

THE OPEN STANDARD

The Newsletter of the Open Learning Division of Thompson Rivers University

Spring Issue

April 2011

OL Livens Up

Open Learning launches Banner 8 to offer advanced service.

After many months of planning and hard work by the Project SAGE team, Banner 8 Go-Live was launched on February 23. In order to facilitate Thompson Rivers University, Open Learning (TRU-OL)'s transition from Banner 3 to Banner 8 (a software application that uses an Oracle database to gather, store and present information through forms, reports and web self service) online services, such as online registration and myTRU, were unavailable from February 18 to February 22.

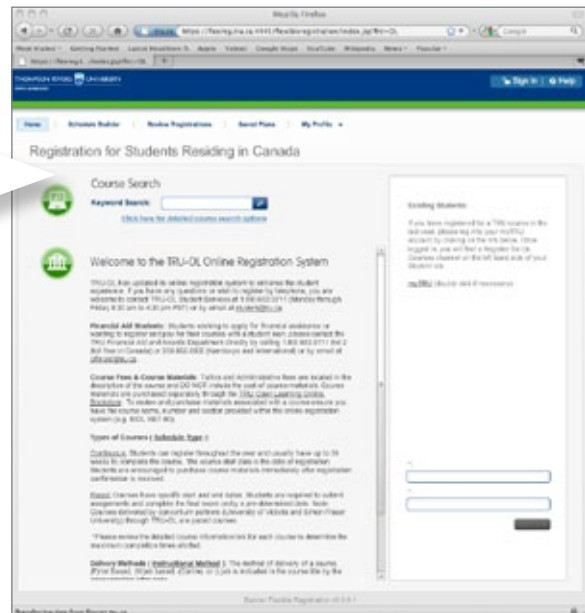
The switch to Banner 8, according to Cameron Beddome, Chief Recruitment Officer, TRU-OL, represents more than just a technological upgrade. "Go-Live for TRU-OL is not just a transition to a new enterprise system, but rather a new beginning," Beddome wrote in communications to the TRU-OL community. The project brings together TRU's many legacy systems and reaps the benefits of an integrated information system according to Leena Niemela, Manager, Admissions and Advising, TRU-OL.

Niemela explained that the new management system, represented by Banner 8, holds all of TRU and TRU-OL's registration, program admissions, grading and graduation records. In addition to the launch of Banner 8, Niemela said that Project SAGE also delivers a new materials management system (WINPRISM) to better serve student's textbook and material orders.

Observable differences resulting from the project's February launch include a new online web registration system and changes and additions to myTRU. The system will also eventually allow TRU-OL's program students to view their program plans online. However, Niemela explained that in the meantime students are receiving the new DegreeWorks Program Plan from their Program Advisors.

Niemela explained that Banner 8 also represents significant changes beneficial to staff.

"Banner 8 is an Internet-based, user-friendly application," Niemela said. "Many processes, such as staff-assisted registrations, will change dramatically for some groups



such as Enrolment Service Officers who will now be working almost exclusively within Banner 8 to serve students over the phone and email."

TRU-OL admissions services also benefit from Banner 8 as they are able to utilize Banner 8's Transfer Articulation module, which records transfer credit activity for program students. A new web application will also be available that can significantly reduce data entry for the Admissions staff.

The new portal also provides improved course and student information, which is of great benefit to Open Learning Faculty Members.

Overall, Niemela explained that TRU-OL's students and staff will benefit from improved efficiencies related to the launch of Banner 8.

"Program students will have shorter wait times to receive word on their transfer credit evaluations and program plans," she said. "Much of the manual paper work that staff complete, from program plans to registrations receipts, will be automated and eventually students will be able to access more information and services through the MyTRU portal."

While the project promises positive results Beddome explains that TRU has put initiatives into place that will ensure such a large scale project is not necessary in the future.

THE OPEN STANDARD

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IN THIS ISSUE

- >Banner 8 Goes Live
- >Student Success Stories
- >The Making of a Generation
- >Life in OL
- >The Flipbook Experience
- >What's News in OL
- >Learning Analytics



THOMPSON RIVERS
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Learning Analytics

Conference aims to improve learning and learning environments.

By Moragh MacAulay, Market Research Analyst

Over 100 international educators, researchers and educational technologists gathered in Banff, AB from February 27 to March 1, 2011 to explore and discuss the emerging field of learning analytics at the First International Conference on Learning Analytics and Knowledge 2011. Representatives of Thompson Rivers University, Open Learning (TRU-OL) included Moragh MacAulay, Market Research Analyst, Irwin DeVries, Director of Instructional Design and Dr. Griff Richards, Instructional Designer.

Richards and DeVries presented a joint paper entitled "*Revisiting Formative Evaluation: Dynamic Monitoring for the Improvement of Learning Activity Design and Delivery*," which illustrated a simple and practical method of introducing student evaluations into online courses. Essentially, the presentation suggested that mini student surveys can be planted throughout a course directly after students complete learning activities and result in positive adjustments to those specific learning activities.

This idea facilitates the integration of surveys and other student feedback mechanisms into course materials in a way that allows results to become immediately available to the instructor and/or instructional designer.



