Note

Carole,

My submission for the AE510 Professional Portfolio can be found at:
stfx.kevinvanlierop.com/portfolio

I have created this Word document to offer an easy way for you to provide comments and corrections as necessary. Given that the chosen format for my portfolio is a website much of the formatting found throughout this document may fall outside of the APA Style guide, although every effort has been made to conform to APA Style where possible. With that said, this document takes *some* liberties and steps away from a traditional academic paper.

Elements such as the inclusion of links to external sites and internal sections of the portfolio were included in this document to ease the process of transferring content to the website. When it comes to links which connect internal sections of the portfolio, the ones included in this document most likely will not work correctly. When these links are used from within the website itself there should be few issues with their functionality.

Because of the nature of the artifacts I have chosen to include such as PDFs, images, document downloads, videos and other types of media, in many cases such artefacts have been omitted from this document. These supporting elements do however appear on the website and where appropriate I have included notes here directing you to where they can be found.

If there are any questions or concerns regarding this please do not hesitate to reach out.

—Kevin

St. Francis Xavier University

Professional Portfolio:
Adult Education, Community Leadership, Civic Engagement

By

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AE510
Professional Portfolio

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London, Ontario
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About Page

A goal to empower individuals and communities to take greater ownership over their futures has led to the most rewarding work I have ever completed. Approaching work with a servant-leadership mindset, my expertise is in designing strategies and platforms which create engaging experiences in support of helping others achieve their goals.

In 2017, I have taken time to explore how focusing my passions and expertise through a small number of intentional actions can create more meaningful and lasting change in the communities I serve. One of these actions has been to begin a <u>Master of Adult Education</u> offered through <u>St. Francis Xavier University</u> in Antigonish, Nova Scotia. Focusing on adult education and community development, my aim is to build upon an established role as a community leader and better connect theory to practice in the work I complete. I am particularly interested in the important role place plays in fostering citizen empowerment throughout community education environments.

Recently, within weeks of this portfolio's completion, I began a new role in the service of others. Working at <u>Fanshawe College</u> to enable students as they seek to become connected to their professional communities of practice, I offer expertise, guidance and support related to career development as a Co-operative Education Consultant. Better connecting students to their professional communities through collaborations and partnerships with organizations, I am interested in how experiences that bridge learning environments can be more meaningfully designed.

Previously, I have worked with organizations such as the City of London, Western University and Fanshawe College, and Libro Credit Union to create engaging experiences in community, education and online environments. To build skill and gain perspective between full-

time roles I often take on projects that are interesting, challenging, or in disciplines I have little experience in. Some of the organizations I have worked with include: <u>Brick Books</u>, <u>Museum London</u>, <u>Ladies Learning Code</u>, <u>UnLondon Digital Media Association</u> and the <u>Urban League of London</u>.

Passionate about the cities we live within, the spaces that make them unique and the people that make them thrive, the work which most resonates with me focuses on civic engagement, urban spaces and improving the places we call home. Collaborating with other city lovers under the guise of the <u>Good City Co.</u> to develop resources which engage, educate, and empower everyday citizens, I create projects, resources and activations such as <u>Block Party in a Box</u>, <u>Walk London</u> and <u>PARK(ing) Day</u> in support of fostering a more active <u>civitas</u>.

Site Sidebar

Approaching my work with a servant-leadership mindset, I aim to empower individuals and communities to take greater ownership over their futures. I have found the greatest reward in supporting others achieve their goals through the design of strategies and platforms that create engaging experiences.

Site Header

A portfolio tracing my growth as an adult educator. Identifying the philosophies, knowledge, skills, and attitudes I bring to my work, I offer reflections on what has informed my practice and how it continues to evolve.

Preface

Portfolios are not a new concept to me. Previously, while both staff and student at an Ontario college, I led and completed the process of crafting portfolios for the purposes of securing employment. Although *my* portfolios were more descriptive in nature, focusing on course work in the context of an anticipated profession, the process itself was informative. Learning how to select, arrange and present content was as important of a lesson as was understanding the audience for whom I was writing to and the *why* of the overall process. As relevant as they were more than a decade ago these elements are still as important as I craft *this* professional portfolio.

As I embark on a process to better comprehend, name and communicate my professional practice there are specific goals I aim to achieve. First, as I review and consolidate a body of work which I often feel is disconnected my aim is to identify connections between my efforts to see what patterns emerge both in approach and outcomes. Facing the challenge of validating my efforts to others *and* myself on what seems like a daily basis, I am hopeful that this process and the resulting product will provide a better understanding of my practice and the value it offers.

A second goal is to understand the nature of adult education and the multifaceted forms it can take. Having always found satisfaction in supporting others as they work towards achieving their goals I have not necessarily framed this work in terms of adult education. I am interested in understanding perspectives of adult education and community development and how they manifest themselves through the strands of my practice. I aim to craft a narrative which identifies and speaks to the practice I have developed in the context of adult education from perspectives such as my own, those of my peers and of the people I serve. Often struggling to find alignment between my personal worldview and those which provide the groundings for societal and

industry expectations, I am hopeful that this process will help to identify bridges between these diverging worldviews while enhancing my understanding and communication among them.

Requiring careful thought and consideration to more deeply understand the nature of my work, my fear is that I will end up *still* confused about my practice, continue to lack confidence in my ability, or that I will identify the strands of my practice do not align with adult education whatsoever. Although the later concern, my practice not aligning with adult education, is highly unlikely it is a fear nonetheless. I am hopeful that this process will help me to establish a stronger foundation upon which a more focused practice can continue to be built. Identifying strengths to leverage and deficiencies to develop, I want to shape my practice more intentionally and fill it with greater meaning. Although primarily completed for academic purposes with an emphasis on reflective practice, I hope this portfolio can also be used as a tool when seeking out more challenging and purposeful professional roles.

- Reflection dated June 2, 2017

Table of Contents

Executive Summary

Tracing my growth as a practitioner, this portfolio was developed as a tool to help me in the dissection and understanding of my professional practice. Completed in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Adult Education at St. Francis Xavier University, I have taken the time to identify the knowledge, skills and attitudes I bring to my work as both an adult educator and community developer. Defining a practice which I often see as confusing, sporadic and a collection of contributions across sectors, the primary audience for this portfolio is myself in support of forming a better understanding of a personal and professional identity.

