

# The Looming Reskilling Challenge: Endless Opportunity, Even More Complexity for Higher and Continuing Education

by Saul Carliner

**About this Session:** Here's the good news: With automation and AI expected to replace millions of jobs and reshape millions more, the demand for education is expected to grow. But here's the challenge: six-month coding courses and similar quickie, broadly focused approaches are not likely to provide the preparation workers need. This session explores why and suggests strategies that education professionals can adopt to prepare for the growth in workers seeking up- and reskilling from academic and continuing education programs, and the types of experiences institutions can provide to support workers in remaining employable (Carliner, Driscoll & Thayer, 2021)

In this session, you learn to:

- Recognize the bifurcated nature of emerging employment, with the largest opportunities at either the lower-skilled or highly skilled ranges of the spectrum
- Characterize skills gaps between current and emerging jobs
- Recognize the impact of working conditions in emerging areas of employment
- Identify policies and programs that could address these challenges

**About the Presenter:** Saul Carliner, PhD, CTPD has a double-double career: (1) technical communication and instructional design; (2) industry and academe. At Concordia, he is a Professor of Education. At the undergraduate level, he is the instructor who developed the eConcordia course, *Educational Communication* (EDUC 270). At the graduate level, he is Director of the Graduate Programs in Educational Technology and of the Graduate Certificate in Teaching in Higher and Continuing Education. He is author of the recently published *Career Anxiety: Guidance Through Tough Times* with Margaret Driscoll and Yvonne Thayer, *An Overview of Training and Development* (with Margaret Driscoll, published by Lakewood Media), the best-selling and award-winning instructional design texts *Training Design Basics* (now in its second edition), *Advanced Web-Based Training* (with Margaret Driscoll), and *The e-Learning Handbook* (with Patti Shank). Also an industry consultant, his clients include AT&T, Bronx Zoo, Lowe's, PwC, ST Microelectronics, Turkish Management Centre, and several US and Canadian government agencies. He is President of the Canadian Network for Innovation in Education, a Fellow and past board member of the Canadian-based Institute for Performance and Learning, and a Fellow and a past international president of the Society for Technical Communication.

## Contact

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## The Looming Reskilling Challenge: Endless Opportunity, Even More Complexity

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## How you feel when you read headlines like these...

Use chat to respond  
Use chat to respond

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## Typical Headlines

Use chat to respond

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The digital transformation creates opportunities for education professionals to:

- Upskill workers
- Reskill workers
- Leverage growing links between learning technology, and HR and ERP systems.
- Leverage non-traditional places and forms for offering training and recognizing skills.



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But let's be honest.

Traditional approaches to job-related learning won't fix the skills gap on its own.

- Broader changes to the economy and workforce affect who needs training, the training they need, and how they receive it.
- Addressing the skills challenge also requires a re-set of our own skills.
- Training alone won't address all of the skills issues in the economy.



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Central approaches to addressing the looming skills challenge are:

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| Upskilling | Helping workers update their competencies within the context of their current job family |
| Reskilling | Helping workers develop the competencies needed to change lines of work                  |



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Also central are these  
“classic” notions of work-  
related learning:

Training	Develops skills and knowledge that will be applied within the next six months
Education	Develops skills and knowledge that will be applied later than six months



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And, reskilling is not about “*performance improvement*” it is about skills.

**Traditional employer-provided training is not a silver bullet**

Given current patterns, it is primarily focused on certain aspects of upskilling or meeting compliance requirements.

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**Nor is the current interest in higher education for experiential learning**

That primarily prepares students for their first jobs—not prepares current workers to maintain their long-term employability.

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### Skills are the new currency of the workplace.

Complex upskilling and reskilling are our challenge rather than organizational performance.

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What does this really mean?

<b>Relevant skills increase a worker's value within an organization.</b>		
Leads to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Better compensation</li><li>▪ Upward mobility</li><li>▪ Choice projects</li></ul>		

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What does this really mean?

<b>Relevant skills increase a worker's value within an organization.</b>	<b>Organizations have long talked about skills gaps and a war for talent. Now they are really competing for skilled workers.</b>	
Leads to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Better compensation</li><li>▪ Upward mobility</li><li>▪ Choice projects</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Offer competitive pay and innovative benefits (such as remote work and time to support social causes)</li><li>▪ Re-ignite the search for talent within the organization and promoting from within</li></ul>	

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What does this really mean?

