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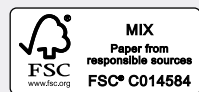
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Lindsay Purchase

A professor once told me that to live a quiet, simple life is heroic. This stands in contrast to what we typically associate with heroism: dramatic acts of real-life bravery or Marvel superheroes fighting to save humanity. What I believe my prof was trying to tell me – to calm my career-planning anxieties – was that it takes strength to live your values.

In this moment, I understand that statement in a new context. I see heroism all around me: in the parents

trying to juggle work and childcare; in those who, in spite of illness or job loss, continue to keep pushing forward; in jobseekers taking time to reflect and develop new skills; and in the activists demanding not a return to normal, but a better, more equitable future.

This issue of *Careering*, on the theme of Career Superpowers, reminds us of the many skills and attributes that can serve as powerful tools in career development. From resilience to mindfulness, storytelling to skills awareness, this issue's topics highlight the many ways career professionals can help clients and students become the heroes of their own career journeys. Authors provide tools to help get you and your clients through tumultuous times, and offer guidance on navigating barriers to career success, such as discrimination. (And for a touch of real-life magic, don't miss our 10 Questions with astronaut David Saint-Jacques.)

As we all continue to navigate COVID-19, it is easy to focus on the challenges. We can't escape them. But reading this issue fills me with optimism – and I hope it does for you, too. Career development is a superpower, and we need it now, more than ever.

As you read this issue, I encourage you to reflect. What are your own career superpowers? How do you help your clients cultivate theirs? Tag us on Twitter (@ceric\_ca) or Instagram (@careerwise\_ca) to share your reflections and to keep the conversation going.

If you're looking for more opportunities to cultivate your career superpowers, don't miss CERIC's upcoming Virtual Cannexus21 conference, with four days of live content and access to session recordings for a full year. Learn more about the conference, including how presenters will be exploring the timely theme of Career Development for Public Good, at [cannexus.ceric.ca](http://cannexus.ceric.ca).

Happy reading, and take good care.

Un professeur m'a dit un jour que les personnes qui ont une vie simple et calme font preuve d'héroïsme. Voilà qui contraste avec ce que nous associons généralement à l'héroïsme : des actes de bravoure dramatiques réels ou des super-héros Marvel qui se battent pour sauver l'humanité. Je crois que mon professeur essayait de me dire, pour m'aider à gérer l'anxiété causée par ma planification de carrière, qu'il faut de la force pour vivre selon nos valeurs.

À l'heure actuelle, cette déclaration prend pour moi un nouveau sens. Je vois de l'héroïsme partout autour de moi : chez les parents qui tentent de concilier le travail et le soin des enfants; chez ceux qui continuent à aller de l'avant malgré la maladie ou la perte d'un emploi; chez les demandeurs d'emploi qui prennent le temps de réfléchir et d'acquérir de nouvelles compétences; et chez les militants qui réclament non pas un retour à la normale, mais un avenir meilleur et plus équitable.

Ce numéro de *Careering*, sur le thème des « super pouvoirs des intervenants en développement de carrière » nous rappelle que de nombreuses compétences et de nombreux attributs peuvent être de puissants outils dans le secteur du développement de carrière. De la résilience à la pleine conscience, des récits à la sensibilisation aux compétences, les sujets traités dans ce numéro nous rappellent les nombreuses voies que les professionnels de la carrière peuvent emprunter pour aider leurs clients et les étudiants à devenir les héros de leur propre parcours professionnel. Les auteurs proposent des outils pour vous aider, ainsi que vos clients, à traverser les périodes tumultueuses ainsi que des conseils pour surmonter les obstacles à la réussite professionnelle, comme la discrimination. (Pour ajouter une touche de magie bien réelle à votre lecture, ne manquez pas nos 10 questions à l'astronaute David Saint-Jacques.)

Dans le contexte de la pandémie de COVID-19, il est facile de se concentrer sur les défis. On ne peut pas leurs échapper. Toutefois, la lecture de ce numéro me remplit d'optimisme et j'espère qu'il en sera de même pour vous. Le développement de carrière est un super-pouvoir et nous en avons besoin maintenant, plus que jamais.

En lisant ce numéro, je vous invite à réfléchir en vous posant les questions suivantes : Quels sont vos propres super-pouvoirs en matière de développement de carrière? Comment aidez-vous vos clients à cultiver les leurs? Rejoignez-nous sur Twitter (@ceric\_ca) ou Instagram (@careerwise\_ca) pour partager vos réflexions et poursuivre la conversation.

Si vous cherchez d'autres occasions de cultiver vos super-pouvoirs professionnels, ne manquez pas le prochain congrès virtuel Cannexus21 du CERIC. Vous profiterez de quatre jours de contenu en direct et de l'accès aux enregistrements des séances pendant toute une année. Pour en savoir plus sur le congrès, notamment sur la façon dont les conférenciers exploreront le thème « Le développement de carrière : un domaine d'intérêt public », qui est tout à fait d'actualité, consultez le site [cannexus.ceric.ca](http://cannexus.ceric.ca).

Bonne lecture et prenez soin de vous.

# ● **Storytelling** *is the career superpower your clients need to master*

Alastair MacFadden

Being able to deliver  
a compelling career story  
will help jobseekers identify  
their value and communicate  
it to employers

**C**ontemplating a path through an uncertain future can be agonizing. For students and workers, it can be particularly uncomfortable. They are bombarded with information and advice. From the future of work to the impact of COVID-19, the labour market context is noisy.

In the face of uncertainty, many will seek refuge by just getting by; focusing on the short-term horizon and making choices that can undermine their preferred future.

Short-term thinking comes naturally in times of stress. A job applicant might relay the chronology of their resume rather than reveal their ambition or true self. A university student might choose more education over a leap into the job market. The impulse is to survive the immediate threat. It is an instinct that comes at a cost. By avoiding risk, we also foreclose on opportunities.

How can a person shape a career plan in the face of uncertainty? How do you excite strangers about your fit for a new opportunity? How can you become the hero of your own story?

These questions are fundamental for anyone engaged in a career journey. To help a client find their way, an essential superpower involves helping them master their story.

## **Why storytelling matters**

We've all overcome difficulties, stumbled and learned. This personal narrative includes the stories we tell ourselves and others. In that sense, they define who we are. (Other leaders in career development have also described the importance of a personal narrative. Lysa Appleton (2018) offers another angle on storytelling in career development based, in part, on Joseph Campbell's *Hero's Journey*. )

“



”

Here's why storytelling is so powerful in career management:

**Our minds are built to share and remember stories.** Our physiology drives us to link fragments of information in patterns (Gottschall, 2012). When something is unclear, it is automatic to jump to conclusions, fill in gaps with assumptions and make up stories (or even conspiracies).

**Arranging the story arranges the mind.** Research has proven that knowing and applying your strengths leads to better engagement, productivity and well-being (Seligman, 2002). Stories integrate emotions, sensations and events into meaning. You can find confidence by exploring patterns and themes that reveal talents and resilience (Dingfelder, 2011).

**A personal narrative positions you as the protagonist.** When you're the agent and not the victim of your story, you gain a sense of control and hope for what is still to come (Ibarra and Lineback, 2005). A story forms the context needed for self-compassion. The work of narrative psychology shows that those who find positive meaning in life events express greater life satisfaction.

**Storytelling is a way to make sense of our lives.** As you arrange the plot points, you highlight what has taken place and frame what is next in your career journey. Turning points gain significance through recall and interpretation, and maturity surfaces as we relate our past to our present and foreshadow possible futures. Your story gives you the words to close one career chapter and begin another.



**We communicate and connect through stories.** By mastering and then sharing your story, you form relationships with strangers. You can become someone memorable because sharing a multidimensional story creates an associative map across multiple brain regions (Lazarus and Snow, 2018).

**There's value in being able to tell a good story.** Good stories transport the audience toward connection. Character-driven stories activate the production of oxytocin in the brain – a hormone associated with feelings of empathy, generosity, trust and co-operation (Zak, 2014). If you want help from others, your story helps them feel they have a stake in your success.

### Building a coherent and compelling career story

A random, accidental and incoherent story is a drag. Compelling stories have structure that grabs attention and transports the audience into another world.

A coherent career story also has flow. It identifies plot points and draws connections between them. To help your client explore their story, ask them what has been significant or inspiring in their work life. Try using these questions as a prompt:

1. As you look back, what are key turning points or events? What are personal experiences that best reflect your strengths, passions and achievement? Describe a time or two when you've been happiest in your work – what skills were you using in those moments?
2. What has been the role of other people in your journey? Who are the mentors, coaches and allies who have influenced you? What advice have you received? What was the impact?

Next, work with your client to create headlines that capture these critical moments and relationships as the chapters in their career story. Encourage them to craft a vivid, concise description of experiences that are most relevant to the impression they want to leave others about their character and story.