This portfolio begins by considering the philosophies I bring to my practice of adult education and community development and how both my personality and approach to learning have informed these philosophies. Presenting my professional practice as a series of strands—Adult Education, Community Leadership and Civic Engagement—I offer explanations regarding each area of focus in terms of the work I have completed, scholarship taken to further my knowledge and the evidence and evaluation of my efforts as identified by others. I close each strand with a reflection on the themes, challenges and opportunities found across my roles.

Following these strands, I provide a Resume where I identify the professional contributions I make related to the areas of my practice. Offering a holistic view of my efforts across all three strands, I close this portfolio with thoughts on the commonalities found within my practice, how work within each strand supports the others, opportunities for growth and areas for attention, and how my practice can evolve to provide greater value to the communities I serve.

Formal in both structure and analysis, the framework for this portfolio is based upon the work of Hughes and Moore (2007) and incorporates the elements necessary to support achieving

my goals while ensuring a deeper level of reflection (pp. 21). Where appropriate links have been

included to help facilitate efficient navigation between sections and to relevant reference

materials, both internal and external. Provided at the end of this portfolio are references,

documents, artifacts and materials in support of the statements made throughout.

Philosophical Statement

How can adult educators balance the needs of the learners they serve and the goals of the institutions they work within, while building a working relationship with their students founded on respect which places an individual's curiosity at the core of the learning process?

As I develop as an adult educator, understanding how theories interact with practice, I have come to appreciate the subtle nuances between the role of student and learner. Student, an individual whose role is bounded by formal educational environments in which study is the primary purpose, and learner guided by personal curiosity and self-directed development to form a more complete version of themselves (Biesta, 2010). Associating much closer with the role of learner in my personal education journey, I find that as I approach the teaching of others with the values of balance, respect and curiosity shaping my personal learning (see Appendix B for personal inventories) taking time to see individuals as learners first has been essential to establishing and acting upon my philosophy of adult education.

For those tasked with teaching young adults in secondary school settings the purpose of education is often driven by the prevailing pedagogy as it aims to achieve a set of predefined, system-wide goals. But, when it comes to adults, how are the goals and approaches to education different? In alignment with both humanistic and progressive philosophies of adult education (Elias & Merriam, 2005; Zinn, 1999), I believe the primary purpose of adult education is to support the personal growth and development of the individual while facilitating self-actualization to enhance their effectiveness in communities and broader society.

Developed from personal experiences where I feel the educational systems I was directed to learn within failed me, my perspectives regarding education are rooted in the belief that the

individual should be at the core of any learning experience. Encouraging adults to think more critically about their actions and the associated circumstances created as a result, education provides a foundation upon which learners can begin to better understand society and how they contribute towards making it more just, relative to their personal worldview.

In believing the role of an educator is not to dictate or design the path for a learner to take, the approach I choose in my practice follows the path of servant-leadership (Greenleaf, 1991) in support of individuals navigating their own journeys. Although as an educator I cannot necessarily empower others (Gore, 1992), as I complete work across the strands of my practice I can strive to establish the conditions where adults feel they have it within them to take the greatest control over their lives and actions (Prins & Drayton, 2010). Taking cues from more radical approaches to adult education, believing strongly that individuals have the ability and responsibly to bring about changes to the complex systems—social, political, economic *and* civic— they exist within, I see myself as an equal with students in the process of learning (Elias & Merriam, 2005). As I listen and engage in dialogue with my students, by asking questions and posing problems to solicit critical thinking, I view myself as an ally rather than an expert in fostering the further development of their knowledge.

Given that individuals should always be the primary participants in their own learning, I believe they should take active ownership over their personal development and ultimately their distinct futures. Although not always agreeing with or taking it at face value, I ask that all learners be open to feedback, criticisms and the questioning of their work which is founded in critical inquiry. Consistent with my approach to community development, I believe that learning to develop as critical thinkers and as active citizens is most meaningful and resonates most deeply when it starts where the people are (Alinsky, 1971; Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993;

Lindeman 1926/1982). Both communities and individuals can strengthen their understanding, development and process of extracting meaning from their own actions if educators meet them where they are already living, working, and learning to building upon their experiences while leveraging existing strengths.

Open to broader discussions which place their lives and learning within in the context of the economic, social and political realities which surround them, I ask that learners respect the process of learning itself however it may unfold or as challenging as it may be. Having experienced firsthand the individually unique nature of a learning journey, I understand that it is only when time and attention is invested and there is a desire for growth that an individual's potential and path can be fully realized.

As an adult educator, community leader and champion of civic engagement I aim to contribute to the development of the individuals and organizations that have provided me with so much purpose, learning and a sense of community over my lifetime. The communities I am surrounded by have shaped me for the better and it is a noble sense of duty which guides me to help shape them in return. Working with students, learners and citizens I wish to enable them to take greater agency over the lives, gaining "the power to act on [their] own behalf to change a situation" (hooks, 1993, pp. 167) and absolute control over their lives and experiences.

Strands of Practice

Over the past decade my professional work has developed into three distinct strands of practice. The following sections consider my practice in the context of <u>Adult Education</u>, <u>Community Leadership</u> and <u>Civic Engagement</u>.

First looking at the investments made in developing each area through <u>professional practice</u> and <u>scholarship</u>, I consider the impact of my work through the lens of others with a focus on <u>evidence and evaluation</u>. Taking time to reflect on each strand individually, I offer thoughts on how my practice has developed over the years, identifying common themes, the strengths and weaknesses in approaches and how my practice is most likely to develop in the future. Each with its own character and purpose, there is significant overlap, similarities and complementary elements found between the individual strands presented.

A collective look of all three strands is offered in the <u>Reflective Synthesis</u> where I provide thoughts on the commonalities across my broader practice, how work within each strand supports the others, the opportunities for growth and areas for attention, and how my practice can provide value to the communities I serve. Connected to <u>relevant literature</u> and the broader systems it exists within, this synthesis provides a deeper analytical consideration of my practice building upon the reflections included for each individual strand.

Adult Education

As someone who has always found purpose in supporting others as they work towards achieving their goals, I was not one to identify as an educator until presented with the opportunity in a highly traditional setting. Now, as my work evolves primarily in community and non-formal environments I often consider my work less in terms of an educator and more of a catalyst that incites and supports growth within individuals and communities.

