NEXT

WHAT BUSINESSES NEED NOW

NEW TRAINING PARTNERSHIP TAKES OFF

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University of Regina | Centre for Continuing Education

WELCOME TO THE CENTRE FOR CONTINUING EDUCATION

Every day at CCE, our team is immersed in the world of education. Simply put, we believe there is always more to learn and a constant need to do so to meet the needs of our community.

In 2020, the pandemic shifted the ground beneath our feet. We quickly adapted and transformed hundreds of courses into learning experiences that were available completely online.

In 2021, we wanted to know how the pandemic marathon was affecting employers. What kinds of skills did their employees need now and what was the best way to deliver them? To help us understand the challenges they faced, we surveyed 400 small and mid-sized employers across our province.

Using the data we collected to drive course content, we introduced a series of four new Professional Microcredential programs. These programs are available now and have been well-received by employers, our partners and government.

As the provincial government continues to move forward with their 10-year growth plan and businesses seek ways to increase the skill sets of their employees, we anticipate greater demand for custom training, new programs and flexible learning opportunities. We invite and welcome those discussions and know that we can meet those challenges – and create those opportunities – together.

We're also seeing more alumni turning to CCE for career and professional development, underscoring our belief that learning doesn't end with a diploma or a degree. To encourage that interest, we're excited to share the news that the University of Regina Alumni Association has introduced a $25,000 fund to financially support them in their goals. Awards in the amount of $500 are now available for all alumni seeking career and professional development through CCE.

As we move forward, CCE is firmly focused on meeting the growing and changing needs of modern-day learners in Saskatchewan and beyond. To be effective in that role, we too will continue to learn from our students, their employers and our community.

Challenging? For sure. Rewarding? Most definitely.

We look forward to collaborating with you to discover what comes NEXT!

CHRISTIE SCHULTZ
Director, Centre for Continuing Education

TOTAL REVENUE FROM CCE:

$44 MILLION

2019-20 ($43 MILLION)

Did you know?

CCE CO-OFFERS:

OVER **30%**

OF ALL CREDIT COURSES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF REGINA IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE FACULTIES

WHAT BUSINESSES NEED NOW

Essential to the success of CCE is its ability to respond to the needs of business. With the pandemic changing the way so many businesses operate, CCE wanted to find out what kinds of skills their employees needed now.

To get that information quickly, CCE surveyed 400 small and mid-sized businesses in 11 industries. The findings were significant and paved the way for a new way of learning at CCE.

"We learned that the remote work environment has highlighted the need for better human skills or what are often referred to as soft skills," says Karen Merz, Manager, Career & Professional Development. "Business communication, problem solving, team building and conflict resolution were just a few of the recurring themes that emerged."

In addition to the type of content that was needed, CCE also learned more about how that content should be delivered. "We've already seen an increase in the demand for custom training, but these survey results indicated there was a need for a flexible way to gain skills quickly. A certificate program isn't applicable for everyone and some employers and employees don't have the budget or time for a longer-term program. They need better skills now."

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>
> **– KAREN MERZ**
> *Manager, Career & Professional Development*

Putting their programming design expertise to work, CCE developed a series of four Professional Microcredentials:

- Business Communications
- High Impact Leadership
- Project Compliance
- Responsive Management

Designed so employees can learn while they work, these instructor-led courses are online and flexible with no prerequisites required. Students can typically complete a badge recognizing their achievement so they can put their new skills to use quickly in the workplace.

The specialized content for microcredentials was created with the input of industry experts to help students boost their employability and advance in their careers.

"This is a credential that they can share on their resumes. As we move forward there will be programs that ladder into certificates. We're now developing these smaller pieces so that everything becomes stackable and recognizable," says Merz. "Students can even share their badges digitally with prospective employers or via social media."

Response to the new offering has been strong. "We've seen the highest uptake in our High Impact Leadership and Responsive Management microcredentials. They are ideal for helping people to manage and cope in this new 'normal' which often involves leading hybrid teams, crisis management and a need for greater resiliency."

Of course, the demand for new skills is applicable to all industries, including those working at the University of Regina. "I took the Crisis Management Badge," says Merz. "It was so interesting to me that as we moved through the pandemic, this was a piece that had been missed by many organizations. It speaks to how we manage and lead teams through the recovery process. Employees are exhausted and I think we'll see more interest in the skill set required to manage our way through and out of the pandemic."

