

THE VOICE

MAGAZINE

Vol 24 Issue 08 2016-02-26

Meeting the Minds

AU's Writer in Residence, Esi Edugyan

Fluff

What Makes a Light Course?

The Girl in the Pink Sweater

The Consequences of Bullying

Plus:

Presidential Interview - AU Edition, Part II

Swimming in Scholarships

and much more!



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***The Voice
Magazine***

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The Voice is published
every Friday in HTML and
PDF format.

For weekly email
reminders as each issue is
posted, fill out the
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Magazine*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



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 Affordance

Karl Low



The big news this week is what happened in Ontario. With their most recent budget, they're making it so that people with a low income will have a much easier time getting an education. Families with an income of less than 50k will have an average tuition of free. More importantly for AU, they're also getting rid of the rule that requires students to enter college or post-secondary within a few years of high school to qualify for the Ontario Tuition Grant, so mature students will now be able to qualify for them. Given the average age of AU students, this should be helpful for many who are in need.

I've always been a strong proponent of free tuition. Simply because I read the statistics Canada reports that show how the average post-secondary graduate makes nearly a million dollars more over the course of their lifetime than someone with simply a high-school education.

The extra taxes that person pays on that million, on average, more than cover the entire cost of that person's post-secondary. But in addition to that, there are all the additional benefits that come with a higher level of education. The OECD, for instance, correlates a 2% increase in a nation's GDP with every additional year of education the population has on average.

Part of that comes from such things as how we know people with a post-secondary education tend to be unemployed less often, and when they are unemployed, it's for a shorter period of time. People with a post-secondary education also tend to need to use health-care less often, and self-rate their own health as good or excellent far more than those without post-secondary (no reasons are known for this, but it's suspected that their better jobs allow them less stress and a better diet.) Then there's how post-secondary graduates are more likely to start their own business, and of the people who do start their own business, the ones started by post-secondary graduates are more likely to still be operating and expanding five years down the road.

Put all those things together and the question, at least for me, isn't "How can we afford this?" but rather, "How can we afford not to do this?"

However, getting into this issue, our Feature article is an interview with AU's own Writer In Residence, Esi Edugyan. This dovetails nicely with the Q&A she recently did for AU. Plus, we have the second part of Scott Jacobsen's interview with interim President, Mr. Peter MacKinnon, and writer Carla Knipe gives us a very personal view about what Pink Shirt Day means to her.

And that's just the start, we've got a review of the brand new Collective Soul album, a Course Exam of English 373, plus a bunch of other informative, entertaining, and helpful articles all lined up this week.

Enjoy the read!

A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karl". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

MEETING THE MINDS

INTERVIEWS with AU's EDUCATORS



Athabasca University's new Writer in Residence, Esi Edugyan, has won a number of literary awards. Her literary expertise can be tapped into by Athabasca faculty and students alike during her 2015-2016 residency.

Marie: Esi, you are a highly accomplished author. What books have you written and what are some of the most prestigious awards you have received for your publications?

Esi: I've written two novels. *The Second Life of Samuel Tyne* was a Knopf First Face of Fiction in 2004. *Half-Blood Blues* won the Scotiabank Giller Prize, the Anisfield-Wolf Fiction Prize, the Hurston/Wright Legacy Award, and the Ethel Wilson Prize for Fiction. It was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize, the Orange Prize, the Governor General's Literary Award for Fiction, and the Rogers Writers Trust Fiction Prize.

Marie: How did you feel when your book *Half-Blood Blues* received nominations from not one, but four award-giving bodies?

Esi: I felt very fortunate, certainly. It was unexpected, as the novel had had such a difficult path to publication—its first publisher went bankrupt on the eve of publication, and the subsequent manuscript was rejected by many publishers before finally finding a home with the editor Patrick Crean, then at Thomas Allen Publishers. For it to be recognized then was a strange and wonderful feeling.

Marie: How did you approach writing your highly acclaimed books?

Esi: I start every book with the idea of a character in a situation of conflict. I then see what develops out of it. The story itself is a thing that grows organically. Sometimes this takes patience.

Marie: How do you motivate yourself to write on a regular basis?

Esi: I keep banker's hours—very steady hours—whether I feel like writing or not. What happens, strangely enough, is that writer's block disappears, the pressure to write disappears; writing simply becomes what you do during your day. If it doesn't go well one day, it's likely to improve the next. And so on.

Marie: What is your writing environment like? Do you have a special place to write or use special software or tools?

Esi: I have my own office. A space of one's own is crucial. I write longhand and on a laptop, depending on the day. But then sometimes I'll write in cafes, too. I've learned to trust anything that works, and not to push a single place or method.

Marie: How do you approach making your characters come alive?

Esi: I don't know. I think you just write and rewrite and rewrite until something right and true happens with them. It can take a long time, and a lot of work. I'm pleased that you find them "alive"!

Marie: Do you outline or how do you approach structuring a book of such magnitude and success?

Esi: Everything in a novel grows out of itself. Outlines, structure, these are elements that emerge in the writing and that I continually return to over the years it takes to write a novel. At a certain point the shape of a story makes itself known to the writer.

Marie: Do you like to implement metaphor or what is your approach to style in writing?

Esi: The subject matter dictates the style I write in. My second novel, for instance, was written in a particular voice; the writing is very different from my first novel.

Marie: You are the Writer in Residence at Athabasca University. What does your role involve?

Esi: I offer critical feedback to students, faculty, and members of the general public on any works of creative writing submitted. I'll give two lectures throughout the year on elements of style and craft.

Marie: I understand that students and faculty can access your services. Do they need to have a fiction work in progress, or do you tackle all kinds of writing genres?

Esi: All kinds. Please see above.

Marie: If a student or faculty wants to learn from you, how can they approach you and what kind of time involvement do you have available to offer each person?

Esi: I can be reached via email: mail.edugyan@gmail.com. Pieces up to 3500 words can be submitted. I'll read the piece several times, and then offer written critical feedback. If a writer has a specific concern, I tailor my approach to address this.

Marie: When does your term as a Writer in Residence conclude?

Esi: September 30, 2016.

Marie: What writing projects have you been working on in your residency?

Esi: I'm at work on a new novel.

Marie: Do you work from home or remotely or somewhere on the limited Athabasca campus?

Esi: I work from my home in Victoria, British Columbia.

Marie: What authors serve as role models for you? Do you ever try to fashion your writing on that of any other literary giants?

Esi: I don't consciously fashion my work after other writers. Some of my favourite writers are James Salter, Cormac McCarthy, Tolstoy, Toni Morrison, Alice Munro, Mordecai Richler, Roberto Bolano.

Marie: If a student wants help with an essay assignment, how would you approach this request?

Esi: My role is not to assist students with academic papers, but rather with creative work.

Marie: What is your long-term goal or quest with your writing?

Esi: To try and make each new book better than the last.

Marie: What types of themes run central to your writing projects?

Esi: I'm not sure I'm the one to answer this. Authors don't write with themes in mind, simply interests that they want to explore. Often they themselves don't understand what their concerns are – they are only out to tell a certain story. Emergent themes are more often clear to readers than to writers, I think.

Marie: Where do you find inspiration for your stories?

Esi: Everywhere. In life, in books, in snatches of dialogue.

Marie: If you could give any piece of advice to a budding writing, what would it be?

Esi: Keep regular hours. Don't despair. Remember that it's a kind of play, no matter how hard it can be.

Marie: What are some of your favorite hobbies and past-times when you aren't writing?

Esi: I have two young children and love their company above all else.

Marie: What kind of books do you like to read for fun?

Esi: I like to read everything, and I only read for fun. Novels, short fiction, history, biography, poetry.

Marie: What are some of your most enjoyable experiences as a Writer in Residence?

Esi: The pleasure of discovering a moment in a story when the entire piece clicks and comes to life.

Marie: Do you feel like you have realized your deepest purpose in life?

Esi: I love what I do. Yes.

Student Sizzle

AU's Hot Social Media Topics

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

**AthaU Facebook Group**

Priscilla seeks feedback from other students on the course load for FREN 374 and 375.

Lesley is looking for study tips for the Abnormal Psychology exam. Carla declares herself a Chicago style newbie and seeks hints.

Other posts include transcripts, in-text web citations, calculating GPA, and courses ASTR 205, COMP 325, HADM 339, HRMT 301, IDRL 308, and PSYC 375.

Twitter

@AthabascaU tweets that T2202A forms will be available Feb 29. You'll be able to access the forms through your myAU account.

@AU Business tweets: "Still time to apply for an #AU Executive #MBA! Deadline extended to Feb 29 for spring intake <http://goo.gl/HlkFvo>."

@AthabascaUSU (AUSU) tweets: "Our President & VP Finance are in Ottawa representing AU students with @casadaily <http://bit.ly/21r5iDA> #cndpse."

