



AFRAID TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL

ACADEMIC UPGRADING PROGRAMS WILL HELP YOU

BY WENDY TERRY

Often we put off calling a university or college as we didn't finish high school or did poorly or did it in a different country in a different language. We are not sure where to start and what to ask for. Searching websites of large institutions more often than not leaves us overwhelmed with lots of information. We are not sure what piece of information fits our situation or plans.

Our first advice is just call any number, tell the person who answers what you want to do and what you are worried about. Ask who you should talk to. Front line people, ones who answer the phone, know their institutions, they can often put you in touch with the right person and give you some advice in the process. Front line people are some of the most helpful ones at large institutions. They spend their days helping confused people.

This article will try to sort out some of your confusion and give you numbers for academic upgrading programs that are not easily found doing best guess key word searches on websites.

First you need to understand that you are applying as a mature student, over 19 for college, over 21 for university and out of school one year. There is no need to go back and start where you left off school. Work from your goal back, what do you need to get into the program you now want. Most have academic upgrading programs

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CUSTOMER SERVICE WITH A SMILE

BY LISA TRUDEL

Have you ever watched Storage Wars on TLC? On a recent episode there was a mime helping the storage guys. Miming was a popular art form in the 1970's and is a form of silent art that involves acting or communicating using only movements, gestures and facial expressions.

Seeing the mime made me ponder: are there any jobs for Mimes in Toronto? I checked www.charityvillage.com and sadly there was not one Mime position listed. In fact, I was only able to find one Mime job at www.gigsalad.com under the "circus" section.

While searching for a Mime job, I noticed that out of about 100 various job postings,

every single one requested the skill of customer service. What exactly is "customer service"? Is it always verbal? Is it the opposite of Mime?

According to www.study.com the definition of customer service is: "the act of taking care of customer needs by providing and delivering professional, helpful, high quality service and assistance before, during and after the customer requirements are met".

Customer service is unquestionably an essential workplace skill that includes promptness, politeness, professionalism and personalization. However, as a consumer you might agree with the results of a recent survey conducted by Curiosity at Work for the World's

Worst Customer Service Awards: airlines, delivery services, cable companies, wireless phone carriers and internet providers.

If you work in these sectors, or wherever you work, or want to work, here are 6 basic points to help improve your customer service skills:

1) Counting Courtesy:

First impressions really do matter. These include the following 8 points: general grooming, cleanliness, clothing, voice tone, attitude, body language, posture and saying "please" and "thank you". Together these elements create a personal style.

2) Identifying Needs:

Customers come to a business for a reason and sometimes they might not be sure about their needs. Part of customer service is uncovering needs and discovering what the person wants. Try using open-ended questions that begin with "what", "why", and "how" to encourage people to talk, and then summarize the customers' needs to clarify that you are both on the same page.

3) Seeing Eye to Eye:

When you are face-to-face with customers it is important to remember that they come into

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CUSTOMER SERVICE WITH A SMILE

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your business because of the products or services. However, they will decide to come again only if they are treated well. From the moment a customer walks through the door, you have the opportunity to offer a warm and inviting welcome. That greeting includes what you say and what your customer sees. Help customers by showing, by answering questions and making sure they are satisfied before leaving. It will make them feel appreciated and valued.

4) Putting Your Best Ear Forward:

When you are dealing with customers over the phone, your only means of communication is the give and take of listening and talking. If you do not listen effectively, it can be difficult to respond effectively, so listening

is critical. Focus on your customer, remain unbiased and you might hear their attitude by paying attention to the tone of their voice. Concentrate on the caller, write down or input key points, and listen without interrupting.

5) Writing What You Mean:

Email and texting is customer service using words. When keyboarding is your means of communication, chances for miscommunication increase or decrease depending on your writing skills, subject line, salutation, and closure. With business correspondence, try to keep your message short and to the point. When customers see a long block of print, chances are they will skip parts of the message. Use short sentences and action verbs to express yourself, and keep

the shortcut lingo such as lol, btw, omg and bff for your personal emails. Never hit the send button until you have reread your message.

6) Calming Storms:

Difficult customer service contacts can happen at anytime, so when a customer complains, look at it as an opportunity to improve. Handling difficult customers requires special skills and it starts with assuring the customer you can help. Listen carefully, investigate what went wrong, and identify the root of the problem. This will lead to the best solution. Thanking the customer for allowing you to make things right enables you to restore your relationship and following up makes you stand out as someone who truly cares about customer service.

In summary, customer service is more than the obvious of always smiling when dealing with customers. It is projecting a positive attitude, conversing verbally, handling difficult situations professionally, creating trust, and communicating nonverbally like a mime.

To learn more about how to improve your customer service skills, or to improve your job search, contact your local Employment Ontario Career Centre.

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

LIGHTING THE WAY FOR A NEW PATHWAY TO POSSIBILITIES

STUDENT PROFILE: FREHIWET KEBEDOM
WRITTEN BY: YVONNE VOUGARIS

Strong. Resilient. Smart.

This description barely skims the surface of Frehiwet Kebedom, a student in the Literacy and Basic Skills (LBS) Program at PTP Adult Learning and Employment Programs.

Frehiwet (or Frey, as classmates and staff affectionately call her) arrived in Canada from Eritrea with her son, Bruke, (now three and a half years old) in August 2017, and she has been building an impressive repertoire of accomplishments ever since.

She spent her first two weeks in Toronto learning how to navigate the TTC. She went as far as she could in each direction so that she would not be a slave to fear when needing to get somewhere.

In less than fifteen months, Frey obtained her Food Handler, Smart Serve, and WHMIS certifications. Additionally, she recently passed her G1 driving test.

When asked what her motivation was in coming to Canada, she takes a thoughtful moment before responding:

“You know, there’s an Eritrean Proverb: The woman is the light of the house. This means if the woman is educated, she’ll give a better life to her children.”

When Frey and Bruke arrived as refugees, they stayed in a family residence shelter for women and children. Coming to Canada was an exceptionally difficult decision for her as it meant leaving her other two children with family in Eritrea. Being separated from them is the biggest challenge she faces here, but she sees how Bruke is excelling and growing, and she knows she has done the right thing. “He is always happy, always smiling. When we get on the bus, it’s often quiet and everyone looks sad or tired. He starts talking to people and the mood changes so everyone starts smiling.” She can’t speak about him without a full grin herself.

Through the family residence shelter, she connected to her initial certification programs. The shelter also provided her with relevant, useful information about where and how to find free clothing and food, and how to access public services (i.e. free passes through the Toronto Public Library for local attractions, swimming classes, etc.).

She also made her first friends there.

Riding the subway one day, she ran into a couple of these friends and asked where they were going. They were on their way to school, a place called PTP. Curious by nature, Frehiwet decided to check out PTP herself.

She had Bruke with her the first time she came to PTP, so she was not able to write the assessment. This drove Frey to push for her childcare subsidy. Within 3 weeks of her initial visit, her daycare was set up, and she came and wrote an assessment. Initially she had no desire to pursue education, but she enrolled in the LBS program to determine if it was a better fit for her than she believed it would be.

Frey worked for many years and was skeptical that further education was the right step for her. She had been out of school nearly 15 years. Since graduating high school with an accounting diploma, she worked for United Nations (UNMEE), QDVC during the building of Dahlak Island, and the US Embassy. She was at the embassy for 7 years and worked in a variety of positions there until she came to Canada. She took advantage of embassy’s monthly, online certification courses. Frey also applied for new positions within the embassy, regardless of whether others more qualified were applying. With this fearlessness, she succeeded in every position she worked in, and it is this same mental fortitude that continues to make her successful today.

Once Frey started at PTP, her preconceived notions of being done with education no longer held true. She says, “When I first came here, I said no. It’s been a long time for me since I was in school, so I don’t want to go

back to school. But when I came here, every day I learned something new. Just because I started here, I learned more. That’s why we all have to just start doing something.”

She quotes another Eritrean proverb: When you put your hand in the sea, you either get wet or you get a fish. She explains this to mean that, “It is important to do something, even if you’re not sure that it’s the right thing, it’s something.”

Frehiwet’s ultimate passion is to help people, especially women and children. Advocacy is close to her heart, and she wants to continue to grow her education and knowledge so she can focus on this innate desire. “First I must help myself so I can help others.”