Here I offer an overview of my contributions to the field of adult education focusing on professional practice in traditional and community settings. Beginning with a glimpse of my practice's evolution through practical experience and scholarship, I continue by illustrating how I have impacted the communities I serve. I close this section by offering thoughts on my work more broadly, what strengths and weaknesses exist within it, and the steps I may take to become a more informed and effective practitioner.

Professional Practice. For more than a decade, I have supported adult learners through activities which engage, educate and enable them to develop the skills and knowledge needed to take greater control over their futures. For organizational purposes, I present my work as an adult educator divided into two distinct areas of focus. First, my work as it relates to formal education delivered primarily in post-secondary environments followed by non-formal education in community education settings.

Formal Education. Focused primarily on curriculum related to the cities we live in and the building of stronger, more connected communities, my teaching contributions at the post-secondary level have often focused on the instruction of students in the planning and development of urban centres. Founded on theoretical knowledge of how cities function and a

technical expertise of industry methodologies, my approach to instruction often begins with lived experiences of the students themselves. Understanding what learning is relevant to the students, I develop educational activities which feel familiar and can be further extended to connect the curriculum to the locales students are situated within.

Bridging the gap between traditional and digital environments, my instruction assists students in becoming comfortable with exploring their own learning through self-directed methods supported by new technologies that can help them to reach their goals. Highlighting opportunities for students to create positive change through professional practice—connecting course work, professional roles and personal communities, my work supporting adults is grounded in a community worldview and the interconnectedness of their personal and professional actions.

Selected Roles

Faculty, School of Design

— *Fanshawe College, 2007–2010*

Designing educational curriculum and resources based on experiential and community-minded principles, I highlighted the opportunities for students to create positive change in their communities as they worked towards obtaining roles in fields related to urban planning.

Research Associate, Department of Geography

— *Western University, 2007–2009*

Leading graduate students in research, technical support and advisory capacities, I provided graduate seminars on software platforms, research methods and approaches to community

development. Overseeing undergraduate students, I was responsible for their engagement, education and enablement as we connected their studies to broader community contexts.

Teacher Candidate, Intermediate/Senior

— *Thames Valley District School Board, 2009–2010*

Connecting young adults with their broader communities through experiential and self-directed learning opportunities, I provided learning experiences which paired students' personal interests with course content, helping to build a greater comprehension of learning materials and deeper connections to their personal lives.

[To view other examples of professional practice please see Resume or Appendix A: Professional Practice.]

Community Education. Instructing adult learners in formal classroom settings, I lead workshops that enable them to understand, apply and integrate digital literacy skills into their everyday lives. Using a scaffold approach to teaching, I support beginners as they develop foundational skills while enhancing the knowledge of more advanced learners concurrently within the same environment. As I design learning experiences based on sound community development principles I aim to enable learners to act as leaders, teachers and facilitators among their peers. This community approach to learning results in individuals collectively learning and developing their skills while supporting each other at the same time.

Selected Roles

Lead Instructor

— *Ladies Learning Code, 2015–present*

With a team of mentors supporting my instruction, I deliver accessible digital literacy through workshops for beginner-level learners covering a range of topics related to web development and design. Through sharing my knowledge, I aim to inspire learners while enabling them to become more skillful and confident in their personal and professional endeavours.

Community Learning Specialist

— *UnLondon Digital Media Association, 2012–2014*

Designing learning experiences for students in community education environments, I shaped the focus of educational programming in a strategic role by providing an informed educator's perspective to better connect curriculum expectations to the needs of the learners and the broader systems in which they existed.

Director of Educational Programming

— *PodCamp London, 2009–2012*

Informing, educating and connecting members of diverse communities through an engaging participant focused conference, I established a learning environment which supported self-directed learning for adults. I enabled experts and amateurs alike to act as facilitators and instructors amongst their peers to help grow a knowledgebase across interconnected industries.

[To view other examples of professional practice please see Resume or Appendix A: Professional Practice.]

Scholarship. Helping me to "establish meaningful connections between theory and practice" (Orland-Barak, 2005, p. 27), formal academia has been a primary contributor to my knowledge as an educator. Often graduating with honours in formal settings of academia, I continue to support my development as an educator through organization-specific training modules offered to me in both professional and volunteer roles. Closely connecting the theories learned in formal settings to my work, I continue to form a more complete understanding of the purpose of adult education and the role I play as an educator. In addition to formal scholarship opportunities I continue to support my practice by developing technical expertise, fostering professional relationships and participating in a newly formed habit of reflective practice.

Selected Scholarship

Master of Adult of Education

— *St. Francis Xavier University, 2020*

With a focus on the formative elements of community development and the role place has in fostering citizen empowerment, I am interested in how both non-formal and informal learning experiences within community education environments can shape an individual's development.

Bachelor of Education

— *Western University, 2010*

Graduating with distinction, my studies connected young adults in formal systems of education with learning opportunities outside of traditional classroom settings. Supported by teaching experiences within secondary and college environments, this credential has served as an applied communications degree providing the tools needed to interact and support individuals of varying needs and abilities.

Organizational Training

— *Fanshawe College* and *Ladies Learning Code, 2007-present*

Providing training specific to individual teaching roles both in formal and community education

settings, these workshops focus on topics such as learning styles, communication strategies, and

tactics to modify course work based on the needs of individuals and groups of learners.

Evidence and Evaluation. Connecting individuals with their peers so they may learn

from others with similar experiences, my leadership style as an adult educator is firmly rooted in

a community mindset. Believing that an individual's learning and growth is directly related to

the cohort in which she exists (Lei, Gorelick, Short, Smallwood & Wright-Porter, 2011), my

students and colleagues regularly identify an expertise in leveraging the abilities, skills and

knowledge of individuals within a larger collective to support their peers.

Approaching the act of teaching in an authentic way consistent with developmental and

nurturing perspectives of teaching (see Appendix B for personal inventories), I place the needs of

my students first and foremost often above content or curriculum requirements. Understanding

that a student's experiences are the foundation upon which the best learning unfolds (Lindeman,

1926/1982), my approach to teaching aims to begin from where the students are, further

developing course materials with learners to co-construct greater meaning.

[Examples of evidence and evaluation can be found on the website]

[To view other examples of evidence and evaluation please see <u>Resume</u> or <u>Appendix C:</u> <u>Evidence and Evaluation</u>.]