Youtube

A quick intro to the Post-Baccalaureate Certificate in Information Security (PBC-IS) posted by Athabasca University Faculty of Science and Technology.

Presidential Interview – AU's Interim President, Part II

Scott Jacobsen



Student Scott D. Jacobsen managed to get some time with Athabasca University's interim president Mr. Peter MacKinnon. Scott interviewed him over a wide set of topics with the president, and the result is this three part interview that we're happy to present in The Voice Magazine. You can find the first part [here](#).

Last year, what were some of the major events of 2015 for AU in research, celebrations, or general momentous occasions?

I always cite convocation. Convocation takes place over three days in June. Convocation is a special event at all universities. It has a particular flavor at Athabasca University, in part, because for so many it is the first time students have met faculty members and fellow students in person. They come together to celebrate over those three days. That it's an open, online university makes a coming together particularly special.

I've said in many settings that, in, my academic life, I have attended well over 100 convocations. The convocations at Athabasca University are very special because they feature the individual stories of our graduates and the barriers that they had to overcome to undertake post-secondary education, and I find convocation the most memorable time of the year.

In a previous interview for the Voice, you were asked about the likelihood of a distance-based Law School (Tynes, 2015). What seems like the chances or odds of this at this point in time through AU?

Some excellent work has been done at Athabasca University, especially in terms of mapping how this could be done. We attracted some excellent support from the legal profession and within the university.

To mount a law program, you need support - not only of the university, not only of the community, but of the governance and the legal profession across the country. We are at work there too.

Insofar as AU aims to transition to a research-oriented post-secondary institution, graduate level research seems well-established with undergraduate research in continued development – for example, research groups and laboratories, –what initiatives seem 'down the road' for 2016 to assist in research at AU – especially with the international statements by Prime Minister Trudeau on the necessity for utilization by the international community of Canadian human capital or resourcefulness (The Canadian Press, 2016)?

I don't see research and teaching as dichotomies. An essential part of the university experience is acquiring a capacity for inquiry, which is what research is all about. We expect academic personnel to be effective in teaching. However, to be effective in university-level teaching, you need to have a capacity for further inquiry, which is what *research is all about*. So, in any university course there should be a merger between these two ideas: being taught and further inquiry. Research is part of the life-blood of the institution for all who work in its academic activities.

Something comes to mind. The phrases "lifelong learning" or "education for lifelong learning" seems to mirror the merger of standardized learning and research-based endeavors.

I would add to that, by the way. In the context of lifelong learning, we sometimes in the university world have been captive to the language of job-ready teaching and graduates - preparation for the world beyond the

university. Sometimes, we have overdone the idea. I emphasize the language of work adaptability in lifelong learning, which may feature more than one - often several - jobs over the course of a working life. Job adaptability means an important creative capacity to adapt to different working circumstances. The university's fundamental purpose of educating the critical faculties becomes salient.

The age of AU undergraduates in 2010-2011 at least, is around 28-29 and graduate students around 38-39. 2/3rds of which are women. In the World Economic Forum Gender Gap Report, Canada ranks 30th out of 145, and in education, we are number one in the world in terms of that same index (World Economic Forum, 2015). With Athabasca having 2/3rds of undergraduates and graduates combined as women it appears we're reflective (more than the national or international average) of international women's rights metrics, or gender gap rankings. How does online education affect possible attractiveness to women as opposed to men for presentation and accessibility of education?

Online education is important for all. We can reach into rural communities, into homes, into employment settings, and wherever people have interest in furthering their education. Maybe, and I emphasize the word "maybe" because I haven't done the research that would be required, we have tapped into, in these years, a pent up demand for online education, which has seen a lot of women respond to the opportunity. Now, that is more speculation than evidence, but it is speculation that I would be interested in testing.

You were an undergraduate student, graduate student, and practitioner of law for 23 years. What advice seems relevant to undergraduate students, graduate students, and as those in, or about to head into, their professional life based upon graduation?

(Laughs) Let me respond to your question in this way, my life in university was a simpler life than the ones now. Other than in the summer, I did not have employment commitments during the school year. I did not have family commitments at the time. I remember my pathways as being relatively easy compared to today.

So, in that sense, it would be presumptuous for me to offer advice. What I would say to *anyone* in the world of education is to be open to the future, to the possibilities of the future, to embracing the different experiences that are afforded through education, and to take maximum advantage of the opportunities to learn, those will remain as fundamental to success in the future as they have been in the past.

You mentioned Nelson Mandela as a hero in a previous interview. Why him?

When you think about the 20th century, and you think the names that come to mind, the great names of the 20th century. What name? What person has overcome obstacles, has achieved mightily, and has done so in such a wonderful spirit of magnanimity?

So, with Nelson Mandela, a quarter of a century or more as a prisoner, struggling against deeply entrenched inequality, being instrumental in overturning that inequality, and in setting an example, not of achievement alone, but an example of *humanity* that I think was unsurpassed in the 20th century, and that's why I mentioned him.

What seems like something everyone, and another thing no one, knows about you?

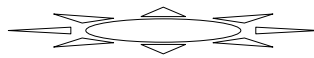
Without violating my own privacy from that question (laughs), I would say that my – that's a good question. What would nobody know about me? Probably, some of my closest friends would know this, but few would know what a devoted fan of baseball I am. I am a baseball enthusiast. I follow the game closely. And I love the game.

It was the only sport I played reasonably well as a young person. I was a poor hockey player. I was too small for football, or, at least, to play football well. And, when I was growing up, soccer was not a significant North American sport. I played baseball. I loved it. And I love it to this day, and not many people would know that.

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A native British Columbian, Scott Douglas Jacobsen is an AU undergrad. He researches in the Learning Analytics Research Group, Lifespan Cognition Psychology Lab, and IMAGe Psychology Lab, and with the UCI Ethics Center.



The Writer's Toolbox

Trailing Away, Part II

Christina M. Frey



In last week's installment we looked at how ellipses and em dashes are used in dialogue to show faltering speech and interrupted or broken off speech, respectively. In this follow-up column, we'll explore how writers can use punctuation to convey two more types of dialogue: staccato speech and stuttering speech.

Staccato Speech

Staccato speech is not necessarily new, but it's been growing in popularity in literature as it migrates from social media to written dialogue. The more common way to express it is by treating each word as a standalone sentence fragment:

Example A: "Didn't you hear me?" She grabbed me by the shoulders, her face reddening. "You. Are. Not. Going."

Some editors prefer a different approach, using em dashes between each word:

Example B: "Didn't you hear me?" She grabbed me by the shoulders, her face reddening. "You—are—not—going."

Still other editors use suspension points to create a firm pause between each word:

Example C: "Didn't you hear me?" She grabbed me by the shoulders, her face reddening. "You...are...not...going."

There's no real consensus here, so choose the form that best suits how you picture your characters speaking, and stay consistent. But note: since not everyone is a fan of reading staccato speech, consider your audience carefully. A YA novel may be a better fit than a genre with an audience demographic less likely to use this type of speech every day. Additionally, even within an appropriate genre, a little goes a long way; the idea is to create a jerky rhythm, but if it's overused, staccato speech can lose its effectiveness and throw off the flow of a scene.

Stuttering Speech

Another much-argued question is how to portray a stammer, like when a speaker is nervous or cold (think chattering teeth).

The Chicago Manual of Style notes that suspension points are useful not just to show faltering speech, or dialogue that trails away, but also "to suggest . . . fragmented speech accompanied by confusion or insecurity" (13.39). However, does that cover the specific situation of a cold or very frightened speaker? And what about dialogue passages that include both trailing-away speech and stuttering speech?

Example D: "I . . . I don't know if . . ."

In the above example, many readers would presume both sets of suspension points here represent pauses longer than one might expect if a speaker was, say, so cold they could barely get the words out.

While some editors choose to follow *Chicago's* suggestion, others feel it doesn't precisely apply to the type of speech under discussion here (a common lament among book editors is how *Chicago* was never intended to cover all aspects of fiction writing). A popular alternative is to use hyphens to indicate a nervous (or cold) stammer:

Example E: His eyes widened in terror. "I-I don't know if . . ."

Em dashes are yet another choice some editors prefer, though many argue that the em dashes here would create a longer break, almost a self-interruption:

Example F: His eyes widened in terror. "I—I don't know if . . ."

Which one should you choose? Think of the nature of your writing, and which method fits best what you're trying to convey. Above all, though, let consistency and clarity be your goal—the best possible guides when the style guides don't tell the whole story.

Christina M. Frey is a book editor, literary coach, and lover of great writing. For more tips and techniques for your toolbox, follow her on Twitter (@turntopage2) or visit her [blog](#).

