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COVID-19 AND ADULT CONTINUING EDUCATION

BY WENDY TERRY

Photo by Engin Akyurt

C OVID has changed how education both full-time and continuing education are delivered mainly to online learning. But COVID has not led us to be more aware of what adult education contributes as it has to what international students contribute. We need to see stories on adult education in the mainstream press, the number of students, the fees they bring in, how adults will adapt to going online.

When we read the dailies the education news is about children and youth at schools (elementary and secondary and post secondary). When will they go back? How will they go back? Then international students who pay triple and more to attend our secondary and post-secondary programs are news as educational providers have become very dependent on this revenue stream. With travel restrictions and moves to online learning, the potential loss of these students and their premium tuition will affect university funding and is therefore news.

Rarely if ever are there stories about adult continuing education yet lifelong learning has become a key component of our lives today. There are several key program areas for each

educational provider and they are a key source of income either from government grants for free programs or tuitions which are slightly higher. If you go full time, you are entitled to a number of courses for a yearly tuition, but if you take each one of those courses part time you will pay more for each course- a mild premium. At one time adult continuing education was considered the money maker for an educational provider but then international students became a more lucrative one as they pay triple and more for each program.

Learning Curves thinks that one of the reasons you do not see stories about adult continuing education is it is very diverse, each educational sector (universities, colleges, schools, community programs, career colleges) offers several program areas targeted to adult learners. It is hard to picture all the pieces of this field in a complete mosaic.

Youth are moving up a ladder, secondary to postsecondary one provider at a time. But as an adult learner you could be taking a course from two or more providers at the same time. For example you could be pursuing a Certificate program at the Ryerson Chang School of Continuing Education one night a week, taking an art course at the Toronto District School Board Learn4 Life program on Saturday, and picking up an online course at

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ZOOM DOOM – FOR THE CONCERNED PARENT

THIS ACADEMIC YEAR STUDENTS MAY EXPERIENCE THESE SCENARIOS



BY JESMEN MENDOZA, PHD



SONNY KH WONG, M.ED.

The two scenarios in this article are intended to help parents foster their child(ren) transitional skills from traditional to online learning. However, if you are an adult learner returning back to school – this content may be relevant to you too.

Scenario: “Help, I think my student may just give up on remote learning and this new student experience.”

It's September, and the first weeks of school have finished and your student has declared that they want to leave the University.

Entering a new learning environment, at any age, involves overcoming some challenges. This year, the transition from high school to University has a remote learning/experience factor as an extra added dimension for students to now manage. Despite this added dimension, acknowledging and gently encouraging them to accept that this year is indeed different from what they have imagined, and naming your student's struggle, can help with the challenge of this unique transition. It might also be helpful to note to your student that they may have some unique opportunities that they can

take advantage of or appreciate during this time. For example, you might highlight how not commuting is a helpful side benefit to this remote instruction; that they don't have to carry a heavy bag of books and a laptop; or have reduced expenses and less spending associated with eating out at the cafeteria or food courts. Aside from what is described here, please refer to Scenario 3 for other helpful hints at assisting your student with other types of transitional issues.

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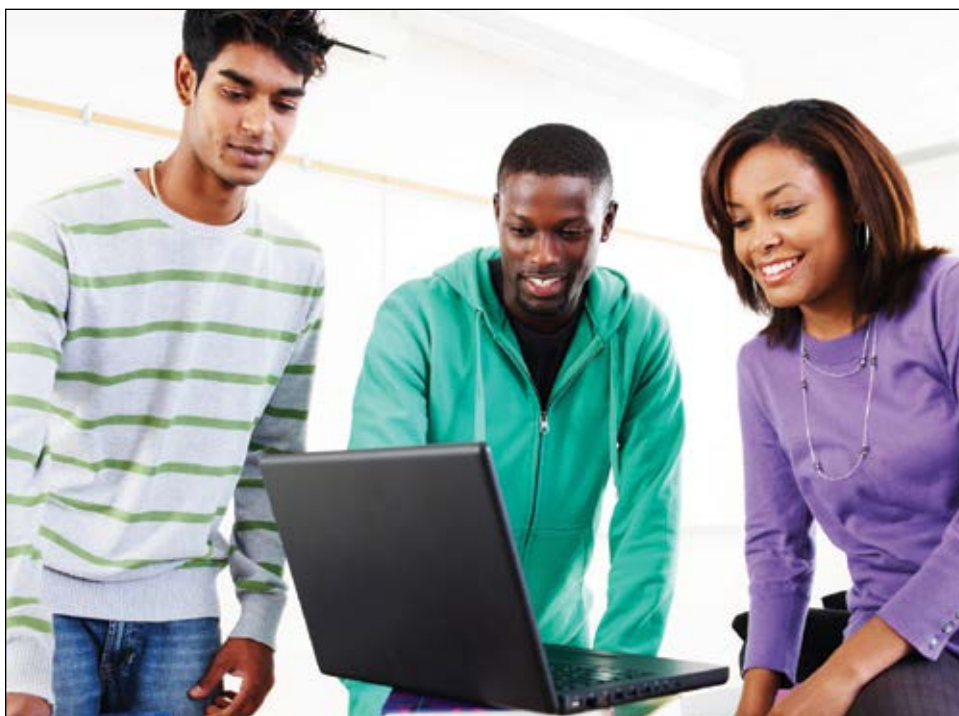


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EMBRACING CHANGE DURING COVID

Mary Mohan makes the most of her days. A typical school week includes Zoom meetings with various teachers to work on her writing, math, and computer skills; daily emails with her instructors; participating in online Zoom workshops; and co-facilitating a weekly healthy-eating group. Because of the pandemic, this is all online. Mary's days could have played out differently during the lockdown, but her choice to seize and squeeze the most out of her opportunities allowed her to learn, collaborate, and take charge in a way that she didn't see previously in herself. "The time at PTP (Pathway to Possibilities) has changed me. I have become independent. I am now doing things I didn't know before that I could do," she says.

At the start of the pandemic, Mary had a choice to make. Having initially come to PTP

to improve her computer skills—"I didn't even know how to use email in the beginning"—Mary stayed on for math, literacy, and further computer classes. The lockdown upended regular in-person visits to PTP and put Mary in a universe where Zoom calls and Google Docs collaboration were the avenues for moving forward. Her instructors at PTP were tossed into this new reality, too.

