

LEARNINGCURVES

CONTINUING EDUCATION | JOB TRAINING | LIFELONG LEARNING

PUBLISHING SINCE 1999



Photo by Daniel Thomas

MASTERING SELF-EDUCATION YOUR PATH TO LEARNING ON YOUR TERMS

BY ANNA KARLOVA

Surely, every person studying a new field asks themselves this question – “What material should I read on the subject?”. The problem is that no matter which book you take; it won't provide much because it won't be part of a systematic learning process. It's a piece of knowledge detached from the foundation. One book cannot replace years of education.

Self-education is usually challenging because it lacks structure and coherence. Even if you build your education solely on textbooks, you still need to know what to read and in what order. If you want to learn independently more effectively, you'll need a developed algorithm of actions.

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THE 2 MINUTE RULE FOR EMPLOYMENT PREPARATION

BY LISA TRUDEL

This year I read a book by James Clear titled “Atomic Habits”. One of the chapters mentioned the “2-Minute Rule” which helps with procrastination, breaking old habits, and building new healthy ones. This idea was first created by David Allen in his book, “Getting Things Done” and the basic meaning is: if you can do an action in two minutes or less, tackle it at the moment instead of delaying it. The 2-Minute Rule can help to keep you motivated when you are unemployed, underemployed, or seeking a new job. However, understanding the context is essential when deciding if you can apply it. For example, there are always some important tasks that demand your full attention and require a deep dive of time, so using this rule won't qualify. Yet, there could be easy tasks that you can complete in just a few minutes. One of the nice parts of the 2-Minute Rule is that it is flexible because 2 minutes is just a guideline. If you have an open window of time you can extend the cut-off time for each task to 5 minutes or even 10 minutes. Here is a list of 15 ideas connected to employment preparation that you could use the 2-Minute Rule for:

1. Creating a Gmail address if you still use a Hotmail or Yahoo account. Employers seldom reply to these 2 older email addresses.
2. Creating an email signature that includes your name, email, and phone number so you always have consistency in your e-messages.
3. Drafting a response to a pending email even just to say “Thank you. I received your email and appreciate the assistance you gave me.”
4. Organizing the workspace you use at home.
5. Writing the first line of your resume “summary”. Creating and editing one sentence is always easier than writing 500 to 600 words which is the average length of a resume that will pass an ATS scanner.
6. Saving a contact on your phone that you have been meaning to add.
7. Deleting 6 junk emails.
8. Reading the first page of a company website you have been wanting to research.
9. Decluttering your emails by unsubscribing from 2 annoying emails that you don't even bother reading.
10. Subscribing to 2 free online newsletters that you hope will give you new inspiration and information.
11. Checking a free online learning site such as www.coursera.org and selecting 2 Certificate courses you want to take in the next 6 months.
12. Watching a YouTube video on how to write an impressive cover letter.
13. Researching a TedTalk video with Amy Cuddy, Social Psychologist and Speaker, that you might want to watch in the future. She talks about “power posing” to gain confidence and how important body language is at job interviews and in the workplace.
14. Improving your knowledge about DEIA (diversity, equity, inclusivity and accessibility) by checking out the e-learning section of www.charityvillage.com and finding and eventually taking, their free 15-minute course on Creating Diversity, Sensitivity and Inclusion. Or finding a free course you want to take at: <https://www.indeed.com/>
15. Preparing to teach yourself about ChatGPT by bookmarking the cheat sheet reference guides at www.quickref.me/chatgpt.html or <https://www.techrepublic.com/article/chatgpt-cheat-sheet/>

career-advice/career-development/
diversity-inclusion-virtual-courses

These 15 ideas are valuable starting points for the 2-Minute Rule if you want to manage your job search anxiety, move forward with your productivity, and manage your time management skills. By doing small things immediately, you can overcome a lack of motivation and willpower. There are genuine benefits to all actions when it comes to developing new habits and accomplishing goals.

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



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THE WORKERS'
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TORONTO REGION IMMIGRANT EMPLOYMENT COUNCIL (TRIEC) MENTORING PARTNERSHIP: MENTORING FOR SUCCESS

BY GINNY RANA

Finding a job is the greatest challenge most newcomers to Canada face. Whether it is the lack of credential recognition, language barriers, or unfamiliarity with Canadian workplace ethics; a job hunt invariably turns into a frustrating exercise for many. Most Canadian employers look for Canadian work experience and prefer to hire candidates with some sort of knowledge about Canadian work culture. Immigrants who are new to the country, with no professional connections and a lack of sector-specific knowledge, understandably feel at a huge loss.

Job search in such cases can turn into an unending ordeal, failing to yield the desired results. As a result, most new skilled immigrants, are often unemployed or under-employed. Many are forced to take up survival jobs that are a poor match for their education, skills and/or prior experience. Lack of job satisfaction rapidly progresses into a career disconnect, social exclusion, and isolation.