Click of the Wrist

Learncation

So this year you don't have plans to travel for spring break, but you'd like to do something other than the same old, same old? Consider a learncation—stay at home but break from your routine by exploring new areas and developing your creativity. This week's links should get you started on your journey:

Create, Create

Want to discover or expand your creative side? SkillShare allows subscribers to take short, project-based classes led by creative types just like you. Now's the time to take up knitting, photography, inking, and more!

Fixer-Upper

If your interests lie in DIY home improvement, check out Home Depot's free videos on everything from installing toilets to replacing outlets—as well as their ideas for home decor projects.

Go Quiet

Or maybe you're in need of a more introspective learncation, a chance to explore yourself and your goals or get in touch with your muse. Writer and creativity consultant Jeffrey Davis explains how you can replicate the benefits of a creative retreat in your own home environment.



The Girl in the Pink Sweater

Carla Knipe



I see this girl, wearing the pink sweater. I look at the freckles and big eyes and remember growing up in an average small town and in an average family. That seemed like such a long time ago, but even now some of those memories of what she went through make my muscles tense and my stomach nauseous, because I know what happened to that girl just a couple of years after she was pictured in that pink sweater.

You see, that girl? That's me. And I was bullied. Not just the brunt of teasing, or teenaged mean-girl stuff. What I went through was far more vicious than that. It was being systematically and deliberately targeted over a period of years. I can't remember what started it all, but I know that once the bullying started, a cycle was set in motion that didn't stop. I became the joke of the school, the punching bag. And yes, I did try to tell people. Over and over again. But the answer I got was; it's not really so bad, everyone goes through it. It's just a phase they're going through. Just take your lumps. So I will never have the answers about why it happened to me or understand why no one stood up for me when they knew it was going on. That bit hurts the most.

Can I forgive? Perhaps. I don't want to guilt any of my classmates who I am in contact with now (thanks, Facebook) about what happened because I want to be the bigger person. And besides, what would be the point of dredging up the past? And if I dared to confront the perpetrators after all this time, I'm not even sure whether they would remember what they did, never mind care. But though that girl is now a woman, I can never forget. I remember everything that was done to me. I remember the pall of fear I felt every day going to school, wondering what fresh hell would be inflicted on me that day. I remember feeling that nobody cared about me or thought I mattered and therefore I didn't even deserve to be on this planet. My inner tape recorder continually played these messages and it took years of effort after the bullying stopped to create positive new ones. But the negative messages can never be fully erased, and they still occasionally pop up even now, when I'm in my 40s. I can never forget what happened because the bullying I experienced during my childhood and teenage years is an indelible part of my narrative of growing up. It will always be there, and perhaps something will always trigger those memories no matter how old I am.

Yes, I am a bullying statistic, but I survived. With the utmost effort of my entire being, I survived. I may not have a Ph.D or a successful career in the worldly definition of success, but I am proud to say that healing has happened. I never thought I'd find a partner and start a family, but I did, and my supportive husband and wonderful son have healed me. I have worked hard to create a safe home and loving family despite feeling the brunt of so much hate in my earlier life. I want to use my experience to encourage others and say to them, you can survive it too.

It's difficult to have that conversation. There is always that taboo. In the back of my mind, society still doesn't know what to call those who have experienced bullying, so I am labeled as a victim. As such, there are connotations. For one thing, being handed this label has taken a bit of my power away forever. Some of my

innocence and sparkle from the girl in the pink sweater was removed, and it can't ever be returned. I know that I can't just bring up the subject of my bullying at dinner parties or in casual conversation. I always fear being judged all over again, that people would say it was down to something I did or said that made my peers turn on me so viciously—or really, I shouldn't be bitter about it. But that is part of the "victim" label. It says that the bullies won, because my feelings became relegated to being not a big deal.

My son is now a bit older than that girl in the pink sweater, and I am so thankful that he has a strong self-esteem and is still carefree and innocent. Yet I worry about what he will encounter during his teenage years. I have not told him what happened to me. Maybe I will at some point. The best legacy I have to give him, despite my emotional scars, is to raise him with kindness, tolerance, acceptance, and love, and to encourage him to treat others the same. One thing that I am grateful for is that the Internet and cyberbullying did not exist when I was young. God only knows how that would've affected me if it had.

I am so glad that the cover is being lifted about bullying and that people are talking about it a little bit more than they once did. After all, bullying thrives in secrecy. It loves hiding in the dark corners, never daring to be spoken about, so the silence gives it the freedom to carry out its ugliness with impunity. Bullying is ultimately about holding power over a person and holding their spirit captive. It is about creating fear. Once that fear is gone, some of its power disappears.

To be honest, I have a lot of mixed feelings about Pink Shirt Day, a recent creation designed to stand up to and ultimately eliminate bullying. I see the sea of pink worn by both staff and students at the elementary school I work at. I wear my own pink shirt as a pledge to do my bit to stand up to bullying. But I am wary that Pink Shirt Day will reduce anti-bullying to something to "celebrate" one day out of the year. I worry that a pink shirt with jaunty slogans on them purchased from a corporate retailer will reduce the seriousness of bullying to just a catchphrase.

What I want to emphasize, in the midst of all the pink shirts, is that bullying is not just a concept. It is a face and a person. Both the one doing the bullying and the one who is the "victim" are real people. The sad thing is, despite the new awareness, bullying is still happening today--perhaps worse than ever now. Bullying still likes to hide and it is terribly crafty so it just gets pushed into other corners and finds dark new environments to thrive in. Social media is a great place for bullying to exist because there are so many methods to be virtually anonymous. And within the maze of cubicles in workplaces, bullying still finds a way to happen.

So how can bullying be stopped, if not by wearing pink shirts? The solution will be found when people stand up whenever they see its ugliness in action. It will be stopped when indifference to injustice ceases to be an option. It will be stopped when people adopt the mindset to willingly and consciously treat people with respect and

Something to think about:

- Canada ranked 26th and 27th out of 35 countries on measures of bullying and victimization. One of the reasons for this is our lack of a national campaign to address bullying problems.
- In about 85-88% of bullying incidents on the school playground, peers were present and watching. Peers spent 54% of the time watching the child who was bullying, 21% of the time joining in and only 25% of the time watching the victimized child.
- Adults who were bullied as children are more likely to suffer from depression in adulthood.
- 2 in 5 parents report their child has been involved in a cyberbullying incident; 1 in 4 educators have been cyber-harassment victims.
- 73% of educators are familiar with the issue and 76% believe cyberbullying is a very or somewhat serious problem at their school.
- Educators consider cyberbullying (76%) as big an issue as smoking (75%) and drugs (75%).
- 40% of Canadian workers experience bullying on a weekly basis

kindness in the big ways and (most importantly) the small ways--no matter what the environment and circumstances are. **It's ultimately about who each individual decides and chooses to be as a person.** Pink Shirt Day is not just for schoolchildren. It is for everyone, and we need to let everyday be our Pink Shirt Day.

References

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<http://www.stopabully.ca>

<http://www.hbsc.org/publications/international/>

Many local and national organizations in Canada are recognizing the seriousness of bullying and are working to take action by implementing programs and strategies to educate citizens on the issues and assist those who have been affected by bullying. Among them are The Red Cross, Canadian Safe Schools, Pink Shirt Day as well as local school districts and chapters of the Canadian YMCA.

Carla loves paper. She has far too many books, compulsively buys craft supplies, has several boxes of cards and letters from years back years that she just cannot throw out, but feel free to say hi to her on Twitter @LunchBuster.



Study Tips from a Semi-Anonymous Friend

How Nerds Can Turn Ideas into Theory, Part II

There is nothing more that The Study Dude wants for you than to examine your passion, find the big ideas that define your passion, and connect those ideas. There you have it: the endpoint of novice theorists. But we have high hopes for you: You will take it to the next level by pulling out your measuring tools. Yes, it's as simple as that. Well, almost.

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 Study Dude fills in the blanks of two phases of theory building, which are called the conceptualize phase and the operationalize phase (in other words, the first two steps of theory building). These phases are modeled and outlined in the simple-to-understand book *Theory Building in Applied Disciplines* by Richard A. Swanson and Thomas J. Chermack. If you like to build stuff (like I do!), then these guys will make building theory as simple as hammering cardboard.

Sometimes Big Ideas Are All That Theorists Propose: You Can Do Better!

Thinking about a problem, figuring out its big ideas, finding relationships, and crafting a model underlie the conceptualization phase of theory building (the first phase).

Just to sidetrack for a moment, your jaw may drop at some of the great philosophers' big ideas. How could you not sigh and wonder at the big ideas of Nietzsche? How could you not "ooh" and "ah" at the ponderings of

Plato? When you heard "I think; therefore, I am" did you not wonder how such greatness could possibly be matched in all of human history?

