMED

In the new business intelligence landscape, big data analytics is a trend adopted by many companies to improve operational efficiency. Data Analytics solution is no longer just for large companies with financial muscles and big budgets anymore. Now every company can harness the power of modern business intelligence tools to raise their bottom line.

Big data versus small data divisions no longer exists. Big data provides an overall view while small data suggests specific actions for better solution. Small data also provides more focussed and real time information.

Small businesses can uncover patterns and relationships by using the same data points like big corporations:

- Full digital indulgence
- Serving as a tool to capture behavioral and impression trails of the customers
- Using online and social presence as its primary tool for gathering customer intelligence.

There are multiple tools and apps like Hub'Scan, LogMyCalls and GA Data Grabber available that small business can use to collect, analyze and process data. Here are some tools for your small business to draw big results.

Google Analytics

Google's free Web-traffic-monitoring tool, provides all types of data about website visitors, using a multitude of metrics and traffic sources.

WolframAlpha's Facebook Reports

WolframAlpha uses a collection of built-in data and algorithms to interpret repositories of information.

Dbxtra

The software integrates with all sorts of databases in all sorts of locations, and lets you dive in without knowing SQL.

Optimizely

It's great to find out if one headline or sales web page format works better than another.

Quintly

Quintly quantifies the strength of pages and profiles on social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. It illustrates data through maps, graphs and charts

IBM's Watson Analytics

IBM's Watson Analytics makes advanced and predictive business analytics easily accessible to small businesses. The platform doesn't require any requisite skills of using complex data mining and analysis systems.

Tranzlogic

Tranzlogic works with merchants and payment systems to extract and analyze proprietary data from credit card purchases. This information can then be used to measure sales performance, evaluate customers and customer segments, improve promotions and loyalty programs, launch more-effective marketing campaigns, write better business plans, and perform other tasks that lead to smarter business decisions.

Social Mention

Social Mention acts as a search engine with social media metrics features. The tool generates results pages based on your search term, displaying and analyzing user-generated content from more than 100 platforms. These pages contain metrics such as, Sentiment – The ratio of positive to negative content. Passion – The odds that a user will post about your search term more than once. Top Keywords – The most common phrases and hashtags used with your search term.

Qualtrics

Qualtrics offers three types of real-time insights: customer, market and employee insights. To gain customer insight, use Qualtrics' survey software for customer satisfaction, customer experience and website feedback surveys. To study the market, Qualtrics also offers advertising testing, concept testing and market research programs. And when it comes to your team, Qualtrics can help conduct employee surveys, exit interviews and reviews. Other options include online samples, academic research and mobile surveys.

JackBe Presto

JackBe Presto can capture data from a variety of sources, including Microsoft Office and Server products, Oracle developer tools and Salesforce.com. These feeds are organized into do-it-yourself interactive dashboards that allow users to compare disparate streams of data essentially on demand.

Once you've made the leap to data analysis, you have to do something about it. Knowing more about your customers is simply the first step to building better relationships with them. If you're going to take on a business intelligence plan, make sure you budget time to do something with the insights you unearth

Sal Ambed is a WEA Board Member and can be reached at: learn@sqlizze.com

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SHERIDAN CONTINUING EDUCATION: FOR YOUR CAREER SUCCESS

“Every college has new courses every year. Sheridan gave us theirs, but you should ask what is new every term no matter what school you go to. Colleges have employer advisory committees that make sure their courses are relevant to the job market. So if the course is new, it probably better relates to the current labour market and the skills in that course would help you be more competitive in the labour market.”

Seasons are changing again, a reminder that we are moving forward, evolving into a different, hopefully better version of ourselves. We may be continuing on a path we have started, or decided to act on committing to a new direction. In any case, it is important to remember to revisit your options because colleges and universities are changing and evolving also. Every college has new courses every year. Sheridan gave us theirs, but you should look into what is new every term no matter what school you go to. Colleges have employer advisory committees that make sure their courses are relevant to the job market. So if the course is new, it probably better relates to the current labour market and the skills in that course would help you be more competitive in the labour market.

Continuing education is a key to success in today's job market. If you want to change careers, land your dream job, or earn a promotion, these new, trending programs from Sheridan's Faculty of Continuing and Professional Studies can help you reach your goals.

Advanced Certificate in Accounting and Finance (ACAF)

Get ready for an accounting career and earn a respected industry credential. The ACAF is the only nationally recognized accounting and finance certificate in Canada supported by the CPA—the leading accounting and finance educator in the country.

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People are using their mobile devices more than ever. This means mobile marketing skills are a must-have for marketers. Learn digital communication techniques and how to create mobile marketing strategies.

Sales (Recognition of Achievement)

In this program, you'll learn much more than sales. You'll get the 21st century skills employers want: skills like prospecting, communication and listening, negotiation, winning the confidence of others, organization and public speaking.

Event Management

(Recognition of Achievement)
Event management is an exciting and

in-demand career choice. From start to finish, you'll learn to plan events for the public, corporate and non-profit sectors.

Siemens Mechatronics Systems Certification (Sheridan Certificate)

Siemens is a leader in mechatronics—a system that combines electrical, mechanical and computer engineering. This program gets you ready for a career in this in-demand industry.

Front-End Web Development (Sheridan Certificate)

Front-end web development is a growing and in-demand area. In this program, you'll learn to create beautiful and interactive websites.