While in the shelter, she would often accompany other Eritrean women to various appointments and translate for them. Upon discovering this, her case worker suggested that Frey do an interpretation course through MCIS. Because PTP is flexible and works with students and their ever-changing lives, Frey was able to readjust her schedule and simultaneously enrolled

in the 6 week interpreter course. She successfully completed this course, and is registering with the province to pursue this as an income source.

Still, there are many things Frehiwet wants to do, and one of the courses she is taking at PTP is Pre-Entrance Prep with Lucy. She says, “I have several goals. This week, one thing I learned in Lucy’s class is to set up realistic goals—she asked us to write a thesis sentence about our goals.”

Ultimately, Frey thinks that social work or law enforcement are best suited to her. “I want to help people and make a difference, but first I must help myself through education so I can do that.”

With her big heart and good intentions, there is no doubt that she will continue to succeed in whatever pursuits she chooses to follow.

“My vision is that one day, whatever I learn here, I can transfer it and help other women—even back home.”



Frehiwet Kebedom outside with her son.



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A POEM

BY DR. ALTAF QADEER

Many ideas come in mind
Many ideas leave the mind
Come from where and fly to where
How ideas form within us
How our ideas get the wings
Where they come from
Where they turned so unique
Knowingly or unknowingly
Feel yet not feel the hidden nets
Ideas emerging from some
known formations
And ideas emerging from some
unknown formations
A world of astonishment opens new ways
Ideas also make some
unknown combinations
Innumerable worlds of known
and unknown links of ideas
Revolves something intriguing
between the ideas
Ideas flying in the unknown
worlds of mind
First flash of ideas like an unseen particle
The in-depth look can make
it like a bright star
World of thinking, a world of ideas
World of ideas like drops,
waves and oceans
World of thinking is a world
within many worlds
Making nets of ideas and

remaking to redefine
World of thinking is knowing
without knowing
And sometimes not knowing
what is known
And at times knowing how it was known
Predicting what will be there,
tracing what was here
And at times just wondering
how we came to the known
World of thinking is powerful to know
infinity without reaching that far
Saying in words, 'words can not describe'
A language of emotional infinity
sings between the minds
An urge to know, a desire to create
A power to fly in the opposing
wind of questions
In the galaxies of ideas,
searching new stars
Either awake or asleep
Even when we don't know the answer
Somehow a feeling of a solution emerges
And yet leaves us with many
wondering questions

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NIGHT RIDE HOME:

STARTING THE DIALOGUE ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH AND TRUCKING *PART ONE OF TWO* BY CARTER HAMMETT



Photo by Matthew T. Rader on Unsplash

Little by little the walls of stigma surrounding mental health are starting to crumble. People are starting to open up and talk about some of the rude realities that exist within the trucking sector. Sometimes the words sting. That means the healing has begun. Part one in a two-part series on mental health and trucking puts a human face on a tough subject. We hope it makes a contribution.

When Gerald Burley finally decided to do something about his issue he realized he was quite possibly at the worst stage of his life.

Over the years he'd experienced a string of self-destructive relationships with enablers, had experienced binge drinking and through much of that time was living with a feeling of just being "down."

Looking back, the 56-year-old Haligonian trucker "always suspected there were issues" he says, but couldn't readily identify what those issues were or what they meant.

"I went through a down time for about two years where I didn't go out or do much of anything," he says. "I was just existing."

Although Burley denies feeling suicidal, he does admit that he felt "really down" and "going through the worst circumstances of his life," especially after he tried quitting smoking.

"I had a good job, career," he says. "I thought I was happy and just going through a dark spot. That's the only way I can describe it."

Elephant in the room

That "dark spot" was eventually diagnosed as depression and it's a condition that's likely more pervasive than people in the trucking and transport industries like to admit. Despite the disproportionately higher rates of mental illness present in the trucking industry people still fall prey to the stigma associated with being something "less than." Despite the presence of national programs like Bell Let's

Talk Day and national training programs offered by everyone from the Canadian Mental Health Association to The Mental Health Commission of Canada, mental illness remains the proverbial elephant in the room: everyone knows it's there but nobody wants to discuss it.

Time to change that.

The statistics are nothing short of startling. And in a workplace context, the figures are downright alarming. During any random week more than 500,000—a half-million people, folks—Canadians will miss work because of some kind of mental health issue.

The standard figure usually given is that one-in-five Canadians, or 20 percent of the population is living with some form of mental illness today.

Those are fairly large numbers. But what do they mean exactly? First, let's start with a working definition of what exactly "mental health" is before driving these numbers home.

Although definitions of mental health vary widely, this article centers on a workplace context, so we've chosen to use the definition offered by The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (www.ccohs.ca), which defines "mental health" as "a state of well-being in which a person understands his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to his or her community."

"Both physical and mental health are the result of a complex interplay between many individual and environmental factors, including:

- family history of illness and disease/genetics
- lifestyle and health behaviours (e.g., smoking, exercise, substance use)
- levels of personal and workplace stress
- exposure to toxins

- exposure to trauma
- personal life circumstances and history
- access to supports (e.g., timely healthcare, social supports)
- coping skills

"When the demands placed on someone exceed their resources and coping abilities, their mental health will be negatively affected. Two examples of common demands are: i) working long hours under difficult circumstances, and ii) caring for a chronically ill relative. Economic hardship, unemployment, underemployment and poverty also have the potential to harm mental health.

Conversely, "mental illness" is a recognized, medically diagnosable illness that results in the significant impairment of an individual's cognitive, affective or relational abilities. Mental disorders result from biological, developmental and/or psychosocial factors and can be managed using approaches comparable to those applied to physical disease (i.e., prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation)."

According to a 2016 federal report:

- Psychological health problems and illnesses are the number one cause of disability in Canada.
- Psychological health problems cost the Canadian economy ~\$51 billion per year, \$20 billion of which results from work-related causes.
- 47% of working Canadians consider their work to be the most stressful part of daily life.
- Psychological health problems affect mid-career workers the most, lowering the productivity of the Canadian workforce.
- Only 23% of Canadian workers would feel comfortable talking to their employer about a psychological health issue.

Now let's bring the subject a little bit closer to home and look at the

nature of the trucking industry.

A 2016 joint webinar presented by The Mental Health Commission of Canada (MHCC) and Trucking HR Canada (THRC) revealed that approximately two-thirds by value, of Canada's trade to the US is moved by truck. A staggering 400,000 people are employed in the sector including approximately 300,000 commercial vehicle operators.

Drivers are widely considered a vulnerable population with an unacceptably higher risk of injury, disease and mortality—Higher rates of obesity, diabetes, anxiety, depression, cardiovascular disease, and drug addiction than the average individual—Mental health issues play off physical health issues and vice versa. Not surprisingly, occupational stress is highest among longhaul drivers.

There's also a variety of risk factors that come into play in the industry as well. Some of these include, time pressures, loneliness, boredom, financial pressures, and being away from home for extended periods of time. Compounding this are additional stressors like uncertain driving conditions, fatigue, road rage, dangers around truck stops and violence and the risk of psychological issues increases, as does the risk for unhealthy coping mechanisms like substance abuse and unhealthy sexual behaviours.

There's a couple of other variables that contribute to the stress of driving and one of these is the fact high injury rate associated with the profession. A 2012 study by the US-based Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration revealed that one-third of all drivers would be involved in an accident at some point in their careers.

See Part 2 in next issue of Learning Curves – Spring 2019.

PAPA AND CRAYON

BY HEESUN K

Today in art class, we did drawing. The teacher told us to draw faces of our mom and dad to prepare for Parents' Day happening in few days. Most of my classmates drew their mom's face. I wanted to draw my mom too but I couldn't remember her face. I was told that my mom went to heaven after giving birth to me. It's sad I don't even have a picture of my mom. Even seeing her once would have been a treasure for me. So instead, I drew my dad's face.

Holding the apricot colored pastel crayon, I drew his facial line on a white paper, then the nose, eyes, mouth and ears. When I was drawing my dad's glasses as a last step, Chulwoo came up behind me and suddenly hit my hand for no reason.

"Dumbass Chulwoo! The glasses got messed up because of you!" I cried.

"Come on, that's not a big deal. You just need to draw that again." He snickered.

"Do you want my new crayons?" He boasted.

