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CAREER FAIRS: WHAT THEY ARE AND WHY THEY MATTER

BY LISA TRUDEL

From March 2020 until mid-2022, almost all local Career Fairs, Job Expos, Information Sessions and Hiring Events became virtual or were postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Now, many of these events are in-person again. Recently I was sent 3 questions about Job Fairs: Should I attend? Is it worth it? What are the benefits of attending?

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Photo by Evangeline Shaw on Unsplash

IS HIGH-QUALITY SELF-EDUCATION POSSIBLE?

BY IRYNA PALTSEVA

Over the past 200 hundred years, the world has changed so dramatically that the human brain can sometimes not comprehend it. Changes, not in any specific order, have included the Internet, the light bulb, antibiotics, the television, the cellphone and the discovery of DNA.

Many people however, still use their childhood habits when it comes to learning. They might still watch a television show instead of going to YouTube, and they might still physically go to the Public Library to read a dusty book or they might still use a pen to write a letter instead of sending a text or email.

The developments in technology, during the last 10 years specifically, has created a whole new set of occupations and a whole new type of specialist. Along with these career changes, the approach to learning and education has changed.

In the past, adult learners would sit passively in a traditional classroom format with a teacher or University professor commanding everyone from the front of the room with informative but sometimes dull lectures. Grades were

often secured through structured timed exams without any group interaction, chat rooms or self-directed learning to a Wikipedia page.

Digital technology has changed not only teaching methods and learning styles, but also how and where an adult learner can be educated. In the past, international students in Canada would have to fly across the globe, to spend years at an expensive college. Now an international student who lives outside of Canada can join a Toronto classroom if they are aware of the time differences of their classes, and still don't mind paying international tuition fees.

However, whether an international student or a Canadian-born student, everyone can enjoy learning by accessing the many free online learning sites that are available through sites such as coursera or LinkedIn Learning. For example, Harvard, Cambridge, MIT, the University of Toronto, and other educational institutions offer excellent free, and sometimes fee-based, online courses. Knowledge has indeed ceased to be something that is privileged. Technology has allowed accessibility to anyone with a

laptop, a connection to the internet, advanced English abilities and the willingness to learn.

The question is, if learning is now so much more accessible, then why aren't the streets of Toronto filled with self-taught millionaires?

The answer might be that people can still be slaves to their traditional habits. Adapting to technology and learning independently are not learning styles that everyone can manage or want to manage. Also, many occupations in Canada are regulated which means requiring a serious set of degrees and credentials that can take many years to acquire. Canada is crying for Registered Nurses but this occupation requires a 4-year University Degree.

However, the good news for many people is that not all occupations are regulated. An example of this is the field of Information Technology. This is a career that adjusts to the needs of society, and if IT Professionals keep their skills current they can find employment. The magic words are "keeping current". IT does have an expiry date and what you learn one year can be outdated in 4 years. Many

self-taught people have appeared in the IT sector recently and within a few years can make a reasonable wage, however they will need to keep their knowledge current and up-to-date.

In summary, self-education really can work for some people, and it can open doors for many who do not want to study regulated occupations. Yet it is not a panacea or solution for everyone. Not everyone can organize themselves to master a profession without additional motivation such as specific grades, a teacher to keep them on track, or opportunities for self-achievement through scholarships. However, for the person who does not want to go into educational debt, self-education might be an ideal solution.

The stories of many self-educated people prove that successful self-learning is possible! Of course, this does not apply to all sectors. It is impossible to become a lawyer, doctor or teacher without studying at a University. Yet, if you are thinking of changing careers and dream of learning, start 2023 by Googling "free online courses in Toronto" and you might surprise yourself. If you love to learn, you can learn by taking the first steps into the exciting world of self-education.

This article was written by Iryna Paltseva. She is a Ukrainian Freelance Writer who relocated to Canada under the CUET Visa (Canadian-Ukrainian Authorization for Emergency Travel). Iryna is re-establishing her writing career and you can contact her at: irasbel3@gmail.com



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A QUEEN PASSED FROM THIS WORLD

BY OSMAN OZSOY



During my trip to London in June 2022, while walking in front of Buckingham Palace, I suddenly stopped and looked at the palace from a distance for a while. You know, there is a saying that if stones could speak, who knows what they would say... That came to my mind. None of us will ever know what this beautiful palace witnessed over its 300 years.

