

THE “I DON’T KNOW” CLIENTS’ RESPONSE

BY SONNY WONG

Career Counselling is the art of examining the issues presented by a client and applying counselling techniques.



Clients come to us during their transitional periods, such as: school to work, employment loss, or career changes – these stages can be disruptive to their career identity development. Recently, in a session that I was leading with career practitioners, one participant asked me: “What do I do when I encounter a client who responds to my queries with – I don’t know.”? For some clients, the immediate response to our queries is the typical “I don’t know”. As Career Practitioners, what is our personal/professional approach to helping clients cope with life/career ambiguities?

My 20 years’ experience has lead me to have faith in my clients’ inner resources as their fuel to generating their own solutions. Chances are it may not be the first time they have encountered a crisis and have overcome it. This means that when they respond to me with “I don’t know” – I take the stance that they do know. Let me process this point with you by posing some

reflection questions. Do you prefer to explore what the client doesn’t know or what he/she does know about him/herself? Do you believe that the client possesses internal resources or do they need your supportive resources? Do you see that the client as an unemployed person or someone who is seeking information? Have you ever wondered why clients tell the same self-narrative repeatedly? Depending on how you answer these questions – it may shine light as to how you conduct your sessions with clients leading them out of their anxious state.

Research has shown that clients’ success is based on the therapeutic alliance established by the counsellor/client rather than the interventions. Psychologists have discovered that there is a directional relationship between individual’s level of happiness and success. When we encounter someone who has lost their significant other – we often ask him/her – what do you need – in hopes to lift their mood. When we encounter someone who has lost their job – we may imply – don’t worry – network and go online. In both cases, there is a grieving process which requires a humanistic approach to engaging in one’s behaviors towards healing. However, in the latter, we may be prescriptive in our statements

when responding to clients’ suffering?

Technological improvements have allowed much of our work to be efficient but transactional. Today’s career work evolves around querying clients’ job search skills, personal branding capabilities, and explaining standardized career assessments profiles. Therefore, is it not understandable that the clients respond to us with the “I don’t know”? We are the one demonstrating our expertise and signaling to them that we do know about their issues. When/how do we create space for our clients to flex their self-awareness, strengths, and capabilities to move themselves out of their ambiguous/scary transitional periods? More importantly, when do we examine our own “I don’t know” when working with clients?

Some career practitioners are going back to the basics – which is – establishing the humanistic foundation between counsellor and client. They have further developed their counselling skills to explore with their clients the specific personal influences which cultivate healthy career identity development. Others have integrated therapeutic modalities within career counselling to address the client’s socio-emotional barriers to meaningful employment. Many career practitioners have



Photo by Yashin Kangrang

reported that they treat their clients with heightened curiosity forming partnerships to co-constructing meaning and clarifying/striving for goals. These approaches lead clients to flourish in their private and public spheres. In turn, these career practitioners themselves report that they noticed an increase in their own well-being from their client engagement.

Sonny Wong is Registered Psychotherapist with a specialized focus in Career Identity Development. Sonny utilizes his specialized training in Applied Positive Psychology, Solution-Focused Counselling and Narrative Counselling to facilitate the development of healthy career identity. In January 2018, he will be presenting at Cannexus on Deconstructing Clients’ Career Anxiety by Creating Positive Narratives & Co-Constructed Plans – for more information go to: <http://cannexus.ca/deconstructing-clients-career-anxiety-creating-positive-narratives-co-constructed-plans/>

Dear Readers,

The Editor of Learning Curves asked me to provide you with some pointers to prepare yourself for an appointment with a career practitioner. I want to clarify that when I reference career practitioners – it is a generic term – this category can include caseworkers, coaches, consultants, caseworkers, and counsellors. Some of you have had experience working with career practitioners while others may be new to these types of services. Each of these types of professionals possess different levels of education, training, and expertise to help you develop a plan to meaningful employment.

The career practitioners are limited with resources. So it is common that they will ask you creative questions to get you thinking about your own internal resources to complement their services. And this is where your reflex response – “I don’t know” may play out in the session. Some of my clients have asked me – what can I do to prepare for my appointment? Here are the pointers I provide to them. I share them with you – in hopes that it can create a different mindset for yourself before your actual appointment.

- Allow yourself plenty of time to arrive to our appointment. Create a stress free travel from your home to the office – focus on relaxing your mind and body. See the appointment as the beginning of your journey to obtaining meaningful employment.
- Self-Knowledge. You are the expert in your own life – the self-knowledge you have about yourself is what the practitioners rely on to co-design an action plan.
- Generate Questions. If you have questions, write them out and bring them to the appointment. Those questions sometimes are clues for the practitioner to guide their exploration with you.
- Reflect on Previous Setbacks. Allow yourself to reflect on how you have overcome previous barriers/set-backs in your life – write up those up in short points. Keep and read these points everyday until your appointment.
- Accept Positive Certainties. When we lose our jobs – of course – life is characterized by ambiguities. Allow yourself to find the positive certainties and write them down.

Select a time during the day where you can generate/record your life positive certainties.

- Re-Examine Your Plan. Usually, clients have ideas of what they want to achieve and how to go about doing it. The practitioner is there as a resource. Ask yourself – What if my plan is not the ideal one at this time – what would I do instead?
- Solution may not always related to the PROBLEM: You may believe you have a problem. If you believe you have the solution – then everything can change for you.
- I Don’t Know. During the session, be aware when you respond to the practitioner’s queries with the “I don’t know” response. Ask yourself – If I don’t know...how can I go about knowing just a bit more?

The appointment time between you and the practitioner is one hour and if you are deconstructing the “I don’t know” – it shows that both parties are making progress on deconstructing the solution.

Sincerely,
Sonny Wong

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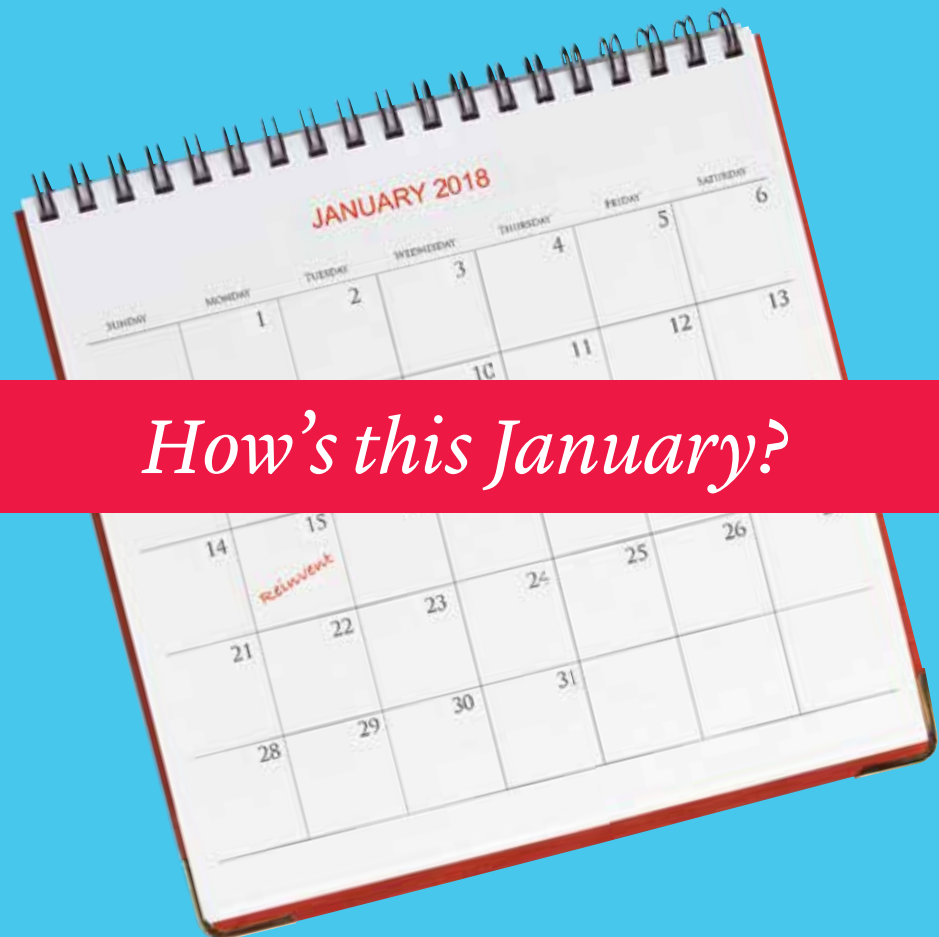
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LOCAL COLOUR:

Heeding the Call for Diversity in Today's Trucking Industry

By Carter Hammett

Photo by Nigel Tadvanchondo on Unsplash

Canada's trucking industry has been falling short of diversifying its aging workforce. In response, it's slowly heeding the call and recognizing the benefits only pluralism can offer, and slowly reaching out to non-traditional communities to fill the gap.