Well, these philosopher guys came up with a lot of big ideas, but they left them at that: ideas. What they left out included ways to measure and test and apply and refine their big ideas--ways to turn them into robust theories. Of course, not all of the philosophers did this, but you get the idea. Their theories could have been made even better if they made the next step and made them measurable.

But many theorists stop at the conceptualizing phase (i.e., finding big ideas and their relationships to one another), according to Swanson and Chermack. That's the easy way out, failing to measure your big ideas. So, if you want to scour the literature for, say, seven big ideas that seem to cover the scope of your passion, and stop there, then go ahead. Find how these ideas are related to one another, although if you don't find a relationship, then don't worry: other theorists sometimes don't have a clue how their ideas are related.

When you have your big ideas together, and you have their relationships spelled out, then make a drawing or a chart or a mind-map or whatever works for you that visually links them together. But, to make it a "good" theory, you will need to take your big ideas and their relationships to one another to the next step: you will need to find ways to measure the relationships.

For now, let's stick with the first stage: the conceptualize phase where you gather your big ideas and determine their relationships to one another—and see what Swanson and Chermack have to say about it:

- Your big idea has the potential to turn into a theory, but you need to groom it in order for it to be considered theory. Don't leave your theory untested. Instead, test your theory through methods such as interviews, surveys, and experiments. [But, those methods come to play in next week's Study Dude article.]
- Find the big ideas that cover the scope of what you are examining by peering at the literature. Then determine how these big ideas link together if possible.
- Start your theory building with a useful problem. What do you want to solve? Alternatively, you could start your theory building with some theory you've come across that you think lacks substance. You could take that theory and make it better. As yet another alternative, you could examine new things that people are up to, such as social media. New technologies, new societal values, unusual cases, and new social circumstances beg for new theory. Keep your eye out for some juicy opportunity to flex your theorizing muscles.
- There exist at least four methods for coming up with big ideas (in the conceptualize phase of theory building): (1) a quantitative method, (2) grounded theory, (3) social constructivism, and (4) case-studies. They all pretty much boil down to finding big ideas and their relationships and outlining the scope of what you want to study (for instance, the scope could refer to an international corporation versus a mom-and-pop shop).
- Start by identifying your big ideas. To get these ideas, talk to experts, read journal articles, look at problems that arise in practice. Then organize your ideas to find relationships among them. Use sticky notes to organize your ideas

Once you find relationships between your big ideas, you can build a model. Models are typically visual representations of the big ideas. Models need to show all the relationships and all of the big ideas, of course. A model could be as simple as a chair with three legs on a mat, with each leg representing a big idea. The seat could represent the major overarching idea and the mat could represent the supporting idea.

Got Your Big Ideas? Prepare to Measure Them.

Finding ways to measure ideas is part of the operationalizing phase (the second phase) of theory building. This is the phase where you get to think about how you are going to measure your big ideas in your theory.

In a future article for the Study Dude, I plan on devouring a book on measuring tools and instruments for the sciences. Yes, I'm going to awaken you to some amazing devices for getting your big ideas pulled together into some model that can be measured.

Why do measuring tools excite me so much? I once became fascinated with a concept called parallax—so fascinated that it stirred my passions to a lifetime high. I wanted to measure how the world moves in unexpected ways, how still trees and light posts actually move in surprising ways whenever we move. It sounds bizarre until you actually start paying attention to the phenomena.

Ever since my fascination with parallax climaxed, I wanted to figure out a way to start measuring the phenomena. So, these Study Dude articles give me an opportunity to begin thinking of ways to measure the parallax phenomenon—and maybe even one day build a measuring instrument or even a theory.

But, that would take years and years of study, and I'm not sure I'm up to the task, but my view is, if we have some sort of distant goal, just keep working toward it, however small the steps. One day we might just bump into our final destination and everything will gel. The effectiveness of gradual but daily progress gives rise to the tale of the tortoise and the hare. Slow but persistent progress ultimately leads to opportunities.

I also read in Gail Wagnild's book *True Resilience* that she crafted her own instrument (a survey) that measures resilience just by interviewing lots and lots of resilient people—and placing tidbits of their quotes exactly as they said it into her instrument. Can it get any easier than that? Sure, sure, it takes a lot of work studying the literature to ensure you don't miss anything, and then you need to study other available instruments, and then you need to interview hundreds of people—but you end up making your own instrument to measure your own big ideas. What could possibly be cooler than building your own instrument?

Swanson and Chermack get into the meat and potatoes of the operationalize phase:

- In the operationalize phase, you make your ideas measurable. This phase sets up the theory for the next phase (in next week's article) where you actually test—actually measure—the ideas in the theory.
- Relationships and ideas need to be turned into things we can test.
- You will need to get instruments, methods, and scales that can measure your big ideas. Your instruments can be surveys that people fill out on their own, like the Resilience Scale to measure resilience, for instance.
- You base the operationalize phase on the big ideas, the relationships between the big ideas, and the models that come from the conceptualization phase above.
- Case studies and grounded theory work well for building theory that uses mixed methods (mixed methods involves the use of both quantitative and qualitative methods).
- Some excellent methods for qualitative method building include "grounded theory, social construction, phenomenology, and some case studies" (p. 80).

Your Truth Statements, Your Measuring Tools, Your Research Questions: Now You're Ready!

This stage sounds harder than it really is. Trust me. This stuff is just part of the operationalize phase above, and it gets pretty exciting.

When you make a truth statement, you are saying that as one thing changes (goes up or down), another thing changes, too (goes up or down, gets better or worse, etcetera). Your measuring tool will just confirm whether the relationship holds, and your research question will generalize the relationship in the form of a question.

You have to take all—yes, all—of the big ideas in your conceptual phase and measure them to see if their relationships to one another or to the central idea hold.

For instance, if you are studying cramming, you might ask "How do adrenaline highs play into cramming?" as one of your questions. You might find that, if adrenaline addiction and cramming are positively correlated, the more adrenaline you crave, the more likely you are to cram.

But, the fun part of this hypothetical study on cramming involves your digging through the research trying to find an instrument that measures adrenaline addiction. If you can find an instrument (a survey, an experiment—anything!) that is useful, simple, and appropriate, you are all set to use it to measure how addicted to adrenaline someone is.

But, if you can't find an instrument, then you need to develop one on your own, which might take years and years. But, hey—you will be the first to create an instrument on that particular domain. Wouldn't that accomplishment—you, creating an instrument—look awesome highlighted in bold on your resume?

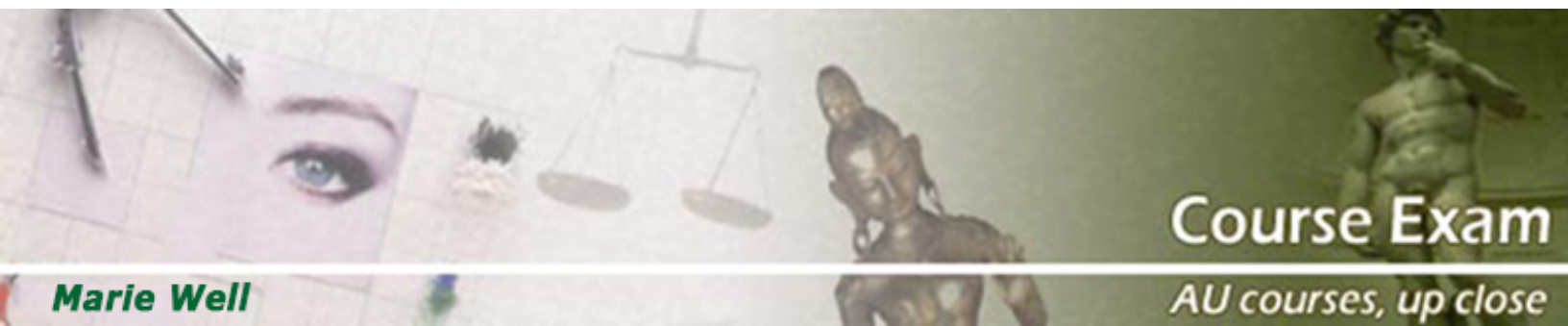
Swanson and Chermack make this part of the operationalize phase seem as easy as telling your grandma about the olden days:

- Propose some truth statement for your big ideas, such as "If cramming and adrenaline addiction are positively related, the more you are addicted to adrenaline, the more frequently you will cram."
- Measure your ideas with an instrument, such as a tried-and-true survey that scholars respect. The surveys can measure to what degree you are addicted to adrenaline, for instance: one step in measuring your variable.
- Then make a hypothesis, or list some research questions. Your research questions could be general, such as "How does adrenaline addiction impact cramming?" You need to have a question for all of your big ideas. For instance, if time constraints (another big idea in your theory on cramming) also leads to cramming, you could find some instrument to measure whether increased time constraints lead to higher levels of cramming.
- If you can't find instruments with which to measure your truth statements, then make your own.
- If you are using a qualitative method, make sure your truth statements (propositions) or hypotheses are falsifiable. For instance, make sure you word your truth statements (propositions) such that one instance that doesn't confirm your findings falsifies your theory. For example, you could say that increased time constraints leads to increased cramming. But you'll need to define what you mean by "cramming." If putting off your studies for a read of *The Study Dude* is cramming, well, then cramming might be healthy for your overall GPA.