Indeed, a few days ago, Queen Elizabeth II's platinum jubilee was held here. The decorations were still up, the horseshoe marks left by the horses on the ground were still there.

As I looked at the palace, I thought of

Queen Elizabeth who lived there. Despite her 96 years, her energy and determined work ethic came to my mind. It was that aspect that everyone appreciated the most.

Life is full of lessons for those who want to learn.

You know, we have a saying that horses die standing. It means they complete their lives by running until their last breath. As a matter of fact, one of the last to see the Queen from outside the palace was Prime Minister Liz Truss, who came to The Queen's last pose to the world was standing. She was at her post and she was smiling as always. From time to time, there

are questionnaires on social media that ask which fruit or animal you identify with. We do not know, perhaps this was one reason for the Queen's special passion and interest in horses. Running and working until the last moment.

My friend Irep said that when her seven-year-old daughter returned from school, she told her the Queen was dead. Suddenly her eyes widened as she asked what would happen to the Queen's dogs now. Perhaps this is one reason why she was so loved and respected by every generation from 7 to 70. Everyone found in her something with which she connected with her.

My niece, who lives in Berlin, went on WhatsApp to inform her elderly mother, who lives in Istanbul, that Elizabeth had died. When her mother asked "Which Elizabeth?" she responded by asking her mother, "How many Elizabeths do you know in this world?" "Oh my God, is the Queen dead?" her mother gasped.

Queen Elizabeth II was not just queen of the people of the Commonwealth Nations; she was the world's most famous woman and also its queen. Her name was respected by all world leaders, regardless of regime. She wasn't just the queen of 56 countries and a population of nearly 2.5 billion. She was also a foster mother who wanted to keep her family together.

She wanted to keep it under her control without skipping any detail until her last breath. It can be said that her high sense of responsibility may even be one of the reasons why she was bestowed with longevity.

She was a stylish woman. Whatever she wore suited her. In May 2013, at the age of 87, she chose to take the train with her then-92-year-old husband, Prince Philip, during a visit to the town of Cambridge. She had not positioned herself above the people like a courtier. Her image touched everyone and was accessible to everyone. I have told this example to young people a lot in my lectures at university.

Fifteen Prime Ministers appointed. She was only 26 years old when she gave the post of prime minister to Churchill, the most powerful Prime Minister of the 20th century. It is not easy to be queen for 70 years and to continue in office without losing any of your reputation. She went down in history as the head of state who had seen the most countries in the world.

A queen passed from this world. She left a pleasant voice behind. assume the post of Prime Minister.

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CAREER FAIRS: WHAT THEY ARE AND WHY THEY MATTER

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The answer is in the following 10 points:

• **Understand what Career Fairs and Hiring Events are.**

Career Fairs are multi-sector recruiting events that are very common in Canada. Some of the exhibitors will be employers with available jobs and there will also be local community organizations promoting their job search and resettlement programs. These events are usually funded by for-profit companies and supported by non-profit organizations and can be an excellent source of networking and meeting with potential employers.

• **Dress for success.**

Dress in business casual attire just like you would when attending a one-to-one job interview. Ensure that your visual image is professional and do not carry a big, bulky bag since you will need your hands free to shake hands or collect business cards.

• **Prepare your general resume.**

Bring lots of printed copies of your resume and demonstrate your organizational expertise by keeping them in a folder or envelope. Everything is part of your visual professional image.

• **Research the companies who will be in attendance.**

Try to find out which employers will be at the Career Fair and check their websites before

you arrive. Employers can be impressed by your knowledge of what they do and their available jobs you are qualified for.

• **Prepare a 30-second introduction.**

Employers might ask “Who are you and why are you here?” Be prepared to promote yourself with a short introduction or “elevator speech”. Introduce yourself with your name and what city or country you have recently relocated from if you are new to Toronto. Mention your expertise and what sets you apart from others. For example, you could say:

“Hello. My name is Jane Smith and I recently moved to Toronto from Vancouver. I am searching for a job similar to what I had in the past. I speak 3 languages, have excellent customer service skills and advanced database management skills. I am interested in re-establishing my career and appreciate this chance to talk with you. I saw on your website that you are seeking a Communications Coordinator. Are you accepting applications today or holding on-the-spot interviews?”