Lauren, one of Mary's instructors, says, "She used this time to try out new ways of learning. She was the very first student to go on Zoom with me. This method of learning was new to both of us and we approached it as a learning partnership." Mary identified the areas she wanted to improve on and created a schedule with individual teachers in order to get the most

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ZOOM DOOM FOR THE CONCERNED PARENT

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Transitional Issues in this Scenario:

- Making meaning of their new and unexpected virtual reality
- Adjusting to the virtual classrooms
- Coping with social isolation

Students Say:

- “definitely it is not what I was told it will be like... this will suck”
- “it is already hard enough for me to talk in a regular class room and now I have a cam in my face and everyone is staring at my face on camera and I can’t even see some of them...they don’t have their cams on...”
- “how do you even make new friends in school when there is no school to go to?”

How You Can Help:

- Your student may conclude that virtual learning and experiences are meaningless. You can encourage your student to make their own meaning of their experiences and that their learning and their student experience is essentially their own responsibility. Suggest that they can still make the best of this situation.
- Discuss with your student what they might want from school, and encourage your student to be curious on how they can get the support.
- Remind your student that the online world is not new to them and suggest that formal and informal class discussions can be held through Zoom, Facebook, Instant Messages, email, chat rooms or specially designed e-bulletin boards.
- Ask your student to identify which forms of participation they are most comfortable with and encourage them to further develop those behaviour in other virtual forums when their peers gather (e.g., if they enjoy asking questions of others, can they do that in the chat function of their Zoom call).
- Suggest to your student that opportunities to make connections with your peers, teaching assistants, and professors require some participation and encourage them to not avoid by turning on their video

camera while participating virtually.

- Learning remotely requires self-management. Let your student know that managing their emails and other online communication tools with their groups and professors in a timely way is another aspect of their learning, in addition to being mindful of their assignments/tests/exams.
- Discuss with your student how live and synchronous lectures may give them more opportunity to participate and learn, as opposed to relying on recorded or asynchronous lectures. Suggest to your student that they use recorded lectures as a reference part of their exam preparation.
- There is a difference between alone and loneliness. Highlight to your student how virtual learning may be more independent but no one expects you to learn on your own 100% of the time.
- Explain to your student how there is a learning curve and an adjustment period during the first year of University. Suggest to your student to be patient with themselves as they adjust to University and this novel way of learning. Also, professors expect your student to ask a lot of questions, and encouraging your student to be curious may even help your professors make their first virtual course more interactive and better.
- Encourage you student to reflect on their experience by gathering their thoughts/insights and making meaning of what they’ve learned about themselves and the University experience. Point out to your students how sharing these thoughts and feelings will not only let others, including their peers, know how they are doing but may be surprised to find out that their peers may be thinking the same thing.

Scenario 2: “Help, I think my student may have Zoom Doom.”

It’s the beginning of October.

-- over involvement

Many workplaces in different sectors have had to rapidly adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic and this University is no different. For the University to continue their mission of teaching, learning and research, teaching faculty/staff have come to utilize video conference platforms, like Zoom, to adapt to this remote form of instruction for the foreseeable future and until the pandemic is over and/or restrictions ease on gatherings with respect to the advice of public health authorities. The University’s teaching faculty have worked diligently at developing and finding unique methods of teaching on this type of platform. However, your student may experience “Zoom Doom” where they may experience cognitive side effects (e.g., lack of concentration) and complain of fatigue, and body pains.

Transitional Issues in this Scenario:

- Developing healthy screen time practices
- Finding structure by establishing routine, non-screen time interactions, and school/life balance
- Examining expectations associated with personal and environmental factors

Students Say:

- “my eyes...my neck...even my fingers hurt after a day of zoom lectures...is this normal?”
- so what if the gym and yoga classes are available on campus...I am constantly tired and exhausted and for no reason...”
- “I don’t know what it is...I read a few pages and I can’t concentrate...it is like my eyes and my brain just stopped working”

How You Can Help

- Remind your student that boundaries are important – Suggest to your student that they treat their study space as a home office.
- Study space is important to your productivity and physical comfort. Ensure that your student has a table or desk that is properly stationed and is accompanied with a comfortable chair to support your body posture.
- Double check that with your student that

they have the technical equipment/skills for your courses. Ask your student to review their course outlines as well as encourage them to speak with their professors to determine the specific technology requirements.

- Encourage your student to incorporate variety in their learning by suggesting, if possible, the choice of reading some of their coursework via paper and print instead of online, as a way of limiting the amount of screen time hours.
- Your student may have good intentions to make most of this year by being active and participating in many zoom events hosted by student clubs, course union gatherings and student leadership. However, there may be a limit to how many one can do. Encourage your student, when making choices around what to attend, that they prioritize learning and that they do not need to do everything to have the full University experience.
- Numerous studies have talked about developing positive habits for screen time, such as: no screen time before bed so that you can get a good night’s sleep – Encourage your student to identify what their screen time limits might be.
- There is no magic number to indicate how much time your student should spend on the screen. Suggest to your student that any screen time they do engage in is something that they find value in.
- Encourage your student to take breaks throughout the day as a way of limiting any frustration they have with their screen work or refreshing themselves and prevent fatigue. Let your student know that their body may be signaling a break.
- Remind your student to spend some time re-capturing those recreation activities that they use to engage in before the pandemic.

We hope you find our insights and suggestions useful. Give some of them a try, once you make it pass October – your adjustment learning curve is flattening – enjoy your new life stage.

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A FEW MONTHS MAKE

BY LISA TRUDEL

If you are reading this article, you might be interested in learning, or job searching, or just staying informed. Everyone around the world was informed in March of 2020 about COVID-19. Some people lost their jobs. Some people had employers who shifted them to remote work. Some people returned to school.

Wherever you are in your career, it could be time to step back onto your career lattice and recharge your job search energy. COVID-19 might have changed our economy yet what has not changed is the need to review the following 6 points:

- 1) **Career Lattice:** until the 1990s it was common for companies to hire employees in an entry-level position and then allow them to advance up an invisible career ladder to more responsibility and increased salary. This changed in the 2000s to a career lattice image. Similar to a garden lattice, everything is connected yet nothing is a one-size-fits-all career plan any more.
- 2) **Resumes:** you still require a resume to apply for a job. However resumes are now usually initially read by ATS scanners, not people. Become skilled at revising your resume for every job posting you apply to.
- 3) **Cover Letters:** there is still a need to cover your resume with a letter. A cover letter is a standard business best practice and resumes are seldom sent without one. Cover letters provide a way of describing how you can bring profitability and improved productivity to an employer using words that you would never write on a resume.