<b>Relevant skills increase a worker's value within an organization.</b>	<b>Organizations have long talked about skills gaps and a war for talent. Now they are really competing for skilled workers.</b>	<b>Like cars, currency can depreciate</b>
Leads to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Better compensation</li> <li>Upward mobility</li> <li>Choice projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offer competitive pay and innovative benefits (such as remote work and time to support social causes)</li> <li>Re-ignite the search for talent within the organization and promoting from within</li> </ul>	...once people have landed a job they need to continue to develop skills to remain relevant and valuable.

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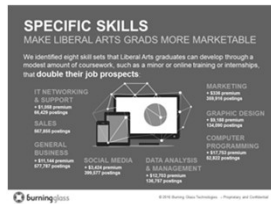
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Developing, tracking, and trading on skills starts early.



- Skills are:
  - Individually held (not organizationally)
  - Related to the major you choose
  - Skills gained in higher education are used to identify and recruit talent
  - Of varying value to employers

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Technology makes locating, evaluating, updating, recruiting, and promoting skills increasingly easy



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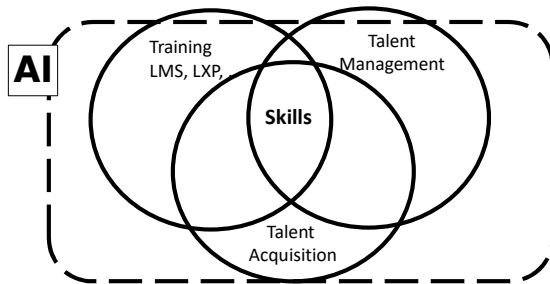
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Here's how skills are becoming a common currency within organizations with the aid of technology.



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Skills may be the currency, but we are still working on the exchange rate.

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If workers need upskilling and reskilling, the new economy has changed the system for receiving it.

- Who gets trained?
- Who pays?

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### Employment status matters

Employees | Freelancer | Contractor  
Employer-funded | Personally funded

People not covered by employer-provided training:

- Freelancers: 57.3 million people in the U.S. (and 86.5 million by 2027). (Upwork)
- Gig workers: 36% of U.S. workers through their primary or secondary jobs. (Gallup)
- For 44% of gig workers, this is their primary income source. (Edison Research)

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Workers at different skill levels receive different levels of investments in up- and reskilling.



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### These occupations are projected to see the most job growth between 2020 and 2030 (in thousands)

RANKING BASED ON NUMBER OF WORKERS	2020 National Employment Matrix title	Median annual wage, 2020 <sup>(1)</sup>	Employment, 2020	Employment, 2030	Employment change, 2020–30	Percent employment change, 2020–30
Median	Total, all occupations	\$41,950	153,533.8	165,413.7	11,879.9	7.7
1	Home health and personal care aides	\$27,080	3,470.7	4,600.6	1,129.9	32.6
2	Cooks, restaurant	\$28,800	1,153.2	1,716.7	563.5	48.9
3	Fast food and counter workers	\$23,890	3,455.5	3,973.0	517.5	15.0
4	Software developers and software quality assurance analysts and testers	\$110,140	1,847.9	2,257.4	409.5	22.2
5	Waiters and waitresses	\$23,740	2,023.2	2,430.7	407.5	20.1
6	Registered nurses	\$75,330	3,090.1	3,356.8	276.8	9.0
7	Laborers and freight, stock, and material movers, hand	\$31,120	2,821.7	3,077.5	255.8	9.1
8	General and operations managers	\$103,650	2,411.9	2,638.2	226.3	9.4
9	First-line supervisors of food preparation and serving workers	\$34,570	915.4	1,106.1	190.6	20.8
10	Passenger vehicle drivers, except bus drivers, transit and intercity	\$32,320	707.4	887.9	180.6	25.5
For comparison	Training and Development Managers	\$115,640	42.1	46.6	4.5	11%

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### Age also matters

- Beyond age-ism on the part of an employer
- If someone invests their own funds in costly reskilling, will they work long enough to recoup the investment—or at least, to repay the loan?



