

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 23 Issue 29 2015-07-17

Minds We Meet

Interviewing Ravi Parhar

Time For Yourself

Finding Meaning in Your Studies

Fly on the Wall

When the 'Should' Hits the Fan

Plus:

Good Grades, Good Health?

Album Review: Covered

and much more!



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



Dear Editor:

As one of your regular readers, I have followed the AUSU goings on with keen but detached interest. However, the AUSU forensic audit "survey" that appeared in the July 10 edition of THE VOICE compels me to comment.

Based on long experience in social research, it seems clear that AUSU failed to obtain professional expertise to guide them in that endeavour. Two major flaws stand out - among others.

First, use of an on-line tool lacks the sampling rigour needed to determine to what extent the responses obtained are the views of the AU undergraduate student population that Council was elected to represent. There is no way of knowing whether responses may be skewed by Council having recruited as many supporters as possible to complete the survey and provide responses favourable to what it wanted the survey to "show".

The second major flaw is how the issue is framed. To validly elicit respondents' views, the explanatory comments to describe an issue on which respondent's opinion is being sought must be as neutral as possible. The introductory comments by the AUSU in this "survey" are by no stretch of the imagination neutral. The wording used presented the issue in a way that will bias the responses.

Designing valid surveys demands considerable professional expertise. Use of a do-it-yourself survey tool to determine the views of the students that AUSU are mandated to represent is like using an on line how-to guide and a kitchen knife to perform exploratory diagnostic surgery.

In fairness, it is all too common for many to rely on resources readily available on line without ascertaining the quality or suitability of the material. That said, judgement in discerning what is sound and what is superficial fluff is one of the skills a university education is supposed to equip students with.

The bottom line is that any decisions made or justified on the basis of the results of the AUSU poll cannot be validly portrayed as reflecting the wishes of the AU undergraduate student body.

Leo L.

- A case of vote early, vote often? -- Ed.

We love to hear from you! Send your questions and comments to voice@voicemagazine.org, and please indicate if we may publish your letter.

EDITORIAL**Reality Wins****Karl Low**

The heady days of summer are upon us (not that you can really tell if you're in Calgary) which means that, as most of you enjoy your summer holidays, some of our writers are also enjoying some time away, which means that this week's Voice is a bit shorter than we've been doing lately, but you can use the extra time to enjoy some of those outdoor activities you've been missing out on.

When you come back in, though, check out our feature article where we interview Ravi Parhar. Like many AU students, for Ravi, AU is simply a stop along the way to completing his education at a more traditional bricks and mortar university. It can be easy to forget, sometimes, that not all of us here at AU are "lifers."

Personally, my own thoughts this week have been back on government finance. You may know that the Bank of Canada recently lowered its prime rate by a third of what it used to be, dropping it to 0.5%, on the reasoning that inflation is too low, which indicates our economy is stalling. Unfortunately, I think that this is the right answer to the wrong problem and so simply won't work.

Traditionally, when inflation is low, we lower the rates and so people are able to borrow money and spend it, and when they spend it, businesses start expanding and hiring, meaning more people have jobs so have more money and we get into a virtuous cycle. However, the base assumption of this model is that people don't have enough access to money. In today's society, access to money really isn't the problem. We know this because even as the Bank of Canada lowers the rates, it sends out dire warnings about people taking on too much debt. They already know we have more credit than we can handle, and yet the solution that Mr. Poloz offers is to provide even cheaper credit.

No, the problem isn't that the money supply is too tight, it's that it's not being distributed efficiently. We keep seeing new reports about how income disparity is increasing, and how the share of wealth that the wealthiest control is vastly increasing, while for the rest of the population, it stagnates or decreases. Of course our economy stalls in those circumstances, the people who have the resources don't need anything else, and the people who have unmet needs don't have any resources to fulfill them. The answer, then, is to redistribute these resources. This is not something that the Bank of Canada can do, and in fact, its actions to increase the availability of credit only work to exacerbate this situation in the long run.

What's needed is a government that understands the benefits of taxing those who have more than they need and giving it to those who can't meet their needs with what they have (either directly, through social welfare programs, or through hiring people to build public infrastructure). Unfortunately, the very base assumption of a conservative makes this idea untenable. That assumption? That life is fair. The idea that "if you are a good person and work hard, you will succeed," is a core of conservatism, and so giving resources to people who haven't succeeded already is giving resources to people who are not working hard and are not good, and thus, do not deserve them. Unfortunately, reality doesn't care about deserving. And, in the end, reality always wins.

Enjoy the read!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl'.

MINDS WE MEET



Ravi Parhar is an AU student from British Columbia. Ravi has been taking courses at AU to fulfill prerequisites for full-time studies. He returns to University of British Columbia this fall.

The Voice Magazine recently interviewed Ravi via e-mail about education, Nietzsche, and community involvement.

Whereabouts do you live?

I have spent most of my life in the lower mainland of the greater Vancouver area in beautiful British Columbia.

If you're working, describe what you do.

After completing my initial bachelors degree, I took courses part-time through a mix of in-person colleges and online via Athabasca. I have held numerous part-time and full-time jobs in the customer service sector (typical telecommunication jobs,) education sector (STEM summer camps, advanced tutoring and advance placement course teaching,) and in the forestry industry (lab-based research and hands-on labour.)

Describe the path that led you to AU.

After completing my initial studies at a bricks and mortar school, I needed the flexibility to take additional pre-requisite courses for further studies in professional school, and was drawn to Athabasca's course offerings and flexibility of self-paced distance education courses. Compared to another west coast distance education school, Athabasca's offerings in the Sciences, administration, and overall process from start to finish were far superior! Distance education courses worked perfectly with the odd timing of my contract jobs, and geographical flexibility.

What do you do like to do in your leisure time?

During my leisure time, essentially any time I am not at work or working towards school, I enjoy being involved in my community. I feel that, if it was not for my various community involvements and leadership roles, I would not have developed into the individual I am today. They really have complemented my social development and self-confidence in the workplace especially.

What happens after you finish your education?

Now that I have completed my final pre-requisite courses via Athabasca, I will be returning to full-time school at the University of British Columbia for professional studies.