With the aim to create employment solutions to help skilled immigrants to integrate better in the Canadian labour market, the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC) has been working to improve career and employment outcomes for newcomers in the Greater Toronto Area. Since 2004, TRIEC has been coordinating TRIEC Mentoring Partnership, which is a collaboration of 27 employer and 12 community partners across the Greater Toronto Area. The program is funded by the Government of Canada through Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, the Government of Ontario through the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and the Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration, and International Trade.

How the Program Works?

Designed for immigrants who are internationally educated, experienced, employment-ready, and seeking a job in their field, the program matches newcomer immigrant professionals to a mentor in Canada who shares a similar professional background. The mentor helps mentees to reconnect with their career through sound professional advice, tips, and job search strategies. Mentees can hone their skills, learn Canadian work ethics, and workplace communication, and build professional connections. Over a mentorship period ranging three months, mentors help newcomers learn to navigate the local labor market and conduct job searches that are more effective and successful.

Community partners, employment partners, and settlement and employment agencies work together to match immigrants and support them in finding meaningful employment.

Key players in TRIEC Mentoring Partnership

There are three key players in the TRIEC Mentoring Partnership: Community Partners, Employers Partners and Settlement and Employment Agencies.

Community Partners: employment-providing organizations who support immigrants to find work in their professional fields.

Employer Partners: Several organizations from diverse sectors find and recruit mentors from amongst their staff.

Settlement and Employment Agencies:

based around the Greater Toronto Area who refer their newcomer clients to mentoring to find employment.

How a Mentor Can Help?

A mentor will help you to:

- Understand Canadian job market and industry trends;
- Build your professional network;
- Develop effective job search strategies;
- Find ways of leveraging your skills and experience.

To be accepted as a mentee in the program, you must:

- Have 2 years + international experience in your professional field;
- Have lived in Canada for less than five years;
- Be currently unemployed or underemployed and looking to reconnect with your career;
- Be legally entitled to work in Canada;
- Have a post-secondary education equivalent to a university degree or college diploma;
- Have English language proficiency sufficient to work in the field (usually Canadian Language Benchmark level 6-8);
- Not have previously participated in the program.

Program Support

As a part of the program, mentees receive support in terms of:

- Workshops to build job search, resume, and/or interview skills;
- Employment counseling and job search assistance;
- Networking events;
- Hiring events;
- Soft skills workshops.

How to Sign Up?

To sign up for the program,

Step 1: Visit your nearest Community Partner

Step 2: Talk to a mentoring coach: at the community partner location. The mentoring coach will assess your eligibility for the program.

Step 3: Wait to be matched: Based on your information, you will be matched to a mentor who has the same professional background.

Step 4: Meet Your Mentor: If you accept the mentor's recommendation, you participate in an orientation session to get started.

TRIEC Mentoring Partnership is Empowering

TRIEC Mentoring Partnership empowers new immigrants with industry-specific job knowledge, providing them a pathway to reconnect to their careers. The program is committed to tapping diverse workforce talent and creating workspaces that are more immigrant-inclusive.

Published in 2020, the evaluation report titled, "Demand For & Impact of Mentoring

Newcomer Professionals: The Case of TRIEC Mentoring Partnership" found that:

- The TRIEC Mentoring Partnership more than doubles a newcomer's chances of securing a good quality job;
- Participant mentees are 2.5x more likely to find good-quality employment;
- 85% of those employed after the program are in permanent and full-time jobs;
- Over 80% of the mentees reported enhanced job search skills;
- 4x more likely to expand participants' professional networks.

The report highlights that the greatest impact has been observed on female newcomers and those who are unemployed. The program has been instrumental in fostering career transitions. (<https://triec.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Demand-for-Impact-of-Mentoring-Newcomer-Professionals-The-case-of-TRIEC-Mentoring-Partnership.pdf>)

Mentoring for Success

TRIEC Mentoring Partnership is impactful, delivering proven outcomes, and social, employment, and economic successes. It has reduced precarious employment and

helped newcomer immigrants achieve their employment goals and integrate better into the Canadian workforce.

The TRIEC Mentoring Partnership has ushered in a lifechanging transformation for many new immigrants, and you never know, it could turn out to be your key to professional success.

Resources

<https://triec.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Demand-for-Impact-of-Mentoring-Newcomer-Professionals-The-case-of-TRIEC-Mentoring-Partnership.pdf>

This article is written by Ginny Rana who is an international student pursuing Social Services Worker (Immigrants & Refugees) program at Seneca College. A published writer, Ginny is working as a volunteer with the Canadian Red Cross and can be reached via email at ginnyrana15@gmail.com.

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CHALLENGES IN PURSUING POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION AS AN ADULT

BY A. KERR



Photo by Dom Fou

A. Kerr is a member of University in the Community. She made the decision to pursue undergraduate studies while caring for her family of four and working part-time. In this article, she passes on some tips for adults who decide to go back to school.

Pursuing post-secondary education is common for adults even years after they have worked at their jobs. The reasons for going back to school vary. Some return to achieve a second career, some for advanced training specific to their jobs, some to get a higher salary and surprisingly some may attend just for knowledge and interest. No matter the reasons for this decision adult learners as compared to younger students will experience challenges.

