Best of luck to all students with their exams
&
Happy Holidays to all students who celebrate!

Teacher's Spotlight: Enrico Qulico

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Please recycle when you're finished with it.

The True North Strong... and Free?

Julianne Cairns

Have an opinion on this topic that would like to share? Send us an e-mail and we may publish your thoughts in the next issue!

E: tjdc@tav.ca

TAV College English and Humanities teacher Gary Cymbalist teaching a class.

Exam Season: 9 Ways to De-Stress on a Student Budget

1. Reading
The last thing a student wants to do after weeks of flipping through pages of textbooks is pick up another book by their own free will, however, studies show this may be exactly what they should do. Studies performed by neuropsychologist Dr. David Lewis and reported by The Telegraph, indicate that reading is one of the fastest ways to distract the mind and allow the heart and muscles to relax. Just over five minutes of reading can reduce stress levels by sixty-eight percent, making it one of the most efficient (and cheap) ways to de-stress.

2. Creative Outlets – Drawing, Sketching, Writing
Art therapy and other creative outlets such as drawing, sketching and writing only require a pencil and paper, making it one of the cheaper methods for students on a budget to relieve anxiety. Art therapy is a method used in schools and rehabilitation centers across the world and is a great method for allowing the mind to wander from the stresses of student life.

3. Music
For many students, music is already an integral part of their lives. For the purpose of relaxing, however, blasting trap music may not be key. "Soothing" music doesn't have to be limited to classical music or lullabies, in fact, there is a song called "Weightless" by Marconi Union engineered to reduce anxiety, leading to a reduction in heart rate and blood pressure.

4. D.I.Y. Spa Day – Korean Face Masks and Eye Masks
Spas can be expensive, especially in Montreal. A thrifty, but effective alternative is turning to your own kitchen for the spa experience. Perhaps not as luxurious, however, many simple spa treatments can be replicated at home. If you're feeling fancy, the Face Shop sells Korean face masks for under five dollars. To reduce the dark circles that form under your eyes after an all-nighter. Apply chilled cucumber slices and coconut oil regularly, avoiding contact with the eyes, to achieve the "only-slightly-sleep-deprived" look.

5. Scents, Candles, Incense and Essential Oils
Most things that appeal to the senses can aid in relaxation, and your sense of smell is no exception. Try dabbing a few drops of lavender, eucalyptus, jasmine, or peppermint oil on your pillow to instantly transform your room into the ultimate relaxation environment. Scented candles and incense are also great and inexpensive ways to use your sense of smell to de-stress.

6. Physical activity – Exercise, sports, and stretching
One of the many benefits of physical activity is that it can relieve stress. Physical activity leads to the release of chemicals in the brain called endorphins. The release of endorphins results in better sleep, which is essential for keeping stress levels low.

7. Meditation – Free apps
Quieting your mind is harder than it looks. Luckily, there is a range of free apps, like Headspace, that offer guided meditation, giving college students a chance to forget what an "R-score" is, even if only for a few moments.

8. Connection
Humans are social creatures. Social connections promote mental health and ease loneliness, which can also reduce anxiety. Amidst all the studying and exam prep, don't forget to stop once in while and reach out to friends or family for some face-to-face interactions.

9. Health – Mental and Physical; Sleep and Nutrition
No matter how many relaxing playlists you listen to, or how many cucumbers you apply, if you aren't getting a full night's sleep and proper nutrition, your anxiety levels will inevitably be harder to regulate. Ensuring proper levels of mental and physical health is the first step to promoting a less stressful lifestyle. Proper nutrition and adequate sleep are the fundamentals of a healthy mind and body. Try to steer clear of the artificially flavoured ramen for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

Julianne Cairns

With over a month since the CAQ was elected into majority government, Quebecers have come together to express their concerns over the party's plans to ban religious symbols for public servants.

The idea of banning religious symbols in Quebec is not a new one. In 2013, the Parti Quebecois introduced Bill 60, otherwise known as the Charter of Quebec Values. Had the bill been passed, public employees would be prohibited from wearing "conspicuous" religious symbols on the job. On the Charter of Quebec Values website, which is no longer available, the party classed turbans, hijabs, burkas, kippahs and certain crosses as conspicuous religious symbols to be included in the ban. Adding insult to injury, the website also presented less obvious alternatives to these religious symbols, including a Star of David ring, a pair of star and crescent moon earrings, and a small cross necklace. The ban eventually died on paper in 2014, but has re-emerged in 2018 under the Francois Legault's administration.

