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Canada's Magazine for Career Development Professionals

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Youth Affects Everyone**

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jeunes affecte tout le monde**

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INSTITUT CANADIEN D'ÉDUCATION ET DE RECHERCHE EN ORIENTATION

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Karolina Grzeszczuk

In a society that values the imagined virtues of being youthful – limitless possibilities and the energy with which to tackle any project – the reality of being part of today's youth and entering the changing world of work is a very different ballgame.

As a Millennial, I have witnessed many of my friends and schoolmates navigate their careers with uncertainty, caution and trepidation. Many are burdened by school debt and some have become

bitter that their degrees have not automatically opened a door to a job in their field. But how bad is youth unemployment and underemployment?

Unemployment affects youth in Canada somewhat significantly, sitting at around 13.2%, compared to 7.1% for the overall Canadian unemployment rate. Canada's figure is lower than the staggering 49% unemployment that youth in Spain have to contend with but it is still a daunting figure for a generation that faces high student debt, economic uncertainty and the newness of the "gig economy." How can youth obtain the experience they will need to develop their career prospects if entering the workforce is prohibitive with high unemployment rates?

To complicate matters youth face a number of barriers, for example: individuals who suffer from mental health issues typically experience the onset of illness between the ages of 14-29, which can negatively impact their ability to obtain an education and valuable work experience.

The situation certainly seems bleak but it is not without hope. Career professionals, educators, employers, parents and other guardians, indeed anyone who works with youth, are well poised to help calm their fears of an uncertain future and to help them navigate their careers in a positive direction.

What are some of the tools and techniques career professionals can use to help their young clients find employment and develop their skills in the face of uncertainty? Read this issue to find out!

Notre société valorise les vertus que l'on prête à la jeunesse (des possibilités illimitées et de l'énergie pour s'attaquer à tout projet). Or, aujourd'hui, ce n'est plus du tout pareil d'être jeune et d'entrer sur le marché du travail en évolution.

Appartenant à la génération Y, j'ai vu bon nombre de mes amis et camarades de classe cheminer avec incertitude, prudence et appréhension dans leur carrière. Nombreux sont ceux qui croulent sous les dettes d'études et certains s'aigrissent de voir que leurs diplômes ne leur permettent pas d'obtenir automatiquement un emploi dans leur domaine. Les taux de sous-emploi et de chômage chez les jeunes sont-ils si graves?

Le chômage touche de façon assez importante les jeunes au Canada, avec un taux d'environ 13,2 %, par rapport au taux global canadien de 7,1 %. Le pourcentage canadien est inférieur au taux de chômage stupéfiant de 49 % auquel les jeunes sont confrontés en Espagne, mais il s'agit tout de même d'un chiffre décourageant pour une génération qui fait face à des dettes d'études importantes, à une incertitude économique et à la nouveauté que représente l'« économie d'emplois temporaires ». Comment les jeunes peuvent-ils acquérir l'expérience dont ils ont besoin pour ouvrir des perspectives de carrière, si l'entrée sur le marché du travail s'avère impossible en raison de taux de chômage élevés?

De plus, les jeunes doivent affronter un certain nombre d'obstacles. En effet, pour les personnes atteintes de problèmes de santé mentale, les symptômes apparaissent généralement entre 14 et 29 ans, ce qui peut avoir une incidence négative sur la capacité de ces personnes à recevoir une éducation et à acquérir une expérience professionnelle précieuse.

La situation semble particulièrement inquiétante, mais elle n'est pas désespérée. Les professionnels de la carrière, les éducateurs, les employeurs, les parents et autres tuteurs, bref toutes les personnes qui travaillent avec des jeunes, sont les mieux placés pour apaiser leurs craintes à l'égard d'un avenir incertain et les aider à prendre une orientation positive dans leur carrière.

Quels sont certains des outils et des techniques dont les professionnels de la carrière se servent pour aider leurs clients jeunes à trouver un emploi et à perfectionner leurs compétences face à l'incertitude? Lisez ce numéro pour le découvrir!

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Beyond Baristas:

Youth are the Future Soft Power for Communities

Youth can do and want to do more than just work at a fast-food restaurant or a café. Why don't we do more to support them in turning their own ideas for employment into action?

By Yuan Shi



When you hear the words “youth employment,” what comes to mind? Perhaps high school students aspiring to be either doctors or engineers? Maybe teenagers who work at a McDonald's or Starbucks? The United Nations defines youth as persons between the ages of 15 and 25. According to Statistics Canada, the youth unemployment rate in Canada was 13.3% in October 2015. As of June 2015, youth unemployment rates in the European Union were 20.7% and 49% in Spain. Many people think that working to pay tuition or saving up for travel plans is the most common way that youth engage with employment. As such, they don't realize the negative impact of high youth unemployment rates. Likewise, they underestimate the power of a highly productive youth workforce.

In October 2015, I attended a youth forum called "The New Era of Employment and Education: Solutions for Change" in Barcelona, Spain. The conference gathered 75 young professionals and senior experts throughout the world to exchange ideas, share experience and build a global network to contribute to tackling the issue of youth education and unemployment.

What I found unique about the forum was that 16 youth-led community projects, initiated by over 30 young leaders, were selected to compete for financial and technical support. The projects ranged from social media information sharing platforms and professional development programs to education models and collaborations with businesses. It was interesting to note that 73 out of 75 program participants were from developing nations, with only two people from North America. It was equally interesting that 70% of the presenters were female. The youth presenting their projects have been leading small but powerful social programs in their local communities and making genuine contributions.

The competition winner was a recent medical school graduate – Swekshya Neupane from Nepal. During the 2015 Nepal earthquake, she witnessed the poor state of child health care in rural communities. This inspired her to initiate an educational project called "Health for female community leaders." According to her presentation, the percentage of child mortality in Nepal was 54 per 1,000 live births and most health facilities only provided services to the rich, those living in the capitals and to males. There were many social reasons that caused this imbalance. The accessibility of health-care infrastructure in rural communities, a lack of transportation, and multiple barriers to affording health-care expenses are some good examples. Another major contributor to the social imbalance was the lack of knowledge young rural mothers had regarding the health care of their children, along with their attitudes towards health care. Neupane's project focuses on connecting and mobilizing young doctors to implement an educational series for mothers, assisting them in delivering adequate baby care and recognizing and reacting appropriately to emergency situations.

Spending four days with young leaders was an inspirational experience which reminded me of a term I had heard a few times – soft power.

This term was initially coined by political scientist Joseph Nye as the ability to attract and persuade. Shashi Tharoor, in his TED Talk, called it, "the ability of a culture to tell a compelling story and influence others to fall in love with them."

Neupane's story is admirable and a perfect example of soft power. The reach of her positive impact spans not only the communities she works with, but also the professionals she engages and the individuals and families whose lives have improved on a daily basis. Now, as a result of participating in the youth forum, she has impacted young leaders who dare to make a difference in this era of instability.

The young leaders who presented at and attended the forum clearly demonstrate that active and effective youth engagement in the job market is a key way to address both current and future employment issues. The question becomes, how can we, as community organizations, corporate representatives, educational institutions, educators and student services staff, support youth employment? How do we create opportunities for students to develop agency and build their own ideas?

An example from my own community set the stage for students to tackle current issues. The University of Alberta's Undergraduate Research Initiative and Kule Institute for Advanced Study collaborated on an event called "Tomorrow's Ideas, Now (TIN): Connecting Communities." The goal was to support students in building connections with local communities, and working together to develop projects that can break down stereotypes and implement tangible contributions. At the end of the project development day, event organizers and facilitators provided monetary awards and resources to help students get their ideas started.

Youth unemployment has been a topic for decades. Youth can do and want to do more than just work at a fast-food restaurant or a café. Youth are the future soft power for communities. They can better understand the special concerns and doubts that their fellow peers are experiencing. Why don't more institutions, educators and community organizations support youth with accessible opportunities and platforms where they can truly turn ideas into action? ■

AUTHOR BIO

Yuan Shi works as the Engagement Facilitator at the Undergraduate Research Initiative which is part of the Career Centre at the University of Alberta. For the past five years, as a youth herself, she has been highly involved with diverse community engagement initiatives.

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Learning Disabilities and Employment

Youth with learning disabilities while not “immune” to underemployment can develop the tools to help them in their job search and throughout their careers

L'emploi au-delà des limites d'un trouble d'apprentissage

Bien que les jeunes qui ont des problèmes d'apprentissage ne soient pas à l'abri du sous-emploi, ils peuvent mettre au point des outils qui les aideront dans leur recherche d'emploi et tout au long de leur carrière

By/Par Sara Savoie

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From an economic standpoint, underemployment is when there are more available workers than jobs on the market. However, on a socio-professional level, other images come to mind: having to bust your tail to end up in an unrewarding work situation, having a job beneath your skills or, worse, working in a field that doesn't correspond with your education. When working with youth with learning disabilities (LD), being aware of this and of potential solutions to prevent underemployment in this vulnerable population is important. The national situation should be considered, and certain intervention components, advocated for.