Who in your life had the greatest influence on your desire to learn?

My parents have always been my role models in my desire to learn and devour knowledge, mostly because they themselves did not have the same opportunities that are available today to our generation.

What famous person, past or present, would you like to have lunch with, and why?

I would love to have lunch with the late Friedrich Nietzsche, and explore the mind of a great philosopher and scholar of his time.

Describe your experience with online learning so far. What do you like? Dislike?

I love the ability to manage my own schedule and push through as much as I can in as little time as possible when I have a few days where I have down time from my day-to-day work life. I find not being restricted to a set schedule allows me to best optimize my free time to get tasks done in an efficient and effective manner.

Have you had a time when you wavered about your education?

Slightly, but not notably.

What's your most memorable AU course so far, and why?

My most memorable course at AU so far was CHEM 360, *Organic Chemistry 2*. I had come into it with a very weak base-line of *Organic Chemistry 1*, but it was so well laid out that I was able to painstakingly follow along and come out fairly intact by the end!

If you were the new president of AU, what would be your first project?

To enhance and further develop online study platforms and abilities for students to communicate with one another on the course websites.

What is the most valuable lesson you have learned in life?

The most valuable lesson I have learned is that the education we receive is a true privilege, and that we should always be thankful for the various means we have through which to further develop our minds. Not only formal education, but informal means of learning and developing our skill-sets through freely distributed print and online media.

**Primal Numbers****Good Grades, Good Health?****S.D. Livingston**

Studying can be hard on your health. Besides the pressure to get good grades, there are stiff necks from poring over textbooks and bleary eyes from cramming for exams. Still, those are nothing compared to the perils of *not* studying. According to new research, a lack of education might be just as deadly as smoking. But a closer look reveals that yesterday's data might not hold true for tomorrow.

The news comes from a team of researchers at the University of Colorado Denver. As *Science Alert* reports, they analyzed data from the past 90 years, looking at things like diet, smoking, and income in relation to people's level of education

and death rates. They found that "145,000 deaths in the US could have been prevented in 2010 if adults who

didn't finish high school had graduated." College dropouts fared nearly as bad, with the study estimating that another 110,000 deaths "could have been prevented if [they] had finished their degrees."

The results are sobering though not surprising. After all, higher education brings better literacy in all kinds of things, like deciphering contracts and bank statements or reading prescription handouts.

Besides that, power brings access to the best resources—and we live in a world where money equals power. Whether you're the top surgeon or the highest paid lawyer on the block, a good education supports good health in countless ways, including the best food, the best shelter, and the best medical care.

But here's the catch: today's job market is different than it was in 1925 or 1955. Those 90 years of data might not reflect the same links between education and mortality in the modern, global economy.

For instance, a degree or diploma often played a huge part in a successful career even a few decades ago. But many college and university grads today struggle to find work in their fields. Some high-tech jobs don't even require higher education. Take the example of STEM degrees in this *Globe and Mail* [article](#).

STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) would seem to be a field that promises good jobs for grads. Especially the technology sector. Yet as the article notes, "only 25 per cent of the 15 million Americans who have a STEM degree work in a STEM job." Even more telling, of all the millions of people who do have jobs in STEM fields, less than half of them have a degree in those fields.

In Canada, recent stats show that over qualification is a widespread problem. As the *Calgary Herald* [reports](#), "nearly 40 per cent of university educated Canadians are working in jobs that don't require a university degree." And if you're a university grad aged 25 to 34, the news is even more interesting. Eighteen per cent of you are "working in jobs that require a high school diploma or less."

The point is, higher education today may not be as closely linked to lower mortality as it once was. Especially in a job market where, as the [CBC](#) points out, temporary, contract, and part-time work is on the rise and "self-employed workers increased almost 45 per cent between 1989 and 2007."

Even stable, well-paid government jobs are a vanishing breed, with increasing numbers of public sector roles being filled by temp agencies. It's not a stretch to imagine someone with a master's degree being hired on contract without benefits, a pension, or a guarantee that his contract will be renewed in six months.

Does all this mean that a good education is a bad idea? Not even close. Education still brings all the benefits of greater literacy, of knowing how to think critically, of the skills that you'll need if you decide to start your own business empire.

But before you sign on for that PhD in hopes of better health, just remember that even [Einstein](#) got an infection from his parrot.

S.D. Livingston is the author and creator of the Madeline M. Mystery Series for kids, as well as several books for older readers. Visit her [website](#) for information on her writing.

Ramp Up a Writing Career with a Residency

Barbara Lehtiniemi



What do Marian Engel, Lynn Coady, Charlotte Gill, Lawrence Hill, Michael Crummey, and Margaret Laurence all have in common (besides the letter "L")?

If you identified all of these as prominent Canadian writers you'd be correct, but they have a further connection: each of these writers has served as a Writer-in-Residence at a Canadian university.

For writers already enjoying some degree of success on the national literary scene, or for less-well-known writers planning their career trajectory well in advance, writer-in-

residence programs are worth checking out.

Writer-in-residence (WIR) programs are offered at many Canadian universities, from St John's ([Memorial](#)) to Vancouver ([Simon Fraser](#).) (Even a few public libraries in larger cities like Toronto, Winnipeg, and Edmonton are offering WIR programs.) Some programs invite applications annually, while others are invitation-only ("don't call us; we'll call you.")

Writers selected for residency and the institution offering the residence program enjoy a mutually beneficial relationship for a period lasting from ten weeks to a year. The writer gains prestige, exposure, and writing time, while the institution gains publicity for its educational offerings and an in-house provider of programming and mentorship.

For writers, participating in a WIR program means valuable exposure and experience, not to mention a little cash. When not working on their own writing projects, writers spend time on such activities as interacting with, instructing, and mentoring other writers, and hosting workshops and other events that may be open to the public. Writers gain experience dealing with the media and the public, as well as skills in instructing students and mentoring writers. In general, writers give 40% of their time to the hosting institution, and in the remaining time pursue their own writing projects.