### Delivering a story that connects

When someone asks your client, "What do you do?" or "Tell me about yourself" they are inviting a short story. Converting career chapters into human connection involves linking past experiences with the present and future.

To arrange the chapters and deliver a story that connects, good stories offer a consistent formula:

- ➡ Know your audience. The aim is to share a career story that will resonate with the audience. The client should tailor their narrative to the opportunities they are exploring. Scanning a job ad for keywords, for example, can point to elements of the story that should be emphasized in a cover letter or interview.
- ➡ Start by sharing something that may be surprising, such as a time you embarked on a personal challenge or crossed a career threshold.
- ➡ To sustain attention, build tension by sharing obstacles that have shaped you, such as a crisis or failure or an unusual project. Describe the insights gained, before leading to ...
- ➡ The present state – a career crossroads – where you are taking a further step toward your preferred future.

Over time, each interview and tailored job application will bring the client clarity and a deeper sense of direction as they master their career story.

### Anticipating the next chapter

Heroes don't just endure difficulty and accept their fate. They exercise their strengths to prepare for the future. If a client feels they are preparing for an uncertain future, help them build their story with scenario planning. Have them focus on what is known:

- ➡ *Their main talents, gifts and competencies.* For example, what patterns are evident in the interests, experiences and life lessons in their career story?
- ➡ *Trends shaping the future of their work life.* What will be the impact on the client of personal and labour market trends over the next 10 or 20 years? Can they envision multiple futures or scenarios? (E.g. technological change or other trends in their profession, changes within their family or their family status, wider economic or social trends such as access to childcare or eldercare.)
- ➡ *Choices in a changing world.* How can the client's talents be deployed in each of the future scenarios they envision? What partnerships or allies will matter? How can their knowledge, skills and attributes best be deployed? Of the tactics that fit each future scenario, which ones appear again and again? Those are the tactics that offer the most robust next steps for any plausible career future, and they should inform the client's choices and their next chapter.

It is worth reminding the client that they are protagonist of their story. By helping them master storytelling, you are helping them gain a superpower that will build their confidence, form relationships and propel their career forward. ■



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# *Supporting the careers of individuals Black, Indigenous and people of colour*

It is vital that career professionals understand how systemic racism affects the career and educational pathways of their clients to help them succeed

## *Soutenir le développement de carrière des personnes autochtones, noires et de couleur*

Jodi Tingling

Il est essentiel que les professionnels de la carrière comprennent les répercussions du racisme systémique sur les parcours professionnels et scolaires de leurs clients afin de les aider à réussir

**S**ystemic racism in Canada has affected individuals who are Black, Indigenous and people of colour (BIPOC), and for many has had a negative impact on their career pathways. As a career practitioner it is important to understand how systemic racism affects the clients you see and to assess how you can help dismantle a system that can be oppressive to ensure everyone has an opportunity to succeed in their careers.

### **Addressing inequity and its impacts**

Equity means being fair and impartial; this includes having opportunities for all – not only a certain group. Understanding the challenges that BIPOC face is an important aspect of addressing their true career journey and its impacts. From challenges in the educational system to biased recruitment practices, to microaggressions in the workplace, to being screened out of senior leadership positions – these issues can negatively impact BIPOC's career journeys.

As a career professional, be aware that BIPOC clients may have experienced racial trauma, which can affect their career and many other aspects of their life. Racial trauma results in the psychological and physical distress

**A**u Canada, le racisme systémique a touché les personnes autochtones, noires et de couleur (PANDC) et a eu une incidence négative sur le parcours professionnel d'un grand nombre d'entre elles. Les intervenants en développement de carrière doivent bien comprendre les effets négatifs du racisme systémique sur leurs clients et bien évaluer comment ils peuvent contribuer au démantèlement d'un système parfois oppressif afin de s'assurer que chacun a la possibilité de réussir sa vie professionnelle.

### **Lutter contre l'inégalité et ses conséquences**

Le concept de l'équité repose sur la justice, l'impartialité et l'égalité des chances pour tous et non seulement pour un groupe en particulier. Il est important de bien comprendre les défis que les PANDC doivent relever pour déterminer leur véritable parcours professionnel et ses répercussions. La discrimination dans le système d'éducation, les méthodes de recrutement partiales, les micro-agressions sur le lieu de travail et l'absence de



# who are



of individuals and can be attributed to varying experiences because of one's race (Comas-Díaz, Hall, & Neville, 2019).

Addressing inequity and its impacts requires a commitment to understanding the system in which BIPOC navigate their careers. It is important to be aware that standards of professionalism are ingrained in white supremacy culture and serve to oppress those who are BIPOC. According to two grassroots organizers and scholars, Tema Okun and Keith Jones (n.d.), white supremacy shows up in many organizations and has characteristics that are embraced in the workplace. This includes expectations of white-coded behaviours and attitudes ranging from perfectionism, to standards of hair, clothing and communication patterns, to overall expectations like adhering to organizations' "culture fit." These expectations amplify toxic workplace environments and serve to hurt BIPOC's careers.

Your strategy to empower BIPOC's career trajectory needs to begin with commitment to becoming an ally to support and dismantle a system that serves as a disadvantage to the BIPOC community. This requires challenging the system and providing a space for BIPOC to thrive in their careers.

nominations à des postes de direction font partie de ces défis qui peuvent avoir une incidence négative sur le parcours professionnel des PANDC.

En tant que professionnel de la carrière, sachez que les PANDC peuvent devoir composer avec des blessures du racisme qui peuvent avoir un impact sur leur carrière et sur de nombreux autres aspects de leur vie. Les blessures du racisme entraînent une détresse psychologique et physique et peuvent être attribuées à différentes expériences associées à la race.

Pour lutter contre l'inégalité et éliminer ses conséquences, il faut comprendre le contexte dans lequel les PANDC mènent leur carrière. Il est important d'être conscient que les normes de professionnalisme sont ancrées dans la culture de la suprématie blanche et servent à opprimer les personnes autochtones, noires et de couleur. Selon deux organisateurs de terrain et universitaires, Tema Okun et Keith Jones, le suprématisme blanc existe dans de nombreuses organisations et a des ramifications sur le lieu de travail. Ainsi, les attentes en matière de comportements et d'attitudes sont

## Education and career pathways

Barriers to career pathways can start in the education system, where educators' racial biases can alter the educational trajectories of racialized students. Only recently, the Government of Ontario announced that it would end the controversial practice of streaming students into applied and academic tracks, a practice that has widely been known to discriminate against racialized students. A 2017 report from York University, *Towards Race Equity in Education* (2017), concluded 53% of Black students were in the academic program of study, compared to 81% of white and 80% of other racialized students. These discriminatory practices in the education system ultimately limit career trajectories and can alter and create a negative perception of school and career navigation for BIPOC.

## Employment earnings and job security

BIPOC are affected negatively in their careers when it comes to unemployment, earnings and opportunities. According to the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives (CCPA), racialized workers were more likely to be unemployed in 2016 at a rate of 9.2%, compared to non-racialized workers at 7.3% (Block, Galabuzi, & Tranjan, 2019). Additionally, the earnings gap has remained relatively unchanged since 2006. For every dollar that non-racialized men earn, racialized women earn 59 cents and racialized men earn 78 cents. In the *By the numbers: Race, gender and the Canadian labour market* report, the CCPA also concluded there has been little progress to close the racial gap in unemployment. One of the report's key learnings is that labour market discrimination against racialized workers continues to be an issue both in the wage gap and in unemployment rates.

codifiées selon les conventions des Blancs. Il est ici notamment question du perfectionnisme, des normes en matière de coiffure, de vêtements et de modèles de communication et des attentes générales telles que l'adhésion à la « culture d'entreprise ». Ces attentes amplifient les environnements de travail toxiques et nuisent à la carrière des PANDC.

Pour assurer la réussite de votre stratégie visant à améliorer le parcours de carrière des PANDC, vous devez d'abord devenir l'allié de vos clients pour les appuyer et contribuer au démantèlement d'un système qui les désavantage. Pour ce faire, vous devez remettre en question le système et offrir aux PANDC un espace où elles pourront s'épanouir sur le plan professionnel.

## Formation et parcours professionnels

Les obstacles à la réussite professionnelle peuvent prendre racine dans le système d'éducation, où les préjugés raciaux des éducateurs peuvent faire dévier le parcours scolaire des étudiants racialisés. Ce n'est que récemment que le gouvernement de l'Ontario a annoncé qu'il mettrait fin à la pratique controversée qui consiste à orienter les étudiants vers les filières des études appliquées et universitaires. Une pratique largement connue pour être discriminatoire à l'égard des étudiants racialisés. Un rapport de 2017 de l'Université de York, *Towards Race Equity in Education*, a conclu que 53 % des étudiants noirs suivaient un programme d'études universitaires, contre 81 % des étudiants blancs et 80 % des autres étudiants racialisés. Ces pratiques discriminatoires du système d'éducation peuvent au bout du compte limiter le parcours professionnel et modifier les perspectives scolaires et professionnelles des PANDC en plus de créer une perception négative.