Get 'Em While They're Young!

For the fourth straight year in a row, skilled trades topped the list of Manpower's global 2015 Talent Shortage Survey with electricians and mechanics clocking in as some of the most desirable talent. These numbers are echoed in Canada where estimates of skills shortages fluctuate widely and wildly with upper-limit estimates as high as one million workers needed by 2020. In Nova Scotia, over 40% of the workforce in the automotive service and repair industry is over the age of 45, but in 2013 only 36 people signed up for the course at Nova Scotia Community College.

The trucking industry doesn't get off lightly either. A 2013 Conference Board of Canada report estimates that shortages could reach as high as 25,000 by 2020. Again, the major reason for this is the aging demographic.

"Tens of thousands of truck drivers are approaching retirement age, but very few young people and immigrants are entering the industry," said the report which was funded by the Canadian Trucking Alliance, a federation of provincial trucking associations.

This has left the automotive and trucking industries wrestling with the problem of how to attract workers to a sector with positions that desperately need to be filled.

One solution that's gaining momentum is reaching out to non-traditional communities who have, until recently, been passed over by a field that's been largely dominated by white guys. As a result, targeted campaigns have been aimed at groups like people with disabilities and immigrants with a slow but steady success.

Women Starting to Make Inroads

Women are underrepresented group and are starting to heed the call.

"Women are becoming more aware of opportunities in the trucking industry and they are less intimidated by working in a male-dominated environment," says Ellen Voie, president and CEO of Women in Trucking (WIT) Association. "In fact, women are often urged to consider careers in non-traditional roles. I also believe that women are also encouraging their friends, sisters, daughters and colleagues to join them in the area of transportation. Women In Trucking Association has led these efforts. As well, our mission is simply to increase the percentage of women employed in the trucking industry."

In June, The Automotive Industries Association of Canada released the highly anticipated document, Advancing Women in Automotive Knowledge Exchange Needs Assessment Report. The publication was based on the results of nation-wide focus groups of women in the automotive aftermarket industry and augmented by an online survey of human resources insiders.

The needs assessment makes four key recommendations for employers, the industry and government, which include developing more inclusive workplace cultures, implementing proactive support measures for female employees, investing in measures to enhance public awareness of employment opportunities for women and continued support for training and incentive programs as well as communications programs to raise awareness

and interest in the industry among women,

Some interesting findings emerged from that report, including:

- "Public perception of industry opportunities for women. The majority of participants advised that although they had an interest in the trades they had never contemplated the industry as a possibility because it was perceived as 'male-dominated'". Ellen Voie challenges that assumption. "Trucking is so rewarding and contributes so much to the economic success of the country. Additionally, women who work in nontraditional careers earn more than their counterparts in traditionally 'female' occupations. It might be tough to work in a male-dominated environment, but once a woman shows she is capable, she is generally accepted as a peer," she says.
- "The impact of workplace culture. In discussions surrounding workplace culture and its impact on their experiences, women identified instances of gender stereotyping and harassment as typical." "Unfortunately, harassment from male co-workers, still exists, says Voie. "Many of them just ignore the remarks or they respond with contempt."

"Women In Trucking Association has an anti-harassment employment guide we offer to our carrier members. It identifies harassment and includes information on how and where to report it. Most importantly, it provides a drivers "expectation exchange" for training or team environments. The drivers decide what subjects are not to be mentioned, such as politics, religion, etc. They also talk about their needs, such as

any allergies, or physical issues. When someone offends another person, the recipient needs to call attention to the comments and make it clear when it is unacceptable in the case of derogatory remarks or offensive jokes, she says."

"Trucking is an additional skill to who the person is," says Yvette Lagrois, president of the Ontario Truck Training Academy (OTTA). "If you're 19 and come to me and say 'I wanna be a trucker' we're adding a skill to who and what you are." I will mine an individual...if you're a mechanic, you'll get it."

Opportunities abound for women planning a career in the field, says Voie.

"Women can use their educational training in nearly any area within the trucking industry. Whether it's marketing, accounting, legal, safety or technicians, the trucking industry has opportunities for women. Typically, women find careers in trucking inadvertently. By that I mean they might respond to an ad at a carrier and find themselves working with drivers as a dispatcher, safety professional, human resource worker, etc. I often ask women to raise their hands if they chose to work within the area of transportation and few respond accordingly. In my own career, I was working for a steel fabricating company in the drafting department when they asked me to consider moving over to the traffic department. I ended up getting a diploma in Traffic & Transportation Management which led me into a career in trucking."

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FACING SETBACKS WITH COURAGE:

What Malcolm Robinson taught me about humanity, a short story

By Mina Wong

My visits to public libraries often turn into unexpected learning experiences.

One winter, a man was rummaging through newspapers and talking to himself at a library. “Darn, where is it? Just where is it?”

With newspapers all around us, I thought he was looking for one. “Do you want The Star?”

Startled, he spun right around with glasses so thick they seemed opaque. “Oh no, I had a piece of paper. It’s gone.”

Then I saw a sheet of paper under the table and grabbed it. “Is this what you want?”

“Oh my, that’s it. I thought I lost it. Thank you.” His grimace melted into a smile. “I wrote a story about a girl and she is going to write about me.”

Before I could ask, “What’s your name and who’s the girl”, I was handed the crumpled page with handwriting all over and “By Malcolm” at the top.

“This is about Nina from my class.”

“You’re Malcolm?” I ventured.

“Yes. Malcolm Robinson. I wrote this about Nina from my class. She’s my friend.”

Malcolm’s passage burst with admiration:

“Nina has dark hair like a pretty angel.

She has three jobs to pay bills.

Nina is from Cuba.

She is learning English.

Nina sits with me in class.

She makes us laugh.

In winter she works as nanny.

In summer she works as

farmer in Newmarket.”

I said, “What a lovely story!” Moved by Malcolm’s honest respect for Nina, I wanted to know more about him.

“So do you hang out here a lot?”

Malcolm told me he had come from Winnipeg after a family tragedy. Before that, he had been a happy-go-lucky tenth-grader with a loving mother and two sisters who doted on him with encouragement. Visually impaired and in special education, Malcolm would make household gadgets in shop class for his family. From the school kitchen where he learned to cook and bake, he would make food that he sometimes took home.

But Malcolm’s life changed irreversibly the day his mother and sister were hit by a truck near the hotel where they worked.

“The worst, worst, worst day,” Malcolm’s palms covered his face. “Police came to my school. They took me to the hospital to see mom and Adeline. My mom didn’t make it.”

While Adeline’s injuries weren’t fatal, she was off work for months and eventually resumed only occasional work, received disability benefits, and moved to a wheelchair-accessible group home.

At the time, Adeline was nineteen and Malcolm’s other sister, Janine who was eighteen, dropped out of college to support her teenage brother.

“Me and Janine got kicked out of our apartment. We stayed with her friends. She quit school. She worked all day. She cried a lot. It was hard for her to take care of me. I cried a lot too. I didn’t want her to take care of me anymore”, Malcolm said wistfully.

Janine suggested foster care for sixteen-year-old Malcolm who protested. “What do you want to do, Malcolm? I can’t look after you on my own.”

Malcolm offered to visit Mr. Lipton, a teacher who was home for the summer in Lorette just east of Winnipeg. “Maybe I can take a bus there?”

Although reluctant to let Malcolm travel alone, Janine did trust Mr. Lipton whom Malcolm looked up to.

“I got on the bus and stayed there. I didn’t know it was Toronto when I had to get off the bus.”

That was thirty years before. What had Malcolm been doing in Toronto all this time? Did his family know his whereabouts?

First reticent, Malcolm did tell me what he took pride in. “I cook for the shelter down the street, ever since I came here.”