For universities, having a WIR program draws positive attention to the institutions' programming. Since most WIR programming is funded by the [Canada Council for the Arts](#) and other arts foundations, universities can offer WIR without taking away from other educational programming. Having a writer who is known or starting to be known nationally attracts students and projects a positive public image. Many universities require their writer-in-residence to host community programming, as well as to coach students.

Honorariums paid to writers-in-residence vary, depending on the term and the program requirements. At [Wilfred Laurier University](#) in Waterloo, Ontario, for example, residents receive a generous \$25,000 for a

three-month term in addition to being provided accommodation. Over at McGill University in Montreal, Quebec, the resident receives \$17,000 for four months; no accommodation is provided.

Athabasca University offers a writer-in-resident program that runs 8-12 months. The honorarium paid to the resident varies from \$18,000 to \$45,000, depending on funding. AU receives funding for this program from both the Canada Council for the Arts and the Alberta Foundation for the Arts. The resident for 2014-2015 term was Anita Rau Badami, who has also served as a WIR at McGill. Not surprisingly, AU's WIR program is unique among university WIRs, being conducted online. During her residency, Ms Badami received writing samples from AU students and other writers by e-mail, which she would critique and offer suggestions. The 2015-2016 WIR for AU has not yet been announced.

Writer-in-residence programs are a great boost to a writer's career. If you're at the stage of your career where you feel you would benefit from a residency, or if you're planning ahead for when you get to that stage, check out the various residencies offered. A list of most WIR programs at universities and libraries in Canada is available from www.writerstrust.com.

Barbara Lehtiniemi is a writer, photographer, and AU student. She lives on a windswept rural road in Eastern Ontario



Student Sizzle AU's Hot Social Media Topics

Following what's hot around AU's social media sites.



AUSU Student Forums

In the Business and Administration course discussion forum, Dave seeks study suggestions for the ADMN 417 exam.

Other topics include retaking courses, AU's financial situation, AUSU's health plan, the upcoming election, council conduct, and courses CHEM 217 and CMNS 358.

AthaU Facebook Group

Tina seeks information on temporarily withdrawing from a program. Deanna asks for clarification on the supervisor's role in a Directed Study course.

Other posts include AUSU's survey, myAU outage, and courses ACCT 356, COMP 361, ENGL 255, PSYC 290, PSYC 323, and WGST 421.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets: "#AUPress – New Publication: van Gogh's "My Own Portrait in Writing" <http://ow.ly/PAZOO> ...@AU_Press."

@AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweets: "AUSU has issues [sic] a press release announcing the new Executive Director. <http://bit.ly/1f0aURR> #AthaU #AthabascaU."

Music Review

Run Koko

Samantha Stevens



Album: *Run Koko*

Band: Hey Anna

It's finally summer. The sun is bright and hot, the gentle lake breeze washes over you like a refreshing wave, and every morning you feel like you're in a tiny paradise. At least that is how my summer spent camping at a lake feels. What makes my paradise even more complete, besides spending it with family and friends, is an awesome soundtrack. *Run Koko* features music that perfectly captures the marvellous relaxing feelings that come with a summer spent outside.

Known throughout the NYC indie circuit, *Run Koko* is Hey Anna's debut album; released July 9th, it's just in time to make it onto your summer vacation playlist. Their music is an unusual combination of themes from The Beach Boys with vocals that resemble Serena Ryder

and Feist, and the sounds are light and airy with the occasional Middle Eastern-influence. Hey Anna uses an interesting blend of conventional rock instruments and electronic effects to create music that is best described as ethereal.

Of the thirteen tracks on the album, "Mt. Piccu" is by far my favourite. The Middle Eastern influence in this song makes me think of the perfect summer festival music. And like the rest of their songs, the vocals are very delicate, yet I find that in this particular song the vocals are not overwhelmed by the intricate and powerful instruments. When I listen to the wonderful arrangements in this song I picture lazily floating on a raft down a calm and quiet river.

I also found "Island" to be fantastic. For some reason images of beaches and surfing come to mind as the track opens with a soft but strong bass sound reminding me of the rolling waves often seen at popular surf spots. But the singing is easily the centrepiece of this track. As I listen to this song I find myself begin carried away by the gentle tones.

Perhaps the only thing that I don't like about this album is the lack of variety between songs. I found that as one song ended and the next one began they were so similar that I couldn't tell the difference unless I paid close attention. But given that this album is light and relaxing this could be seen as a positive feature since it allows the listener to relax and soak in the sounds as they come. And as a summer album, listening to *Run Koko* reminds us to stop, relax, and enjoy some of your summer.

Overall, Hey Anna picked a perfect time to release their debut album, and I can't wait to lay on the beach with my headphones on and revel in the soft and intricate sounds of *Run Koko*. And as students that may or may not be working on courses this summer, *Run Koko* provides us with a perfect break that forces us to go out and soak in some of that wonderful air and sunshine.

Samantha Stevens is an aspiring writer who loves combining her love for literature with photography, painting, music, and all creative pursuits.

Fly on the Wall: When the 'Should' Hit the Fan

Jason Sullivan

The Importance of Taking others at Face Value, No Matter How Many Psychology Courses We Have Under Our Belt



There's a moment, in Chapter 11 of Jack Kerouac's classic *On the Road*, where he's riding the Greyhound across America and sits next to a fetching country girl. He engages her in a conversation, which amounts to an interrogatory attempt to suss out her meaning of life. As he ogles her tanned breasts she describes her enjoyment at sitting on her family porch eating popcorn. When pressed she admits that she dreams of one day attending the Roxy club in New York. It turns out that most of her life involves porches, bicycles, and

soda pop. Kerouac becomes disillusioned, not because those things lack sentimental grace in his heart, but "because her heart was not glad when she said it I knew there was nothing in it but the idea of what one should do." (Kerouac). For Kerouac, the 'should' had just hit the fan. He was sure that she felt a 'should' when it may have been him imagining his values within her. As scholars we must be careful not to project our assumptions onto our subject matter while still giving a personal and critical interpretation of the text at hand.

The history of 'shoulds' is written in the history of philosophers' attempts to map the world according to rights (sic) and wrongs. Immanuel Kant's 'categorical imperatives' suggest that to kill even one person to save a million would be a grave moral error (Kant). As AU students, our 'shoulds' often involve moral precipices in the form of deadlines. We really should be working on our term paper, yet something more pleasurable, or prosaic, demands our attention.