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

Swanson, Richard A. & Chermack, Thomas J. *Theory Building In Applied Disciplines*. San Francisco, CA: Berrett-Koehler Publishers.



English 373 Film and Literature

AU's English 373 — Film and Literature was written by Monique Tschofen. Marie Well had a chance to talk to one of the courses' tutors, Dr. Vivian Zenari, about the course.

What is the course about?

Vivian: It's a comparative course, I guess. It's the examination of literature as it relates to film. Some of the assigned readings are films and some are like a novel or play or story and the discussion of the theory between film and literature.

Can you tell us a bit about the theory?

Vivian: It's a combination of literary theory and film theory. So, in this course you learn a little of both. It's actually quite theoretically oriented, so some of the terminology includes postmodernism, modernism, realism--that kind of thing.

When was this course created? When was the last update of the course? Of the learning materials?

Vivian: Well, the course was created as it stands now in 2000, so it's quite an old course. It's been moved to Moodle. There were some minor changes to it, but actually it's pretty much the same as it was when it was created in 2000.

If it's an e-text course, have they heard of any issues with the e-text that students might want to be prepared for?

Vivian: There aren't any in this course. The closest thing to an e-text are PDF files to reproduce the student manual--the print materials. A student would get a box with a big stack of paper in it, so a big reading file. There's a student manual and a study guide. Then there's the primary texts: the films and the books.

You get a book and a stack of paper, really.

About how many students take this course, on average?

Vivian: Right now there's 24, and that's about the average size.

What kind of learning style is it? For instance, is it very open ended or does it give fairly detailed instructions?

Vivian: It's pretty detailed. The study manual is broken down into chapters and there is a theoretical discussion at the beginning of each chapter and then assigned readings and questions that you can answer for each of the assigned readings. There are a lot of assigned readings. The theoretical materials... I counted: there's 23. They are not easy. The text kind of guides you along. It tells you when and what to read. It's pretty structured.

So why is the material hard? Is it very abstract?

Vivian: Yes.

What part or concept in the course have they seen students have the most trouble with?

Vivian: Some people are not prepared for the theoretical aspect. I think a lot of students take it because they think it is going to be fun and easy, and I think it's fun, but it's not easy.

What's a good way for students to deal with the more troublesome parts?

Vivian: I think it's really kind of an attitude more than anything. There's a lot of people who've been writing on the subject for a long time. Part of what you have to do is try to understand these thinkers even if you don't agree with them. Once you understand what they have to say, then to decide at that point whether you think what they have to say is worthwhile.

It's a two stage process: understanding them and being willing to understand them. Some people are shocked at the assigned readings. If your attitude is that you are going to do well and you want to learn what these people have to say, then I think it'll be okay. You have to kind of psyche yourself up for that.

How do you think students can manage the readings well?

Vivian: Sometimes students don't do all the assigned readings. I can see why because there are so many of them, and they are not easy. There are study guide questions that kind of direct you towards what to focus on when you read them. So, the study guide questions are actually important to help you get through the readings.

Are the assignments fairly similar in the amount of work required, or are some of them much larger?

Vivian: There are two essays. One of them is slightly longer than the other. But, frankly I think it's the same even though we write more for one of them. The overall work that goes into them is probably the same.

Is there a part of the course they've heard students really enjoy? What is it?

Vivian: I don't know. People who are interested in film and literature for their own sake, I think they, like me, are intrigued about learning about some of the theories and even the history of film in particular. Those people I think will be satisfied with that.

If there's exams, what are they like? Is it a couple of essays? Short answer questions? Multiple choice?

Vivian: It's one final exam. Part one is short answer. Part two is an essay. It's cumulative.

Is there some part of it they think might need to be looked at in the next update?

Vivian: All of it. It's an old course. Things have changed especially with technology and film and that needs to be reflected in the course. Some of the texts have gone out of print. Publishers never tell us when they are taking texts out of print. I believe it's underway.

What would you change to make the course even better if you could?

Vivian: Helping smooth over some students who are not used to this kind of theoretical reading and maybe aren't aware of the breadth of materials that are out there in terms of film and literature. There's no Seth Rogen movies here. Just kind of help students orient themselves to the theoretical orientation of the course.

Do you watch movies in the course? If so, which ones?

Vivian: We have a movie called *Smoke*, which is by Wayne Wang and Paul Auster... a film by Maya Deren who does short films. We've got a movie called *Vanya on 42nd Street*... a movie called *Orlando*. You are supposed to watch all of them.

What kind of things do you want to look out for when you watch the movies?

Vivian: You should probably watch them more than once. Since you are watching these for the course, you should then look at the study guide, look at what the study guide has to say about the texts. The study guide kind of controls the philosophy of how to look at the texts and the films.

It does help to have some knowledge of film. Frankly, I think most people do at this point in their lives... they've seen films and they kind of know what kinds of things can happen. Let the study guide help you.

When you say philosophy in films, what do you mean?

Vivian: The philosophy of the course with respect to the film, so the study guide is kind of its own creation, I guess. The writer of the course has a certain attitude toward the assigned readings and the kind of things the course asks you to think about. It reflects a kind of philosophy. I mentioned there is a theoretical orientation. So, that's what I mean by philosophy.

In your opinion, do you think this course is a harder one or an easier one than the average at AU?

Vivian: I think it's hard.

Can you name one of the theories?

Vivian: I guess for this course, there's postmodernism. Some people are familiar with that theory. There are some texts that are postmodern, and some people aren't used to those texts. They might be shocked by it.

So does the course talk about things like film angles?

Vivian: There is some of that in the course, yes.

What else? How film conveys meaning, I suppose?

Vivian: Yes, so postmodernism, for example, reflects kind of a world view that sees that it is difficult to come to terms with the world in a way that there is kind of a universal. Postmodernism says that there are no rules in the world, that people kind of invent them. Society is socially constructed. So, we make the world make sense to us. Some filmmakers, therefore, will try to remind you that the texts are invented by somebody. A lot of people, when they watch a film or read a book, they like the idea of being told that these things are natural or happened in the world. Postmodernists want to make sure that you are aware that somebody made the film, wrote the book, and they will draw your attention to that in kind of shocking ways.

Some films do that and some don't?

Vivian: Yes.

So some films follow a theoretical framework. Do you look at films that don't follow a theoretical framework?

Vivian: No. That's why it's hard. There aren't very many kind of straight Hollywood films. I'm trying to think of an example that people would know. The film with Michael Keaton two years ago, *Birdman*, won the Oscar for best picture. A lot of people didn't like that film because they thought it was really strange. Well, that's kind of what you are looking at in this course. That's the kind of thing you should expect to wrap your head around.

So, you are looking at theoretical art?

Vivian: Yes. It's very much an art-centered course, so being aware of the theoretical nature of art, those kind of big questions, is kind of what you have to do in this course.

What kind of personality type or talent is required to succeed at this course?

Vivian: I think it kind of helps if you are sympathetic to creativity and imagination. If you want to learn about new things that are off the beaten track or are a little harder than what you are used to in life... So, curiosity is good. You also have to read a lot, actually. Some people maybe don't think of that... they take a course that has the word *film* in it... but we are actually doing a lot of reading in this course. That's something you have to want to do.

Do you read theory in the course?

Vivian: Yes. Theory. There's a novel and a play and a short story. There's some of that in there, a couple of novels, actually. That's the easy stuff. If you like reading, that's good.

Can you tell us some of the theories that you look at?

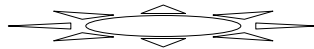
Vivian: There's Sergei Eisenstein. He did a lot of films that you would now consider a little avant-garde. He was interested in how images can be used to show how life doesn't go on in a straightforward way. He's using images almost as symbols. Once you've got a writer like that commenting on film, you are going to see how the image is very important. You can read images like the same way you can read books.

Spatial relationships between people and things like that?

Vivian: Yes. That is part of it, for sure.

Does this course qualify for any certificates or diplomas?

Vivian: You can use it towards a degree. I don't think it's a required course for anything. People often take it because they need 300-level credit.



