



# Learning Quarterly

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**Prior Learning Assessment:**

**British Columbia Trends**

by Susan Simosko

**A University Perspective**

by Kathryn Hanson

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## Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology

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*May LQ Cover Illustration creator, Aaron Ball with  
North Island College Instructor, Susanne Sampson*

### About the Artwork in the *Learning Quarterly*

Each edition of the *Learning Quarterly* showcases artwork designed by students in the British Columbia post-secondary education system. Students are invited to participate in the LQ Cover Contest to develop the covers and illustrations for the LQ. C2T2 looks forward to working with all post-secondary institutions and their students in developing the future covers of the *Learning Quarterly*. The cover for the next issue will be designed by the students at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design.

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## Our Cover Story

For the cover of this issue of the *LQ* we chose this thought provoking image by Luke DeWinter of Kwantlen University College.



Every person has his or her own particular rich and complex reservoir of knowledge and abilities that they have gained from many different sources. Sometimes some of these resources can be utilized in seeking rich and rewarding lives; other times they go largely unrecognized and unrewarded. The PLA movement seeks to give recognition to the knowledge and abilities that individuals have accumulated during the course of their lives, and help them use these to improve their lives. The image designed by Luke DeWinter of Kwantlen University College for our current cover suggests a vast hidden potential in even the most unlikely looking individuals.

I like the slightly grotesque appearance of the person whose secret thoughts are being shown to us. He reminds me of Quasimodo in a recent television production of the Hunchback of Notre Dame (not the abominable Disney version!). In the climax of the story the priest Dom Frolo explains, to the supposedly uncomprehending Quasimodo, his all-consuming love for the beautiful Esmerelda — that he would give up eternal life for one of her smiles. The poor, persecuted, grotesque Quasimodo asks, "why is it you think I know not of such things?"

Indeed, why do we think that those who come to our institutions know not of the things we know, unless we ourselves have taught them?

I understand the arguments for maintaining control and standards through residence requirements; I'm sure at times in my career I have made such arguments. But increasingly these things seem self-serving and irrelevant, even solipsistic. Standards are not ensured by sitting in classes in a particular institution; they are ensured by setting achievement levels that students must demonstrate before progressing. The PLA approach promises a system built not upon capricious and arbitrary standards, but upon fair, meaningful, rigorous and clear standards.

— Gary Bauslaugh, Editor-in-Chief

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Vol. 1 Issue 3

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## Message from the Editor

"The world's spinning madly,  
it drifts in the dark,  
Swings through a hollow of haze.  
A race around the stars,  
a journey through the  
Universe ablaze with changes."

– from the song "Changes" by Phil Ochs (1965)

Educators are rightly skeptical of purveyors of change. We ought to resist the impulse to jump on bandwagons. We should be cautious about unprincipled entrepreneurs who wish to sell us ideas and products regardless of whether or not those ideas and products are good ones. We should resist the simplistic slogans of reductionists, who trivialize the complex and emphasize the obvious and easily measurable.

So why don't we just keep doing what we do? Perhaps in some ways we can, but it seems clear that society is undergoing an extraordinary change that educators ought not to ignore. These changes have to do with money and with technology. The former is declining, the second is increasing, and doing so very rapidly. The overall decline of financial resources probably has something to do with world population growth outstripping the availability of resources, but the problem in education also has to do with a growing discrepancy between the rich and the poor and increasing reluctance to support redistribution of wealth and programs of social assistance. Public education is not likely to fare well in the mean-spirited world that is emerging. Funding will be in short supply and the cost of education to students will increase. Therefore, the public demands for relevance, affordability, access and accountability will increase, not decrease, as the public will require efficient and demonstrably effective education.

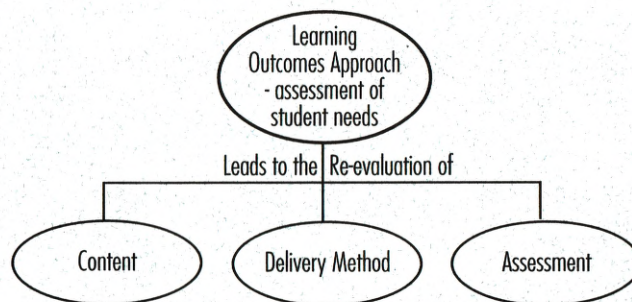
The growth of technologies is having an even more profound effect on society and on educators. Many writers have expressed concern about this: for example, Sven Bickerts in his *Gutenberg Elegies: the Fate of Reading in an Electronic Age*. Bickerts' book was the focus of a June 1997 meeting of the Liberal Studies Association of Canada, held in Toronto. As Bickerts points out, the change is not just one of degree – of more information being more readily

available – but it is one which fundamentally alters the way we interact with and respond to the world. Much of this is disturbing, as when Bickerts recounts the inability of his students to respond to the subtlety and pace of a Henry James story. But there are many positive aspects as well, such as the availability of the information Bickerts himself uses to make judgments about the effects of technology. The indisputable point in all of this, whether the effects are good or bad, is that technology is changing the way people think, respond and learn, and educators ought not simply to pretend that this is not happening.

Technology is also changing the nature of work so drastically that we must rethink our approach to one of the central tasks of education, which is preparing students for work. Rather than simply learning specific job skills which they will practice for the rest of their lives, students must be prepared for a rapidly changing work environment, where adaptability and generic skills will be the key to their success, not mastery of a single trade or discipline. This drives us not toward more traditional trades or academic training, but toward a new appreciation for generic skills and general education.

All of this calls for a re-examination of the purpose of curriculum, followed by a reconsideration of how content, delivery and assessment practices suit this purpose. This, and nothing more, and nothing less, is what we mean by "the learning outcomes approach," and it holds the best promise for evaluating the need for change, and for determining what particular changes ought to be made.

The first step in the learning outcomes approach (defining the purpose of a program of post-secondary education)



is best expressed in general terms, perhaps half a dozen or more statements that relate to the intention to prepare students not only for employment in certain (preferably generic) areas, but also to be responsible citizens who understand how to continue their education and how to adapt to the new situations they will find themselves in



throughout their lives. This purpose, based on a determination of student needs, then governs the detailed development of curriculum. The process of determination of needs, by the way, should be controlled by faculty, but also involve consultation with the wider community.

Content is examined on the basis of how it serves the defined purpose of the program, not on how it reflects faculty interests or traditional subject-based approaches. In most cases the analysis of purpose will lead faculty toward some broader conception of their role, and a different approach to curriculum content. The responsibility to prepare students for the new society, once it is accepted as the driving force for curriculum development, is one that most faculty will take most seriously, as many already have.

The next major consideration is delivery of curriculum. Focusing initially on purpose and student needs fosters interest in how best to achieve the purpose, and delivery methods are key to this. The new technologies, for example, create better access for many students as well as providing certain learning efficiencies for many students and vitally important experience in independent learning. Other delivery methods, such as learning communities, and the various cooperative and collaborative approaches to learning, and problem-based learning, assume new relevance and significance. All of these approaches and others emerge as important means by which to pursue the educational goals that are identified through the learning outcomes approach.

## Assessment

The learning outcomes approach leads to a reevaluation of our traditional, norm-based approaches to assessment. By basing programming on student needs, student success becomes paramount. Rather than focusing on the selecting out of an academic elite, where failure rate is often considered a measure of academic standards, the learning outcomes approach suggests a commitment to a process designed to help as many students as possible achieve the skills, knowledge and values they need for their future success. Given this shift in thinking about what we are trying to accomplish, norm-based assessment naturally gives way to criterion referenced assessment, whereby all students can succeed if they achieve necessary and defined standards.

The setting of program standards has many advantages, both educationally and politically. Students learn better when they know clearly what is expected of them. While helping all students, clearly defined standards offer particular support to traditionally disadvantaged students, many of whom face real cultural barriers that are the result of not

being familiar with academic expectations. Clearly stated assessment standards are of help to all students, but especially so to those unfamiliar with the ways of traditional academic institutions. Politically, the demonstration of achievement through the setting of standards can have enormous advantages to the entire educational community, which often suffers from difficulty in demonstrating value for money.