The flexibility and online format of the microcredentials is also resonating with employees. "Online is definitely the preferred method of learning. Now you don't have to take a couple of days away from work or travel to our campus," notes Merz.

That accessibility has allowed CCE to broaden its reach throughout Saskatchewan and beyond. "We recently received a course evaluation from one of our students who farms outside of Saskatoon. She has small children and said she would never have been able to take these programs if they had not been offered online," recalls Merz. "We get excited when we hear that because it just confirms that we're on the right track."

NEW TRAINING PARTNERSHIP TAKES OFF

Like many 'aha' moments, this one started with a single conversation.

"We knew that small and mid-sized businesses have been hard hit by the pandemic," says Michelle Mikkelsen, Program Coordinator for CCE's Career & Professional Development division. "Our next step was to find out where the pain points were in terms of training and then work to address them. I thought a great place to start would be talking to the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce (SCC)."

She was right.

"We quickly realized that there was so much more we could do together to support Saskatchewan businesses with training," says Mikkelsen.

That initial conversation ultimately formed the foundation for a partnership between CCE and the SCC that delivers programming to Chamber members across the province. "With their connection to more than 10,000 individual businesses, industry associations and local chambers, there was no doubt that the Chamber was the ideal way to connect with employers and employees," says Mikkelsen.

Together the partners prioritized the need for in-demand skills training and programming that focuses on career and professional development through a suite of non-credit programs, including the newly launched Professional Microcredentials.

"This partnership is an important step towards recognizing that lifelong learning is increasingly important to business. CCE's new Professional Microcredentials are a perfect example of education meeting workers where they are," said Steve McLellan, Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce CEO.

"Through this partnership, we're working to provide business with flexible and timely options for workers to upskill, reskill and boost those skills that are in demand by industry."

To assist in cross-promotion, SCC features CCE's programs on their website as part of their training network. In turn, CCE tracks those students that enroll as members of the Chamber. "We're excited to see that those numbers are growing," says Mikkelsen, "and members are coming to us from across the province."

News of the initiative is also spreading further afield thanks to a recent story about the partnership in an online newsletter devoted to higher education that is distributed nationally by the Academica Group. "Feedback has been excellent," adds Mikkelsen, "and we are excited by the opportunities that exist to continue to evolve and collaborate with the SCC and their members."

CAREER & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NON-CREDIT REGISTRATIONS:

2020-2021 = **1,107**

372

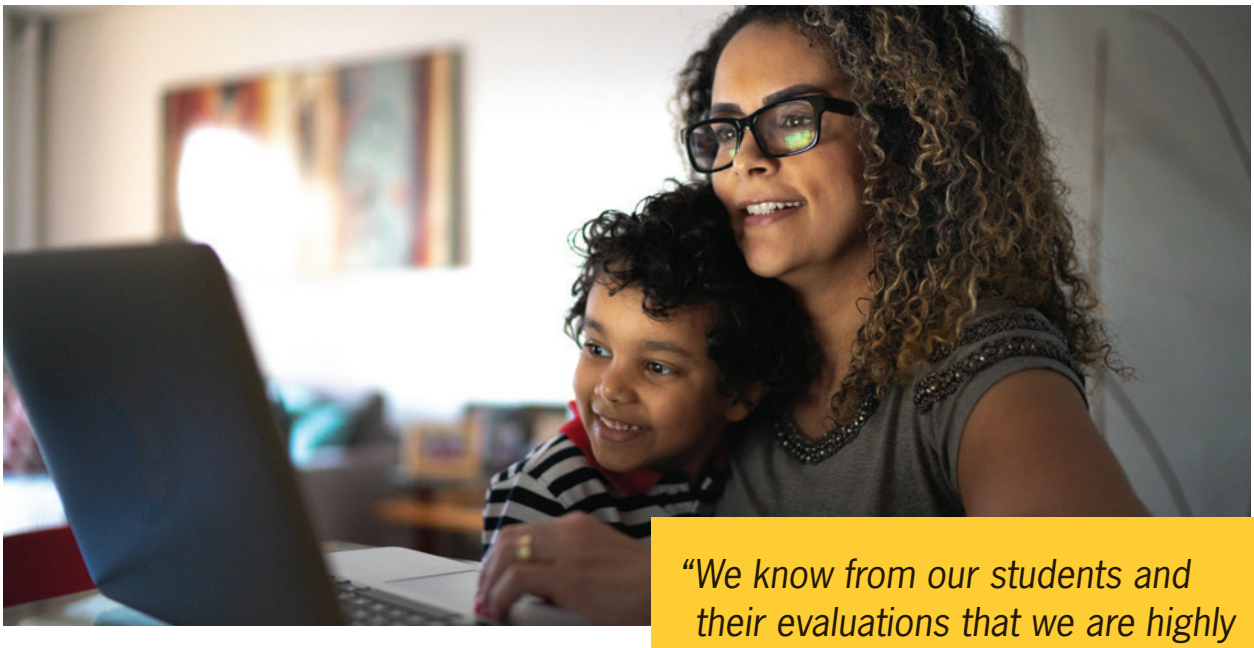
CORPORATE TRAINING STUDENTS

CAREER & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CREDIT REGISTRATIONS:

2020-2021 = **2,523**

MORE ALUMNI RETURNING TO CCE

New Financial Awards Support Enrolment



Trends in continuing education show that the University of Regina's alumni are returning to their alma mater and CCE for professional development in greater numbers and at a younger age. "We're seeing that people are coming back to learn earlier in their careers," says Christie Schultz, Director of CCE. "Grads are one of our key audiences."

Looking for ways to connect and serve this important audience of over 30,000 potential learners, CCE participated in an alumni engagement survey conducted this past year.

Michelle Mikkelsen, Program Coordinator for CCE's Career & Professional Development division, says the survey results were both informative and surprising. "We found out that the areas that our alumni were most interested in were Emotional Intelligence, Leading Change and Equity, Diversity and Inclusion. We also learned that their biggest challenge in learning is a lack of time. Fortunately, our online learning options can really help with that."

> *"We know from our students and their evaluations that we are highly regarded but to hear it from our own alumni means a lot."*
>
> **– MICHELLE MIKKELSEN**
> *Program Coordinator, Career & Professional Development*

For Mikkelsen, the surprise was in finding out that CCE's Professional Development was identified by alumni as one of the University's top strengths. "We know from our students and their evaluations that we are highly regarded but to hear it from our own alumni means a lot."

To further encourage alumni in their pursuit of career development, CCE also collaborated with the University's Alumni Association to create a Professional Development award. "Funds have been set aside and we are offering 50 awards of $500 each to alumni enrolled in CCE and registered in a professional development program," says Mikkelsen.

While CCE is built around the need for lifelong learning, it is clear they recognize the importance of lifelong relationships as well. "One of our most valued relationships is with our alumni," says Schultz, "and we'll continue to look for new ways to support them and help them achieve their goals."

STEPHANIE ROBB
Manager of Sales, Delivery & Events
Rebellion Brewing Co.

Professional Leadership Certificate
Career & Professional Development

"I was intimidated to have a full-time job and study, but I would do it all again. I learned so much, but one thing that really stands out to me is how important it is to apply different listening and communication skills to meet the needs of different individuals. This has helped me be a better manager and deliver better customer service. I already have my mind set on taking a public speaking course. I want to continue learning and growing."

THE ROAD TO MENTAL READINESS TAKES AN ONLINE DETOUR

Now more than ever it takes mental resiliency to be one of the more than 325,000 Canadian public safety personnel (PSP) on the front line. Paramedics, police and firefighters, among others, face trauma and crises on a daily basis that challenge their mental health.

"Mental resiliency skills in these careers are important elements in performance and well-being," says Rachel Werrett, Manager, Training & Development at the Canadian Institute for Public Safety Research & Treatment (CIPSRT-ICRTSP), a research unit located at the University of Regina. "This is why Road to Mental Readiness (R2MR) is one of the programs selected for training for PSP."

The R2MR program is comprised of a set of trainable mental competencies that underpin resilience and mental toughness meant to optimize performance and identify specific occupational stressors and demands and to mitigate their impact. The Road to Mental Readiness Program was originally developed by the Department of National Defence for Canadian Armed Forces personnel. It was introduced for PSP in 2018 via collaboration between the Department of National Defence and CIPSRT.

"CIPSRT is a knowledge translation hub. We take the latest research and clarify it for our end user to use. We translate that knowledge so that we can help PSP access tools to deal with operational stress injuries, Post-traumatic Stress and other traumatic injuries."

Prior to the pandemic, CIPSRT had received federal funding to create a 'Train the Trainer' program for R2MR, allowing them to broaden the community reach of the program. "Travel and gathering restrictions due to COVID halted that plan. Public Safety Personnel were called back to the front lines and there were no resources or means to send anyone anywhere for face-to-face training," recalls Werrett.