"Mine is very expensive, and I bet it's going to make you draw even better.

Look! My dad bought it for me from his business trip." He beamed.

"And yours? They're all worn out.

How do you even use that?" He smirked.

"What are you doing? Stop making fun of me now!"

I pushed Chulwoo down hard and fast on the floor, surprising him. I got up quickly and grabbed his neck with both hands. The fight continued and our classmates gathered around in crowd to watch us scrapping.

"Dongha, beat him!" Cried a classmate.

"Chulwoo, you can do it!" Cried another.

"Hey, stop you two! You guys will get in trouble."

As Sohee was trying to calm two of us down, the teacher came into the room.

"What is this mess?" She demanded.

The teacher shouted and the whole crowd into a cold silence.

"Did you two make this mess when I was not around? Who started?"

"It's Dongha who pushed me first." Chulwoo said in a tearful squeak.

"Is that true, Dongha?"

"Because he ruined my drawing and made fun of me for no reason."

"Don't you know you shouldn't fight with your classmate for that reason?"

I looked at floor with no answer.

"I'll have to ask you to write an apology letter, with your father's signature on it."

"No way!" I shrieked.

"What why don't you understand?" She said.

"That's not fair!" I shot back angrily.

"Now, everyone go back to your place. Sit down!"

The teacher didn't listen to me: Chulwoo hit me too... It was not fair... I thought.

It's him who ruined my drawing from the first place... Besides, he upset me!

Suddenly, tears ran down my cheeks and blurred my sight.

My dad read my apology letter that evening and sighed deeply.

"Tell him sorry when you go to school tomorrow."

"I don't want to! I'm not going to talk to him! He ruined my drawing and made fun of me."

"Why did he make fun of you?"

"He laughed at my old crayons."

"Are they all worn out?"

"I thought they are just fine. I can still use them."

"Can you show it to me? Let me take a look."

Dad looked at my crayons and didn't say a word.

The next day, late at night, dad came home drunk. It was my first time to see my dad drunk. I was so worried about him. I had to support him from stumbling and helped him lie down on the floor.

"Dongha! I bought a present for you."

He slurred. Dad handed me the present while lying down on the floor. I took off his jacket, hung it on a chair, and covered him with a blanket; gently removing his glasses and put them on the table. Then, with excitement, I finally opened the present. My heart beat faster as I unwrapped the paper.

"Wow~ It's new crayons!" I exclaimed with joy. I opened the crayon box: "Look at these colors! Oh! So beautiful!" I rejoiced with eyes as big as saucers. In the box, 48 color crayons laid side by side; 24 more colors than my old crayon box!

Papa must have fallen asleep. I could hear him snore. I went back to my room and took out my sketchbook. I wanted to draw my dad's face again from scratch. I took out crayons and drew my dad's face. I could feel the smooth and nice texture of the crayon. As I scrabbled on

paper, the crayons made a nice sound. I truly felt like I was drawing better than before. As I drew more and more, I started yawning.

"Haaaa ..."

Somewhere, I began to hear a beautiful melody: it was not a piano or a xylophone sound. When I faced towards where the music was coming from, it was rather like the sound of a bell from a silver lining in the sky. I could see the crayons fly up to the sky spinning round and round and round; dancing to the rhythm of the music that sounded like flowing water in a brook on a sunny spring day. The crayon fairies flew freely in the sky and started to draw using many magic wands that sprinkled silver powder to make a face, eyes, a nose, and a mouth and ears. As two legs were drawn, the lady's pink skirt blew with the wind and the crayon fairies spread apart. A bright light beamed and she began to move slowly.

"Huh? Who is that?" I exclaimed.

"Dongha~" She said softly and she walked towards me with her arms wide open.

I was stunned and couldn't say a single word.

"Dongha, my darling!" Her tender voice sounded like an angel from heaven.

"Mom? It's mom! I am sure it's my mom!" I cried to myself.

"Mom! Mamma!" I kept crying out.

I ran towards mother as fast as I can to reach her arms and when I reached her, she hugged me tightly.

"Mamma!" I wept softly in her bosom.

The air was filled with the scent

of My Mother, My Mamma.

I woke up from the dream, surprised by my dad's snoring. The dream was so vivid that I still felt the presence of my mom. I've never seen her in my life before and I didn't have any memories about her; so, to not forget her, I began to draw my mom to capture her face.

"Mamma!"

In my drawing, she is smiling at me gently.

A tear drop rolls down slowly and falls on my Mamma's face in the drawing.

"Mom, I will never ever forget you."

I wiped my tears and looked at my sleeping dad; his beard looked shabby than usual. I picked up my new crayons again and drew his portrait. I colored his face, his beard with black dots and, finally, his glasses. My dad looked great.

Mamma and Papa lay side by side in my drawings with a happy smile. I whispered in my dad's ear.

"Papa, I love you. Thank you so much."

HeeSun K is a student in University in the Community. She arrived in Toronto from South Korea in September, 2018. Shortly after her arrival, she met a student on College Street who, upon hearing of her interests, handed her a copy of Learning Curves. "You should go here," he suggested, pointing to an article about UitC. On September 26th, the first day of classes, HeeSun sat proudly in the classroom at Innis College and became a valued member of UitC.

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Yellow Hyacinths

BY LUIS DE ESTORES

Jimmy was pronounced “Dead on Arrival” when he arrived at the hospital. Adelle had heard this earlier. True, that was painful, but what she was hearing now was even worse. She could feel her heart pumping, and her pulse throbbing on the sides of her head. Her sight turned dark, as her knees weakened. “Adelle?” Yvette asked, as she tried to get hold of Adelle. Liesel tried to help catch Yvette as she fainted.

Just a couple of days before, Adelle was on her merry way to get some fertilizer for her garden. It was spring in Montreal, a glorious season for the spring bulbs that flower throughout the city, especially tulips. Adelle’s favourites are the yellow hyacinths that she grows in her garden. She loves them for the intoxicating sweet scent. For her, it’s spring time when their sweet perfume fills the air, and it is wonderful. Peonies are a favourite too, but the one she planted last year died. For now, she just wants to buy fertilizer, may be even some marigold seeds, so she can plant them early this year.

On her way to the garden centre, Adelle decided to pass by St Catherine St. It was the weekend, and it is always nice to have a visit at Maggie’s, her favourite coffee shop. For lunch, she was thinking of going to Chinatown, which is a bit further. There’s this wonderful buffet restaurant that she likes going to. And so, off she strolled to St Catherine. All in all, it was a nice peaceful Saturday morning.

Something did cross her eyes. It was Jimmy, her boyfriend. Anger came to her when she noticed that Jimmy wasn’t alone. He was with a woman, and they seemed awfully close,

and they were laughing – maybe at something that Jimmy said. Angry and curious, Adelle followed them, trying not to be noticed. “What on earth is this?” she asked herself, as Jimmy and the woman entered a jewelry store called Charlotte’s. Peeking in the window, Adelle could see them looking at rings. It was then that she noticed what the other woman looked like.

“Jimmy is replacing me with HER?” Adelle said to herself. “She’s ugly!” The woman’s look may not have been as unpleasant as Adelle had thought. For sure, Adelle was angry, and well, jealous, and her judgements were clouded. But what Adelle noticed was the woman’s distinct buck teeth. “Oh, what does Jimmy see in HER?” Adelle continued watching them, as the woman picked up a ring and tried it on her finger, and looked infatuated with it. Jimmy was talking to the sales staff, took out his wallet, and reached for his credit card.

“I have had enough of this nonsense,” Adelle thought, “I can’t take this anymore”. She walked home, and never even bothered to take a bus. She just walked, but tried to hold off the tears in her eyes. “The bastard’s cheating on me!”

Two days passed. Jimmy called Adelle but she never answered her phone. He left messages, and she just deleted them. For her, Jimmy was the one that she thought she was going to marry. He was the one she would like to build a family with. He was the one she loved. It’s pretty much a good thing she discovered what kind of man he is – a lying cheat! For the first time in her life, she felt what it felt like to be heart-broken.

After the anger, there was a sense of

sadness. At least the garden was still there. It needed tending. But then, she heard the door bell. She went in and looked to see who it was. It was Jimmy. “Oh no, here he is,” Adelle opened the door.

“Hey Adelle,” Jim said, “I’ve been trying to reach you all weekend. Where’ve you been, babe?”