When it comes to youth underemployment and education, Canada fares quite well compared with other countries.¹ School is much better for youth with LDs since their need for adapted learning strategies were recognized. More time, access to isolated rooms and specialized coaching, as well as software designed for their disabilities, make it possible to consider their full potential before determining whether or not they will be able to succeed and get their diplomas. Few studies have assessed the repercussions in terms of employability but access to higher education is now possible for individuals with the required aptitudes (beyond the adapted strategies).

Over the last few decades, national indicators for underemployment among young people, with or without LDs, have remained stable. However, some groups of young university graduates seem more vulnerable to underemployment, in particular immigrants and those with a degree in humanities or social sciences. But students with LDs are rarely mentioned – no distinction is made – yet, learning disabilities,

Du point de vue économique, il y a « sous-emploi » lorsque les travailleurs disponibles sont plus nombreux que les emplois offerts sur le marché. Du point de vue socioprofessionnel, d'autres images nous viennent en tête : avoir « trimer dur » pour se retrouver dans une posture professionnelle peu valorisante, avoir un emploi en deçà de nos compétences ou, encore pire, travailler dans un secteur d'activités ne correspondant pas à notre préparation scolaire. Alors, quand on intervient auprès de jeunes ayant un trouble d'apprentissage (TA), on pourrait avoir intérêt à connaître cette situation et les pistes de solution afin de prévenir le « sous-emploi » chez cette clientèle plus vulnérable. La situation nationale est alors à considérer et des éléments d'intervention à préconiser.

En matière d'éducation et de sous-emploi des jeunes, le Canada se compare favorablement à d'autres pays.¹ La situation des jeunes ayant un TA s'est vue améliorée au plan scolaire depuis la reconnaissance de leurs besoins en termes de mesures adaptées d'apprentissage. Le temps supplémentaire, l'accès à des locaux isolés et à un accompagnement spécialisé ainsi que des logiciels adaptés à leur problématique permettent maintenant de considérer leur réel potentiel avant de décréter ou non une impossibilité de réussite et d'obtention d'un diplôme. Peu d'études ont évalué les répercussions en ce qui a trait à l'employabilité, mais l'accès aux niveaux supérieurs d'éducation est maintenant rendu possible si les aptitudes de l'individu (au-delà des mesures adaptées) le permettent.

Avec ou sans TA, les indicateurs nationaux du sous-emploi des jeunes sont restés stables au cours des dernières décennies. Toutefois, quelques segments de la population de jeunes ayant obtenu une éducation universitaire semblent plus vulnérables – notamment des jeunes détenteurs de diplômes

referring to a number of disorders which may affect the acquisition, organization, retention, understanding or use of verbal or non-verbal information, can certainly have an effect on employment. These disorders affect learning in individuals who otherwise demonstrate at least average abilities essential for thinking and/or reasoning. As such, LDs are distinct from intellectual deficiency.

LDs result from impairments in one or more processes related to perceiving, thinking, remembering or learning. These processes include, among others, phonological processing, visual spatial processing, language processing, processing speed, memory and attention, and executive functions (e.g. planning and decision-making). LDs may also involve difficulties with organizational skills, social perception, social interaction and perspective taking. They are lifelong; however, the way in which they are expressed may vary over an individual's lifetime, depending on the interaction between the demands of the environment and the individual's strengths and needs.² It therefore makes sense to reflect on the effects of LDs on youth, in particular on those who are underemployed but perhaps shouldn't be, unless, of course, this underemployment stems from conditions affecting the entire population.

Over the past 10 years, I have learned a lot from working with this clientele and I feel it is necessary for me to share some key considerations to fight underemployment and eliminate persisting prejudices. It is important to be informed, and to go beyond the traditional framework for career exploration and choice. I believe understanding the influence of these LDs and their repercussions on career choice is essential. In fact, the Learning Disabilities Association of Canada (LDAC) has published a study on the social costs of learning disabilities in Canada. This applied research, titled *Putting a Canadian Face on Learning Disabilities* (PACFOLD), sought to establish what it means to be a child, youth or adult with a learning disability (LD) in Canada. Most importantly, it showed just how resilient Canadians of all ages living day-to-day with these disabilities are. They face many roadblocks to success in school, at work and in life that we should know about. I feel that the clients we help are the ideal starting point for understanding how LDs influence career advancement. When it comes to how LDs are expressed, every case is different. However, according to this research, certain key factors make the biggest difference for success in school and at work:

- Finding a teacher who is trained to work with students with LDs
- Having family support that includes financial resources
- Finding an employer that understands learning disabilities and provides the necessary accommodations

As with any other medical condition, early screening, intervention and support are needed to minimize the impact of LDs on the people with them and the cost to Canadian society. With the right support, Canadians with learning disabilities can enjoy equal and fair opportunities to realize their potential.

I've found that youth with LDs such as dyslexia and attention-deficit disorder fight a daily battle to have career prospects that are consistent with their potential on the one hand and their interests on the other. In addition to finding a balance between the two, they must also understand the challenges of the school system and job market opportunities. All youth need to grasp

en sciences humaines et des immigrants instruits. On parle alors très peu des étudiants ayant des TA et on ne fait pas de distinction. Pourtant, on entend par trouble d'apprentissage un ensemble de dysfonctionnements pouvant affecter l'acquisition, l'organisation, la rétention, la compréhension ou le traitement de l'information verbale ou non verbale. Ces dysfonctionnements affectent l'apprentissage chez des personnes qui, par ailleurs, font preuve des habiletés intellectuelles moyennes essentielles à la pensée ou au raisonnement. Ainsi, les TA sont distincts de la déficience intellectuelle.

Les TA découlent d'atteintes à un ou plusieurs processus touchant la perception, la pensée, la mémorisation ou l'apprentissage. Ces processus incluent, entre autres, le traitement phonologique, visuo-spatial et langagier, ainsi que la vitesse de traitement de l'information, de la mémoire, de l'attention et des fonctions d'exécution telles que la planification et la prise de décision. Les TA peuvent aussi impliquer des déficits sur le plan organisationnel, social, de même qu'une difficulté à envisager le point de vue d'autrui. Ces troubles durent la vie entière. Par contre, leurs manifestations varient tout au long de la vie et sont tributaires de l'interaction entre les exigences du milieu, les forces et les besoins de l'individu.² Il va donc de soi de se questionner sur l'effet des TA chez les jeunes et, plus particulièrement, sur ceux qui parmi ces derniers se retrouvent dans une situation de sous-emploi qui pourrait être évitée si celle-ci ne relève pas, bien sûr, d'une explication générale affectant toute la population.

Ayant vécu diverses expériences au cours des dix dernières années avec cette clientèle, je trouve nécessaire de partager les éléments essentiels à considérer pour contrer le sous-emploi et abattre les préjugés toujours persistants. Pour ce, il faut s'informer et aller au-delà du cadre traditionnel d'exploration professionnelle et de choix de carrière. Il m'apparaît fondamental de connaître l'influence de ces TA et leurs répercussions sur le choix de carrière de ceux qui en ont un. L'Association canadienne (TAAC) a d'ailleurs publié une étude sur les coûts sociaux des troubles d'apprentissage au Canada à pacfold.ca. Cette recherche appliquée intitulée *Aspect canadien des troubles d'apprentissage* cherchait à établir ce que signifie être un enfant, un jeune ou un adulte qui a des troubles d'apprentissage (TA) au Canada. Elle a surtout révélé la résilience remarquable des Canadiennes et des Canadiens, jeunes et vieux, qui vivent quotidiennement avec ces troubles. La réussite de ces personnes à l'école, au travail et dans la vie de tous les jours est souvent entravée par des éléments que nous devons connaître. Je crois que c'est en partant des clients que nous aidons que nous pouvons repérer les influences des TA sur leur développement de carrière. Il s'agit de cas par cas en termes de manifestations du TA. Par contre, d'après cette recherche, les éléments qui font la plus grande différence sur le plan de la réussite scolaire et professionnelle semblent dus à des facteurs précis :

- trouver un enseignant formé à travailler avec les élèves TA;
- avoir un soutien de la famille dont des ressources financières;
- trouver le « bon » employeur qui comprend les troubles d'apprentissage et qui fournit les accommodements nécessaires.

Comme toute autre condition médicale, il faut alors un dépistage précoce, des interventions et un soutien pour réduire au minimum l'incidence sur les personnes et sur les coûts pour la société canadienne. En obtenant le soutien nécessaire, les Canadiennes et les Canadiens qui ont des troubles d'apprentissage auront des débouchés équitables pour développer leur potentiel.