With face-to-face training no longer an option, the team at CIPSRT tried another tack. "We met with a variety of stakeholders including the federal government and the national training committee that is the voice of public safety personnel across Canada to talk about a different approach. Ultimately we received approval to take the funding and use it to convert our participant materials to a remote delivered, online format."

To develop these materials, Werrett helped to assemble a team that included learning design experts from CCE's Flexible Learning division. "They are the subject matter experts who were able to translate our content into engaging material that our end users can use. We don't have that skillset on our team and this was a great collaborative effort."

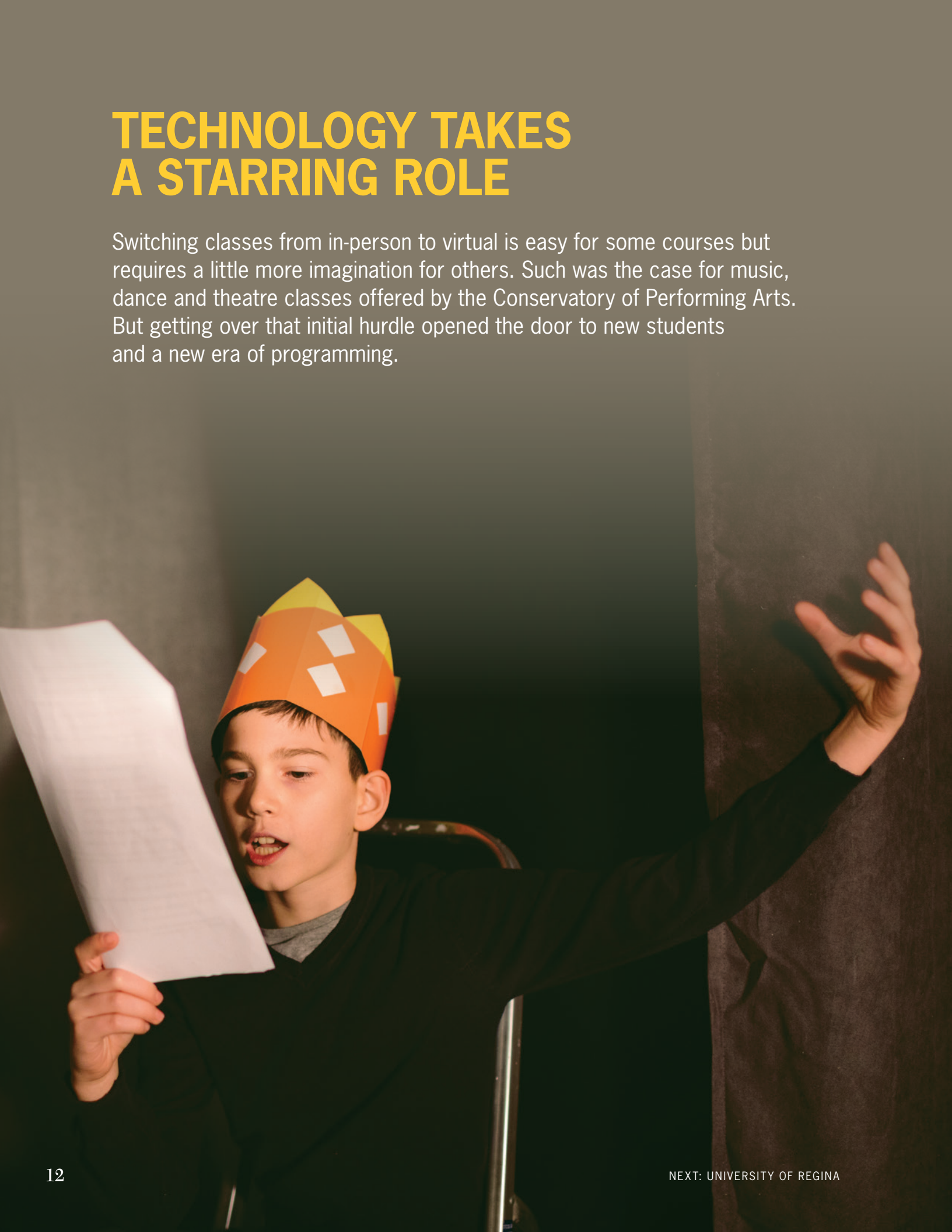
The team focused on ensuring that the online content would be as engaging as possible. "We've included interactive exercises, a personal learning journal, interactive PDFs and feedback activities to help participants and the trainers monitor progress. There are scenarios that allow participants to learn and practice their skills, as well as discussion forums and videos to elaborate concepts and make the learning relevant."