Learning Analytics

Learning analytics is the collection and analysis of data implemented in order to understand and improve learning and learning environments. The field covers a range of interests including discourse analysis, the semantic web, social network analysis and pedagogical practice in the online environment.

Learning analytics is becoming an area of interest for researchers at institutions and corporations because

of the parallel emergence of three forces. First, there is growing demand for more effective educational practices in order to increase student retention and help them complete existing degrees. This will positively influence educational attainment rates which will in turn enable countries to produce better educated populations.

The second force is indicated by the increasing use of online tools in all phases of education including,

LAK'11

recruitment, admissions and enrolment, workplace learning, blended learning and online delivery and assessments. Learner engagement patterns can often be identified by analyzing the digital trails students leave in electronic environments as a result of using online tools.

The third force is a result of the fact that computing capacity and algorithms are becoming readily available. Specifically, the same sort of data-mining technology supermarkets use to analyze a customer's affinity card record of purchases or the technology credit card companies use to prevent fraud, can be used by educational institutions to identify opportunities for improvement, students at risk and areas of excellence.

TRU-OL is looking into integrating and assessing big datasets generated by various platforms such as Banner, Blackboard, Moodle, the TRU website and all the social network sites associated with the campus in order to improve institutional activities. Smaller-scale datasets TRU-OL garners from individual surveys or course activities may be used to develop more customized and adaptive learning environments.



Banff, Alberta


Analyzing the Value

Learning analytics is helping to develop and implement cyclical practices of data collection, systematic analysis and subsequent thoughtful interventions that improve and enrich the learning experience. While there is much research to be done, learning analytics has the potential to provide all members of the learning community, especially the learners, with information that can lead to improved outcomes in education.

However, there are concerns related to the use of learning analytics. For example, many individuals spend a lot of time online and every one of their clicks results in a trace in a log file that can be collected and mined for information. How that information is used can be an area of concern related to privacy and results in the question, "do we have a right to privacy online and is our private information being gathered for beneficial purposes?"

In practice, the ultimate objective of learning analytics is to measure the extent to which a teaching and

learning activity has been successful and to suggest areas of opportunity for improvement. Learning can be assessed by measuring changes in behaviour as long as the necessary resources and circumstances are in place to prompt that change in behaviour. Measuring those changes through the use of learning analytics should be approached with both rigour and care. Any planned interventions into the teaching and learning relationship, based on learning analytics, should be examined in light of how these interventions will benefit all students and how they align with and are respectful of academic freedom and institutional autonomy.

While the creation of a more responsive online learning environments is desirable and possible, any strategic implementation of learning analytics should begin with a thoughtful and informed discussion of our universal right to privacy. As we swim through the ocean of data available to us, the challenge of using it effectively, as well as responsibly, will become increasingly more complex. 



Moragh MacAulay

Reviewing a Generation

BC Professor promotes book on education of the 70s generation.

Lesley Andres, a Council member with the BC Council on Admissions and Transfer, released her new book entitled *The Making of a Generation: The Children of the 1970s in Adulthood* published by the University of Toronto Press. Andres, a Professor in the Department of Educational Studies at the University of British Columbia, one of Thompson Rivers University, Open Learning (TRU-OL)'s consortium partners, coauthored the book with Johanna Wyn, Professor in Education and Director, Youth Research Centre at the University of Melbourne.

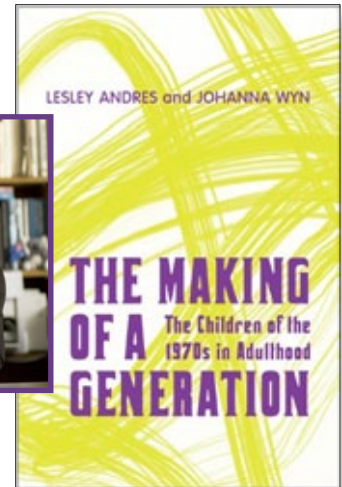
The book looks at the economic insecurities, social changes and workplace restructurings that secondary school graduates of the late 1980s and early 1990s are coping with. It draws on studies that recorded the lives of young people in both Canada and Australia for over 15 years offering unique insight into the hopes, dreams and trajectories of a generation.

Authors Andres and Wyn write that although children born in the 1970s were more educated than ever before, as adults they entered new labour markets that were deregulated and precarious.



Lesley Andres

Read about the consequences of education and labour policies in Canada and Australia and the long-term impacts they have had on health, well-being and family formation. The authors conclude that these young adults bore the brunt of policies designed to bring about rapid changes in the nature of work and that despite their modest hopes and aspirations for security, those born in the 1970s became a vanguard generation as they negotiated the significant social and economic transformations of the 1990s. [CS](#)