Social Media Writing

(Recognition of Achievement)
Writers need digital writing skills to stay competitive in today's market. In this program, you'll learn social media, web and blog writing skills and become a savvy digital media writer.

Data Science (Sheridan Certificate)

Here you'll learn how to transform data into business information by exploring, analyzing, predicting, reporting on, and monitoring data from small to large data sets.

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SAS® Base Programming

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Professional Development Workshops

Sheridan also has several Professional Development Workshops coming up this fall, including:

- Human Resources
- Photography
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- Management Workshops

Sheridan's continuing education programs are also flexible. With online, on campus or blended courses, you can fit learning into your busy schedule.

Most fall classes begin the week of September 11, 2017. Register now at caps.sheridancollege.ca



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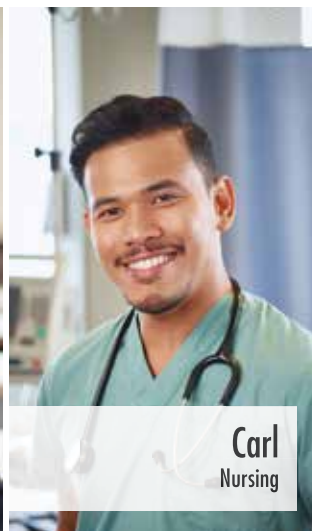
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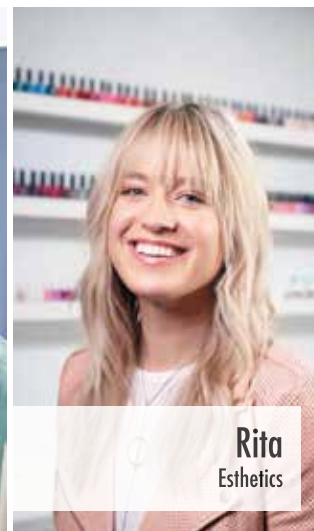
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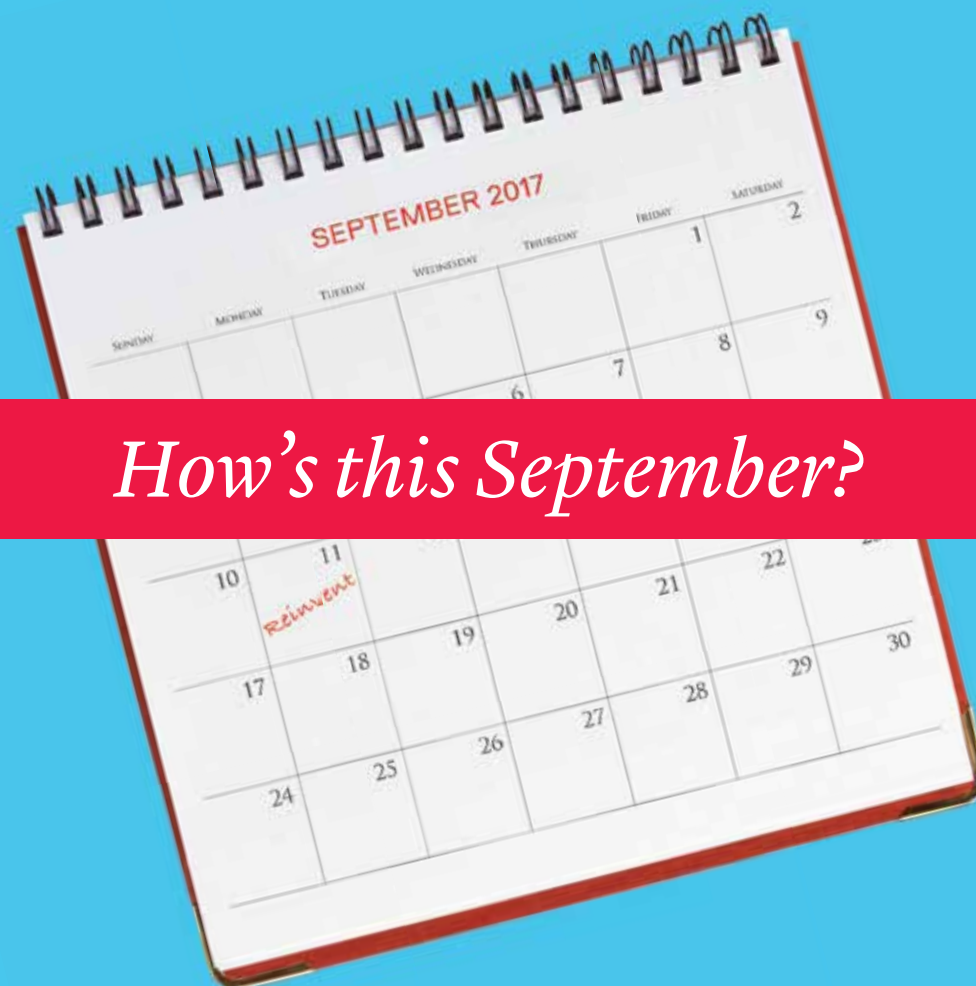
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- Private Investigation Certificate **ONLINE**
- Municipal Bylaw Certificate
- Mindfulness Certificate
- Cyber Crime Specialist Certificate **ONLINE**
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- Behavioural Science Certificate

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I LOVE CANADA

The following three poems were written by students attending Level 3-4 ESL classes at the Downsview Library site. The students were asked to write poems about what Canada meant to them.