The challenges are not always obstacles because adults can learn from them. Individuals travel from near and far for their

education. However, older adults are not international students. To gain space in a university or college program it is daunting.

First, the student has to know the course or program of interest. Then they apply and seek financial assistance or plan how to pay for the course. There is OSAP for paying, as well as awards or bursaries for students. Some students will pay out of pocket which is good. Before applying for a space, the student will choose a specific college or university.

They also have to decide whether it is online or in person. The application process is very challenging if the student does it online. Sometimes the application might suddenly log out requiring you to go back in and start all over again. Some students have to go to the institution to get help.

Challenges faced by adult students

going into post-secondary education are different for each individual. There are financial responsibilities, family situations, and stress that this decision to start school may not work out. Some older adult students will experience challenges and difficulties using technological devices and equipment. It is impossible sometimes for them to get the necessary assistance.

After getting into the program the work begins. Students who do in-person study are faced with having younger classmates and it can be intimidating. Older students worry about not feeling welcome. Online adult students are worried about understanding the work and completing it.

Adult students are responsible for getting support groups that can assist and encourage them. The institutions need to

find more ways to help their adult student population. Libraries are great places to find resources to help with research for post-secondary education. Librarians will also help to guide individuals on how to research.

Friends, associates, and families are a large group who can provide support and encouragement. Overcoming the hurdles and barriers that can be a hindrance in completing post-secondary education is good. There are some tips to help anyone complete post-secondary education successfully, even if you have a disability. You can find out about your rights as a student and what you are responsible for.

If you need specific help, let it be known. Always remember to ask questions. The Accessibility Services of the institution will provide it. There is also other assistance which includes mentorship, tutoring, academic writing support, counseling services, library workshops through the institution, and academic advising. Much of this information is not disclosed by the colleges or universities. Sometimes it is very difficult for students who are not aware of how to get the resources or information about these services. However, success comes from knowing and applying the knowledge.

In June, 2023, after several years of part-time studies, Ms. Kerr graduated from Brock University with a Bachelor of Education.

Huge congratulations from all the students at UitC to their classmate and friend! 📚

THE MAGIC MIRROR!

BY SAMANVITA ORUGANTI

*Magic mirror on the wall,
Show me a tale that brightens
the day in one way and all
And is as liberating as a free fall.*

With the thinking hat right on; I look within myself for all those stories, I've witnessed from dusk to dawn but nothing comes closer to the journey of 'the reflection I capture the day in, day out', whom I fondly call A pocket full of sunshine due to the warm and fuzzy feeling this one leaves behind.

The narrative doesn't begin with once upon a time...in a faraway land but it indeed starts with the information on first-hand about a grown-up human and her shenanigans in full galore.

Her aura sometimes soothing, sometimes exciting, and sometimes grim but all the while enchanting got me laughing like a baby; from her grumpy morning faces to I got bloated tummy nose scrunching

dinner overlook cases. She also got me smirking from her impromptu out-of-tune singing concert to our very own private off-beat dancing TV reality show in her comfortable oversized polo t-shirt.

As we have our mid-day prep talks and the decision-making sessions, she moves me and makes me swell with pride for the wise person she evolved into from a tiny caterpillar to a butterfly with courage personified. Her tears make me sad, and her self-doubt makes me mad, but watching her solve life puzzles makes me very glad.

Mirroring her life routine is finding my very own shiny glory, so my brave girl, it's you that is my favorite story!

Samanvitha Orugant is an avid storyteller who likes narrating stories about people, emotions, and places. She believes our world has innumerable tales, some hidden, some not, but all waiting to be told. She can be reached via email at samanvita.krishna@gmail.com

AN APPLE

BY HEESUN

"Do do ti do la do sol do fa do mi do... mi mi re mi do mi ti mi la mi sol mi..."

I was playing *Hanon with excitement. My fingers moved so fluidly that I felt like I was a famous pianist performing on stage.

"Ring ring"...

"Julia, are you playing the piano right now?"

"Eek, how did my mom find out?"

"The concierge called me. There was a noise complaint from the neighbor upstairs."

My heart sank and I quickly looked outside the window. The sun had already set.

"Didn't I tell you to play the piano only during the day?"

"Oops, I forgot about that."

My face turned red from feeling sorry and embarrassed. I put down the telephone and walked around the living room wondering what to do.

"Oh my, what should I do?"

I went into my room. I took out a piece of paper and a pencil and started writing a letter. My handwriting looked so messy that I kept erasing it and writing it over again.

"Hello,

My name is Julia. I'm a first-grade student at Swansea School. I live downstairs. I was so immersed in playing the piano that I didn't know it was getting dark.

It must have been noisy. I'm sorry."

I took out some crayons and started drawing an apple. The red apple with a green leaf looked very pretty. I put the drawing and the letter inside an envelope went down to the ground floor, and placed it in the mailbox for unit 1002.