Similar to Bill 60, the CAQ's proposed law would target public employees holding a position of authority in Quebec. Legault has expressed his confidence in the law by communicating his willingness to use the notwithstanding clause if necessary, against the advice of Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. "Notwithstanding" is a clause clearly laid out in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, section 33, available to all on the Government of Canada's website. Section 33 states,

"Parliament or the legislature of a province may expressly declare in an Act of Parliament or of the legislature, as the case may be, that the Act or a provision thereof shall operate notwithstanding a provision included in section 2 or sections 7 to 15 of this Charter."

This essentially gives provincial legislature the power to ignore the section of the Charter aimed at protecting Canadians' fundamental freedoms, such as section 2. This would allow the Quebec government to enforce the law, regardless if it respects the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, or not.

The ban of religious symbols could directly threaten the fundmental freedoms of Canadians, namely the freedom of religion and expression. In an interesting turn last month, premier Legault explained to reporters at the Francophonie summit, held in Armenia, why the crucifix in the legislature would not be included in the ban. A quote from the CBC regarding his reasoning on this issue included, "In our past we had Protestants and Catholics. They built the values we have in Quebec. We have to recognize that and not mix that with religious signs." The premier made no mention and gave no credit to non-Christian groups for the building of Quebec values, completely ignoring the contribution of indigenous peoples, and countless other cohorts of immigrants of various ethnic backgrounds who have contributed greatly to Quebecois culture over the course of the province's history. We musn't forget that it was a large majority of immigrant workers who were responsible for building our first transcontinental railway in 1881, among many other things in this province. However, this blatant disregard for the contributions of minority groups is certainly nothing new to Quebecers with the proposition made by Pauline Marois just a few years ago, yet it is no less disheartening.

Should this ban proceed, teachers, nurses, doctors, police officers, firefighters and many other public servants may have to choose between their careers and aspects of their faith – a tough choice for Canadians accustomed to having their freedoms and rights respected and protected.

Protecting the fundamental freedom of expression and religion is in itself preserving Canadian values. To limit Canadians' abilities to express themselves and exercise their rights to freedom of religion is to throw away a part of what makes us Canadians – tolerance.

TRUE NORTH STRONG... AND FREE?

JULIANNE CAIRNS

Graphics by Justin Hand-Gregory

French Language Police

Religious Symbols Police

Whatever We Want Police

The Halo: Should it return to F1 racing next year?

Giuliano Di Saulo

For those who aren't familiar with Formula 1 racing, the "Halo" system is a device that the FIA (Fédération Internationale de l'Automobile) voted to officially have installed on top of every current F1 car's cockpit (where the pilot of an open-wheel car sits). This decision was made in order to improve the drivers' safety. The aesthetic appeal of an F1 vehicle, without the Halo device is what the majority of F1 racing fans have been detesting for years. Simply put: It's ugly. Also, it ruins the classic (we can now officially call it "vintage") F1 look. However, the "look" was not my major concern, rather, how unnecessary the device is. However, yes, I would agree that it also ruined the look, so I wasn't too fond of it.

The alternative option that the FIA was considering was a screen shield, which, if you were to ask me, is even one thousand times more ugly and completely ruins one of the largest components of the sport: Visual appeal. Also, it should be mentioned that the Halo, could be a major concern as it could decrease the drivers' visibility, which is a topic that many fans of the sport voiced their opinions on.

The concept of the Halo system was born on August 26, 2012, in Belgium. On a notorious turn frequent-ly titled "La Source" in the Spa-Francorchamps circuit track, French driver Romain Grosjean's illegally drove into another driver, causing a multi-vehicle pile-up at the start of the 2012 Grand Prix, resulting in a rare "one-race" ban. At the start of the 2018 Grand Prix, German F1 driver Nico Hülkenberg's brakes locked-up springing him forward into the rear of Spaniard legend Fernando Alonso's car, which then sent him flying on top of Monégasque driver Charles Leclerc. It was reported that Nico Hülkenberg admitted to being at fault for the crash. Leclerc then posted to Instagram stating that he "never was a fan of the Halo, but was happy to have it over him that day.".