Canada, you are the best country in the world.
Your people are very kind and polite.
I wasn't born in your beautiful land,
But you're my second country,
And I am proud to live here. Glory, O Canada
- *Galdina Moreira*

And here I love, and here I want to stay
Because there is no place
Better than Canada.
- *Cleudina Maria Martins Marques*

Canada is a multicultural country
That is the crib
Where everybody feels safe.
We love Canada.
God Bless Canada.
- *Maria Maravilla*

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UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO IN THE COMMUNITY: PROFS, IDEAS AND THEIR IMPACT ON ORDINARY LIVES

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 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. The fall 2017 program runs from Sept. 27–Nov. 29. We meet 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 have been unable to complete post-secondary studies due to life circumstances. To a person, UitC students are passionate about learning.

What is the topic of the Fall 2016 lecture series?

This fall, the topic of our series is: "University of Toronto: The Influence and Legacy of Its Scholars"

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 may be required. An optional writing component will be offered this fall

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 2017 Classes

University of Toronto in the community: Profs, ideas and their impact on ordinary lives

Wednesday evenings, 6:30 - 8:30 pm, September 27th - November 29th
Location: Innis College, 2 Sussex Ave. (St. George subway stop)

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- can meet weekly for 10 weeks
- have intermediate English literacy skills



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HAPPINESS AND LIFELONG LEARNING: MAYUMI YAMAGUCHI IN CONVERSATION WITH MINA WONG

How would you describe your life before moving to Canada?

After graduating from college in Tokyo majoring in English literature, I worked as a conductor for a train company.

But studying abroad had been my dream, so I saved money and came to Toronto on a temporary visa for language school and employment at a café. Those were great experiences for me to practice English in real life.

Upon returning to Japan, I interpreted for American engineers at a Subaru factory before working in promotions and public relations for Corona beer, a major product at a Tokyo liquor distributor's marketing department.

While working there, I gave a presentation at a conference in Mexico. I really enjoyed that job because I felt appreciated for my creativity, organization, and sociability.

With such success, how did you decide to move to Canada?

When my company planned to amalgamate with another firm, I thought instead of a long distance relationship with my now husband, I would move to Canada to be with him.

Of course, I had mixed feelings about making Canada home even though living abroad was also my dream. I wasn't sure if I could leave my family and friends in Japan. I was worried about jobs in Canada. Also, would I get along with other Canadians from different cultures? Would I become dependent on my husband? Could I still be independent as back in Tokyo?

With many questions about my own future in Canada, my family and friends would also miss me even if they were happy I would be with someone they trusted. These days, my husband and I hope to visit Japan once every two years.

Once you moved here, what were your impressions of Canada?

I remember most of the time when I passed by people on the street, they would say "hello" or at least smile at me.

And at bus stops or on the subway, people would talk with me. That comforted me and made me feel welcome. If I looked lost, people would help even without my asking. That kindness taught me to do the same if I ever saw someone who might need help.

Although it took me some time to get used to a Canadian style of service compared to that in Japan, I learned if I talked nicely to Canadians, they would respond in kind. I also remembered how Japanese retail workers seemed more polite and engaged with customers, and that in Japan, bus drivers would never stop for coffee while their passengers waited.

But I liked living downtown Toronto with lots of trees and green spaces. I also found out many Canadians took time off work to spend vacations with family.

With these new experiences, how have you adapted to life in Canada?

At first, I would be very nervous at gatherings with other people. Little by little, if I saw some of the same faces, I would remember them; I would get to know their personalities,



families, their jobs and leisure activities. Over time, I enjoyed longer conversations with them, and now, I actually like meeting people.

I've also learned that Canadians donate generously to charities, and now I do the same.

With meeting more people, have you made many friends in Toronto?

When I first attended English classes at LINC, I made a few new friends who kept in touch after the program. Some of them continued to study while others started working as I did.

Before having kids, I would make friends whenever my husband and I got together with his friends and co-workers. Just being with them was like a good English lesson, and gradually, I felt more comfortable joining in their conversations.

I was shy and quiet at first because I felt I was the only one who didn't speak English fluently, and I also couldn't understand everything they were saying. But over time, I've learned to speak up, not hold back my opinions, and even to complain when necessary.

When you adapted so well, can you share some experiences as a student in Canada, and how you have managed to succeed while working and raising a family?

Many Canadians work full-time and study part-time to strengthen their career success. Their spirit of "never stop learning" inspires me to be a lifelong learner.

But it's been hard to study with little kids at home. After work, I have to feed them, bathe them, and put them to bed. By the time I am freer at night, I already feel exhausted, and actually fell asleep many times while studying.

When in school, I also have less time for family on the weekend. So, I always motivate myself with "It won't last forever!" or "Look around, many people are just like you!" and "You can do it!"

I have now completed the first level of an accounting certificate. It was lots of work to finish all the courses, but I felt great every time I checked off a course.

I'd like to try another accounting certificate in the future. When the time comes to apply for a better job, extra credentials on my resume will make me a stronger candidate.

After all this time, how has Canada shaped your life, education, career and future plans?