“Babe? Don’t freakin’ ‘babe’ me.” “What’s wrong, hon? Did I do something wrong?”

“I freakin’ saw you with some woman! You even bought her a ring!”

Jimmy looked surprised. “Dell, Dell, Dell...”

Dell is what Jim calls Adelle as a term of endearment. Adelle liked it, but not today; Not after what she saw. “Don’t Dell, Dell, Dell me, cheater!”

But before he could answer, she pushed him a bit too hard. And that was that. It only took a few seconds for Jimmy to lose balance, fall on the ground and hit his head on a rock by the yellow hyacinths. Soon blood flowed, touching the base of the beloved plants.

“No... no... no...” she said, panicky. “Help! Please help!”

The neighbour, André, limped his way over and saw the bloodied body of Jimmy lying on the pavement. “I’m calling 9-1-1.”

The paramedics came, performed emergency procedures, to no avail. They still took Jimmy to the hospital, with André driving Adelle in his car. She called Jimmy’s sister, Yvette. Tragically, he was pronounced “Dead on Arrival”.

An hour later, Yvette walked in the hospital lobby talking on her cell phone, with Adelle crying. “What happened?” Yvette asked.

“I don’t know. I saw him walking by my door, when I saw him fall. He slipped on something... probably, or lost balance... I don’t know.” They both sat down, and didn’t talk to each other. Just then, a familiar looking woman walked in. “Adelle,” Yvette said, “This is Liesel.”

Liesel hugged Adelle. “I’m so sorry... really sorry. Jimmy was my favourite cousin. We were pretty close.” As Liesel spoke, Adelle noticed HER familiar buck teeth. “By the way, Adelle, Jimmy meant to give you this ring for your birthday. He was planning to propose to you. I helped him buy it the other day.”

Luis is a UitC student who is also a filmmaker.

Recently, he and fellow filmmaker, Derreck Roemer, won *Art with Impact’s* short film competition for their film, “Off Suit”.

Using stop-motion animation and based on a true story, “Off Suit” gives viewers a powerful look at the impact of language and social stigma. Congratulations, Luis!



Watch it here:
artwithimpact.org
(Winner AWI Short Film Competition, November, 2018)

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



Learning Curves is changing. We are hard at work behind the scenes creating an even better website experience for our readers!

The learning-curves.org site is being UPDATED, so you can find recent articles as well as older ones under subject headings. Not only will you be able to enjoy Learning Curves in print and online, you’ll have even more ways to enjoy it on the go as the new site will be more mobile friendly.

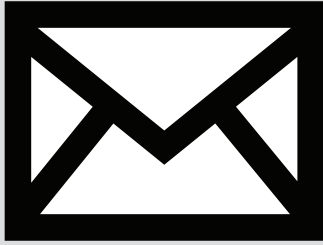
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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FEEDBACK RE CHRIS'S ARTICLE REVIVE YOUR THIRD AGE THROUGH ART

1.

I've read the article. I like that phrase—"Curiosity has secrets." And the advice about "brain training," especially through visual art, is excellent.

Well done!

—George Elliott Clarke, OC, ONS,
FRCGS, PhD, LLD (etc)
E.J. Pratt Professor of Canadian Literature
University of Toronto

2.

I found it interesting how there could be a correlation between art or any other type of brain exercise might have a correlation in treating Alzheimer's disease as well as dementia.

I suppose one of the missing components would be to find a passion and vision to stick to it. however if you find the vision, the passion will soon follow. It reminded me of my days of when I was a graphic artist back in the 90s. I find that kind of work does sharpen your senses and I agree with this article.

Keep up the good work Cris

—Erick Ouellette of Toronto

3.

Dear Editor,
Thanks for the article, REVIVE YOUR THIRD AGE THROUGH ART by Cris de Souza on pages 3 and 7 in your Fall 2018 edition.

—Thomas L. Gilmer

FEEDBACK RE LUIS DE ESTORES STORY "THE PRESENCE"

Subject: The story-the presence

4.

Wonderful story
Keeps you interested and wondering to the last word
Congrats Luis De Estores
I just loved it.

—Patricia Reid

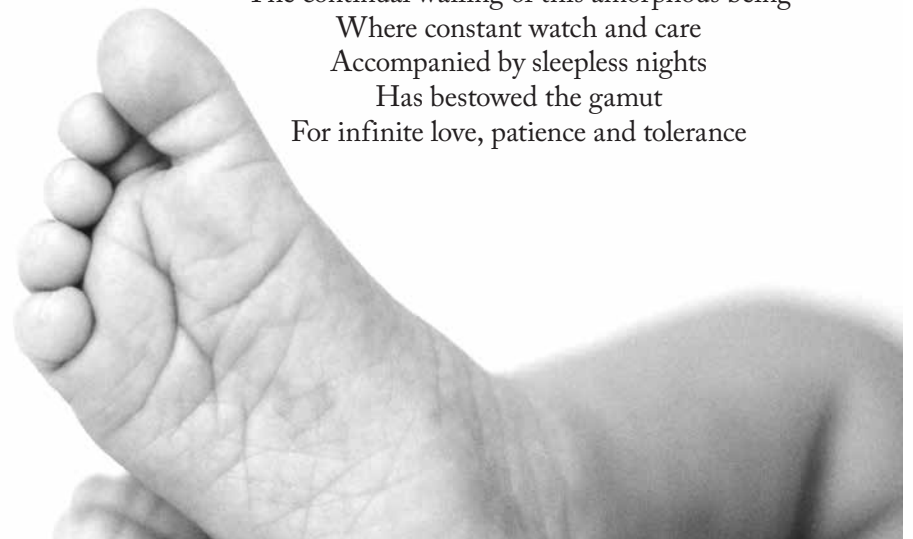
NEWBORN

BY KEITH CAMPBELL

That sacred communion
Between man and women
Has brought forth
A new creation
Conceived in an all encompassing harmony

A mixture of anxiety and anticipation
Awaits its emergence
From a submerged liquid darkness
And seemingly illimitable gestation

A blissful annoyance,
The continual wailing of this amorphous being
Where constant watch and care
Accompanied by sleepless nights
Has bestowed the gamut
For infinite love, patience and tolerance



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Night school, Summer school, E-Learning, Computer Courses
Microsoft Office Specialist Training

Oshawa Campus 905 438-0570 & 905-626-6631
Ajax Campus 905-683-7713 & 905-626-6631
Reconnect Program - Ajax Campus 905-666-1146
Whitby Giffard Centre Campus ESL & Linc 905-666-1255
Welcome Centre ESL & Linc 289-481-1336
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4. Our editorial is informative and insightful - profiling programs and learners and government policy for adult learning. Our articles are posted and handed around.
5. Our rates are affordable

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GIVE YOURSELF THE GIFT OF LEARNING THIS HOLIDAY SEASON

As the holiday season approaches, you're probably scrambling to think of the perfect gift ideas for your family and friends.

But have you ever stopped to consider giving yourself something great for Christmas as well?

Investing in your career through continued education is the gift that keeps on giving. Whether you're acquiring new skills and knowledge or simply updating your existing ones, it's a great way to set yourself apart in today's competitive job market, climb your company ladder or even transition into a new career.

Better yet, Sheridan's Continuing and Professional Studies programs are designed to fit into your busy schedule. Most courses are offered weeknights or weekends at each of Sheridan's three campuses (Brampton, Oakville and Mississauga), and many are offered online as well.

That flexibility and convenience is what convinced Anca Jugarean to finally take a continuing education course, something she'd wanted to do for many years but kept putting off because she feared she didn't have enough time.

"I chose the online option to study Project Scheduling Management because of the flexibility it offers to people who are time-constrained. As well, while I enjoy the classroom interaction, learning to use the MS Project software in a more independent environment — with guidance as needed — gave me the opportunity to use it as I would in the real world," Anca says.

"To anyone who would consider pursuing further education but for various reasons isn't quite sure or ready yet, I would say to try pursuing one course at a time. It's an affordable option which would not put a big strain on a schedule that may already be busy."

With more than 200 courses to choose from, you're bound to find something that will help you advance your career, taught by

experienced instructors who are passionate about student success.

"ConEd courses can be a stepping stone to the next level of your career, giving you a knowledge boost that can make a difference," says Greg Golding, who co-ordinates Sheridan's Microsoft Office Applications program.