## Revenus et sécurité d'emploi

Les PANDC sont désavantagées sur les plans du chômage, des revenus et des possibilités de carrière. Selon le Centre canadien de politiques alternatives (CCPA), les travailleurs racialisés étaient plus susceptibles d'être sans emploi en 2016, avec un taux de chômage de 9,2 %, que les travailleurs non racialisés, avec un taux de chômage de 7,3 %. En outre, l'écart de rémunération est resté pratiquement le même depuis 2006. Pour chaque dollar que gagnent les hommes non racialisés, les femmes racialisées gagnent 59 cents et les hommes racialisés 78 cents. Dans le rapport intitulé *By the numbers: Race, Gender and the Canadian Labour Market*, le CCPA a également conclu qu'il y a eu peu de progrès pour combler les différences raciales en matière de chômage. L'une des principales constatations émanant de ce rapport est que la discrimination sur le marché du travail à l'égard des travailleurs racialisés est toujours présente, tant pour l'écart salarial que le taux de chômage.

De même, le Conference Board du Canada conclut qu'il existe des pratiques discriminatoires qui contribuent aux écarts en matière d'emploi et de salaires. « Avoir un nom à la consonance étrangère » a fait partie des facteurs évalués dans le cadre du processus de recrutement. En comparant des curriculums vitæ dont le contenu était similaire, on a constaté que ceux qui appartenaient à des personnes dont le nom n'avait pas de consonance étrangère avaient 35 % plus de chances d'être rappelées. L'appartenance à un groupe racialisé réduisait également la sécurité d'emploi : 20,9 % des personnes appartenant à des minorités visibles ont déclaré que le fait d'avoir été victimes de discrimination a été une entrave au maintien de leurs possibilités d'emploi.

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**"Understanding the challenges that BIPOC face is an important aspect of addressing their true career journey and its impacts."**

**« Il est important de bien comprendre les défis que les PANDC doivent relever pour déterminer leur véritable parcours professionnel et ses répercussions. »**

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Similarly, the Conference Board of Canada (2017) concludes there are discriminatory practices that contribute to the employment and wage gap. One factor during the recruitment process included "having an ethnic-sounding name." When comparing resumes that had similar content but differences in names, they found those with non-ethnic-sounding names were 35% more likely to get a callback. Belonging to a racialized group also decreased employment security; 20.9% of visible minorities reported experiencing discrimination as a barrier to maintaining employment opportunities.

### **Career mobility**

Career mobility among the BIPOC community is a major issue that needs to be addressed. BIPOC are consistently underrepresented in senior leadership positions. A report from Ryerson University's Diversity Institute (2019) found that although Greater Montreal's population was made up of 22.6% of racialized people, only 5.3% held senior leadership positions. Additionally, in *The Black Experience Project*, Black people living in the Greater Toronto Area were asked how being Black has affected their work experience (Ryerson Diversity Institute, 2017). Participants cited challenges in their career including "having their level of competency questioned, dealing with racism and stereotypes, and having their qualifications overlooked or not recognized." Expertise in the BIPOC community is often overlooked and this can be very discouraging for those who want to be in senior leadership roles.

### **Assess your biases**

When thinking about the ways you as a career professional can help your BIPOC clients, first, assess your bias. Harvard has a race-based Implicit Associate Test (IAT) that can help you understand your blind spots when it comes to race. Take this test to understand where your biases may be and develop a strategy to actively work on them. Understand that systemic racism in Canada exists and professionals from the BIPOC community have historically been discriminated against, both during the recruitment process and in the workforce. Next, if you realize you have blind spots, take the necessary steps to learn, listen and be receptive to the experiences of BIPOC.

### **Mobilité professionnelle**

La mobilité professionnelle au sein de la communauté des PANDC est aussi une question importante qui doit être abordée. Les PANDC sont constamment sous-représentées dans les postes de direction. Un rapport du Diversity Institute de l'Université Ryerson a révélé que bien que la population du Grand Montréal soit composée à 22,6 % de personnes racialisées, seulement 5,3 % d'entre elles occupent des postes de haute direction. En outre, dans le cadre du *projet Black Experience*, on a demandé aux personnes noires vivant dans la région du Grand Toronto de décrire comment la couleur de leur peau a modifié leur expérience professionnelle. Les participants ont évoqué certains obstacles qu'ils ont dû affronter au cours de leur carrière, notamment la remise en question de leur niveau de compétences, le racisme et les stéréotypes. Ils ont aussi affirmé que leurs qualifications avaient parfois été mises de côté ou non reconnues. L'expertise des PANDC est souvent non reconnue, ce qui peut être très décourageant pour ceux et celles qui souhaitent occuper des postes de haute direction.

### **Évaluation des préjugés**

L'évaluation de vos préjugés devrait constituer la première étape de votre processus de réflexion sur la manière dont vous, en tant que professionnel de la carrière, pouvez aider vos clients issus du groupe des PANDC. L'Université Harvard propose un test d'association implicite (IAT) basé sur la race qui peut vous aider à comprendre vos idées reçues en ce qui concerne les préjugés raciaux. Passez ce test pour comprendre vos préjugés et établir une stratégie pour les combattre activement. Assurez-vous de bien comprendre que le racisme systémique existe au Canada et que des professionnels de la communauté des PANDC ont historiquement été victimes de discrimination, tant durant le processus de recrutement que sur le marché du travail. Ensuite, si vous constatez que vous avez des idées reçues, prenez les mesures nécessaires pour écouter les PANDC, apprendre de leurs expériences et y être réceptif.





## Building resilience

Challenge systems that serve to benefit certain populations and cause harm to others. Ask yourself what you can do to propose alternative processes that support and provide equitable opportunities for BIPOC.

Here are some strategies that you can start to engage in to advocate for opportunities for the BIPOC community:

- Become an ally; use your power and privilege to help dismantle oppressive systems that serve to promote white supremacy and negatively affects BIPOC's career journeys.
- Partner with organizations that do advocacy work to address the specific needs of BIPOC.
- Assess if education streams your BIPOC clients are being steered into are limiting and help provide options to expand career opportunities.
- Empower your BIPOC clients by connecting them to mentorship, networks and leadership opportunities to help them build their career.
- Speak to employers about potential biases and blind spots, advocate for opportunities and amplify BIPOC voices.
- Stand up to racism and oppression when you see it, engage in crucial conversations and seek reinforcements to help support your work.
- Form a network that can be a referral source for culturally appropriate resources that can support mental health, build networks and enhance growth.

With these strategies in mind, continue to help your BIPOC clients succeed and navigate the barriers they may be experiencing in their career. ■

## Renforcer la résilience

N'hésitez pas à remettre en question les systèmes qui profitent à certaines populations au détriment des autres. Demandez-vous comment vous pouvez vous y prendre pour proposer de nouveaux processus qui appuient les PANDC et leur offrent des occasions équitables.

Voici quelques-unes des stratégies que vous pouvez adopter pour défendre le droit au perfectionnement professionnel des PANDC :

- Devenez un allié. Utilisez votre expertise et vos privilèges pour contribuer au démantèlement des systèmes oppressifs qui servent à promouvoir la suprématie blanche et qui nuisent au parcours professionnel des PANDC.
- Établissez des partenariats avec des organisations qui font un travail de sensibilisation pour répondre aux besoins particuliers des PANDC.
- Évaluez si les domaines d'études vers lesquels vos clients issus du groupe des PANDC sont dirigés sont limitatifs et proposez des options pour élargir leurs perspectives professionnelles.
- Offrez de nouvelles possibilités à vos clients issus du groupe des PANDC et aidez-les bâtir leur carrière en les mettant en contact avec des mentors, des réseaux et des dirigeants.
- Parlez aux employeurs des préjugés et des idées reçues possibles, faites la promotion des possibilités et amplifiez la voix des PANDC.
- Dressez-vous contre le racisme et l'oppression lorsque vous en êtes témoin, engagez des conversations cruciales et cherchez des renforts pour vous aider à poursuivre votre travail.
- Créez un réseau qui pourra être une référence pour obtenir des ressources bien adaptées aux réalités culturelles et qui peuvent soutenir la santé mentale, établir des liens et améliorer la croissance.

En gardant ces stratégies à l'esprit, continuez à aider vos clients issus du groupe des PANDC à obtenir du succès et à surmonter les obstacles qu'ils pourraient trouver sur leur parcours professionnel. ■

### AUTHOR BIOS • BIOGRAPHIE DE L'AUTEURE



**Jodi Tingling** is a career and wellness practitioner who works with leaders, professionals and organizations to ensure they meet their true potential. Her true passion is working to empower the voices and experiences of Black Indigenous Women of Colour (BIWOC). As the founder of Creating New Steps, she amplifies organizations and professionals to meet their unique workplace goals.