He’s done all right, I thought. Young Malcolm had faced setbacks with courage despite learning and visual challenges, family tragedies, an ambiguous bus ride from Winnipeg, and an uncertain future in Toronto where police patrol took him to a men’s shelter.

Cooking for homeless people became Malcolm’s vocation and a path to literacy classes at public libraries. His family would have been proud of his maturity and determination.

After learning to read with other rudimentary readers, Malcolm gradually tried spelling and writing. Some time before I met him, Malcolm had found a new purpose: writing stories about life – his life, others’ lives, animals’ lives – as long as he could express honest feelings.

When we parted at the library, I felt blessed to know people like Malcolm and Nina who would resiliently do their best to overcome obstacles. If facing setbacks with courage showed healthy self-esteem, telling honest stories about the lives of others would be a most human thing I could learn to do.

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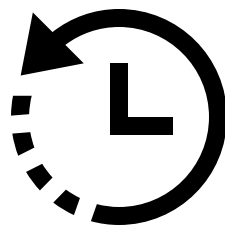
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The Gift of Time

BY LISA TRUDEL

“If I had 8 hours to chop down a tree, I would spend 6 hours sharpening my axe.”

I could not say this any better when it comes to job search and employment preparation. When you are unemployed, you are given the gift of time. There is time to prepare a general 2-page resume, a one-page resume, a general cover letter, and time to update your LinkedIn profile. You can prepare your reference list, Google yourself to see what appears, participate in free online learning and you can practice your interview skills.

For all job seekers time management is essential. Every job search means a significant responsibility of time and energy, so learning how to spend your time wisely is also crucial. The following time investments and approaches might be your best starting point:

**1) APPROACH: NETWORKING.
TIME INVESTMENT: 50%.**

Statistics prove that 80%+ of all job interviews are secured through networking. If you fail to make this your top priority, the results could be a very long and sometimes unsuccessful job search.

**2) APPROACH: LINKEDIN.
TIME INVESTMENT: 20%.**

One recent survey found that 94% of recruiters use LinkedIn to actively search for candidates. Thus, having a professional online presence using LinkedIn to highlight your accomplishments might lead to your next interview. Even if you do not want to use LinkedIn to find a job, it has become similar to Google for how employers research and explore who you are.

**3) APPROACH: EXPLORING
ONLINE JOB POSTINGS.
TIME INVESTMENT: 10%.**

Instead of spending the majority of time reading large job boards, focus your efforts on just a few targeted sites. For example, research websites of the companies that you are truly interested in working with. Then create a

short-list of your targets, and then establish a schedule to check these sites on a regular basis such as every other week for 30 minutes.

**4) APPROACH: REVISING
YOUR RESUME.
TIME INVESTMENT: 10%.**

The workplace still demands a professional resume and it is still a standard requirement for almost all networking contacts before they might consider referring you for a position. Once your general resume is refined, and you have created at least one targeted cover letter and resume, you will need less and less time for this part of your job search.

**5) APPROACH: EMPLOYMENT
AGENCIES AND RECRUITERS.
TIME INVESTMENT: 10%**

Using an employment agency is only helpful if you understand how they work. For example, never use an agency that asks you to pay a fee, since most agencies are paid by the company whose position they are trying to fill. Look for employment agencies that are specific to your industry and most of all, remember that they are

not career coaches. They are not in the business of helping you with your next career step.

If you are looking for a career coach or a place that can help you with all your time investment approaches, consider using a free Employment Ontario funded career centre. Career Specialists can help you with all of your employment preparation including your resume, your cover letter, your networking strategies, and your LinkedIn profile.

When you are job searching, the gift of time provides no clear timeline for how long your job search will be, yet you can increase the process by focusing on approaches that provide the greatest value for your time investment.

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

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Art Against All Odds

By Cris de Souza

Throughout man's tumultuous historical journey, artists have endured against all odds. While war raged, while being persecuted, threatened, censored and imprisoned, artists have continued to express the spirit of their humanity.

The Renaissance occurred amidst conflicted times. Between 1494 and 1559, most city-states in Italy, the Papal states, major European states and the Ottoman Empire were at war. In spite of those wars, Europe produced many important artists such as Leonardo da Vinci, Erasmus, Michelangelo, Raphael, and Holbein.

In 1930s Germany, the Nazis developed their own style and condemned everything they considered modern, influenced by jazz, Jewish or Communist. Jazz was banned from the airwaves; modern art was called "degenerate art;" book burnings on a large scale were organized, including a famous one in front of Humboldt University in 1933. Artists and musicians were dismissed from teaching positions. Films and plays were censored. Artists were prohibited to purchase painting materials, exhibit, sell or produce art.

Among the "degenerate" painters there were Marc Chagall, Wassily Kandinsky, Franz Marc and Paul Klee. Among the "degenerate" movements one can list: Bauhaus; Cubism; Dada; Expressionism; Fauvism; Impressionism; Surrealism. Books by Hemingway and Thomas Mann were burned. Books by Franz

Kafka could not be bought by 1939.

Thousands of art works had been confiscated or stolen by Nazi leaders from public institutions, studios and collections throughout the country. Other than a desire to control the culture, they wanted to enrich the regime by means of confiscating valuable artwork. "Paintings from the degenerate art action will now be offered on the international art market. In doing so we hope at least to make some money from this garbage," wrote Goebbels, who was Hitler's propaganda minister. Therefore, some paintings were sold in Switzerland. Some pieces were acquired by museums or private collections.

Speeches of leaders contrasted with several artist manifestos. Avant-garde artists were branded enemies of the state and a threat to the genuine German culture.

Many artists and art professionals felt the atmosphere of terror and oppression and fled from Germany. For example, Paul Klee went to Switzerland. Hans Hofmann, a painter, remained in the United States and Max Friedländer, an art expert, moved to Holland. Artists who remained in Germany were subjected to surprise visits by the Gestapo, the Secret Espionage Police. Those of Jewish descent were sent to concentration camps or murdered. In occupied Paris in 1942, the Nazis burned in a bonfire hundreds of "degenerate" paintings by Dali, Picasso, Klee, Miró and others.

However, in Saint Petersburg, under siege

by the Nazis, Dmitry Shostakovich, one of the major composers of the 20th century, wrote his Seventh Symphony, acclaimed as a symbol of that city's brave resistance to the German invaders.

In short, the Nazis tried to regulate the arts to a degree never seen before. Only in the Soviet Union during the Stalin years, the state showed such concern with controlling the culture and using it as a propaganda tool.

Art works have been used as tools or platforms to spread or advance political ideas and inspire democracy, as has a book by the writer and human rights activist Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn in the former Soviet Union and East Europe. Its name is "The Gulag Archipelago."

In spite of totalitarianisms, modernism, jazz and Jewish art have survived.

Far from being exclusive to the Nazis, Fascists and Soviets, many artists are persecuted all over the world today. Dissidents and their works are targeted by authorities who are hostile to them.

In Communist countries such as North Korea, Cuba and China, there are strong censorship laws that do not allow free expression and do not respect human rights. In Cuba, Pen was closed long ago and some writers, graffiti artists and poets have been taken to prison. Survivors are "lucky to be alive". Armando Valadares, a Cuban poet, wrote his book in a prison cell and smuggled its pages from

there. In China, also Christians and Falun Gong practitioners are severely persecuted.

In many Islamic countries, artists are persecuted. In Saudi Arabia, poets have been sent to prison. In Iran, filmmakers are convicted even for a short documentary, if they criticize the treatment of women or mention something against the government. Cases abound in the Middle East, where Christians have been severely persecuted.

Likewise, in many African and Asian countries, such as Zimbabwe, Mali and Burma, there is fierce persecution.

From comedians to graffiti writers to singers to fine artists, "these are artists who refuse to be silenced creatively in the face of oppression, injustice and despotism. Their creative acts often come at a heavy price - harassment; threats to family and friends; imprisonment as well as torture; or the inability to leave their native country. But they continue to create, in the shadows, in underground theatres and in prison cells," wrote Hallie Sekoff in an article for Huffington Post. "Every artist has the obligation to fight for freedom of expression" declared Ai Weiwei, contemporary artist and activist.

Humanity goes forward. Also art, the fruit of the human spirit, endures against all odds.

Cristiano L. de Souza is a Toronto-based artist. cris4444cris@gmail.com

University in the Community, fall term, 2017

By Joanne Mackay-Bennett

U of T scholars: ideas that shape our everyday lives

UitC's fall program tried to answer this question: In what way do the ideas and discoveries of U of T scholars engage and connect with the community?