April Showers bring May Flowers

Blogs Away

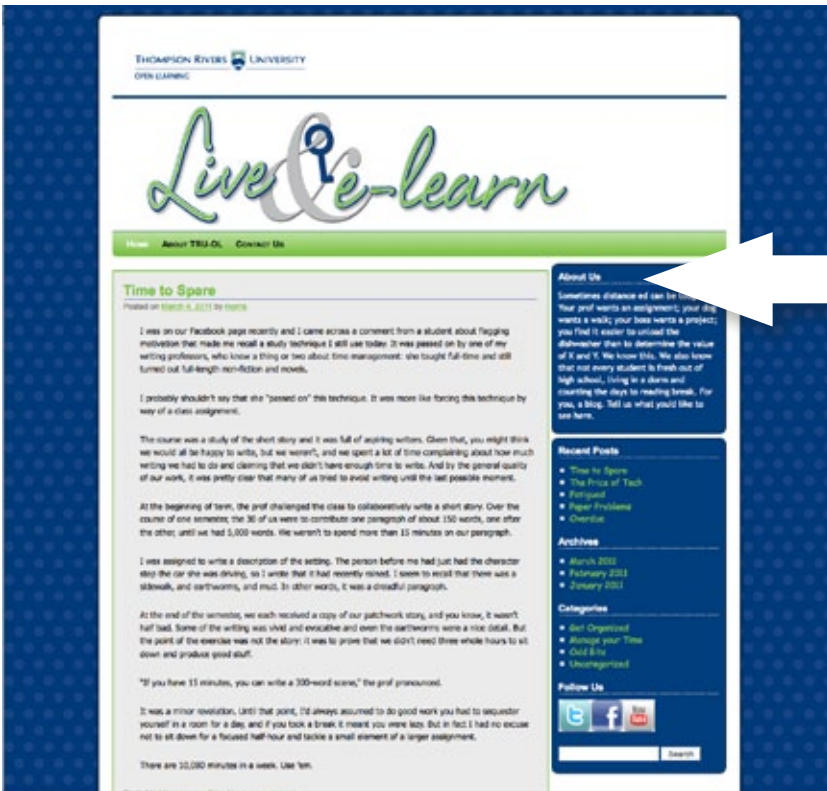
OL launches new blog addressing issues regarding online and distance learning.

By Lindsey Norris, Web Editor

The marketing department of Thompson Rivers University, Open Learning (TRU-OL) has launched a new student-focused blog to address issues related to online and distance learning.

Studying online and at a distance has both advantages and challenges to traditional classroom environments. The new blog, entitled *Live and e-Learn*, acknowledges these differences and explores aspects such as study habits, time management and organizational skills.

Going forward, the blog will include interviews with TRU Faculty, Open Learning Faculty Members, as well as past and current students. The resulting content will be useful to online and distance learners and will create a forum for discussion among students who may be studying in isolation.



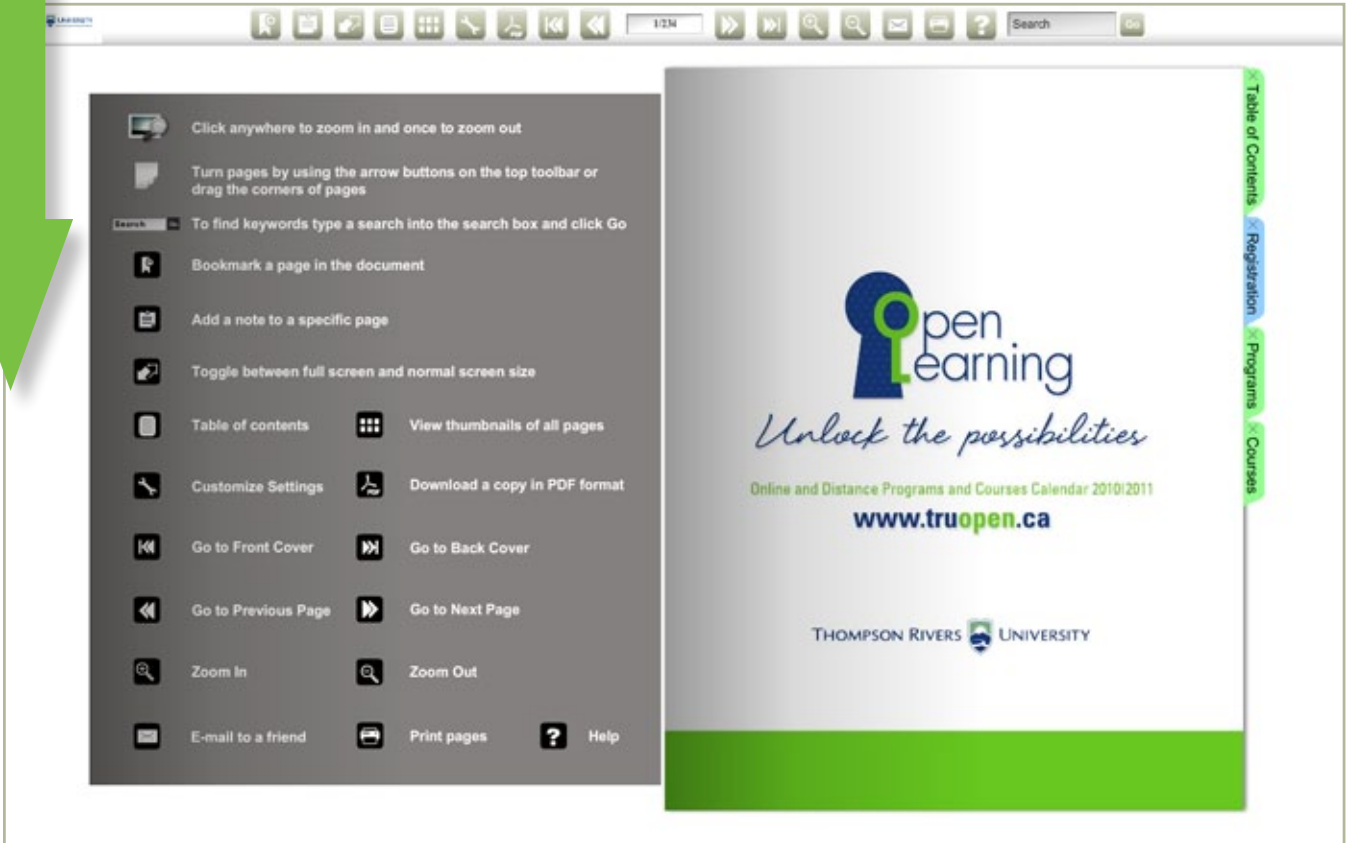
If you have an idea for a blog posting that you think would be helpful to students, email Lindsey Norris, Web Editor, at lnorris@tru.ca. To read the blog visit <http://liveand-e-learn.inside.tru.ca>