One of the largest incidents that caused the safety demand for the Halo system was an incident in 2014 involving F1 driver Jules Bianchi. Bianchi collided with the rear of a tractor crane upon losing control of his vehicles. However, it is theorized that the Halo system would not have saved his life. Belgian-Dutch star-driver Max Verstappen disagreed with the FIA's decision for the Halo saying that it would be extremely rare for a vehicle to hit or fall on the driver's head, if a car would ever land on top of another.

Recently, during the first lap of the final Grand Prix 2018 in Abu Dhabi, there was a major incident, caused a second time by Nico Hülkenberg, that shocked viewers. Hülkenberg turned too fast knocking into Romain Grosjean, causing his vehicle to flip over once twice, eventually landing into a barrier. What would have happened without the Halo system? The car would have to rely on the top portion of its frame if ever it landed upside down. Thankfully, the seat and seat belts in an F1 vehicle are designed to secure the driver in an event where the car would be upside down.

Disagree with Giuliano's article? Send us your thoughts: tjdc@tav.ca

In the Spotlight:

What are TAV Teachers up to on Their Spare Time?

Propa Alam & Giuliano Di Saulo

This issue's teacher:
Enrico Quilico

Enrico Quilico is not your average teacher. He is not only an inspiring individual and a workaholic, but he is also a disciplined athlete.

In 2016, Enrico took part in the Ironman triathlon. This race is an extreme, world renowned racing franchise that takes place in various locations each year, followed by a World Championship. The "Ironman" is one of several long distance triathlon races organized by the World Triathlon Corporation. The particular race that Enrico participated in consisted of a three-point-eight kilometer swim, followed by a one-hundred-eighty kilometer bike ride, finishing with a forty-two kilometer run. In total, Quilico conquered over two-hundred-twenty-five kilometers of terrain.

Enrico has been participating in marathons for the past ten years. He has ran one full Ironman, as well as other various Olympic distance triathlons. As a whole, he has participated in over twenty triathlons over the past ten years and is extremely passionate about the races. For Quilico, the races are an integral component not only for his physical health, but also, for his career as both a teacher and a doctoral candidate. He believes the races teach him unequivocal discipline and the demonstration of achieving a goal through hard work. Quilico then applies the same strategies to teaching that he does to training and running races. However, he wasn't always this way.

During his youth, he was not very active, competitive or athletic. After high school, Enrico suffered a life threatening accident while riding his motorcycle on the highway at the age of twenty-three. The accident resulted in a traumatic brain injury and put him in a coma for nearly two weeks. However, he pulled through and recovered. After spending two months in the hospital, Quilico then spent two years in rehabilitation. It was in the rehabilitation department where actually had to relearn how to walk, talk, and speak again. This near death experience was a "wake-up call" for him and also where he fostered a new outlook on life. He grew motivation to return to school, as well as started taking his physical health more seriously. In 2008, Quilico participated in his first sprint triathlon and fell in love. From here, he set the goal of completing a full triathlon. In 2016, in recognition of ten years after his accident, Quilico set the goal and completed his first Ironman triathlon; His proudest achievement. He was also able to raise over $10,000 for Brain Injury Canada, a post-trauma research foundation based in Ottawa. Recently, he has participated in the half Ironman, which took place in Montreal last September.

According to Quilico, his greatest athletic accomplishment is undoubtedly his participation in the Ironman races. He stated that the 2016 triathlon was the "high point" of his life as he completed the Ironman in just twelve hours. The race is restricted to a seventeen hour maximum time limit. Also, in 2011, he won a national prize in the eight-hundred meter swim at the Master Swimming Canada competition, which also included a gold medal.

Enrico re-enrolled at Concordia University in 2012, eventually earning a Bachelor of Education degree. Then, in 2015, he earned a (research-based) Master's degree from McGill University in Kinesiology. He is also a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Toronto where his dissertation revolves around the research of community-based exercise programs for people who suffered from traumatic brain injuries. His research is being supported by the federal and provincial government.

