

Liz Best

Part of Modern Day Life



In the time of Socrates and Plato, philosophy reigned as the education of the day. It was perceived greater to be persuasive than educated. Before long, Aristotle suggested that the three Rs—actually mathematics, geometry, astronomy, physics, logic, aesthetics, music, drama, tragedy, poetry, zoology, ethics, and politics—were actually more relevant tools to guide us through life. Reviewing primary, secondary, and post-secondary education, it is possible to see this dichotomy has continued to the present day.

Primary schools focus on the basics; there is little deviation from that focus through secondary school. In fact, until well into the 20th century, education beyond the primary level wasn't considered necessary; it was reserved for only the brightest or richest. Looking at education in this very young 21st century, it is possible to see where the influences of Socrates and Plato are entering the education system, especially at the post-secondary level.

With increasing frequency, people are returning to learning, not only to learn hard facts but also to learn to reason why. This leads to pondering as to why people are participating in continuing education and why they choose one institution over another.

Reasons for continuing one's education are generally quite personal and vary greatly from one person to another. They fall into one of two philosophies:

Altruism, or egoism.

The altruists continue their education to expand their abilities to help others, while the egoists continue their education for themselves. Generally, egoist has a negative connotation, but it can also be defined more neutrally as one focused upon oneself; it is this more neutral definition intended here. Royal Roads University has learners, likely equally in either category, dispersed among the programs that encompass RRU's four curricular pillars of empowering leadership, management and entrepreneurship, environmental sustainability, and conflict resolution.

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One altruistic motive for continuing education is to learn about passing knowledge on to those who will follow in the future, and help them avoid the missteps made in the past. Another altruistic motive is to learn alternative methods of approaching challenges, and how these can be applied in both a person's professional and private life to facilitate being more efficient and effective. The first helps others by expanding their knowledge base beyond that of prior generations, while the latter helps others by providing alternative

avenues to explore when there are obstacles in the current path.

Alternatively, egoists have more clearly defined motives for continuing their education; these can be subdivided into personal or professional goals. For the person who works in one field, continuing education is one way to indulge in a hobby, while another who has dabbled at a particular hobby can focus and refine his or her knowledge in that particular subject. Additionally, there are people who learn simply for the enjoyment learning brings; they continue to learn just to please themselves.

Continuing education can also be part of a process to change career paths for those seeking new challenges or those redefining themselves in this modern economy. Economics can also encourage someone to continue with his or her education because financial benefits often result from advanced degrees, along with advancement in the workplace.

These are the general reasons why some continue learning throughout life. A survey of 10 individuals would likely find 10 different specific reasons, other than those given as examples above. Similar results occur for the reasons people choose one institution rather than another. Royal Roads University is just one of an increasing number of post-secondary institutions in the world. For the most part, it offers the same courses available elsewhere. It has both undergraduate and graduate programs with tuition fees comparable to other

Editor's



Many thanks to talented Victoria photographer **Frances Litman** for her excellent cover photos of the Winter 2001 *Scrivener* (above), and the cover of the current issue!

Next Issue Summer 2002



Our Cover Story for the Summer *Scrivener* is **Rhoda Witherly**, Notary Public in Prince Rupert. The theme for the issue is **Present Day Pioneers**. Feature articles will showcase individuals integral to the growth and progress of our province

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institutions thus, since you can learn the same material elsewhere at the same level and cost, it is heterogeneous with the others in the academic world.

If Royal Roads really wasn't different from anywhere else, it wouldn't exist—but it is different. Royal Roads is something new, a breed of university looking at more than just what you have done in academics. It evaluates an applicant for admission using prior learning assessments. PLA examines the learning you have done in formal academic settings, as well as life learning experiences gathered on the job or in other activities.

Along with PLA, Royal Roads offers a learner the ability to cater the learning experience to his or her lifestyle. Undergraduate learners complete two academic years in one calendar year, while graduate learners can schedule their courses to suit their learning pace, and remain in the workforce while earning their degree.

For some, being a part of this new ideal of learner-centredness is the reason for attending Royal Roads; learning, however, still has to cover a subject relevant to a specific learner, and even with only a few programs, Royal Roads offers a diverse selection of programs.

In its five graduate programs—Master of Arts Leadership and Training, Master of Science Environmental Management, Master of Arts Conflict Analysis and Management, Master of Business Administration, and Master of Arts Distributed Learning—Royal Roads has learners from many fields including education, science, business, technical, and health. Additionally Royal Roads offers undergraduate degrees, certificates, and diplomas programs along with graduate certificates and diplomas programs, to meet the varied needs of learners.

All the programs have other commonalities, the most important being the reliance upon and use of technology in the physical and virtual classroom. Learners have the opportunity to participate as part of their learning—regardless of where they are—as if they were physically located in Victoria on the Royal Roads campus.

Communities are created in the electronic environment instead of the corporeal one, yet they fulfill their purpose of bringing the learners together.

Of the commonalities, there is one that is the least important in terms of learning, but the most-often mentioned: the locale of the Hatley Park Estate, part of the Royal Roads campus. The physical beauty of the campus is a benefit, even if it only serves to provide a scenic view while travelling between buildings.

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Life-long learning isn't something new; it has happened in varying degrees for over two millennia. What *is* new is how accessible this learning has become and the array of learning that is taking place. It is easy to imagine that in the future, there will only be more options, and that tailoring your education by selecting individual courses from any institution will be commonplace.

Imagine customizing a degree like decorating a house, by choosing individual items from each knowledge specialist to meet specific needs; the physical location of the specialist is irrelevant because everything is delivered to you. Part of this world exists now. Find a reason and an institution and become a life-long learner. ▲