Students began by learning the names of some of the scholars whose work has contributed to U of T's recognition on the world stage. Although some of us recognized their names, we were harder-pressed to describe their accomplishments.

Our first lecturer, University Professor Martin Friedland, introduced us to the life and work of W.P.M. Kennedy. Kennedy was the U of T law school's first dean and author of *The Constitution of Canada* (1922). His book is remembered today as one of the first to discuss the intricate processes that made Canada an independent, sovereign nation.

The following week, University Professor Peter Russell explained that it was precisely this question of sovereignty, asked of him in the 19070's by a female elder of the Dene Nation, which led to his ongoing exploration of the Canadian constitution. As Peter argues in his recent book, *Canada's Odyssey: A Country Based on Incomplete Conquests* (2017), to fully understand Canada and its position in the world today means readjusting

historical "truths," in this case, recognizing the fundamental importance of French Canada and Indigenous nations in Canada's history 100 years prior to confederation.

Intellectual discovery, we learned, is usually preceded by years of intellectual exploration. Dr. John David Stewart pointed out that the discovery of insulin in 1922 by U of T physician, Frederick Banting, medical student Charles Best, J.B. Collip and their supervisor J.J. R. Macleod, was fraught with disappointment and "failure" prior to its successful breakthrough.

Readjusting the terms of a belief, or expanding on what had previously been believed, was central to the work of many of U of T's most well-known scholars. Professor Donald Gillies spoke about how Marshall McLuhan's study of technology and the media shifted our focus from the content of a medium to its effect. Those of us who rely on the internet know that one of its life-changing aspects is the way that it accelerates and expands our relationships with one another and with the way we live our day-to-day lives.

As Professor John Bonnett explained, ideas that expand our world are by nature, adaptable. The economic theories of U of T political economist, Harold Innis, are integral to our understanding of Canada's development. As an example of how ideas evolve over time, Bonnett talked about his current work in the digital humanities and

how it has been influenced by Innis' earlier writing on communication and technology.

The work of many scholars remains undiscovered. Growing up as the child of political economist Harold Innis and Mary Quayle Innis, Anne Innis Dagg, spoke about the accomplishments of both her parents. Not surprisingly, those of Anne's mother, Mary Quayle Innis, remain less well-known. In fact, Anne's mission, apart from her own lifelong study of giraffes (5 Giraffes, 2016), is to write her mothers' biography in recognition of her achievements as an author and as a U of T administrator.

Anne Rochon Ford gave an informative talk based on her research on the first female students at U of T, admitted in 1884. (See: *A Path Not Strewn with Roses*, 1984.) Although several of these women went on to accumulate a long list of firsts, their place in our history books has been largely unrecognized.

To change a mind requires passion and persistence. Professor Emerita Natalie Zemon Davis has been the recipient of the highest honours given to a historian. Her tenacious commitment to tell the stories of "ordinary" people, people who have found a way to make their lives meaningful in the face of overwhelming obstacles, has enlarged our historical record. "I have tried to be not only a truth-teller," Professor Zemon Davis has

stated, "but also to be a historian of hope."

Over ten weeks of exploration and discovery, UitC students were often surprised by the degree to which their knowledge and thinking had been influenced by the discoveries of U of T scholars. If ideas circulate between academe and the community, they concluded, they do so when we, as citizens, make it our responsibility to be informed. From UitC students to the readers of Learning Curves, here are three resolutions for 2018:

1. Read more – enlarge your point of view. Pearce Carefoote, head of rare books and special collections at U of T's Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library, helped us understand that books can change your life.
2. Write more – expand your horizons. Ten UitC students did that in our writing workshop led by the multi-talented and accomplished writer, Rosemary Aubert. Some of their work appears in this issue of Learning Curves.
3. Think more – become informed, critical citizens who are knowledgeable and adaptive to change.

University in the Community is a free, liberal arts program offered to the community. It is held on Wednesday evenings at Innis College during fall and winter terms.

For more information, please email: universityinthecommunity@gmail.com

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An Association of Adult educators, a place to learn
by Wendy Terry



Wendy, John and Katie along with others worked to put this 1000 piece puzzle of Elvis together during breaks at AAACE.

AAAACE had their conference in Memphis October 31-November 3. As going to their conference has been on my bucket list, I got on a Greyhound bus October 30th and went.

Adult Education Associations.

Adults who takes classes may wonder how the field of adult education organizes itself. In health care you know there is a Ontario Medical Association representing doctors, and

assume there is a nursing association which there is, the Registered Nursing Association of Ontario and others like one for hospital administrators, etc. Well there are similar organizations for adult education, such as TESL Ontario, Teachers of English as a Second Language which you have to be certified to join just like having to be a doctor to join the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

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Representatives from Access Business College, sponsor of the 100th issue Celebration are from left to right. Fatima, Laura, Howard, Sona and Ruhini



Left to right: Rod, a former president of the WEA, gave Learning Curves its name. Rod's brother Rick was the first delivery person for LC and his sister Deborah writes LC's "Dear Elcee" column. Karen, a former executive director of the WEA., developed the WEA's Adult Learning Line in the 1990's and was the first editor of Learning Curves

CELEBRATING!

LEARNING CURVES CELEBRATES 100 ISSUES

On October 20th, Learning Curves held a 100th issue celebration in the parlour of St. Luke's Church where we have our office. Thanks to Andrew, Learning Curves' designer since 2002, and Laura, a representative of event sponsor Access Business College and our event photographers, we can do this picture story.

Learning Curves is volunteer-published by the Workers' Educational Association of Canada, a charitable organization. Our first issue of Learning Curves appeared in 1999.



Left to right: Afie, Premier Kathleen Wynne's Constituency Office assistant, presents Wendy, publisher of Learning Curves, with a certificate of recognition. Premier Wynne's constituency office has supported Learning Curves for many years by buying an ad in each issue.



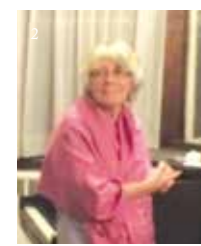
Left to right: Wendy and Mina were creative co-partners in the room's wall display of LC's first 100 issues. Mina is a Board member of the WEA and a regular writer for Learning Curves.



Left to right: Andrew, Learning Curves designer and incoming president of the WEA, talks to Anne. Anne was the editor of Learning Curves for 14 years. Standing next to Anne is Sarah, our bookkeeper for ads and financial statements. When Sarah was a CGA student, she was the subject of a feature story in LC.



Clockwise from top left: Deborah (peeking shyly through doorway) is the editor of LC. Patsy, a WEA Board member, Nenke and Lynne are all UitC students.



1. Elma, a UitC student who attended both the Innis class and the writing workshop, has a story in this issue
2. Jane is a UitC student and was also a participant in the fall term writing program.
3. Fatemeh joined the UitC class this fall.



L-R: Graham, a feature writer for LC and Terri, V-P CUPE, local 4400, Toronto Education Workers. Local 4400 supports LC through advertising.



Learning Curves supports the WEA's University in the Community by running articles about the program, publishing stories written by UitC students and donating advertising space for new programs. The WEA's University in the Community is a free, liberal arts program for community members held at Innis College in partnership with Senior College at the University of Toronto. Left to right: Sharon, UitC student, Peter, founding principal of Senior College, Harold, principal of Senior College, Donald, chair of Senior College's UitC committee and Joanne, UitC coordinator.

100



Left to right: Stella is a former UitC student and Susan is a volunteer distributor for LC. She has delivered all 100 issues!



1. Left to right: Diana, is the head of the LBS program at the Durham Catholic District School Board, an LC advertiser. Seated next to Diana is her husband, Chris. Diana is a key source of information for articles.

2. Left to right: Cris, UitC student, artist and feature writer for LC. See Cris' article in this issue. Seated next to Cris are Lynne, a UitC student and Rumana, UitC student and WEA Board member.

3. Wendy, outgoing president of the WEA, reads a letter of recognition from Bill Morneau, Member of Parliament for Toronto Centre. Wendy thanked all attendees, volunteers, supporters and advertisers of the past 100 issues.



Left to right: UitC students Marlene, Priscila and Robert



Left to right: Lisa and Sonny have written feature articles for LC from our early issues up to and including this one.