At a fundamental level, I'd suggest that every moment of life operates because we accept or reject what we 'should do'. It is this critical interrogation of daily life that is at the core of being a mature student. We know that life has more than one interpretation; we are different people before we embarked on our educational journeys, and our continued educational success means we must continuously analyze our priorities and categorize our 'shoulds'.

"What does your brother do on a summer's night?" He rides around on his bicycle, he hangs out in front of the soda fountain. "What is he aching to do? What are we all aching to do? What do we want?" She didn't know. She yawned. She was sleepy. It was too much. Nobody could tell. Nobody would ever tell. It was all over. She was eighteen and most lovely, and lost." (Kerouac)

Was she really lost? Kerouac's diatribe against her simplicity and lack of dreams reads today like a proto-hipster attack on anyone not part of the 'in' crowd. The fact that shortly thereafter the author describes himself awaking, prostrate, in a bathroom stall covered in excrement of all descriptions only further serves to gloss over the aspersions and judgements laced into his description of the woman on the bus (Kerouac). He feels that his 'rich' life experience gives him license to judge her 'poor' simple life. In this vein, we need to remember that less-educated folks are entitled to their intellectual space, at least to the extent that we can have discourse with them and find common ground. As AU students, our varied backgrounds and ages really help us to understand this.

In 2002 I was 21 and went to a used bookstore in Creston, B.C. I bought and read 'On the Road' and it (along with 'Tropic of Cancer' by Henry Miller) forged in me a post high-school sense of what I wanted to do with my

educational future. I finished my Horticulture program and embarked on my Arts education. There was something in Kerouac's pages that reminded me that life, real life as opposed to just that between the pages, could exist in an English classroom. And, what's more, it existed in society to the extent that critical faculties were stimulated by a liberal arts education. I took a lot from that book as I began my Sociology education at AU (and elsewhere) from 2004 onward.

I felt like I should pursue an arts education and I wondered why. When we feel that we must act or speak in this or that way we invariably betray our deepest urges and impulses, which are often unknown in their goal, yet tugging in their desire. Sometimes we want life one way and sometimes we want it another, and sometimes we don't know exactly what it is that we want. (The feeling of being 'shoulded' upon is the essence of societal control, which is external and coercive.) An external observer, analyst, or interviewer is by no means objective. Think of all the times in life a person thought they'd figured you out and were dead wrong. As our education piles up our arrogance easily can as well; Kerouac certainly thought that he'd read into the heart of the bus girl after a brief interaction. When we apply our knowledge as university students we need to add a progressive dash of humility to the proverbial popcorn. The form of our inquiry often clouds the object of our investigation; we need to be open to the actual words of our subject, rather than the logocentric assumptions we often come to cherish (Derrida). There is no one final truth in a text or in a person, yet this is what we often seek to find in others and in ourselves. Kerouac seeks to tie the bus girl to a Procrustean bed, a place where she can neither move nor exhale (Procrustean bed). As students we (hopefully) learn to expand our minds such that broad horizons excite us rather than lead us to seek shelter in a smaller mental world.

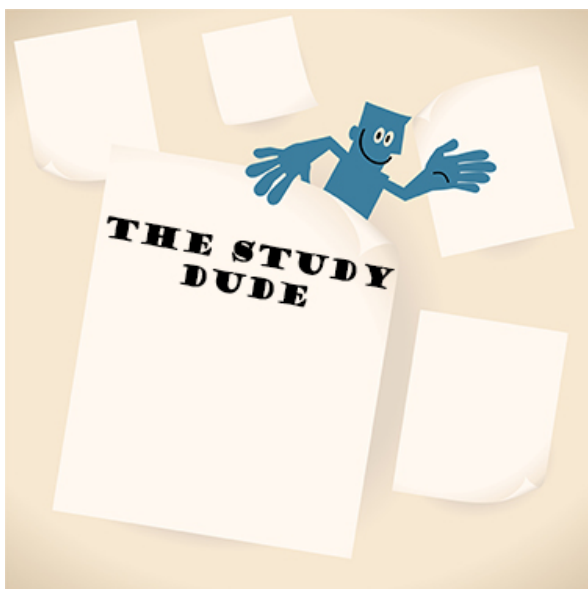
This is not just idle theorizing, a masturbatory effort across Kerouac, but rather ties directly in to the experience of most AU Students. Essay-writing reflects our need to balance daily life with academic demands. It's controlled creativity; we have to limit our egos while adding some sort of useful critique of the material at hand. If we don't let the material breathe we'll sound like we're writing a blog, but if we are too restricted then our interpretations will never shine through. Are we 'shoulding' on the world or are we expressing our interplay with theories in a way that allows for a new understanding of them? Professors often note their boredom at marking the same assignment over and over, not only because the subject matter is the same, but also because the students have given the assignment exactly what they thought it should want from them. Yet assignments, like people, are never mirrors of our own desires.

Essays can be something new and beautiful if we only give them space to breathe. I wonder if 'ol Kerouac ever truly let the bus girl speak, let alone breathe a silent breath, and allowed the mental embrace of the crickets she heard from her porch to rush in. Maybe if Kerouac had given her that moment, something earth shattering would have happened. Maybe she would have enabled him to recapture some of the innocent wanderlust that allowed him to dream his way across the continent in the first place. There's something about becoming hardened off by the outside world that the brick-and-mortar education system often seems to embraces. It's as though when we walk out of the classroom and check our text messages we suddenly return to the 'real world'. These rigid boundaries do not exist for us as distance students. We are in a unique position of knowing that life is only ever a pen's throw from our desk; we are here out of a desire to better ourselves not only in income but also in heart and spirit.

Jason Hazel-rah Sullivan is a Masters of Integrated Studies student who loves engaging in discourse while working in the sunny orchards and forests of the Okanagan.

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Study Tips from a Semi-Anonymous Friend

Thinking Skills

There is nothing more that The Study Dude wants for you than to discern when an argument or point-of-view sucks.