      Reflection. Never intending to become an (adult) educator, the professional practice I have formed over the past decade has placed me in roles that feel overwhelmingly natural and thoroughly enjoyable at the same time. Often feeling that my perspectives are at odds with the pedagogy and systems by which learning is delivered to younger students, it comes with very little surprise that my practice as an educator has navigated towards working with adults.

      Developed from a feeling that educational institutions, instructors and the systems they operate within have failed me to date, not able to academically stimulate or challenge me as a high-achiever, I have often sought out learning opportunities in less traditional environments through self-direction. With a personal curiosity to better understand the world I live within, my philosophy of adult education and the actions I take have been informed intimately by personal learning experiences and the communities I am a part of.

      Possessing the ability to self-teach and absorb almost any information, I find myself needing to be less concerned with content comprehension and can focus my time and attention on its application as it is relevant to students' lives, helping to more adequately shape and enhance their learning experiences. Not without challenges in my own practice, I find it most difficult to work within the structures of existing systems, both in places of formal academia and the professional work place. Recognizing a personal need to develop greater patience and an acceptance that the creation of meaningful change takes time, I would benefit from developing a better appreciation for other worldviews and approaches to learning and management. Finding commonalities between my perspectives and both the individuals and institutions I work with

would help bridge understanding for the purposes for communication, cooperation, creating change and best serving those who look to me for support.

As I continue to develop my practice as an educator supported primarily through the completion of a Master of Adult Education degree, this portfolio being a partial requirement of, I aim to better incorporate theories of adult education into actions taken across the other strands of my practice—Community Leadership and Civic Engagement. The more intentionally I can integrate these distinct strands with one another the better of an expertise I will develop in support of the individuals and organizations I aim to serve.

Community Leadership

Both the theory and practice of community have been foreign concepts to me for much of my life. Only during the past decade when surrounded by community during the most difficult of times have I begun to understand how an individual's life can be shaped by those around them and how their actions can strengthen a broader collective in return. As I become increasingly more embedded in communities often through positions of leadership I find myself placing the best interests of a community ahead of my own, first in decision making and then actions taken. I believe that as a community strengthens so do the individuals which make up its whole.

The following offers an overview of the contributions I have made to the communities I am most connected to. Considering both volunteer and professional roles primarily within the not-for-profit sector, I highlight the time and attention invested in developing leadership skills in support of strengthening individual and organizational capacity. Broadly looking at my role as a community leader, I provide thoughts on themes of leadership found throughout my work and how I may leverage them as I continue to support communities in the future.

Professional Practice. Sought out by individuals and organizations to design meaningful community building experiences, I have developed a recognized expertise in areas such as community engagement, entrepreneurship and strategic innovation (see Appendix C for testimonials). To generate consensus amongst individuals and organizations working together to achieve common goals I analyze divergent areas of professional practice and translate them to help stakeholder groups understand often foreign concepts. Beginning with an open mind believing that anything is possible regardless of what may have come before, my approach to leading is intentionally seeking to understand the *why* behind all we do and to not limit the possibility of what could be.

Providing a perspective that is informed by urban theory, social entrepreneurship and the development of ideas which have been deemed "innovative" and "forward thinking" (see Appendix C for testimonials), I lead organizations as both a researcher and nurturer (see Appendix B for personal inventories). Approaching work through a process of inquiry, to understand the theories and reasons that provide the grounding for actions taken, I strive to serve individuals and organizations by placing their needs at the forefront of any problem we aim to collectively address.

Selected Roles

Manager, Community Development

— *London Fuse New Media Collective (City of London), 2012–2014*

Working with diverse stakeholder groups I oversaw the planning, design, marketing and implementation of community focused programs and services. My work provided the strategy and tactics which enabled local businesses and organizations to effectively communicate with broader audiences while strengthening their respective communities.

Manager, Community Engagement

— *Emerging Leaders London Community Network, 2011–2012*

Advancing strategic direction and community engagement activities, I established processes related to program creation, mentoring and career support. Managing daily operations, my work supported young leaders through training, networking and professional development opportunities as they established themselves in their respective fields of professional practice.

Director

— *Urban League of London, 2013–2015*

Providing a young urbanist's perspective at the leadership level, I contributed to the development of stronger and better connected neighbourhoods towards building a vital, successful and sustainable city. Engaging with citizen groups to help them become better informed, my work enabled neighbourhood associations to shape their communities while advocating for their best interests.

[To view other examples of professional practice please see <u>Resume</u> or <u>Appendix A: Professional Practice</u>.]

Scholarship. In support of my efforts to become a stronger and more effective leader I participate in learning opportunities that broaden my awareness of foundational community development principles while deepening my understanding of personal leadership traits. Often asked to consult on learning programs during their infancy to aid in their development (<u>see Appendix B for professional development),</u> I have been a fortunate participant in the final, refined programming offered to the broader public.

In support of these non-formal educational opportunities I regularly create the necessary time and space to reflect upon and grow the characteristics of my leadership style and core values. To build a more holistic understanding of who I am and how I can best lead communities, I participate in individual leadership, personality, character assessments and self-directed courses (<u>see Appendix B see personal inventories</u>). In addition to building a toolkit of professional skills and resources to aid me in strengthening my broader practice, I participate in these learning opportunities to guide me in more thoughtfully interacting with others to create meaningful engagement experiences.

Selected Scholarship

Community Development for Practitioners, and Foundational Community Building

— *Campus for Communities of the Future, 2013–2014*

Enhancing my knowledge and skills as a community builder I developed an understanding of how to work with stakeholders to address issues, assess trends and create models for community transformation. Provided with the frameworks for furthering community development activities I established baseline skills to better serve as a catalyst for positive change.

Engage!, and Leadership London

— *London Community Foundation and Emerging Leaders London Community Network, 2011– 2012*

Providing experiential learning, mentoring and networking opportunities, these programs helped me to develop a better understanding of what value I provide to my communities and how to best leverage my talents to serve.

Active Creative Engaged Community Building

— *Grassroots Enterprises, 2012*

This course provided the knowledge and resources needed to be a more adept community development practitioner while working in partnership with the City of London on initiatives to strengthen neighbourhoods and grassroots community efforts.

[To view other examples of scholarship please see Resume or Appendix B: Scholarship.]