"I love the opportunity to share my knowledge and experience to help others who are trying to get ahead. It's wonderful to make a difference in someone else's life."

The benefits of being a Continuing and Professional Studies student at Sheridan go beyond what you'll learn in your courses.

You will have access to free monthly career development workshops that will help you write the perfect cover letter and resume or refine your interviewing skills. Tutoring in a wide variety of subjects is also available at no additional cost, up to 1.5 hours per week per subject. Or, you can schedule 30-minute employment consultant meetings, in which you'll get one-on-one support with things like identifying employment opportunities and conducting job searches.

"Taking a course under the Continuing and Professional Studies at Sheridan also enables a wonderful networking-while-learning opportunity... (even) from the comfort of one's home," Anca says.

New courses and programs are added on a regular basis, while the department also works on constantly updating its existing courses and certificates in order to keep pace with changing industry needs.

The majority of on-campus classes for our Winter term begin Jan. 7, and online classes begin Jan. 15. For more information, visit caps.sheridancollege.ca — and give yourself or a loved one the gift of continuing education this Christmas!



Prepare yourself for work you'll love.

You may love your job but want to get to the next level. Or you may be looking for a career you're passionate about. Whatever path you're on, we're here to help.

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On campus classes start the week of January 7.
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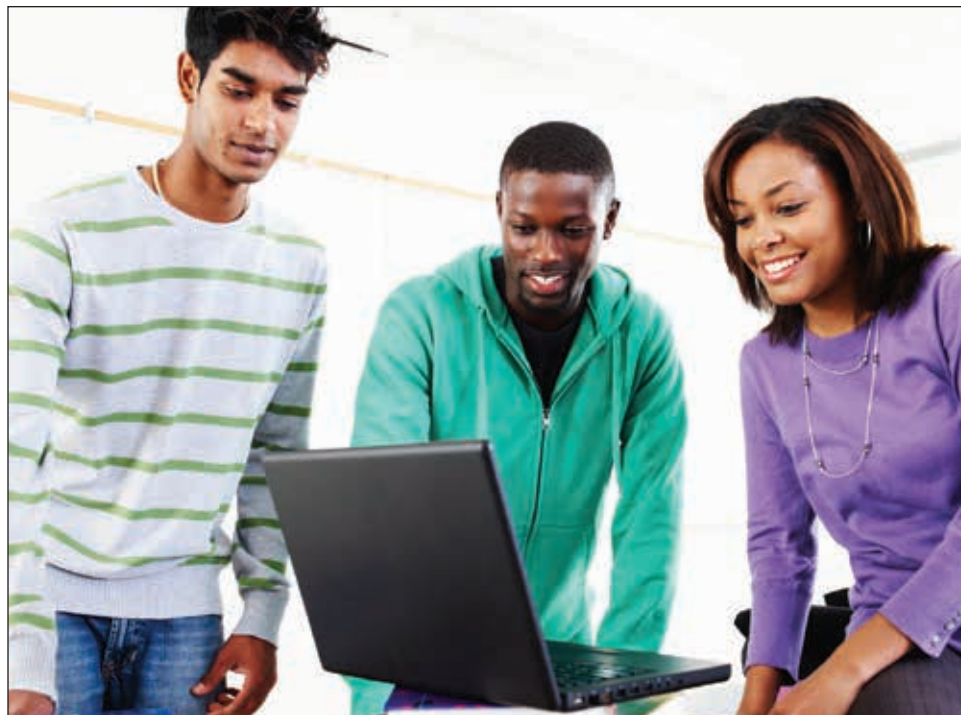
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* additional assessments may be required

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SIDDHERTHA SAHA GRADUATES WITH AN ACCOUNTING AND PAYROLL DIPLOMA

My name is Siddhertha Saha and I am writing this to let all of you know that I have graduated in Accounting and Payroll (Diploma) program from ABC Access Business College. I would like to express my gratitude to ABC Access Business College for the quality education programme offered at their school. First of all let me preface this by saying that my compliments are unsolicited. These are honest compliments

I love the ABC college. I chose it because of the Accounting and Payroll program as well this program is accepted by the CPA. (Chartered Professional Accountants) All of the Diploma programs of this school are approved as career and vocational programs by the Ontario government. The support of the teachers and instructors was excellent. My heartiest THANK YOU goes out to Ms. Sonia and Mr. Berj for guiding me throughout the program. Thank you for helping me to continue my education at your school and to make this possible for me through help with funding applications. It means a lot to me to know that there are people out there who are committed to helping a student follow their dreams.

After I graduated, I started to work as an Accounting and Payroll Instructor in a college where I worked almost one year as I am a certified payroll instructor and this is authorized by the Canadian Payroll Association. Then after that, I got another position to work for a corporate client in the Robert Half Company. As per a conversation with Accountemps and succeeding in the interview. I came to know my name was on the top of the list of their payroll data base. It gave me more confidence. At present I am working as a Payroll Analyst in Scotia bank in the division of Global HR operations services.

Finally, recalling the old days at ABC- I appreciate your help during that 2016-2017 year. You were patient, inspirational, and actually made things fun. Thank you so much for everything. I won't forget it!

*Siddhertha Saha, MBA,PCP
CPA Member*

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

Learning Curves would like to point out to our readers a key piece in Saha's letter. The course he took at Access Business College was certified by a professional association, Chartered Professional Accountants. Joining a professional association, earning their Certification is one of the best job search strategies. One, most of them have job banks, an employer who wants a certain skill set, will post with the professional association first. Two, most of them have regular events where you can network with others in your

field. Here you hear about jobs before they are posted. Ask the local librarian to help you find an association related to your skills through searching Associations Canada. This directory is only on line now so you will need some help devising best key word search terms Also see www.learning-curves.org, bottom of left column on home page, Skills Transfer for Internationally Trained Professionals. These articles focus on professional associations in fields like health care, engineering, accounting, business, computers, law.



Siddhertha Saha sits his wife and two children.

time for my family

time for my learning



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UNIVERSITY IN THE COMMUNITY

BY JOANNE MACKAY-BENNETT

This article was originally published in the Fall 2018 issue of the Senior College Bulletin. Senior College has been a longtime supporter of UitC.

“Cities have the capability of providing something for everybody, only because, and only when, they are created by everybody.” – Jane Jacobs

I am the coordinator of a humanities-based, adult education outreach program called University in the Community (UitC). We are an initiative of a non-profit organization, the Workers' Educational Association (WEA), working in partnership with the University of Toronto's Office of the Provost, Senior College and Innis College.

Today, a partnership between the university and a non-profit seems rare but ours is a relationship that goes back 100 years. It began on April 29, 1918, when Sir Robert Falconer,

the university's fifth president, rallied a group of businessmen, public figures and trade unionists to attend a meeting at Toronto's Technical School. Their purpose was to form an association similar to the British WEA, whose founder, Albert Mansbridge, saw workers' education as key to a strong democracy. (See: Ian Radforth and Joan Sangster, “A Link Between Labour and Learning”: The Workers' Educational Association in Ontario, 1917-1951.” *Labour/Le Travailleur*, 8/9 (Autumn- Spring), 1981-2, p.43, 44.).

It's hard not to see the accomplishments of Falconer's founding committee as some sort of bureaucratic miracle: within just a few short weeks, professors, trade unionists and members of the public had drafted and adopted a constitution. By fall, eight evening classes held at U of T, Upper Canada College and industrial plants were up and running with 60 registrants! (How did they do that?)

As its constitution affirmed, the WEA would “provide an opportunity for workers to obtain the benefits of University Education” and would “assist them to acquire the knowledge which is essential to intelligent and effective citizenship.”

Their document laid the groundwork for liberal arts education for workers in Canada.

Fast forward to 2003, when the WEA (Toronto), more specifically, the indomitable Wendy Terry and Anne McDonough, initiated a new version of those early WEA classes and named it University in the Community. Not long after, Peter Russell initiated a partnership between Senior College and UitC. Among the innumerable benefits of our alliance with Senior College is the Senior College-UitC advisory committee, chaired by Donald Gillies. We rely on the committee for teaching classes, for sound advice on programming and, of course, for invaluable help in our relentless search for funding.