Finally, he found TAV College. First employed as a part-time fitness instructor, Quilico quickly came to assume more responsibilities and was eventually brought on as an English teacher at TAV. Aside from his academic life, he is a personal trainer at the downtown YMCA and runs an adapted physical activity program for people who have had traumatic brain injuries. Further, he assists the intellectually disabled and others with post-traumatic brain injuries as a small way to give back. He also holds seminars with teens at the gym about the advantages of a healthy lifestyle. This teacher indefinitely has a story not only worth telling, but one that we can all learn from.

Is Mental Illness a Social Taboo?

Propa Alam

Do people take mental illnesses seriously? A mental illness is a health condition involving changes in thinking, emotions or behaviors, it could also be a combination of the three. The most common mental illness in North America is anxiety disorder. The disorder is primarily composed of panic and phobias. People who are affected by mental illnesses either manage to recover, or are capable of living with it, however seek occasional, professional help. However, until recently, the issue surrounding mental illness is that it has been depicted by the media as something to be ashamed of, proving that it is stigmatized in general.

According to a study, "internalized discrimination" is a process where people who are affected by mental illnesses raise the stereotypes about mental health issues against themselves and is directly endorsed by society. Being discriminated in general has a major impact on one's self-esteem and overall confidence. People with mental illnesses believe that they are not valued. They are regularly discriminated, tend to feel isolated within society and are likely to meet socially separate. The Queensland Alliance for Mental Health stated that people with a mental illness are often depicted as violent and abrupt by the media. However, Mental Health UK made a good point in stating that the people who are affected by mental illness are more at risk of harming themselves than harming anyone else.

Corporations and celebrities are excellent examples of ways in which the social movement around mental illnesses are finally becoming less taboo. Bell Canada, for example, initiated a campaign assistance program known as "Bell Let's Talk" to promote awareness on this topic and to diminish the stigmatization. The campaign allows people to share their story, experience and struggles with mental illnesses. Howie Mandel, a Canadian comedian and television host, has become Bell Let's Talk's main ambassador and speaks openly about dealing with OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder), which falls under the broad category of anxiety disorders. In 2009, Mandel released a funny, yet genuine autobiography entitled "Here's the Deal: Don't Touch Me." In the autobiography, Mandel opened up about his personal struggle with OCD, as well as ADHD and how much of an impact these mental illnesses had on his life.

Celebrities such as Howie Mandel voicing their illness, and corporate campaigns such as Bell Let's Talk" can be seen as progressive examples in the fight to end the social taboo of mental illness in North American society.

TAV 3D

TAV has began a small, private 3D printing project that is open to all students. 3D printing is an up-and-coming technology that is gradually innovating many industries on a global scale; Do I dare say, it may even change the world.

The new technology works by sending a detailed, schematic model rendering to the 3D printer's computer. From here, the computer begins to slowly, layer-by-layer "print" the model it was sent. The printer uses a roll of thin plastic wiring that is fed to the printing arm and carefully heated to a specific temperature so as to be pushed outward through the printing pen and onto a surface where the model is created. Printing a small 3D model can take anywhere from one to forty plus hours to complete, depending on how detailed the model rendering is.

3D printing is virtually endless and its capabilities are limitless to the imagination of the creator. With that being said, TAV's 3D Print Project is opening up their doors to any TAV student who is interested in printing something. Be it for creative, academic, or simple curiosity purposes, the college is offering the 3D printing of small objects for free! You are able to print in any color you wish. The only limitations are: Size and discretion. As this is an academic institution, we ask that no one sends 3D print models of anything inappropriate. Also, you will not be able to print anything larger than six inches high, by 6 inches wide.

We invite you to explore www.thingiverse.com to discover unique and interesting 3D print models. To send a print request, contact Elie Saadé on Omnivox. Open to currently enrolled, TAV College students only. You are required to provide your TAV student ID number with your request.

Justin Hand-Gregory
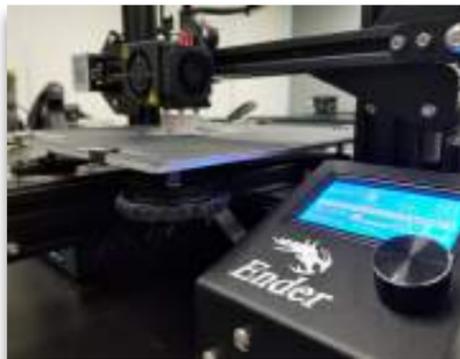
One of TAV's three 3D printers.
Photos by Justin Hand-Gregory

Some objects created using TAV's 3D printer.