- 4) **Volunteering:** if your employment ended in February or March of this year, one of the best ways to fill in a resume gap is to conduct remote volunteer work. Volunteering is respected just as much as paid work, and including your community involvement in the “experience” section of your resume, can help the reader to understand more about what drives you to succeed.
- 5) **LinkedIn:** the increase in remote work has intensified the demand for job seekers to have an extraordinary LinkedIn profile. Understand how to use this online platform to showcase your professional story. It should summarize your experience for your connections, future employers and recruiters. Best of all, it provides a space where your connections can write flattering recommendations about you.

- 6) **Professional Development:** education is more than obtaining a University Degree or College Diploma. It includes understanding how social media has shifted hiring procedures. For example, many interviews are now conducted via Zoom or other video conferencing platforms so become an expert on how to capture the attention of an employer by being on camera instead of shaking hands exuberantly as we used to do before COVID-19.

To find out more about how you can step onto your career lattice and recharge your job search, contact your local Employment Ontario Career Centre. COVID-19 might still be here, yet you can still be supported in your career planning efforts. You alone can achieve, but you don’t have to walk alone toward career success.

This article was written by Lisa Trudel, Career Specialist with the Centre for Education and Training. You can contact her at: ltrudel@tcet.com

ADULT ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE ONLINE LEARNING

BY SALIMA SATANI

I remember the last day before March Break very well. The Minister of Education stated that all schools would be closed until April 5th due to COVID-19.

My level 5/6 learners at Overland Learning Centre, TDSB kept on asking me, “Salima are we coming back to school?” And at that point all I remember saying was “I’m not sure what’s going to happen and I have no idea when the schools will reopen.” The obvious happened, we did not return to the physical school site, however we met virtually online.

My first point of contact with my students was over the phone. I told them that

we would have online classes and I would send them an email to arrange everything.

I wanted my first email to my learners to be special and I did not want to over bombard them with too much school work. I also wanted to ask them about their well-being. So I created an email which was both comforting and educational. In the email I sent to my students I shared the idiom ‘we are all in the same boat’. I wanted to let them know that they were not alone and we were all in this together. I received many replies from my students full of appreciation and thankfulness. Some were excited to join online and others replied saying that they could not attend the classes as they were taking care of their kids but still wanted the lessons emailed and would learn in their free time. For those who wanted to engage synchronously online, we connected through Zoom.

Connecting on Zoom took a bit of time, initially! Zoom was a new platform and there were many challenges; internet connection issues and technical challenges including volume checks, background noise and camera concerns. When we finally met on Zoom and saw each other face to face we were so happy and excited! It felt really good to see my class once again.

We immediately bonded and were excited to have our class back, even if it was online. At this point, resiliency came into play. We had a plan. I told my learners to register for a couple of online learning platforms and check out some English websites. During the three months of online learning we had engaging and

meaningful discussions, sang songs, discussed stress and time management strategies, we read stories together, and they learned how to write emails and toward the end of the term the students did amazing presentations.

On the last day of class, the students were very appreciative and thankful for the online classes we had. The students told me that they wanted to meet again over the summer so we also decided to meet virtually for coffee and desert in July, which we enjoyed very much!

Salima Satani, ESL Instructor, Overland Learning Centre, TDSB CLB 5/6

From a learner's perspective: My name is Fortune and I came to Canada in September 2019 from Cameroon. I started in Salima's class in February 2020. Personally, I think my English is pretty good but after I registered for Salima's class I realized how much I learned. On the last day before March Break we were all talking about Covid-19 and how terrible it was. We were not sure what was going to happen. I remember drinking coffee and asking Salima if the class would open after March Break. She wasn't sure.

COVID-19 ruined my plans. It was so boring at home. Nothing to do, nowhere to go and no classmates to talk to. After March Break finished I really wanted to go back to class but it was closed.

A few days after March Break finished my phone rang one morning, and when I said hello it was Salima. I quickly stood up and jumped with joy! It was so good to hear her voice. She asked me for my email address and

said we would learn English online. I was so happy. She was genuinely concerned about us. I liked getting her emails because she gave us a lot of encouragement and good English learning information with excellent tasks and website links. But the best part was coming to meet everyone on Zoom. I felt like we were in the classroom. We laughed a lot and that really helped me. We learned so much online about grammar, how to write emails and we did presentations. We talked about how to be resilient during COVID-19. Salima gave us plenty of information on how to reduce stress during this time. I really enjoyed the class. My favourite part of the class was when we sang songs. Singing songs online with my classmates and teacher was wonderful.

Salima also planned a one on one end of term interviews with every student to discuss our progress.

On the last day of school in June, I was sad because the class finished. Salima prepared us for the summer and told us we could register for summer classes. But I did not register because it was 3 hours a day on Zoom 5 days a week and it was too long for me and I did not want another teacher.

I am ready to go back to school in September now that the government has decided to open schools. I wonder what it will be like.

Fortune Tonzeu, ESL student in Salima's class at Overland L.C



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out of her time with them. She didn't have access to a laptop, so she worked with Ryan, her computer instructor, to use one from the school and get oriented to working from a screen.

Karin, another instructor, recalls, "At the beginning of the lockdown, there was a fork in the road, and Mary took the route of engagement. She fully embraced all opportunities and took advantage of all that PTP had to offer." Karin notes that literacy comprises more than reading and writing; there is a fair amount of community involvement in Mary's work. Each week, she and Mary together think through, organize, and plan a weekly healthy-cooking group via email, Zoom, and Google Docs. Mary also gives her time to the Metro Toronto Movement for Literacy and is a volunteer organizer for the upcoming International Learners' Conference later in the year.

The partnership between the learner and the instructor is a recurring theme in conversations with Mary and staff at PTP. "Students should know that the environment is very much student driven," says Lauren. "We are preparing the student for whatever is coming down the line. Most importantly, we ask the learner what is it that they want to do. We provide the materials and the guidance and the learner decides how they are spending their time." Shahina, another of Mary's teachers, concurs. "Mary came with a positive disposition and it was our job to provide a supportive learning environment. We provide a safe space free of judgement that allows for making connections to other learners."