**Jodi Tingling** est une intervenante en mieux-être et en développement de carrière qui travaille avec des dirigeants, des professionnels et des organisations pour s'assurer qu'ils réalisent leur plein potentiel. Sa véritable passion est de faire entendre la voix et les expériences des femmes autochtones, noires et de couleur du Canada. À titre de fondatrice de Creating New Steps, elle accompagne les organisations et les professionnels afin qu'ils atteignent leurs objectifs professionnels uniques.

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# Making career development 'stick' in K-12

Adriano Magnifico

The career development gap in schools can only be bridged by prioritizing and scaling programming



I grew up with superheroes.

I loved their superpowers – Superman leaping tall buildings in a single bound or the Torch igniting into a flaming comet.

I always had a soft spot for Spiderman, who could spew silk from his wrists and stick to the sides of buildings. He constantly helped those in distress but struggled to gain the respect of the public.

It reminds me of the typical career development (CD) practitioner.

CD has a respect problem in schools, a notion echoed by Deirdre Pickerell, Dean of Student Success at Yorkville University, who noted how hard it is to get career development to “stick” (2020) in the hearts and minds of leaders.

CD’s transformative power must become higher profile – by integrating a Spiderman-like “stickiness” into K-12 programs.

## The problem: A career development gap

Career development has long been a part of high school, but its delivery is intermittent and scattered. Program leads, usually guidance counsellors, are often besieged with mental health issues, family engagement, academic recovery programming, at-risk students and graduation credits. Schools laud graduation rates far more than post-high school planning initiatives.

The problem is a sizeable gap between research (RBC, 2018, Statistics Canada, 2020, The Canadian Chamber of Commerce, 2014) purporting that career development is “central to learning across K-12” (CMEC, 2017) and the implementation of school plans that treat CD as a bonus activity available to students when time permits.

The gap can only be bridged by selling, prioritizing, planning and scaling CD programming in K-12 schools. The challenge is getting leaders and school teams on board.

But it can be done.

## Bridging the CD gap

For 25 years, I have worked to bridge this gap in schools by adopting a “blue sky” perspective of the larger mission. These are my key action steps to build a school career development program that sticks:

- 1. Talk to the leaders.** The CD gap will never be properly tackled until practitioners sell career development to school administrations and then take time in staff meetings to stimulate discussion about how career development can supercharge any classroom subject. Without the school administration identifying career development as a priority, any effort, while worthy, will ultimately miss its larger mark.

2. **Find the CD champions.** Teacher-champions exist in every school who can spread the mission and build a collaborative interschool framework. I run a Career and Innovation Group in Louis Riel School division that meets regularly to discuss our CD initiatives and plans.
3. **Establish a foundation.** Is there a 24/7 CD tool that every student, parent and teacher can access? Scaling career development in a building is difficult without one. Our division uses an online tool called myBlueprint, but there are other options. Every Grade 7-12 student has an account and access to self-assessment tools, school credits, occupations, goal setting, e-portfolios and scholarships.
4. **Integrate CD into courses.** Some provinces mandate career courses. Manitoba offers optional career electives. These are useful, but they tend to compartmentalize career development. A stronger strategy is to integrate career development into everyday courses such as math, English and biology, and to get bigger buy-in from all subject teachers in schools.
5. **Involve parents.** Research continuously shows that parents are the No. 1 influence when students decide on post-high school paths. Connecting with parents on CD initiatives in school is essential to having robust conversations about future pathways.
6. **Collect the dots; connect the dots.** School and community do a great job of helping students collect dots – academic courses, clubs, sports, dancing, volunteer work, part-time jobs, etc. – but they do a poor job of helping students connect their dots, which is the key to effective career development. In Louis Riel School Division, we've created the LEAN Career Design Canvas, a tool that enables students to connect the dots of their experiences and to prepare for a career path that will last a lifetime. I share the Canvas with any practitioner who wants to try it out; it's been iterated in 23 cities in and outside Canada.
7. **Build networks.** Teach students the art of networking and model how to build professional and supportive networks. While telling students "to get out there" and connect with professionals may seem like a reasonable expectation, it's really not. Without school networks of community professionals who offer internships, job shadows, volunteer experiences and mentorships, students will have no idea how to connect with employers or volunteer organizations. Most high school students need training, nudging and places to go.
8. **Create extra options.** Offer more to students who want more. In partnership with RBC Future Launch, we've created the *LRSD Skills Credential*, an optional intensive career management program for Grade 11 and 12 students who complete career management workshops in financial literacy, labour market information, personal branding, ethics, problem-solving, project management and networking. Seventy-one LRSD students completed the Credential Program in 2019-2020; over 100 are in the pipeline for next year.
9. **Go online.** COVID-19 has forced us to convert career development processes into fillable PDFs, one-on-one video chats and group video-conferencing. During the pandemic, 60 students presented their LEAN Career Design Canvases via TEAMS videoconferencing. The online canvas experience worked well; online tools will likely augment teacher-student engagements in the future.
10. **Build inclusivity.** CD programming needs to appeal to the wide range of students in every school. For example, how does career programming connect with newcomer, Indigenous and LGBTQ2+ students? *The Circle of Courage* (Brendtro, 2009) has been an effective philosophy in Louis Riel School Division's mission to build a culture of inclusivity.

## Plan and pitch large

Currently, career development is too dependent on the will and persistence of a dedicated few working in the trenches with a minority of students. To bridge the career development gap that permeates K-12 schools, we need to build collaborative networks, pitch research and effective practice to school decision-makers and create inclusive plans that bring systemic CD into classrooms

Scaling career development programming that "sticks" to students' lives can be transformational – they will not only collect the dots of their experiences, but also engage in thoughtful reflection that connects their dots in ways to help them see their best selves and future pathways. We can't wait for a radioactive spider to make this happen. ■



### AUTHOR BIO

**Adriano Magnifico** is your friendly neighbourhood Career and Entrepreneurship Consultant in the Louis Riel School Division in Winnipeg.

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# Bridging the skills awareness gap through reflection

Carli Fink

Card sort and mapping activities from Queen's University can help students acknowledge and articulate their skills with confidence



There is a lot of chatter about a graduate skills gap, but a skills awareness gap may be more appropriate. Post-secondary students and recent graduates have many skills — skills they have learned in classes, developed in workplaces, sharpened in the lab, honed on the field, practised on stage and demonstrated in their communities. Their curricular and co-curricular pursuits have shaped their ability to perform a wide range of tasks. Yet, as career development practitioners, we often hear students claim they are not qualified for any opportunities. This article will explain why the supposed skills gap is more of a skills awareness gap, and describe practical ways to support students and recent graduates in bridging this divide.

## The role of skills awareness

The foundation of building a career is understanding the skills required to succeed in a given field and how these align with one's own strengths. Communicating one's value to a prospective employer is the ticket into the labour market. Reflection helps one become aware of their own strengths and competencies, enabling them to then articulate those assets and how they align with a given industry's or employer's needs.

A need for greater skills awareness is common among post-secondary students: despite their numerous achievements, many struggle to explain

what they bring to the table beyond a list of past job and volunteer titles. Some do not connect their experience as a swim instructor to their strong communication skills, or realize that they are adaptable and culturally competent thanks to their experience living in two countries. Therein lies the "gap" — the skills are not absent, so much as unacknowledged and unarticulated. Those who can speak about their skills with clarity and confidence are able to demonstrate their value to prospective employers.

## Bridging the gap

Reflection is a career superpower and, when it comes to skills, flexing this muscle gives individuals the ability to identify and share their strengths. At Queen's University, we have created a web of supports to help students with skills awareness and articulation, including: Skills Cards, Experiential Learning Wraparound and Major Maps.

While reflecting on skills is important, it can be a challenging undertaking. We decided to create a hands-on activity to help make this essential activity more engaging. The Queen's Skills Cards ([careers.queensu.ca/skillscards](https://careers.queensu.ca/skillscards)) are an innovative card sort based on the Queen's Learning Outcomes Framework and employer data on desired skills. The cards name and define common transferrable skills, break each skill into components and provide an example of what that skill looks like in action. These cards help





students identify and describe their skills, which boosts their confidence and provides a clearer sense of how different roles suit their strengths. The interactive and fun resource was designed as a physical deck of cards for career counsellors to use in appointments and workshops with students. Our hands-on resource has had to adapt to the COVID-19 times – a virtual version is also available. Guides for career practitioners at other institutions who wish to use the Queen's Skills Cards or create their own institution-specific set are forthcoming.

We've created a variety of exercises that advisors can lead students through using the Queen's Skills Cards. "You've Got Skills!" asks students to sort the cards by their proficiency, and then by the impact of each skill on their energy – that is, whether they find it energizing or draining to use that skill. An advisor can probe students to help them make meaning of their results: what kinds of jobs might rely on the skills they have identified as both high proficiency and energizing? How

might they further develop the skills that feed their energy, but at which they are not yet proficient? A graph is also available so that students can plot their skills and see patterns more easily.