Well, in these articles, as The Study Dude, I'll try to give you the study tips you need to help make your learning easier. I'll also give you straight and honest opinions and personal anecdotes—even the embarrassing ones that you wouldn't ever dare read about from any other study tip guru.

This week's article further examines a book called *Thinking Skills: Critical Thinking and Problem Solving* by John Butterworth and Geoff Thwaites. Butterworth and Thwaites make critical thinking

and problem solving friendly topics. Their book serves as a cornerstone for a variety of exams on critical thinking. In Canada, if you want to do well on the GMAT, then a read of Butterworth and Thwaites will help you to recognize flawed arguments and solve math or word problems.

Learn to Identify Assumptions

Yahoo! News oozes with assumptions. The online forum and many other hackneyed newspapers claimed that a pillar of the community, Tom Flanagan, for instance, had devious inklings when he spoke out against laws criminalizing the possession of child pornography. The assumptions that abounded in the papers stood completely unfounded and permanently scarred the reputation of Flanagan, a leader in both Alberta's and Canada's heritages. Flanagan wrote a book called *Persona Non Grata: The Death of Free Speech in the Internet Age* about this present-age internet brutality.

The mainstream news today reminds me of the crowds jeering in front of the noosed persecuted in days old, clamouring for the kill. No one dared utter a word to contend the prevailing assumptions for fear of backlash. The innocent were hung in a heartbeat. No-one spoke out against the barbaric practices—either then or now.

As for logic, I just made some weak assumptions myself: for one, I made a strong claim that no one speaks out against injustice. Clearly, this assumption isn't true. Advocates speak about injustice at all times, and people came to the defence of Flanagan during the media upheaval. You just took your first step into identifying assumptions.

Assumptions of all kinds pose dangers, so to tread carefully, Butterworth and Thwaites provide insights to help you identify assumptions:

- We often believe things to be true on the sole basis of us not having reason to believe otherwise. Be wary of such occurrences.
- If someone makes a claim and doesn't support it with facts, then his or her argument merely makes an assumption.
- "Another way to think of implicit assumptions [where implicit is an assumption not stated] is as missing, or hidden, premises" where "premises" means the same thing as reasons.
- If an assumption fills in the blank of an unstated reason in an argument, then treat that assumption as a premise for the argument.

- Crafty arguers might leave out an assumption (not state it) because, by stating it, the assumption would weaken the argument. Be wary of such occurrences.
- Sometimes arguments contain implicit assumptions that are mere opinion.
- Some assumptions we naturally accept, such as Jesus is Lord for Christians, but these assumptions can often find themselves challenged, say by atheists. Other commonplace assumptions, such as we should always pay for restaurant meals, can be challenged in certain circumstances, such as considering the persecution of a homeless man who ate and ran while on the verge of dying from starvation. Just because we accept an assumption as fact, doesn't mean we can't challenge the assumption.

Learn to Determine Flawed and Fallacious Arguments

When advocates wave their flags and rant their chants, chances are they make some fallacious or flawed arguments to support their position. Extremism oftentimes comes with a flavour of skewed reasoning. One time, for instance, in a classroom presentation by a fellow student, this student meandered back and forth in front of the class and expressed strong loathing for the Conservative party. Although I didn't at that time identify with the Conservative party, his tirade amused me. He called the Conservatives predators, crooks, you name it, all the while failing to support his reasoning with any logical backing. During most of the semester, this fellow sat beside me, and I enjoyed his quixotic company until he dropped out in favour of entering politics.

I even ventured into some stints with advocacy. I spoke out against the invasion of Iraq and the injustices toward the Moslem culture by a government enamoured with Iraq's oil reserves. We ended up marching a procession through downtown with hopes of raising awareness. During the march, a particular march leader sung words like "Drop bombs on Bush" and made other comments about killing—all of which the audience parroted, including me, reluctantly.

My chest was heavy and I felt queasy, restless. These comments were the antithesis of what I thought the movement would stand for: namely, that peace should prevail. By spreading hatred back to the aggressor, I felt we had failed in conveying the heart of a peace-seeking movement. Before the protest, talks even prevailed over whether to have people dress up to look bloodied with missing limbs. I spoke against such a move as I feared that violence would ensue and innocent marchers would get injured. So, the blood and gore idea was dropped from further discussions. After that experience, I never entered another march again. The assumption was flawed that peace-seeking laid at the heart of the march. Peace seekers don't advocate revenge. I think the overall intention had merit, but the actual event needed some revision.

Butterworth and Thwaites outline some practical advice on how to recognize a flawed argument:

- a valid argument has true reasons and a true conclusion that naturally follows from the reasons.
- an unsound argument has one or more reasons that are false and/or the conclusion doesn't follow from the reasons.
- If the conclusion doesn't follow from the reasons, the argument can be labelled as having "flaws in the reasoning."
- One major fallacy consists of making a general sweeping conclusion based on one or limited examples. For instance, if I noted that I passed my driver's exam with flying colors without ever driving a car and concluded that most people would pass driver's exam with flying colors if they never drove before testing, I would be committing a flawed argument.

- Another major fallacy consists of making a conclusion based on an anecdotal premise. Anecdotes are true stories. The above argument commits a fallacy using an anecdote (a story about my driver's test success without prior driving experience).
- "For an argument to be sound the reasons must outweigh [be stronger than] the conclusion" (p. 73). If the conclusion sounds stronger than the reasons, the argument likely sucks.
- Another fallacy consists of taking the past and assuming the future will take the exact same direction. For instance, if it never snowed on the summer solstice in Canada, you can't assume that it will never snow on the summer solstice.
- Another fallacy involves assuming one thing caused another just because one thing is mentioned first and the other mentioned immediately after the first. Correlations (which means two or more things are related but not necessarily causal) makes for a better assumption than causality.

Learn the Basics of Problem Solving

I solve math problems like a professional. At least, I did when I entered the math program at a university. I scored the highest mark in seven out of nine math classes, even taking home a final grade of 100.5% in the third level of university Calculus (with the extra 0.5% due to bonus questions). So, does that make me a problem solver?