The next day, I came back from school and noticed a basket sitting on the table. Mom said, "Someone left it in front of the door just now...". There was a letter inside the basket.

*'Dear Julia,
thank you for the kind letter and the drawing.
I can rest assured that there will no longer be loud noise at night. Please don't worry about me and continue playing the piano. Even skipping one day might slow down your progress, so, it's good to practice every day.
These apples are organic and are harvested with families in mind so when you eat them, just rinse with water and eat them with the skin on. It will be delicious.
- From the lady upstairs who loves nature and doesn't want to be called grandma yet.'*

*Hanon (Charles-Louis Hanon): A French pianist and educator (1820-1900) who created the piano exercise piece called "Hanon Exercises"

**"Apple" is "사과-Sagwa" in Korean. It has two meanings.

One is the fruit "apple" and the other is the "apology".

HeeSun is a poet and storybook writer who belongs to the University in the Community. She brings hope to people and brightens the world with beautiful poems, songs, and stories. She is a member of the Pen International. 📚

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STREETS ARE THE MIRROR OF SOCIETY

BY OSMAN OZSOY

One of the news we saw most in the Toronto media this summer was the growing number of homeless people in the parks and the housing problem of newly arrived immigrants.

As I passed through Allan Gardens Park, where the relatively homeless population is located, a memory came back to me when I lived in Boston 24 years ago.

I lived near Boston College. When I went for a walk in Chestnut Hill Reservoir Park near my house, I also saw homeless people coming to the park to cool off in the summer heat. They spent time sitting on benches in the shade of trees. When I went to Boston at the beginning of 1999, I bought a very nice leather jacket for winter. While returning to my country in mid-August, I wanted to leave this coat to the homeless. You know, the homeless carry all their stuff in bags. I put my coat in a sturdy bag and left it on a park bench frequented by the homeless. I also wrote a note in it and said:

"I know, summer from the seasons right now. But winter will come again one day. If you need please get it. I leave it here for you."


The next day, as I was passing by, I saw my coat where I had left it. The sturdy plastic bag was taken, and the coat was there. The note I left was on the coat. But they had written a note on the back of the paper and left it on the coat. Written in the note was: "Yes, winter will come again, but we need summer clothes now."

I am known in my country as a scientist who plans and manages successful election campaigns. I also have many books on the art of winning

elections. But the one-line message I received from the homeless impressed me a lot. It has been very inspiring and instructive. I even used this memoir as the back cover of a book published in 2004, titled "The Successful Politician's Handbook".

If the homeless get that coat, they'll have to carry it around for a few months until the weather gets colder. This means that people who do not have a future do not have a priority to plan their future needs. Their need for carrying loads of the sturdy plastic I put the jacket in was greater than the jacket for the moment.

This message not only shows us the diversity of people's needs, it also shows us how important timing is in the delivery of needs. It's not just poor people who need something. Regardless of their social status and economic wealth, everyone needs different things. Those who can accurately identify people's needs and present them on time can achieve success, happiness, and mutual love and respect in life. Political parties that can determine the expectations of the voters are successful in the elections, and this is the factor that increases the market share and profitability of the companies in the field of product and service presentation, and even ensures domestic happiness.

Those who have to live on the streets are made up of people whose needs and expectations we could not identify and meet in a timely manner. In fact, what is reflected on the street is the result of the issue that we fail to do the right thing at the right time in life. It is useful to look at the subject in this way. 



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University in the Community Fall 2023

Life lived on a human scale: Reclaiming the Human Scale (in a World of Mega-Everything)

University in the Community (UitC) is a program for people who believe that lives are improved through the opportunity and experience of learning together.

What is University in the Community?

University in the Community (UitC) is a small, informal, free, adult education program offered online and in-person during the Fall and Winter terms. It's fun too!

Where and when is UitC held?

Classes are held on Wednesday evenings (unless otherwise specified) over a period of 10 weeks. Our Fall 2023 program runs from September 27 – November 29 @ 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.

Who can register?

A curious mind, a respectful attitude, a commitment to attend all classes, and an intermediate level of English language comprehension are all you need.

What is the topic of the Fall 2016 lecture series?

Reclaiming the Human Scale in a World of Mega-Everything

Who teaches the classes?

UitC is supported by U of T's Faculty of Arts and Science, Senior College, and Innis College. Classes are taught by a number of experts – academics, artists, and public advocates.

How much does UitC cost?

UitC is free of charge.

How many students are in the class?

Registration is limited to approximately 30 students.

Is homework required?

Although some weekly reading may be assigned, the main requirement is your presence and your participation.

Does UitC offer university credit for its courses?

Sorry, UitC does not offer university credits.

How can I find out more?

That's easy! Just get in touch!
universityinthecommunity@gmail.com
 416 923-7872

Time to Register for

Fall 2023 Classes

Fall topic: Reclaiming the Human Scale (in a world of mega-everything): Wednesdays 5:00 – 6:30 pm, September 27 – November 29, 2023. Classes on Zoom and in-person.