My future plans are now more meaningful. If I want something in life, I should pursue it. Many workers who study inspire me to do the same. It's hard to balance work, school, and family, but if I want to succeed, I have to try hard.

I've achieved my dream of working for a Canadian organization with opportunities to grow. It'd be great to move up through hard work and self-improvement.

I also want my kids to see how both parents work hard and support each other. If I am a good role-model, I hope they can do the same for their families when they grow up.

NEW LOCATION FOR OSHAWA CAMPUS DCDSB – CONTINUING EDUCATION

BY WENDY TERRY

Learning Curves visited the new Oshawa Campus for the Archbishop Anthony Meager Catholic Continuing Education Centre on August 23. All faiths are welcome so this school could be for you.

This new Oshawa campus is built for students of all ages and includes collaborative learning spaces, computer labs and a child minding room. The new Oshawa campus, has been built to specialize in adult education programs that support 21st century learning and workplace training programs.

Principal Jim Wilson gave me a tour. First, his office looks right out onto the upper level entrance onto the mall where students in the Personal Support Worker Program and Raising Healthy Children Program can enter. This is also the entrance where community partners have staff on site to support student well-being. This speaks to what I have always found the staff at the Oshawa Campus to be: accessible and helpful.

Right beside Principal Wilson's office you will find community partner meeting rooms. These are rooms where community agencies and services can set up to help the students. This campus brings community agencies in to provide support for students who need assistance and provides a private room to meet in.

Then we saw the classrooms which included computer labs and collaborative learning spaces. There was a special room for the Raising Healthy Children Program. This is a free Early Years program offered in partnership with the YWCA. Students bring their pre-school child or children to class and at the same time earn a high school credit. Child-minding is also available after the Raising Healthy Children program for young parents who wish to earn an additional credit.

In the Fall 2017 Course Guide, there are specialized training programs where you can earn high school credits while participating in a co-op placement in that field for work experience. These programs include Child Care Assistant, Customer Service, Personal Support Worker and Recreation and Fitness. The following programs caught my eye as there is a high labour market demand for these: Personal Support

Worker and Child Care Assistants. Then there is the Microsoft Office Specialist industry certification where you can add Excel, PowerPoint, Access and Outlook to upgrade Word skills. Introduction to Computer Programming and Web Development is another.

Do these courses seem a bit scary as you have always had trouble with math, writing, computers and have never taken a science course in high school? Call Diana who is in charge of the Adult Upgrading classes 905-438-0570 Ext. 57156. After upgrading you could go on to earn high school credits through day courses, or the specialized training programs described above. Correspondence courses or eLearning (online) courses also give flexible options for adults to earn credits and learn at home. For adults who are working during the day, a Work-4-Credits program provides an opportunity to earn co-op credits while at your regular day job.

There is more, go online at www.con-ed.ca to see.

Principal Wilson showed me the student lounge area where students can sit and have lunch and chat with other students. No more standing in a hallway, leaning against a wall while you eat your sandwich. A place for students to relax on the lounge furniture and socialize has been built into the new Oshawa site. This collaborative area also has computers for students to work on assignments in their spare time.

As a part-time student for many years, I had to run errands around getting to class, so I was interested that the Oshawa location is in the Thornton Centre Mall. I could see where you could do your banking, drop off and pick up your cleaning and have breakfast or lunch at a local diner. This site is accessible by bus, has a lot of parking space and is close to many amenities.

Come see for yourself! An Oshawa Campus Open House will be held on Thursday, September 7 from 10 a.m.-1 p.m. or 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. You can change your life by going back to school. Many adults have.

The new Oshawa Campus DCDSB is located at 850 King King Street West, Unit 22 Oshawa 905-438-0570

GOOD NEWS FOR ADULT LEARNERS

THE 2017 ONTARIO AND CANADIAN GOVERNMENT BUDGETS

BY WENDY TERRY

Sometimes when you read the daily press summaries about the budgets, you wonder – what does that mean for me? Even if you read the budget itself you still wonder, so I set out to translate budget-speak into what it means for you as an adult going back to school.

Ontario's Budget, April 27, 2017

The Ontario budget paper said the following: “For adults looking to find their next learning opportunity, land a better job, or move into their next career, **Ontario's Lifelong Learning Skills Plan** will help provide the literacy, numeracy and digital skills essential to being able to adapt and thrive in a changing economy.” The Honourable Charles Sousa Minister of Finance. (2017 Ontario Budget, Forward) April 27, 2017 (viii)

So what does that mean in terms of real services, programs and financial support going back to school in your community? And how would you find these, given there is no central or local learning information service for adults going back to school?

In Chapter III of the Ontario Budget, Creating Opportunities and Security (pg. 63) it notes “**The Ontario Lifelong Learning and Skills Plan** includes three elements:

- 1) Investment and enhancements to the adult education and essential skills system,
- 2) The new OSAP support for mature students to access post-secondary education; and
- 3) The updating of key Employment Ontario programs that support unemployed, displaced and incumbent workers who require retraining and skills building.”

Element 1 – Some of you may be aware there are programs called Literacy Basic Skills or Essential Skills. Does investment and enhancement mean there will be more spaces for more students as the programs will receive more funding?

Yes, 90,000 more adults will have access to skills training and upgrading. This includes access to pathways programs. These programs help you to develop learning plans that will get you to an apprenticeship, college, university or work. We used to call this career planning.