A close-up photo of a purple skull created using a 3D printer.

What is
Graphic Design ?

Justin Hand-Gregory

I was recently talking with a friend about my graphic design work and after the ten-to-fifteen-minute conversation we had, he then stated "I'm not even really sure what graphic design is." I of course laughed at the fact that he respectfully endured my lecture about a topic he was completely oblivious to. Nonetheless, this humorous situation laid the foundation for the topic of this article: What actually is graphic design?

Graphic design is one of those things that we all sort of have an idea of, or a general concept of what it is, however, for the majority of the time, no one can truly describe what it is. It is like Einstein's E=MC2 equation, or how a computer operates: We know the general idea of these things, however, ask us to explain or elaborate on them and our brains become "blank screens." However, have no fear, I am here - to explain what this mysterious, daunting, abstract term means and also, how you could easily apply some of its basic principles to your life.

The easiest way to explain what graphic design is-is to use the four general principles first coined by writer Robin Williams (not the actor): CRAP. C.R.A.P. is the acronym for contrast, repetition, alignment and proximity. Much can be said about each of the principles, however, as this is a short and sweet introduction, only the larger, more significant ideas will be presented. It should also be noted that this is a paraphrased version of the original author's work.

C - Contrast is extremely important for aesthetic and mental comprehension. When two or more colors compliment each other, we call this having "good contrast." For example, the colors dark grey and yellow go well together, or white and black. However, the most common mistake that many people make when presenting information is the lack of attention to the contrast principle. You would be surprised at just how quickly bad contrast can throw off your eyes and by extension your mind. The inability to read text because, for example, the font color is purple and the background is red, creates a major visual inconvenience for your audience. Bad contrast and color choice is seen time and time again in school or work presentations, websites, even company logos! However, it is a small, yet very powerful added touch that can bring the information you are presenting to a step just above the rest. If you would like more information or additional examples of contrast, I invite you to visit this link: https://blog.slideshare.net/2014/03/17/how-to-use-colors-in-presentations

R - The principle for repetition in the most basic of explanations is: If you do something in one place, this must be repeated throughout. In other words, if you use Arial font for the title on a page, you should use Arial font for all of the titles and subtitles on the page. Howev-

er there is an exception to this font principle, which is: Complimentary fonts. If you use a modern font for the title, you may use a classical font for the content, or vice versa. In general, this principle should apply to all aspects of whatever you are creating: Images, fonts, colors, and style. When a medium has a defined style, it is significantly easier to retrieve information from it because the medium has repeated aspects. However, if the medium were to constantly change, your brain is in a constant state of flux trying to process the differences. To elaborate, a concise example may be of assistance: If you are creating a ten page proposal and you use an orange background with a photo on the first page, and Helvetica font, in the subsequent pages, all of these aspects should be repeated to establish coherence.

A - Alignment is simply ensuring that all of the contents of the presented information follow repeated spacing. In other words, if you align the title of a paragraph to the left, but you align the paragraph itself to the right, this would immediately throw off your audience or reader. Also, alignment could establish certain connotations to the contents. For example, in English writing, centered alignment establishes emphasis, left alignment establishes structure and normality, and right alignment establishes obscurity and abnormality. These could be manipulated depending on the feeling you want to convey with the information.

P - Proximity is the space between content. An easy example to visualize this is the margins in a document. If you were set the margins of a document to "0", not only would it print incorrectly, but again, your eyes would be immediately thrown off. Proximity is arguably the most difficult to manipulate as it doesn't always come naturally. Also, proximity is often what graphic designers "play with" the most when designing concepts. Many minor aspects fall under the category of proximity from the space between the characters of text, to the space between a paragraph and a related image.

I'm not sure if you noticed, but one of the most redundant sentences I used in this article is "throws off your eyes" because this is exactly what graphic designers work with and manipulate. Graphic design is simply taking information and displaying it in an intelligent and aesthetically pleasing manner as to allow for faster and more efficient comprehension. You have graphic designers to thank for massive amounts of visually comprehensive phenomena around you at almost every moment and most people aren't even aware of this. However, in following the basic principles outlined in this article, you should now be able to act as a graphic designer and drastically change the presentation of information should this ever be demanded of you. Nonetheless, you now have a basic understanding of this rather unfamiliar term "graphic design."