No. I came down with a bad bout of anxiety that, when active, prevents me from solving even the most basic math problem. Plus, my inability to handle conflict effectively leaves me wondering if there must be more to problem solving than coming up with a math-related solution. Sure, I could figure out quadruple integration with no sweat, but to figure out how to fend off a fellow employee wanting to sell Avon is another ball of wax. Besides, I've forgotten every last morsel of math that sustained me during the undergraduate years. If you don't use it, you lose it.

In spite of this, the headspace for solving mathematical problems really stimulates me to this day. While reading Butterworth and Thwaite's math-related word problems, I went into that inexplicable zone—that mode of thought where you partly leave the human realm and enter something more intangible, more abstract. When I'd go into deep thought on math problems, the slightest interruption would quash this magical train of thought, so otherwise removed from everyday life.

So, let's move onto the nitty-gritty of problem solving, as relayed in Butterworth and Thwaite's book:

- Something as simple as brewing a pot of coffee takes considerable problem solving when you really think about it.
- Problem solving can occur through trial and error or through finding a method, or through both means.
- The ways of solving a problem include (1) identifying the data you need, (2) combining seemingly unrelated data to create new possibilities, and (3) associating new problems with ones we've experience and figured out in the past.

In next week's article we'll get to the heart of problem solving.

So, there's nothing to fear. The Study Dude is determined to make right for you all the wrongs I made in grad school—one A+ at a time.

References

Butterworth, John & Thwaites, Geoff. (2014). *Thinking Skills: Critical Thinking and Problem Solving*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

The Travelling Student

Stick it to the Plan

Philip Kirkbride



My name is Philip Kirkbride. I'm a college graduate from Ontario studying at AU. I've always wanted to do an exchange program or study abroad but never found the right time to do so. This is the story of how Athabasca University has allowed me to create my own study abroad program. In the last issue I started the long journey from Sydney to Cairns, in an RV with Dylan, my new Australian friend.

As the sun began to set we decided to look for a good place to stop. One of Dylan's friends had suggested a little place five hours north of Sydney called Crescent Head. It's not a popular town, having barely made it on to Wikipedia with only a two-line description:

Crescent Head is a beachside community 440 km north-northeast of Sydney, in New South Wales, Australia in Kempsey Shire. At the 2006 census, Crescent Head had a population of 1,076 people. Its major industries include tourism and fishing. It has a small golf course overlooking the sea.

While Crescent Head wasn't the most popular of destinations it was certainly one of the most beautiful. We drove up a large hill on a winding road, appropriately named Skyline Crescent. At the top sits a large water-tank in a clearing surrounded by shrubs and trees. From the top of that we could see the dim lights of the small town behind us. In front of us lay a steep cliff with an amazing view of the beach. With the sun reflecting off the wave-filled sea, Dylan snapped photographs from every direction.

Dylan is both an amateur photographer and artist, though the quality of his work was anything but amateur. In addition to taking photographs, he designed stickers which he plastered on to public and private property alike on his travels. After he was done taking pictures he stuck one of his stickers on to the giant water-tank. On the sticker was a photo he'd taken of a smoking miner on his jobsite somewhere in South America. It was his own unique form of protest, he'd even stuck one onto the side of a transport truck as we sat at a red light earlier that day.

Even though the view was great, we wanted to get a spot down by the beach for the night and, after searching for a few minutes, we came across a small parking lot along the beach. The lot was lodged between a little skate park and a paid campsite. Another RV was parked in the parking lot (seemingly for the night), which told us that we'd come to the right spot. The RV was covered with myriad graffiti images, and fit perfectly with the bohemian style of the sea-side skate-park.

We parked the RV in a spot we hoped wasn't frequented by park rangers (who are known to tell beach campers to move along, or even give them a ticket). Almost every beach in Australia has a public stove or barbeque, absolutely anyone can walk up to the beach and toss a steak on the grill. No charcoal is required, unlike many public barbeques found in Canada, simply walk up press a button and a large metal surface starts to heat up.

As we approached the barbeque we heard the sound of drunken teenagers. Dylan turned to me "dammit I think it's schoolies, I forgot". I had no idea what 'schoolies' was but I'd soon find out.

The Mindful Bard Covered

Wanda Waterman

Sometimes Creative Self-Indulgence
Really Does Pay Off



Album: Covered

Artists: The Robert Glasper Trio
(pianist Robert Glasper, bassist Vicente Archer, and drummer Damion Reid)

"I missed the piano. I didn't want to go back to trio and just play a bunch of standards or original jazz compositions, because then I would lose the big fan base I just built from mainstream R&B. So I decided on a happy medium, returning to the piano trio but doing cover songs . . ."

- Robert Glasper

"I feel proud to be brown every day."

- *Covered*, "I'm Dying of Thirst"

If your favourite scenes from the *Peanuts* holiday specials involved Schroeder channelling Vince Guaraldi on his toy piano, this album will make you go all giddy.

Jazz pianist Robert Glasper manages something that's much harder than it looks; he brings the sweet, healing sounds of post-rock ambience, the passion of soul, the rebellious fun of hip-hop, the virility of rhythm and blues, and the cleverness of his own original musical experiments while remaining tethered to the intellectual rigour—and thankfully the swing—of traditional jazz.

As always, Glasper steers clear of formulas and predictability. At first listen this album sounds like an abrupt departure from his last two projects, the Grammy-winning *Black Radio* albums; it's more conventional, but still not quite what you'd expect of a jazz piano master who's suddenly decided to lay aside years of musical exploration to return to "serious" jazz by covering old tunes for the first time.

And yet these covers aren't just another set of standards (the only jazz standard on the album is "Stella By Starlight") or even famous pop tunes—rather they're songs that struck Robert's fancy and that he wanted to interpret. I confess that I hadn't heard of most of these songs, confirming my hunch that no record execs "helped" Robert pick winning tunes.

But he's still experimenting—or, should I say, creating original sounds (which happens when experimentation succeeds). The rapid-fire notes of his 13-minute "In Case You Forgot" (which appeared in an earlier version on *Black Radio 2*) remind you of chipmunks chattering to each other, but is surprisingly interrupted every so often by poignant musical phrases from a Cyndi Lauper song. The audience (the album was recorded live before an intimate group of fans) is smitten.