“With the right support, Canadians with learning disabilities can enjoy equal and fair opportunities to realize their potential.”

the importance of these factors, but young people with LDs also need to overcome resistance on the part of certain teachers, parents, friends and co-workers who more often remind them of their limitations instead of their strengths. In your approach, focusing on important considerations other than the limitations of learning disabilities can lead to significant benefits.

Job satisfaction: Is job satisfaction driven by factors that are accessible to the young candidate? Giving up on certain occupations does not necessarily mean giving up on job satisfaction. Emphasize how useful certain lines of work are and how rewarding they could be. Consider combining a few occupations to round out satisfaction.

Employer expectations: Be specific in your descriptions of the expected behaviours within the profession or by the employer (e.g. attendance, following instructions, work quality), and try to determine if these behaviours can dovetail with the characteristics of the LD. This makes it easier to understand what needs to be improved, without risking job loss, while countering potential negative perceptions on the part of the employer.

Original strategies: Doing things differently does not mean that the employer's expectations will not be met. Checklists, the opportunity to prepare for oral questions or getting to work early are just a few examples of adapted employment strategies that youth can learn to employ. The job market is different from the school environment: young people must identify strategies that contribute to job security for themselves and use them.

Perseverance: Do not expect things to happen overnight. The efforts made in school are still important when looking for a job – although the learning curve is different. Reading and writing may no longer take up as much time but being on par with other candidates still takes a lot of energy.

While young people with LDs will not necessarily be “immune” to underemployment, they can develop the tools to help them minimize the impact of their conditions during their job search, while on the job and throughout their entire career paths. ■

AUTHOR BIO

Sara Savoie is a career counsellor (MEd, 2003) and special education teacher (MA, 2007). She contributes to the socio-professional integration of youth with learning disabilities, and works with parents, teachers and employers wishing to find the best ways to help these young people realize their professional potential.

References

¹ Canada 2020 – Canada's leading, independent, progressive think-tank. <http://canada2020.ca/about/>

² Learning Disabilities Association of Canada <http://ldac-acta.ca/learn-more/ld-defined>

Selon mes observations, qu'ils soient raccrocheurs, cégépiens, universitaires, du réseau public ou privé, les jeunes ayant des TA tels que la dyslexie et le trouble déficitaire de l'attention sont destinés à un combat quotidien afin d'aller vers des perspectives professionnelles respectant, d'une part, leur potentiel et, d'autre part, leurs intérêts. En plus de trouver un certain équilibre entre cette dualité, ils doivent aussi comprendre les enjeux du système scolaire et les débouchés sur le marché du travail. Contrairement aux autres jeunes qui, eux aussi, doivent saisir l'importance de ces éléments, ils doivent persévérer tout en se butant aux résistances de certains enseignants, parents, amis et intervenants qui leur rappellent le plus souvent leurs limites plutôt que leurs forces. Dans vos interventions, il est alors avantageux d'insister sur des éléments significatifs pour aller « au-delà des limites du TA »:

La satisfaction au travail : Déterminer si la satisfaction repose sur des éléments accessibles au jeune. Faire un deuil de certains métiers ne veut pas dire qu'il faut mettre de côté une satisfaction au travail. Préciser l'utilité de certains métiers et la valorisation que le jeune pourrait ou non en tirer. Envisager de combiner plus d'une occupation, s'il y a lieu, pour une satisfaction plus globale.

Les attentes de l'employeur : Valoriser une communication précise des comportements souhaités pour un métier ou par son employeur (assiduité, consignes, qualité du travail, etc.) et tenter d'évaluer l'arrimage possible avec les caractéristiques relatives au TA. Ainsi, il est plus facile de connaître les points à améliorer, sans risquer de perdre un emploi ou de minimiser les mauvaises perceptions de l'employeur.

L'originalité des moyens à adopter : Faire les choses autrement ne signifie pas ne pas respecter les attentes de l'employeur. Avoir des aide-mémoire, faire une préparation à l'avance sur des questions posées oralement ou arriver à l'avance au travail ne sont là que quelques exemples de mesures adaptées en emploi que le jeune lui-même doit apprendre à utiliser. Contrairement à ce qui se passe en milieu scolaire, il sera nécessaire sur le marché du travail que le jeune identifie par lui-même et essaie des moyens qui peuvent contribuer à son maintien en emploi.

La capacité de persévérer : Ne pas s'attendre à l'instantanéité. L'effort mis lors des études peut demeurer important lors de la recherche d'emploi et le maintien de celui-ci. L'apprentissage n'est plus d'ordre scolaire. La lecture et l'écriture seront fort probablement moins fréquentes, mais il demeure important de mettre l'énergie pour être au même pied d'égalité que les autres candidats.

Ainsi, les jeunes ayant un TA ne seront peut-être pas nécessairement « immunisés » contre le sous-emploi, mais ils pourront alors se prémunir d'outils qui les aideront à minimiser l'effet de leurs particularités dans leur recherche d'emploi, leur maintien en emploi et les choix à faire tout au long de leur cheminement de carrière. ■

BIOGRAPHIE DE L'AUTEURE

Sara Savoie est conseillère d'orientation (M.Ed. 2003) et orthopédagogue (M.A. 2007). Elle contribue à l'intégration socioprofessionnelle des jeunes ayant un trouble d'apprentissage et intervient auprès des parents, enseignants et employeurs désireux de trouver les manières optimales de faire valoir le potentiel professionnel de ceux-ci.

Références

¹ Canada 2020 - groupe de réflexion indépendant et progressiste du Canada

² L'Association canadienne des troubles d'apprentissage <http://ldac-acta.ca/fr/en-savoir-plus/definition-des-tas>



CAREER BRIEFS

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Canada's first digital strategy seeks to increase digital skills

A new report from the Information and Communications Technology Council (ICTC), *Digital Talent: Road to 2020 and Beyond*, estimates that the demand for jobs in the information and communication technology sector will rise significantly, up 182,000 jobs by 2019, well outpacing the available domestic talent currently available.

To ensure that Canada remains competitive in the growing digital economy, the report outlines a made-in-Canada strategy with seven major recommendations, including:

1. Nurturing a strong youth talent pipeline;
2. Leveraging Canada's diverse talent;
3. Supporting workforce upskilling to enhance digital adoption;
4. Attracting and retaining global digital talent;
5. Strengthening digital literacy and digital skills for Canadians;
6. Fostering digital entrepreneurship; and
7. Building labour mobility pathways to fill high-demand occupations.

Engaging youth, diverse populations and fostering technical, business and management skills, along with soft and interpersonal skills are an integral part of the strategy.

To find out more about Canada's first digital strategy, visit ictc-ctic.ca/digital-talent-strategy.

Summer Skills Academy features Mark Savickas on constructing careers in the digital age

The popular Dr Mark Savickas will discuss and demonstrate practical techniques for using stories and life themes to foster educational and career decision making at this year's CERIC Summer Skills Academy in Toronto. The July 13 session has already sold out with another date – July 14 – added, pending a minimum number of registrations.

Participants will learn how to integrate career construction approaches into their ongoing practice and may even use them to better understand why they became advisors and counsellors, and how their occupations allow them to advance their own life stories.

Bridging theory and practice, Dr Savickas is renowned for his work on Life Design Counselling and currently teaches at Northeast Ohio

Medical University in the Family and Community Medicine Department. The one-day training session will include a variety of practical activities to assist career professionals in putting Life Design Counselling and other career interventions to use with their clients.

Summer Skills Academy is an annual event that provides in-depth, budget-friendly training, intended for anyone involved in the career development field.

For more information about the event, visit ceric.ca/summerskills.

Workopolis releases the Job Search Guide for New Canadians

With the Syrian refugee crisis at the forefront of the news and Canada's newest immigration strategy set to welcome 300,000 permanent residents into the country over the next year, Workopolis has released the *Job Search Guide for New Canadians*.

The guide is currently only available in English and is intended to equip anyone working with immigrants and refugees with the basics of job searching in Canada.

A list of jurisdiction-specific organizations included in the guide is meant to provide a starting point for individuals seeking assistance with finding employment. The guide also includes: a list of the documents new Canadians will require in order to find work; instructions on crafting resumes and cover letters; an overview of regulated professions; tips on building a network; and tips on acing job interviews.

Access the guide in epub, pdf or mobi under the Job Search Strategies section at careers.workopolis.com.

New wiki explores how professionals and their clients can best use social media

From research to personal branding to networking, a new ContactPoint wiki covers the do's and don'ts of social media for career development across a range of the most well-known platforms such as LinkedIn and Twitter, as well as more recent apps including Periscope.

The new wiki was added at the same time as the wiki feature on ContactPoint, a free online community for career professionals run by CERIC, was upgraded. The upgrade allows users to more easily contribute wiki content.