Flipping Forward

New software combines digital convenience and the real reading experience.




Today's ever advancing world of online technology truly does allow us to sing from the rooftops that sometimes, some things are "even better than the real thing." This is the impetus behind the adaptation and online release of some strategic Thompson Rivers University, Open Learning (TRU-OL) publications from static print PDFs to interactive digital flipbooks, including TRU-OL's 2010-11 Program and Course Calendar and it's TRUe Stories.

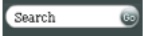











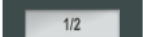

Flipbook software utilized by the Marketing and Communications (MARCOM) team of TRU-OL provides a solution for the design

and implementation of online digital page flip publications, which converts existing publications into dynamic digital editions with the look and feel of the original document. Essentially, interactive digital flipbooks actually emulate physical publications and offer benefits including portability, small file sizes, simple point and click navigation and no download wait time. Click the arrow and the page actually flips before your eyes (See Table 1 for definitions of Flipbook tools).

TRU-OL's flipbooks can be quickly downloaded and saved, printed, shared on social networking sites or sent to friends, coworkers and

colleagues to allow for easy and free sharing on an array of mediums such as web browsers, Blackberrys or Droids (See Table 1).

Unlike the print versions, which are less friendly to the environment, online flipbooks offer readers features such as embedded hyperlinks, infinite zoom technology, flash animation, videos, audio and notes and bookmarks (See Table 1). By utilizing the flipbook technology for its publications, TRU-OL's MARCOM team is able to share more information more efficiently and actively involve its audience in the process beyond merely reading the words. 

	<p>SEARCH-</p> <p>To search in the publication, enter your term or any word in the search field, and then click on the "GO" button. You can improve your search by adding an asterisk(*) after a word, our search engine will pull up pages with all variations of the word. Example: Search* our search engine will pull up pages with the words searches, searching, searchable, etc. By replacing a letter with a word with a question mark (?), our search engine will pull up pages that include any character in that position. Example: b?g , our search engine will pull up pages with the words big, beg, bag, etc.</p>		<p>PAGE BROWSING-</p> <p>To turn pages- click on the corner of the publication or use these buttons. To instantly view the next or previous page you may also use the arrows on your keyboard to navigate the pages.</p> <p>Click on these buttons to instantly view the front or back cover.</p>
	<p>PRINT-</p> <p>To print click this button, select desired page/s and click on the "PRINT" button.</p>		<p>DOWNLOAD-</p> <p>Use this button to download the publication in PDF format or CD version.</p>
	<p>EMAIL-</p> <p>To send an email link to a friend or associate, use the button, fill out all the required fields and click on the "SEND" button. Your recipient will receive an e-mail instructing him of the link to the digital publication.</p>		<p>TOOLS-</p> <p>Click on this to select desired page viewing and sound option. you may also set your preferred level of zoom.</p>
	<p>ZOOM IN</p> <p>Click this button to zoom in. Or you may click on the center of the page to zoom in. You may navigate on the page while zoomed in by using the left button of your mouse and moving the page to desired position. To adjust zoom level go to tools option.</p>		<p>THUMBNAI LS-</p> <p>Use this button to view a smaller version of all pages simultaneously. Clicking on a thumbnail will open the selected page.</p>
	<p>ZOOM OUT-</p> <p>Click this button to zoom out. Or you may click on the center of the page while in the zoom in mode to return to regular viewing mode.</p>		<p>TABLE OF CONTENTS-</p> <p>Use this button to get to the summary of the publication. Click on the links to navigate quickly to a specific page, subject or article.</p>
	<p>NOTE-</p> <p>This tool allows you to add notes anywhere on the page by clicking on the 'note' icon on the toolbar and, selecting the area you wish to comment on. Just write your notes in the dialog box. When you wish to view your notes again, simply scroll over the note.</p>		<p>BOOKMARK-</p> <p>This tool allows you to add bookmarks to your digital edition that will allow you to return easily to specific pages. The bookmarks will remain on your edition as long as you view the publication on the same computer.</p>
	<p>PAGE NUMBERS-</p> <p>Display the page number you are currently viewing / out of the total pages of the publication. Type in a page number to instantly view a specific page.</p>		<p>HELP-</p> <p>Click this button to get an explanation how to use the digital publication. you may also navigate the mouse over the tool bar to view what each button does.</p>

To view TRU-OL's TRUe Stories flipbook visit:
www.tru.ca/distance/about/OLStudentsTestimonials.html

To view the flipbook version of TRU-OL's 2010-11 Program and Course Calendar visit:
www.tru.ca/assets/ol/ebooks/Open_Learning_Course_Calendar_201011/

To view the flipbook version of TRU-OL's 2011 Viewbook visit:
www.tru.ca/assets/ol/ebooks/ol_viewbook_2011

Table 1 Flipbook How To Chart

Unlock the possibilities



A Portrait of Pedagogy

Education helped this student realize her dreams and shape her artistic future.