There will be enhanced “dual credit” opportunities, meaning a course you take at high school level (adult day school for adults) will also count as a credit in a college program.

What adults understand as co-op programs- credit for learning in a work placement- will be added to by “funding technical and workplace-based skill training pilots.” Pilots mean they are just starting with a few programs but will grow. For example, the Ontario Bridge Training programs for the internationally trained started out as pilots. Now each year over 6,000 highly skilled immigrants in up to 100 occupations are connected to the labour market. And the government is enhancing, adding more funding to these Bridge Training programs. (pg.64) So there will be more placements for newcomers

Contact your local school and ask for the number of their adult education programs- specifically the Literacy Basic Skills programs or as some are called Essential Skills Programs

Google CLARS centres (Canadian Language Assessment and Referral Centres) for referral to Bridge Training programs. CLARS centres have centralized assessment and learning information services for ESL learners. Thanks be. Now if we could just have centralized for all adult learning information that would be a big step in support of lifelong learning.

Element 2 – New OSAP funding (Ontario Student Assistance Plan) “will make average tuition free for low-income and most middle-income students including mature students and adult learners. Students with children may be eligible to receive OSAP funding for child care costs: Starting in 2017-18 mature students will be able to access the same full suite of OSAP support as younger students.” (pg.64)

Remember mature student does not mean someone your mother's age. For colleges it means 19 years old and out of school for one year, for universities, 21 years old and out of school for two years.

Contact the Financial Services office of any college or university for help in understanding what OSAP support you can now get. Even if you didn't qualify for OSAP before, go ask. The funding has increased, the mandate has been broadened to serve adult learners going part-time. Chances are you qualify now.

As well, these offices have many financial aid programs in addition to OSAP so ask what support you can get not only from OSAP but from other programs as well.

Element 3 – For most adults Employment Ontario Centres brings to mind services for the unemployed, although they can help employed people though this is not as widely known. Nor in the past could the employed be a large percentage of the clients served. But this has changed.

So what do they mean by “incumbent” workers – “employed” ones or for that matter what do they mean by “displaced” workers

Under Employment and Training Services Transformation we have our answer “While the employment and training system continues to support unemployed workers it must also responds to the needs of the changing economy and offer support to other groups, Including employed (italics mine) workers who need to build their skills to adapt or find their next job.” (pg. 64)

For “displaced” maybe we need to read between the lines about Second Career funding. “Second Career was established in response to the global recession of 2008-09. The emerging needs of Ontarians require that programs such as Second Career, designed for the challenges of

yesterday, be recalibrated to address the changes of today and tomorrow.” (pg.64) There are many newspaper articles about workers being displaced by technology ie let go, laid off. So displaced by tech change is now a focus whereas before it was those let go due to the recession.

The idea of the next job and lifelong learning addresses the needs of older workers. See Lisa Trudel's article on page 6 of this issue of Learning Curves. “Over 45 and Looking for Work?”

Call 211 for the location of on an Employment Ontario centre in your neighbourhood even if you are employed. Also call 211 to find community based training programs- it is one of the few comprehensive information sources for community based training programs.

The Ontario Budget paper has a special section on **Inclusive Skills Development**. It reminds us that in the 2016 Budget, Ontario committed to develop a provincial employment strategy to help more people with disabilities, which includes an acknowledgement of “the need for a shift in broader societal attitudes towards people with disabilities” See Carter Hammett's Article on pg 4 in this issue of Learning Curves, “The Employee with Epilepsy” as Carter writes about the needed employer shift.

Most children are assessed for learning disabilities in school but adults are not. Quite often adults drop out of school as unidentified learning disabilities affect their ability to succeed. In some countries, learning disabilities are even less commonly identified- so coming into Canada to then be labeled learning disabled is a bit of shock, to have your children identified as having a learning disability seems an affront. But being identified is the first step in getting help.

Colleges and universities have Student Service offices that help students with disabilities They can help your teacher help you and they can help you connect with employers who can accommodate your disability. Remember employers are being supported by the Ontario government to make changes in their workplaces that would help you work there despite having a disability.

Dyslexia is a common learning disability. If you have always had trouble spelling even in your first language, read slowly and have trouble tracking your sight line across a line of text or write and speak in circular thought patterns rather than a linear progression of thoughts, tell the Special Needs office as these are signs of dyslexia.

Contact the Student Services office if you have learning problems others don't seem to have, even if you have never been identified as having a learning disability. Remember a learning disability is not a developmental disability. You are smart, you just learn differently. Canada's Budget –March 7, 2017

When reading a national budget in Canada, it is important to remember Canada is a federation of provinces and territories. Often newcomers do not understand this as in their previous countries the provinces, regions, follow the national government plans. Often even Canadians forget we are a federation- one in which education is a provincial responsibility but training is a national one. So the two levels of governments have to agree who funds what and who delivers what. Given there are 10 provinces and three territories you could have 13 different agreements with the national government. Complicated, eh?