A poster made from the front page of the 100th issue of Learning Curves. These were donated by Tavi, of Centra Web, the printer who has done all 100 issues.

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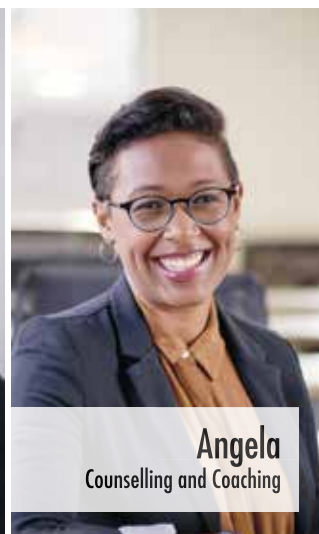
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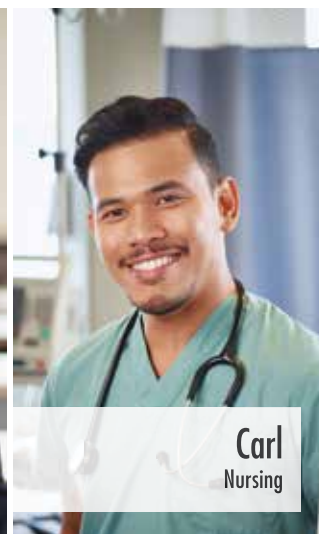
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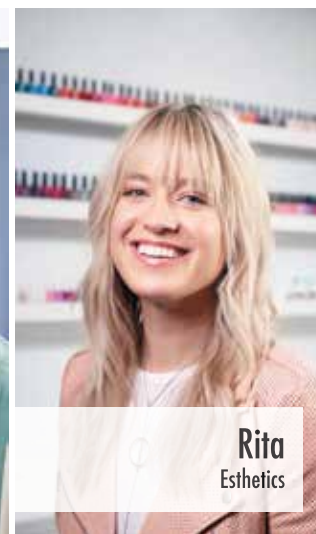
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MY FIRST YEAR

ELMA MORGAN

This fall, UitC coordinated a creative writing series led by Toronto writer, Rosemary Aubert. Enjoy the stories of two of its participants, Elma and Luis!

The end of September brought joy to my parents as they were thrilled to welcome me at 7 pounds two ounces and 18 inches. My grandparents were thrilled as it turned out to be that I was the second of what was to be a group of seven. My head was fully covered with curly, dark hair which when stretched out would have been about one inch long. I had brown eyes that would open slightly then close as the flicker of the light came across the room. You see, there was no electricity there. The room was kept illuminated by a clear glass kerosene lamp that was covered by a wick holder at the top, which was threaded at the top and immersed into the kerosene holder. It had a clear glass shade that held the yellow glow, which was broadcasted into the room to make things more visible.

Oblivious of my surroundings, for the first few days, I slept for many hours and only moved around when I was wet or I was hungry. As the days went by my eyes would begin to open a bit wider with a little bit of hindrance from the glare of the light. I tried to roll my eyes around and to follow some things aimlessly even though they were blurry; garnering attention to myself as I became fixated trying to focus. At times, I would yelp and bring my hands up to my face. I would make little noises. However, when it was

feeding time, my yelping would become a sigh, a click, and then a whimper. Then the noise would get louder and louder until finally, if I was not attended to, it became a shriek and a howl.

My mother had the arduous task of breast feeding me because I refused to suck from the bottle! She would bring it up to my lips, push it into my mouth then pull it out again. I would shriek and whimper; then the noise would begin to get louder and louder. That bottle exercise was just not for me!

As I got older and stronger, I would try to move my head and bobble it back and forth trying to bring my hand first to my face then to my chest. I started making these cooing sounds and as it came out I would do it again and again in an effort to start a conversation and take on any adult or older child who would show some kind of interest in me. I had noticed at the time that they were beginning to interact with me. I felt that this was the most significant part of my existence up to this time and the people were beginning notice me and to show some interest in me. I was beginning to command some attention and they were allotting it to me with much generosity.

My eyes were beginning to get clearer and clearer as the days went by. I could hold on to focus on things and I was beginning to recognize and stare at objects. I could see shadows and I would follow them around so that they were becoming more familiar to me. I

could see different moving objects and things moving around. Suddenly, I heard a creaking in this large expanse of space that looked like an enormous well-lit universe. I saw what I thought was a cloud burst of movement; something was moving and I thought that must be a person entering this large expanse of a lighted space. I thought that must be my mother because the pattern of music that she was making in what seemed to becoming somewhat familiar and it was reverberating in my tiny ears. I looked towards her. I glanced up and in focus, she said: “My, my, look at those eyes,” as I was vigorously kicking up a storm with my legs.

She said. “Hi sweetie, you are up!”
“How are you today,” which made my tiny hands and feet kick out fiercely and in unison. “I am glad that you are feeling better today, because you scared me yesterday.”

She grabbed me from my bed then cuddled me into her arms. She put some socks on my tiny feet then to keep them warm and took me out of the room into the kitchen. I was going to have one of those bottles which I detested and if I failed to suck on the nipple then she would have to breast feed me. She was afraid that if I did not eat I would probably starve and die.

So, as the days went by, I began trying to hold my head up. It was a big task as I tried twisting and turning from side to side and in whichever directions I could manage. My happy times were during breast feeding because I got to snuggle and drink for as long as I wanted and even went from breast to breast. She would give me water to drink in a two handled sippy cup that I would try to hold on to. Later that was a toy that I would use to toss onto the floor.

A few months had passed and incidentally, I began to hold my head up and twist and turn from side until finally one day I realized that I could move my body with it and I could get on my side. I could stretch my legs out and pull them back in. I could bend and straighten my toes and my eyes were becoming clearer and clearer. I could make smiles and they would smile back at me. I could coo and there was always a response from the adults. Even the little children were part of this little game! I could see faces that had become more familiar. She whom was smiling at me was my mother to whom I responded with a smile. I heard something that seemed to be what I thought to be a name as if it was directed at me each time and to which I responded, and as I did a smile would come over her face. I liked that exercise as it seemed to make her happy.

During the afternoon hours and as the days became hotter she would give me a shower then she would dress me up in a vest and diapers with loads of talcum powder on my skin. She would put something to soften my bushy hair and place ringlets and bows of all shapes, sizes and colors in my hair and she would place me in a chair so that I would learn to hold my back up straight and learn to sit. At first, I would fall forwards or even sideways, however, the trick was to try to hold myself up. I think I mastered that well so on to the other move!

In a few weeks I was introduced to the floor on which I was oriented in crawling. First my body would pull backwards, so I would become frustrated and knock my face to the floor then try again. In about a week after this, I had figured out finally how to move my body forward with the assistance of an adult. By the end of a few weeks more, I was moving and exploring all over the place and I was learning that there were secret places all over the house where I could explore, play hide and seek and even take a nap when I became tired. No television, so I had to invent my own games to entertain

myself and I took cues from the cat which seemed to be amused at my movements and would demonstrate which I followed willingly. Eventually, I was crawling then jumping first on one knee then both then jumping up on knee and on to crawling as this seemed to facilitate some speed for my adventures.

Within a few months after I had learned to crawl, then I would grab on to anything that I felt was sturdy and safe and try to pull myself up to my feet. There were many times I would become frustrated with my efforts as these would result with me falling forwards or backwards with a thud or a thump. If I succeeded, my efforts were rewarded with smiles of pride as I tried to navigate this landscape. If I tried at one place and it did not work; eagerly I would move to another place. My favorite place was the oven door as I could see my reflection in an effort to balance myself. I would crawl away and when the eyes were not starring I would carefully pull myself up and practice the balancing act.

My words were becoming more distinct and I seemed to imitate the adults by copying their gestures and sounds. I tried to respond to their chatter as I was realizing that they were talking to me so I needed to respond. Each day, the chatter seemed to become more intense and more frequent as they would direct them towards me and they seemed to await my response. The sounds were becoming words, so I would repeat them again and again. My lips would move and when I was alone I would practice and now I could respond a little to their simple acts and their conversations. They thought that I was nattering and mumbling but I thought that I was speaking a language that they failed to understand.