By ending your elevator speech with a question, you are opening up the conversation.

• **Watch your manners.**

Be friendly, stand up straight, don't chew gum, don't fidget, don't sway from side to side, don't play with your hair, don't smell like sweat or cigarette smoke, don't act distracted and don't be on your phone when talking

with an employer. Instead, be calm, have a bright smile, use a confident tone of voice, be interested in the person you are speaking to and say thank you at the end of a conversation. Always try to make a good first impression.

• **Be aware that Career Fairs are not social events.**

Do not fall into the mistake of interacting on a social level and forgetting you are being judged on your potential to function in a work setting. Job Fairs, Career Expos and Hiring Events are professional networking forums, not personal gatherings.

• **Have an open mind:** You might have 3 employers on your target list, however if you have extra time take advantage of the opportunity to talk with other employers who are not busy. You might be surprised to learn something and at the very least you are practicing initiating a conversation in a less formal business environment which is an essential skill in the Canadian workplace.

• **Appreciate that you will be evaluated on more than your resume:** Often your resume is the only thing an employer sees to determine whether or not to interview you. At a Career Fair you have an opportunity to stand out from the crowd. Communication skills and workplace-appropriate skills are critical in the workplace and many employers evaluate these skills very

seriously because they want to hire staff who can make a good impression with their customers.

• **Provide a memorable goodbye:** If you have an on-the-spot interview or if you meet an employer you really want to connect with, be prepared to ask relevant questions regarding the next step in the recruitment process. Take initiative and follow-up when you get home by sending a thank you email with your resume. Always ask for a business card to ensure you have the correct email. Everyone likes to be thanked and this will show that you really want to work with them. It will also start an email thread that will hopefully lead to you securing a job with an employer that you connected with at the Career Fair.

In summary, attending a Career Fair can be worth it if you understand the benefits and your own expectations of what will happen. Use these 10 points to enhance your knowledge so even if you leave without a job, you leave with new information and inspiration about networking which is the #1 way of securing employment. To find out more about networking, contact your local Employment Ontario funded Career Centre and find out if you meet the criteria to use their free services.

This article was written by Lisa Trudel, Career Specialist with Achève at 100 Lombard Street in downtown Toronto. You can contact Lisa at ltrudel@achev.ca

CAN'T FIND THE SUMMER ISSUE OF LEARNING CURVES? GO ONLINE.

Learning Curves along with many of its partners in education and community services, has been affected by COVID-19. Our Fall issue drop-sites continue to be affected. Unfortunately, we cannot effectively cover our usual distribution of the paper: a print run of over 16,000 located at over 650 sites in Toronto and the GTA.

We would be happy to send you hard copies of the Spring issue or drop them off. Simply contact us at learningcurves@hotmail.com.

We thank all our readers, and our advertisers without whose support Learning Curves could not have existed for the past 20+ years. Look for us in all the usual places as the province opens up. Many of our back issues are online at www.learningcurves.org

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

LEARNINGCURVES

WHAT A NIGHT!

UNIVERSITY IN THE COMMUNITY HOSTS AN EVENING WITH THE CO-AUTHORS OF *VALLEY OF THE BIRDTAIL: AN INDIAN RESERVE, A WHITE TOWN AND THE ROAD TO RECONCILIATION*

BY JOANNE MACKAY-BENNETT



On December 7th, the students of University in the Community (UitC) hosted an evening with the co-authors of the recently-published book, *Valley of the Birdtail: An Indian Reserve, A White Town, and the Road to Reconciliation*. The event was held at Innis Town Hall and in the spirit of our UitC program, it was free and open to the public.

With the backdrop of an eye-catching poster designed by our brilliant Andrew Oliver (president of the Workers' Educational Association of Canada - WEA, the non profit organization that initiated UitC in 2003), audience members settled in before UitC student, Nenke, opened the event with the land acknowledgement. She reminded the crowd

and Akosua both received their law degrees at U of T and both were students of Douglas Sanderson who is an associate professor at U of T's Faculty of Law. Andrew is a working journalist, Akosua is a practicing lawyer and Douglas teaches law and holds the Prichard Wilson Chair in Law and Public Policy.