In the Budget 2017, Canada's **Innovation and Skills Plan** there is plan to “expand the level of support for job training under the Labour Market Transfer Agreements, including expanding the eligibility for programs and services under the Labour Market Development Agreements.” The Honourable Bill Morneau, Minister of Finance, Budget 2017, Budget Plan. Chapter 1 Skills Innovation and Middle Class Jobs. (pg.2)

These Agreements with the provinces- in a federation mean the national government does not order the provinces about but comes to agreements with them. You can see this federal dynamic clearly in wording on pg 15, “Working in partnership with willing provinces and territories (italics mine), the private sector, educational institutions and the not-for-profit organizations , this organization will

- Identify the skills sought and required by Canadian employers,
- Explore new and innovative approaches to skills development,
- Share information and analysis to help inform future skills investments and programming.

This new organization referred to would support skills development and measurement in Canada. But how does the **Innovation and Skills Plan** propose to help individual Canadians.

For one the “Government proposes to amend the *Employment Insurance Act* to broaden worker eligibility for programs and services under the Labour Market Development Agreements, allowing more Canadians to access EI funded skills training and employment supports.”

Second and one of the biggest changes for EI claimants is they can now pursue self-funded training and maintain their EI status- “they can take a course to get the training they need to find a new job – without fear of losing their EI benefits they need to support themselves and families.” So no more sneaking around doing a course while on EI- now you can be upfront. Phew!

For example, a laid off Administrative Assistant can take a Web Development course (one of the latest in demand skills) a course that would make him/her more competitive in finding a job –without having to lie in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16

GOOD NEWS FOR ADULT LEARNERS THE 2017 ONTARIO AND CANADIAN GOVERNMENT BUDGETS

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

their EI reports. This is one giant step for a lifelong learning society and long overdue. To do this has been given in many European countries for many years.

So ask your EI counselor about taking a course that you feel would help you get a job. It shows you are actively looking for work by upgrading your skills.

Third, Budget 2016 included “a 50% increase in Canada Student Grants (grants do not have to be repaid) available for part-time students. In the 2016-17 year it was estimated that 16,000 part-time students will receive an additional \$5000 each year as result of this measure.” (pg.15) “In 2017-18 a new flat rate contribution model will be introduced to determine eligibility under the Canada Student Loans Program (these loans have to be paid back). ... This new model will benefit adult learners many of whom may work while studying and own a home or other assets.” (pg. 15)

Again you can see the federal system at play. “... the existing income thresholds, *which presently vary by province and territory*, will be replaced with a higher, single national threshold.”

These measures should help women, as the budget notes that.” Women represent nearly two-thirds of the Canada Student Loans Program’s part-time recipients, while approximately four out of five students receiving the Canada Student Grants for students with dependent children are women”

So ask the Financial Services office at College or University about the Canada Student Grants and Loans for part-time students. They are expanding and increasing so if you asked before and did not qualify, ask again, you may be now.

In the Budget 2017, there was a clear statement that going back to school as adult has its own set of challenges: “However it can be difficult for adults who are already employed and who may have family responsibilities to pursue training or upgrade their credentials.” (pg.10) Good to see this recognized

Learning Curves thanks the Ontario and Canadian governments for helping adult learners go back to school.

Learning Information versus Labour Market Information Comment on Budgets.

In the Fall 2016 issue of Learning Curves page 16-17, I wrote an article “Finally Learning and Workforce Information Services for Adults.” See www.learning-curves.ca for back issues.

This Learning Curves article looked largely at the findings of the “Building the Workforce of Tomorrow: A Shared Responsibility” the report of the Premier’s Highly Skilled Workforce. Expert Panel June 2016.

In Appendix C What the panel heard was that there was learning information needs and career path information needs. First, the panel noted that they heard individuals are not aware of the full array of education and career opportunities available to them. In a second bullet the following statement was found “There are opportunities to better promote all career paths (including colleges and apprenticeships and entrepreneurial pathways in K-12/ Adult credit systems) over and above the mandatory Grade 10 Career Studies course at Employment Ontario service providers and other intermediaries.” (pg 68)

The Ontario and Canada budgets seem to favour career path help –Pathways over Learning Information. I suppose it seems logical to have a work goal in mind when you pick a course, and for the government to help you – it should depend on if there is labour market need. Picking an in demand labour market goal is the way to get approved for Second Career funding But does this pathways to a goal, career planning, encourage one to go back to school or just overwhelm the adult?

Consider in a lifelong learning society like Finland which Canadians often site as a model, they have **Learning Information Centres** for all. The focus on what the Ontario Expert Panel heard. **Individuals are not aware of the full array of education and career opportunities available to them.**

Within these Finnish centres they have labour market training information but the hook in for the adult is their idea to take a course –learning information – as Step 1. Planning a career pathway may grow from looking for a course but as Step 2 . Planning a career pathway needs one to take a deep breath, finding a course is a door opener. Could we develop and promote Learning Information centres as the Finns do or even learning information services within Employment Ontario centres?

Think about these two banners. Which would bring you in? “Visit your local Employment Ontario Centre”’s Learning Information Centre. They will help you find the course you want.” Or “Visit your local Employment Ontario Centre for a Career Pathways workshop. They will help you find related training for employment. The Finns favour the first and so does the WEA, publisher of Learning Curves. Think about, The Finns job related education is 41% and Canada’s is only 31%. (OECD report cited in Building the Workforce of Tomorrow) Could the Finns be onto something?

FIND THE ADULT STUDENT ASSOCIATION- THEY CAN HELP YOU.