In addition to the social media wiki, ContactPoint also features wikis on:

- Career Development Theory
- Mental Health and Employment
- Glossary of Career Development

Share your knowledge with the career development community!

Contribute to the wiki at contactpoint.ca/contactpoint-wiki.

Federal Government expands the number of youth who can access the Skills Link program

In an effort to increase the ability of youth to gain the skills and work experience they need to find and maintain employment, the latest federal budget added an additional \$165.4 million to the Youth Employment Strategy. The money is earmarked for new green jobs for youth, new jobs under the Young Canada Works program and an expansion of the Skills Link program.

For-profit and non-profit organizations, governments and Aboriginal organizations that create employment opportunities for youth facing barriers to employment can currently apply for funding to the Skills Link program year round, though the program will transition from continuous intake to a Call for Proposals process in the future. The program defines these employment barriers as potentially impeding a successful transition to the workplace, for example: non-completion of high school, being part of an official language minority or being a person with a disability.

For more information about the Skills Link program, visit servicecanada.ca.

Impact of Caregiving on Careers is the focus of a new literature search

Caregiving for aging parents, other family or friends is especially challenging when caregivers are also engaged in the workplace. The latest literature search from CERIC reviews existing studies related to the impact of caregiving on careers today.

Topics covered in the literature search include:

- Informal caregiving
- Engagement in the workplace
- Transitioning out of caregiving
- Gender issues
- Effects of caregiving on health and finances

A total of 35 literature searches are currently available for download, including Economic Benefits of Career Guidance, Transitions from Athletic Careers, Career Counselling Competencies, Ethical Issues in Career Development, Mental Health Issues in the Workplace, and more.

Literature searches are intended for use in research and feature comprehensive listings of key articles in various areas of career development, highlighting critical points of current knowledge. ■

To access the full list of literature searches, visit ceric.ca/literature-searches.

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Nadine Harrison, PCP
Payroll Administrator



An Opportunity to Thrive:

Positive Experiences of Post-Secondary Students from China

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An exploration of practical steps to promote resiliency among Chinese international students – the largest group in Canada

By Alexander Huang

The process of crossing borders for post-secondary purposes can be fraught with notable challenges. As Popadiuk and Arthur¹ emphasize, international students may encounter stressors that can similarly affect host culture students, such as academic and relational concerns, while also facing issues that are promoted by contextual and social changes. Prominent hindering experiences amongst the international student community include the loss of an established support network, the experience of ethnic discrimination, language acquisition difficulties, and cultural adjustment struggles.^{2 3 4 5}

China has accounted for the largest influx of international students within Canada; students from China represent approximately 32.42% of the entire international student body, a population that is estimated to include roughly 290,000 individuals⁶ spread across the various Canadian post-secondary campuses. Consequently, unique hindering experiences among Chinese international students have been studied, which can include barriers to engagement with host nationals, familial issues, challenges with help-seeking behaviours, and existential or life struggles.^{7 8 9} These general and distinct challenges can easily give rise to an image of a vulnerable population, and indeed, research tends to depict international students as being more vulnerable towards developing psychological or mental distress.¹⁰ However, in spite of these potential challenges, growing research has begun to highlight the possibility for positive transitional experiences, thus illustrating the capacity for individuals to adapt and thrive; in essence, to be resilient. In support of previous research, my graduate work, where I interviewed post-secondary Chinese international students about facilitating and hindering events related to their transition, appears to reinforce the belief that resiliency can be promoted through significant experiences, such as interactions with family and friends, encounters with institutional supports, turning points, and the acquisition of a purpose.

Family and friends

Resiliency research points to the importance of having supportive members who can assist in enabling one to develop positive adaptation skills.¹¹ In addition to offering reassurance, supportive family and friends can, more significantly, become models of resiliency so that individuals can learn to better address their own challenges. As one interviewee outlined, the experience of witnessing a paradigm of resiliency helped to promote the construct within her own circumstances, particularly as it related to finding work as an international student:

[A] really close friend...she's trying to find a job here. For one year, she's still not really settled down, but she's still trying...and it makes me feel...nothing to lose...And also you feel companionship...I'm not alone trying...even though I get jobless, I'm not alone.

Simply observing a friend's determination appeared to provide not only a sense of normalization towards one's struggles surrounding the acquisition of work within a foreign country, but more importantly, the impetus towards continued persistence despite obstacles such as unfamiliarity with workplace norms, lack of work experiences in Canada, and inherent language barriers.

Capitalizing on institutional supports

When family and friends are not readily available, post-secondary institutions offer a plethora of resources which can assist with promoting resiliency. Although there may be some reticence regarding specialized forms of help-seeking,¹² some of the Chinese respondents discussed their experiences with select resource providers when they were unable to address a particular issue on their own. It was through these encounters that the individuals were afforded the opportunity to build relationships that not only addressed feelings such as loneliness, isolation or confusion, but also enhanced their knowledge within the host culture and nurtured a sense of safety and security to adopt novel behaviours. For example, one of the participants emphasized her meeting with a career advisor, who highlighted the importance of acquiring Canadian work experience and explained Canadian workplace expectations. Thus, the participant was encouraged to expand her behavioural repertoire in order to address her concerns. This incident offered clarification regarding requirements and expectations, and helped the individual “navigate through” the Canadian system, as opposed to being obstructed by it.

Turning points

A critical event for some respondents related to an instance where they had a decision to falter or to endure. One respondent conveyed this experienced moment of despair that produced a sense of perseverance:

I told myself I have my responsibility...I have my duty...my duty is I have to study here and I have to get my Master degree, so I cannot [say] ‘oh, because I get homesick, I want to go back to China’...I cannot do it because...I have responsibility to...study hard, and study here.

In the moment, the self-talk emphasized an obligation towards completing her pursuits and to not waver from the goal of attaining her degree within a Canadian post-secondary institution. Such expressed thoughts and goal reminders, therefore, can act as an additional motivating force that moves one beyond “being stuck” towards the possibility of flourishing.

A sense of purpose

A final notable experience relates to the discernment of a purpose. For some students, this event occurs through active participation with organizations that can expand one’s identity within, and perhaps beyond, the post-secondary context. Participation can stimulate a sense of belonging that facilitates a greater connection towards the larger host culture due to being a “part of something.” For example, one interviewee discussed her engagement with a club that promoted feelings of satisfaction and purpose, and combatted the fear of “becoming lost” among the vast population within the university context:

[It’s] not that significant overall, maybe compared to classes...but...you feel like you have a job...you have...a lot of potential to really develop yourself...you have purpose in this campus.

Although deemed as mundane, the experience of becoming involved with a club generated a reason for studying abroad, one that seemed to extend beyond the role of a student. This felt sense appeared to urge the participant to contribute her skills and resources, and as she described it, she was able to discover and develop her “niche” in the process. Not surprisingly, such purposeful action seemed to facilitate her transition process.

Practical implications

The intention of this research is to highlight the potential capacity for Chinese international students to thrive and lessen the emphasis on hindrances and challenges. As career practitioners, it is imperative that we continue to recognize and acknowledge the successes of these individuals – amidst the potential turmoil, there are glimmers of positive experiences that can promote resiliency. Career practitioners in particular can stimulate this construct in the following manner:

- act as a conduit of information to help international students navigate a foreign country;
- conceptualize the entirety of transitional experiences (by attending to both hindering and facilitating ones) so that individuals are not simply mired by their challenges, rather, they can also acknowledge helpful events that can stimulate their ability to thrive; and
- advocate and implement ideas expressed by the international student community so that they can contribute and generate a sense of purpose, as opposed to feeling isolated and separated from the host culture.

Although the post-secondary transition process can be challenging for international students, it can also be seen as a rewarding enterprise where there is an opportunity to showcase one’s ability to grow and to thrive. ■

AUTHOR BIO

Alexander Huang is a Personal Counsellor at St. George’s School, a university preparatory school in Vancouver, BC. He has worked previously as a transition co-ordinator and learning resource teacher, assisting high school students and international students with diverse learning profiles. A research area of continued interest remains secondary and post-secondary students’ transitional experiences.

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CANADIAN CAREER SERVICE PROFESSIONALS: HOW IS THE FIELD CHANGING?

Interest in career counselling fundamentals is up, while social media is down when it comes to career development research, reveals a comparison of CERIC's 2011 and 2015 surveys

By Mario R. Gravelle



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The Canadian Education and Research Institute for Counselling (CERIC) plays a part in generating primary data about the career counselling and career development field. It has recently carried out a national survey to uncover the opinions of career service professionals in Canada. The online survey was conducted between October 19 and November 20, 2015. Participants were recruited from CERIC's email lists as well as those of its supporting organizations. The 2015 survey was completed by 1,004 professionals in the field. CERIC undertook similar surveys in 2006, 2007 and 2011. The 2011 survey was completed by 1,013 career services professionals. Visit ceric.ca/surveys for additional materials on survey findings, including a full comparative slide deck between the 2011 and 2015 surveys.