Evidence and Evaluation. Acting as a catalyst in the building of stronger, more connected communities, my contributions while in leadership roles have shaped the understanding of what the term community means more locally. With an approach that is grounded in thoroughly understanding problems at and placing those I work with at the core of the purpose for work, my practice reflects many of the principles of servant-leadership in support of the development of others. My work aids individuals and organizations in understanding what possibilities can materialize when they come together to achieve a common goal, and in the process the realization of their full potential. Driven by the belief that cities should be built from the ground up by their residents, the leadership I exhibit in the development of communities has been recognized by my peers, community collaborators, employers and alma mater.

Selected Evidence

Growing Prosperity Award

— *Libro Credit Union, 2016*

Highlighting my leadership, passion and community-minded focus, I was an inaugural recipient of this award and recognized for the exceptional and significant contributions I make to growing prosperity in southwestern Ontario.

Young Alumni Award

— *King's University College, 2013*

Awarded to a King's University College graduate under the age of 35, I was recognized for the outstanding contributions and accomplishments I have made in the communities I am a part of.

Who's London? Roundtable

— *The London Free Press, 2011*

As part of a series focused on "young, energetic thinkers anxious to shed London's tired image," my perspective on local city building initiatives, municipal identity and the future of local politics were highlighted by the London Free Press.

[To view other examples of evidence and evaluation please see <u>Resume</u> or <u>Appendix C: Evidence and Evaluation</u>.]

Reflection. The role of community leader is not one I intentionally developed or ever envisioned for myself. Beginning from a personal will to improve the interactions I was having with my city—an approach rooted in selfish needs and wants—over time I have developed the belief that every citizen has the power, ability and responsibility to shape the places they live to improve both their personal life and community.

Not able to formally name my leadership style until more recently, but identifying a strong distinction between leadership and management (<u>Hanold, 2015</u>), only through personal reflection have I become comfortable with naming my leadership approach as Servant Leadership (<u>Greenleaf, 1991</u>). Having always believed that the purpose of a leader, including educators, is to help others "grow as persons" (<u>Greenleaf, 1991, "Who is the Servant-Leader," para. 2</u>), I have found comfort in naming my approach while identifying with others who have similar perspectives. In addition to new theories and resources to aid me in the continued growth of my practice I have developed an approach to leading communities grounded in both researching and nurturing perspectives (<u>see Appendix B for personal inventories</u>). These perspectives are complimented by an identified INTJ (introversion, intuition, thinking, judgment)

personality type (<u>see Appendix B for personal inventories</u>) and the asset-based community development approach I choose to employ as I complete work in the community.

Continuing to build a more recognized expertise, my aim is to focus attention on the work that matters most as defined by myself and those I work most closely with. Bringing greater intentionality to the roles I assume and the actions I take, documenting my work more attentively to share both process and results would be of benefit to myself and those who look to me to lead. Commenting more broadly on the problems, solutions and questions surrounding my communities of interest, there is an opportunity to translate my leadership, expertise and desire to incite positive change into thoughts and resources to support others as they strive to achieve the same.

Civic Engagement

As I take actions to improve to city I live within I find myself continually leading activities which engage, educate and empower other individuals as they shape their communities' futures. Holding a belief that cities should be built from the ground up by citizen themselves with their very best interests in mind has led to some of the most rewarding work I have ever completed. Acknowledging that I, and those I collaborate with, have the power, ability and responsibility to shape our city for the better, this strand of my practice considers the more tactical contributions I have made to supporting community development in urban environments.

The following pages outline work I have completed with individuals and organizations for the purposes of civic engagement. Focused primarily on grassroots projects, activations and resource development—those beginning with residents, citizens and community members—I consider the type of work that most resonates with me and the efforts taken to strengthen my perspectives and ability to affect change. Considering more than a decade of civic engagement work I provide insight into future actions and the impact I wish to make.

Professional Practice. Focused on the modern day <u>civitas</u>—the social body of citizens— as the foundation upon which our communities function, my civic engagement efforts are concerned with how the civitas comes together to shape the places it calls home. Believing both individuals and member-based community organizations can work together in the building of stronger and more connected cities, my professional work focuses on taking complex ideas and distilling them down to their basic functions.

Designing solutions to address common everyday problems identified by citizens, I transform these solutions through quick, scalable, intentional and no-frills efforts. The projects, resources and activations I create help citizens take greater ownership over their communities.

My work shaping neighbourhoods and cities has helped me to develop an understanding of the approaches, processes and relationships that inform what is and is not possible in terms of civic improvement efforts. Often working with municipal and institutional partners to implement initiatives administered through their processes, most of my professional practice to-date has had roots in radicalism. Considering efforts which are driven bottom-up by the community, I undertake work to help improve civic livelihood following an asset-based community development informed approach.

Selected Roles

Senior Community Fellow

— *The Good City Co., 2017–present*

Creating projects, resources and activations to help residents take greater ownership over the cities in which they reside, I specialize in building stronger, more connected communities by transforming ideas into action. Working with individuals, community organizations, local institutions, private businesses and municipalities, I engage, educate, and enable citizens to harness their unused potential to create positive change.

Designer

— *Block Party in a Box, 2013*

Acting as a catalyst for community interactions and relationship building, this print-at-home toolkit has empowered neighbours from across the globe to celebrate the places they call home. Most often used by communities of faith and local neighbourhood associations, *Block Party in a Box* has been adapted and built upon to create unique, relevant and engaging experiences for audiences of all ages.

Project Lead

— *PARK(ing) Day, 2010–2011*

Bringing together not-for-profit organizations, businesses, and citizens to take ownership of urban spaces, I helped change the quality of dialog about the city in which I live while empowering others to do the same. Endorsed by civil servants and local politicians, my work provided the foundation upon which new and progressive public spaces are planned and developed.

[To view other examples of professional practice please see Resume or Appendix A: Professional Practice.]

Scholarship. In support of civic engagement efforts which often exist outside of formal organizations, structures or processes, the approach I take to develop my skills, knowledge and attitudes often leads me to informal or self-directed learning opportunities. Drawing inspiration and insight from the work of those who have come before me, I have cultivated my knowledge through observing and studying the work of art collectives, tactical urbanists, civic activists and the ongoing efforts of everyday citizens as they improve the relationships they have with their respective communities. Compared to the adult education and community leadership strands of my practice this approach to scholarship is less formal and reflective of nature of this type of work. Rather than learning from established systems and texts, scholarship is formed from the citizen led, ad-hoc efforts of those who have come before me which informs much of my work. Learning from the actions, successes and failures of others has provided a foundation upon which I have established further understandings of my own.