Now in the pilot stage, the course is comprised of six modules and is designed to support a variety of learning preferences including closed captioning of some videos for students that prefer to read content and asynchronous learning for those that like independent learning. "It features a video conferencing environment that has a face-to-face learning feel so that participants can share their experiences, discuss more in-depth scenarios, and learn how best to navigate the Road to Mental Readiness program," says Werrett.

For those on the front line, this program couldn't have come at a better time. Our public safety personnel are proportionately exposed to more mental health injuries and repeated traumatic experiences than the average citizen," says Werrett. "R2MR is something our team is very proud of and the fact that CCE prioritized this project allowed us to create something that we're very excited about."

TECHNOLOGY TAKES A STARRING ROLE

Switching classes from in-person to virtual is easy for some courses but requires a little more imagination for others. Such was the case for music, dance and theatre classes offered by the Conservatory of Performing Arts. But getting over that initial hurdle opened the door to new students and a new era of programming.



Erika Folnović, Program Coordinator for the Conservatory of Performing Arts, says there have been challenges associated with the pandemic but also definite advantages. "One of the benefits of having to hit reset is that it gave us a chance to take a closer look at what we were doing and to develop new ways of using technology to work remotely with teachers and students."

Last year, the Conservatory created the infrastructure to make the transition and this year used it as a springboard for launching a variety of new programs for learners of all ages. "In February of 2020, we developed a partnership with local Regina radio station 91.3 CJTR. The first class focused on helping kids create a podcast and the second was 'Radio 101' which focused on familiarizing kids with broadcasting," says Folnović. "They loved going into the radio studio."

That program morphed into a virtual world in the summer with students recording their podcasts at home using whatever technology was at hand. "Some kids were using their phones or a computer. We taught them how to edit their podcasts through screensharing on Zoom."

A second summer camp called "Radio Play 101" allowed students to write their own script or use a pre-existing script to perform in a five to ten minute dramatic production. "It was a real hit with the kids and it gave us another way to partner with CJTR," added Folnović.

For those students involved in the creation of videos, remote learning also proved to be a positive experience. "When we ran digital media courses on our campus, it wasn't practical to ask them and their families to bring their expensive equipment here. When they work at home, they learn how to tell a story using their ipad, computer webcam or phone and then we showed them how to edit their videos."

Of course, it's not just kids who are interested in the performing arts. "We're running theatre workshops for adults and we have a course called Acting 101 which is also being taught remotely. We record via Zoom and show each performer in the gallery view so you can see them interacting in the recordings. When we broadcast the final production, the bonus is that their families and friends can watch as well, no matter where they live. One of our students had family in South America and they were able to see them perform and talk to them live during the call."

In addition to allowing family and friends to tune in, teaching remotely has allowed students from a much larger geographic area to tap into the resources offered at the Conservatory. "We've had students from as far north as Prince Albert and Nunavut and as far south as Texas," notes Folnović.

For smaller rural communities, being able to access programs such as musical theatre represents a new opportunity. "Before, if there wasn't someone in your town interested in teaching musical theatre, it probably didn't exist. Now I hope that people are less intimidated by technology and that remote learning will help us continue to fill some of those gaps."

While the transition from in-person to online learning has not been without its bumps in the road, the journey has put the Conservatory on a fast track to the future. "This transition pushed us out of our comfort zone but I believe it has advanced us a good five to seven years into the future," says Folnović.

For the students, it has allowed them to continue to pursue opportunities they could never have imagined. "Seeing the smiles on the kids' faces at the end of a performance and the joy we were able to bring to the families' lives has made it all worthwhile."

VICTORIA BOURGET

Bachelor of Education in Secondary Education
Faculty of Education

"I have taken many flexible courses during the fall, winter and summer terms. I love the flexible courses that the U of R offers because I can work, see friends and family and travel (when safe to do so), all while taking classes. With flexible courses, you can take the class from anywhere, at whatever time of day works for you."

A FULL CIRCLE OF SUPPORT

Inspirational author Rick Warren once said: "While it is wise to learn from experience, it is wiser to learn from the experiences of others." That quote aptly describes the philosophy behind the Aboriginal Grandmothers Caring for Grandchildren Support Network, coordinated by CCE's Lifelong Learning Centre.

What started as a research project to explore health and social support needs by University of Regina faculty in 2004 has evolved into a monthly sharing, learning and supportive environment for grandmothers who have taken on the role of primary caregivers for grandchildren and other extended family members.