Mary and Karin note that the support and collaboration echo beyond classwork. In the pandemic, PTP staff worked with learners to provide access to Chromebooks, support with internet costs, and deliveries of the Good Food Box from FoodShare. Mary was also going through a period of personal loss and recalls that each of the staff members with whom she works reached out to provide support and care. "I would encourage people to come to PTP because it's a wonderful place. It's a place where we learn, we grow, and we build our strengths. All the staff are very caring, warm and welcoming," she says. "It really helped me, especially when I had a big loss in April. Everyone called me. They were all checking in with us all the time to make sure we were fine."

Mary wants to continue learning and work part-time. "I like learning for its own sake and I see I can grow more," she says. When she came to PTP, the staff and instructors saw the potential in Mary and worked to provide opportunities to her. Mary took them on fully and sees herself as someone who has flourished. She says, "I realize I can do more than I think I can do."

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COVID AND ADULT CONTINUING EDUCATION BY WENDY TERRY

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Centennial College about Adults with Learning Disabilities. The adult is reaching out from their centre of interest to meet diverse needs.

It has got more complicated as many youths will pick up a course at the continuing education program at their home provider or another provider online, which is equivalent to one in their day time program. And adults can pick up a course in the day program as a special student or even go back to school full time to change careers. They also earn credits at different providers and transfer the credit back into their home provider.

So how do you do a story about such a mosaic? How have the providers in this mosaic changed their mode of delivering in this COVID world? Learning Curves has gone over back issues and updated and

reconfigured summary articles of each sector into charts to give you a whole picture of the adult continuing education field at universities, colleges, schools, community programs, career colleges. Then we noted most have gone online or just dropped courses till COVID is over.

Further it is important to note adult continuing education programs are run on a market basis more so than educational institutions competing for youth coming out of high school. You can do an academic upgrading course at universities, colleges, schools, community programs so it is not in the interest of any one provider to promote an overview of all providers or show you all your choices in the mosaic.

Learning Curves' mandate is to help adults go back to school, so we have a learner mandate, many of articles are overviews of choice. In Finland they have Learning

Information Centres for adults that do provide that overview of choice. Here we only have this type of service (CLARS Canada Language Assessment and Referral Services) for ESL programs, much needed as newcomers are new to our educational infrastructure so where to look is more of a challenge. Further online searches depend on using the right key word and being new to the language, this is a challenge.

Note Learning Curves and the Finnish Adult Learning Centres are projects of Workers' Educational Associations, another story.

Finally we would like to again assert the importance of adult continuing education and lament its lack of recognition. If you have 44,000 full time students each taking five courses, or at least three courses to be considered full time and 70,000 registrations for adults going part-time taking at least one course paying a bit of a premium per course, both student

bodies are key to the educational provider's survival and the adult student's development. Further using Ryerson stats, 44,000 students going full-time at a minimum of 3 courses each equals 132,000 registrations, the 70,000 registrations for adult continuing education students is more than half this. Even if 20% of these adult continuing education students decided not to go back doing online during COVID, the institutional finances would take a major hit. Consider during COVID some ESL classes have lost half their registrations after going online. Further with ESL, given that immigration has all but halted during COVID, the pool of newcomers for ESL programs will take another major hit. We need to give adult continuing education its due in the mainstream press-to make its significance more visible.

DISTANCE EDUCATION LEARNING ONLINE – THE “NEW NORMAL”

Learning outside of the classroom used to be considered an option, now it is to use today's phrasing the “new normal.”

High School

The Independent Learning Centre offers online credits courses for a high school diploma and used to be the only one that did. They are the exclusive provider of General Education Development testing, the GED, equivalent to a high school diploma. ILC is run from TVOntario 416-484-2704.

Colleges and community programs offer GED prep programs. GED testing gets one a high school equivalency certificate is often offered through the Apprenticeship Programs at Colleges.

But now all schools and colleges have been moving adult education online during COVID, as well as the education for children and youth education.

The Independent Learning Centre is now just only one online option.

College

www.learnontario.ca

Learn Ontario is a consortium of the 24 Ontario Community Colleges that have pooled their resources to increase online learning options. Learn Ontario was founded in 1995

and offered 75 courses. By 2014-2015 when Learning Curves Summer Issue 2016 did a story “Learning by Distance Education” there were 73,059 registrations and over 1,100 courses. In the 2018-2019 Annual report posted on the Learn Ontario website there were 80,278 registrations. Can you imagine how that number will sky rocket in their 2019-2020 report, the COVID era of online learning.

At one time online distance education courses were listed in a separate part of the calendar, now on the institution's website each course lists how it can be taken, in class, online, hybrid etc. Most were still in class but post COVID will most be online. Will in class courses be listed in a separate part of the calendar, the outliers as were online courses a couple of decades ago.

www.acedistancelearning.ca

You can take academic upgrading courses at colleges, community programs, adult schools. At schools they are often called Literacy Basic Skills or Essential Skills At colleges they are called ACE and you can do these online through the acedistancelearning website. The ACE

Certificate is recognized as equivalent to the OSSD (Ontario Secondary School Diploma), Just as passing the GED test at the Independent Learning Centre is equivalent to a high school diploma.

Pre COVID adults more often did ACE courses in class now the “new normal” is all online.

University

Canadian Virtual University

www.cvu.uvc.ca

In the Summer 2016 issue of Learning Curves, in an article titled “Learning by Distance Education” we referred our readers to the Canadian Virtual University site. CVU is (was) a group of nine universities that specialized in online distance education. Three years after we did the Summer 2016 issue CVU disbanded.

The member institutions of CVU decided the time had come to end the consortium, It was formed in 2000. CVU noted in June 2019 the there was now a plethora of choices with more and more institutions offering online credit distance education. And one year later in 2020 in the COVID era all are online, the “new normal.”

ADULT ED HOW TO FIND COMMUNITY PROGRAMS, CAREER COLLEGES, PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS.

The Universities, Colleges, and Schools charts in this Mosaic of Adult Education help you find the doors to specific programs at an educational institution. But how do find the many community programs, career colleges and professional associations who all offer courses but individually not within one large institution.

Community Associations.

There are many community programs in Toronto and the GTA. Ones who have supported Learning Curves, Skills for Change, PTP, Mothercraft, Learning Enrichment Foundation, Learning Disability Association Toronto and so on. The most comprehensive listing of community association programs can be found by googling 211 Toronto. Select Employment and Training and you are lead to a sub menu that includes: Academic Upgrading;

Apprenticeship; Career Counseling (Pathways); Employers Staffing Assistance; Internationally Trained Professionals; Job Search Support/Training; Newcomer Employment Programs; Older Workers; Self Employment/

Entrepreneurship; Work Experience and so on By clicking on any one of these and putting in your postal code you will be lead to community programs. As well you will find listing for colleges and government programs. If you keep clicking on the categories you will often seen the same community group as they offer a variety of programs .