FREE, liberal arts classes for people who...

- have experienced barriers achieving educational goals
- are passionate about learning
- can meet weekly for 10 weeks
- have intermediate English literacy skills

Please get in touch!

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It's not too late to register for Fall 2023 classes

Reclaiming the Human Scale (in a World of Mega-Everything)

Wednesday evenings, 5:00 - 6:30 pm, September 27th - November 29th
 Location: Zoom and in person at Innis College, 2 Sussex Ave.

Free, liberal arts courses for people who...

- have experienced barriers achieving educational goals
- are passionate about learning
- can meet weekly for 10 weeks
- have intermediate English literacy skills



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**Adult Education transforms lives
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BLUEPRINT CAREER SERVICES SETS SIGHTS ON CAREER TRANSITIONS AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT THIS FALL



Over the summer, the University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies (SCS) Blueprint Career Services team has been hard at work updating workshop materials, curating excellent free resources for Blueprint Portal members, and connecting with community groups who need specific career support.

Now they are ready to dive into a new season of support and guidance for anyone ready to make a big career change, whether they are taking on a new role, learning to adapt their skills in a new country, or joining an entirely new industry.

SCS Career Strategist, Ann Park, is looking forward to bringing SCS Blueprint offerings to a wider audience.

"We are very excited about our Fall 2023 season! In addition to continuing to offer our core career support services, Blueprint will be participating again in the Canadian Immigrant Fair taking place on November 9, and our very own Juan Mavo-Navarro will be a key note speaker," she says.

"We will also be working with the Learning Enrichment Foundation for our very first in-person panel."

The in-person panel is entitled Empowering Internationally Educated Healthcare Professionals and will offer participants an opportunity to hear their peers' success stories, learn about opportunities for them to upskill or reskill to suit the needs of Canadian healthcare, and to build their Canadian career networks.

Park says she is excited to have Blueprint be a part of the future of healthcare in Canada, and that she is particularly proud that Blueprint fits in with the rest of the School of Continuing Studies' commitment to accessibility.

"We also recently had the opportunity to participate in the BALANCE for Blind Adults Community Information Fair. I was chatting with a woman there who had taken a course through SCS and was so impressed with the options and support provided to her when it came to accessibility," she says.

"I'm extremely happy that we are able to offer the same support and accommodations through Blueprint, because it means we aren't limited in who we can assist on their career journey."

To that end, Blueprint will be hosting a free, online discussion panel on Navigating the Workplace with a Disability, Wednesday, Sept. 27.

According to a Canadian Human Rights Commission study, at the national level, the employment rates of people with disabilities are substantially lower when compared to those of people without disabilities. This panel will examine, given these statistics, how people who identify as having a disability or disabilities should navigate the workplace; how they should request accommodations; and when they should disclose that they have a disability when they are looking for employment.

"The Navigating the Workplace With a Disability panel promises to address a pressing issue," Park explains,

"It's essential to have conversations like these. People with disabilities often face unique challenges, and discussing how to navigate the workplace and when to disclose a disability can empower individuals to make informed decisions about their careers."

In addition to the Navigating the Workplace with a Disability RealTalk panel, a new season of Blueprint's popular free, online Industry Insights panel discussions, featuring industry experts, kicks off October 18 with a banking industry-focused expert discussion and interactive Q and A session. The rest of the season will cover a diverse range of Topics, providing participants with

valuable industry-specific knowledge to help them make informed career choices.

Blueprint's Career Wayfinding Workshops, which use design thinking principles to help participants find the way forward when their next career step is uncertain and support them in gaining clarity and direction in their careers, will continue to remain a cornerstone of their fall 2023 offerings.

The free, online Blueprint Career Services Portal will continue to offer up-to-date resources to help portal members define and meet their career objectives.

Those in need of one-on-one guidance, can sign up for the school's CareerNav sessions with Blueprint's in-house Career Strategist who will work with them to clarify their goals, address their specific career needs, and provide them with a targeted action plan.

And Blueprint's CliftonStrengths Workshops will round out the fall 2023 season by helping participants to identify and harness their natural abilities and use them to propel their careers forward and achieve their goals.

To learn more about the University of Toronto School of Continuing Studies Blueprint Career Services, visit their website and the Blueprint Portal.

The School of Continuing Studies is the centre of lifelong learning at the University of Toronto. They offer transformative personal and professional enrichment opportunities through hundreds of expert-led, non-degree courses and certificates. They value diversity and welcome learners from all educational backgrounds and all stages of the professional/learning journey. Their learners, clients, and a passion for lifelong learning are at the heart of everything they do.

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CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

MASTERING SELF-EDUCATION: YOUR PATH TO LEARNING ON YOUR TERMS

BY ANNA KARLOVA

The importance of preparation

It's impossible to know everything, no matter how much we want to delve into thousands of things. There is a constant time constraint. Therefore, it's crucial to carefully choose where we'll invest our resources: money, time, and effort. At the initial stage, it's helpful to ask a few questions.