Then, finally, one day as I was becoming an expert at pulling myself up and balancing, I realized that I needed to push myself much further. I would try to hold on to stationary things and move first one leg, then both legs, or move sideways while holding first with one hand then change let go and on changing to the next. Suddenly, I realized that in the gap of time that I was standing and I was not falling. I could go from right to left and still remain erect. I was not costing me much effort and it seemed to be fun and I was doing it and it had become to me at will. My challenge, therefore, was to take one giant leap and it had to be soon. I was about to prove to myself that I could do what those other people were doing. They were standing erect and moving their bodies and exploring and I wanted to be able to do just that. So, then this my turn, here I go! Pull yourself up.

“Stand erect. Balance yourself with both legs. Move on foot; then the other. Move forward with a one, two, three, and four steps.” I fall down. Try again.

“Up on your legs; with a one, two, three, and four steps and down again.”

“Up on your legs; with a one, two, three, and four steps and down again.”

“Up on your legs; with a one, two, three, and four steps and down again.”

At eleven months, I was walking and the reign of terror had begun as with my movements came all the moveables which were becoming harder for me to reach. I would then settle for insides of the cupboards as there were so many interesting things inside there and I could move them around, scatter them all over the floor and even try to put them back or just move on. I had a choice of banging them on the floor with a blunt musical pitch then go faster and faster until my arms were tired or move on to another place to seek new adventures and explore!

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3. Listen while the picket captain explains what the issues are.
4. Thank the captain for letting you cross and the other picketers.

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THE PICTURE ON THE TOMB

BY LUIS DE ESTORES

This fall, UitC coordinated a creative writing series led by Toronto writer, Rosemary Aubert. Enjoy the stories of two of its participants, Elma and Luis!

Hello, bonjour. My name is Jean Luc, and I just graduated from McGill University, in Montreal, Quebec. For many people, finishing a degree is one of the biggest, hardest tasks in their lives, and my own journey is not an exception. All throughout I struggled a lot, not just in my Business course, but in other parts my life. Sure, homework and assignments, the ever harder projects and exams, and, of course, the foreboding deadlines that accompany them, are always present in the life of a university student. Also, there's always, always the issue of money. Like many students, in addition to my studies, I took a job, and this was one of the most interesting experiences that ever happened to me. You see, for four summers, I worked in a graveyard.

It wasn't easy. My job included picking up old dried up flowers on tombs, occasional plantings, and mowing the lawn, which sometimes hurt my back. It wasn't glamorous, but hey, it paid the bills, and that's all that counted. I'd like to think

of it as landscaping with character.

At any rate, there I was, just finished my freshman year, and in need of a job. I picked up a newspaper, answered an ad, and in a week, I was ready to start my summer career. I was introduced to Claude, the other graveyard gardener who was supposed to train me. But that's getting ahead of the story.

You see, a few weeks back, he was by himself working in the cemetery. His old job partner, Andre, an old man like Claude himself, had an accident where he tripped on a misaligned pavement and broke his leg. Thinking he was getting too old, he decided to retire a couple of weeks later. So, for those weeks, Claude was working on his own, tending the cemetery, and I'm sure, every so often, would take a sip of vodka in a concealed flask in his jacket. (For years, I've always seen him drinking on the job, and he never knew I was aware)

So one Sunday, he was minding his business, mowing a lawn, when an old woman in black, approached him. "Bonjour, monsieur, I'm looking for the grave of Sofia Gagnon" she asked. "I'm sorry madame," Claude answered, "there are so many people buried here, I couldn't remember all of them. You can go to the office, and ask them. They may be able to help."

And that was that. He never saw her come back. That's when he realized that the office was closed, owing to the fact that it was a Sunday. The office wouldn't be open again until the following week. There she was again, approaching him, asking for the same grave. "Bonjour, monsieur. I'm looking for the grave of Sofia Gagnon, can you help me?" she asked once again. "I'm so sorry, madame. As I told you last week, I don't remember all of the names in the cemetery. Come back on a weekday when the office is open. I'm sure they can help you" and the woman in black, turned and walked away.

That Wednesday, he went about his weekly chore of picking up old, dried up flowers by the tombstones. That's when he noticed the new grave. There, he noticed the name of Sofia Gagnon, who died at age 60, etched in the tombstone. He took a note of the name in his head, just in case the same old woman would come back and ask him where Sofia Gagnon was buried. Yet, something else he noticed. There were two mourners; he assumed they were Sofia Gagnon's daughters. Pretending not to notice them, he went about picking up dried roses in a tomb beside Sofia's. That was then he noticed one of the daughters pulling out a framed photograph of the deceased. That was then

he noticed that the photograph of the deceased resembled the same woman in black who asked for Sofia Gagnon's grave. "Could it be," he asked himself, "that the woman was asking him for her own grave?" That experience gave him the shivers as he walked away, a bit shaken.

I came in a week later for the job. He didn't tell me that story until the following day. I was being trained by him about my new job. He gave me the instructions to pick up old dried up flowers on Wednesdays, to put them in a compost heap hidden somewhere in the cemetery. I also helped him straighten the misaligned pavement that was the scene of the earlier accident. That's when we heard a voice, asking us a question. "Excusez-moi, monsieurs. I'm looking for the grave of Sofia Gagnon. Can you help me?" Claude looked up, as his jaw dropped. "Oh no!" he yelled, and ran frantically.

Confused on Claude's behaviour, I answered her question. "Oui," I said, "I think I just saw that name in the north side of the cemetery." So I brought her there. I also noticed the picture on tombstone. "Madame, the woman in the picture looks a like you." I asked. "Why yes, she does." she answered, "Sofia is my twin sister."

WORDS OF SUPPORT FROM THOSE WHO COULDN'T BE THERE...

Hi Wendy,

Thank you for your thoughtful invitation. Unfortunately, I am unable to attend due to our own celebration at SKills for Change (35 years of operation). I wish you all the best and congratulations on your 100th publication. You are a valued partner of our promotion and outreach plan regarding our programs and services.

- Roland Rhooms

Hi Wendy,

I'm so happy the publication has had such a long and successful run - it is wonderful resource for the community. I'd love to attend the celebration, but unfortunately I'm not available.

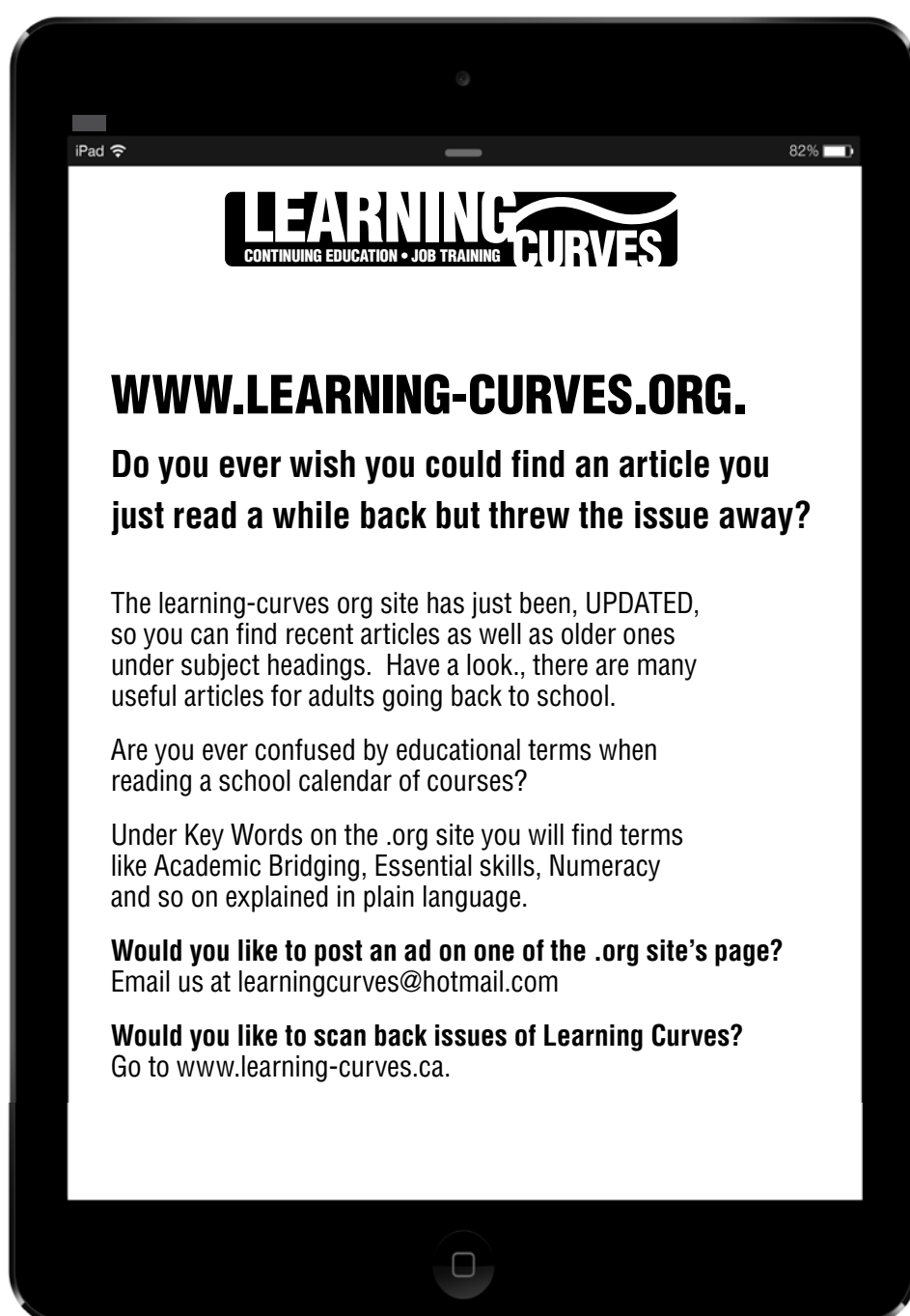
However, I am interested in writing for Learning Curves again. I'd love to talk to Deborah and hear more about your current projects.