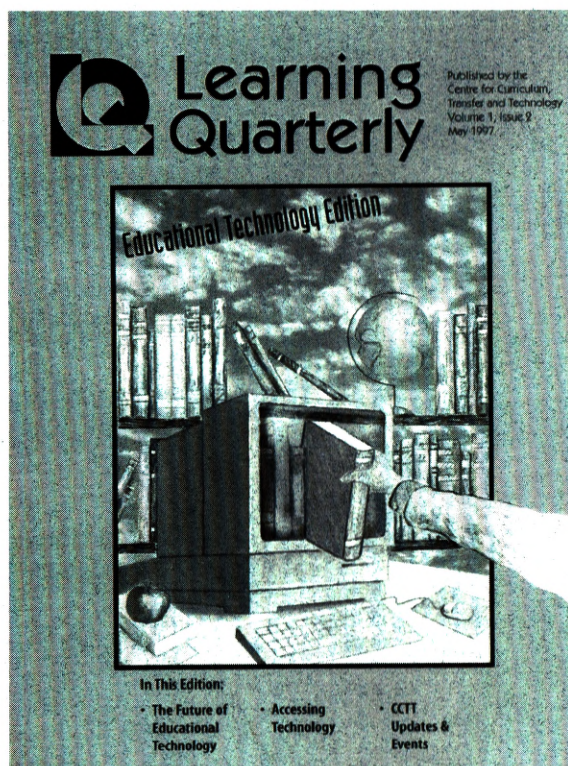
One caution about assessment should be pointed out. Earlier versions of outcomes-based learning stressed narrowly focused and easily measurable objectives, suitable for certain specific learning tasks but too narrow for the complex thinking skills that are central to academic education and to the learning needs of the new society. Many academics were rightly concerned about the reductionist nature of a process driven by ease of assessment. We must emphasize first the need to define purpose — so that this purpose, however complex, is the driving force behind curriculum, not the ease of assessment. Once the purpose is defined, then, we determine assessment practices which properly reflect the purpose, not the other way around.

Finally, let me add a few comments about Prior Learning Assessment (PLA), or flexible assessment. The PLA initiative in BC, with strong support from the Ministry, has been a real success and is described in detail in the lead articles in this volume of the *Learning Quarterly*. The philosophical notion behind PLA is that the validity of an idea is independent of its source; similarly, the validity of learning is independent of its source. If we can determine that a person has already learned, from any source, what we expect them to learn from a particular course or program, then we should award certification, not require that the learning process be repeated. The dedicated work of our PLA practitioners represents the leading edge of outcomes-based approaches to educational reform in BC.

I realize that much of what I have written here is known to many in our system, but I hope it is useful in helping to find order in all of the changes, and for helping to see the connections and inter-relatedness of various educational reforms. I hope, as well, that my comments and the others that appear in the *Learning Quarterly* are persuasive in demonstrating to those who remain skeptical about change, that there is something in these reforms beyond the inevitable claims of self-serving entrepreneurs and uncomprehending reductionists. There is something here of educational consequence.

— GB

## What you said...



*Some comments from our readers about the May 97 edition of the Learning Quarterly.*

I extend to your contributors and editorial staff a hearty congratulations on an outstanding publication. In your first two issues you have already captured the concerns, interests, and controversies that hit close to the hearts and minds of almost all educators. I especially enjoyed issue 2 for its honest and reflective discussion on educational technology. For those who believe that educational technology will become the gospel for curriculum delivery and methodology in the next millennium, issue 2 has some startling revelations.

**Leo Spindel Staff Resource Centre, George Brown College, Toronto, On.**

"I can see the importance of having the information that you put forward in your publication to help me prepare my students for Post-Secondary Education, or even to enter the world of work. The Editor's Message hit home in having students deal with complex issues related to the courses they are enrolled in.

**Ken Hamilton  
Technology Education  
Fort Nelson High School  
Fort Nelson, BC**

Greetings

I picked up Vol 1, Issue 2 at the BC Users Group Spring Camp and I'm very glad I did! Great articles and info on events and such. I'd appre-

ciate a copy of Issue 1 and future issues.

Here's a comment that may be useful or may just reflect my own poor sense of history: I'm puzzled by the diagram on p. 18, which suggests five colleges became university colleges in 1989. As I remember it, three were given that status in 1989, and two others followed shortly but it seems to me not within the same year. Also, Okanagan does not show among those that became university colleges. Can you clarify?

Keep up the good work on LQ.

**Starr Owen, Research Associate,  
Office of Learning Technologies  
Project  
Distance Education and  
Technology, UBC.**

Mr. Owen,

Thank you very much for your comments! We are getting many, many e-mail messages on this issue.

Thank you for pointing out the history information. You are correct! Okanagan, Cariboo, and Malaspina became university colleges in 1989. Fraser Valley (UCFV) became a university college in 1991 and Kwantlen became a university college in 1995.

*-Editor-in-Chief*

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## CENTRE STAGE

# BC Trends in Prior Learning Assessment: Where Are We Going?

**Susan Simosko**

Susan Simosko is an internationally known consultant who is the author of *Applying APL Principles in Flexible Assessment: A Practical Guide* and *PLA: A Vision for Now*.

Prior learning assessment (PLA) has been around as a concept for a long time. The development of recognizing individuals' skills and knowledge has rich historical, philosophical and educational roots.<sup>1</sup> Since the mid 1970s, however, the movement has focused on providing adults with new opportunities for admission, placement, exemption and credit in college and university settings. Recognizing adults' "prior" learning has enabled many people around the world to enter colleges and universities and earn meaningful credentials in shorter and sometimes less expensive ways. They have been able to use and integrate their previous learning to achieve personal and professional goals and move on to new learning experiences.

Even with all its many successes, however, the implementation of prior learning assessment programs across Canada and in many other parts of the world has proved difficult in spite of its obvious benefits to individuals and institutions. Recently, an Alberta institution reported "that the PLA process...was time consuming, subjective and not really appropriate to grant credits for life or work experience."<sup>2</sup> And learners themselves, whether they received credit or not, have often suggested in many different contexts that

PLA as a process is often bureaucratic, inefficient and sometimes confusing.

The experience in British Columbia reflects both perspectives of PLA—the positive one that has allowed many learners to earn credit for existing skills and knowledge and the negative one that has led educators, training providers and policy makers to seek significant changes—conceptually and practically—in the way PLA is being established in the province. There is now a strong movement across the province to reduce the paper work, ensure the rigor and open more doors to more people through a range of PLA opportunities.

*"I think about what students need to know and be able to do differently now and I regularly think about how I can help them to integrate their learning through valid and meaningful assessment processes."*

With support from the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, post-secondary institutions in the province have been funded to develop their capability to offer a range of PLA services and credit-bearing opportunities to learners across program areas. As these institutions develop their PLA services, policies and procedures, a number of key educational issues are being addressed. While the dialogue and debate surrounding these issues will continue, there is little doubt that a number of distinct patterns are emerg-

<sup>1</sup>Houle, Cyril O. "Deep Traditions of Experiential Learning" in *Experiential Learning: Rationale, Characteristics and Assessment*, edited by Morris T. Keeton, Jossey-Bass, 1976.

<sup>2</sup>Kolodziej, Mark. "SAIT develops non-portfolio approach to PLA" in *College Canada: The Newsmagazine of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges* Volume 2, Issue 4, 1996/1997.



ing reflecting a unique “made-in-BC” PLA model, one that is contributing to the transformation of BC’s educational system.

### Flexibility

In a world in which “learning has no boundaries”<sup>3</sup> the concept of prior learning assessment makes a lot of sense. More than ever people are making the most of learning opportunities all around them—at work, in their homes and communities and on the Internet. But the words—prior learning assessment—many people in BC argue, seem outdated and not a good reflection of the actual process. The phrase flexible assessment has been suggested as a sound alternative since there are, in the BC model, many different ways a learner can be assessed to earn credit and recognition. No longer is the concept of PLA synonymously linked with the use of portfolios. Individuals throughout BC can be assessed through some combination of demonstration, oral questioning, portfolio of direct and indirect evidence, project-based assignments, written tests like challenge examinations or other assessment methods. No one assessment method is recommended as the PLA or flexible assessment tool. The particular tools and methodologies are determined by the nature of the material to be assessed, the learner’s actual experiences and available evidence and the assessor’s need to meet the technical requirements of sound assessment cost effectively.