Question #1: Will this information still be relevant in 10 years?

The answer to this question can be somewhat debatable, as some information quickly becomes outdated due to the growth in the field. For example, if you decide to study a programming language, it's likely to be out of date in 10 years. The language might disappear from the market, but the foundation you gain will remain: the programming logic, methods, and approaches. Most of the information you can learn now, such as news, expert forecasts, and market analyses, won't be relevant. If you're not planning to use this information presently and are studying it for the future, it merely creates an illusion of understanding. Therefore, don't clutter your mind with things that will become 100% irrelevant in just a week. Otherwise, in 10 years, you'll know nothing.

Question #2: Is this information cross-industry, and can you apply it no matter what you do?

For instance, communication skills, time management skills, project management, financial and marketing skills, and much more are knowledge that will be useful no matter what you do in life. For example, look at a housemaker - doing repairs, improving a child's educational process, managing the budget, building good relationships with a partner and oneself, and keeping an eye on health. All of this is cross-industry knowledge that's useful in many situations.

Question #3: Will this knowledge help me transition to the next level of life right now?

The subject you're considering studying might be specialized, but you deem it necessary for your personal growth. To give an example, you decide to study Data Analysis. Most likely, the technical skills you acquire won't be relevant in 10 years. But if you connect your future precisely with this industry, if it will lead you to your transformation and desired realization, then the answer to this question will be positive.

Moving to the learning process

Of course, obtaining all the information on the topic that interests you is impossible. Moreover, we intake data in an unorganized manner. To explain, photos from someone's vacation whom we don't know come right after

complex scientific or philosophical texts. Things of varying difficulty and importance pile up, and as a result, nothing remains in memory. Such occurs because being engaged, getting inspired, and thinking are different states of the brain. It cannot switch between them fast and requires the separation of information streams.

Step one - distributing information.

For instance, create separate accounts on different social networks for entertainment, creativity, news, and learning. You can have a separate YouTube account exclusively for helpful videos and watch it when you're ready to consume precisely that content. Thus, the YouTube algorithm on this account will never show you entertaining videos but will recommend scientific lectures, conferences, compilations, and so on. Only the content needed for learning, which you carefully listen to during the time set for it.

Step two - seeking university courses and textbooks.

After choosing what to learn and distributing the information, the next step is to acquire basic knowledge. The best way to gain a fundamental base in any field is to start with university courses and textbooks. For years now, worldwide universities have been uploading full-fledged learning programs to the internet. There are two websites where you can find almost everything you need: EdX and Coursera. Most universities offer free education if no one will check your work, and you won't receive a certificate in the end. For personal and non-professional purposes, this is very convenient and an excellent start for building a foundation.

You can find books on Amazon or other online bookstores by looking through reviews, ratings, and recommendations based on what other people are buying on the same topic. And of course, don't forget about the library. The more you study, the more advanced your books will become, and you'll start searching for recommended books written by scholars you've learned about. Gradually, you'll move from beginner publications to university textbooks.

Step three - utilizing YouTube.

Now that we've assembled a list of courses and textbooks, we can explore what else is interesting on YouTube. Short, engaging, and simple episodes on the topic of interest are helpful in the initial stages, as we need someone to explain things straightforwardly. Filtering through playlists allows us to find entire collections of videos. Many YouTube users create playlists for themselves, and we can benefit from these results. The advantage of such playlists is that we can find videos from professional channels and universities that have very few views and subscribers, making it nearly

impossible to discover them through search. However, playlists will help us find gems.


What's next?

After you've built your foundation, you might want to move on to studying academic papers. Usually, by this stage, you will already have a list of quality sources because lecturers in academic fields often reference them. Each industry has its resources. Currently, useful and popular options include Sage Journals, Google Scholar, and Annual Reviews. Typically, these are sufficient to start. On these platforms, you can explore research and new hypotheses, a list of all the studies, and if something interests you, you can delve deeper and learn more.

You'll quickly amass several hundred hours of lectures and additional reading material. Such will be enough for years of in-depth study. If you're tackling something complex, it's crucial to maintain order in your mind. Mind maps are ideal tools for structuring information. You can

create them yourself or use ready-made templates that you can find on Google. During the learning process, you'll add to them, make some changes, and expand upon them. In this case, mind maps become a structured learning plan tailored to your individual needs, helping you track the process, see the subject systematically, and study it gradually but effectively.

In self-directed learning, it's important not to scatter your attention. Choose one topic, delve into it, and only then move on to the next. Don't try to take all the courses simultaneously, don't listen to all the playlists, and don't immediately follow every link you come across. May your self-directed learning process be as efficient as possible.

This article was written by Anna Karlova, who loves learning throughout her life and has a strong passion for Data Analytics. 