Experience defines us; it makes us who we are, helps us to interpret life and gives life meaning. Shima Iuchi, a Thompson Rivers University, Open Learning (TRU-OL) alumna, communicates her life experiences – her memory, movement and learning – through art, creating her own existential masterpieces.

Iuchi has funneled her journalistic memoirs, which she recorded throughout her travels since immigrating to Canada in 1998 from her native Japan, into her artwork and has used other people's experiences to fuse locally inspired installations. Iuchi's experiential, multi-media approach to artwork has helped her build a successful career as an internationally exhibited artist and teacher while her online and distance approach to education through TRU-OL fuelled her artistic ambitions and allowed her to achieve her goal of gaining a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in 2003.

While Iuchi, who moved to Canada to study English, originally enrolled in TRU in the Tourism Management program she quickly found her true calling while visiting the Chair of TRU's Visual Arts department. There she was enthralled with the artwork gracing the office walls and engaged in a subsequent discussion that left her filling out a form to switch her program to TRU's on-campus Diploma of Fine Arts, which she graduated from in 2001.

While Iuchi blossomed as an artist upon arriving in Canada and studying through TRU, her educational and artistic journey began in her native Japan, where she graduated with a diploma in Art Management from the Seian University of Art and Design. However, it was in Canada where her artistic experience and calling grew exponentially.

Studying through Open Learning allowed Iuchi to complete coursework while creating her artwork, exhibiting her installations across North America and co-curating local exhibits which all helped buttress her burgeoning career as an internationally exhibited artist.

"[While studying through TRU-OL] I was the co-curator organizing a Japanese contemporary art exhibition, Kyozon, at the Kamloops Art Gallery (KAG) which included my research trip to Japan," Iuchi recalls.

TRU *story:*

"I also did the grant writing and obtained \$18,000 from the Canada Council for the Arts. I was also doing a lot of volunteer work at KAG as well as at TRU. At the same time, I started showing my works at galleries and different venues across North America and Japan."

In addition to co-curating *Kyozon* while studying through TRU-OL, in 2002 Luchi presented solo exhibitions of her work *Transient's Voice* in Kyoto, Japan and Surrey, BC. In 2003, she was part of group exhibitions including *Beyond Borders 2003 – Eighth Annual International Art Competition* at the Whatcom Museum of Art and History in Bellingham, Washington (which won first place) and *Artropolis 2003* at CBC Studios in Vancouver, BC as well as *Borderland* at the Campbell River and District Art Gallery in Campbell River, BC. How did she manage to complete her online and distance coursework while creating her masterpieces and exhibiting internationally one may ask? *"I just worked hard on my art to manage my life, educational and artistic career goals,"* Luchi said. *"I did not want to lose any opportunities for my art resources, so I attended conferences and workshops and I went to as many art galleries and museums as I could. It was not easy but I believed in myself and I was very enthusiastic about what I was doing."*

"My planning, setting goals and commitment were so strong that I could eventually achieve all the goals I set."

Studying through Open Learning helped Luchi excel in time management in all aspects of her life and she in part credits these skills for her ability to so completely commit herself to her education, work and art creations.

Her Open Learning experience and interactions with Open Learning Faculty Members also provided her with *"models"* of individuals working as professional artists *"showing their own works of art in many different places."*

"I found all of my Open Learning Faculty Members very helpful," Luchi said referencing a memorable experience she had with one Open Learning Faculty Member.

Very passionate and committed to completing one particular course, Luchi worked hard on assignments, contemplated critiques and comments and found satisfaction with the feedback she received. She was so satisfied with the Open Learning Faculty Member's responses that she did not feel the need to contact him with questions. *"One day the Open Learning Faculty Member called me at home and said 'I am worried about you. You are doing very well in this course but don't you have any questions for me?'* I have never had such a thoughtful instructor," Luchi recalled.

Such experiences with TRU and the Open Learning Division helped Luchi realize her goals to teach and become a professional artist.


After graduating, Luchi furthered her education by taking advantage of many opportunities such as producing artwork and developing her artistic career and skills in the Maine Media Workshops Summer Work Study in Photography in Rockport, Maine and at the Banff Centre in Banff, AB in the Visual Arts Studio Work Study. In 2008, Luchi also completed a continuing education program in the Digital Media Academy of Stanford University based in Palo Alto, California.

Luchi has also worked as an artist in residence at The Banff Centre in 2008 and 2009 in the New Media Institute and, in 2004, at The Cooper Union School of Art in New York where she focused on photography.