This article will provide a comparison of the findings from the CERIC 2015 Survey of Career Service Professionals with those of a similar survey conducted in 2011. Both surveys were designed to provide a snapshot of those in the field, surface their professional development and competency improvement interests as well as issues pertaining to research and learning dissemination. Survey questions also focused on matters pertaining to mobility and succession planning. Comparing the findings of these surveys brings to light interesting insights into enduring elements of the field as well as changing dynamics. For instance, according to demographic information, the career development profession continues to be predominately female and comparatively well-educated versus the general population. Although online technology is ever-present, career service professionals continue to prefer in-person professional development opportunities instead of web-based offerings. Lastly, those who responded to the latest survey have some research interests in common with the 2011 cohort – i.e. accessing easy-to-understand labour market information and serving new Canadians – but are also interested in different topics including skills development strategies and supporting youth. Below are some of the details of what we learned when comparing the results from CERIC's two most recent surveys of career service professionals in Canada.



Gazing into the Crystal Ball: What's on the Horizon for Career Development

During a panel at the Cannexus16 National Career Development Conference, leaders from across Canada's career development sector engaged in a lively discussion around the 2015 CERIC survey findings. Here are just a few of the things they had to say:

“We talk about lifelong career development but in Canada our practice has been built around working with the unemployed and working with school-to-work transitions. That's traditionally where the work was. And so, are we actually walking the walk when it comes to lifelong career development?”

- **Dr Roberta Neault**, *President of Life Strategies Ltd. and Associate Dean, Yorkville University, BC*

“Canada is still viewed as a leader in career development, yet we don't have a national strategy for career development or workforce development and we need that.”

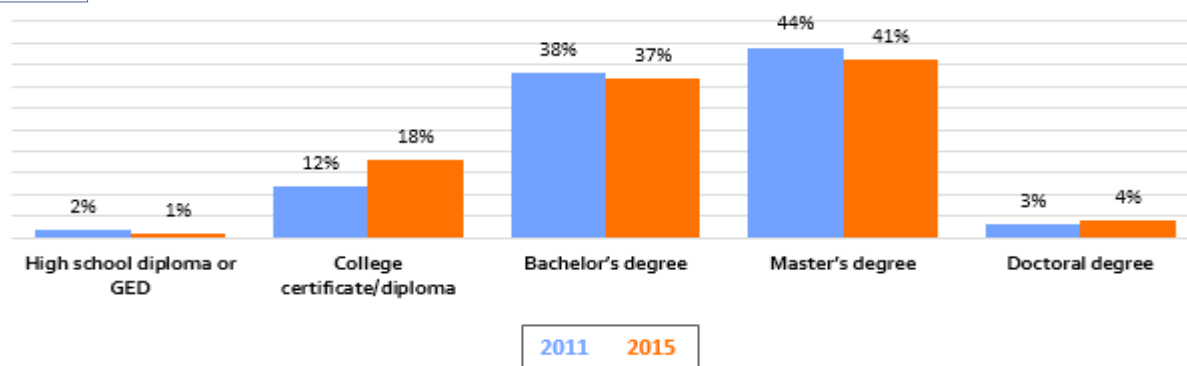
- **Valérie Roy**, *Deputy Director of Regroupement québécois des organismes pour le développement de l'employabilité (RQuODE), QC*

Demographic information

Both surveys included a suite of questions to ascertain the demographic composition of the field. Very little change has apparently occurred in the gender characteristics of those who work in the field as women continue to be over-represented (79% in 2011 vs. 82% in 2015). The share of respondents by age group also stayed relatively the same. Whereas 56% were in the 35 to 54 year-old age group (“35 to 44” and “45 to 54”) in 2011, 58% were in this category in the latest survey while the share of the population from the younger and older age groups was unchanged (both around 15%). Asking about the highest level of completed education did surface a notable difference. As shown in Figure #1, career service professionals continue to be relatively well-educated with over 80% having at least an undergraduate university education (85% in 2011 vs. 82% in 2015). Interestingly, the proportion of those whose highest level of education is a “college certificate/diploma” increased by one-third (12% to 18%).

Figure 1

What is your highest level of education completed?



Both surveys asked respondents to choose from a list of options to “...best describe your job function as it relates to your primary role in the career development/career counselling field.” Although a majority in 2011 and 2015 answered that they are directly involved in the provision of career services, the proportion has dipped somewhat over that time (from 68% to 61%). Comparing the size of the career service organizations of the respective survey respondents shows a “clustering” of the field towards relatively mid-sized agencies. Firms with five to 25 workers increased by six percentage points (37% to 43%) while those with fewer than five employees dipped from 28% in 2011 to 24% in 2015. The largest agencies (e.g. those with more than 50 workers) also shrunk from 22% to 19%.

“We have to grant mutual respect across our sector to allow all practitioners along the continuum to flourish and for the sector to grow as a whole.”

- **Matt Wood**, *Researcher, Toronto, ON*

“We rely too much on the expert to design a tool that we can then use. We need a more collective response. I think that will just explode the field in the same way that Wikipedia exploded how we think of access to knowledge.”

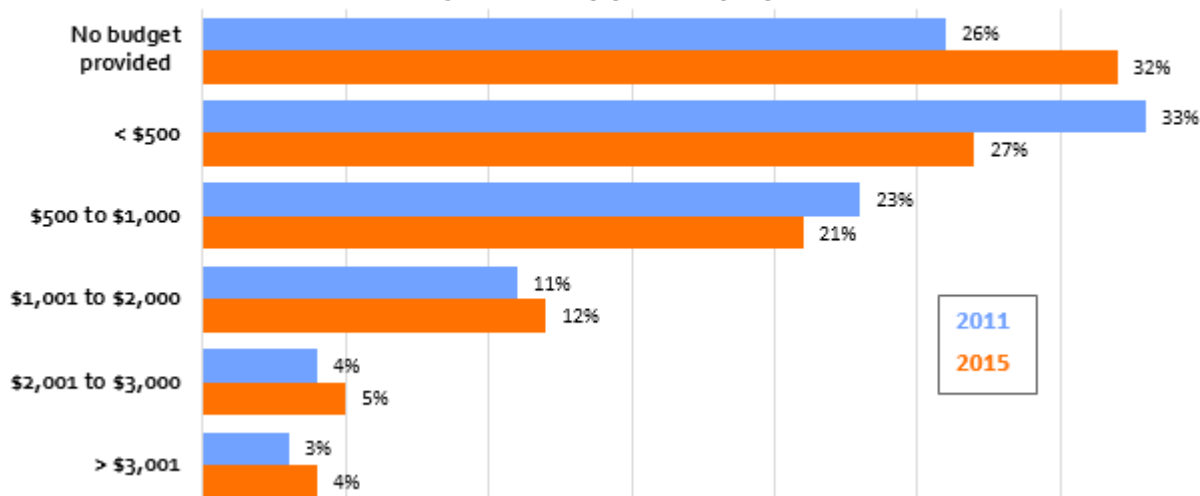
- **Dr Kris Magnusson**, *Dean of Education, Simon Fraser University, BC*

Professional development and competency improvement

CERIC included nearly a dozen questions in both the 2011 and 2015 surveys to explore professional development and competency improvement and the ways in which those in the career counselling and career development field want to enhance their knowledge and skills. For example, participants were asked to identify the formal learning approach to training they prefer. Professional development and competency improvement opportunities that occur in person continue to be highly sought after by those in the field. In both surveys, "Workshop/seminar – in person" were the leading answer choices followed by "Conference." Career specialists certainly remain interested in accessing online competency enhancement opportunities but they are increasingly attracted to webinars instead of online courses. The proportion of those who mentioned preferring webinars increased from 32% in 2011 to 37% in 2015 while courses via web delivery dropped from one-third to one-quarter. Unfortunately, the latest survey indicates that employers in the field are decreasingly inclined to pay for professional development. As shown in Figure #2, the proportion of those who noted that they do not receive any funds from their employers jumped from one-quarter to one-third. Meanwhile the share of those who have less than \$1,000 dropped from 56% in 2011 to 48% in 2015.

Figure 2

What is your yearly personal development budget as provided by your employer?



“There's a lack of commonality in the field... we don't have a common definition of what career development is and I think that's really holding back the field.”

- **Darrell Cole**, Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Career Trek Inc., MB

“Many of us in this field don't feel like we have the expertise to develop the instruments to collect the data [on impact of career interventions].”