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How do you keep your own skills current?

Use chat to respond.




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How many hours a week do you spend developing your skills?

*Use chat to respond.*



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The landscape is changing internally and externally.

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This is what people seek now.

Formal education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>E-learning</li> <li>Traditional classroom</li> <li>Bootcamps</li> <li>Higher education</li> <li>Related support</li> </ul>

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Formal education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ E-learning</li><li>▪ Traditional classroom</li><li>▪ Bootcamps</li><li>▪ Higher education</li><li>▪ Related support</li></ul>
Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Apprenticeships</li><li>▪ Returnships</li><li>▪ Stretch projects</li></ul>

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Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Apprenticeships</li><li>▪ Returnships</li><li>▪ Stretch projects</li></ul>
Credentials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Badges</li><li>▪ Certificates</li><li>▪ Certifications</li><li>▪ Licenses</li><li>▪ Degrees</li><li>▪ Professional memberships</li></ul>

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Within organizations, Training, Talent Acquisition, and Talent Management are increasingly integrated activities.



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But are employers developing the skills people seek?

- Training
  - Compliance
  - Micro-learning
  - Learning in the flow of work
- Education
  - Apprenticeships
  - Long form learning
  - Badges/certifications
  - Tuition reimbursement to higher ed, 3<sup>rd</sup> party
- Development
  - Coaching / mentorship
  - Stretch assignments

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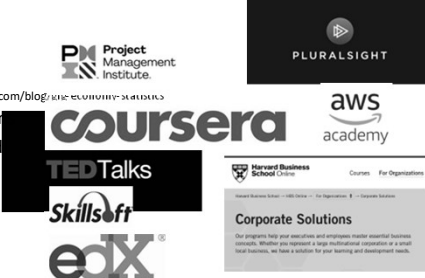
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Externally, a lot more players want a piece of the up- and reskilling action, including:

- Boutique vendors
- E-Learning catalog providers
- Professional organizations
- Crowd sourcing (DIY and curated content) and
- Higher education



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What percentage of the students you serve are trying to shift or maintain careers?

- a. Less than 10%
- b. Between 11 and 25%
- c. Between 26 and 50%
- d. Between 51 and 75%
- e. 76% or more

(Type your response in the Chat.)

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In response to the ever-growing cost of higher education, the digital transformation, and evolving demographics, governments are developing new policies and programs.

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Policy Models from Around the World

Enterprise Singapore

FOOD SERVICES

Support Training and Upskilling

SkillFuture Series

Need help? Chat with me

Related content

Canada

Government of Canada / Gouvernement du Canada

Canada / Canada Revenue Agency / Agence des services fiscaux

Canada Training Credit

Notice to the reader

This measure has received Royal Assent.

For 2019 and subsequent taxation years, the budget pre-credit, which may be used for eligible tuition and fees p

Expand all Collapse all

1. What is the Canada training credit?

Education Leave

All employees of VMware South Korea may apply for Educational Leave. It of absence of up to 365 days of unpaid Educational Leave. VMware may g discretion, taking into account the type of education, and the business nee

Benefits and Service

If you take an Educational Leave your length of service will stop accruing it leave. You will also not be eligible for Paidtime Benefits and child school wa this time.

Conduct During Leave

While on Education Leave you are still considered a VMware employee an comply with all rules of conduct, including the Business Conduct Guidelines are required. During your leave, you may not work at another company approval from VMware. If you work at another company, while out on lea approved, you will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including term

Scheduling Educational Leave

You should inform your manager and HR before VMware network access

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Workplace learning will evolve to meet the new requirements for skills.