Currently, Luchi works as a member of the Lab Faculty in TRU's Visual Arts department.

"With my experiences and goals blended nicely together now, I would like to continue teaching adults in some communities and to support developing contemporary art scenes in specific locations," Luchi said.

Perhaps, in the future, she will choose to accept the past offers of enrolment into the Masters of Fine Arts programs provided by both the Art Institute of Chicago and Concordia University.

In recognition of Luchi's multitude of achievements, TRU awarded her a TRU 2011 Distinguished Alumni Award, Arts and Culture. 



TRU *story:*

Canadian Career: The distance education that allowed one student to get closer to her dreams.



Big change has been a theme in Jodie McDonald's life for the past decade, affecting her work and home life and the very ground beneath her feet. McDonald has made and stuck to life altering decisions to not only move professions but also move across the world, never letting the associated stresses keep her from working towards the educational goals she aspires to.

Ten years ago, living in Norwich, England, McDonald decided she no longer wanted to work as an Accountant but instead chose to pursue a career as a Counseling Psychologist. Inspired and driven, McDonald enrolled in a Psychology degree program at The Open University, based in the United Kingdom. However, in 2007 McDonald immigrated to Canada, a move that convinced her to switch to a Canadian-based post-secondary provider.

"I wasn't able to continue my studies with The Open University because of the time difference and distance," McDonald explained. "I started looking at the distance learning programs offered by the universities in British Columbia and came across the Social Service Worker Certificate offered by Thompson Rivers University, Open Learning (TRU-OL) and it was ideal for my career plan."

McDonald, who has studied through TRU-OL for the past two years, said that TRU was the only university she could find that offered this type of program through distance learning. Further persuading her to study with TRU-OL was the fact that she was able to gain credit towards her Social Service Worker Certificate for courses she had gained through The Open University.

While McDonald had researched an array of institutions in BC for pursuit of her post-secondary goals, one thing remained consistent, she would continue as a distance learner.

"I have family commitments so studying long distance at my own pace is ideal for me," McDonald said, noting that her experience with TRU-OL has been very positive.


"I have found the (TRU-OL) courses to be well written, organized and the Open Learning Faculty Members very knowledgeable and helpful. The workload is manageable as 30 weeks for each course gives me plenty of time to complete the assignments."

McDonald found the flexible approach to education allowed by distance studies has even enabled her to fit part-time employment into her balance of family and school life. In November 2010, McDonald put her learning into practice and embarked upon her new career when she began working at Desert Sun Counselling and Resource Centre in Oliver, BC. There she found a niche that allows her to utilize her newfound knowledge related to social work as well as her past expertise in accounting.

"I do administrative, fundraising and advocacy work such as completing tax returns for clients, helping them to complete government forms and locating other resources for them in the community," McDonald said, adding that eventually she would like to work in a transition house or safe home.

Planning for her future, McDonald will work towards completing a degree in Social Work, perhaps with one of TRU-OL's consortium partners.

"The University of Victoria accepts TRU-OL's Social Service Worker Certificate in place of the first two years of their degree," McDonald said, explaining that her post-secondary goals have been completely remodeled as a result of the opportunities available to her through TRU-OL.

"As a result of studying for my TRU-OL certificate I have changed my initial career plan of becoming a Counselling Psychologist working in a General Practice Doctors Surgery to becoming a Social Worker." 

On a Roll **TRU** *story:*

This proud graduate and World Record holder in inline skating competed all over the globe while earning her degree.

Meaghan Buisson, an 11-time international medalist and World Record holder in the sport of inline speed skating, graduated with distinction from Thompson Rivers University, Open Learning (TRU-OL)'s Bachelor of Science program in 2010. Buisson recounts her inspirational educational experience with TRU-OL:

When I stepped across the stage for my graduation from Thompson Rivers University, Open Learning (TRU-OL), I kept thinking "I'm really here."

Receiving my degree marked the culmination of a long, hard journey racing around the world, literally. As a national team athlete in the sport of inline speed skating, sitting in a traditional classroom simply wasn't an option. I bounced through five universities before finally finding the right "fit" at TRU-OL. Through TRU-OL's flexibility and support while working towards my Bachelor of Science program, I was able to complete my degree one course at a time. I quickly learned how to study in trains, planes and automobiles while crisscrossing oceans and continents. My reading selection caused raised eyebrows on the World Cup circuit more than once. What, doesn't everyone read a biology textbook while sitting on a stationary bike? Somehow I managed to balance school and sport; breaking a world record one day, writing a final exam the next. I've stood on international podiums and known the pride of hearing the Canadian anthem play following a skating victory.



However, I can honestly say the feeling of finishing my degree is every bit as special to me as anything I have accomplished on skates.

I'll never forget the day of my graduation. As a TRU-OL graduate (Bachelor of Science, Biology/Life Sciences, 2010), the ceremony held special meaning as it was my first time ever seeing the campus. When I met faculty and support staff, individuals whom I'd only known through email and phone, all I could say was "thank you." Their support and encouragement was amazing. They are the pillars upon which TRU's Open Learning programs stand strong.

I read a quote once that said people need both "roots and wings." My degree through TRU-OL has given me both. As I turn in pursuit of graduate studies, I do so with the knowledge

the quality of my degree from TRU-OL is recognized worldwide.