But what does this album *mean*? It's been criticised for being too calm and "passive" compared to the *Black*

Radio albums, but I actually took a pass on those two albums when they came out and fell in love with this one; if only because it's the more mindful, and that is, after all, what this column's all about.

Glasper's social conscience makes him lean toward some expression of historical pain, and yet *Covered* seems to do so in such a sensitive and dignified way that the listener feels centred, balanced, and ready to be restored after all the insanity.

Which is not to say that Glasper has abdicated his role as a conduit for social enlightenment. On one of the tracks Harry Belafonte discusses the reality of being a black man who succeeded in America and yet still carries the weight of racism. On Kendrick Lamar's "I'm Dying of Thirst" several children, including Glasper's son Riley, read off the names of victims of racially motivated violence as the trio plays repeats a series of sad yet serene chords.

High points: the deeply tender and life-affirming cover of Radiohead's "Reckoning," the cover of Joni Mitchell's "Barangrill" that brings out all the tenderness latent in that tune, and Musiq Soulchild's woman-affirming "So Beautiful." But it's really all-of-a-piece, one of those albums that should be enjoyed in its entirety.

Covered manifests eight of the Mindful Bard's criteria for music well worth a listen.

- It's authentic, original, and delightful.
- It harmoniously unites art with social action, saving me from both seclusion in an ivory tower and slavery to someone else's political agenda.
- It provides respite from a cruel world, a respite enabling me to renew myself for a return to mindful artistic endeavor.
- It's about attainment of the true self.
- It inspires an awareness of the sanctity of creation.
- It displays an engagement with and compassionate response to suffering.
- It renews my enthusiasm for positive social action.
- It makes me appreciate that life is a complex and rare phenomena, making living a unique opportunity.

International News Desk

Closure Concerns Abound



If the recent reports about AU's financial situation have you worried, perhaps you can at least take solace in knowing that you're not alone. In the 2015 Survey of College and University Business Officers, almost one in five chief business officers of colleges and universities are worried that their institutions are at risk of shutting down in the foreseeable future.

While 64 percent agree that their financial model is sustainable over the next five years, that confidence drops to only 42 percent if you look over the next ten years.

Most colleges and universities are looking toward increasing enrollment as a means of dealing with their funding challenges, but according to [Inside Higher Ed](#), this is a strategy that "can only go so far" due to being "limited in how much capacity we have on our campuses." Of course, this means that for AU, this strategy might still be viable.

Time for Yourself



Deanna Roney

Over the course of my degree my addiction to books has only increased. I have been introduced to new genres and authors. As a result I have been adding books to my "to read list" and to my "to buy list" I have also bought several and added them to my bookshelf to be read at a later date. I find I have so much reading to be done for school that any reading time needs to be spent on schoolbooks. I have not finished a book since I started my degree that was not for school. I have started several, though, and I pick them up every few months and read a bit more when I need a break.

I am learning to rediscover reading for pleasure. It is a very different form of reading than reading for academia. Whether they are books I thoroughly enjoy or books I struggle through, reading for school is inherently different. Each passage is read closely,

looking for symbols, themes, or deeper meaning. Trying to decipher why the author is saying that; what could it be foreshadowing; why was it said in that manner and at this point? When I pick up a book to read for pleasure I can skim over slow parts, or read while I am half-asleep. I still get involved in the book and care for the book, but it does not have the same pressure as reading for class.

I recently started reading *I am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai. This book has reignited my love for pleasure reading. It related back to some of my course work and I find I am getting more information from it now than I would have previously. I am not only being entertained by it, but I am feeling educated by it—I can feel my education coming into play as I read the passages written by this young girl. While I've found my previous education coming into play reading other novels for course work, this is an entirely different feeling.

I have found that reading this novel has rejuvenated by commitment to my courses. When you are buried in academic readings it can feel as though these are things that happened ages ago. They have real-world connections but are not always modern issues. The history of women's issues, in this case, is important to understand. Having a book like *I am Malala* helps to bring those issues forward, to see how far society has come and yet how far it has to go. It helps to make these events more personalized. This novel, and I have only just started, is bringing to light issues that surround the Middle East; issues that are glossed over in newscasts or lost completely.

It can be difficult to apply a humanities degree to daily life, to see the progress you are making and the knowledge you are gaining. It can be done, though, by simply taking the time to do something you love—read. Remember to read for pleasure, to seek information outside the coursework and university life. In this way I have found I am able to clearly see how far I have come, and how far I have yet to go. It is always beneficial to pick up a book, whether it is one with cultural significance or a mystery. Regardless of what it is, it will help you to see where you have come.

Deanna Roney is an AU student who loves adventure in life and literature



Not Optional

Sometimes a whole bunch of obligations conspire to test one's time management skills, priorities, and sanity. Here's a peek at what's going on in our lives.

As Alberta wilts through a prolonged heat wave we are planning to get air conditioning installed. We've talked about it for years but did nothing. Until now. Even so, the installation will be delayed by a week because we are going to be away. I expect this thirty-four hundred dollar investment to be money well spent as our comfort level increases and our nights become the restful reprieve they are meant to be.

As Hilary's milestone birthday approached I knew we had to do more than the usual restaurant dinner. Greg and Carrie agreed to host the shindig because their house is gigantic, more centrally located, and air-conditioned. We brainstormed the menu and decided it would be Ukrainian all the way. We're experimenting with getting part of the meal catered and filling in the gaps ourselves. Bocce ball and a lawn ring toss game are planned unless Sunday is heat stroke hot. A DQ ice cream cake will be devoured.

Before we host her b-day party, though, we need to get through Saturday. I will be driving more than an hour to perform a marriage ceremony, only to turn around and drive home for a change of clothes and then off we head in the same westerly direction to attend a different wedding. As if that wasn't enough action for one day, we were also invited to a milestone birthday party for twins who attended school with Roy. The party location is on the way home so we'll kill ourselves trying to make an appearance before all the old people pack it in for the night.

As soon as we get home from Hilary's party we need to start packing for a weeklong county function in the Grande Prairie area that Roy needs to attend. I've already had a chiropractic treatment and a therapeutic massage in anticipation of the six-hour drive. I promise to look up from my book occasionally to see the miles fly by.