Another activity, "Getting What You Need to Succeed," asks students to sort the skills by their relevance to a particular industry or job posting of interest. The student and advisor can then discuss whether the student has the skills they have identified as necessary. If the student believes they do possess those skills, the conversation can move toward finding examples to emphasize in their application or in an interview. If the student lacks one or more key skills, the advisor can help them find opportunities to develop those skills.

The Queen's Skills Cards are now being used within other skill-building and skill-reflection activities. For instance, students can engage in skills conversations through the Experiential Learning

WrapAround. The EL WrapAround provides training for university staff and faculty who supervise student employees or volunteers, with the goal of supervisors facilitating their students' reflection at strategic points within the arc of these positions. At the beginning, middle and end of their students' roles, supervisors lead their students in an intentional, supportive conversation about what skills they hope to build and how they can do so. A standard form centred on a short list of key skills helps supervisors focus and make the discussion concrete.

Finally, the Major Maps ([careers.queensu.ca/majormaps](https://careers.queensu.ca/majormaps)) and Grad Maps ([careers.queensu.ca/gradmaps](https://careers.queensu.ca/gradmaps)) allow students to see a list of skills they can develop through each major available at Queen's. The maps also outline the range of career-building experiences available within each of these programs of study. Prospective students as well as first-year students in general arts, science and engineering enjoy using the maps to evaluate how different majors will prepare them to achieve their career goals. Each map has a list of the skills developed in that particular major – these lists provide students with a starting

point for talking about the skills and knowledge developed in their program, and how these differ from the outcomes of other programs.

## Conclusion

Skills reflection and articulation are superpowers critical to finding a path that suits one's strengths and in conducting an effective job search. As society enters a new era – one in which opportunities to gain experience in certain fields may be more limited – it is essential that students and recent graduates be able to explain their strengths and provide evidence of their transferability, ideally in language that is meaningful across industries. The fact that students and recent graduates have skills doesn't mean they automatically know what to call them, how to describe their development or where in the labour market these skills might prove valuable. To foster this knowledge and bolster their confidence, students and recent graduates must intentionally reflect on their experiences. In helping individuals harness the power of their past experiences, reflection provides the key required to unlock the doors of future opportunities. ■



### AUTHOR BIO

**Carli Fink** is a Career Counsellor at Queen's University in Kingston, ON, and led the launch of the new Queen's Skills Cards, which were recognized with a 2020 CACEE Excellence in Innovation: Student Engagement Award.



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# CAREER BRIEFS

## CERIC's Cannexus conference to go virtual in 2021

Cannexus21, Canada's bilingual Career Development Conference, will bring stakeholders together around the theme of *Career Development for Public Good* and feature 150+ live and on-demand concurrent sessions in both English and French. Live sessions will be held over four days (Jan. 25 & 27 and Feb. 1 & 3, 2021) and registrants will be able to access session recordings for a full year after the conference. Virtual Cannexus21 will feature inspiring live keynotes from Zabeen Hirji, Executive Advisor Future of Work at Deloitte; Dr. Kris Magnusson, Professor, Simon Fraser University; and Perdita Felicien, Olympian, author and sports broadcaster. Register by Nov. 12, 2020 to get the discounted Early Bird rate.



To learn more and register, visit [cannexus.ceric.ca](https://cannexus.ceric.ca).

## Employers expecting more from graduates: survey

A report from the Business + Higher Education Roundtable in partnership with the Business Council of Canada finds employers are expecting more from new graduates, with 75% saying their expectations are higher than five years ago. Employer expectations focus on productivity, resiliency, technical and human skills. Candidates also have greater expectations around work-life balance, flexibility, empowerment and meaningful work. The results suggest that Canada's post-secondary system is doing a good job of keeping pace with respondents' demands for technical skills, but human skills are not meeting expectations.



Visit [bher.ca](https://bher.ca) to read the report.

## New bursary recognizes career development leader Marilyn Van Norman

The Counselling Foundation of Canada has established the new Marilyn Van Norman Bursary to support community-based career development and employment practitioners in attending the Cannexus conference each year. The bursary is given in recognition of Van Norman, the recently retired Director of Research Initiatives at CERIC and one of its founding Board members. Known as a collaborator, visionary and expeditor, she is widely respected for her more than 40 years of leadership in the career development field, with particular expertise in career centre and student services management.



Details about the bursary can be found at [cannexus.ceric.ca/marilyn-van-norman-bursary](https://cannexus.ceric.ca/marilyn-van-norman-bursary).

## Report finds Black leaders mostly absent from Canadian boards of directors

A report from Ryerson University's Diversity Institute shows women continue to make slow progress on boards of directors, but in some cases, representation of racialized people is moving backward. The study analyzed the representation of women, Black people and other racialized persons among 9,843 individuals on the boards of directors of large companies; agencies, boards and commissions; hospitals; the voluntary sector; and educational institutions. It found that while racialized people represent 28.4% of the population across the eight cities studied, they occupy only 10.4% of board positions in the sectors analyzed. Among 1,639 corporate board members, the study found only 13 who were Black (0.8%).



Read the results of the study at [ryerson.ca/diversity](https://ryerson.ca/diversity).

## CERIC-funded project to examine foundational skills in Grades 4-6

A new CERIC project will examine how foundational concepts and skills that are introduced and developed by classroom teachers connect to career-related learning in Canadian elementary schools. The *Career Development in Children: Identifying Critical Success Conditions and Strategies* project was awarded to an international team of academic researchers led by Dr. Lorraine Godden, Ironwood Consulting and Carleton University; Nicki Moore, University of Derby; and Dr. Heather Nesbitt and Dr. Stefan Merchant, Queen's University. The research will inform the development of a teacher's aid toolkit that validates teacher practice.



Learn more about the project at [ceric.ca](https://ceric.ca).



# CASE STUDY

In this recurring *Careering* feature, career professionals share their real-life solutions to common problems in the field.



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## Helping a client with autism improve her interview skills

Sarah Taylor

**C**indy is a recent post-secondary graduate who lives on the autism spectrum. Since completing her diploma in business administration six months ago, she has applied for approximately 130 jobs, been on 42 interviews and received zero job offers.

Upon first meeting with Cindy, her inconsistent eye contact is noticeable; it is difficult to feel a sense of connection with someone who doesn't look at their conversation partner. Cindy also has trouble connecting through small talk. She hates to talk about the weather, lacks interest in sports and tends to want to "get to the point" of any verbal exchanges. In interviews, this may read as cold and distant.

Cindy also tends to begin interactions with others by saying "Greetings" rather than with a more common "Hi" or "Hello." This tendency, paired with her unusually quiet voice, provides insights about some of the interview challenges that may be holding her back.

However, Cindy is completely closed to the idea of disclosing her invisible disability in a job interview. Her past experiences of bullying and trauma have led her to believe that disclosure creates more challenges in her life than it solves, and that people will think that she is stupid or incapable if she tells them she lives on the spectrum.



## As her employment counsellor, what can you do in your work with Cindy to help her experience more interview success?

This case study is one that I wrote for a workshop for career development professionals. Although Cindy is not actually a client of mine, her profile represents some of the challenges commonly experienced by people who live on the spectrum and by the career

development professionals who serve them. The increased emphasis in today's workplace on emotional quotient vs intelligence quotient, social vs technical skills, and vague concepts such as finding the "right fit" for the team can make it difficult for a prospective employee on the spectrum to present as a desirable candidate.

In fact, a 2013 study on autism and employment published by the *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry* found that approximately 85% of people living on the autism spectrum are unemployed or underemployed. These results represented the lowest employment rate among disability groups even when controlling for impairment severity, household income and social demographics (Howlin, 2013). To further complicate the issue, many "high-functioning" people who live on the spectrum attempt to hide or mask their symptoms, fearing stigmatization. So, how can we as career professionals help?

For a Cindy or a client who presents with similar issues, I would first recommend focusing on interview skills.

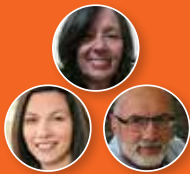
The spoken and unspoken language of interviews is highly complex and has many nuances that may not be obvious to a person who has a diagnosis of ASD or another invisible difference. It is important to break down the questions one can expect, the answers they should give and the unspoken elements of connecting with the interviewer.

One of the most effective ways of doing this is to record mock job interviews and review the recording with your client. Typically, when I am working on a four-week timeline with a client to get them interview ready, I try to do a baseline mock interview (e.g. at the very beginning of my time with a client); another one two weeks in, after we have done lots of teaching, workshops and worksheets about the interview process; and lastly at the end of four weeks with an interviewer who is totally new to my client (i.e. a colleague assigned to different clients). This works well because it creates an opportunity to show the individual behaviours that the client might not be aware of. I once had a client comment during this process that although people were always asking her to speak up or repeat herself, she never realized until reviewing her interview footage how inaudibly she spoke. Recordings pick up word timing, intonation, eye contact, interruptions, excessive fidgeting as well as the content of the answers. All of this is extremely beneficial to a person who may lack innate social awareness.