The skills I gained throughout my undergraduate program, including time management and self-motivation, coupled with the quality of my education, are intangible assets. My degree has opened doors I didn't even know existed and there is not a day that goes by when I am not grateful for TRU-OL. I wouldn't have graduated without having the online learning option.

While I'm not sure when I'll be on campus next, one thing's for certain; no matter where I go in this world, I'll always be a proud graduate of Thompson Rivers University. 🇨🇦

LIFE in OL

Open Learning welcomes **Barbara Hubert** to the position of Director, Business Intelligence and Operations. Hubert, who brings to this position a Masters of Business Administration, Digital Technologies credential from Royal Roads University, has spent the past four years working as the Branch Manager of Betware Solutions Canada Ltd., an enterprise software and services company that sells eCommerce and multi-channel lottery solutions. Hubert was responsible for establishing this Canadian subsidiary and for managing all functions related to running and growing the business. In addition, Hubert was responsible for managing a portfolio of projects for Betware's key North American customer, BC Lottery Corporation. Prior to working for Betware Solutions Canada Ltd., Hubert held a variety of positions in areas including project management, program management and technical writing/editing.

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The Marketing and Communications department for Open Learning welcomes **Cristian Sonea** to the position of Web Strategist. Sonea holds a BSc in Marketing from the University of Economics and Business Studies of Bucharest. Upon graduation, he began doing freelance work for public and private sector clients, helping them to achieve their business objectives through the use of Internet and Information Technology. Sonea moved to Canada in 2006 and in 2007 began his education in Computer Systems Technology through the British

Columbia Institute of Technology in Vancouver. After graduating, Sonea worked as a lead Web Developer with Athabasca University in Alberta. In this position he completed the redevelopment process of seven academic centres and more than 25 distance education program websites totaling over 1,500 webpages.

The Business Intelligence group welcomes **Shannon James** to the position of Data Analyst replacing Laszlo Nemes. James brings to this position a strong background in Computing Science through TRU.

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Open Learning wishes **Kristine Smalcel Pederson**, who resigned from her position as Director, Admissions and Enrolment Services in January 2011, best of luck in her new endeavours. In the interim, **Troy Hanschen** has assumed the role and responsibilities of the Director position until such time as her replacement is identified. To accommodate this shift of positioning, **Hilary Parsons** has been appointed to the role of Manager, Enrolment Services in an acting capacity.


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Open Learning offers its best wishes to **Leena Niemela** who resigned from her position as Manager of Admissions and Advising effective April 2011. Niemela joined the OL Division in 2007 in the capacity of an Enrolment Services Advisor and soon afterwards moved into the role of Manager of Admissions and Advising. She has hired, trained and motivated many individuals to become top performers in Admissions and Advising. Niemela is moving on into a new career as the Associate Registrar at Langara College. **Scott Walker** has been appointed interim Manager, Admissions and Advising.

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TRU-OL students and prospective TRU-OL students frequently post questions and comments about courses, program fees and registration deadlines on the **TRU-OL Facebook page**. Social media can be a great way to circulate information to a broad audience. If you have news you want to pass along to TRU-OL's students or alumni regarding new courses, fees or other matters, Facebook may be the way to do it. Email **Lindsey Norris** at lnorris@tru.ca if you would like more information about using Facebook to communicate with students.

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On April 19, 2011, Open Learning Faculty Member **Keith Whitmore** was given accolades by TRU for his service and achievements when he received the Teaching Excellence Award for Open Learning Faculty Members at the Annual Staff Awards ceremony held at the Campus Activity Centre. 

What's NEWS in Open Learning



A new report warns British universities and colleges that they must make online learning a priority if they are to meet growing student demand and remain competitive in an increasingly international higher-education landscape. The report, entitled *Collaborate to Compete: Seizing the Opportunity of Online Learning for U.K. Higher Education*, was produced by a 2009 study group set up by the government council that finances higher education in England. Its purpose was to maintain and develop the nation's position as a world leader in online learning. The report outlines six recommendations for future success, including the use of technology that enhances student choice, greater investment to enable the development of partnerships to achieve "scale and brand in online learning," and the acquisition of "more and better market intelligence about international demand and competition."

Distance learning education is the solution to a lack of teachers in Ghana according to Anamuah-Mensah, the former vice chancellor of the University of Education, Winneba, who spoke at a lecture organized by the University of Cape Coast centre for continuing education. The theme of the lecture was "Distance Education for National Development: Reflections on a decade of operations in the University of Cape Coast."

On January 11, 2011, the World Bank Board of Directors approved a US\$5 million **Flexible and Open Distance Education Project for Papua New Guinea** that is intended to focus on increasing the number of the country's out-of-school youth who complete recognized secondary diploma and certificate equivalency programs via distance learning. A large proportion of the country's out-of-school youth lack the publically recognized certification that would allow them to qualify for higher levels of education or to meet the minimum education requirements of some

employers. The Flexible and Open Distance Education Project intends to support the College for Flexible and Distance Education (FODE) to improve education outcomes. The project will increase opportunities for Papua New Guinea's out-of-school youth to gain recognized qualifications and improve the performance and services of those students enrolled in FODE courses. It will focus on: improving the quality of the equivalency curriculum and provincial support services; increase tutor-student contact hours in the provincial centers; introduce new technologies that would improve efficiencies and reduce costs; and improve the quality of student assessment.