Music Review Collective Soul

Samantha Stevens



Band: Collective Soul

Album: *See What You Started By Continuing*

When I was growing up I loved listening to the local radio station, eagerly waiting for one of my favourite songs to play, no matter how long I had to wait. And when a song I loved finally played, I experienced a few precious minutes of utter delight and ecstatic bliss. Many of Collective Soul's songs, "Run," "Shine," "December," and "The World I Know" just to name a few, were among my favourites all those years ago. Today, I still love listening to those older songs and being transported to those days. The days when bands took care to create great music that simultaneously entertained and energized you—music that made you think and made you stop and enjoy a moment. Well, with the release of *See What You Started By Continuing*, Collective Soul has brought those days back!

Collective Soul rose to international fame in 1993, and, while taking some time off since their last album release back in 2009, were inducted into the Georgia Music Hall of Fame. 2015's *See What You Started by Continuing* is their ninth album, and the band is celebrating it's release and their over 20 years in music by hitting the road and touring during 2016.

The music on *See What You Started By Continuing* is phenomenal, each track flows seamlessly into the next one, and I find it hard to pick just one as a favourite. Perhaps my favourite thing about this album is that each song is different, and the musical influences vary from jazz to big band, from blues to folk, which in my opinion makes for a great rock album.

The first track "This" is reminiscent of Collective Soul's original sound and the upbeat tempo will grab your attention and force you to listen. "This" oozes rock music and includes everything that makes rock music great. I've listened to the track several times already and it still makes me get up and dance wildly, all while lip syncing.

If slower is what you like, then be sure to check out "Tradition," a song that will mesmerize you with soft vocals, spoken lyrics, and sensual guitar. Although the majority of the song is a typical semi-slow rock song, the spoken lyrics are what set it apart. Almost like you are being treated to a wonderful impromptu poem, the spoken lyric is an effect rarely used in modern music. Yet, if done well, it adds an intimate element to the song, drawing the listener in.

"Without Me" finishes off the album perfectly. Complete with a fantastic piano solo, this blues-inspired love song also features a violin playing subtly in the background, and the overall composition of the song reminds me of older rock, like something you would've expected to from Queen. Perhaps the best and most startling thing about "Without Me" is that when the music fades away and the album ends, you realize how the album has affected you, how the melodies, rhythms, and harmonies worked their way into your bones. And you are left feeling what it is like *without* more Collective Soul to listen to!

If live music is your thing, then be sure to check out Collective Soul's [website](#) to see if they are playing near you. Tickets for all of their shows went on sale February 19th. I had the chance to see them live years ago and it was one of the best concerts that I have ever been too!

See What You Started By Continuing is now available where ever you buy your music. Although while the music is perfect to listen to while studying, I will warn you that occasionally you will want to turn the volume way up and dance, tossing your books aside for the time being and seizing a moment for yourself. But, really, isn't that what great music is all about?

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

Swimming in Scholarships

Barbara Lehtiniemi



Nothing can brighten a student's day like free money. Being awarded a scholarship feels a little like winning a lottery. Having that inflow of cash can help counter the outflow of tuition, textbooks, and invigilation fees that accompany a postsecondary education. The best part: a scholarship, unlike a loan, does not need to be paid back.

If you're having trouble finding scholarships you qualify for, don't despair. There are more scholarships out there than you can imagine. However, most scholarships will not come looking for you—you have to go looking for them. Where do you start? Don't just flounder around the internet; dive in here:

Athabasca University. AU offers dozens of scholarships for its undergraduate and graduate students. Start at the [Student Awards](#) page and begin shopping for an award. On the [Awards for Undergraduate Students](#) page, you'll find almost 100 awards listed. Most awards require an application; those with an upcoming due date are noted.

Athabasca University's Student Union. AUSU offers four scholarships for AU undergraduate students: the *Academic Achievement Scholarship*, the *Balanced Student Award*, the *Returning Student Award*, and the *Student Service Award*. There are two award cycles each year with deadlines of May 1 and November 1. Details on each award are on the [Scholarship, Awards & Bursaries](#) page of the AUSU website. AUSU also has bursaries which can be applied for year-round.

External Awards. There are many scholarships offered by other organizations. AU maintains a list of some of these awards on their [External Awards](#) page. Here you'll find links to about 80 awards offered by organizations such as the Canadian Federation of University Women, the Foundation for the Advancement of Aboriginal Youth, Rotary International, and the Trudeau Foundation. Since these awards are not connected to AU, you'll have to click on each link for details on eligibility, due dates, and application procedures.

[Universities Canada](#) administers scholarships for over a dozen organizations. The awards list, including application due dates, is available on their page, [Scholarships and Internships for Canadian Students](#). The Universities Canada site indicates which awards are currently accepting applications, and provides a notification service for those that are not.

Scholarship databases. Both [Yconic.com](#) and [Scholarships Canada](#) have extensive, searchable databases of scholarships for their members. It's easy to sign up for an account. Once logged in, you can search available scholarships, set up alerts, and enter contests.

Government of Canada. For more scholarships, check out the [Scholarships](#) page from the Government of Canada's [CanLearn](#) site, the [Education and Training](#) page from Service Canada, and the [International Scholarships](#) page from Global Affairs Canada.

Wait, we're not done! Don't forget to check close to home, too. Some employers offer scholarships to employees and their family members. Many organizations offer scholarships to their members, families, and

sometimes anybody. (Check out *The Voice*'s 2014 article, [What Mensa's Got for AU Students](#), for information on that organization's scholarships, which are available to all Canadians.)

As you browse through awards websites and lists, make note of any you are eligible for now, or will be in the future. Maintain your own personal list so you can note details of the awards you want to review again. Put any upcoming application deadlines in your calendar.

AU's scholarship offerings are just drop in a sea of scholarships. There is an ocean of available awards out there, it just takes time—and a bit of swimming—to find them.

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



In Conversation with Jack Berry

Wanda Waterman

Jack Berry is a Nashville-based blues guitarist and singer noted for producing music that's deeply rootsy yet informed by new and original musical sensibilities, sometimes described as "alternative blues" and "wild bunch blues." Berry has just released the single "[The Bull](#)" from his soon-to-be-released album, *Mean Machine*. Recently he took the time to answer Wanda Waterman's questions about what brought him to where he is now.

Until hearing your music, I hadn't found anything that I thought deserved the label "alt blues." How do you remain so true to the essence of blues and hard rock while injecting the perfect amount of weirdness?

I've been noticing quite a few different genre placements and artist comparisons and I'm always intrigued because I don't ever set out to sound a certain way. I suppose I try to convey a certain conviction and color and those in turn leave connections.

For instance, I've never tried to translate the emotion that, say, an Elmore James song gave me, because to me he's captured the best version of that feeling for the song. But my respect for traditional blues opens my ears and eyes to the resemblance of James to a Zeppelin track. From there I might notice a guitar riff from the same ballpark in a Rage Against the Machine song. I'm just tracing through music that strikes a chord (pun intended).

What was your most beneficial educational experience?

Failure. Constant and relentless failure. Those moments where you sulk and break in juxtaposition to the days where life is just pretty normal, those build-ups and breakdowns you can literally hear in my music. I don't have any music training outside of my own listenings. I'm self-taught in both music and life, and with that there's a lot of screw-ups and a lot of unorthodox approaches. Just keep fine-tuning.

What was the most mesmerizing musical experience of your life?

I was at a festival in Napa. Ben Harper was playing, and I was supposed to leave the stage early to migrate to another stage where Kings of Leon were to catch the end of their set. I turned my back to get going and this most familiar drum and harmonica combination I have in my head fired up behind me. Ben had Charlie Musselwhite with him and they were busting out "When The Levee Breaks." I'd never seen this song live and it's one of my favorite songs. I think I watched the whole thing with this shit-eating grin and missed the Kings' set.

What's your favourite instrument to play and why?

Guitar was always most accessible to me and there's so much left to it I have to give, but I loathe every day that I can't play drums.

What influence, positive or negative, has Nashville had on the development of your sound?

When I came here a few years ago I knew I was going to be an underdog musically. These cats here are masters of their instruments and technique. An interesting thing happened to me where I was told to listen to shit I'd never heard of because the shit I had heard of wasn't cool— this *other* stuff was cool.

I found a bit I liked, but what I really discovered was after a time I began to think, "Screw you—I still like this 'uncool' shit, so it's cool to me garsh dammit." It solidifies where you stand. If you aren't playing music you believe in, go write some god-awful bro country song - you're just after an image not a sound.

How do you get yourself psyched up for stage performances?

Whiskey.

What conditions do you require in your life in order to go on being creative?

I believe complacency is my kryptonite. I need to constantly be climbing up hills just to face-plant back into mud to feel alive and creative. Make the going up worth the coming down.

What do you feed your muse? Are there any books, films, or albums that have deeply influenced your development as an artist?

I love western novels and movies. Cormac McCarthy, Lee Van Cleef, Ennio Marricone...that type of thing. Hands with blisters and guts with holes.

If you had an artistic mission statement, what would it be?

Make the truth so everyone wants to hear it.