Supporting these informal learning opportunities, providing both the context and theory related to practice, I have complimented scholarship efforts through non-formal educational offerings. Provided by leaders in the fields of community development and engagement these opportunities have helped me in understanding how my contributions can be bridged with organizational, community and individual civic engagement efforts and how they support each other to build strength within their collective communities.

Selected Scholarship

Community Engagement: Technologies for Change

— *Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement, 2016*

Building upon a thorough understanding of digital media and technologies, this workshop helped me to understand how I could better apply knowledge to community engagement efforts. Connecting with fellow practitioners I was exposed to new online services and strategies to aid in the face-to-face engagement experiences that are at the heart of creating community change.

Active Creative Engaged Community Building

— *Grassroots Enterprises, 2011*

This course provided the knowledge and resources needed to be a more adept community development practitioner while working in partnership with the City of London on initiatives to strengthen neighbourhoods and grassroots community efforts. Addressing strengths and challenges in leading communities, this course helped me identify and further develop my leadership style as both a nurturer and researcher (see Appendix B for personal inventories).

[To view other examples of scholarship please see Resume or Appendix B: Scholarship.]

Evidence and Evaluation. Characterized as "novel", "innovative", "creative", and "forward thinking" (see Appendix C for testimonials), my work designing civic engagement experiences has been well received by the communities I aim to serve. As a starting point for broader conversations, my approach to engaging citizens brings root problems to the surface while highlighting the assets from which improved conditions and experiences can be created. Helping others to understand the core problems and the minimum requirements needed for effective solution implementation, my work is often built upon by local organizations to create more formal, community specific initiatives which exist permanently in the public realm. Endorsed by citizens, organizations, civil servants and politicians, my work aims to engage audiences in authentic ways that are not hindered by traditional processes.

Recognized nationally and internationally my work extends beyond the confines of the communities it is developed within. This approach is by design. When problems are addressed appropriately there are opportunities for learnings and solutions to be more broadly applied beyond the boundaries of the initial issue they aim to solve. Through the design and distribution of tools, resources and programming that are more widely adaptable there is the opportunity to affect change in ways initially unimagined.

Selected Evidence

League of Creative Interventionists April Global Hangout: Neighbor

— The League of Creative Interventionists, *2014*

Recognized for my ability to creatively engage citizens in the process of building stronger communities, I was asked to contribute to a conversation on the importance of *neighboring*.

Hosted by the <u>League of Creative Interventionists</u> and <u>Good Worldwide Inc.,</u> I joined civic engagement practitioners from across the globe for a public discussion on ways to make cities more neighborly.

Unofficial signs take first steps (Walk London)

— *<u>Spacing Magazine,</u> 2012*

Highlighting Walk London, a guerrilla wayfinding initiative I brought to my home town modeled after <u>Walk [Your City]</u>, Spacing Magazine provided national and international attention to this civic engagement project. Noting the challenges London, Canada faces in providing adequate infrastructure to serve pedestrians, the author takes time to connect this simple yet effective civic engagement initiative to larger planning processes.

PARK(ing) Day London: Documentary

— *<u>Redcat Films,</u> 2010*

Documenting the local application of <u>PARK(ing) Day</u>, an annual worldwide event where artists, designers and citizens transform metered parking spots into temporary public parks, this film highlights how the quality of dialogue about the city we live in can change when citizens are brought together and feel empowered to take ownership of urban space.

[To view other examples of evidence and evaluation please see <u>Resume</u> or <u>Appendix C: Evidence and Evaluation</u>.]

Reflection. Developed in a similar fashion to my work as a <u>community leader</u>, the efforts I have taken related to civic engagement have often formed from initial pain points in my life or challenges communities face. In addressing issues that most resonate with citizens one of

the greatest rewards has been learning from community members in locations from around the globe, adapting and building upon their work to help solve localized versions of similar issues. A common element amongst the civic engagement initiatives I have designed has been the adoption of the ideas, platforms and mechanisms by established organizations for sanctioned programs. As not-for-profit, economic development and municipal organizations build upon my efforts it has been encouraging to see versions of my work exist in the public realm on a permanent basis.

With an ability to distill complex ideas down to their core elements I have helped organizations focus their time and attention to deliver more manageable projects. Whereas resources may have been poorly invested under traditional project processes, my approach begins with a minimum viable product scaling it to larger sizes as needed. In support of initial project efforts gaining greater traction I could dedicate more attention, resources and a long-view approach to the work I complete to help establish legacies for the projects I lead. Often abandoning work once it has been launched, staying with initiatives beyond their initial development would help me to refine the ideas, measure impact and help shepherd them forward to increase their reach.

Recognizing that any individual has a finite amount of time, energy and resources at their disposal, I am most interested in how I can more wisely invest my skills, resources and talents. As my practice evolves, with an emphasis placed on collaborations to generate greater impact, I aim to focus my time on the development of resources that can be replicated and adopted by those beyond my local communities. Moving away from the subversive work I have completed in the past and towards more formal and partnership based work, I hope that my efforts will gain greater recognition across communities. As I build stronger relationships with fellow

practitioners I aim to develop more meaningful community connections founded on respect,

mutual encouragement and the co-creation of positive change.

Resume

[Please see PDF included on the portfolio website]

Reflective Synthesis

How an individual chooses to shape their professional practice can take any number of infinite paths. A similar statement can be made regarding how someone approaches adult education, both in theory and practice. Over the course of my professional career it has been personal experiences as both a learner and an engaged citizen that have provided the greatest point of reference from which I construct strategies and structure learning opportunities to support others. With a goal of serving others with greater intention and effectiveness, my approach in doing so begins with what I know from personal experiences and is informed by the theory I consume, the observed actions of others and through developing a more complete understanding of myself as an educator, leader and individual.

Educator as Learner

Understanding myself first as a learner has informed my perspectives on education and the actions I take as a practitioner. Feeling unfulfilled by the learning experiences I often encounter, I believe that traditional approaches to education structured upon principles such as the banking concept (Freire, 1979) have not served me as best they could. Unreceptive to approaches which provide little autonomy for self-directedness I often seek out problem-based and experiential learning opportunities to provide challenges and enhance my development.