Career Colleges

Career Colleges are private schools whereas Community Colleges like George Brown are public. You will often see ads for Career Colleges but to find a comprehensive listing of Career Colleges registered with the Ontario government you can look two places. Career Colleges must be registered with the Ontario government. There are over 400 Career Colleges.

The Career Colleges Ontario association lists their members but not all career colleges are members of the association. All must be registered with Ontario but here you must search by the name of the College there is no comprehension listing you can scan. As well, not

unlike 211 Toronto providers are not categorized by type of program offered either with the Association or the Ontario government so you must do more clicking, and scanning to get a comprehensive picture of the offerings of career colleges within a Mosaic for Adult Education.

There are two Ministries now that deal with adult education, the Ministry of Colleges and Universities and the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development. The Private Career College Search Program is with the Ministry of Colleges and Universities. On the Home page click on Education, College and Universities, then on the 2nd page click on Find A School, then on the 3rd page click on “go to a private college” on the 4th page click on Search for Private Career College. Choose suggested key words for program type in the Search program and it will pop up contacts for related schools located by your postal code.

Professional Associations

These are often overlooked when you try to picture the Mosaic for Adult Education. They offer courses and are often partnered with a college, university or career college. You do not have to be a fully accredited member to join most of them. You could be a computer professional from another country and join the Canadian Information Processing Society (CIPS)

More importantly they have job banks where employers post because they want a specific skill set like the ones CIPS members have. They have events that you can go to as a member or visitor where you meet professionals in your field to network for job openings yet to open up or be posted.

Most libraries have a hard copy of Associations Canada or an online copy. You can book a librarian for a hour to help you search this directory online. Using the right key word is key to finding relevant associations. If you using English as a new language this is difficult, book a librarian

UNIVERSITY

For the most part courses are offered online this fall. Call and find out.

	Part Time Undergraduate Degree programs Night school Weekends E-learning <i>These are credit programs so you have to be admitted and the best thing to do is talk to admission counselors.</i>	Ac Bridging to Credit studies <i>These programs help you qualify for university- bridge you in- even though you do not have the required credentials to be admitted.</i>	ESL <i>There are many ESL programs in Toronto but usually if you get a certain grade, the ones at the universities may exempt you from doing an English admissions test.</i>	Continuing Ed Post Degree <i>Usually you have to look up each faculty – full time listings- then enquire which ones offer a Continuing Education –post degree courses.</i>	Continuing Ed Open Admissions <i>These are some of the largest programs: Ryerson's G. Raymond Chang School; the University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies; York University's School of Continuing Studies.</i>	Bridging Programs for Internationally Educated Professionals	Seniors
University of Toronto	Woodsworth College Counselling available to get you started. Registrar's Office 416-978-4444	Woodsworth College Millie Rotman Shime Ac. Bridging academic.bridging@utoronto.ca	School of Continuing Studies English Language Program 416-979-5104	Check with each Faculty	School of Continuing Studies 416-978-2400 Campuses St.George Mississauga Scarborough	School of Continuing Studies Comparative Education Service International Professions 416-978-2400	Later Life Learning 416-978-4921
York University	Bennett Centre for Student Services Guidance available 416-872-9675	School of Continuing Studies Destination York 416-736-5353	School of Continuing Studies English Language Institute 416-736-5353	School of Continuing Studies 416-736-5616	School of Continuing Studies 416-736-5616	School of Continuing Studies English Language Institute Academic Program 416-736-5313	Tuition Free Degrees, for Seniors 60 plus
Ryerson University	Admissions 350 Victoria Admissions counseling at the Service Hub 416-979- 5036	Chang School Spanning the Gaps 426-979-5000 ext 2291	Chang School English as A Second or Additional Language 416-979-5000 ext 4196	Check with each Faculty	Chang School 416-979-5035	Chang School Gateway for International Professionals 416-979-5035	Programs for 50+ 416-979-5163

COLLEGES

For the most part courses are offered online this fall. Call and find out.

	Campuses	Part time Continuing Education	ESL	ACE Tuition free Academic upgrading	Second Career Funded programs for adults who have been laid off	Skilled Trades Apprenticeships	Pathways Latest word for career planning & PLAR
Durham	Oshawa Whitby	905-721-3052	English Language Centre 905-721-2000 ext 2355	905-721-3131	905-721-2000 ext 3219	905-721-3344	Career Development Office 905-721-3034
Centennial	Downsview Eglinton and Yonge East York, Scarborough: Progress, Ashtonbee Morningside	416-289-5300 or toll-free in Ontario 1-800-268-4419.	416-289-5000, ext 2122 or ext 2500	416 289-5000 ext 7022	416-289-5123	Ashtonbee & Downsview Campus 416-289-5004 Progress Campus 416-289-5000, ext 2356	416-289-5123
Seneca	King, Markham Newham, York U Downtown, Vaughan, Yorkgate	416-491-5050 ext 22529	416-491-5050 ext 77337	416-491-5050 ext 44750 autestbooking@senecacollege.ca For youth 416-491-5050 ext 44762 irene.demian1@senecacollege.ca	Office of the Registrar 416-493-4144	Newham 416-491-5050 ext 22718	416-491-5050-26464
George Brown	Casa Loma St. James Waterfront	416-415-5000 ext 2756	416-415-5000 ext 2654	416-415-5000 ext 3560	416-415-5000 Ext 3372	416-415-5000 ext 6711	416-415-5000 ext 2107
Humber	North Lakeshore Orangeville	416-675-3111 1-877-675-5660	416-675-6622 ext 73359	416-767-6622 ext 74842	416-675-8521	416-675-85217 ext 8038	416-675-6622 ext 74236
Sheridan	Davis, Mississauga Hazel McCallum, Oakville Trafalgar	905-845-9430	905-459-7533 ext 5156	Brampton Davis Campus 905-450-7533,ext 5440 Oakville STC Campus 905-846-9430 ext 5052	905-845-9430 ext 2929	905-845-9430	905-459-7533 ext 5204
				See Learning Curves Winter 2019 Issue Afraid to Go Back to School, Academic Upgrading Programs will Help You.		See Learning Curves Spring 2020 Issue Why is an Apprenticeship So Hard to Find- How can we help you find one	

**GO ONLINE TO SEE THE CHART OF PROGRAMS OFFERED AT SCHOOLS IN THE GTA.
WWW.LEARNING-CURVES.ORG/2020SCHOOLCHART**



BENNETT MITCHELL'S JOURNEY FROM PROBATION TO LAW CAREER

A SHORT STORY BY MINA WONG

Bennett Mitchell was certainly a straight shooter when we first met at the building supplies distributor where he worked. He always looked directly at people when speaking with them. A person of few words, he would help customers with "Yes, that'd be aisle 4", or "No, sorry we're out of stock right now". He would never beat around the bush.