- **Jennifer Browne**, Director of Career Development & Experiential Learning at Memorial University, NL

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Conversely, it appears that a growing proportion of career service professionals are willing to use their own resources to cover professional development and competency improvement expenses. Sixty-eight percent of 2011 respondents stated that they would be prepared to pay up to \$500 out of pocket for these costs compared to 57% of those surveyed in 2015. The share of those who would invest between \$500 and \$1,000 jumped by one-third (22% to 32%).

Research and learning dissemination

The closing section of the 2015 survey included seven of the same questions asked in the earlier survey about the research interests and knowledge dissemination practices of career service professionals. One of these queries asked participants, “What three topics would you most like to see career development research focus upon?” According to Figure #3, four of 2011’s ranked answer choices were also in the top eight in 2015.

Figure 3

RANK	2011	2015	RANK
1	Labour market information including data about employment or career trends	Practices, approaches, techniques or tools used in career counselling/development	1
2	Social Media, Web 2.0 and Cybercounselling	Assessing the impact/value of career-related practices, approaches, techniques or tools	2
3	People with a Mental Illness or Mental Health Problem	Labour market information including data about employment or career trends	3
4	People in Post-Secondary Education	People in Post-Secondary Education	4
5	Immigrants	Youth	5
6	Aboriginal Issues	Immigrants	6
7	Older Workers	People with a Mental Illness or Mental Health Problem	7
8	People with Disabilities	Skills (technical and/or soft skills)	8

Nevertheless, half of the earlier topics of interest (Social Media, Web 2.0 and Cybercounselling; Aboriginal Issues; Older Workers; and People with Disabilities) were replaced by new themes (Practices, approaches, techniques or tools used in career counselling/development; Assessing the impact/value of career-related practices, approaches, techniques or tools; Youth; and Skills). The closing question of the research-related section in each survey enquired about the prevalence of evaluative practices in the field. Assessing the impact of career counselling/career development interventions has remained stable from 2011 to 2015. While 62% of respondents from the earlier survey stated that they evaluate the influence of their work, 60% of participants from 2015 said the same.

Where to learn more

For a detailed breakdown of survey findings, an infographic, webinar recording, video of the Gazing into the Crystal Ball: What’s on the Horizon for Career Development survey panel presentation from Cannexus16, as well as the full comparative slide deck referenced in this article, visit ceric.ca/survey2015. ■

AUTHOR BIO

Mario R. Gravelle is The Counselling Foundation of Canada’s Learning & Innovation Analyst. He is responsible for supporting funding requests as well as managing the Foundation’s grants. Gravelle likewise spearheads knowledge transfer activities to promote the work accomplished by the organization’s grant recipients. He also supports CERIC’s survey activities.

Le sous-emploi chez les jeunes

Par Émilie Grégoire

See contactpoint.ca/careering for the English translation of this article.

Nous parlons beaucoup plus souvent du chômage que du « sous-emploi », mais les jeunes Canadiens affichent le deuxième taux de sous-emploi le plus élevé de l'Organisation de coopération et de développement économiques (OCDE), ce qui entraîne des conséquences négatives tant pour les personnes que pour l'ensemble de l'économie

Le marché du travail se révèle fort plus complexe que le fait d'être en emploi ou de ne pas l'être. Contrairement à la problématique – très visible – du chômage, le sous-emploi est quant à lui rarement abordé.¹ Il présente des conséquences importantes sur la main-d'œuvre car il ne lui permet pas d'utiliser à sa juste valeur les compétences qu'elle possède.

“ Le sous-emploi, la surqualification et la sous-utilisation sont des notions apparentées, mais elles ne sont pas tout à fait équivalentes. Le sous-emploi a trait principalement aux personnes qui ont un emploi mais dont les compétences et la disponibilité à travailler sont sous-utilisées. La surqualification, quant à elle, ne concerne que les personnes dont les compétences sont sous-utilisées mais ne tient pas compte des différences relatives à leur situation sur le marché du travail. La sous-utilisation est une notion plus inclusive en ce qu'elle englobe les sous-employés et les surqualifiés, mais s'étend également aux personnes découragées par la recherche d'emploi qui ont renoncé à offrir leurs services sur le marché du travail.² ”

« La jeunesse du Canada est extrêmement bien instruite, mais possède également le deuxième taux de sous-emploi le plus élevé parmi les pays de l'OCDE ».³ Le Congrès du travail du Canada rapporte que le taux de sous-emploi, au Canada en 2013, était de 14,2 %, soit le double du taux de chômage de 7,1 %.⁴ Entre 2007 et 2011, la proportion de jeunes qui estimaient être en situation de sous-emploi aurait presque doublé, passant de 2,2 % à 4,0 %.⁵ Pour les jeunes de 15 à 24 ans pour la même année, 27,7 % vivaient en situation de sous-emploi, soit plus de deux fois leur taux de chômage (13,7 %).⁶ Environ 24,6 % des jeunes détenant un baccalauréat en 2005 vivaient une situation de sous-emploi puisque leur métier ou profession n'exigeait pas d'études universitaires.⁷

Il semble ardu de bien comprendre les causes du sous-emploi. Naturellement, la scolarisation de plus en plus importante des jeunes augmente leur risque de se retrouver dans cette situation. Le sous-emploi peut également être influencé par l'offre et la demande changeantes en termes de diplômes, les progrès technologiques et l'hétérogénéité des travailleurs.⁸ D'autres facteurs indirects peuvent également influencer le sous-emploi, tels que la structure de l'économie, la migration des jeunes ainsi que la qualité de l'information sur le marché du travail (IMT).⁹ En ce qui a trait à l'IMT, il est avant tout question de jumelage entre l'offre et la demande de travailleurs.¹⁰ En effet, pour effectuer un choix éclairé, les jeunes doivent disposer des bons renseignements tant sur les programmes disponibles que sur les besoins des employeurs et sur les compétences pouvant faire l'objet de rareté de main-d'œuvre. Également, les employeurs exigent parfois des niveaux d'éducation, d'expérience professionnelle et de compétences plus élevés que ce que le poste requiert en réalité,¹¹ une situation que le CCJ a également constaté à quelques reprises dans le passé.

Le Comité consultatif Jeunes (CCJ) a la responsabilité de définir les problématiques vécues par les jeunes dans leurs démarches d'intégration, de réintégration et de maintien en emploi. Il est composé de 15 membres issus d'employeurs, de syndicats, de regroupements étudiants, d'organismes en employabilité, en développement régional ou en défense de droits (ccjeunes.org). Il est financé par la Commission des partenaires du marché du travail (CPMT).

En somme, il semblerait qu'aucune analyse approfondie n'ait été réalisée pour bien comprendre les causes du sous-emploi en contexte canadien.¹²

Les conséquences, pour les jeunes, semblent être davantage de l'ordre des disparités entre l'apprentissage acquis durant les études et les compétences auxquelles l'expérience professionnelle donne accès.¹³ Les jeunes immigrants présenteraient les taux de sous-emploi les plus élevés¹⁴. En effet, à l'instar du CCJ, Statistique Canada soulève quelques raisons pour lesquelles les immigrants vivent davantage en situation de sous-emploi : arrivée récente au pays, manque d'information sur le marché du travail et faible réseau de contacts professionnels.¹⁵

De façon générale, le sous-emploi entraîne une déqualification ou dégradation des compétences, qui à son tour agit sur la qualité de la main-d'œuvre et la productivité d'une nation :

“ Le chômage et le sous-emploi des jeunes génèrent des coûts élevés en matière sociale et économique, qui entraînent non seulement un ralentissement économique, mais aussi une érosion de la base d'imposition, des dépenses de sécurité sociale accrues et un investissement inutilisé dans l'éducation et la formation. ”¹⁶

En 2013, l'OCDE lance son plan d'action pour les jeunes afin d'une part de lutter contre le sous-emploi et d'autre part d'élargir leurs perspectives d'emploi à long terme.

La même année, le CCJ propose dans son avis sur les transitions entre l'école et le marché du travail qu'une analyse approfondie soit menée afin de mieux comprendre les causes et les conséquences du sous-emploi, en portant une attention particulière aux jeunes.¹⁷

La Fondation canadienne en développement de carrière soulève plusieurs pistes de solutions, telles que le soutien aux partenariats industrie-études, l'investissement dans les stages rémunérés et les programmes coopératifs ainsi que des incitatifs financiers, pour les employeurs, afin d'embaucher les jeunes et leur offrir une formation plus pratique pour favoriser leur maintien en emploi.¹⁸

Bien que le sous-emploi touche particulièrement les travailleurs, ses effets se répercutent également tant sur les entreprises que sur l'économie dans toute sa globalité. Cela représente autant de raisons pour lesquelles nous devons en connaître davantage sur le sous-emploi pour agir rapidement afin d'en réduire les effets.