The Library of Babel

Eden Autmezguine

Zeina (center-back) poses with TAV's Digital Marketing class taught by Zoonie Nguyen (center).

Bishal Pandey, Stephanie Revah & Eden Autmezguine

Zeina Gharzouzi recently gave a short seminar on personal branding to the TAV College digital marketing class taught by Zoonie Nguyen on November 8, 2018. Zeina is currently the Senior Account Manager - Enterprise Solutions for SOTI (a mobile device and enterprise mobility management corporation based in Ontario). She is also a decorated member of the LinkedIn online network, as well as a successful entrepreneur and public speaker. Zeina offers some excellent tips for personal branding in this rather short, but sweet (paraphrased) interview.

How could a student with minimal experience build their "personal brand" to become a valuable asset to potential employers?

The first thing is that every student needs to know what their "self brand" is about: What makes them different? And, what will actually make them "stick" in the market. This could be discovered by asking some of the following questions to: What type of environment do you thrive in? What can you bring to the table? Who are you? If a student doesn't know who they are as an individual, they will never be able to discover their strongest asset(s) in life. The biggest issue regarding youth as they move ahead in life is that if you ask them questions such as, who they are, what they want, and what they love, they will almost never have a concrete answers. Therefore, a student must assess what their strongest abilities are and if they don't know, they should attempt to find out. Your defining asset, or the thing that sets you apart can be anything! Everyone has unique, special, and individual qualities, that if worked on, could be translated into an extremely valuable asset for potential em-

ployers, as well as your community. So, I ask you to reflect: What sets you apart?

How can you develop a personal brand that is valuable, yet remains genuine to the individual?

Start with your parents, relatives, teachers, or your friends. Ask these people what they like about you and what are the good things about you. This will help in defining the "real you." The aspects that define you are what makes you unique and stand out. Therefore, discover your personal elements and start to expand on them. "I tell students: Don't learn to be fascinating, unlearn to be boring." What are you already doing naturally, but your attention has not been brought to it? For example, if reading books is what differentiates you, then simply read more books! Develop your writing skills, storytelling and analyzing skills. These could be the elements that may one day lead to a career. Learning should be a constant throughout your life and with that being said, you never know what you will discover that extends your established knowledge, or grants access to new information that excels your career and individual brand.

In terms of human resources, which aspects of an individual does a corporation seek in comparison to someone with extensive experience and someone with minimal?

Your attitude is everything. Attitude and energy in the interview can make or break it. Interviewers want to see a light in your eyes. A simple reaction to what they are saying, or asking questions shows curiosity, which in turn demonstrates desire and ambition. They want to see the "gears turning" when they are speaking to you and most importantly, they want to see that you are coachable and open to criticism. If you are coachable and have a good attitude, this tells

the interviewer that you can learn anything.

Once an individual has acquired legitimate experiences, how would this person go about presenting these experiences on a social network such as LinkedIn?

Aside from the obvious, which is to add any and all experiences to your LinkedIn profile, a great starting point is to showcase your breadth of knowledge in the industry as well as your constant curiosity for innovation and adaptation. Look at what some of the top companies are doing really well and comment on this. For example, if you are in marketing and Bombardier comes up with a great marketing campaign, mention this on LinkedIn and give them a public " k u d o s . "

Can you recommend any additional assets that a student could immerse themselves in, non-academically, during their studies that would be of significant value to an employer?

It would always be networking. There are always events going on with "Eventbrite," or getting invites on Facebook. If you know anyone in college or at work who is attending or knows of a networking event, ask them if you could tag along. Always try to be introduced to new and different people and be exposed to different people. You never know who's hand you are shaking.

HOW TO BE VALUABLE TO AN EMPLOYER:

Five tips from Zeina

Photo: Pieter Brueghel the Elder. Redesigned by: Justin Hand-Gregory

If you give a monkey a typewriter, and leave it for a million years, will it eventually bang out a word-for word copy of Shakespeare's Macbeth? From a purely mathematical point of view, the answer is yes, given either an infinite amount of time or an infinite amount of monkeys. Jorge Luis Borges, an Argentinean writer, was inspired by this idea. He wrote a short story called "The Library of Babel", where he imagined a vast library that would contain every possible permutation of the alphabet and some punctuation marks. In addition to almost endless amounts of unintelligible gibberish, it would have everything ever written- from Shakespeare to scientific articles- as well as everything that can possibly be written. Nothing is new; anything you come up with, no matter how random, already exists somewhere and has been there all along. Intrigued by this concept, computer programmer and author Jonathan Basile set out to create a digital version of the library. I spoke to him for the chance to find out a little more.