As I engage adult learners I find myself interacting with them through means which are representative of how I wish I would have been engaged in my own prior learning. Drawing similarities to asset-based community development, a framework which aims to "help communities recognize and map their assets … to mobilize them for development purposes" (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993, p. 8), as I work with learners I aim to build upon their life

experiences (Lindeman 1926/1982). Believing that curiosity and existing strengths form the foundation upon which the most meaningful experiences are constructed, my aim is to support individuals as they shape their own learning, development and growth.

Empowering Individuals

Margaret Mead may have said it best when she stated, "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has" (Lutkehaus, 2008, p. 261). It is in this spirit that I find purpose and direction in supporting individuals as they strive to create positive change in their lives.

Cautious of the term *empowerment* as it can often be misused and misunderstood (Gore, 1990) and because I am still in the process of determining the exact meaning of it myself, I am interested in how its meaning and use can support the autonomous development of individuals and communities. Consistent with the work of Prins and Drayton (2010), the learning experiences I feel have been most valuable have been those which provide the conditions for me to define for myself what success looks like and the actions needed to reach my goals.

Believing that it is only when we fully empower citizens—or as a better approach, co-lead initiatives with them (Raderstrong & Boyea-Robinson, 2016)—that communities and society reflect the best interests of all. Similarly, I have found that the most rewarding and effective teaching experiences to be those where students have full autonomy over their own learning controlling, "task, time, team, and technique" (Merriam & Bierema, p. 147) related to directing their own growth. Based on these experiences I find myself proactively establishing conditions to empower individuals by providing tools, resources and knowledge to support them as we co-construct learning opportunities which resonate and are relevant.

Searching for Identity

Consistent with a humanistic approach to adult education, the sense of moral obligation to community which the African philosophy of Ubuntu conveys—"I am because we are" (Tschaepe, 2013, p. 49) is a worldview that resonates closely with my own, evidence of which can be found throughout my work. But, as I take steps to strengthen communities I question why it is that I find a connection to this worldview when I struggle at the same time to find an authentic sense of belonging in communities and professional roles?

If I consider that a search for community may represent a search for self-identity, I see how the actions I take to build stronger communities may be actions taken to construct an individual identity for myself. The work of Tschaepe (2013) proposes that through Ubuntu an individual's purpose, worth and identity may only exist when placed in context to the relationships they are a part of. That the communities of identity, faith or place an individual is surrounded by shape who they are as defined by the value they offer to the individuals which make up the larger collective.

In trying to fully understand this perspective on forming one's identity I consider the work *Daring Greatly* (2015) from Brené Brown in which she notes (p. 231) an important distinction between *belonging* and *fitting in* as communities are encountered in our daily lives. In seeking a sense of belonging for myself I have begun to question whether the reason I move from one community to the next, changing roles in the process, is that I am seeking out where it is I truly belong and trying to form an identity for myself in the process.

Dichotomies of Practice

As my practice evolves across traditional and community environments I look to better understand, navigate and shape the dichotomies which exist in my life. Taking the time to identify and understand the competing elements which influence my worldview helps to continually inform greater self-awareness and shapes the actions I take.

Believing that I am a learner first and student second (Biesta, 2010) has informed how I interact with systems of education. The value, strength and elements of empowerment I find within leadership rather than management (Hanold, 2015) has influenced how I choose to engage others while in positions of power. And, the recent recognition that many of the difficulties I face as a learner and practitioner are rooted in the difference between *fitting in* and *belonging* (Brown, 2015) has provided guidance in better comprehending the conditions I require to best support my own growth. Recognizing that a meaningful life and successful practice are never void of such dichotomies, rather than viewing these differences as points of friction I choose to leverage them as opportunities and to find great strength within myself.

Towards a Collective

While the nature of community is present in many of my actions I find it difficult to admit that much of my professional work takes the form of individually secluded efforts rather than collective community action. The contributions I make while in teaching and community development roles are often made through work that is secondary to my primary responsibilities or completely disconnected from those I strive to serve. This approach has formed through the combination of an INTJ (introversion, intuition, thinking, judgment) personality type where I value independence and can find it difficult to interact with others in social settings (Myers-

Brigg, 1962), an ongoing challenge to find a community which I truly feel a connection to and a history of assuming roles that do not leverage my strengths as a practitioner (see Resume for professional experience; see Appendix B for personal inventories). Because I have not necessarily invested the effort required to complete work that deeply resonates I have as a result spent a great deal time completing individualized work at an arm's length with organizations I feel few connections to.

In understanding that great strength can come from working as part of a larger collective, as my practice evolves I aim to complete work with an emphasis placed on collaborations. Working in partnerships to achieve aspirational goals, I am interested in the collective capacity individuals possess to support the actions of others through their engagement, education and empowerment.

Integrating Practice

As an often-sporadic practice consisting of three distinct strands my professional efforts have only begun to come together in more recent years. With a goal to merge all strands of my practice into one cohesive body of work I aim to build upon the overlap and complementary nature which already exists between my Community Leadership and Civic Engagement efforts. Focusing my attention with greater care, I wish to weave both the theory and practice of Adult Education into the community centred work I am most passionate about. As my practice matures, I continue to gain greater clarity of its purpose and find myself taking the steps necessary to form an unique identity. With time, I am hopeful that these intentional actions will shape a practice that is not only in the service of others but in the service of myself as well.

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Appendices: Supporting Materials

Documents, artifacts, press and other materials have been collected here in support of the statements made throughout this portfolio. Provided in their original formats when possible with links to online versions if available, materials include degrees and certificates, transcripts, awards, teaching materials, resources, assessments, feedback, letters of support and personal inventories. Supporting materials have been organized under three main sections which coincide with the structure of each individual strand of practice. These sections are:

- Appendix A: Professional Practice,

- Appendix B: Scholarship, and

- Appendix C: Evidence and Evaluation.

Within each appendix, the contents have been further organized under headings appropriate to the specific materials included. Brief descriptions have been provided for each grouping of materials to identify main themes, the significance of their inclusion and how they support my work as a professional practitioner.