BY WENDY TERRY

When adults think of student associations they think they are for young people but there are students associations just for adults especially at universities.

There was a movement to organize adult students at these educational institutions in the mid 1970’s into the early 1980’s. This is when APUS at the UofT started in fact it was the first, CESAR at Ryerson and the Atkinson College Students Association at York as well as others throughout the province like the Julian Blackburn Students Association at Trent U. . At this time there was a Canadian Organization for Part-time University Students (COPUS) but now most of these organizations belong to the Canadian Federation of Students.

Along with a group of fellow CE students, I worked to found CESAR in 1979. It was the beginning of a career in adult education. Today these associations can help you and you can help them, even leading you to a career in today’s world of lifelong learning.

Why should you be in contact with the adult student association?

We often advise our readers to ask for help at institutional offices for student services, financial aid offices, admission offices and so on. But student run organizations can give you advice from the students’ perspective. “Here’s how it really works advice.” Think of what it is like to ask a human resources officer then to ask a trade union official for advice. The responses are quite different.

These student associations offer services like health care, TTC discounts. Some have bursaries They advocate for changes that would help adult students. They organize start of term orientations. They organize social events. Often you only meet the students in your class but there are many adults taking courses. You could make friends with some fellow lifelong learners at these social events.

Founding members of CESAR are still friends, lifelong friends: John Yuen, John Cockerill, Branko Samsa, Carol Anne Laraway, Maddy Hoogstraten, myself and with staff, like Karen Ferguson. We reminisce about Hugh Innis, a CE program officer who helped us from the very beginning and Ken MacKeracher the Dean of CE who stood with us. And more like Michael Persaud who has a Bursary named after him in the Public Administration program. . He passed away way too young.

You can volunteer to do orientations, help new students out. You can run for the Board of Directors, adding management skills, leadership ones to your portfolio.

These associations employ administrative staff, program coordinators who help adult students. They often have job postings on their sites. In the age of life long learning this is good work experience which could be transferred to training services in business, government, educational institutions, and community services.

You can even go on to do degrees in adult education. See Brock University, the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the U of T. and others like the University of New Brunswick.

So find these adult student associations, they are a whole new world for you to learn from, and grow through.

Ryerson University

The Continuing Education Students’ Association of Ryerson. (CESAR)

Ryerson Student Centre
SSC301 55 Gould Street
Phone 416-979-5193
www.mycesar.ca

They have Health and Dental Plans, Bursaries, Emergency Grants, Legal Clinic, Tax Clinic and Printing Services.

University of Toronto

The Association of Part-time Undergraduate Students.

Sidney Smith
100 St. George Street
Room 1089
Phone 416-978-3993
www.apus.ca

They have Health and Dental plans, Scholarships and Bursaries, affordable printing 5 cents a copy, as Study Space and Lounge and a Tax Clinic.

There is a Mature Students Association as part of APUS

At one time most part time students were mature but now a lot of youth go part time, so APUS has a special grant for mature for students as does York.

York University

When I attended Atkinson College from 1978-1995 as a mature part-time evening student, there was an Atkinson College Student Association. ACSA. But then the Faculty of Arts and Atkinson College merged in 2009 to form the Atkinson Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies. Then the Atkinson Centre for Mature and Part-time Students, formed as an advocacy body on behalf of mature students.

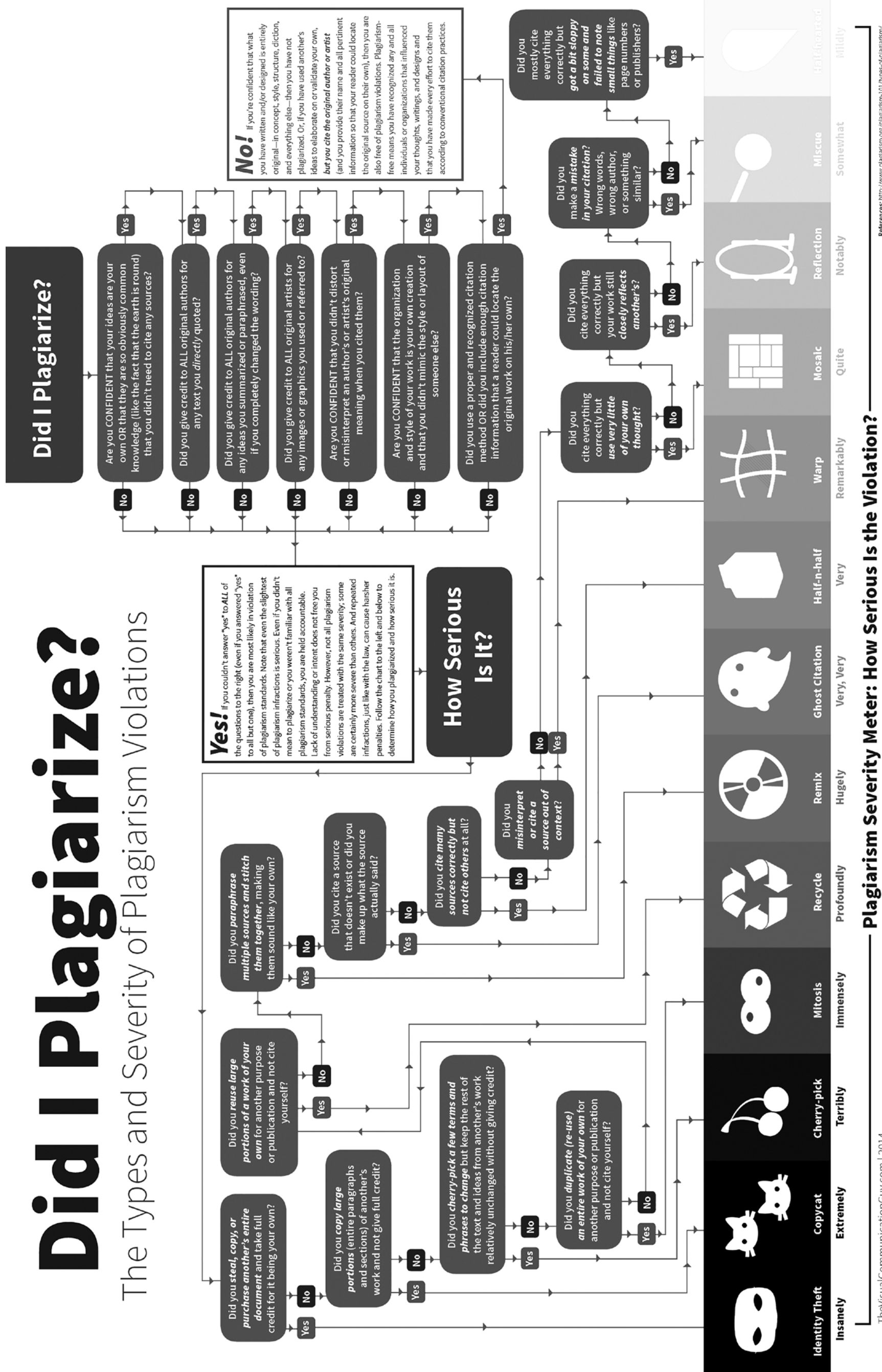
Atkinson Centre for Mature and Part-time Students
111 Central Square
4700 Keele Street
Phone 416-736-5770
acmaps@yorku.ca