Since 2003, UitC has offered free-of-charge, liberal arts lecture series for adults who have been unable to follow the traditional path of higher education. Last year, we offered two, 10-week sessions on scholars whose work is foundational to U of T's national and international reputation. This year, our topic is Human Rights and the City. Its focus is on what we are calling local citizenship.

With 40 people registered this term, students arrive early at Innis to grab a seat. They come from all regions of the city, their ages span more than six decades, and their backgrounds are as diverse as you will find on any corner in Toronto.

This term, several refugees have joined our group. In a recent discussion on gun violence in Toronto, the presenter, the founder of the Zero Gun Violence Movement, energetically asked, “So what would you do to stop gun violence in Toronto if you were elected mayor?” “I would invest in community organizations, in the lives of people,” a student replied. As someone who arrived here after roaming from country to country for more than 20 years, the weight, and the weariness, of his response momentarily silenced the room.

University in the Community is cemented in the belief that education and civil society are inextricably linked. And in that firm grounding, there is such hope.

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



Photo credit: Ryan Fettig



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AFRAID TO GO BACK TO SCHOOL: ACADEMIC UPGRADING PROGRAMS WILL HELP YOU

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

that help you get what you now need to succeed.

At one time most mature students went part time to evening classes and young people just out of school went full time to day classes. Now it is more mixed with our gig labour market, and high tuition fees, young people pick up extra credits at night school as they have part time jobs or are coming back to school after a contract and mature adults are more often going back full time during the day to pick up skills faster to get back into the labour market. Going part-time for a decade or more doesn't make use of your learning investment as much as going back full time for a year or two then back into the labour market.

So you need to understand there are two silos at universities and colleges. Actually three at universities. One is for full time students in a certified program like a Degree. The classes for these programs are usually offered during the day, but some credits towards your program can be picked up at night. The second silo at universities are degrees offered part-time at

night. You you can earn a Degree this way but this is a different registration process than for the one going full time during the day right after high school. Then there is a third silo. The Continuing Education school where many courses are not a credit towards a Degree.

You may earn a Certificate or a Diploma or recognition from a professional association. By searching websites using Continuing Education you will find this third silo but at universities you will not find the part-time degree night school one. Try mature students part-time undergrad.

There are different entry points depending on what you want to do at universities. See www.learning-curves.ca for the Fall 2016 issue of Learning Curves page 7. We tabled six for each of the three universities in Toronto.

At the colleges there are two silos. One is full time day, though you can go part time during the day but you must be admitted to a program before you start earning credits.

Then there is the other silo Continuing

Education sometimes called Part-time usually offered at night or on the weekends – quite often by distance education. They have open admissions. You do the courses and when you have all the courses needed for your certification, usually a Certificate, you apply for your Certificate. Whereas in the other full time day silo you apply to be in the program first, then earn your credits.

Both universities and colleges offer academic upgrading programs for those who would not otherwise qualify to be admitted.

So let's look at academic upgrading programs.

ACADEMIC UPGRADING PROGRAMS AT UNIVERSITY

One of the best places to start are academic upgrading programs. In general, you take a university level course in a small group and if you earn a grade that shows you can do university level work you are admitted and that upgrading course counts as a credit towards your program. We have listed the numbers for these programs at Ryerson, University of Toronto and York and give more details about each program.

Ryerson

If you click on Access to Post-Secondary Education on the Courses and Programs page for the Chang School for Continuing Education it will lead you to Spanning the Gaps. Under Programs and Workshops here you will see Transition Foundation Programs. However if you had put these two titles in the Search Engine, you would get a blank

You can reach Transition Foundation Programs by phoning 416-979-6000 Ext 2291. They have regular open houses and they have one on December 11. Call this number to book yourself in.

The Transition Foundation, Program Structure includes three courses: Academic Writing and Research; Literature Across Borders, Critical Thinking. Getting a C+ in these course earns you a university credit which you can transfer into other programs.

Under Information and Academic Advising you will note that you can get help with Admission Requirements, Upgrading Options, Program and Course Selection, and most importantly Financial Aid. Often adults going part-time think they do not qualify for financial aid which is not true.

University of Toronto

If you put academic upgrading in the U of T web page search engine, you get to the Academic Bridging program at Woodsworth College.

You can reach this program by calling 416-978-4444. Applications open in January for the April to June term.

Three courses are offered in this spring term which if you go part-

time you chose one. They are

Contemporary Canada, Introduction to the Study of Literature, Topics in Indigenous Cultures and Societies. Other ones offered in different terms are Introduction to Academic Studies, Canadian History, and Introduction to Environmental Studies.

When you successfully complete at least one course in the Academic Bridging Program, you gain admission to the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, at U of T. That course credit in the bridging program earned is applied to your degree.

Don't forget to ask about Financial Aid. Aid programs specific to the Academic Bridging Program, on their site are the Noah Meltz program, grants specific to the Academic Bridging Program and Woodsworth College grants. If you go to the Academic Bridging Program full time you can apply to OSAP, the Ontario Student Assistance Plan.

Woodsworth College is where you apply to be a Part-time Undergraduate Degree Student, in the Faculty of Arts and Science, night school courses.

The Association of Part-time Undergraduate Students APUS works to make sure that part time students, often night school students, have access to a full range of programs. Call 416-978-3993

York University

If you put academic upgrading in the York University Search engine you are brought to Academic Bridging in the School of Continuing Studies.

You can reach the School of Continuing Studies by calling 416-736-5616.

They list three Academic Preparation Courses: Academic Bridging- Humanities, Academic Bridging- Social Sciences, and Academic Preparation- Math. If you pass one of these academic Bridging programs with a B grade, "you will strengthen your application for admission to select faculties" with three credits towards your degree.

ACADEMIC UPGRADING PROGRAMS AT COLLEGES

One of the most important things to note upgrading programs at the colleges are tuition free.

Also note, when you are looking at websites each has different information but these programs are much the same in each college. So if you find one thing noted like career counseling on one site and not on another college's site, just ask if they offer that.

It is a good idea to look at all or a few of the college AU sites as given each site has different information, you get a better overview of the Academic Upgrading programs. You will know better what to ask about.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE



Kathleen Wynne, MPP
Don Valley West

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

Constituency Office:

Don Valley West
795 Eglinton Ave East, Unit 101
Toronto, ON M4G 4E4
416-425-6777
www.kathleenwynne.onmpp.ca



ACADEMIC UPGRADING PROGRAMS WILL HELP YOU

CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS

Centennial

Choose Part-time Studies, then at the bottom of the Screen choose General Education, Teaching and Languages then choose School of Advancement then Academic Upgrading. Or just put Academic Upgrading in the search engine for Centennial College's home page. You reach the Academic and Career Entrance Program, commonly known as ACE .

You can reach this program by calling 416-289-5272

They offer programs in Chemistry, Biology, Math, Technical Mathematics and English.

By doing four ACE courses you can earn a ACE Certificate which is equivalent to a High School Diploma. This will meet the requirements for acceptance into an apprenticeship programs and college programs at all colleges.

There is also a Career College Transition program for those who have a High School Diploma but who want to go back to school. You can upgrade essential skills in math, English, biology, chemistry required for admission to college or university programs.

Seneca College

On Seneca College's home page in the search engine put academic upgrading and you will get to the AUC page Academic Upgrading program. They have part-time evening programs as well as full time day ones. You can take a self-paced program or an accelerated one.

You can reach them by calling 416-491- 5050 ext. 44772.

They detail their courses on their site. Intro Level: Mathematics. Intermediate Level: Computers, English and Communications, ACE Core Mathematics, Principles of Biology, Principles of Chemistry. Advanced Level: Principles of Human Biology, Applied Chemistry;

ACE Communications II, Computer Fundamentals, Communications and Self Management, and one of the following: Business Mathematics, ACE Technical Math2 or Apprenticeship Math.

Once you have completed 4 advanced level subjects including English & Communications, and an advanced level Math you will have earned an ACE certificate. This is accepted for admission to Ontario colleges and apprenticeship programs.

The AUC site notes that you will receive career counseling and assistance with college applications. Getting help here is invaluable as application forms can be a challenge as can deciding what career to pursue in today's volatile labour market.

See ad on page 10 for Seneca College Tuition Free Upgrading. Mind don't let the address for their web site at the bottom of the page throw you off. The program is administered by the full time day silo of the college but they offer part time evening courses just like the CE silo. Don't feel bad if you find large educational institutes confusing. They are, remember just ask any front line person. They know their institutes.