Tell us about your current projects.

Mean Machine is due out in April. The single "The Bull" and one other will be released beforehand. It's a fistfight in church.

What's next for you?

Touring my ass off.

Do you have anything else to add?

Drink your Ovaltine.

Wanda also writes the blog The Mindful Bard: [The Care and Feeding of the Creative Self](#).

Trudeau, The World Economic Forum, & Athabasca University

Scott Jacobsen



Athabasca University (AU) is in line with the future of education and the future economy. The future of education—credentials, knowledge, and skills. The future of the economy—human capital with creativity, education, and experience. Human capital investments are an issue for students coming out of university, and employers looking for suitable candidates or employees. A salient set of facts for fellow students on track to complete their education at AU when Prime Minister Justin Trudeau represented Canada at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland from January 20th to 23rd to talk about the future economy.

Trudeau's attendance at international events gives the basis to plan and negotiate with other world leaders for the future economy, and to present the strengths of the Canadian economy. But if the future economy is based on education, then the future of education will be the future economy by implication. In turn, plans made on a global platform with other nations influence the trajectory of Canada – provinces and territories, and their respective universities such as AU.

The WEF gave the opportunity to express the strengths of the Canadian economy. Trudeau spoke on the shift from weight given to Canadian resources and transitioning more into Canadian human capital, "My predecessor wanted you to know Canada for its resources. I want you to know Canadians for our resourcefulness."

The WEF meeting was, in part, based on the new and ongoing industrial revolution, the Fourth Industrial Revolution. It builds on the previous industrial revolutions that used steam-, electric-, and information-based technologies. It will increasingly incorporate cyber-physical systems. Trudeau's statement described the shift in the Canadian economic landscape from natural resources, "Canada for its resources," to human capital, "Canada for our resourcefulness."

Canada remains the most educated, or credentialed, rather, population in the world (Grossman, 2012), and AU is the largest online provider of education in Canada. In other words, *AU is the largest online human capital investment in the country.*

Insofar as Canadian resources are concerned, the drop in oil prices has hurt the resource-based sector of the economy of Alberta, but not necessarily the human capital sector. Students, in general, express concerns about acquisition of work upon graduation from university. Employers express concerns over potential workers with relevant qualifications coming out of university.

AU could, and should, play an even greater role in this transition towards a more balanced mixed economy: "resources" and "resourcefulness." That is, AU should perform an important intermediary role in the future of education and, by implication, the future of the economy in filling the jobs (worker concerns) and skills (employer concerns) gaps with the rapid development of this knowledge economy. Human capital will

increasingly become our greatest strength in the province and the country, and the international marketplace. AU resides at this juncture, and Prime Minister Trudeau statements on the global stage align with AU's purposes in education and education's connection to the economy.

References

Grossman, S. (2012, September 27). And the World's Most Education Country Is.... Retrieved from <http://newsfeed.time.com/2012/09/27/and-the-worlds-most-educated-country-is/>.

A native British Columbian, Scott Douglas Jacobsen is an AU undergrad. He researches in the Learning Analytics Research Group, Lifespan Cognition Psychology Lab, and IMAGE Psychology Lab, and with the UCI Ethics Center.

Fluff

Deanna Roney



There was a bit of controversy on the unofficial AU Facebook page this week. It is something, I believe, every student does. Though perhaps the wording is what caused a kerfuffle. A student asked for advice on lighter courses to balance out some more demanding courses. As distance education students we balance a lot in our daily lives. Adding a single university course to the mix can fill our spare time, adding two, equally demanding, cuts into essentials, like sleep, or eating somewhere other than in front of the computer.

While I understand where both the student and the commenting professor are coming from, it posed an interesting question for me. The way in which we word things can give off a bad impression. It is unlikely that any (or few) university courses are "fluff" or "filler" or simply "GPA boosters". And, as we shell out the same amount of cash for each course, I find it difficult to believe that students would throw money away on a course they will not take anything away from. Yet, asking in those terms, for course suggestions *can* be taken that way. This debate made me consider what courses I would recommend to the student looking for "fluff" courses and if they were "fluff" in the way the professor took it; or were they "fluff" in the way I believe the student meant: lighter.

Subsequently the courses I recommended were, English 353: *Intermediate Composition* and Philosophy 333: *Professional Ethics*. I considered the implications of my suggestion and came to the conclusion that I was not recommending these courses because they offered little value, or simply acted as an easy "A". On the contrary, these were courses that I took a lot from; English 353 being one of my favourite courses and one that I took a lot out of; and, Philosophy 333 was a course I enjoyed, one I developed skills from, it was a course I was able to tailor to my interests. These courses were not just filler courses, they taught me a lot and were exceptionally helpful to the rest of my degree and will help me beyond school. So why would I recommend these in response to a request for "fluff"?

The answer, really is simple. For courses that I took so much out of, the reading was considerably lighter than other courses. I dedicated more time to practicing the concepts rather than reading about the concepts or reading literature. When I am taking courses coupled with literature courses, or women's studies courses these are often very demanding for time: reading novels, or conducting research. It is essential to balance a heavy course with a lighter course. It does not mean the lighter course is less vital, nor does it mean the student is taking it less seriously than the other course. It is a simple time-management plan; proper time-management is essential for students, especially distance education students, to learn quickly.

The debate itself was over the wording of the question. As students we should be aware that our tutors are on these pages and consider the way we are wording questions, or otherwise, as these are connections which could be essential in our future. It can be easy to forget who may be viewing the pages, especially on Facebook where we may feel anonymous and safe behind our keyboards. It can be easy when we are sending a message on the forums to forget who we are talking to. But, a question to ask is, "Would you ask your professor (or boss) these questions in person?" You may not be directing your question to them, but they are likely reading them. If the answer is "no" consider revising.

The idea that how we conduct ourselves on these pages is being viewed by our professors was in the back of my mind. Yet, it was this specific incident that showcased how important it is to bring that to the forefront. That while it is a place to connect with fellow students, it is also a great place to connect with professors. So we should be careful in how we word things. At the end of the debate I believe both sides understood where each other was coming from, and what the intentions were. It did however, make me stop and think—think about what courses I recommended, and how I conduct myself on social media.

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

Women Of Interest



Isabel Janet Macneill was born in 1908 in Halifax, Nova Scotia and died in 1990. She began her career with an interest in design, and attended Mount Saint Vincent University, Halifax, Nova Scotia. Following her graduation in 1926, she attended Nova Scotia College of Art (1928) and then Heatherley's Art School in London, England. However, her path took a different route when she began working as a counselor. Macneill went on to join the Women's Royal Canadian Naval Service where she quickly became the first female commanding officer in the British Commonwealth. Subsequently she became superintendent of the Ontario Training School for Girls in Cobourg and Galt, followed by the first female prison warden and head of the Federal Prison for Women in Kingston, Ontario. Isabel Macneill worked to promote prison reform and was a life member of the Elizabeth Fry Society.

Some of the awards Isabel Macneill's was granted include the Coronation Medal in 1953, the Order of Canada in 1971, and an Honorary LLD from Queens University in 1977.

<http://famouscanadianwomen.com/famous%20firsts/military%20leaders.htm>

http://www.dal.ca/academics/convocation/ceremonies/honorary_degree_recipients/hon_degree_1892_1999.html

<https://memoryns.ca/isabel-macneill-fonds>

compiled by Barb Godin

Candian Education News

Scott Jacobsen



Summer Temporary Employment Program (STEP)

Local business and the Alberta government are connecting with the Summer Temporary Employment Program (STEP). The program helps students gain work experience in collaboration with employers. Information sessions will be in Alberta, and already happened in Edmonton.

Minister of Labour, Christina Gray, said STEP is valuable to students by giving work experience. Indigenous Relations Minister and Edmonton Rutherford MLA, Richard Feehan, said the importance of STEP in giving advantages to students in the job market.

STEP is predicted to cost \$10 million and create 3,000 jobs. The program gives employers a subsidy of \$7/hour based on "work opportunities between four and 16 weeks" for high-school or post-secondary students returning in the fall with distribution "across sectors and across the province" in a fair manner.

Athabasca University Pushes for Manufacturing Jobs

Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters (CME) joined with AU to train the Canadian manufacturing workforce. AU School of Business created the Manufacturing Management Certificate of completion (MMC) in late 2015, in Saskatchewan.

CME encouraged all companies in its membership in Canada to have "every company engaged in manufacturing to enroll their employees." The CME/AU joint effort is intended to train workers capable of competing internationally as managers and supervisors.

By training, MMC will fill the gap in manufacturing management's skills shortage "promoting production or operations employees into supervisory or management positions." According to Dr. Deborah Hurst, dean of the Faculty of Business at AU, it will develop the necessary soft skills for leadership and "hard-management acumen."