As colleges and universities begin to work with all of these assessment methods and tools, they realize that although flexibility is important, really, they are assessing learning—no “prior” or “flexible” needed. The methods used to assess learners’ existing skills and knowledge are all *bona fide* assessment methods that have been around for a long time. There is nothing magical about employing any one method or combination of methods to assess what an individual already knows and can do. Because of this realization, a growing number of people are already suggesting that the province drop the term “flexible assessment” and simply talk about assessing learning—regardless of when, where or how that learning was achieved.

### Integration of assessment and learning

Another unique aspect of the emerging BC model is the move to view assessment as integral to the learning process, not as a separate activity that occurs at the end of a set period of learning. Indeed, many people argue that the self-assessment, reflection, feedback and continuous improvement cycle that is intrinsic to PLA is equally fundamental to more effective learning and a process in any context. Increasingly, educators and policy makers alike are realizing that assessment is learning. As one writer recently put it, “Both the content and methods of assessment teach students. Together, they convey a vision of what learning is (and) underscore what really counts....”<sup>4</sup> As the BC model of PLA is illustrating, there can be no meaningful separation of assessment from learning if individuals are to become true life-long learners and see themselves as such.

*“The methods used to assess learners’ existing skills and knowledge are all bona fide assessment methods that have been around for a long time.”*

### Learner as assessment partner

Increasingly, BC learners are active partners in the assessment process. They are being asked to think about all they know and can do, identify sources of evidence that might serve as useful indicators of their learning achievements, and work with advisers and assessors to develop meaningful assessment plans. In many instances individuals are encouraged to use learning outcomes or standards of occupational competence to guide their thoughts and reflections—not just about what they know and can do but about the nature of evidence that will best illustrate their learning achievements. As partners in the assessment process, BC PLA candidates are being asked to gener-

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<sup>3</sup>“Learning has no boundaries: Bringing PLAR into the workplace” is the official name of the 1997 PLAR Conference sponsored by Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC).

<sup>4</sup>Taylor, Kathe. “Assessment Dreams: Rethinking the Connections Among Teaching, Learning and Assessment,” in *Washington Assessment Newsletter*, Volume 6, Number 3, May 1997.



ate evidence from multiple sources whenever possible in order to maximize their participation in the process and enhance the validity of their assessments.

*“I think about what students need to know and be able to do differently now; and I regularly think about how I can help them to integrate their learning through valid and meaningful assessment processes.”<sup>5</sup>*

### Assessment and learning outcomes

Prior learning assessment developments have strong links with other provincial initiatives, not the least of which is the learning outcomes work. Many institutions across program areas are developing clear, assessable descriptions of what learners should be expected to know and do at the end of a course or program. These outcome statements enable all learners (whether they attend traditional classes or not) to develop better learning plans and generate more suitable evidence for the assessment process. They also promote better understanding and collaboration with other learners, faculty and work-place supervisors. As one adult recently put it, “Having the outcome statements lets me see where I am and how far I have to go. I don’t have to spend hours trying to figure out—and worrying about—what the instructor wants.” The development of clear and relevant outcome statements is streamlining the assessment process and enhancing its relevance to learners throughout the province.


### Ensuring quality

Another distinguishing characteristic of the BC PLA work is its emphasis on ensuring technically sound assessments. This is seen as absolutely critical to ensuring the quality of assessments, particularly as colleges, institutes, and universities work more closely together. For the past several years, regular training

and development opportunities have been provided for faculty and other subject specialists, helping them to build on and develop their assessment skills and knowledge. A great deal of effort has gone into ensuring the validity, reliability, currency and authenticity of each assessment, so much so that one faculty member said that a recent PLA training event had enabled her to improve her classroom assessment strategies considerably, “I think about what students need to know and be able to do differently now and I regularly think about how I can help them to integrate their learning through valid and meaningful assessment processes.”<sup>5</sup>

There is little doubt that this focus on quality will support the growing development and use of PLA. No longer will it be viewed as a “soft option” for “well meaning adults.” Rather the learning and assessment processes being spurred by the PLA movement in BC may ultimately provide more meaningful and flexible opportunities for all learners, not just adults, to make maximum benefit of BC’s rich educational and training opportunities.

### Continuing trends

None of the individual trends of the emerging BC PLA system may sound radical. Indeed none are. But together they are transforming, shaping the BC education and training system in subtle (and some not so subtle ways) making it increasingly more responsive, flexible and accountable to individual learners. Over the next year, with continued financial support from the Ministry, there is sure to be an increase in the number of institutions, program areas and employers actively involved in offering flexible assessment services. So too as institutions gain experience and confidence with flexible assessment services, they are likely to find new ways to reduce costs and red tape and increase learner options and flexibility. And most importantly, across the province, a growing number of learners will be able to meet their personal and professional learning goals more effectively and with greater confidence in their own ability to learn. 

<sup>5</sup> Personal comment made by a faculty member at a BC training event in June 1997.



## VIEW POINT

### A University Perspective on PLA

**Kathryn S. Hanson**

*Kathryn S. Hanson is Associate Director of Extension Credit Programs at Simon Fraser University and has represented SFU in the Institutional Coordinators Working Group for PLA since June 1996. She holds a Ph.D. in Germanic Languages and Literatures from Princeton University and has taught at the University of Western Ontario, the University of Alberta, and SFU.*

By university standards of measurement, the formal practice of prior learning assessment (PLA) or flexible assessment is a recent and largely untested phenomenon. In fact, the large majority of faculty have yet to encounter a student request for PLA (by any name) even at an institution like Simon Fraser University where the option of course challenge has been widely, albeit unevenly, available for more than 20 years. Of those faculty who have fielded such requests, most voice an aversion to formalized PLA, yet tend to be sympathetic with the needs of the student and willing to call into play a variety of PLA-related practices such as waiving pre-requisites, granting advanced standing or unassigned credit, or facilitating challenge credit, often based on as little as an interview or successful completion of a few short assignments. Contrary to myths afloat in the post-secondary sector, it is the rare university professor who would, when confronted with the certainty that a student had already mastered, by whatever means, the content of a particular course or achieved its objectives, insist that the student retake the course in its entirety.

#### Faculty concerns

The difficulty, of course, lies in establishing that certainty. What we learned from a comprehensive review of course challenge practices at SFU last year is that perceptions of how straightforward or complex it might be to assess prior knowledge in relation to course material vary considerably from faculty to faculty. In most science departments, for example,

where learning outcomes are fairly easy to define, the appropriateness of course challenge is simply not an issue: if a student can pass the final exam, then that's indication enough of mastering the course material. In many humanities courses, on the other hand, learning outcomes are much more difficult to articulate and are often indistinguishable from the learning process; attempting to equate prior learning with these courses can be cumbersome and downright time-consuming. Indeed, time and money quickly become the major determinants of practice, rather than the overall needs of the student. In times of ongoing budget cuts and increasing faculty workloads, it makes little sense to pursue flexible assessment beyond the point where the cost of assessing the student's prior learning exceeds the cost to the student and the province of (re)taking the course (recognizing that cost to the student beyond tuition fees is clearly a murky area).

For budgetary reasons as well, many believe that unless demand for course challenge rises substantially above its current low level, this option for students will necessarily remain limited in reach and faculty will not feel disposed to design the generic challenge exams required to facilitate it. Should we then cultivate demand by lowering the price and advertising the availability of challenge credit? This idea makes a lot of faculty uneasy. After all, it's one thing to deal

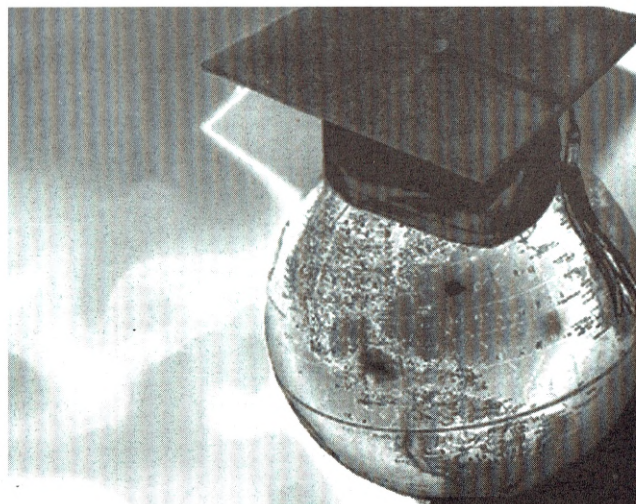


Illustration by Elaine Bayley



with self-motivated student requests, but quite another to set up shop. Some faculty, especially in professional programs such as Business

Administration, fear that misunderstanding can ensue from promotional materials suggesting that experiential and classroom learning are equivalent (especially at the course level) when more often they are complementary.