Humber College

When you put Academic Upgrading in the Humber College search engine, it leads you to an AU page with a header

School of Liberal Arts and Sciences.

These Liberal Arts schools are associated with going full-time during the day, in fact most of the academic upgrading programs are offered through Liberal Arts. So adult students who keep searching in Continuing Education will be frustrated.

This AU website indicates only day hours for classes so you need to phone and ask if they have evening classes. Note that ACE courses are offered through distance education and they have monthly intakes. So this gives you more scheduling options but phone and ask.

Call 416-7675-6622 Ext 74842.

Students who earn 70% or higher in each of the following four courses earn an ACE Certificate in addition to their Humber Certificate of Completion. The courses are ACE Business Math, ACE Communications, ACE Computers, and Skills for Success By clicking on how to apply then clicking on Register for Informal and Assessment Sessions you get to a page where you can click on Courses, ones where you can get more basic help or help with other areas of study. They are in addition to the ones above Pre-ACE Computers, Pre-ACE Communications, Pre-ACE Math, Math Bridge, Pre-Ace Chemistry, ACE Chemistry, Pre ACE Biology and ACE Biology.

Finding the drill down path on the website described above which leads you to these more basic courses reinforces the challenge of getting to information on websites. So remember phone and ask.

On this same page where you clicked on Courses, you can click on Services. Here they note you can register for Peer Tutoring, Career Counselling in the ACE program, and the Humber Counselling and Disability Services Office. Note you can also apply for Transit Support Allowance.

Clicking back to the original AU page, then clicking on Fees. Leads you to other Financial Aid options at Humber. The Fees page lists Scholarships which may put you off having not got high grades but remember Bursaries are also always available for those in financial need Ask is the first and best rule for getting help.

George Brown College

On the home page for George Brown put Academic Upgrading. This leads you to two options. Chose the second one Program A 751

Here you can get more detailed information. Click on courses to get a full listing of what is available. They include ACE Biology, ACE Chemistry, ACE Physics, ACE Computer Studies, Foundation Communications, Pre ACE Communications, ACE Communications, ACE Math for Technology, ACE Math for Apprenticeship, ACE Math for Business, ACE Workplace Math, Core Skills, Ace Personal and Professional Exploration.

If you click on the full description option you will find that one classes are offered on a continuous intake basis. Other colleges seemed to have a term based schedule. Ask. They indicate that classes are offered during the day but distance education offers your more flexibility.

They note that students begin with a three-week orientation to determine their appropriate upgrading class level, and create a learning goal plan. They note that if applicants

are not fluent in English they may be referred to and English as a Second Language program.

Heads up although another webpage indicates that orientations are every Wednesday if you click on the listing for them they are scheduled for Tuesdays. So ask. And think about this, one of the reasons institutes moved to websites rather than print calendars is it was easier to update websites. But often they are not updated. And as Learning Curves notes the advantages of a print calendar is you can scan, a web site you must drill down hopefully using the right keywords, then come back up and drill down with another set of key words. So our advice is always, phone ask, Phone 416-415-5000 ext. 3560

Durham College

First when I put Academic Upgrading in the Search engine of Durham's home page it gave me over 2000 listings. TMI I clicked on the first one and got to the home page for Academic Upgrading –College Preparation. What I liked about this page is you could scroll down and get the information you did not need to drill down from page to page.

First I spotted the phone number 905-721-3131.

Then under Here's How To Get Started there was a reassuring description of the assessment.

"The assessment is a great opportunity to reflect on all types of learning from life experiences, work experiences as well as formal education."

It was the only college website where they referred you to websites that would help you with the Math and English assessments found under How Can I Prepare for the Assessment

I was fascinated with the list of math skills which included: decimals, fractions, metric, order of operations, ratio and proportion, percents, geometry, algebra and trigonometry. Of course depending on your career goals you would not need all of these.

This same page gives you a link to the On-line ACE courses and a list of orientation dates, there is one on December 10th. Call and sign up.

This website however did not list the ACE courses but you have the idea from looking at other college websites.

Sheridan College

When I clicked on the search engine on Sheridan's home page. I was led to the Academic Upgrading page but I could not easily see a phone number. As we advocate phoning and asking, I was a little frustrated. But like Durham College they have a scroll down page instead of key word page to page search so I scrolled At the bottom of the page under Interested in Applying I clicked on "here" for each campus and got the phone numbers.

The Brampton Davis Campus is 905-450-7533 Ext 5440 and the Oakville STC Campus is 905 -845-9430 ext. 5052.

They listed their courses differently than other colleges, not referring them to ACE but to high school levels. They are Communication (up to Grade 12), Mathematics (up to Grade 12), Biology (up to Grade 11), Computer Applications and Strategies for Success.

Sheridan was the first college to list assistance with day care costs. Like other colleges, they listed assistance with transportation.

They did list evenings as well as day time hours for classes.

For those learning English they noted that one needed a Canadian Language Benchmark of 6 under admission requirement. This is the first time I saw this specific information.

Going Back to School in the New Year.

Don't wait till the New Year to apply to an Academic Upgrading program, phone in December so you could get started in January. If you wait to call till January you may not be able to get in until the Spring.

ACADEMIC UPGRADING AT SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY GROUPS

Academic upgrading in schools and community groups is not referred to as ACE programs as they are in Colleges but as LBS programs and sometimes Essential Skills.

In previous issues we have done articles on Academic Upgrading in Schools and Community Groups.

Here are links to some of these:

www.learning-curves.ca Summer Issue 2017 page 10–11, Going Back to School as an Adult with or without a high school Diploma.

www.learning-curves.org Left column. Click on Where to Study then click on Learning in Schools then click on Adult Learning in the GTA. Then go back to Where to Study and click on Adult Day Schools in Toronto

Left column. Click on What to Study then GED & Preparation for High School Diploma and/or What is the Toronto District School Board LBS

In this Winter 2019 issue of Learning Curves, PTP student Frehiwet has written a story about her experience in the Literacy Basic Skills program. See page 2 As well Durham Catholic School Board – Literacy Basic skills program supports Learning Curves. See page 7.

Other sources of Information

Call 211 The Community Information hotline for Toronto and York Region. Ask for academic upgrading programs offered by community programs.

Other sources of programs

Call the Independent Learning Centre which offers on-line credits for high school and the GED- an equivalent to high school 416-484-2704.

It's all about Learning:

John Gallant in conversation with Mina Wong

John has been a residential building custodian for many years on my street. There is something special about John: he is always curious about fixing problems. For John, he would simply say, "It's all about learning".

I recently asked to talk with him about his love of learning.

MW: From what I know about you, you came to Toronto from New Brunswick, and then worked as a custodian. How did you decide to do that?

JG: I was the runt in a family of three brothers and four sisters. When I was in high school, my folks were retired, my brothers and sisters all married with their own kids. I could've stayed in Moncton cleaning the art gallery, but Mom said I should see the world, and so I came to Toronto with some friends.

My buddy, David got a job as carpenter for an apartment building and I just tagged along. I was seventeen, not good enough to be an apprentice, but I liked helping David, and did the cleaning part of the deal. Ha, they called me "custodian", a big shoe to fill, but it was great.

MW: That's the building right here, on our street, right?

JG: Now I am custodian for the whole building. David has a better job now, but I am still here, cleaning the building and helping people with problems in their apartments.

MW: I think you really like what you are doing. So, how long has it been that you are custodian here?

JG: I came here twenty years ago with David. Lots of people and things have changed in the building.

In this time, I have learned to be a real custodian by figuring out how things work, and also by learning new things when helping people with problems in their apartments. The managers appreciate how I like to learn and solve problems.

It's all about learning. That's how a person becomes better. You need to learn new things every day and be happy about it.

MW: It's great that you love learning. You must have a lot of stories to tell.

JG: When I was seventeen, I was just a kid. By working with David, I learned carpentry – how to fix walls, doors, floors, closets, cupboards, cabinets, and all the rest. I painted them and the first time was lousy. But I got serious and really liked doing a good job.

David took courses to be an electrician, and he taught me a thing or two about electrical panels. One time during a power out, we made sure all the emergency lights were on. Most of the time, I would help with electrical maintenance in the building.