Interestingly enough, I owe my current career to Learning Curves. I wrote an article on technical writing, which made me interested in the field. I then completed a technical writing program, which set me on the path to a successful career in technical communication, knowledge management/adult training and development, and then technical communication consulting.

I owe thanks to Learning Curves for connecting me with opportunities I didn't know existed.

Congrats on 100 issues - your work really does positively impact your audience (and your staff).

Kindest regards,
Mary Preston



LOCAL COLOUR:

Heeding the Call for Diversity in Today's Trucking Industry

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

There's other groups, including people with disabilities, that are starting to enter into careers within the trucking fields as well.

Parents come to me with their special needs child all the time and ask me if I think they have a future, says Lagrois. "It's important that they have the intellectual capacity to understand the risks that go with the job."

Don't Dis My Ability

One of these who understands this is Toronto's Thomas Riley, 28. Riley was diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome—now known properly as "High Functioning Autism" (HFA)—with the condition in grade one, but never learned about it until the end of high school.

"At first I felt a little overwhelmed by it," he recalls. "I knew something was wrong...I didn't have many friends and wasn't into the same things like hip hop that others were."

Riley says he always liked large vehicles and going away and driving to places.

"I was first interested in truck mechanics, but realized it wasn't for me. But driving helps keep me concentrated in one area. You really need to pay attention."

Riley drives along both local and regional routes and says that once he's been finished for the day, he'll sometimes

receive another assignment "and deliver wherever they need me to go."

He says his favourite part of the job is "being able to go places where you don't get to go usually. I like going to a massive warehouse, and I feel like I'm making a contribution to society because without trucks our economy would cease to function."

But the flip side is that he has to sometimes get up early and deal with traffic jams which makes him anxious because he may be late. "If I'm sitting in traffic for a long time I become agitated," he explains.

Although Asperger's is considered part of the autism spectrum, people living with the condition are considered to have average-to-above average intelligence, despite sharing traits with other forms of autism. For example, many are creatures of habit and perform better when dealing with repetitious tasks, feeling secure in routine. Another element shared with others on the spectrum is an awkwardness in social situations.

"A lot of co-workers joke around and I don't really pick up on the humour, or I misinterpret," says Riley.

He also admits discomfort when interacting with customers.

"Sometimes I don't know if I say the right thing. When asked what I'm transporting

I sometimes don't know because the bill of lading doesn't give me a product description."

So it makes good business sense to reach out and tap into non-traditional communities. Nonetheless, job seekers have to ask themselves, "do I own my disability or does my disability own me?" That means researching, understanding and embracing your disability, making realistic career decisions and understanding what kinds of accommodations—tools and strategies to enhance productivity on the job—are required to be successful in the workplace.

Another decision to think about is disclosure. This is a question many people with invisible disabilities—dyslexia, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, anxiety, depression, migraines, fibromyalgia, etc.—must confront. Because Asperger's isn't as readily apparent as seeing someone in a wheelchair or wearing a pair of hearing aids, people's perception of the disability sometimes becomes an issue. One thing a job seeker with a disability should consider reflecting on is whether or not the disability affects on-the-job performance. If it doesn't, disclosure is sometimes a non-issue.

"I was nervous about how they would react," says Riley. "The company's been really good to me and I've never felt the need to disclose."

Employers should also understand that in general employees with disabilities have less sick days than their non-disabled counterparts, insurance is often not an issue and absenteeism, and turnover is generally less than employees without disabilities as well. Furthermore, hiring a person with a disability demonstrates good corporate citizenship and social responsibility.

Meltdown!

In July this year, Ontario became the first province in Canada to introduce Mandatory Entry Level Training (MELT) for Class A truck drivers.

Individuals seeking a Class A licence in Ontario on or after July 1, 2017 will need to successfully complete mandatory entry-level training before attempting the Class A road test. Individuals who already have a Class A licence before this date will not be required to take training.

"MELT will be a game changer," says Manan Gupta, 40, editor of Road Today, a multimedia publisher aimed largely at South Asian truckers. "Only serious contenders will be able to contribute to the growth of the industry," he says. "Ontario's the first province in Canada to introduce these new minimum approved standards for truckers."

Gupta estimates that approximately 50% of new Canadians are gravitating the transportation and trucking industries.

"Furthermore, he notes, Canadian-born job seekers are turning away from this field which opens the doors to communities eager to work.

The average working age for visible minorities in Canada is 33. Compare this to 42 years of age for the average Canadian trucker. And yet, immigrants represent only about 19% of the workforce in trucking, according to a report by Trucking HR Canada: Changing Workforce: The Case for Diversity in Canada's Trucking Industry.

"Members of visible minority populations in Canada tend to be young, urban, motivated to work and many are highly skilled. They can help companies by bringing new perspectives and ideas, by reaching out to new markets and customers, and by building a work environment where people feel that differences are welcomed.

"Research has shown that a majority of visible minorities are committed to their employer; they are willing to put in extra effort to help the organization succeed, are proud to tell others about the organization, and intend to stay with their current employer. However, they do face challenges in many workplaces – they are often less likely to receive chances for learning and development, less satisfied with their careers, and more likely to experience workplace barriers than their white/Caucasian colleagues.

"A workplace that can welcome people who are visible minorities will be a positive workplace for all employees – which strengthens their commitment and engagement toward the company – and ultimately boosts organizational performance."

"If the people aren't diverse it doesn't look good," says Gupta. "The company needs to showcase that diversity is welcomed."

So What Can Employers Do?

With the benefits of hiring non-traditional communities clearly established, employers need to take that next step to reach out to these populations and actively broaden their recruiting practices.

Working with local immigrant serving agencies is a great way to start. Reaching out to multilingual recruiters has many benefits as does being present at job fairs and diversity hiring events. In-house training and cultural awareness training can have tremendous benefits for broadening understanding and appreciation.

Companies have a tendency to attract and diversify their customer base as well. If a potential customer observes a diverse workplace, they are more likely to perceive that company as an employer of choice. Furthermore, a 2012 study by Deloitte concluded that an 80% increase in business performance occurs with high levels of diversity and inclusion. Clearly there's many opportunities for Canada's trucking employers to broaden their talent pools.

"The transportation industry currently ranks below most other federally regulated employers when it comes to workforce diversity. Women account for 48% of Canada's workforce, but only 3% of the nation's truck drivers, mechanics, technicians and cargo workers. While 12% of drivers are under 30, 46% of the Aboriginal population is under 24; and, the trucking industry's immigrant population is 3 points below the national average of 22% states the Trucking HR Canada report.

"The industry needs to engage from diverse backgrounds," says Manan Gupta. "Whether it's women, people from First Nations, there are many who can play a vital role and should be welcome."