Emilie Grégoire possède une formation en administration publique et en administration des affaires. Elle cumule plus de 10 années d'expérience en gestion et coordination de projets, en développement organisationnel et en demandes de financement. Les quatre dernières années lui ont permis de développer une solide expertise dans le secteur de l'employabilité des jeunes. Entre autres choses, elle rédige des avis et mémoires destinés au gouvernement du Québec et qui portent sur les problématiques d'emploi vécues par les jeunes de 18 à 35 ans. ■

BIOGRAPHIE DE L'AUTEURE

Émilie Grégoire possède une formation en administration publique et en administration des affaires. Elle cumule plus de 10 années d'expérience en gestion et coordination de projets, en développement organisationnel et en demandes de financement. Les quatre dernières années lui ont permis de développer une solide expertise dans le secteur de l'employabilité des jeunes. Entre autres choses, elle rédige des avis et mémoires destinés au gouvernement du Québec et qui portent sur les problématiques d'emploi vécues par les jeunes de 18 à 35 ans.

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Theory Corner:

Cultural Scripts and the Career Development of Canadian Young Adults with Mental Illnesses

Career counselling can assist youth with mental illness to challenge cultural scripts and become successful in their careers

By Christa Boychuk

Individuals are more vulnerable to the onset of mental illness during late adolescence and emerging adulthood (ages 14 to 29). Mental illnesses vary from anxiety to schizophrenia and are often associated with formal medical diagnoses, and can result in social and vocational deficits that limit opportunities for young individuals to develop their career.^{1 2 3 4}

Magnifying the challenges encountered by young individuals with mental illnesses are cultural scripts, or “the range of possibilities for an individual in a given cultural milieu to perceive, think, feel, and act in ways that are experienced and seen by others as being normal.”⁵ Though mental illnesses are influenced by complex factors, many non-mentally ill individuals believe that those with mental illnesses can recover through their own efforts, without medical or psychosocial interventions by “pulling themselves up by their bootstraps.” Such cultural scripts can marginalize individuals with mental illnesses and constrict their educational, employment and financial opportunities.

Cultural scripts and the career development of Canadian young adults

Young adults may start to work part-time jobs or volunteer after school to develop their work experience and abilities, to prepare for adult work roles. In their educational paths, they may try out different options that prepare them for various types of work. This exploration allows a young individual to connect their experiences with their interests and competencies to develop their career identity.^{6 7 8}

Career development is associated with participation in post-secondary education, as a growing number of young adults seek advanced education.^{9 10 11 12} In addition, young adults tend to live with their parents after completing their education, in order to repay debt and obtain employment.¹³

Overall, the cultural script of the career development of Canadian young adults is marked by a prolonged and indirect transition from adolescence to adulthood, characterized by career planning, career exploration, post-secondary education and the search for independence.^{14 15 16}

Career development script applied to Canadian young adults with mental illnesses

The cultural script of the career development of Canadian young adults poses challenges to the career development of individuals with mental health problems. According to Caparoso & Kiselica (2004), most young adults with mental illnesses do not complete post-secondary education nor develop a career identity after illness onset due to barriers such as:

- Early dependence on government disability assistance;
- Limited availability and quality of vocational services for those with mental illness;
- Belief by some health practitioners and family that post-secondary education and competitive employment may create stress and prevent full symptom recovery; and
- Social stigma.

Limited employment and social experiences encountered by young individuals with mental health problems constrains vocational decision making due to having few successful decision-making experiences and lack of decision-making competence.¹⁷

Young adults with mental illnesses often perceive few career options, engage in few decision-making tasks and are frequently limited to few career and educational options that lead to residential and financial dependence.^{18 19}

Implications

The cultural script of the career development of Canadian young adults presents challenges to individuals with mental illnesses. This script is based on limiting assumptions that reinforce negative stereotypes that individuals with mental illnesses are incapable of obtaining and maintaining careers and experience a lifetime of limited career prospects.

Career counselling can provide a suitable context for young individuals with mental illnesses to challenge career-related scripts and facilitate career decision-making competence by providing an environment that instills hope, facilitates self-awareness, challenges negative thinking and facilitates goal planning.

Challenging cultural scripts in the career counselling context

Often clients with mental illnesses enter into career counselling lacking self-awareness and having limited career decision-making skills, as they are often disengaged from education and employment. As a result, career clients with mental illnesses often lack hope and engage in negative patterns of thinking. Career counsellors can assist clients in challenging career-related

scripts and promoting their career decision-making competence using the following suggestions.

- Cultivate collaborative and supportive therapeutic relationships with clients through the use of open-ended questions during sessions, be prepared to discuss clients' mental health concerns and open and willing to discuss and challenge mental health-related biases;
- Facilitate clients' self-awareness through written narratives that encourage clients to explore their values, skills, interests and how these have influenced their career development;
- Assist clients in identifying and addressing their career development challenges through Socratic Questioning, a psychotherapeutic approach used to challenge the accuracy and completeness of a clients' thinking and helps them move towards their goal (Medical University of South Carolina, 2016). This approach can help clients challenge their maladaptive thinking and develop critical thinking skills pertaining to their career development issues; and,
- Stimulate clients' career exploration and planning through vision boards, career literature, completion of online career inventories (e.g. Career Fitter and Career Cruising), career assessments (e.g. Strong Interest Inventory, Career Values and Motivated Skills) and identification of potential supports, education and training opportunities.

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Conclusion

The cultural script of the career development of Canadian youth presents challenges to young people with mental illnesses, as this script is based on limiting assumptions that reinforce negative stereotypes limiting their career development. Despite these challenges, career counselling can provide a suitable environment for mentally ill youth to challenge career-related cultural scripts, build their career decision-making competence and encourage career exploration and planning. ■

AUTHOR BIO

Christa Boychuk is a PhD candidate in Rehabilitation Science at Queen's University in Kingston, ON. Her research and clinical practice interests include the employment experiences of individuals with mental illnesses. You can contact Boychuk by email at christa.boychuk@queensu.ca.

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Employment Support for Young Clients with Criminal Records

By Pauleen Payne (Editorial Support: Linda Johnson)

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Youth between the ages of 18-34 are overrepresented in the Canadian criminal justice system and require unique career support for them to be successful on their career paths

Young adults with a criminal record present a unique set of challenges to career development professionals. According to Public Safety Canada, over 23% of men and 4% of women between the ages of 18-34 have criminal records and these numbers are growing due to legislative changes, which have doubled the waiting time to apply for a record suspension and quadrupled the application cost.¹ The 18-34 year age group is overrepresented in the criminal justice system, making up 65% of criminal cases but only 29% of the overall population.² These formative years are integral to the development of a career path and a criminal record can become a significant barrier to employment at this life stage. Therefore, effective career support for this marginalized group is critical.



“Clients with criminal records often feel overwhelmed and have feelings of shame, anxiety and hopelessness. As clients feel the ongoing support of the career professional, an environment of trust is established. The relationship grows and clients’ self-confidence and belief in themselves develop, resulting in the clients feeling motivated to move forward.”

Advice from a career professional³

Amanda Stumpf, an employment consultant (job developer) with Lutherwood Employment Services in Kitchener, ON, has 12 years’ experience supporting clients in finding work. She emphasized that realizing success with this population demands strong interpersonal and counselling skills on the part of the career professional, involves a long-time commitment, includes the use of outside resources to provide wrap-around support and requires a solid understanding of the labour market.

Strong interpersonal/counselling skills

Stumpf emphasized the importance of building a strong connection with clients to lay the foundation for success. She pointed out that empathy and understanding for the client is just the beginning. Clients with criminal records often feel overwhelmed and have feelings of shame, anxiety and hopelessness. As clients feel the ongoing support of the career professional, an environment of trust is established. The relationship grows and clients’ self-confidence and belief in themselves develop, resulting in the clients feeling motivated to move forward.

To build rapport between counsellor and clients, Stumpf uses several tools including:

- Motivational interviewing: giving autonomy (control) to clients to make their own decisions
- Narrative analysis: listening to clients tell success stories and realize their skills
- Pros and cons list: listening to clients reflect on the benefits and costs of all choices and thus decide what is most important
- Draining the pool of anxieties: encouraging clients to express the roots of their anxieties thereby freeing themselves to move forward

Stumpf lists important career professional attitudes core to supporting this demographic:

- A belief in the potential of each person to find gainful employment
- A non-judgmental approach
- A dedication to serving your clients

A career practitioner’s guide from the Government of Alberta on working with diverse clients, *What Works: Ex-Offenders*, supports Stumpf’s relationship-building approach, emphasizing, “Growth occurs in situations where clients feel trusted and empowered.”