I don't think I will be an electrician, but I have learned enough about electricity to look after the building. If an apartment has a problem with wiring, I will learn to fix it, too.

Nothing is impossible if I want to learn it.

MW: Have you always loved to learn about all sorts of things?

JG: To be frank, I am not smart like people who have lots of education and make lots of money.

But I like to find out how things work. If there's a problem, I will spend days learning to fix it.

My folks couldn't send me to college, but bless their souls, they said I should just go and make something of myself. They were happy I was cleaning an art gallery, and they are happy I am a professional custodian with lots of responsibilities.

My folks, they never finished high school, but they always say, "If you love learning, you will never be poor."

MW: In these twenty years, you have gained a successful career through continuous learning. What else has happened since you were seventeen?

JG: Lots have changed. As a kid, I hung out with people in Toronto and learned many things about friendship. I found out some people just wanted to take advantage of kids, like con them into trouble with the law.

One girl wanted to marry me. But she liked me only because I had a stable income and a nice apartment.

After breaking up with her, I didn't have a girl for a long time. I learned that many people want a secure lifestyle but not the responsibilities of a real relationship. It took me several years to meet Ida, and a long time to make sure she's the girl to spend my life with.

Ida has a kind heart, and she is proud of me. She's studying interior design and loves carpentry, too. We're happy.

Well, thanks for writing my story for Learning Curves.

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

HOW TO GIVE THE GIFT OF LEARNING FOR CHRISTMAS

GIVE YOUR LOVED ONE

- tuition for a course
- books or a tech gadget for a course
- a coffee gift card for an after class pick me up
- give your loved one time to learn
- promise to babysit while they work on a project
- provide a few homemade meals to help save time
- proofread their papers or tutor them in your speciality

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



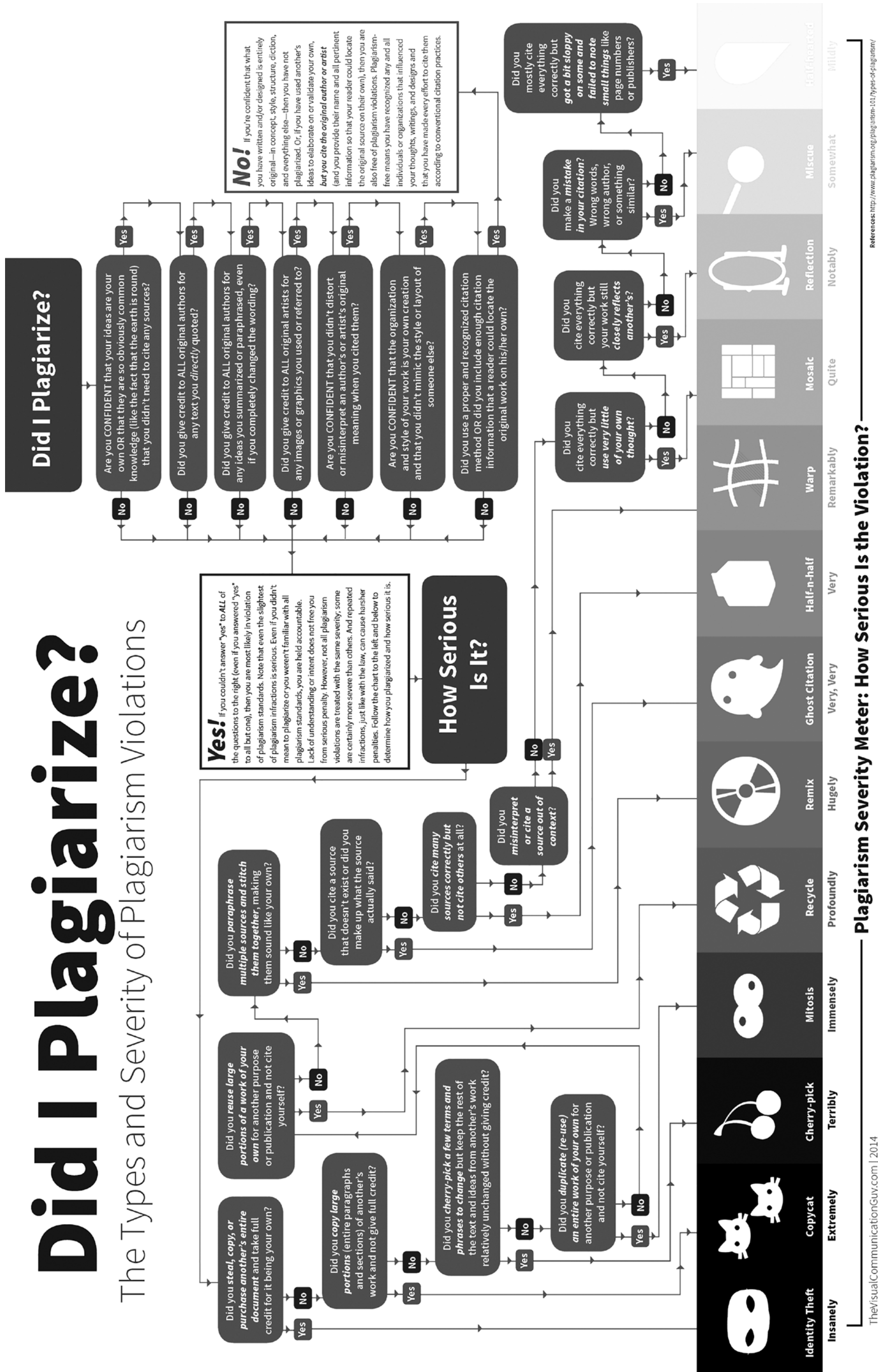
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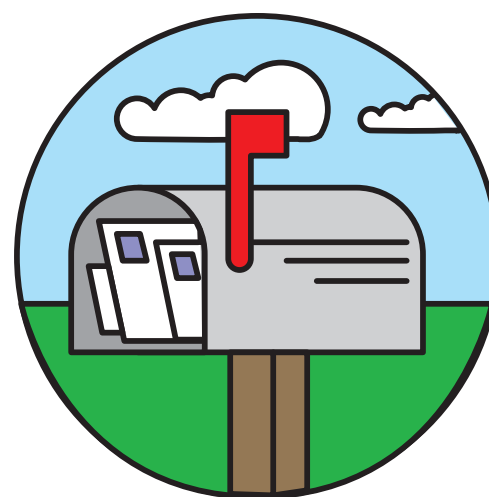
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Dear Elcee

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:

After 25 years at the same job I have just joined the ranks of the unemployed! I have a great resume prepared, good references and am enthusiastic about taking on new challenges. I thought I had all my bases covered but I keep being told I should have a social media "presence". What the heck are they talking about? I have a Facebook account but how does one job search on that?

Lucy in Leslieville

Hi Lucy,

You are not alone. It seems some days that everyone around us is plugged in. We hear terms like Twitter and Snap Chat but what do they mean and how can they possibly help us job search? For most of us who were introduced to the Internet as adults it can feel like entering a maze. Don't fear...I will help guide you through the confusion that is social media. While most of us are familiar with the most common job search sites such as Indeed.com or jobs.gc.ca, using social media is your portal to networking. While nothing can replace face to face contact, social media can be a great way to expand your base. Some of the more common apps to take advantage of are;

Linkedin.com

Probably the most user friendly and common networking site. LinkedIn allows you to post your resume, join professional groups and have contacts that are familiar with your work post commendations.

Twitter

What??? Twitter??? I am sure you have heard of it. Who hasn't? You can't turn on the news without hearing about it. However, despite the occasional Twitter debacles this app can be used for good. With Twitter you can follow companies you may be interested in working for, stay abreast of new products

and initiatives and get your information and respond in real time. Be very careful about what you post on Twitter. Try to stay away from personal opinions and stick with the facts.

Facebook

When I recommend Facebook I always advise people to, if possible, open one with a professional name and keep another for just personal use. Facebook provides a great opportunity to let people know you are looking for work and connect with other jobseekers. However, keep in mind that many employers have been known to check on a person's Facebook page if they are considering hiring a person. Ensure that your Facebook page does not have any pictures of you that you would not want anyone else seeing, that your comments are clean and well thought out and you are presenting yourself as a possible employee. Many jobseekers have not gotten positions because an employer checked out their Facebook page.

*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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