In conversation with the moderator, the co-authors responded to probing questions in a manner that was both passionate and articulate. The book charts the course of the human histories of two neighbouring but deeply-unequal communities, one settler Canadian (largely Ukrainian) who live on one side of the valley in Rosscorbin Manitoba, and one indigenous community who live on the opposite side of the valley on a reserve called Waywayseecappo. At times, the overwhelming tragedy, racism, and unending inequity and division is hard to read. I, like many others, had to take breaks in between reading just to catch my breath. But without giving too much away, in what seems like an impossibility, a ray of hope appears when both communities come to



thank you to the panelists on behalf of UitC students and the audience. He thanked them for writing the book, for their honest telling of the Canada's appalling history of racism towards Indigenous Peoples. Racism is a disease, Ali said, one that he has witnessed first-hand.

And yet... there we all were, together, on an evening where the speakers had us in their thrall, enlightened by the book's truth, taking one step closer to our long journey to cross that historical valley.

University in the Community is a small, free, non-credit program that offers university-level classes to adults who have a passion for learning, especially those who face barriers to post-secondary education. We are a project of the Workers' Educational Association of Canada and receive support from U of T's Faculty of Arts and Science, Innis College and Senior College.

Does this sound like a program you would like to join? We meet weekly on Wednesday evening. Our Winter term starts at the end of January, 2023. Drop us a line! E: universityintbecommunity@gmail.com



that although we are all immigrants or refugees to Canada, we are also all newcomers. Others - Anishnaabeg, Haudenosaunee, Chippewa, Mississaugas of the Credit, and Huron-Wendat peoples - were in Tkaronto at least 15,000 years ago. It is our responsibility to honour their land, the presence of First Nations people, and the spirit of the 'Dish with One Spoon' treaty. After welcoming the audience members and giving a brief introduction to UitC's history and its purpose, Joanne, UitC's program coordinator, introduced co-authors Andrew Stobo Sniderman, Douglas Sanderson (Amo Binashii), and the evening's moderator, Akosua Matthews. The three panelists have such exceptional biographies (and they're still young!) that it was not easy to choose what to include and what to eliminate. Briefly, Andrew

realize that in order to make a small step towards reconciliation, they, themselves, must be the bridge. Change is possible but it takes leadership and an understanding that giving up something today can lead to mutual gains in the future. Reconciliation, we were reminded, is not a short-term project; it is a generational undertaking. This superbly-researched and beautifully-written book brings newfound clarity, and hope, to the question: Can Indigenous Peoples and non-Indigenous Canadians live side by side as equals? It asks whether non-Indigenous Canadians care enough about Indigenous Peoples to think beyond themselves and to ask: What can I do, what must I do, to turn my mirror into a doorway? At the close of the event, Ali, one of the students who attends UitC, gave a heartfelt

Top Left: Joanne, UitC coordinator, welcomes the audience to our UitC author talk on December 7

Top Right: Roy, a UitC student, was an energetic 'mic runner' for the event

Bottom Left: No better panelists than these three: L-R: Moderator Akosua Matthews, co-author Douglas Sanderson (Amo Binashii), and co-author Andrew Stobo Sniderman

Bottom Right: Poster designed by Andrew Oliver

Photo Credit: Osman OzsoyPhotos: Osman Ozsoy Poster: Andrew Oliver



MINI MBA'S, MICRO-CREDENTIAL NEW WAYS TO GET UP TO SPEED BY WENDY TERRY

The front page article of the Winter 2022 issue of Learning Curves titled "Micro Credentials The Next 'Big Thing' in Adult Learning" described a new type of certification. www.learningcurves.org Now I see the Globe and Mail in the November 23rd 2022 Business Section had an article titled "Mini MBA's are a time-friendly way for professionals to boost skills" described a new type of graduate studies certification.

Both of these, micro credentials and mini MBA's, are marketed to would be adult learners as a way to get a specific skill needed in a cost efficient and timely way. You do not have to pay for a full course or series of courses or spend the time to take them, in order to just earn a specific skill or gain a specific area of knowledge. to get a credit to show on your skill set listing or resume.

Seeking a specific skill or area of knowledge is especially true to continue to be digital literate. To be digital literate, it used to be knowing Microsoft Office, then analytics and big data, now it is about communication across sectors to make sure you are not siloed. See the Globe and Mail in the November 23rd 2022 Business Section, an article titled. "Industry leaders must be able to talk tech."