A new report from Contact North, Ontario's distance education and training network, provides an outlook for online learning in 2011. The report states that despite systemic barriers to online and distance education, including faculty resistance, lack of training in teaching and lack of a system-wide approach, there is plenty of opportunity for growth and development in online learning. The key areas of development for online and distance education include course redesign, improved mobile technology, open educational resources, more multimedia, learning analytics and shared services between post-secondary institutions, according to the report.

A US\$2 billion grant program announced by the Obama administration in late January 2011 could provide unexpected gains for open online learning. The four-year program, designed to expand job training at community colleges, endorses the trend towards the free sharing and availability of learning materials on the Internet. "With US\$500-million available this year, this is easily one of the largest federal investments in open educational resources in history," U.S. Education Secretary Arne Duncan

said in a statement e-mailed to *The Chronicle*. The grant guideline document suggests that the Obama administration is encouraging the development of high-quality immersive online learning environments and promotes open access to everything.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) awarded the New Mexico based Gallup-McKinley County School District and Jemez Valley Public Schools almost US\$1 million to expand online educational programs and telemedicine. The USDA's **Distance Learning and Telemedicine Program** will provide US\$499,486 to Gallup-McKinley to help 18 schools connect and create a first time video conferencing system. This is intended to let teachers and students in 10 communities in the Four Corners region to share courses, initiate new courses and offer professional development for faculty. Jemez Valley will receive US\$475,145 to connect eight schools in the region through distance learning equipment to offer advanced placement and language classes for students and continuing education courses for teachers. "This funding will allow Gallup and Jemez schools to use developments in technology to bring important distance education and health care access to our rural communities," U.S. Sen. Tom Udall said in a news release. The USDA also awarded Jackson State Community College, based in Tennessee, a grant of US\$489,000 to expand distance education to rural communities. The **Rural Utilities Services Grant** will help purchase distance learning equipment in seven counties in West Tennessee. The distance learning equipment will be placed in seven high schools in West Tennessee for use in the College's dual enrollment program. High school students will be able to earn college credit while still in high school without leaving their own school. The grant was a competitive grant process awarded from the USDA.

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What's NEWS in Open Learning

A new online course has replaced the US Marine Corps Institute printed version of Leading Marines. Lance corporals must complete the Marine Net version, called the **Leading Marines Distance Education Program**, to be eligible for promotion. *"The Marine Corps is becoming more and more computers-based,"* Sgt. Joshua Busath, communications non-commissioned officer for I Marine Expeditionary Force Marine Headquarters Group, said. *"They are able to put a more comprehensive class online rather than in a book."*

Ken Steele from the Academica Group will be the keynote speaker at the second **PSEWEB 2011** conference held in Toronto, ON from May 18 to 20, 2011. He will speak on *"Higher Education in the Fast Lane: New Tech Trends."* The conference is geared towards college and university marketers, programmers, designers, digital architects and community managers. Visit www.pseweb.ca for more information.

The Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, of which TRU is a member, recommends that a proposed requirement to destroy reproductions of lessons be eliminated. The rationale behind this relates to the fact that requiring lessons to be redeveloped over and over again *"would waste educational resources and discourage the use of online learning in Canada."* The recommendation was a response to perspective copyright changes relating to the House of Commons Legislative Committee on Bill C-32, An Act to amend the Copyright Act.

A "quality scorecard" was developed by US-based Sloan Consortium, a company that publishes research related to online education. The scorecard is intended to provide a standardized measure for comparing any type of fully online college program. The scorecard has 70 metrics, all of which are weighted equally and account for three possible points. Certain categories contain more metrics, and therefore account for more points, than others. Categories include: support for students, course development and instructional design, evaluation and assessment, course structure, support for faculty, technology support, teaching and learning, general institutional support, and social and student engagement.

The OpenCourseWare Consortium will hold its 2011 Global Conference from May 4 – 6, 2011. At the conference, global educational leaders will converge to discuss how the open sharing of knowledge can continue to broaden access to education and support teaching and learning worldwide. The conference, to be held in the Boston Marriot Hotel in Cambridge, Massachusetts, brings together individuals committed to the advancement of formal and informal learning through the worldwide sharing and use of free, high-quality education materials. Planned panel discussions will focus on three main themes, including: the impact of OpenCourseWare; producing Impactful OpenCourseWare content; next generation "Open" learning tools and technology.

The Botswana College of Distance and Open Learning (BOCODOL) began consulting stakeholders in March 2011 regarding the transformation into Botswana Open University (BOU). The Executive Director of BOCODOL Daniel Tau explained that the concept came after they realized that the demand for distance education in Botswana continues to grow given the impact of recent changes in population size, complex labour market skills requirements, increasing demand for tertiary education and prevailing socio-economic development. *"BOCODOL has demonstrated the potential of distance education in increasing access to education and training opportunities as illustrated by several tangible results, so it is therefore these achievements that we propose to renew and expand its mandate at tertiary levels in order to effectively brand Botswana as a success story in the provision of open and distance learning beyond school equivalency learning,"* Tau said.