I think the concept of the Library is a really fascinating one, but it can be a little hard to grasp. Can you explain what the Library of Babel is?

Sure. I first encountered the idea in a short story by Jorge Louis Borges, an Argentinean writer. The idea, as it occurs in his story, is that you have a library that would have every possible permutation of a basic character set. He described 22 letters, in addition to the space, comma and period, as being enough to express all the things that it is possible to express. With every possible 410-page book, you would have a library that contained everything that had been written and everything that could be written, ranging from things we consider masterpieces, like Shakespeare, to things that we haven't discovered yet, like the cure for diseases. Everything like that would be there, but it would be impossible for us to find because it would be drowned out by endless amounts of texts that are completely unintelligible.

You've created a website based on the short story. How does it differ from the library described in the short story?

My goal was more or less to recreate the short story in the form of a website. I had to make some concessions to the form of the internet. The website, as it stands right now, has every possible permutation of the twenty-six lowercase letters of the English alphabet, as well as the space, comma, and period. It has every single possible page, not every single possible combination of those pages in the form of a book. I used the same proportions as Borges did, so one page of text in the library has 3200 characters, 40 lines, and 80 characters per line. So it's just a matter of mak-

ing the computation happen quickly enough.

How does that work, exactly?

The number of pages that are possible to encounter on the website is greater than the number of atoms in the universe! So it would be impossible to store those on disc. The website actually uses a relatively simple algorithm to generate pages. Every page of text has a locating number, which is essentially the URL of that page. The locating number is the input of a random number generator that produces the page of text that you're looking for. So every time you go to a URL you'll find the same page of text there. Right now, there's a discreet URL for every possible page of text.

So the website doesn't contain every possible book, but it contains every possible page, correct?

Yes.

How many pages would that be?

About 10^4680.

How many books would you have if you chose to compute every possible combination of those pages?

Well, it depends on how many pages there are in a book. If you gave the proportions that Borges imagined for his library, which was 410-page books, the number of books is around 10^1000000. How long did it take you to create the website? About six months altogether. I made an early version that took about three months and the current version took about three more months.

What were some challenges you faced when working on the website?

Well, I didn't expect that it would end up working at all! I didn't know much about programming when I started out, and most of the advice I got from people who knew more about programming were things like "Why would you do that", "That's impossible" and "You'll never be able to do it". So I was operating without a lot of guidance. With a combination of sticking to it and just asking for more help when I needed it, I managed to ultimately get something that worked.

Did you learn anything new while you were at it?

I definitely got a more accurate sense of the magnitude of what Borges is imagining. When I started the project I thought that you would, if you went through the pages every now and then, maybe find a couple of words on it, but that's a very unrealistic expectation.

Are there no limits to language? Can you find anything in any language, as long as you know how to interpret the way it's written?

There are a lot of different ways of looking at that. Borges writes that it contains everything possible to express in all languages. So it is possible to translate or transliterate any text in any language, or even treat it as a cryptographical puzzle in order to convert it into the alphabet that the Library uses.

Has anything changed now that we have access to the things contained in the Library?

I don't think that the Library gives access to any more or less of the things that we had access to before. It's not a functional compendium of all possible knowledge, because you find even less typically than you would in a normal library.

What do you think the importance of the Library of Babel is?

I think it's more of an opportunity to reflect on the nature of language than it is a way to compile existing data. It's not a very practical way to try to do things, like finding the cure to diseases, but I think it's a way to think differently about the nature of language and our relationship to it. We tend to think of language- of all the things that we say, and the things that people say- as spontaneous ideas that we are generating out of our free will. But one of the things this story reminds us of is that in order for ideas to be communicable at all, they have to be able to fit a communicable form of language. So, in a certain sense, they have always existed wherever we imagine that spontaneity and that spark of free will. What appears in our frame of reference to be a form of invention and self-creation is actually a discovery of things that are pre-formed and ready-made.