Having read news about the latest data release from Canada's 2021 census, I learned we have the highest percentage of citizens with post secondary education in the G7. So that could explain the market for micro and mini, as many adults want a specific skill set or area of knowledge not another full under graduate degree or post graduate degree. They want an education package that does not take up a lot time and money to earn that specific skill set or area of knowledge

Having gone back to school in the early 1970's most of my fellow students had not even completed high school, so we were willing to put the time and money in to get a Certificate, a Diploma, a BA. Most of us went part time evening, forever, it seemed to get that certification. Now you find that adults are more willing to invest going back full time day as the labour market will now reward them for getting that full credential. There is also more student funding. For those who already have an accepted credential, and there are many, adding a specific skill or knowledge area is then what they would be willing to pay for.

The Canada census data noted that partly what drove us to having a high rate of degree holders was that many newcomers had a degree as they are given priority for entry, based on level of education. But do we reward them for that in the labour market, often not. So taking a micro or mini course would help them gain Canadian credibility at a price and time investment they could afford given the costs of adjusting to a new country, labour market.

So where can you find these Micro and Mini graduate courses. Well Micro credentials have become well spread out in the adult education field but one of the first to offer them was the School of Continuing Studies at the University of Toronto. The Rotman school of Management at the University of Toronto offers mini MBA's called Essential MBA's.

Put Micro Credentials in your search engines as well as Mini MBA's and see the plethora of choice. Many of these can be done by distance ed, so you can still work in Toronto but study at the University of Ottawa, their digital transformation mini MBA.



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HOW PAUL CHIN EXAMINED TRADITION AND PRIVILEGE TO RE-SHAPE IDENTITY AND FAMILY

A SHORT STORY BY MINA WONG

Born in 1970 to Macao businessman Man-Yun Chin and his third wife Emma, Paul grew up studying Chinese, English and Portuguese in excellent schools.

Emma and Paul lived in a cozy duplex where Man-Yun stayed several times a year, each time bringing presents and bank investments.

At an early age, Paul wondered why his parents lived apart, and why he couldn't see Papa more often. Emma would explain, "Papa's a very busy man, but he loves you and wants the best for you."

Feeling Emma's loneliness as he got older, Paul would ask, "Mama, does Papa want the best for you, too? Does he also love you?"

About marital happiness, Emma would usually say, "Papa looks after me, and that means he wants the best for us."

One day when Paul was nine, Emma said they would be attending a funeral: "Papa's mama has passed away at eighty."

With few memories of family members, Paul asked, "Who else would be there?"

Emma told her son that at the funeral, he would see Man-Yun's first and second wives Jenny and Lulu, and their children Joy, Jewel, James, and Henry. "They're your older brothers and sisters."

Unfamiliar with the names, Paul simply listened: "Be polite at grandmother's funeral. Papa wants everyone to be respectful."

At the funeral, Paul was surprised that Jenny and Lulu were older than Emma, and that all their children were adults. He also learned that Jenny was the mother of Joy and Jewel, and that Lulu's sons were James and Henry.

Joy, twenty, and Jewel, nineteen, hugged Paul affectionately. Then James, also nineteen, and Henry, eighteen, shook hands warmly with their younger brother.

The older siblings obviously knew each other, but they were all enchanted by precocious Paul with thoughtful eyes.

Thinking his siblings as tall and smart, Paul was intrigued by their attentiveness. He also watched Jenny, Lulu, and Emma wept in an embrace for their departed mother-in-law.

Not having seen Man-Yun for two months, Paul noticed that he looked older: "Papa's the oldest person in our family now."

Later when Paul asked Emma why she had married Man-Yun, she said, "Only Jenny is Papa's legal wife. When Lulu had James and Henry, Papa got a bigger family. I was in Grade 13 when Papa gifted my school with scholarships. He was very kind and I liked him. Then we had you."

Emma's disclosure confused Paul even more. "But Mama, why did Papa want James and Henry when he already had two beautiful girls? And why did he want another son with you when he already had four smart kids?"

Emma's reply prompted Paul to later examine and re-define his own

identity. "Papa's a traditional Chinese man. I'm sure Joy and Jewel were the light of his life, but he also wanted sons, and Lulu gave him James and Henry."