Top 5 Reasons to Advertise in Learning Curves

1. We are the only community newspaper dedicated to adult learners in Toronto and the GTA. One in every five adults participates in adult education.
2. We have over 600 distribution points including all Toronto and GTA libraries as well as schools, colleges, universities, community programs and employment resource centres, apprenticeship offices and many neighbourhood, community and recreation centres and other sites.
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5. We offer online ads and our rates are very affordable

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ORDINARY MOMENTS FROM MY LIFE: TIFFANY MANNING'S STORY

A SHORT STORY BY MINA WONG

My name's Tiffany from the Georgetown area in Ontario. Thanks for letting me share a few moments from my childhood, family, and recent times that make up my life of almost twenty-one years.

I spent my first few years in Halton Region's foster care while my real parents, still teenagers, were supported by child welfare workers to reunite with me, once they became adults and could take care of me. Foster parents Rose and Mike Simons instilled a lot of resilience in me. Although eager to adopt, they knew my biological parents had expressively wanted me back.

When my real parents came, I felt transported to a different world. One day, around a table at a government office, I heard "junior kindergarten for Tiffany" from all the adults there. After signing a lot of papers, a couple took me home to an apartment with my own room. I came to know them as my parents, Melanie Jacob and Joshua Manning, both nineteen years old.

I missed Rose and Mike and my carefree, pre-school days. I disliked morning kindergarten because Mom always fussed over breakfast when I was still sleepy. I also felt irritable when Dad worked long hours from early morning till late evening.

At school with twenty other children my size, the teacher was like a mom. But she couldn't just play with me. She'd read and count numbers with us before letting everyone play outside. I cried a lot but settled down, especially at the end of the second Friday when our teacher, Mrs. Hislop said, "On Monday, we'll have a little party for Tiffany's birthday."

I started to like school after that day. To my parents' pride, I excelled, and in time, attended a high school strong in STEM*. By then, my brother Robin was almost in middle school. Five years younger, he was my responsibility each day until our parents finished work late afternoon.

Our home life was happy with bittersweet moments. Our parents didn't have post-secondary skills to compete for well-paying jobs. Instead, they settled for junior positions to provide for us. They made sacrifices and taught us how to stretch a dollar. As a family, we've always shopped carefully and lived within our means.

Mom and Dad are a bit teary-eyed as I am finishing college, followed by working as an architectural technician. Knowing they didn't have a high income, I managed with student loans and summer jobs. Now that Robin's in high school and starting college soon, I want to support his education as much as possible.

My ordinary life taught me important values about family, happiness, perseverance, and success. I give my parents credit for their commitment to keep us all together, and for

always teaching us honesty and optimism.

Without siblings, my parents were lonely, latchkey children raised by single mothers who worked extra-long hours. When they had me, both were criticized for making an unforgivable, out-of-wedlock mistake. But I now understand that even at the tender age of fifteen, they must have loved each other very much and that they wanted me.

Mom and Dad also postponed college to work and provide for me. While I was in foster care, they lived at home, finished high school, found jobs, saved money, and checked off all the requirements for having me back with them.

While foster parents Rose and Mike Simons (who have retired to Elliot Lake) gave me hope, trust, love, and generosity early in life, my real parents have shown how much they want Robin and me, through their devotion to family in good times and bad. Now that I'm an adult, I want to help Mom and Dad live more comfortably after overcoming so many challenges. If they want to pick up from where they left off, local post-secondary schools offer wonderful support to adult learners across personal growth, academic success, and professional development.

Although Dad now supervises a warehouse after many years as a receiver, courses in wholesale management could earn him a raise. Likewise, after twelve years in clerical positions, Mom could enjoy better work opportunities by studying accounting or data management.

As for me, I look forward to what lies ahead. I'll build my life with further studies, a long and full career in architecture, marriage, and children. I also want to spend more time with my grandmothers who are now semi-retired. When I was born, Grandma Susie Jacob was an ER nurse, and Grandma Dorothy Manning was a social service worker. Although well-educated and resourceful, they felt deeply estranged from Melanie and Joshua for having a baby out of season. Already working and parenting full-time, neither grandmother felt she could also look after me. In the end, they agreed to voluntary foster care until my parents could reunite with me. Since then, both grandmothers have generously reached out to us, a gesture that my parents reciprocate, with a strong sense of family that means a lot to all of us.

Looking at my life, I also thank my teachers who always taught me the importance of inclusion and empathy, and who set examples of high achievement. As we say, the rest is history, and as historical as my ordinary life in Halton Region!

**STEM = science, technology, engineering, and mathematics.*



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:

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

Lucy in Leslieville

Hi Lucy,

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

LinkedIn

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

Twitter (X)

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

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

Facebook

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

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

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

WE HELP: HOW THE KINDNESS OF CANADIANS CHANGES THE LIVES OF IMMIGRANTS

BY IRYNA PALTSEVA



The first few years of life in immigration are usually very challenging. A person often has to literally start their life from scratch - dealing with everyday issues, rebuilding social connections, and navigating new laws and rules. All of this often happens against the backdrop of insufficient knowledge

of the English language and difficulties in finding suitable work. Psychological factors such as social isolation, homesickness, and separation from family and loved ones also do not contribute to quick adaptation.