*It is this argument, that the whole of the program is worth more than the sum of its parts, that causes faculty to pause when discussing the merits of flexible assessment.*

This points to another major concern, namely the role of course challenge or flexible assessment in the student's program of study and the integrity or coherence of that program. Just because a student has mastered the content or objectives of one or two courses, does this mean the full value of those courses within the context of the program has also been attained? If not, then perhaps alternative courses should be required instead of granting credit outright. It is this argument, that the whole of the program is worth more than the sum of its parts, that causes faculty to pause when discussing the merits of flexible assessment. Of particular concern is the development of skills and dispositions such as persuasive writing and critical thinking, which are the product not of one or two courses, or even of a major or minor program, but rather of the undergraduate experience as a whole. The tendency of the PLA movement to dismiss faculty reservations such as these as self-interested or resistant to necessary educational reforms has been unnecessarily provocative and, so far, has not answered the broader pedagogical concerns. Rigorous though the technical requirements of PLA may be<sup>1</sup>, they are of little help without a clear understanding of what they are measuring against and why.

### **Broadening the focus to achieve our goals**

If those of us who are sympathetic to the goals of flexible assessment are to move beyond this impasse

and bring our academic colleagues on side, then we must stop rushing ahead with a solution that makes too many people uneasy and pause long enough to take in the big picture: a picture that doesn't just focus on the solution of PLA, but brings the underlying problem into sharp relief. The question now, as it was for the pioneers of PLA, is how to provide people in mid-career or mid-life with access to advanced education in a way that takes account of what they have learned over the years outside the classroom and, as well, allows them to integrate that knowledge with a coherent program of study. Framed in this way, the argument for seeking creative, academically responsible solutions to the growing demands of adult learners is a compelling one.

When one considers that the lower division university curriculum has been structured and developed for a young, inexperienced population entering university directly from secondary school, it does not make sense to require the mid-career adult to follow the same path. Why would we place the 35-year old legal secretary or the 42-year old company trainer on a par with an 18-year old first-year student when such a practice not only fails to acknowledge the possibility of substantial on-the-job learning, it ignores the personal and societal costs of time spent out of the work force as the mid-career adult attempts to complete a university degree one or two courses at a time on top of or at the expense of a full-time job?

### **Changing demographics and university programs**

This is not an idle question, for the student population is undergoing a significant demographic shift, exacerbated by the profound restructuring of the economy underway since the early 1990s. More than a dozen years ago, Ernst Lynton drew attention to the changing demands on higher education:

We have entered an age in which individuals of all ages require, or at least desire, the kinds of courses and programs that used to be largely confined to a lower age group. What we think of as undergraduate or graduate education is no longer a commodity dispensed only to young people preparing for a career. It is now in demand by a much broader spectrum of the population.

<sup>1</sup>CT. S. Simosko and C. Cook, *Applying APL Principles in Flexible Assessment: A Practical Guide* (London: Kogan Page, 1996), 97-123.



Colleges and universities, therefore, must face up to a very clear and immensely important choice: are they institutions defined by *what* they teach, regardless of the nature of the student body, or are they to be characterized by *whom* they teach?<sup>2</sup>

Motivated by the new expectations of employers and altered employment patterns, an increasing proportion of the adult population recognizes the need for further education, either in the form of retraining or of upgrading with a degree or other credential. As a result, a more diverse group in terms both of age and learning experience is now seeking entry to post-secondary institutions.

There is a strong demand for degree programs that are designed for those already in careers, that build upon previously acquired knowledge, and that can enhance workplace skills, flexibility, and acumen. Indeed, there have been numerous expressions of interest in the development of degree-completion opportunities at Simon Fraser University, particularly for potential students who have substantial technical training and successful experience in a field of practice, but little or no university transferable credit. These needs cannot easily or efficiently be met by conventional degree requirements, which are primarily designed for relatively inexperienced individuals and which prescribe that students work through sequences of foundational courses as prerequisite to the more specialized material that would be of more direct benefit to those already in careers. By the same token, course challenge and similar flexible assessment methods that seek to establish course equivalencies for prior knowledge are too time consuming, cumbersome, and costly to deal efficiently with well-developed professional competencies or cumulative blocks of on-the-job learning.

### Rethinking the baccalaureate

In 1995, following the lead of some of its own graduate programs that recognize experiential learning experience, such as the Executive MBA, the M.Ed degree, and the Graduate Liberal Studies Program, SFU undertook to respond to these challenges at the undergraduate level. One of the first steps was to take a hard look at degree requirements and attempt to articulate the values and knowledge represented

by a bachelor's degree. What is it, we asked, that we expect students to have learned by the end of the first two university years that makes them ready for upper division work? If we can understand that, then it should be possible to determine whether mid-career adult students seeking admission to the university already possess the required level of readiness for the final two years.

*The question now, as it was for the pioneers of PLA, is how to provide people in mid-career or mid-life with access to advanced education in a way that takes account of what they have learned over the years outside the classroom and, as well, allows them to integrate that knowledge with a coherent program of study.*

Although learning derived from experience in a field of practice is not the same as what is learned in lower level university courses, it nevertheless bears comparison in several pertinent ways. Like first-and-second-year university students, employees develop learning skills appropriate to their surroundings and acquire a specialized vocabulary. As they move into more responsible decision-making roles, they develop their critical thinking and problem-solving skills, gaining something akin to what mathematicians would call "math maturity." Even more significant, like first and second-year university courses, several years of workplace experience serve as a screening device that separates the highly motivated and capable from the less motivated and capable, and separates as well those who have developed various "street smarts"—such as, focusing on a task, setting priorities, and managing time—from those who have not. Again comparable to the university experience, the workplace evaluation process documents attitude and achievement, and earmarks high achievers for advancement. However, what many mid-career adults lack is the foundational breadth and theoretic depth which characterizes an undergraduate education and which is necessary to further develop the many skills they have already acquired on the job.


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<sup>2</sup>Ernst Lynton, *The Missing Connection Between Business and the Universities* (New York/London: Collier Macmillan, 1984), 75.



## Piloting the new model and evaluating results

So with this in mind, SFU set out to develop programs customized to the needs and experiences of mature learners rather than measure their prior learning and fit it into existing programs. The resulting Integrated Studies Programs are cohort model undergraduate degree completion opportunities that consist of coherent programs of study organized around the challenges and principles related to a specific field of interest or practice; build on students' work experience and knowledge, both credentialed and uncredentialed; and involve employers or other sponsors in the selection of suitable candidates. The pilot class of the Integrated Studies Program in Liberal and Business Studies is now in its sixth semester of a nine semester program and a second cohort began classes in January. What is significant about these groups of students is that, while their educational backgrounds range from an engineering degree at one extreme to no post-secondary coursework at the other, and while each

student comes into the program with on average only 30 university transfer credits, they will all follow the same 60-credit hour program of study, and those who successfully complete it will earn the Bachelor of General Studies degree (a four-year, 120 credit-hour degree). The key is flexible admissions, a process by which we screen sponsored candidates using a matrix of factors which we believe allows us, efficiently and effectively, to determine readiness for the program. But we are not just taking this process on faith and neither is the University. We have been documenting and evaluating this program since its inception, making adjustments where necessary, and are committed to continue at the very least until the conclusion of the third cohort. If the results to date have been gratifying, they are nevertheless preliminary. But they bear watching and should make a significant contribution to the formal documentation of results that has been lacking in the flexible assessment movement and that will be essential to garner the support of faculty over the long term. 

### Prior Learning Assessment CASE STUDIES

Name: Camilla McGuire

Occupation: Child and Youth Care worker

Presenting Situation: Camilla's professional experience is extensive, including working with physically and mentally challenged children and their families and providing support for families with children at risk of abuse. Throughout her career she actively pursued learning opportunities through extension courses, professional development workshops and some formal course work. Camilla had completed a Diploma in Early Childhood Education from Britain, as well as a few selected Arts and Sciences

courses, but she lacked the specific transfer courses that would enable her to enter a professional degree program. When Camilla heard about PLA and attended an information session, she decided to request credit in the Child & Youth Diploma Program, as completion of this diploma would provide her with admission to 3rd year of the Degree.