YMUSO is listed as Mature Student Club on the ACMAPS website

York University Mature Students Organization
Vanier College 113B
4700 Keele Street.

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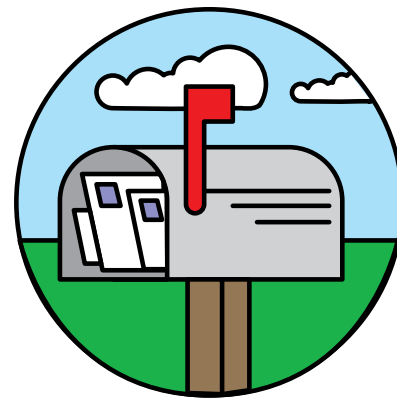
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Dear Elcee

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 37 years old and have been considering going back to school to get out of my dead end job and into a career I will enjoy. I would like to work in the Social Work field however I don't know where to start. There are so many career options out there and the information can be overwhelming. Can you help me?

Confused in Collingwood

Dear Confused,

I can certainly understand your dilemma. Know that you are not alone. The number of adults (29+) returning to school to either start or upgrade their postsecondary education is growing all the time. There are some questions to consider before making the leap.

What to study? The field of social work is very broad. Choosing an area of study can be one of the most difficult decisions you will make. Take into consideration such factors as what you like to do currently. Are there skills you currently have that you can transfer into your new career? How much time (and money) can you invest into your studies. I highly recommend doing an online or in-person career assessment. If you are in the Toronto area you can call 211 and they can steer you to a local community employment centre for more information.

How to study? You can attend classes, study online or do a combination of both. The path you take depends a lot on the area of study you choose, the type of learner you are and the accessibility to a local learning centre.

Do you need to upgrade? Depending on how long you have been out of school you may wish to brush up on your computer skills. Some fields, such as healthcare, may require you to upgrade your math and science skills. The humanities may require upgrading in essay writing and English skills.

Are there learning opportunities through your work? Many employers offer bursaries for their employees who wish to upgrade or continue their schooling. Unions will also often offer learning opportunities.

I highly recommend doing volunteer work in a variety of areas related to the field of social work. Seniors homes, Hospitals, the Red Cross and the Salvation Army are just a few organisations that accept volunteers. Look for something in your own community that you can commit to. This will help clarify your goals, gain insight into the field and develop your skills.

I highly recommend the website workingincanada.gc.ca for up to date labour market and career information. Another good resource is the book "What Colour is Your Parachute 2017" and the accompanying website www.jobbhuntersbible.com. And of course, Learning Curves...real information from real life long learners! Good luck. With thorough planning, patience and commitment you are sure to achieve your goals. Welcome to the beginning of the rest of your life!

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

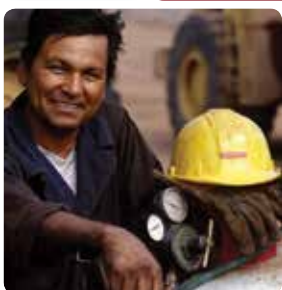
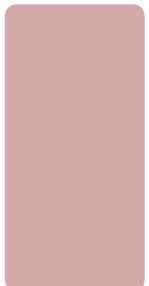
We value your opinion. Please let us know what you think about this column. Send comments to learningcurves@hotmail.com.

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