Secondly, I would recommend helping Cindy create a what I have come to refer to as a "self-advocacy script." Self-advocacy is a way to explain autism spectrum traits using a template that appeals to the neurotypical way of understanding information. It provides a positive or neutral story for interpreting behaviours that may seem unusual or could be easily misunderstood.

A great example of how Cindy could do this is to write a script to explain her impatience with small talk. It might sound like this: "I'm the kind of person who is so interested in getting to the meat of a discussion, I'm not always paying attention to small talk. I'm not trying to be rude or disrespectful; I'm just excited to get into the interview."

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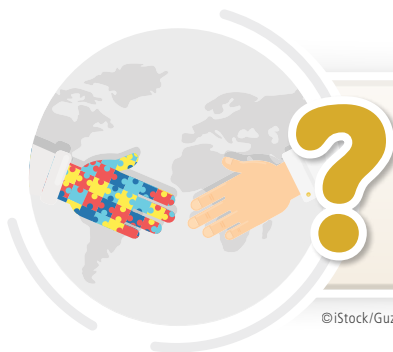


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"...approximately **85%** of people living on the autism spectrum are unemployed or underemployed."

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This script provides an explanation for behaviour that a client with an invisible difference may not be able to change and offers that safety of "disclosing without disclosing." Although there are various opinions on when and how to disclose a disability, I think we can all agree that there are inherent risks to sharing very personal information with a complete stranger – or worse yet, a panel of strangers. If an individual is not

ready to do that, we can assist them by providing a non-threatening way to disclose some information related to their disability.

Overall, assisting people who have invisible differences and different ways of thinking in improving their interview skills is challenging, rewarding and doable. ■



#### AUTHOR BIO

**Sarah Taylor** began her career in autism treatment in 1996. In 2014, Taylor made the switch from working with and advocating for children and youth with ASD to designing and implementing a federally funded program, Next Level ASD, which provides employment supports for adults with autism and coaching support to partner employers.

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# *Leveraging the power of mindful in career development*

## *Le potentiel de la mindfulness en développement de carrière*

Gabrielle Beaupré and / et Geneviève Taylor

This flexible tool can help individuals connect to their interests and values

Un outil flexible permettant aux individus de se connecter à leurs intérêts

**M**aya is an undergraduate student who has just started her second semester in accounting. She is disappointed by her grades so far and has doubts as to whether this is the right career path for her. She wonders whether she will be good enough to eventually acquire the professional title she initially wanted. She worries a lot and often ruminates about past mistakes. Recently, she has been having difficulty sleeping and concentrating and does not see her friends as much as she used to. She lacks the energy to engage in her daily activities, including studying and her part-time job.

Maya's situation exemplifies the psychological health issues that post-secondary students face today. Indeed, an increasing proportion of students report experiencing stress, anxiety and emotional distress (UEQ, 2019). This is compounded by questions regarding career goals, choice of academic programs and/or different career paths, which are frequent in this population. A recent pan-Canadian study shows that approximately 40% of post-secondary students have difficulties dealing with career-related issues (ACHA, 2019). They also experience anxiety caused by an increasingly unstable and uncertain labour market and by a multitude of opportunities, which can actually induce a feeling of "paralysis" and chronic dissatisfaction (Schwartz, 2004). Unfortunately, career guidance professionals in university settings often lack the time or resources to provide adequate support for students (ASEUCC, 2013). Therefore, they need to rely on new approaches to reinforce students' self-determination and help them to reflect on their future.

**M**aya vient d'entamer sa deuxième session comme étudiante au baccalauréat en comptabilité. Elle est déçue de ses résultats scolaires et elle commence à douter de son choix de carrière. Elle se demande si elle sera assez performante pour éventuellement obtenir le titre professionnel qu'elle visait initialement. Elle s'inquiète beaucoup et ressasse souvent des pensées négatives. Depuis peu, elle éprouve des difficultés de sommeil et de concentration et ne voit plus ses amis autant qu'avant. Finalement, elle manque d'énergie pour toutes ses activités, incluant ses études et son travail à temps partiel.

Cette situation illustre bien les enjeux de santé psychologique présents chez les étudiants universitaires, alors que la proportion d'étudiants vivant du stress, de l'anxiété et de la détresse émotionnelle ne cesse d'augmenter (UEQ, 2019). À cela s'ajoutent les questionnements liés à la carrière, au choix de programme ou au cheminement professionnel, fréquents chez la population étudiante. Les résultats d'une enquête pancanadienne récente avancent que près de 40% des étudiants postsecondaires ont de la difficulté à gérer leurs problèmes liés à la carrière (ACHA, 2019). Ils vivent également de l'anxiété causée par un marché du travail de plus en plus instable et incertain et par une multitude d'opportunités, ce qui peut induire un sentiment de « paralysie » et d'insatisfaction chronique (Schwartz, 2004). Malheureusement, les professionnels des services d'aide aux étudiants en milieu universitaire dénoncent le manque de temps et de ressources pour accompagner adéquatement les étudiants (ASEUCC, 2013). Ils doivent donc compter sur de nouvelles approches pour renforcer l'autodétermination des étudiants dans leur réflexion sur l'avenir.



ness

et à leurs valeurs



### Mindfulness as a superpower

Mindfulness-based interventions represent relatively new approaches that could allow students to better manage their career-related issues. Mindfulness is generally defined as a non-judgmental, accepting awareness of our inner and outer experience as it arises in the present moment (Kabat-Zin, 2003). A mindful person tends to be more attentive to his or her sensations, thoughts and emotions as they arise, and does so in an accepting and self-compassionate way. The good news is that mindfulness is like a muscle – it can be developed as a skill through various types of exercises one can practice alone or in a group, with or without guidance. Typical mindfulness practices are:

- Focused attention exercises on different objects such as the breath, bodily sensations or the five senses;
- Focused attention exercises on body movements (e.g. mindful walking, mindful stretching, yoga);
- Meditations that develop compassion for the self and for others.

### The impact of mindfulness on well-being

Several scientific studies have established positive links between mindfulness and well-being. First, mindfulness promotes the development of psychological flexibility, an important determinant of mental health, which allows a person to adapt to new situations such

### La mindfulness comme super-pouvoir

La mindfulness (présence attentive ou pleine conscience) apparaît comme un super-pouvoir pouvant aider les étudiants postsecondaires à faire face aux enjeux reliés à la carrière. La mindfulness décrit généralement l'état de conscience d'une personne qui porte délibérément son attention sur son expérience (interne et externe), dans l'instant présent, sans jugement et avec acceptation (Kabat-Zin, 2003). Concrètement, une personne «mindful» a tendance à être plus attentive à ses pensées, ses émotions ou ses sensations, et ce avec acceptation et bienveillance. Comme un muscle que l'on exerce, la mindfulness peut être développée par le biais de diverses interventions prenant la forme de pratique personnelle ou de méditation guidées:

- exercices d'attention dirigée sur différents objets (respiration, sensations corporelles, cinq sens) ;
- exercices de l'attention dirigée sur les mouvements du corps ;
- exercices de compassion pour soi et pour les autres.

### L'impact de la mindfulness sur le bien-être

Plusieurs études scientifiques ont démontré les liens entre la mindfulness et différents aspects du bien-être. D'abord, la mindfulness aide à développer la souplesse psychologique, un facteur important pour la santé mentale, permettant à l'individu de s'adapter à un changement ou



"A mindful person tends to be more attentive to his or her sensations, thoughts and emotions as they arise, and does so in an accepting and self-compassionate way."



as unexpected life changes and difficult circumstances (Kashdan & Rottenberg, 2010). During the COVID-19 pandemic, several researchers have become interested in personal resilience factors. They propose mindfulness as an adaptation tool that may help people be better able to deal with uncertainty (Polizzi, Lynn et Perry, 2020). Mindfulness increases our focus on the present moment, which takes us away from ruminations about the past or anxious anticipation about the future. What's more, mindfulness-based interventions have been shown to reduce stress and depressive symptoms among university students and career counselling clients (Piot, 2020; Grégoire et al., 2016). Finally, our research group has found that mindfulness could help students who were experiencing a career-related action crisis to better regulate their emotions (Marion-Jetten, Taylor et Schattke, 2020).

### **Mindfulness as a career-related superpower**

Beyond the benefits of mindfulness for well-being and emotion regulation, how else can it act as a career-related superpower?

#### ***Better self-knowledge***

First, mindfulness could help a person to better distinguish between his or her deeply held values and interests and those that originate only in societal or parental expectations (Schattke, Taylor, & Marion-Jetten, 2020; Strick et Papies, 2017). There are many ways to increase one's self-knowledge – mindfulness stands out as a flexible tool to do so. It promotes the ability to pay attention to all aspects of one's experience, while accepting everything that comes up instead of avoiding it (Carlson, 2013).