Hertha Kay, Outreach Program Assistant in the Lifelong Learning Centre, says the group has grown primarily through word-of-mouth and offers an engaging way of addressing concerns and issues. "The Grandmothers share their personal experiences and knowledge and we also bring in speakers from community agencies to talk about health and well-being, financial matters and traditional teachings."

In turn, some of the participants share their knowledge in a broader way by making presentations about their experiences to social work students as well as to children's advocacy groups and government agencies. This past June, some of the Grandmothers made presentations as part of the Indigenous History Month Celebration series. "These presentations were well-received and we will be working with the Grandmothers to plan another series for next June," notes Kay.

Kay anticipates interest and participation will continue to grow. "It was a growing need before the pandemic because we kept getting more grandmothers at a younger age coming in. The pandemic has kept away some of the older participants who weren't as comfortable using a computer but we're hopeful they'll return when we're able to resume in-person meetings."

For the participants, the experience that the network provides is an affirming one. "The best part is sharing in the talking circles," says one of the Grandmothers. "When other people tell their stories I remember that the same thing happened to me and I realize that I am not the only one."

ACCELERATING THE LEARNING CURVE

Newcomers Adapt to Online Learning

When people have taken the bold step of leaving their home country and emigrating to Canada, there's probably not much that will stand in their way. However, for students in CCE's Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program, it's easy to imagine that a shift from in-person to online instruction might have presented an insurmountable obstacle.

NEXT: UNIVERSITY OF REGINA

"Most of our students, as newcomers to Canada, need computer literacy training," says Koroush Khandehroo, LINC Co-ordinator & Lead Instructor. "This was not originally part of the program but now we know we have to teach it."

LINC, which is fully funded by Immigration Refugees and Citizenship Canada, focuses on 12 learning themes. "We do a needs assessment with our student groups to determine their interests and needs and then select the themes for that class. One of the new topics is definitely technology. Our instructors have developed modules that talk about how to navigate websites, how to find information and how to participate in our Zoom classes."

With an early emphasis on digital literacy, students have become adept at navigating the realm of online learning. "The learning curve was definitely accelerated," says Khandehroo, "because there really was no other option if they wanted to attend the classes."

And, while a return to in-person learning may be on the horizon, a recent survey suggests that students have adapted well to the virtual classroom. "Our attendance rate is higher than it's ever been and when asked, 79% of our students wanted classes to continue online."

The switch to remote learning has prompted another unforeseen result. "In the past, we had students who were 55-60 years old. Now we're seeing more students in the 30-35 year old age category. I think it's because this format allows students the flexibility to work or care for their families and still participate," adds Khandehroo. "In the future we'll likely offer blended classes so they benefit from the best of both worlds."

Demand for language skills and assistance integrating into Canadian culture has grown throughout Saskatchewan, prompting a new stream of provincial LINC classes. "There are students in rural areas who aren't close to a publicly-funded service provider and some who are on the wait-list to get into a LINC class. This pilot project is focused on remote learning to ensure better accessibility. Students in this program are mainly from Saskatoon and other rural communities."

Whether courses are conducted face-to-face or online, for Khandehroo the reward remains the same. "My favourite part is meeting so many different people from so many different backgrounds. When they share their stories, we all learn something new together."

"I was a teacher in Bangladesh and I had learned about Canada in high school. When my son was growing up I knew we needed to move to another country and thought Canada was best for me.

I know Canada has only two languages—English and French. If I live here, I need to know English. I need to write and read. I like LINC class because the teacher helps me understand more and more and makes it clear. He's a good teacher and always encourages me.

My dream work is to get back to teaching. For me and my family, our life is almost perfect."

NASIMA AKTER

Student, Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)

VANESSA OWEN
Brew Manager
Rebellion Brewing Co.

Project Management Certificate
Career & Professional Development

"It was great learning from instructors with such a wealth of real-world experience to share with students. It helped us connect with them and what they were teaching. I liked being able to take the program remotely at home because it made managing my time between work and my courses easier than if I had to go in person."

JANUARY 2022

KNOW MORE.
DO MORE.

VISION

Expanding possibilities, strengthening communities.

MISSION

The mission of the Centre for Continuing Education is to meet lifelong learning needs by offering high quality, accessible, innovative and responsive education and training programs to learners of all ages by building on the strengths and collaborating with the resources of the University and the community.

University of Regina | Centre for Continuing Education

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