Luckily, I've evolved enough to know that I can (indeed should) take a summer break despite my intense work as a festival coordinator. The companions' program includes days full of scheduled tours and shared meals. It's also a great chance for county council and spouses to bond, to see another part of our magnificent province, and to squeeze in a bit of shopping.

For any road trip, I like the challenge of list making and the challenge of packing the appropriate stuff in the right quantities. A cooler with ice-cold cherries—check. Close-toed shoes for tours—check. A variety of cool, casual, comfy clothing for day and evening—check.

The challenge with the coming days will be to enjoy the two weddings, the two birthday parties, and all the driving. The alternative of just getting through it with teeth gritted and jaw set is not optional, from where I sit.

Hazel Anaka's first novel is Lucky Dog. Visit her [website](#) for more information or follow her on Twitter @anakawrites.



Dear
Barb

Barbara Godin

Dealing with the "Kids"

Dear Barb:

My boyfriend and I are in our early twenties and we had our first child three months ago. She was not planned, but we are ecstatic she is here. We had been dating only six months when I got pregnant and I can't believe how much our lives have changed since our daughter was born. We have gone from being single, then going into a relationship and then becoming parents all within a short period of time and I am finding it all really hard to manage. Even my relationships with my family and friends have changed. It's all a bit overwhelming for me. I haven't discussed how I feel with my boyfriend, as I feel he is overwhelmed too, so I don't want to add more onto his shoulders. Are we just immature, or is what we are feeling pretty normal? Stressed in Edmonton.

Hi Stressed in Edmonton:

What you are feeling is pretty normal. Becoming parents is stressful, even when a pregnancy is planned. You both are fairly young, possibly just out of school, or maybe you are still in school. You have gone from a carefree lifestyle of freedom and fun, to suddenly being responsible parents. It's important that you and your boyfriend make time for each other, even if it's only to go for a walk or a quick dinner together. Take advantage of the help offered by family and friends. Grandparents are usually more than willing to care for a new grandchild, as this gives them an opportunity to get to know the new member of the family, one on one. It is essential that you and your partner share childcare and household responsibilities. In many cases these responsibilities are left to the mother early on and then it becomes more difficult to change at a later time. Also you need to spend time with your girlfriends and your partner needs to spend time with his buddies. If one person is left home alone with the baby all the time, resentment will

simmer and eventually erupt and cause major problems within your relationship. Being parents requires adjustment and sacrifice, but the rewards are immense. Thanks for your excellent question.

Dear Barb:

I have a friend who has five cats! No kidding, five cats, all living in the house! I really like her she is a great friend, but I can barely tolerate these cats. Every time I go to her house, these cats are all over me. They sit on my lap and get hair all over me, or lay on the back of the sofa behind my neck. I just find them kind of creepy. I try to shush them away, but they keep coming back. My friend keeps saying "oh they love you." How can I get her to realize that I do not want these cats all over me? Help! Holly.

Hi Holly:

I hear you! I love cats, but not five all at once. You are going to have to tell your friend exactly how you feel. Gently tell her that you understand she loves cats and you love cats as well, it's just that you don't feel comfortable with five cats on you all at once, plus the hair is difficult to get off your clothes. I'm going to take a chance and assume that you are not the first person to mention this to your friend. There is no other way around this. If you don't explain how you feel, then you are going to have to put up with these cats. The choice is yours. Good Luck Holly.

Email your questions to voice@voicemagazine.org. Some submissions may be edited for length or to protect confidentiality; your real name and location will never be printed. This column is for entertainment only. The author is not a professional counsellor and this column is not intended to take the place of professional advice.

Weird Canada

A Masquerade, a Fishing Trip Murder, a Telltale Rolex

You should have let me know you were coming, Ron! I would have chartered a deep sea vessel! But this rowboat will get us to the trout. Just let me hold on to your permits so you don't lose them.

Albert Johnson Walker stole \$3 million from his clients in Canada before escaping to Britain in 1990 with his daughter, who posed as his wife. Walker befriended Englishman Ronald Platt and helped him to emigrate to Canada, then, having stolen Platt's driver's license and birth certificate, assumed his identity. When Platt returned to England for a surprise visit, Walker took him on a fishing trip and murdered him. But he forgot to remove Platt's Rolex, whose serial number eventually allowed the police to solve the murder.





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AUSU Bi-Election

AUSU will be holding a bi-election this summer to fill 6 vacant councillor seats. The call for nominations will be sent out on Monday, July 20.

- Do you want to get more involved in your education?
- Are you passionate about student advocacy?
- Do you want to work on bringing great services and resources to AU undergraduate students?
- Do you want to have a voice on the AU Student Council?

Consider running for Council during the 2015 Summer By-Election!

Nominations will be accepted from July 20 to July 31, so stay tuned for more detail. If you plan on running, start preparing your campaigns!

Please direct any inquiries to ausu@ausu.org.

AUSU Emergency Bursary

Did you know that AUSU has an **Emergency Bursary** that can help members pay for course extensions and supplemental exam fees during times of urgent financial need?

<http://www.ausu.org/services/scholarships.php>

IMPORTANT DATES

- July 20-31: Call for Nomination for Bi-election
- Aug 10: Last day to register for courses starting Sept 1
- Aug 21-24: General Election Voting Period
- Sept 9: AUSU Council Meeting
- Sept 10: Last day to register for courses starting Oct 1
- October 14: AUSU Council Meeting

Forensic Audit Survey

If you have not already taken our Forensic Audit Survey, we want your opinion. This is about *your* membership dollars!

Take it now at

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/V6LJKRF>

**Note: This survey will also be posted in our upcoming August Newsletter. Student ID numbers are collected in the survey for the sole purpose of ensuring only one response per student and that all respondents are AU students. Your answers are kept strictly anonymous and confidential.*

Free Student Planner and Handbook!

AUSU provides members with a free student planner and AUSU handbook! It has a full calendar, study scheduler, contact section, style guides, grade conversion charts, and more!



<http://www.ausu.org/services/publications.php>

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