For example, by practising body awareness, Maya could realize that she often feels tension in her shoulders when she thinks about taking the accreditation exams to become a chartered accountant. She could also realize that she has a lot of negative thoughts during these times and observe them to see what they could tell her. At the same time, she could notice that she feels light and open when she give oral presentations. This information can become very useful when thinking about which work contexts would better fit her needs and her working style as a future accountant.

#### ***Setting self-concordant career goals***

Second, mindfulness could help a person to set career goals that are based on their deeply held values and true interests. Referred to as

une situation difficile (Kashdan & Rottenberg, 2010). Avec la COVID-19, certains auteurs se sont intéressés aux facteurs de résilience en contexte de pandémie. Ils ont décrit la mindfulness comme un mécanisme d'adaptation aidant les gens à être plus résilients face à l'incertitude (Polizzi, Lynn et Perry, 2020). En effet, la mindfulness encourage l'individu à se concentrer sur l'instant présent, ce qui atténue les ruminations du passé et l'anticipation négative du futur. De plus, les interventions basées sur la mindfulness permettraient de réduire le stress et les symptômes dépressifs des étudiants universitaires et les clients en orientation (Piot, 2020; Grégoire et al., 2016). Enfin, la mindfulness aiderait les étudiants à réguler leurs émotions lorsqu'ils traversent une impasse décisionnelle liée à leurs objectifs de carrière (Marion-Jetten, Taylor et Schattke, soumis).

### **La mindfulness et la carrière**

Au-delà des bienfaits sur le bien-être et sur la régulation des émotions, comment la mindfulness peut-elle agir comme super-pouvoir relié à la carrière?

#### ***Mieux se connaître***

Premièrement, la mindfulness peut aider une personne à mieux distinguer ses valeurs fondamentales et les activités qui l'intéressent vraiment des attentes de la société ou de ses proches (Schattke, Taylor, & Marion-Jetten, 2020; Strick et Papies, 2017). Sachant qu'il existe plusieurs moyens de mieux se connaître, la mindfulness apparaît comme un outil supplémentaire. Elle améliore la capacité d'une personne à porter attention à tous les aspects de son expérience, tout en acceptant ce qui émerge au lieu d'essayer d'éviter (Carlson, 2013).

Par exemple, en portant attention à son corps, Maya pourrait réaliser qu'elle éprouve souvent des tensions dans les épaules lorsqu'elle pense aux examens pour devenir comptable. Elle pourrait aussi se rendre compte qu'elle a des pensées négatives durant ces moments et les observer pour voir ce que ça peut lui indiquer. En même temps, elle remarquerait qu'elle se sent ouverte et légère lorsqu'elle donne une présentation orale. Ces informations s'avèreront très utiles pour choisir le contexte de travail dans lequel elle sera satisfaite en tant que comptable.

#### ***Se fixer des buts de carrières autoconcordants***

Deuxièmement, la mindfulness aiderait l'individu à se fixer des buts de carrière en lien avec ses véritables valeurs et intérêts. C'est ce qu'on appelle l'« autoconcordance des buts ». Ceux-ci naissent d'une motivation autodéterminée et sont essentiels pour le bien-être de l'individu







« Concrètement, une personne «mindful» a tendance à être plus attentive à ses pensées, ses émotions ou ses sensations, et ce avec acceptation et bienveillance. »

self-concordant, these goals are based on self-determined motivation and are essential for well-being (Deci, Ryan, Schultz et Niemiec, 2015). In fact, a series of longitudinal studies has shown that choosing an academic program that is related to one's true interests and values can increase academic performance and decrease psychological distress and school dropout (Taylor et al., 2014).

By practising mindfulness, Maya could realize that she is often concerned with what others would say if she dropped out of her current program and did not become an accountant. She could then observe, without judgment, that her motivation for this career goal was perhaps not as self-determined as she thought. As previously mentioned, Maya could also become more aware of her own values and of what truly interests her. This could help her to zone in on her next career goal, and eventually help her to set and get engaged in a more self-concordant goal.

### **Developing creativity**

Finally, mindfulness can increase different types of creativity, which would allow a person to think of or even create new opportunities for themselves and find innovative solutions when confronted with career-related obstacles. Research on this topic has shown that people can solve problems more easily when they have practiced mindfulness meditation right before (Colzato et al., 2014; Ding et al., 2015). Mindfulness could thus help Maya find "out of the box" opportunities to resolve her career-related issues.

### **Helping university students with mindfulness**

How can career development professionals help students cultivate mindfulness? They can encourage them and guide them to observe their everyday experiences as they arise (i.e. recurring thoughts, bodily sensations, emotions), and accept them in a kind and non-judgmental way. University students could capitalize on the development of mindfulness as a skill – especially since it is an accessible practice that can be easily adjusted to fit into an already busy schedule. More than ever, career decision-making is a lifelong process, and not a stage that is fixed in time. Mindfulness could enrich this process, constantly evolving as the student enters and interacts with the labour market.

In our opinion, mindfulness represents an additional yet important career-related superpower; a tool that can help a person regulate

(Deci, Ryan, Schultz et Niemiec, 2015). En effet, les résultats d'une série d'études longitudinales ont démontré que choisir un programme d'études en lien avec ses intérêts et ses valeurs peut diminuer la détresse psychologique, augmenter les résultats académiques et diminuer le risque de décrochage scolaire (Taylor et al., 2014).

En pratiquant la mindfulness, Maya pourrait réaliser qu'elle se préoccupe souvent de ce que les autres diraient si elle abandonnait son programme et si elle ne devenait pas comptable. Elle pourrait alors observer, sans jugement, que sa motivation envers son objectif de carrière n'est peut-être pas aussi autodéterminée qu'elle le croyait. Tel que mentionné précédemment, Maya pourrait aussi prendre conscience de ses véritables valeurs et de ce qui l'intéresse réellement. Cela pourrait l'amener à mieux préciser son objectif de carrière, et éventuellement s'engager dans un but de carrière plus autoconcordant.

### **Développer sa créativité**

Finalement, la mindfulness favorise la créativité (Lebuda et al., 2016) sous toutes ses formes, ce qui permet à l'individu d'imaginer des possibilités nouvelles et innovantes lorsqu'il est confronté à des obstacles. Les études à ce sujet ont démontré que les gens trouvaient plus facilement des solutions à un problème lorsqu'ils avaient médité avant (Colzato et al. 2014 : Ding et al. 2015).

À ce titre, la mindfulness pourrait aider Maya à trouver des opportunités inédites pour surmonter les embuches liées à sa carrière.

### **Aider les étudiants universitaires grâce à la mindfulness**

Comment les professionnels en développement de carrière peuvent-ils cultiver la mindfulness des étudiants universitaires ? D'abord, ils peuvent les encourager et les accompagner à observer et à reconnaître ce qu'ils vivent dans leur quotidien (pensées récurrentes, sensations physiques, émotions) et à accepter ces expériences avec bienveillance. Les étudiants universitaires pourraient capitaliser sur le développement de la mindfulness comme habileté, d'autant plus que sa pratique est adaptée et accessible malgré leur horaire chargé. Plus que jamais, l'orientation professionnelle apparaît comme un processus continu tout au long de la vie, et non comme une étape fixe temporellement. Ainsi, la mindfulness représente une habileté « évolutive », étant donné qu'elle se développe au fur et à mesure que l'étudiant évolue en interaction avec le marché du travail.

negative emotions that often accompany career issues. Mindfulness also helps people to get to know themselves better by fostering access to their true interests and values, recurring thought patterns, emotions and bodily sensations. Therefore, a more mindful student could make more self-congruent choices and better adjust to career-related obstacles, even after graduation. ■

La mindfulness comme superpouvoir lié à la carrière est donc un outil supplémentaire permettant d'atténuer les émotions négatives généralement associées aux questionnements à ce niveau. Puisqu'elle favorise un meilleur accès à ses intérêts à ses valeurs, à ses pensées récurrentes, à ses sensations et à ses émotions, elle permet à l'étudiant de faire des choix cohérents et de mieux s'adapter aux obstacles, même après avoir gradué. ■



#### AUTHOR BIOS • BIOGRAPHIES DES AUTEURES

**Gabrielle Beaupré, MA**, is a doctoral student in education at UQAM and a practising career guidance counsellor. Her research interests focus on mindfulness, motivation for career goals and well-being amongst university students. Her doctoral project is financed by the Fonds de Recherche du Québec Société et Culture.

**Gabrielle Beaupré, M.A., c.o.** est étudiante au doctorat en éducation à l'UQAM. Elle s'intéresse à la présence attentive, à la motivation envers les buts de carrière et au bien-être auprès des étudiants universitaires. Son projet doctoral est financé par les Fonds de Recherche du Québec Société et Culture.