Achievement: Diploma in Child & Youth Care. After being awarded this Diploma, Camilla was admitted to 3rd year of the Bachelor of Social Work program at the University of Victoria.

Institution: Malaspina University-College, Nanaimo

Methods of Assessment: Review of an extensive portfolio which documented knowledge and skills through work descriptions, self-assessments related to each credit request, letters of validation, case studies, an analysis of professional development courses completed, and a video demonstrating her counselling skills; an oral assessment was also conducted.

Personal Comment: "PLA provided a leap forward, accelerating my progress toward my goal. What had looked like an endless process [attaining a degree] now appears attainable. PLA afforded me with an opportunity to look back and reflect on what I had learned over the past 25 years but also to look forward and consider where I am headed. I would recommend PLA for any experienced and mature adult wishing to accelerate their progress toward a degree."



## Prior Learning Assessment: Where We Are Now

**Carol Matthews**

*Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology*

Five years ago we did not hear much about Prior Learning Assessment in British Columbia, but now it is a hot topic for discussion and debate at articulation committee meetings, Education Council meetings, and departmental meetings around the province. Faculty, students, educational leaders, registrars and advisors are asking questions about PLA and what it means for them and their institutions. What was until recently a service at only a few institutions, and often only in their continuing education and contract training programs, has now become a mainstream activity that the College Institute/Educators' Association has claimed as faculty work which should be integrated into regular faculty workload.

So what is Prior Learning Assessment, and why are we doing it? According to the definition adopted by the BC Council on Admission and Transfer in May, 1994, PLA is assessment by some valid and reliable means, by a qualified specialist, of what has been learned through non-formal education/training or experience, that is worthy of credit in a course or program offered by the institution providing the credit.

The concept is a simple one: regardless of where the learning has taken place, knowledge and skills can be assessed and, if they are equivalent to existing courses in a program, they should be recognized.

Why are we doing it? Most colleges and universities have a long-standing practice of using challenge exams to recognize prior learning, and many departments routinely consider evidence of competence as a reason for exempting students from certain course requirements. These practices are not new. Nor is the portfolio method of assessment which is often used in conjunction with demonstrations, testimonials, and the recognition of program equivalencies.

What is new is the growth in PLA activities. As "life-long learning" becomes a reality, and not just a buzzword, we see more and more students returning

to school after gaining considerable knowledge from their experience in a work environment, in community activities, and in non-formal or informal educational pursuits. These students want recognition for the learning they bring with them when they enter a program of study.

Prior Learning Assessment is a service which students are now beginning to expect. In British Columbia last year, more than 1280 students were awarded assessment for their prior learning. This year the provincial government has committed one million dollars to fund the development of Prior Learning Assessment programs and services in the post-secondary system. In his opening remarks at Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology's Spring Forum on Prior Learning Assessment, the Honourable Paul Ramsey, Minister of Education, Skills and Training, announced that the BC government is pleased with the progress that institutions across the province have made in implementing prior learning assessment and that this approach is consistent with the government's overall plan for post-secondary education.

With more than three years experience in the implementation of Prior Learning Assessment at our institutions, we are acquiring considerable knowledge about the benefits that result when students have the opportunity to have their prior learning assessed and recognized for credit.

Employers have been vocal about the value of creating a learning environment in the workplace which supports increased employee career development while reducing time and training costs. Robin McQueen, Executive Director of the Nanaimo Family Life Association, says, "Many of our employees are interested in upgrading their professional qualifications. Prior Learning Assessment recognizes and validates the skills and abilities that our employees have and makes continued education more feasible for working people. It's an innovative '90s approach' to learning that results in a win-win situation for the agency and its staff."

cont'd on page 16



Prior to 1992 • Early development at Open Learning Agency



## Five Years of PLA Progress in British Columbia

- 1992** • Human Resource Development Report identifies the need to develop greater capacity to assess prior learning in BC
- 1993** • First provincial forum on PLA sponsored by Ministry of Skills, Training & Labour, and BC Council on Admissions & Transfer (BCCAT)
  - BCCAT establishes a provincial PLA Steering Committee and appoints first PLA Coordinator
  - BCCAT PLA Steering Committee develops “system wide” standards and guidelines for PLA
- 1994** • BCCAT sponsors provincial PLA workshop for colleges, institutes and universities
  - Consortium of colleges develops two PLA handbooks
  - Seven colleges, institutes, and university colleges receive funds from the Ministry of Skills, Training & Labour Innovations Fund for PLA activity
  - First post-secondary credits awarded through PLA
- PLA coordination diversifies in BC through BCCAT, Centre for Curriculum, and Professional Development, and Ministry of Skills, Training & Labour
- 1995** • Ministry of Education, Skills and Training funds ten institutions for PLA activities
- 1996** • Credits awarded through PLA in six BC post-secondary institutions
  - Charting A New Course assigns responsibility for system-wide implementation of Flexible Learning Assessment, including PLA, to the newly-formed Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology (C2T2)
  - Ministry of Skills, Training & Labour funds twenty institutions for PLA activities
  - C2T2 develops terms of reference for PLA Provincial Steering Committee and Institutional PLA Coordinators Working Group
- 1997** • PLA Provincial Steering Committee and Institutional PLA Coordinators Working Group review and revise standards and guidelines for provincial consultation and review
  - C2T2 hosts Provincial PLA Forum. Minister Paul Ramsey opens forum with announcement of PLA funding
  - Ten Training Modules piloted, evaluated, revised and prepared for distribution
  - College Institute/Educators’ Association (CIEA) passes resolution claiming PLA as faculty work which must be included in regular workload
  - PLA Provincial Steering Committee holds think tank session to consider PLA funding and workload issues
  - BC is represented by numerous panelists, workshop presenters and speakers at the Canadian Labour Force Development Board’s 2nd National Forum on Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition, in Montreal.



cont'd from page 14

Educational institutions are beginning to recognize that Prior Learning Assessment enhances student recruitment and retention and allows more appropriate student placement in courses and programs. Beverley Miller, Dean of Child, Family and Community Studies and Psychiatric Nursing at Douglas College, claims "Prior Learning Assessment opens up opportunities for students to attend classes on a part-time basis. This increases the institution's productivity while creating greater access for students. Furthermore, the use of PLA in work-based assessment provides opportunities to work more closely with employers which helps us to keep our curriculum strongly linked with practice."

Faculty involved in PLA state that providing this service encourages them to adopt new approaches, helps them to use assessment skills more creatively, and generally creates a more positive learning environment. As Dr. Marilyn Callahan at the University of Victoria commented, "Initially I was concerned that PLA might water down the quality of our program. I discovered that the opposite occurred. Students were able to recognize what they knew already, get credit

for it, and move on to new challenges and learning. Our quality improved."

The most obvious benefits, of course, are for the learners, and especially for mature students. Now that the average age of students in our post-secondary programs has risen to twenty-eight years, we find that many students are balancing their activities as learners with demanding home, family and work responsibilities. The increased access, reduced time in class, and reduced cost are of great importance to them. Above all, students gain self-esteem and confidence from being recognized for what they already know and can do. This helps them to develop learning plans to achieve their educational goals and encourages them to become successful in those areas where they have much to learn.



The Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology maintains a list of Prior Learning Assessment Coordinators in the BC post-secondary system. If you would like a copy of this list contact Laura Krueger at (250)413-4451 or e-mail lkrueger@ctt.bc.ca.

## Prior Learning Assessment CASE STUDIES

Name: Dean Campbell

Previous Education: B.A., Double Major in Psychology and Criminology

Occupation: Social Worker, Ministry of Children and Families

Presenting Situation: Dean has been employed as a Social Worker with the Ministry of Children and Families since 1994. When the report of the Gove Enquiry into Child Welfare made its recommendations, a Cabinet decision announced that hundreds of practicing social workers in British Columbia would be required to acquire a Bachelor of Social Work credential. Dean applied for

Prior Learning Assessment when he entered a Compressed BSW degree program at the University of Victoria School of Social Work.