But everyone liked Bennett's mild manners, and customers could always count on his help. He could explain clearly how to use a product; when something was unavailable, he would try ordering it from head office.

That's the Bennett Mitchell I have known ever since we first met. After that, I definitely learned more about him, especially one day last year, when we could talk for a while during a quiet afternoon at the store.

That day, Bennett surprised me with his plan to study law. "Not law school. Licensed paralegal. Two years."

Up till then, my knowledge was that at age twenty-two, Bennett had gone from Georgetown, Guiana to British Columbia. That day, he was able to tell me that after adult high school near Vancouver, he worked for several years in maintenance services at Langara College, with intense hopes to study there. While applying to college programs,

he met Cheyenne, a chef on Granville Island, and soon, the two were married.

Happy at first, he and Cheyenne soon argued every day. Bennett began to feel estranged from Cheyenne, especially when she rejected his college plans in favor of starting a restaurant.

Furthermore, Cheyenne told Bennett he was too old to be a student. "You're twenty-nine and I'm thirty-one. School is for kids, not people like us!"

When Cheyenne stormed out after one volatile quarrel, Bennett also took a break in Toronto where he saw new opportunities with fresh eyes. But in convincing Cheyenne that TO had promising prospects for her, he was devastated by an ultimatum: "Come back right this minute or you'll never see me again!"

Accepting irreconcilable differences, the pair separated later that year. But Bennett stayed in Toronto, moved into a rooming house, and held down a roofing job until an unfortunate run-in with the law.

"I just minded my own business, but a neighbor bugged me every day to sell stolen goods with him. I told him no. He still said his car had stuff worth thousands, wouldn't I just take a peek."

Not fully realizing what he was doing,

Bennett found himself peering into his neighbor's car. "I just looked! A camera inside flashed me so blind I ran and fell."

Bennett was arrested, and charged with attempted theft, followed by a thirty-day sentence. The court admitted as evidence an incriminating snapshot of his face pressed against the backseat window, and his fingerprints on the car door.

During the first few days behind bars, Bennett was so distraught that he stopped eating. "I just wanted to wake up from a bad dream."

Then he met with someone introduced as "Mrs. Cardinal, probation officer". She asked Bennett about previous offenses, his current employment, and what he would do with his life if given a second chance.

"I would work hard, pay my taxes, pay my bills, and never get mixed up again with thieves", he said, sobbing hysterically. "I am so sad right now. I can't sleep, can't eat, can't work. I am a terrible mess!"

Later that week, Mrs. Cardinal's letter released Bennett, but placed him on probation under her supervision, and to work for ninety days as a laborer at construction sites. Toward the end of three months, Mrs. Cardinal referred Bennett to a social

service agency that helped him find work.

With a new job in building supplies, Bennett worked his way up from the mailroom to the front desk. Last year, he also applied to college programs in legal studies, social work, and even correctional services.

Bennett's first college admission letter came from a law program uptown. Beaming with pride, he vowed to build a "real career" as licensed paralegal alongside lawyers. He looked forward to helping people with legal issues around housing, employment, wrongful convictions, and family mediation – all of which had already given Bennett some insight through personal experience.

Summer 2020 marks Bennett's second year in college. In a year, it would be wonderful to hear that the Ontario Law Society had gained a new member: Bennett Mitchell, licensed paralegal.

Personally, the Bennett Mitchell I know is a fearless lifelong learner. Honest about setbacks, he turns obstacles into assets by humbly examining what he can learn and how he can improve himself to achieve personal best. Gentle and soft-spoken, he is in truth, a resolute defender of self-efficacy, success, and good citizenship.

LIVING IN UNCERTAIN TIMES

BY A. KERR

Ever since the coronavirus came into our lives, we have changed in how we work, play, worship and shop. Many procedures and guidelines have been put in place to support us. We have to wear masks and social distance when we visit or enter public spaces. As I write this (end July, 2020), most of us have followed regulations to stay home/indoors or safely in place for the past four and a half months.

We need to get updated information to keep current and to know what is happening in the communities. This current Covid-19 pandemic of uncertain times is not a "me" situation. It is like an ecosystem community. We need other individuals to form a support system.

We are asked to obey the rules and to follow the guidelines by wearing masks in indoor spaces and to practice social distance. There is a great amount of stress involved in navigating all these rules. I wear a mask to enter indoor public spaces when I go shopping.

However, some individuals cannot wear masks because of claustrophobia or for health reasons. This can cause confusion and drama. This is because people get scared when someone enters a public indoor space without a face covering and they do not social distance. It might seem to be rude but it would also be strange for someone to keep repeating, "I am claustrophobic and I also have a health problem, or I have a breathing problem." When the drama or misunderstanding develops, we have to know how to control the dialogue, or we can get into trouble.

I am slowly adjusting to these uncertain times. I have relaxed, cleaned, disinfected and put some things in order. There is always some activity or household chore to do.

I am adjusting to the uncertain upheaval but I dislike wearing a mask and covering up my face.

Summer is here and it is uncomfortable to have my face covered in the sweltering heat. However, I also know that the benefits and safety of wearing a face covering outweighs my personal discomfort.

The Covid-19 pandemic may be stressful, but it has also brought some positive happenings to the forefront. Some of these everyday activities were already in force.

These activities are needed for our daily lives or decision-making. For example, online shopping, food ordering, electronic banking, virtual doctor/telehealth, pharmaceutical (medication ordering and delivery), virtual/online classes and online/remote (stay-at-home) work/job.

There are pros and cons in all the changes and decisions we make, or will make, after the Covid-19 pandemic. This pandemic could create positive or negative situations in our lives.

I have not felt any negative impact because of the coronavirus. There are continuing developments which require constantly monitoring and reporting of new cases of the virus. This is also making the uncertainty a bit alarming because the Premier is calling for a Phase 3 reopening. (Ed. : on July 20, Premier Ford stated that Toronto will stay in Phase 2 for at least one more week.)