**Geneviève Taylor, PhD**, is a professor in career counselling in the Department of Education and Pedagogy at Université du Québec à Montréal, and a researcher in the Groupe de recherche et d'intervention sur la présence attentive (GRIPA). Her research focuses on the role of mindfulness self-compassion in career-related goal pursuit and motivational processes.

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# Prior learning: Unlocking a little-known career superpower

Susan Forseille

*With the support of career professionals, students may be able to leverage prior learning to reduce the time and cost for higher education*

**A**s a fan of Marvel and DC superhero stories, I have noticed superpowers often go unknown for years before a hero discovers their gifts. Once these gifts are known, there is usually a learning process before they can be fully applied. This process often includes naming the superpower, learning how to employ it and practising using it, ending with understanding and appreciating its multiple benefits. This journey is reflected in a little-known career superpower: prior learning recognition.

Many post-secondary institutions (PSIs) recognize that adult learners acquire knowledge and skills through life and work experience. These lived experiences generate learning that can be rich, nuanced and comparable to learning acquired in more formal settings (i.e. colleges and universities). Prior learning recognition by PSIs can significantly reduce both the time and cost to acquire advanced education, while adding to career resiliency and agility. Career professionals can play a key role in helping clients/students learn about and unlock the intricacies of this superpower.

## Defining prior learning recognition

Prior learning recognition is best defined as processes that allow individuals to identify, document, have assessed and gain recognition for their learning done outside of a formal classroom. Prior learning can come from work, volunteer experiences, professional development workshops and seminars, self-study, etc. It can result in clients/students obtaining PSI credit and/or advanced entry for the assessment and validation of their informal and non-formal learning.

Knowing about prior learning is a vital first step in leveraging it as a career development tool. However, it can be difficult for clients to find the information they need. Few schools promote it, and there is no name used consistently at a national or even provincial level. Its labels include: PLAR (prior learning assessment and recognition), RPL (recognition of prior learning), PLA (prior learning assessment) and APEL (assessment of prior experiential learning). Some schools refer to prior learning recognition in less transparent ways, such as “challenge for credit” or “with permission of the dean.”

## How it works

Once your client/student knows prior learning recognition exists, the next step is to learn which schools offer it and how to access it. Schools offer multiple ways to access prior learning recognition. For example, some institutions use it for advanced entry, some use it for awarding credit and some even give “blocks” of elective credit for program competencies. Advanced entry provides a path for students to enter into a program of study without the pre-requisites and/or with advanced standing. For example, a student may be allowed to skip the first year of a two-year program based on their prior learning.

Receiving credit for prior learning for individual courses is also possible in many schools. This can be done through demonstrating the student has achieved the learning objectives set out in particular courses. Assessment of prior learning can be done through portfolios, interviews, demonstration of skills, challenge exams, etc.

**Informal learning** is incidental learning from life experience, workplace-based tasks, volunteer activities and/or self-directed learning and study.

**Non-formal learning** is intentional, gained through participation in organized workplace-based training, non-credit courses and workshops, but does not generate formal credit.

In some schools – admittedly very few – prior learning recognition can be applied to “blocks” of credits in a particular program. Often called competency-based PLAR, credits for informal and non-formal learning are based on broader program competencies such as communication, problem-solving, creative and critical thinking, and other human skills.

Some schools are connected to pre-assessed training programs offered by employers, private training organizations or continuing studies programs. Students can receive credit for this prior learning with proof of successful completion of this learning.

The most important intricacy embedded in this superpower is that schools have processes for students to work through, ensuring there is confidence and rigour in assessing and validating the prior learning. These processes can involve a lot of time and work to complete. Career practitioners can help clients learn about these options, support them in navigating the options, and offer guidance on identifying and documenting their prior learning.

### Benefits of prior learning recognition

On the surface, most clients/students understand the time and money prior learning recognition can save. Yet there are many more benefits to consider. The processes attached to prior learning, especially the reflective elements, can enhance career understanding and management, and this can lead to greater career agility and resiliency.

Students and prior learning practitioners have shared in research (supported by what I have observed in my work) that participating in prior learning recognition processes have helped them better articulate their skills, abilities and knowledge in their resumes, on LinkedIn profiles and during interviews and networking (Keating, 2011; Miller & Miller, 2014). In addition, many PLAR students have commented that reflecting on what they have learned through their lived experiences has greatly affected their future education, career and learning habits. Research

has shown that students who complete PLAR tend to graduate at higher rates, with a higher grade point average than non-PLAR students (Leibrandt, S., Klein-Collins, R., & Lane, 2020). Students have also commented that participating in prior learning recognition made their learning more visible; it has enhanced their understanding of how they learn, what they learn and why they learn. Additionally, PLAR can help students translate their informal and non-formal learning into academic language, which improves their confidence as learners and jobseekers.

### Unlocking the power of PLAR

Guiding your clients/students in researching prior learning recognition options in post-secondary schools will likely take some effective detective skills, patience and persistence. This is because very few schools have a centralized prior learning office where you can start. Most schools that offer prior learning recognition do so within specific faculties or programs, and even the general recruitment team may not have much information on their school's offerings.

Strategies to help uncover prior learning options include searching for keywords on school websites. Effective keywords include “prior learning,” “PLAR,” “RPL,” “informal learning” and “advanced entry.” Clients/students can also ask recruiters, admissions officers, program and/or recruitment advisors, chairs and deans directly about prior learning recognition options. Career practitioners may consider advising clients/students to explore the Canadian Association for Prior Learning Assessment (CAPLA) website (capla.ca). This national association offers more insight into prior learning recognition, including a list of provincial contacts.

When you consider how much informal and non-formal learning your clients/students have experienced, combined with the benefits of prior learning recognition by post-secondary institutions, career professionals are in an excellent position to help clients/students unlock this little-known and little-understood superpower. ■



#### AUTHOR BIO

As the Thompson Rivers University Director of PLAR (Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition), 22 years as a career-educator and an enthusiastic researcher, **Susan Forseille** has been privileged to research the intersections of career development, prior learning and education.

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# 10 QUESTIONS

Prior to joining the Canadian Space Program, **David Saint-Jacques** practised family medicine in a northern Canadian village overlooking Hudson Bay. He was selected as an astronaut candidate by the Canadian Space Agency in May 2009. As a member of the international astronaut team, he has acted as capcom (the liaison between the team on the ground and the crew in space) and carried out various operations planning and support functions at NASA's Mission Control Center and Astronaut Office. In 2016, he was assigned to his first mission aboard the International Space Station.



## **In a sentence or two, describe why career development matters.**

I like that it's career development, not career planning, because it's a journey and you need to be on the lookout for opportunities. I like to tell young people not to be afraid of a big, crazy dream that seems unachievable. It doesn't matter if you don't achieve it exactly the way you pictured it, but it will help guide you and make the journey worthwhile.

## **Which book are you reading right now and why did you choose it?**

I'm currently reading *The Grapes of Wrath* by John Steinbeck. I've been living in Houston for the last 11 years, and wherever I've lived, I've tried to make the effort to read literature that helps illustrate the culture of that place.

## **What was your first-ever job and what did you learn from it?**

I was a ski instructor during high school. It taught me the importance of communication, customer service and empathy.

## **What do you do to relax and how does it help you?**

I'm not a gifted athlete, but I love running, cycling, hiking, climbing, sailing, skiing. It helps me disconnect from work and clear my mind. And, I met my wife skiing!

## **What is one piece of advice you have for Canadians as we navigate these challenging times?**

The skills I developed during my space training preparation and mission were particularly helpful when the pandemic lockdown began. There are three things:

1. When the going gets rough, keep an eye on the big picture or the mission. For the pandemic, it has been about protecting society's most vulnerable.
2. Parents know that it's important to provide a routine and structure for their children, so you need to do the same for yourself; keep work and personal time separate and make space for things that bring joy to your life.
3. Think about how your behaviour and attitudes can affect others. As an astronaut, living in close quarters with the same people for long periods of time, you need to ensure you communicate clearly and don't let things fester.

## **What is the most unusual job interview question you've ever been asked and how did you respond?**

It may not be the most unusual question, but the one I always prepare for is "Why do you want this job?" It's important to consider this carefully because you might get the job; if you do, you want to have the right motivations and know that it will be good for both you and the organization.

## **What's something you want to do in the next year that you've never done before?**

I have thousands of photos taken over the years including those of my children. I plan to carve out the time to organize them, and this will help me reflect.

## **Who would you like to work with most and why?**

Both in the space program and health care, I've met fantastic people. What they have had in common is their genuine love for their work. So, I want to work with people who have positive attitudes toward challenges and an absence of hidden agendas.

## **Which talent or superpower would you like to have and how would you use it?**

I wish I could fly under my own power. I had dreams of this when I was a child and still wish it could come true.

## **What do you consider your greatest achievement and why?**

My family. It is the most joyful, fulfilling and, at times, maddening experience. I wouldn't be who I am now without them. ■





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