"And me?"

Emma smiled. "When Papa and I knew we were having a baby, we hoped for a girl, but we got you, and you're my world."

After grandmother's funeral, Paul didn't see his siblings for almost twenty years until all five had established themselves overseas.

During this time, Paul learned that Joy had married a fellow lawyer in San Francisco and raised a son; New York philanthropist, Jewel was still single. Boston physics professor, James had married a geologist and adopted a daughter; and Seattle urologist, Henry lived with his chatelaine and their son and daughter.

At thirty, Paul was a successful architect in southern Ontario and Michigan. While dating fellow builder Ariana Shaw, he unpacked Papa's polygamy. He saw clearly that the more wives and sons, the higher Man-Yun's socio-economic status.

Although all five children were wealthy by birth, Paul questioned how privilege could justify multiple women's loyalty to one man's self-importance: "What gave Papa that right when Jenny, Lulu, and Mama had no such option from their upbringing?"

Paul also knew Emma's loneliness throughout her devotion to Man-Yun. Likewise, Jenny and Lulu would long for their husband's affection because he never gave it completely to anyone. Moreover, he could continue courting younger women, like his relationship with Emma as Jenny and Lulu entered middle age.

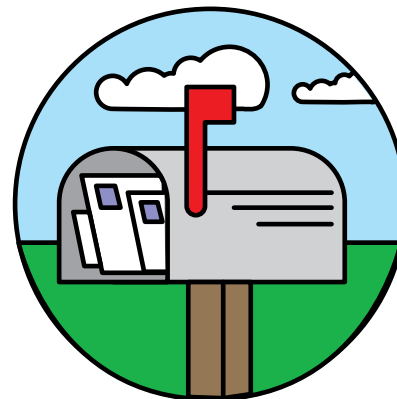
Unfairness to women offended Paul, but he wanted to forgive Papa for practicing the tradition he knew best. "A chauvinistic husband, Papa did acknowledge a new generation for both sons and daughters. He's loved us deeply by investing in all our education and success."

When Ariana asked, "And if you'd been your Papa?", Paul answered, "I would've been over the moon with beautiful Jenny, Joy, and Jewel."

He added, "I'm my father's son, but also my own man – husband to one wife raising our children with her."

At fifty-two, Paul's been married to Ariana for almost seventeen years. Emilie, their fourteen-year-old will travel to Macao this winter to find her roots. All elderly but robust, Jenny, Lulu, Emma, and Man-Yun are ecstatic; Emilie's aunts, uncles, and cousins in different North American cities are also delighted.

Learning from Man-Yun's customs, his children and grandchildren have gained important insight into identity, privilege, marriage, and family. Through forgiving and accepting him as a product of his tradition, they have reunited a family and forged new generations, totally on their own terms.



Dear Elcee

Dear Elcee is a feature written by Deborah Noel of Learning Curves. Send your questions about education, training, careers, and jobs to deborahjnoel@gmail.com.

Dear Elcee:

I am writing this in regard to my 18-year-old daughter. She was diagnosed with a learning disability about 4 years ago. Although she has managed throughout high school with support, she wants to pursue higher education. I am concerned that the stress of attending college may be too much for her but I also want to encourage her to follow her dreams. What is available out there to help students with learning disabilities at the post-secondary level?

Wondering in Willowdale

Dear Wondering;

I am glad you wrote with this question. Many parents of children with learning disabilities quickly learn to access the resources offered by primary and secondary school systems, but then fail to realize the many supports offered to post-secondary students. Post-secondary colleges and universities are now offering a myriad of supports to assist students with learning disabilities to traverse the complexities of studying in this new environment. A college student with learning disabilities has unique needs with unique challenges. They may need, for example, access to custom-tailored studying materials, support from their colleagues, or professional guidance and help from the faculty staff. It is very important, prior to choosing a college, that you and your daughter check

out what supports the college may have to offer. Many colleges will offer an on campus support centre. They will offer help with such areas as adapting individual course instruction. They may also suggest alternative types of coursework and testing materials. Your child may also benefit from assistive software and technology. An important piece of the puzzle will also include in-class accommodations. Building a team around your child will help ensure that she will receive personalized support. This will ensure her post secondary learning experience is both memorable and successful!

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



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