A. Kerr is a student in University in the Community. UitC and this newspaper are projects of the Workers' Educational Association. For information about UitC, email: universityinthecommunity@gmail.com



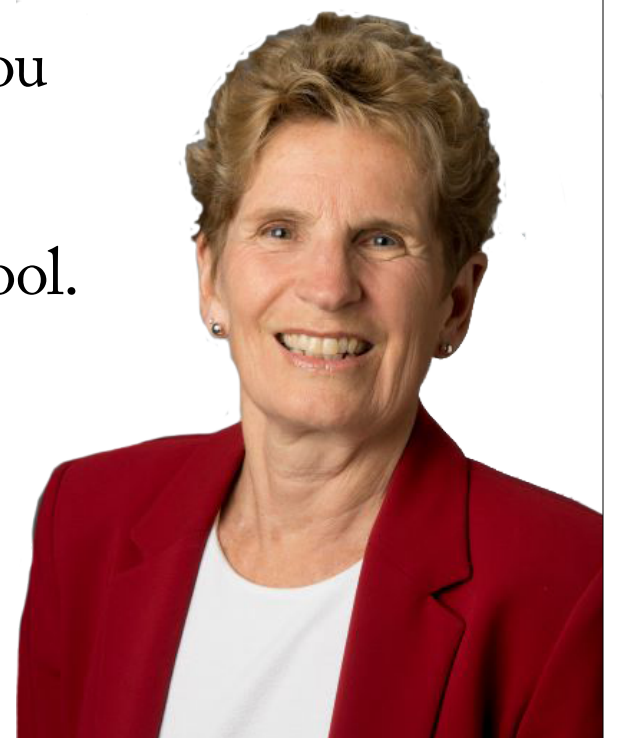
Kathleen Wynne

Member of Provincial Parliament
Don Valley West

Wishing you
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Going Back to School Is Different This Year. Public schools are critical part of our democracy and the fabric of our Canadian Society.

I wish all students, educators and support staff a safe and happy return to their school in September.



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www.kathleenwynne.onmpp.ca

ONLINE TEACHING AND LEARNING IN SOCIAL & COMMUNITY SERVICES

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit, full-time education took a dramatic shift toward remote solutions. But continuing education instructors such as Marion Watt, who had already been teaching online for years, hardly missed a step.

“The biggest change for me was taking on a more supportive role with some of the students, especially those who had been in front line jobs. Letting the students know that we could work toward their goals together, not to give up, and that they were not alone.”

Marion reinforces that “online learning benefits a learner who is balancing working full-time and a family. They can do it on their schedule during the period of the course and they can also work ahead. One of the most important things any online learner needs to know is that you must be organized and focused. When it comes to mindset, you have to move away from comparing it to the in-class experience. It is not the same, you can’t sit in the back of the class during discussions and avoid being asked a question. Pretty much everything you do is graded and the instructor cannot grade what they don’t receive. It is important to establish a rapport with the instructor, they can help!”

Marion Watt, BAA, BEd
Professor - Police Foundations
Program (On-line)/Program Coordinator
- Private Investigations Certificate
Humber College

The nation-wide shutdown brought new challenges for students trying to navigate online learning: some were parents homeschooling their children, others were front line workers with increased hours, and still others struggled with limited connectivity. Many students have been impacted by shutdowns and not able to work. Program Instructor Chad Marson would say that “online teaching has given students the opportunity to continue being productive while making positive contributions to their education during these uncertain times. Learning new skills is an excellent way to think about careers they may have never considered before.”

To help make the shift from learning in-class to learning online, Humber College has developed the Online Learning Kit to help full-time and part-time students succeed. The kit includes “Preparing for Online Learning”, “Program & Project-Based Resources” and “Communicating and Collaborating Online”. This kit, along with the support of the Online Learning Centre, help bridge any gaps for students in online learning.

Chad Marson, Program
Instructor and Coordinator
Cyber Crime Specialist, Criminal
Intelligence Analysis, Border and
Immigration Services, Humber College

Shane Cunningham, Program Coordinator,
Human Services, explains that “the primary

difference that I have noticed in terms of teaching online is the need to adjust lecture notes to be more robust, ensuring that examples, and further explanation that would have otherwise been shared aloud in class, are now detailed in a visual format. I have prided myself on being accommodating to student needs over my years of teaching, and that has not changed as we’ve transitioned online.”

“One assignment required students to engage in a role-play counselling session with a friend or family member, but a particular student didn’t have access to another adult to work with. I developed a unique assignment for her that allowed for the same outcomes to be met, but done on an independent basis.

“Overall, students were very open with communicating their needs and limitations, which was key. Online learning gives the flexibility to continue studies on top of the added pressures of a pandemic, while we give the adaptability to ensure that they have every opportunity to be successful while doing it.

Quick leaps in embracing new technologies have allowed for faculty-crafted and inspired program development. The push towards leveraging online resources, aligns with shifts seen in the current marketplace. As trends move toward reaching out to individuals and communities via remote technologies, new online programs, like “Crisis Intervention & Trauma Supports” have been developed to fill needs

that have grown out of the Covid-19 crisis.

“The current crisis has certainly helped inform the learning outcomes for this program. Research is showing us already that the impact of this pandemic, including isolation, loss of routine, loss of income, and restricted access to supports and services, has dramatically impacted our mental well-being. We are experiencing what is considered a ‘communal trauma’, and this program addresses that specifically.”

Crisis intervention is definitely an area that will be necessary well beyond the pandemic. Mental health and well-being will always play an important role in people’s lives.

“As we continue to see the lasting impact of COVID-19, more job opportunities will become available across social and community services fields – since we know that the trauma stays with us and the experience of a crisis doesn’t just go away.”

Shane Cunningham, BA (Hons), MRes
Program Coordinator, Human Services
Partial-Load Faculty & Curriculum
Development, Humber College

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CAN'T FIND THE SPRING ISSUE OF LEARNING CURVES? GO ONLINE!

Learning Curves, along with many of its partners in education and community services, were affected by COVID-19 and we had to make the difficult decision to skip our Summer issue. This was inevitable as our Spring issue was affected by closures and we could not effectively complete our distribution of the paper to many of our locations around the GTA. While many of our articles are now online at

www.learning-curves.org, we would be happy to send you a hard copy of the paper if you contact us with your address at: learningcurves@hotmail.com. We thank all of our readers for your continued support. We hope that you will look for us in all the usual places this fall, and in the future, when our distribution will increase as the province becomes more accessible. We hope you are staying healthy and safe.