Carter Hammett is the Employment Services Manager at Epilepsy Toronto. He can be reached at carter@epilepsytoronto.org.

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Triple A CE - the American Association for Adult and Continuing Education

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

OMA. Then there is CESBA, Continuing Education School Board Administrators which you have to be a program manager to belong just like the hospital administrator association. There is an association for adult students, CESAR, if you are a student at Ryerson.

Ask your teacher if they belong to an adult education association or if the provider, College, University, Community group. Career College has an association. For interest search adult education associations on the net. They shape your learning either by how they organize their sector or what they lobby the government to do. Sometimes they talk to providers from other sectors like colleges talking to universities.

Well AAACE comes from a different historical background which has faded out in Canada. Individuals who could be teachers, program administrators, adult education advocates join to share program and policy news about developments across all sectors and regions. It is open and eclectic. By reading their publications and going to their meetings and talking to fellow members, you can get an overall picture of adult education in the individual states and nation wide.

The Canadian Association for Adult Education (CAAE) and the Ontario Association for Continuing Education (OACE) along with other provincial associations faded away in the mid 1990's. So in Canada, we have profession specific associations and provider specific associations but no way to get an overall picture of adult education. As an adult educator in Ontario, I have no idea what the program and policy developments are in any other province, indeed even what is going on in Northern Ontario compared to Southern Ontario. Frustrating.

So specifically why did I go to the 2017 AAACE Conference in Memphis- in three words, adult liberal education

Adult Liberal Education.

There was a session called "Lifelong Learning in Japan, Rwanda, and South Korea: Adult Education Beyond Human Capital Development" presented by grad students from Penn State University. Xiaoqiao Zhang was the workshop organizer. In these countries the national government supports adult learning centres where students learn in what we would call General Interest Programs, like the Learn4Life programs offered by the Toronto District School Board. Or programs like those described in the What's On booklet of the Toronto Public Library or the Liberal Arts program offered by the Colleges in their Continuing Education faculties. The Learn4 Life program is self financed through student fees, but Toronto is one of a few school boards that offers such a program. The What's On library programs are free and funded through municipal funding of libraries. In the college liberal arts programs you would pay a regular tuition fee at night and in the day you would have to be admitted to a program or as a special student and pay the tuition. We have no adult learning centres in our local communities where such programs are free or at little cost. These centres would offer courses on topical issues as well.

I first learned about these country wide government funded, community based learning programs in South Korea and Japan from Miya Narishumi, who is an Associate Professor in Health Sciences at Brock University. They were set up after WWII to foster civil society- growth of the individual and as a citizen, and

contributor to community development both locally nationally and today one could say globally. I learned that the Rwanda ones were set up after their civil war to foster civil society, which was destroyed during the genocide.

Miya had contacted me over a decade ago as I was President of the WEA of Canada, the Workers' Educational Association of Canada. At one time the WEA offered liberal arts education to working class people all across Canada in co-operation with the universities not only in class rooms but thorough broadcasts. Radio was the new medium of communication which led to an explosion of distance education offerings just as the net has today The WEA's faded in Canada and the USA but stayed in the Nordic countries, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Denmark and some Commonwealth countries like New Zealand, Australia, England, Scotland.

The WEA's were inspired by the co-op movement, Albert Mansbridge, was the leader of this WEA movement. In the early 1900's in England, the idea of working people having access to a liberal arts, university education without having to be admitted to a program without having to pay university fees, and in small tutorial groups so there was time to ask your questions from your experience was a new movement.

In fact at one time in Canada adult liberal education was dominant. Peter Sandiford who in 1935 was the leader of a study of adult education in Canada noted in the opening comments of his report that adult education should also include training. Today we would have to say that adult education should also include adult liberal education as now training is dominant.

Today there are twelve adult liberal

education programs for the community in Canada, called Humanities 101 or Discovery like in Ottawa, the one run by the WEA in Toronto is called University in the Community . www.universityinthecommunity.ca If you go to www.learning-curves.ca choose the Summer 2017 issue on page 14 you will see a picture of all the program coordinators, their contacts. We met in Toronto May 23-25.

Most of these humanities programs were inspired by the American Clemente Course in the Humanities founded in the late 1990's by Earl Shorris. These programs just won a Congressional Medal.

Adult liberal education over the years has proven to be effective for personal development and for fostering active citizenship. To learn the history, the cultural of your country, and others, how policy and programs came to be and how they might be- motivates one to make change.

In the mid 1970's inspired by the liberal arts tangents of her business writing teacher, Wendy Terry and a group of students founded the Continuing Education Students' Association of Ryerson, CESAR. Wendy went on to become President of the Ontario Association for Continuing Education 1982-1984 and a member of the Board of Directors for the Canadian Association for Adult Education, 1984-1986 and has worked and then volunteered for the WEA of Canada since 1983, as Executive Director, as President, now Secretary and as an Executive Committee member for the International Federation of Workers' Educational Associations and IFWEA's Liaison to UNESCO 1992-2000. Those liberal arts tangents lead Wendy to a lifetime of active citizenship for adult education.

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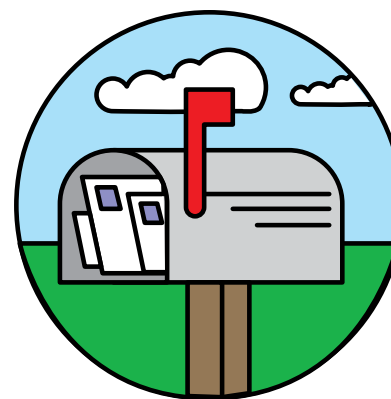
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Dear Elcee

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 need you to help me with a small domestic issue I am having. My husband and I are both recent young retirees (57 and 55). Since we retired six months ago my husband has been happily binge watching Game of Thrones, Judge Judy and CNN along with his daily round of golf. I, however, feel that I am losing brain cells without the mental stimulation I enjoyed at my previous employment. I have been strongly suggesting to my better half that we take some courses and there are many offered throughout the GTA. My spouse states he doesn't understand the value of learning without a specific purpose. I feel I need some strong arguments to get him off the couch and into a classroom. Can you help?

Bored in Burlington

Hey Bored!

Although I don't like to get in the middle of marital spats, I totally get what you are saying. The first few weeks of my retirement I caught up on a lot of overdue series (thank you Netflix) but gradually I began to realize that binge-watching is best left for "sick days". I didn't have my usual energy level or positive outlook. I checked around and began to sign up for courses that were offered in my community. I retook my First Aid, took a few cooking courses and began to notice that not only did my energy level increase but my outlook was far sunnier! So, even if your partner doesn't wish to participate I encourage you to look on your own to find something you might enjoy. That being said, I did a little research and found that the benefits of learning, at any age, but especially in later years are demonstrable in a variety of areas;

1. PLEASURE...We get to choose what we want to learn. In university I always had a hankering to study archeology or geography. I never seemed to get that opportunity between picking what I had to take and fitting classes into an often packed schedule. As a retiree I can study anything I want just because I am interested in the topic. I also don't have to worry about my marks...as they say...BONUS!

2. TIME... there is a joy in pursuing a learning goal with an unlimited time budget. You can do afternoon workshops, occasional lectures or evening classes. Local colleges, museums, art galleries and libraries often offer learning opportunities (and many are free).

3. Mental Fitness! Learning and studying keeps the mind engaged and our thinking clear. Our brain is a muscle that needs to be exercised.

4. Staying Engaged! Going back to school in later life can open new channels of interaction

and introduce us to new friends who share similar interests. Pre-retirement our social interactions were around sharing a common space whether it be school or work. For many people, retiring can often leave us adrift socially.

I hope I have provided some persuasive points. Whether it be learning a new language, a new cooking trend or Shakespeare, there is always value in learning something new! 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 organizations 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.*

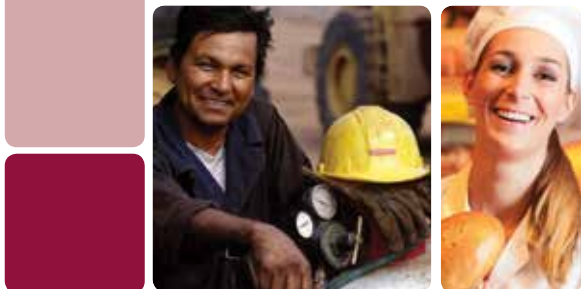
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