So anything that people say, or write, including this interview, are rearrangements of things that already exist?

That would be one way of looking at it.

You can explore the library on your own at www.libraryofbabel.info.

Some College Tips for University Preparation from a TAV Graduate

Tzvi Harrison, Contributor

Learning vital skills required for University and future job prospects is a fundamental aspect of education. We are constantly being prepared and equipped for the next stage of our lives. For me, Cegep was a place to cultivate the ideas I had for my own future. It taught me a variety of skills and topics that I find myself now using almost everyday in university, the most important of which is undoubtedly, essay writing. Aside from term papers, my university classes contain many multiple-choice exams. The issue with standardized testing, however, is that it is based almost entirely on short term memory capabilities, whereas essays deal with a deeper understanding of the underlying concepts discussed throughout lectures. The courses I took at TAV had a large focus on essays with very few multiple-choice examinations. This taught me how to understand material, instead of memorizing it, which is proving to be the most

effective way to retain knowledge.

If I could speak to my past self, I would probably suggest focusing less on simply getting my college diploma and worrying about "R-Score" and instead, focus on what really matters: Learning how to properly comprehend any given topic, and find ways to make it as meaningful as possible. The most important thing I realized from speaking with any teacher was that it is much easier to learn when you are passionate about what it is you're being taught. Finding a path is not so much about discovering what you are good at, but what interests you and can bring you closer to your desired future goal.

Another thing that I would tell myself is that an important part of Cegep is taking courses that span a variety of topics. Electives are not designed to fill your schedule, for me, they are a way to broaden my horizons and learn many things that may lead to fields of interest that I had no

idea about. These courses taught me topics, skills, artforms and disciplines that I constantly use to construct essays, build thesis arguments and cultivate my own perceptions of things I never would have had an interest in, prior to taking these courses.

Looking back, there is very little that I would change from my TAV experience. I learned a lot of useful skills, met many interesting people, discovered leadership methods by working on group projects and most importantly, made sure to always keep things positive because when learning becomes a burden, very little of what is taught gets retained.

AN INFOGRAPHIC OF TAV COLLEGE STUDENTS

TAV STUDENTS BY AGE

- 31 – 40 Years Old: 316
- 7 – 20 Years Old: 404
- 26 – 30 Years Old: 162
- 21 – 25 Years Old: 130

TAV STUDENTS PER PROGRAM

- DEC: 479
- AEC: 533

TAV STUDENTS BY GENDER

- 258 MALE
- 754 FEMALE

*Data was not collected for non-binary individuals.

2018 – 2019
1,012 STUDENTS
110 COUNTRIES

TAV STUDENTS BY COUNTRY

Map: TAV Students by Country

- RUSSIA 11
- CANADA 509
- U.K. 12
- BELGIUM 3
- FRANCE 9
- SWITZERLAND
- KAZAKHSTAN 1
- CHINA 63
- ITALY 2
- GREECE 2
- UZBEKISTAN 3
- IRAN 24
- SOUTH KOREA 4
- U.S.A. 57
- MOROCCO 44
- LEBANON 5
- ISRAEL 36
- SYRIA 12
- PAKISTAN 5
- NEPAL 1
- TAIWAN 1
- ALGERIA 45
- LIBYA 2
- EGYPT 3
- KUWAIT 2
- BANGLADESH 6
- BAHAMAS 6
- CUBA 2
- HAITI 23
- MEXICO 4
- EL SALVADOR 2
- ST VINCENT 6
- GRENADA 2
- GUINEA 2
- MALI 2
- SAUDI ARABIA 1
- INDIA 3
- THAILAND 1
- PHILIPPINES 12
- VENEZUELA 2
- GUYANA 1
- TOGO 1
- IVORY COAST 8
- CAMEROON
- ETHIOPIA 1
- SRI LANKA 3
- COLUMBIA 2
- CONGO 2
- RWANDA 1
- KENYA 1
- PERU 1
- BRAZIL 1
- AUSTRALIA 2
- SOUTH AFRICA 2
- ARGENTINA 1

*Due to spatial limitations, not all countries are plotted on this map.

*Please note that the objective of this map was not to demonstrate accuracy.