BE SEEN NOT SCREENED

BY LISA TRUDEL

Do you know the new formula for job interviews? It is: Remote technology plus COVID-19 equals virtual hiring.

If you are seeking a professional position, your next job interview will probably be via a video conferencing platform such as Zoom or WebEx. Instead of resisting this change, learn how Human Resources are using online interviews to reduce hiring time, make consistent decisions and identity potential.

Less than one year ago, interview tips would have included: shake hands politely yet firmly, look the employer straight in the eyes, and wear a smile. Today the only tip that has not changed is to smile! Now that we are in the COVID-19 era, here are 3 pointers to help boost your interviewing skills:

1) Check your technology: become familiar with your mobile device, cellphone or laptop and a webcam that you will be using for your interview. Practice interviewing with 10 friends or connect with a Career Coach to conduct a mock interview. Become confident with technology. It is as important as your smile!

2) Create a Perfect Interview Environment: learn how to be impressive on camera. Borrow advice from professional TV actors and broadcasters by starting with your lighting. Your background lighting should be in front not behind you. If you are sitting in front of a window during the daytime, close the curtains to prevent heavy back lighting.

Next, ensure that your background is not distracting. Find a quiet area in your home away from noise. If the only room you have is your bedroom or kitchen understand that these are not acceptable backgrounds, so look for another space. For example, if you own a car you might want to set yourself up in the drivers' seat. Just don't be

driving! You are guaranteed to be remembered by the interviewer! You can also consider creating a digital background if your laptop allows it.

Think about when you are watching the news and you want to listen to a COVID-19 medical professional but they are sitting in what appears to be a basement and all you are doing is checking out what is in behind them instead of listening to the message. This is the same thing an interviewer will do. Try to create a perfect environment if you want to achieve a perfect interview.

3) Prepare Like Any Other Interview: this is still a job interview so rehearse and practice. Create answers to standard questions, prepare questions to ask the interviewer and dress for success even if it is from the waist up! Have your "after-the-interview" items ready to email: your reference list and a thank you message.

Prepare for a new time length. Online interviews can be as short as 15 minutes since they are platforms that are easier for employers to access you. Second interviews that evaluate your keyboarding speed and communication skills are common now, so a question you can ask is "will there be a second interview and is there anything I can prepare?"

Be sure to smile and say thank you. That part has not changed in our new era of virtual hiring.

To find out more about how you can improve your interview skills, contact your local Employment Ontario Career Centre. There is a new formula for interviews so make sure you are seen and not screened!

This article was written by Lisa Trudel, Career Specialist with the Centre for Education and Training. You can contact her at: ltrudel@tcet.com

LEARNINGCURVES

Learning Curves has changed. We've been hard at work behind the scenes creating an even better website experience for our readers!

The learning-curves.org site has been 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 is more mobile friendly.

You'll have free access to all of our content, updated frequently, with access to the archives as well.

We will continue to update the site so visit often. We will be updating the progress on our twitter feed in the coming weeks.

Would you like to post an ad on one of the .org site's page?

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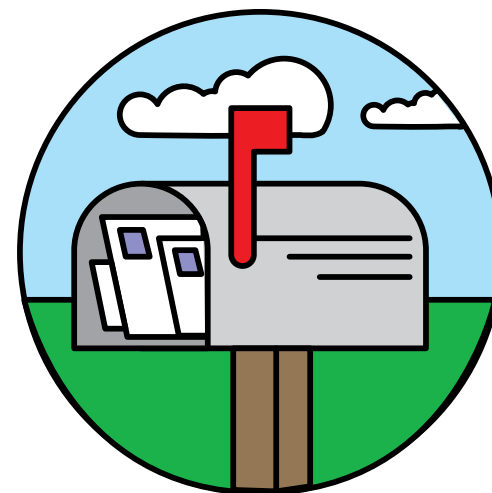
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Dear Elcee

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:

*2020 has been my worst year yet! I am a recent college graduate with a degree in English and was hoping to go on to do a Masters degree. I have not been able to find work to save money towards going back to University. The pandemic has put my life on hold and I am not feeling optimistic about the future. Do you have any words of wisdom for me?
Feeling Hopeless in Halton Hills*

Dear Feeling Hopeless:

I certainly agree that 2020 is a year that will go down in history books. While, It does feel like the world has been put in a holding pattern this is not the first time in history that people have experienced the world shutting down.

Looking back in history we can see that there have been many instances of great uncertainty in the world order through either war or pandemics. I recently was going through the government archives (archives.gov) and there are many letters and recollections that young people wrote to each other expressing fear about the future during the 1918 Spanish Flu pandemic. One can also refer back to writings during the Second World War. There were young men going off to war with their studies interrupted along with women going into the work place for the first time.

What can we learn from this? Great events bring about great change. The Spanish Flu pandemic forced advances in workers rights because, as we are seeing today, the importance of essential workers cannot be easily dismissed. Due to the losses of working age men from both World War 1 and the Spanish Flu more women than ever entered the workforce. This lead to changes both economically, and eventually, politically for women. At the same time, education and business life shifted dramatically during both the Spanish Flu pandemic and World War 11.

I wish I had a crystal ball to tell you when but I don't have one. I believe that we are in this for at least another two years. We need a vaccine and then we need to roll out a vaccine. Not just nationally but internationally

for trade to get back to a "new" normal.

What can job seekers do in the meantime? Remember, you are not alone. This current economic situation is affecting everyone so don't take it personally. Employers won't. In the meantime, use this time to look at upgrading as many skills as you possibly can. There is a vast selection of online courses you can access. Look at upgrading any software or technology programs you might want to add to your resume. (Check out Alison.com) I would also highly recommend taking free Health and Safety courses online. One that I have found is CCOHS.CA (Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety). They even offer free Coronavirus safety programs and Pandemic planning. Adding this to your resume can reassure your future employer that you are serious about ensuring a safe workplace for all.

Don't dismiss retail and customer service positions. Although these jobs may not be on your "dream job" list, there is a lot to gain by being in the workplace. Look for opportunities, when possible, to take on leadership roles to show what you can do.

Remember, this too shall pass. In the meantime, stay safe, wear a mask and practice social (but not emotional) distancing.

*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.*



Toronto Education Workers/Local 4400 supports Adult Education programs offered by the Toronto District School Board (including but not limited to):

- **Essential Skills Upgrading**
- **ESL/LINC Programs**
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along with many more, for more information visit:
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