A long-term commitment

Stumpf gets to know her clients over a period of weeks and months through the Youth Job Connection Program. She gets to know their goals, strengths, abilities and personalities. She sees each client several times a week in the beginning, noting that a commitment from clients is critical to success. She meets for a variety of reasons including:

- Investigating job goals: discussing what type of work clients would find most desirable
- Discussing the job search: asking clients to plan work search tasks and following up
- Developing marketing materials: working on clients’ resumes, cover letters, etc.
- Supporting employment: continuing to meet as often as needed (daily, bi-weekly, weekly) while clients are working, to validate their feelings and offer encouragement

Wrap-around support

Clients with criminal records will require support outside of a career practitioner to help them successfully find and maintain employment. Stumpf notes it is common for clients to have faced tremendously stressful life circumstances. These outside services can help clients see a wider window of opportunities and feel hope for their future. Some of the services Stumpf has referred clients to include:

- Housing, food hampers, clothing, laundry, walk-in clinics, dental clinics
- ID documents
- Personal Counselling services
- Literacy and computer skills
- Education counselling (Stumpf has not yet had any clients with a criminal record who have post-secondary education)
- Credit counselling

What Works: Ex-Offenders adds that clients will also often need transportation, work clothes and a bank account in order to secure employment. A continuum of services including health care and child-care support may also be required.⁴ Ultimately, agencies need to co-ordinate the provision of these services so that the process is efficient and any associated stigma for the client is minimized.⁵

The strong link between low literacy and crime needs to be acknowledged. Daily life is harder for people with low literacy, so they are more likely to feel frustrated and dissatisfied. They struggle with problem-solving skills, tend to be less active citizens and feel like outcasts. With literacy and other training, they develop a more positive self-image and feel proud of what they have achieved. Their new skills and self-esteem help them avoid one of the main causes of criminal activity – unemployment. Literacy improvement and other educational and training advancements can be lengthy so support during this period is important.⁶

Labour market knowledge

Clients' anxieties about the job search can be significantly decreased with the knowledge that the career practitioner has a solid understanding of the local labour market and connections with employers who do not require criminal record checks. Stumpf highlights the importance of understanding job duties and working conditions at various jobs that match with clients' skills and personalities. Stumpf's list has grown over many years of watching and listening closely for employers who do not ask for criminal records checks – it is not a topic discussed openly – and often focuses on three main sectors that she knows offer job opportunities to clients with criminal records:

- Manufacturing
- Construction
- Food Industry

Helping people with criminal records move forward in their career is tough; employment options are limited and clients often face a multitude of other barriers. Hopefully, the advice in this article can help career professionals to better serve this vulnerable section of the population.

What can your staff and organization do to better equip and prepare to effectively support people in this unique situation? ■

AUTHOR BIO

Pauleen Payne is currently enrolled in the Career Development Practitioner program at Conestoga College. She is interested in supporting clients with criminal records and other significant challenges to employment. Payne volunteers at the Lutherwood Employment Centre in Kitchener, ON and has a background in managing an adult ESL program as well as teaching at all age levels.

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10 Questions for Tony Botelho

Photos Courtesy of Tony Botelho

Tony Botelho is the Director of Career and Volunteer Services at Simon Fraser University, an office that was recognized with the Special Award for Innovation by a Career Centre at the 2015 TalentEgg National Campus Recruitment Excellence Awards.

In 2014, Botelho received the Rob Shea Research Award by the Canadian Association of Career Educators and Employers (CACEE) for his research on the role of career education in the contemporary university environment. And of particular pride, his grade two teacher once said he was "a pleasure to have in the class."

Botelho will be presenting at Cannexus17, Canada's largest bilingual National Career Development Conference, in January 2017.

Q In one sentence, describe why career development matters.

A Career development matters because figuring out your place in this wonderfully weird and constantly changing world can be really hard – and for some it's even harder.

Q Which book are you reading right now?

A I am reading *The Secret History of Costaguana* by Juan Gabriel Vasquez. It's a fun and uniquely Latin American response to Joseph Conrad's *Nostromo*.

Q What did you want to be when you grew up?

A When I was in kindergarten I clearly remember wanting to be a lion tamer. I think I would actually make quite a good lion tamer despite the fact that I'm not that good with animals nor am I particularly brave or daring. Actually... maybe I wouldn't be that good.

Q Name one thing you wouldn't be able to work without?

A Humour, or at least my interpretation of what humour is. It makes even the most mundane activity more fun or interesting and it is an under-appreciated educational tool.

Q What activity do you usually turn to when procrastinating?

A Answering Top 10 question lists. :-)

Q What song do you listen to for inspiration?

A This is a tough one as I love music. But if I had to choose one song I'd go with Rufus Wainwright's rendition of Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah." Admittedly, I have no idea what the song is about but I am moved by it every time.

Q Which word do you overuse?

A That you're allowed to publish? Sadly I say the words, "That was a joke" or "That was meant to be a joke" far too often. This likely stems from the fact that the humour that I previously mentioned not wanting to work without is something I'm not that good at. Inspired by Jeb Bush's now famous "Please clap" comment I've also incorporated a "Please laugh" line. The reactions have been similar.

Q Who would you like to work with most?

A I think it would be cool to be a "Careers Correspondent" on a satirical/comedy program like *The Daily Show* or *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*. The careers field needs its own Bill Nye!

Q Which talent or superpower would you like to have?

A I'd love to be able to play any song on any instrument I came across. I hope this doesn't sound greedy as I already play the triangle (and I'm quite good) but I feel my repertoire would be expanded by adding other instruments.

Q What do you consider your greatest achievement?

A Another tough one. I suspect my greatest achievement is less about one thing but more to do with the relationships I've been able to nurture in my personal and professional life. I've really been quite fortunate in this regard. ■

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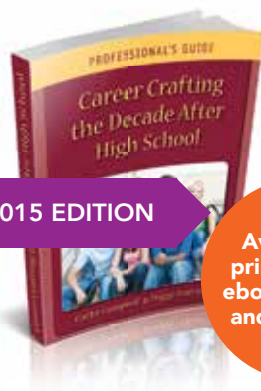
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Canada Careers and Jobs Finder

A web portal and job matching tool that filters jobs according to education and interest and allows the user to apply for certain jobs directly.

canadacareersfinder.ca

Raise Your Flag

A career exploration tool designed to connect youth to meaningful careers that do not require a post-secondary education.

raiseyourflag.com

Youth Career Initiative

An international program that provides at-risk and disadvantaged youth between the ages of 18-21 with employment opportunities globally.

youthcareerinitiative.org

Magnet

A project out of Ryerson University, Magnet was initially launched to assist with post-secondary recruitment and uses job-matching technology to match employers and jobseekers.

magnet.today

Career Decision-making Difficulties Questionnaire (CDDQ)

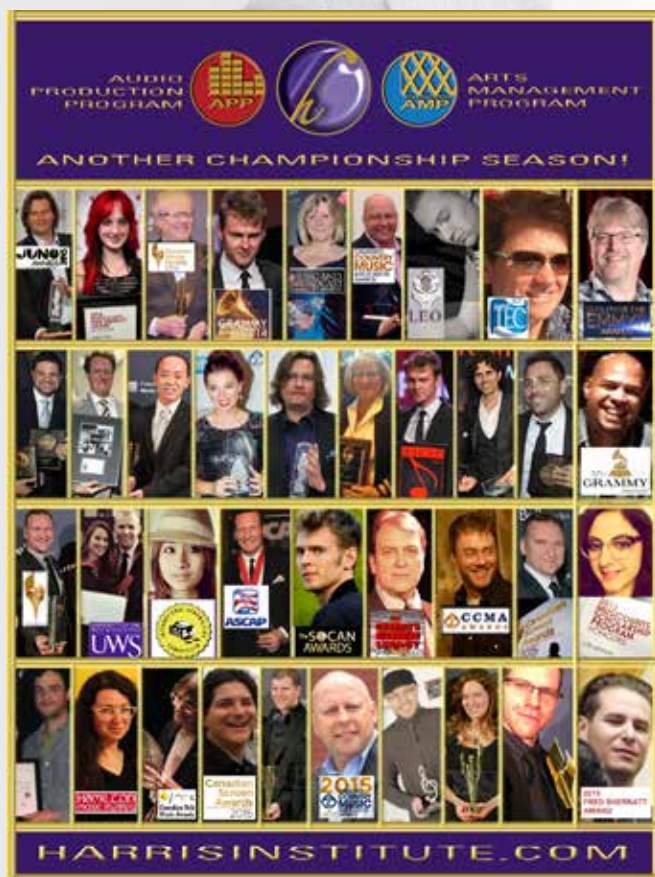
This site features free career assessments, guidance about career decision-making and advice for career professionals.

kivunim.huji.ac.il/cddq

International Experience Canada (IEC)

Government of Canada program for Canadian and foreign youth between the ages of 18 to 35 seeking work abroad in the form of a working holiday, international co-op internship or as a young professional.

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