But at the end of the tunnel, there is always light. And, as the experience of

hundreds of thousands of immigrants all over the world convincingly shows, life falls into a familiar groove after 5-7 years, and a person begins to feel happy in their new place.

Overcoming challenges through compassion

Scientists and psychologists from different countries have carefully studied how the immigration process affects people. Immigration, in terms of the level of psychological trauma, is comparable to divorce or the loss of a loved one. And this is considering that a person mentally and physically prepares for the move and chooses to immigrate on their own will.

Over the past 1.5 years, thousands of Ukrainians have arrived in Canada. The peculiar feature of this new wave of immigration is that all these people were completely unprepared for what awaited them in the new country.

Perhaps today, anyone who follows world news even a little bit knows about the dire situation in Ukraine. Due to Russia's aggressive invasion, millions of Ukrainians were forced to abruptly leave their homes, their established lives, and families, and seek a safe place to live. I am no exception. After spending 1.5 months in the territory occupied by the Russian military, I realized that I needed to save my life and the life of my daughter. We packed three suitcases and went nowhere. A series of coincidences brought us to Canada, where we didn't know a single soul. We survived and were able to stand on our own feet only thanks to the openness, kindness, generosity, and humanity of Canadians.

Having experienced firsthand the uneasy path of a person who finds themselves in a completely unfamiliar environment and doesn't understand what to do, I know for sure how important welcome centers are for newcomers. The help of volunteers is also invaluable, especially when it comes to assistance from the diaspora. To be among people who speak the same language as you and can relate to the difficulties you have to go through is priceless.

Building bridges: Canadians and Ukrainians unite to help newcomers

As of today, there is a unique volunteer organization operating in Toronto, consisting of both Canadians and Ukrainians. To the best of their abilities, they provide assistance to newcomers. Their focus is not only on addressing practical issues but also on expediting the immigrants' adaptation process. After all, you can only love a place that you know well!

WE HELP! Ukraine to GTA is a non-profit organization aiming at providing support to the displaced Ukrainian families arriving in Canada on the CUAET program. Established in 2022 and with the support of more than 120 volunteers they provide assistance in housing, transportation, delivery of warm clothes and household items, and urgent support as well as informational support to Ukrainian families in GTA and Ontario.

With the incredible support of current hosts and sponsors, the organization provided in 2022 - 2023:

- Helped in temporary housing to 300+ displaced Ukrainian families in 23 Canadian cities from Niagara Falls to Kingston, ON;
- Organized 28 events, such as Toronto guided tours, Christmas at Casa Loma, visits to Ontario Science Center, ROM, and Ripley's Aquarium for 2000+ Ukrainians;
- Ongoing help with transportation, deliveries of warm clothes and household items in GTA;
- Informational support via 8 Facebook and Telegram channels with 36K+ subscribers;
- Launched 2 ongoing educational projects (Conversational English lessons and Art Mini Club in Newmarket, ON);
- Participated in 6 local festivals (Aurora, Newmarket, Brampton, Scarborough, Richmond Hill, ON) promoting Ukrainian culture;
- Placed 40 Ukrainian children / CUAET to the local summer camps (Newmarket School of Fine Art, Tropinka summer camp).

WE HELP! Ukraine to GTA would highly appreciate any support of ongoing cultural and educational projects for Ukrainian families who arrived on CUAET program in Ontario. Cultural events organized by volunteers provide a valuable opportunity for Ukrainian families to meet, network, and receive support, to learn more about the Canadian culture, to learn the Ukrainian language (children) and English language (teenagers and adults), to embrace Ukrainian culture (music, literature, art), to better understand and integrate into Canadian culture as well.

Events like Toronto guided tours and visits to museums help Ukrainian families learn more about Toronto and GTA (history, culture, music, art), their local cities and communities, Ontario and Canada's landmarks and improve their English language skills. All of the activities are focused on inclusiveness, empathy, creativity, positive attitude, and friendly synergy of different generations.

Anyone who wants to help can send an e-transfer mentioning the project name to the email address: wehelpukrainetocanada@gmail.com or donate the funds on the website: <https://www.wehelpukrainetogta.ca>

The organization does not have a charity status yet, they can not provide the tax receipts for the contribution, but they will be happy to provide all the reports and receipts on request. WE HELP! Ukraine to GTA volunteers are always happy to find new friends and new Canadian partners and look forward to collaboration in 2023.

This article was written by Iryna Paltseva. She is a Ukrainian copywriter and web developer who relocated to Canada under the CUAET program. You can contact her via email at: irynapaltseva@gmail.com

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 Spring 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 Summer 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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This opportunity is made possible through a partnership between the City of Toronto, The Region of Peel, The Region of Durham, the Province of Ontario and Government of Canada under the Canada-Ontario Early Childhood Workforce Agreement. One-time federal funding has been provided to support the retention and recruitment of a high-quality child care and early years workforce as Canada's national child care plan rolls out.



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