Each course is delivered online at AU over 4 weeks and needs 8-12 hours per week course "readings, discussions and assignments." In 2015, every company that sent AU students to MMC received a received 2/3rds of the tuition costs back. Registration for MMC begins March 6, 2016, and courses start April, 2016.

Canadian Universities Ranked among most employable

The 'most employable' list says six Canadian universities prepares the most work-ready graduates in the world. Out of the top 150, "The University of Toronto, McGill University, the University of British Columbia, the University of Montreal, McMaster University and the University of Alberta" were the Canadian universities. The Global Employability University Ranking 2015 "designed and commissioned by the French human resources consulting agency, Emerging, and carried out by the German market research firm Trendence" used 2,200 votes from recruiters and 2,400 from managing directors of "international companies or subsidiaries across 20 countries."



Part of My Tribe

I felt like a funeral crasher recently when I drove my elderly mother and aunt to their cousin's service. I didn't know the deceased man from Adam. In the room of three hundred I knew precisely three people outside of my mom, aunt, and uncle.

When first asked to drive (because my mom isn't confident in unfamiliar areas of Edmonton) I was conflicted. My first reaction was hell, no; I don't want to give up a precious day. Especially for someone I'd never met. I said something about not knowing any extended family on either side. I meant it as an accusation. As we were growing up why had we not been allowed, encouraged to meet and know relatives outside of her favourite sister and her two sons? As I've thought about that question since, I see Roy and I have done the same. We haven't kept close contact with our extended family and made sure our kids knew them too. Oops.

Before agreeing I considered how much I needed to accomplish before leaving for a three-day conference. But as with most mother related things it's never simple. Guilt is a huge driver. I said 'I'll do it because you've done a lot for me'. No doubt she'd had other, more appealing options each time she chose to help me. Damn.

I left home at 8:45 AM and returned at 5 PM. We left early to allow for construction delays and not being sure of the church location in Mill Woods. I had a sinking feeling when I saw the internment would be at a Sherwood Park cemetery. Naturally, they wanted to go to that too. The funeral procession slowly snaked the thirteen kilometres there. The graveside part wasn't terribly, terribly long. Back we headed to the church. Finally, at 2 PM we had lunch. Then cue the mingling. I stayed put and spoke to two of the people I knew. When a brother of the deceased found out I was the driver he asked if I minded driving back in the dark? His clever way of saying my mom and aunt have a knack for staying and staying and staying, talking and talking and talking.

I became observer. I was clearly trapped for what became an all-day excursion and I might as well be gracious. The service itself was unlike the Ukrainian Orthodox funeral service I'm familiar with. It was interactive with responses expected and group singing of hymns. Before the service began I visited with my mom's cousin who sat next to me. The eulogy was well delivered by a son-in-law and illustrated with laughter and anecdotes a well respected and much loved man. Something I guess we should all be working towards.

Saturday's stories before, during, and after convince me families are all the same. There are favourite relatives and others we don't like. Memory is unreliable. There are successes and scandals, saints and scoundrels. Grudges, misinterpretations, differences of opinion and values exist. The aging process doesn't treat us all fairly. But for better or worse these people are part of my tribe, 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

Bad Dates

Dear Barb:

My best friend Sue used to be so nice and now she's a bitch! We used to do all kinds of stuff together like skiing, going on vacations, running and spending time with our other friends. Now she ignores us and spends all her time with her possessive boyfriend. When I try to talk to her about it she says I'm jealous because I don't have a boyfriend. Really, that is not true, of course I would like to have a boyfriend, but I would still want to do things with my friends. What makes girls do this to their friends when they get a boyfriend? Michelle.

Hey Michelle:

Great question! In the early stages of a relationship is it normal to spend all your time learning about the other person, but eventually you should get to a point where you are able to maintain outside friendships. Sometimes girls get caught up with guys who are possessive and want them to spend all their time with them. Initially the girlfriend is flattered, but then it becomes smothering and unhealthy. So if this is a new relationship, allow them their time to get to know each other. If the relationship continues like this after a few months, your friend will have to decide for herself who she wants to see and if she doesn't this could become a very unhappy relationship. Thanks Michelle.

Dear Barb:

My husband passed away a year ago and I have recently begun dating other people. My friends and family are not reacting favourably to me dating and they are not hiding it. They are making comments like, "already" "so soon" and I really hate it, but I don't know what to say

to them. I already feel guilty enough and then to have to listen to them only makes it worse. Maybe they are right and I shouldn't be dating yet. What do you think? Thanks, Kim.

Hi Kim:

So sorry for your loss. There is no set time to move on, it depends on the individual. Grief is a very personal thing; some people are able to move forward quickly while others may take years. And the time it takes is not a measure of the love you feel for the person you lost. Kim, you have to live your life for yourself not for other people. So hold your head up and do what feels right for you. Life is meant to be lived! Best of luck.

Dear Barb:

My husband and I decided not to acknowledge Valentines Day this year. We both felt it was just another cash grab for the stores. So we decided not to get each other anything, even a card. Not a good idea! I felt awful getting up Valentine's Day without even a card to open. My husband said he also felt bad. So next year we will be back to spending money on all that mushy stuff again. Just saying. Amy.

Hey Amy:

Thank so much for sharing, perhaps something for others to think about.

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.

DISTANCE ED

IN:

IT'LL ONLY TAKE A MINUTE



Hi, I'm Edwina Northrop—mom, substitute teacher, and distance learner. I love my life, but I have a few pet peeves, and here's just one.

Neighbors who think that because I'm home I have nothing to do . . .

Since you're home, would you mind feeding my cat? And picking up my son from daycare? And doing my taxes?

I'm sorry, but I have coursework that has to be done today!

It'll only take a minute!

WRITTEN BY WANDA WATERMAN



This space is provided free to AUSU: The Voice does not create this content. Contact services@ausu.org with questions or comments about this page.

IMPORTANT DATES

- **Feb 27:** Bylaw Change Member Consultation (11am MT)
- **Feb 29:** March course extension deadline
- **Mar 10:** Deadline to register in a courses starting Apr 1
- **Mar 10:** AUSU Council Meeting (4:30pm MT)
- **Mar 11:** AUSU General Election Polls open
- **Mar 14:** AUSU General Election Polls close
- **Mar 15:** April degree requirements deadline

Election Candidates Announced!

AUSU received 9 candidates for the 2016 General Election. They are listed below (*in alphabetical order by last name*). **Find out more about the candidates on the AUSU website [here](#).**

- **Josh Cross** (Ottawa, ON)
- **Andrew Gray** (Calgary, AB)
- **Scott Douglas Jacobson** (Fort Langley, BC)
- **Phillip Kirkbride** (Saint-Jean-Sur-Richelieu, QC)
- **Kim Newsome** (Barton, NS)
- **Brandon Simmons** (High River, AB)
- **Julian Teterenko** (Edmonton, AB)
- **Dixie Toliver** (Okotoks, AB)
- **Shawna Wasylyshyn** (St. Albert, AB)

Since there are the same number of candidates as there are council seats, the ballots will have a "Yes" or "No" option for each candidate. Only candidates who receive more "Yes" votes than "No" votes will be elected to AUSU council, as outlined in [AUSU Election Policy 3.01](#).

The election will take place **March 11 to March 14, 2016**.

Election Forum

All AUSU members are invited to join our [Election Forum](#)! This is the perfect place to ask questions of the candidates and find out more about them!



AUSU Bylaw Changes

During the February 11 council meeting, AUSU council passed a motion proposing changes to the AUSU bylaws to bring them into alignment with the Post-Secondary Learning Act. You can read more about this online [here](#).

To ensure full transparency with the membership, AUSU is providing:

- 21 days' notice of the first reading of the motion,
- Two consultations with our membership,
- Two readings of the motion, *and*
- 2/3 majority required to pass both readings.

Member Consultations:

The first membership consultation meeting was Feb 24.

The second member consultation meeting is this **Saturday, February 27 at 11am MST**. RSVP to admin@ausu.org in order to attend.

Readings of the Motion

The two readings of the motion are scheduled for the March and April council meetings, as follows:

- March 10, 2016 at 4:30pm MST
- April 14, 2016 at 4:30pm MDT

Please RSVP to admin@ausu.org in order to attend.

Forum

AUSU has also created an [online forum](#) for our membership to pose questions and hold discussions about the proposed bylaw changes. AUSU will regularly monitor the forum for questions from the membership and to address any concerns.

The forum can be accessed online at <http://ausugovernance.freeforums.net/>.

CLASSIFIEDS

Classifieds are free for AU students! Contact voice@voicemagazine.org for more information.

Views and articles presented here are those of the contributors and do not represent the views of AUSU Student Council

THE VOICE

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The Voice is published every Friday in HTML and PDF format.

Contact *The Voice* at voice@voicemagazine.org.

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