Achievement: Credit for 3rd year practicum; two second

year courses completed through compressed learning and assessment modules.

Institution: University of Victoria

Methods of Assessment: Practicum Course assessed through an extensive portfolio documenting knowledge and practice skills through case studies, demonstrations, field notes, resume, and supervisors' assessments; compressed modules assessed by exams.

Personal Comment: "As an adult learner, I appreciated the opportunity to show what I had done and what I knew. The Prior Learning Assessment gave students in this program a good inventory of our skill set and our knowledge which was valuable in itself, as we may not have been aware of the extent of this knowledge. It was important for us to have our real experience in the field acknowledged so that we were able to go on and learn new things. I think Prior Learning Assessment is great — it's the way it's got to be for adult learners."



# Open House



**Tuesday, October 21, 1997  
2pm - 5pm**

## **Centre for Curriculum, Transfer & Technology**

We'd like you to be our guest.

On October 21 we're having an Open House to show you some of the changes we've made. The *Centre for Curriculum, Transfer & Technology* has been busy this last year and we'd like you to see some of what we've accomplished.

Here are some of the activities and events that will be happening:

- A live demonstration of our video conferencing facility;

- a chance to meet and exchange ideas with people who work at the Centre;
- a showcasing of our partnerships;
- and much more.

Mark your calendar and plan to attend.

*2nd Floor, 1483 Douglas Street, Victoria*

**RSVP**

Catrin Roach  
(250) 413-4442, fax (250) 413-4403, email: croach@ctt.bc.ca

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## Learner Transitions

### New Appointment

The Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology is pleased to announce the appointment of John Meagher as Team Leader of the Secondary to Post-Secondary Transitions Team. John is retiring from his position as Vice President of North Island College and will be working with the Centre beginning in September 1997.

#### Proficiency Based Entrance Project

John Meagher will be leading the Centre's project on proficiency based entrance to post-secondary institutions. The Team will be developing a secondary to post-secondary transfer guide in collaboration with the education partners in the system. A particular focus in this year will be English and Mathematics. The Centre will be seeking proposals for pilot projects that link university colleges and local schools and school districts in determining appropriate proficiencies for University Transfer programs and institution entrance. Further details will be announced in the fall.

### Articulation Handbook

A writing team which includes secondary and post-secondary instructors, and representatives from BCCAT, the Ministry and C2T2 is in the process of writing a handbook for articulation agreements. There are 353 partnership or articulation agreements in place between schools and school districts and their local college or BCIT. About half of these agreements are between BCIT and school districts.

The Articulation Handbook a) clarifies the concepts, advantages and limitations of secondary-to-post-secondary articulation, b) provides guidelines and templates for negotiating agreements and c) provides examples of current

agreements from a centralized database at the C2T2.

The Handbook is in its third draft and scheduled to be printed this summer.

For more information or to be put on a mailing list for the final copy, please contact: John FitzGibbon telephone : (250) 413-4460; fax: (250) 413-4403 e-mail: jfitzgibbon@ctt.bc.ca

### Career Pathways Project

The Career Pathways Project seeks to create or identify educational pathways that enable learners to proceed from secondary school to certificate, diploma programs and degree programs and into the workplace. Career Pathways projects include: Forestry; Secondary Wood Manufacturing; Information Technology; Human Services and Health Sciences; Tourism; Business and Office Administration; Fine Arts; Electronics; and Entrepreneurship. Each of these projects is guided by a workteam including members from C2T2 and the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training. Significant progress has been made during the last 12 months through the co-operative effort individuals, groups, institutions and agencies. The workteam will continue to develop articulation agreements, program core agreements and transfer agreements. Work will also continue to align proficiencies between secondary and post-secondary systems in pathways areas, to communicate this important information to learners, parents and counsellors, and to establish linkages to provincial industry organizations. For more information regarding this project please contact Jennifer Yee (250) 413-4472; fax: (250) 413-4403; e-mail: jyee@ctt.bc.ca.

### Applied Academics Conference

On May 28-30, 1997, the Center for Applied Academics hosted the third annual Applied Academics Conference at BCIT's Burnaby Campus. The conference highlighted the integrating of applied academics courses into secondary programming, the acceptance of applied academics courses as prerequisites for entrance by post-secondary

institutions, and the acceptance of applied academics courses as foundations for career programs. A video on Applied Academics called *HEY! I CAN DO THIS!* showing teachers and students actively engaged in applied academics was premiered at the conference.

The conference also showcased students currently enrolled in applied academics courses who expressed in their own words how the new courses are improving their learning.

For further information regarding Applied Academics Initiatives currently underway, please contact Nell Ross at (250) 413-4402.

### Report of the Working Committee on Public-Private Articulation Agreements

The Working Committee on Public-Private Articulation Agreements has now released its draft report. The report describes the need for formal arrangements between public post-secondary colleges and institutes and accredited private training institutions and makes recommendations for policy and criteria to be adopted by the Ministry to govern such agreements.

Co-chaired by Scott MacInnis, Ministry of Education, Skills & Training, and Carol Matthews, C2T2, the Working Group had representation from public and private institutions as well as from the College Institute/Educators' Association of BC, the BC Government and Service Employees Union, the BC Council on Admission and Transfer, and the Private Post-Secondary Education Commission.

The report, which is available from the Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology, contains recommendations for a policy statement, principles and guidelines to govern the negotiation of agreements, a "checklist" to assist those negotiating agreements, and a discussion of critical issues related to the success of articulation between public and private institutions.



## The Curriculum Bookshelf

### Foodsafe Student Workbook

The provincial Foodsafe program provides training on the prevention of foodborne illness in food service settings. Instructor resources and video programs have been available for several years. Recently the Foodsafe Level 1 (Basic) Student Workbook was developed at the request of instructors and the Steering Committee is now recommending that it be required. The workbook covers the key food safety concepts in the Level 1 course including microbiology, foodborne illnesses, hygiene, serving, preparation, storage, and dishwashing. It also contains quizzes with answer spaces, a list of common pathogens, a glossary of terms, a registration form, and an examination answer sheet. In addition, the workbook can serve as a post-training reference for workers. (order number: M100613)

### Novels for Adult Learners

These novels, funded by the Ministry of Education, Skills and Training and the National Literacy

Secretariat, contain main characters and themes that will appeal to adult learners who are improving their reading skills.

#### • *The Buckle* by Don Sawyer

The British Columbia bull-riding champion's buckle. Luke wants it more than anything else in the world. And he is willing to do anything to get it. But when he lands in Oakalla Prison, things begin to change. What really is important? What demons from his past is he trying to ride? Can he break them? Or will they destroy Luke? Finally he gets his big chance – the BC Rodeo Championships. *The Buckle* is the exciting story of bull riding and much more. It is the adventure of one man trying to find happiness. To find respect. In the process he discovers that the biggest contest is not in the ring. It's inside himself. Can he meet the challenge? (order number: VA0190)

#### • *Crocodiles and Rivers* by Don Sawyer

"Gordy, let's go to Africa," Ross suggests. Africa? Gordy's never been farther than Reno! Can two British Columbia mill workers really make their way to Africa? And when they do, what will they find? *Crocodiles and Rivers* is the story of Ross and

Gordy. One is black, one white. They work side by side at the mill, but they come from different worlds. Now they are in Africa. Everything is new. Everything is exciting. Will Ross find the home he is looking for? And for Gordy, this is the adventure of his life. What will he discover? (order number: VA0191)

#### • *Frozen Tears* by Don Sawyer

Laura's childhood has been a nightmare. Cruelty. Loss. Loneliness. She locks her feelings deep inside. But Laura is a survivor. She finds strength, courage and determination. She learns to drive a skidder. She survives in a tough world. She saves herself and her daughter from an abusive relationship. She elbows her way into managing a hay ranch. *Frozen Tears* is the story of a woman strong enough to beat all the odds. But is she strong enough to let herself feel again? (order number: VA0192)

#### • *The Mailbox* by Kate Ferris

Helen Turner is a young and beautiful woman married to a much older man. One spring morning she walks out to her mailbox. The letter in her hand is addressed to a stranger, a bush pilot. She slips the letter into