Developed through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Training (skills intended for application in the next six months)</li><li>Education (skills intended for application in more than six months)</li><li>Informal learning</li><li>Job experiences</li><li>Mentoring</li></ul>	Tracked by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Learning Management Systems (LMS)</li><li>Human Resource Information Systems (HRIS) and Talent Management Systems</li><li>Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS)</li><li>Emerging blockchain technologies</li></ul>
Demonstrated through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Badges</li><li>Certificates</li><li>Mini-master's</li><li>Degrees</li><li>Behaviors tracked by emerging standards and AI programs</li></ul>	Analyzed by organizations like Burning Glass

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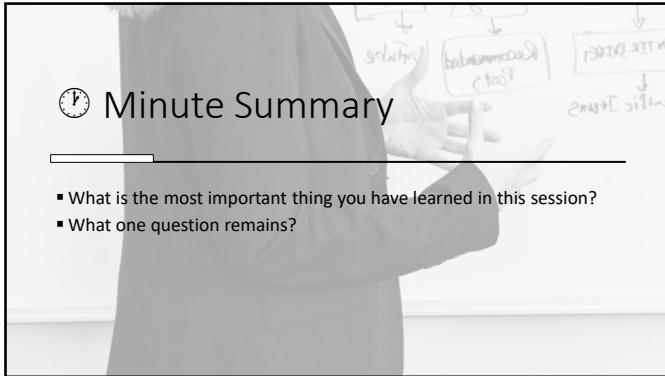
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A person in a dark suit is pointing at a whiteboard. The whiteboard has a flowchart with boxes containing text like 'solutions', 'behavioural', 'career', and 'smart'.

## Minute Summary

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- What is the most important thing you have learned in this session?
- What one question remains?

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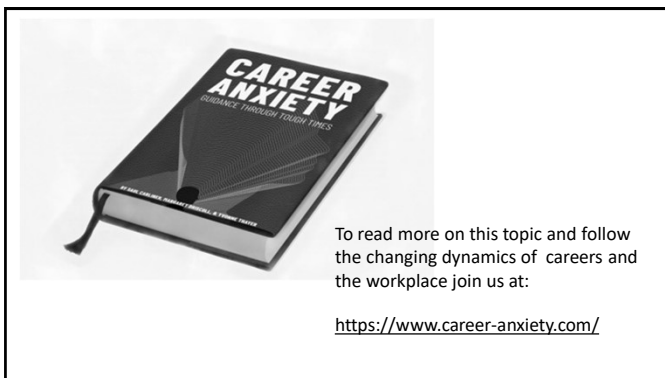
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A black book with the title 'CAREER ANXIETY' in white. Below the title is the subtitle 'GUIDANCE THROUGH TOUGH TIMES'. The author's name 'Dr. David C. Brown' is at the bottom.

To read more on this topic and follow the changing dynamics of careers and the workplace join us at:

<https://www.career-anxiety.com/>

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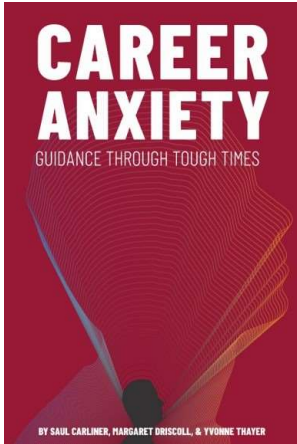
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## **Career Anxiety Offers Practical Career Guidance to Experienced Workers**

The book *Career Anxiety: Guidance for Tough Times* offers experienced workers insights for navigating the challenges of today's employment market and workplaces.

Specifically, *Career Anxiety*:

1. Explains why employment in the 2020s substantially differs from the 1980s—and that's the result of way more than automation and AI
2. Suggests when you need to consider a degree—and when to seek an alternate credential
3. Provides a roadmap to the increasingly automated job search
4. Explains all of the pre-employment checks and first-day agreements with which you must comply when receiving an offer
5. Because many jobs last about as long as a Elizabeth Taylor's marriages, describes strategies for maintaining your employability after you find a job
6. Explains how your finances govern your job search choices
7. Identifies the employability factors beyond your control
8. Offers specific guidance for all phases of your careers: in your 20s, 30s, 40s, and beyond

The three authors bring complementary expertise to the job. Saul Carliner is a Professor at Concordia University in Montreal, where he specializes in workplace learning and communication. Margaret Driscoll manages international teams on projects producing complex learning technologies. Yvonne Thayer is the principal of VESTED Educational Development, and has shaped educational and career policy as a state Director of Adult Literacy and consultant on workforce development and research to universities, community colleges, and school districts.

The book is available in paperback and Kindle versions now from [Amazon](#).