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the box, and raises the red flag. What Helen doesn't know is that the letter she has just mailed will change her life. Looming ahead is a series of mysterious explosions, an airplane crash, and the fires of passion. Helen will be forced to choose between the man she married and the man she loves. (order number: VA0193)

• *The Scowling Frog* by Kate Ferris  
Nathan and Pozzi are in trouble. They have stolen something sacred. The spirits are angry, and so is the sea. In a few minutes they could be swept overboard. The waves are growing ever higher. Alice is busy bailing water over the side. Her long dark hair whips across her face. Both Pozzi and Nathan are in love with her. Both of them have lied to her. But there is something more important right now. In a boat holding three people, there are only two life jackets. (order number: VA0194)

• *Three Wise Men* by Kate Ferris  
Should Hank report the murder he has just witnessed? If he does, will the Mafia kill him, too? Dawn is still a few cold hours away. Hank must keep moving to stay warm. He paces back and forth along the sidewalk. Fear squeezes his chest. What to do? If only he were safely back in Canada in his own small village. He was a fool. He should never have let his buddies talk him into this crazy plan – coming to New York City to sell Christmas trees. But he's here – and he could be dead by Christmas. (order number: VA0195)

### Job Handbooks

These three job handbooks were adapted for BC from Alberta publications. Because of the high demand, the Centre has recently renegotiated the agreement with Alberta for the right to sell the handbooks.

*Marketing Your Skills: The Job Seeker's Handbook* (order number:

MN1443) outlines a campaign approach to seeking employment and covers topics such as organizing the job search, communicating skills, and maintaining a positive attitude. *Making a New Beginning: The Adult Back-to-School Book* (order number: MN1441) helps make returning to school easier. It includes worksheets and hints on improving skills, using resources, and making choices. The third book, *Creating a New Future: The Job-Loss Workbook* (order number: MN1442), was developed to assist laid-off workers cope with job loss and prepare for new employment. Topics such as severance packages, financial planning, coping, support networks, and examining options are included.

Also of interest is *The Job Guide: A Tool for Career Planning in BC*. The guide focuses on jobs that require up to two years of post-secondary education or apprenticeship training. It also provides simple interest and strengths assessments, information on jobs in demand, and overall pictures of various occupational fields. (order number: MN1149)

### Ordering

Copies of these publications can be ordered from the Marketing Department, Open Learning Agency, 4355 Mathissi Place, Burnaby, BC V5G 4S8, 604-431-3210, 1-800-663-1653, 604-431-3381 fax, [catalogue@ola.bc.ca](mailto:catalogue@ola.bc.ca).

## Ed Tech Updates

### Comparative Analysis of Online Instructional Software

User Participation Needed to Evaluate Specific Software Applications

(Learning Space, Virtual-U, Web in a

Box, WebCT, Top Class)

Dr. Bruce Landon (Douglas College, New Westminster, BC) is conducting a research project entitled, 'Comparative Analysis of Online Instructional Software'. His findings will be mounted on a website and will detail: instructor, learner, administrative and technical tools; software features; and technical information and pricing. This website will be a resource for educational planning and decision-making.

The final phase of this research project requires feedback from USERS (instructors, learners and technical administrators) who have experience with one or more of the following instructional software applications: Learning Space, Virtual-U, Web Course in a Box, WebCT, Top Class. Users are being solicited to participate in an online survey designed to rate the effectiveness and ease of use of a specific application. The survey takes about 10 to 15 minutes to complete.

If you have used one or more of the above applications we would like to hear from you. Your input will help other educators identify a product suitable to meet their needs. If you are interested in participating please contact:

Amanda Harby, Manager,  
Educational Technology, Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology.

E-mail: [harby@camosun.bc.ca](mailto:harby@camosun.bc.ca)

Completed surveys will be accepted until October 15, 1997.

P.S. It is anticipated that the website will be launched Fall, 1997.

Other software applications may be evaluated at a later date if they meet the criteria of the research study. All users who participate will be notified on the progress of the site.



## C2T2 Events & Conferences

Canadian Vocational Association (CVA) Virtual National Conference October 16-18, 1997 - Victoria, BC  
Theme: Assessment.

Keith Dunbar, C2T2, 250-413-4455, 250-413-4403 fax, dunbar@ctt.bc.ca.

Meeting the Learning and Training Needs of Adult Workers December 1-3, 1997 - Coast Plaza at Stanley Park, Vancouver, BC Marguerite McCallion, C2T2, 250-413-4446, 250-413-4403 fax.

Connections '98: Bridging the Gap.

The Conference on Educational Technology for Post-Secondary Educators

May 10-13, 1998 Vancouver, BC

Amanda Harby, 250-413-4403 fax, harby@ctt.bc.ca, <http://www.ctt.bc.ca/edtech/etconnex.html>.

## C2T2 Professional Development Events

For more information about C2T2 related PD events please contact Diane Morrison (dmorrison@ctt.bc.ca), or Cheryl Wilson (cwilson@ctt.bc.ca)

Fast Forward '98

May 26-27, 1998 - Capilano College

Susan Weber, Langara College, 604-323-5533, 604-323-5475, sweber@langara.bc.ca

Great Teaching Seminar '98

A residential institute: June 7-9 - Naramata, BC

For educators interested in improving as teachers

ISW Facilitators Institute '98

A residential institute: June 9-14, 1998 - Naramata BC

For ISW Program Facilitators

Chairs Development Institute '98

May 11-14, 1998 - Bowen Island, BC

Focuses on the development of academic leadership skills for chairs with various levels of experience.

Instructional Skills Facilitator Development Workshop '98

May 25-29, 1998 - New Westminster, BC

Prepares existing faculty members to be ISW facilitators at their own campuses.

Pacific Management Development Institute (PMDI) '98

A residential institute: June 15-18 1998 - Bowen Island, BC

Provides an opportunity for professional growth and career development for administrators and managers.

Video Conference Programs

Program site licenses are available through the Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology.

## Other Events and Conferences

ABE Association of BC September 26-27, 1997 - Okanagan University College Pushing the Edges.

Patty Bossort, 250-358-2745, 250-358-2746 fax, 75060.3120@compuserve.com.

2nd National Forum on Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition (PLAR) October 6-8, 1997 - Montreal, Quebec  
PLAR '97 Secretariat, 613-233-5179, 613-233-4766 fax.

League for Innovation in the Community College Conference on Information Technology October 12-15, 1997 - Atlanta, Georgia Mark D. Milliron, The League for Innovation in the Community College, 714-367-2884, 714-367-2885 fax, [www.league.org](http://www.league.org).

The International Society for Exploring Teaching Alternatives (ISETA) Conference October 16-18, 1997 • Fredericton, NB Gloria Balderrama, Colorado State University, 970-491-6452, gloria@math.colostate.edu.

Professional and Organizational Network in Higher Education Annual Conference October 16-19, 1997 - Haines City, FL Our Voice and Our Visions: Their Past, Present, and Future. Kay Herr Gillespie, Conference Coordinator, 914-446-7412, kaygi@uga.cc.uga.edu.

BC Dental Educators Conference October 18, 1997 - Open Learning Agency, Burnaby, BC Karen Leong, Registration Coordinator, 604-431-3387.

Canadian Institutional Research and Planning Association Annual Conference October 19-21, 1997 • Toronto, ON

Back to the Future for Higher Education: the More Things Change . . . Ken Snowdon, Queen's University, 613-545-2100, 613-545-6371 fax, snowdonk@post.queensu.ca.

Regional Lilly Conference on College & University Teaching October 22-24, 1997 - Columbia River Gorge, OR

International Alliance of Teacher Scholars, Inc., 412-361-5425, 412-362-6195 fax, Alliance@IATS.com.

National Council for Staff, Program and Organizational

Development (NCSPOD) Annual Conference October 22-25, 1997 - San Antonio, TX Building Bridges. Tom Rodgers, Collin County Community College, 972-377-1551, 972-377-3226 fax, [www.rh.cc.ca.us/ncspod/ncspod.htm](http://www.rh.cc.ca.us/ncspod/ncspod.htm).

Canadian Vocational Institute  
(CVA)

**Virtual  
National  
Conference**



October 16-18, 1997

Sponsored by the Office of Learning Technologies

Regional Host: Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology

The Conference theme is Assessment. Regional sites (TBA) will prepare local programs and be responsible to address the other regions with real-time presentations.

For more information call Keith Dunbar (250) 413-4455, or e-mail dunbar@ctt.bc.ca

For updates check <http://www.cva.ca/>



### Problem Based Learning Workshops

McMaster University, Faculty of Health Sciences through the Programme for Faculty Development, offers the following workshops in the fall of 1997.

Teaching and Learning in the Clinical Setting Oct 23-24,

Problem Based Learning in Small Groups Oct 14-15,

Role of the Tutor in Small Group Learning Oct 16-17

Visitors' Workshop November 17-20,

Annette F. Sciarra, McMaster University, 905-525-9140, ext. 22714, 905-528-6552 fax, SCIARRA@fhs.csu.McMaster.ca.

### How to Become an Oscar Winning Teacher. October 31, 1997

Featuring: Tony Grasha, Ph.D. Sponsored by Virginia Tidewater Consortium for Higher Education and National University Telecommunications Network (NUTN).

### National Conference on Students in Transition

November 5-8, 1997 - Chicago, IL

Ilana Myerson, University of South Carolina, 803-777-6029, 803-777-4699 fax, fyeconf@ss1.csd.sc.edu.

### Canadian Bureau for International Education Annual Conference

November 6-8, 1997 - Ottawa, ON

Canada and the Pacific World: Imperatives for International Education. Mary Kane, Conference Manager, 613-237-4820, ext 222, 613-237-1073 fax, mkane@cbie.ca.

### Association for the Study of Higher Education (ASHE)

Conference 1997 November 6-9, 1997 - Albuquerque, NM  
ASHE Office, 409-845-0393, 409-862-4347 fax.

### Education and Employment of Graduate Teaching Assistants

November 6-9, 1997 - Minneapolis, MN

Dr. Jan Smith, Center for Teaching and Learning Services, University of Minnesota, 612-625-3389, 612-625-3382 fax, smith004@maroon.tc.umn.edu.

### Orientation for Institutional Board Members

November 7-8, 1997 - Vancouver, BC

Gerry Della Mattia, AECBC, 604-895-5080, 604-895-5088, gerry@aecbc.bc.ca.

### TESL Canada/BC TEAL Conference

November 7-9, 1997 - Victoria, BC

World Skills: Language & Living.

1-800-393-9199, in Vancouver call 298-0312, info@tesl.ca, www.tesl.ca

### TESL Canada/BC TEAL Conference

November 8-9, 1997 - University of Victoria

Dr. Maggie Warbey, Dept. of Linguistics, UVic, 250-721-7420, 250-721-7423 fax.

### North American Conference on The Learning Paradigm

January 10-13, 1998 - San Diego, CA Visioning the Future of Undergraduate Education. 760-744-1150 ext. 2154, 760-591-9108 fax, learncon@palomar.edu.

### Trainer Certification Workshop

January 22-23, 1998 - Vancouver, BC

Personal Strengths Publishing, 760-730-7310, 760-730-7368 fax, psp4sdi@aol.com.

### National Consultation on Career Development (NATCON)

Conference January 26-28, 1998 - Ottawa, ON

Genevieve Beaupre, 416-978-8022, 416-978-2271 fax.

### Freshman Year Experience West Conference

January 29-February 1, 1998 - San Diego, CA

Ilana Myerson, University of South Carolina, 803-777-6029, 803-777-4699 fax, fyeconf@ss1.csd.sc.edu.

### American Association for Higher Education (AAHE) Forum on

Faculty Roles & Rewards Conference

January 29-February 1, 1998 - Orlando, FL

www.aahe.org/calendar.htm.

### International Conference for Chairs, Deans, and Other

Organizational Leaders February 25-28, 1998 - Houston, TX

Leadership in a Time of Change: Thinking Outside the Box.

The Chair Academy, Mesa, AZ, 602-461-6275 fax.

### National Conference on the Freshman Year Experience

February 20-24, 1998 - Columbia, SC

Ilana Myerson, University of South Carolina, 803-777-6029, 803-777-4699 fax, fyeconf@ss1.csd.sc.edu.

### Washington Center Annual Conference

February 26-28, 1998 - Seattle, WA

Embracing Community, Diversity and Change.

Laura O'Brady, obrady@elwha.evergreen.edu.

### College-Institute Educators' Association (CIEA) PD Seminar

March 28, 1998 - Vancouver, BC

CIEA, 604-873-8988, 604-873-8865 fax.

### American Educational Research Association Annual Meeting

April 13-17, 1998 - San Diego, CA

Christine E. Sleeter, General Program Chair, 408-582-3641,

408-582-3356 fax, chrisine\_sleeter@monterey.edu,

http://aera.net

### Washington Center Workshop

Curriculum Planning Retreat - East April 23-24, 1998 -

Spokane, WA Laura O'Brady, obrady@elwha.evergreen.edu.

### Provincial Instructor Diploma Program (IDP)

Graduation Ceremony

April 24, 1998 - Vancouver Community College

Conducted by VCC in collaboration with the Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology.

### American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Annual

Conference April 25-28, 1998 - Miami Beach, FL

202-728-0200, www.aacc.nche.edu.

### Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in the Liberal Arts (CIRLA)

International Conference May 7-10, 1998 - Banff, AB

Bruce Janz, c/o Chris Jensen McCloy, 403-679-1130, 403-

679-1161 fax, CIRLA@AUGUSTANA.AB.CA.

### College-Institute Educators' Association (CIEA) Annual Meeting

May 21-23, 1998 - Location to be determined

CIEA, 604-873-8988, 604-873-8865 fax.

### ACCC Annual Conference

May 24-26, 1998 - Winnipeg, MB

### AECBC Annual General Meeting and Conference

June 1998 - Cranbrook, BC

Gerry Della Mattia, 604-895-5080, 604-895-5088 fax, gerry@aecbc.bc.ca.



**PLAN NOW TO ATTEND THE CONFERENCE FOR**

## **Meeting The Learning and Training Needs of Adult Workers**

Monday and Tuesday, December 1-2, 1997, Post Conference Workshops - Wednesday, December 3, 1997  
The Coast Plaza at Stanley Park, Vancouver, BC

**IF YOU ARE ASKING ANY OF THESE QUESTIONS:**

- How can I design a training program that will reach learners who are already too busy?
- Is "bargained-for training" an employee benefit or a company's investment in the future? ▪ What services would make training more accessible to learners? ▪ What can my institution do to reach adults who needs specific skills, but not necessarily a degree? ▪ What tools are available for assessing my employees' abilities? ▪ What benefits come from investing in training?

**THEN DON'T MISS THIS CONFERENCE DESIGNED FOR:**

- Business and labour representatives concerned with developing a competitive workforce
- Educators seeking new ideas for reaching and assisting working adults
- Government employees developing policies that impact adult learners
- Community agency professionals who want to serve adults more effectively.

**SPONSORS INCLUDE:**

- Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology ▪ Center for Career and Work-Related Education
- Council for Adult and Experiential Learning ▪ Ministry of Education, Skills and Training
- National Society for Experiential Education

**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION OR TO RECEIVE A BROCHURE WITH A COMPLETE AGENDA, PLEASE CONTACT:**

**CATRIN ROACH OR MARGUERITE MCCALLION** Conference Planners

Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology (250)413-4442, (250)413-4403 fax

<http://www.ctt.bc.ca/edtech/etconnex.html>



**Plan to attend!** Here is your chance to meet colleagues from across the province and beyond to discover, discuss and exchange information on exciting new applications of technology. Find out how these applications can be successfully applied to the teaching/learning process. This conference follows the successful Connections '96, where over 500 delegates attended.

**Call for Proposals and Pre/Post Workshop Sessions:**

**The Call will be widely distributed and posted on the WEB in early September.**

**The proposal deadline is November 1, 1997.**

## **Teaching • Learning • Technology Conference**

**May 10 - 13, 1998 • Vancouver, BC**

To receive more information about Connections '98, or about making a presentation, or developing a pre/post-conference session be sure to contact:

Amanda Harby, Educational Technology  
Centre for Curriculum, Transfer and Technology •  
5th floor, 1483 Douglas Street,  
Victoria, BC, V8W 3K4  
E-mail: [connections98@ctt.bc.ca](mailto:connections98@ctt.bc.ca)  
Phone: (250) 413-4405 • Fax: (250) 413-4403



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