Appendix A: Professional Practice

Formed over the last decade, my professional practice spans the areas of adult education, community leadership and civic engagement. Offered as examples of the contributions I have made while in assumed roles, the documents, websites, policies and teaching materials included below are representative of a large and diverse body of work with an emphasis on the public facing community development work that has occupied most of my time.

Policy Development. Participating in strategic planning sessions for organizational and policy development purposes, my efforts and expertise have shaped the communities which surround me. Offering the perspectives of a young urbanist and grassroots community leader, my contributions have guided engagement efforts, helping staff, volunteers and citizens in the building of stronger communities. Providing digital, technical and design expertise as they relate to implementation activities, my contributions have helped to define policies which are better informed by the realities related to their effective delivery. Recognizing the value which exists when working amongst a group of individuals, my contributions are most often made as part of a larger team with myself assuming leadership or delegation roles if a need presents itself.

- City of London - Community Engagement Policy - Page 19
- City of London - Community Engagement Taskforce - Terms of Reference
- Emerging Leaders - Implementation Plan
- Emerging Leaders - Strategic Plan
- London Strenghtening Neighbourhoods Strategy - Overview
- London Strenghtening Neighbourhoods Strategy - Update Report

Projects and Activations. Comprising the bulk of my contributions, primarily under the Civic Engagement strand of practice, I create projects and activations to address local issues and facilitate conversations between citizens about the places they live. A mix of subversive, sanctioned, business and grassroots initiatives have provided a broad perspective on what is possible in terms of civic engagement and the various approaches one can take in completing such work. With many projects and activations adopted by local businesses, organizations and municipalities for initiatives that are still active, the legacy of my work has extended beyond initial implementations. Initially supported by few outside sources, work completed under this heading is often self-funded, funded by low-budget not-for-profit organizations or established under social enterprise models.

- **100 Ways to Improve London** - *100 Ways* was a sign-based installation that instigated a community conversation which spanned multiple topics and took place around various venues. Ideas were collected from the community for ways in which to improve London, Canada. These ideas were taken to the street, posted in the downtown core, and forced people to acknowledge the topics and have important conversations.
    - 100 Ways - Poster List
    - 100 Ways - Posters
    - 100 Ways - Installation Image
- **Change Camp London** - *Chance Camp London* was an annual event and ongoing community that sought to create connections between people and their civic passions by using new tools of communication. The *Change Camp* platform was open to all and hoped to ignite a self-organizing movement for positive change in London and its diverse neighbourhoods. One of the events *Change Camp* offered was focused on reimagine what

citizen engagement would look like if we opened the doors to meaningful dialogue and participation among citizens and with the municipality they live within.

- o Change Camp - The Forth Wall - poster

- **Little Gems Contest** - *The Little Gems Contest* was a way to share and celebrate the diverse neighbourhoods that make up the city of London and the Little Gems which each of them contain. The contest was launched to celebrate neighbourhoods and let people share the things that make them unique. The *Little Gems Contest* is encouraged residents to go online and share, like and support their favourite neighbourhood gem.

  - o Little Gems Contest - Final Report

  - o Little Gems Contest - Work Plan

  - o Little Gems Contest - Branding

- **PARK(ing) Day** - Bringing together not-for-profit organizations, businesses, and citizens to take ownership of urban space, *PARK(ing) Day* helped to change the quality of dialog about the city in which I live while empowering others to do the same. Endorsed by civil servants and local politicians, *PARK(ing) Day* provided the foundation upon which current public spaces are planned and developed.

  - o PARK(ing) Day Documentary - vimeo.com

- **[this city] co.** - *[this city] co.* was a place-based wares company formed in London, Canada. Focused on designing wearables and other products, *[this city] co.* aimed to encourage civic pride and ownership in cities across the globe. Sparking a localized t-shirt movement rooted in civic pride, *[this city] co.*'s offerings were limited-edition designs screened and printed in the Forest City. *[this city] co.* was developed and delivered in conjunction with *Form & Foundry Inc.*

- o [this city] - Merchandise - 01

- o [this city] - Merchandise - 02

- o [this city] - Merchandise - 03

- **Urban Film Nights** - *Urban Film Nights* are a chance to hang out with past, present and future neighbours to socialize over a film, a beer (or two) and some good conversation. Informal and apolitical, the purpose of these films nights is to better understand the cities in which we reside and the elements which make them unique and dynamic.

- **Walk London** - *Walk London* installed signs around the downtown core of London, Canada directing pedestrians to local business, organizations, parks and institutions. The signs where installed to enlighten people, using creative & intentional signage, to the fact that most places they travel to aren't as far by foot as they might think. *Walk London* was in implemented in association with the now defunct *Our Street London*.

  - o Legacy Website - walklondon.thegoodcity.co

- **Wednesday Night Bike Rides** - *Wednesday Night Bike Rides* was initiated as a social activity to forge relationships with new friends, meet old friends, and explore different neighbourhoods in the city, while engaging in light exercise. Meeting weekly on Wednesday nights at 7 pm, a bike leader would emerge spontaneously to guide the group on their journey. *Wednesday Night Bike Rides* were implemented in association with the now defunct *Our Street London*.

  - o Wednesday Night Bike Rides - downloads

Teaching Experiences. Representative of where the focus of my time, energy and talents have been invested over the past decade of work, few documents, artifacts and materials have

been included here in support of teaching adults. The lack of these materials is due to past teaching roles where experiences were emphasized over traditional course materials, the informal or secondary nature of many of the roles I assume and poor recording keeping on my part. Although the included items provide some insights into my accomplishments and may help to form a better understanding of my practice more broadly, it is recognized that this area of focus is underrepresented across my body of work.

- Fanshawe College - GIS - Course Slides - 01

- Fanshawe College - GIS - Course Slides - 02

- Fanshawe College - GIS - Course Slides - 03

- Ladies Learning Code - One Page Website - Course Slides

- Ladies Learning Code - Multi-Page Website - Course Slides

- Ladies Learning Code - Interactive Stories and Game Making - Course Slides

Tools and Resources. In creating tools and resources, primary as work completed through the Community Leadership and Civic Engagement strands of my practice, I aim to engage audiences while empowering them to feel more connected to their communities. Although some resources take the form of online digital platforms to extend the effectiveness of in-person communities, others leverage digital platforms for distribution purposes only. Often developed with the belief that tools and resources provided to community members will be leveraged in specific ways, I have learned over time that it is imperative to begin with the needs of those served so that tools and resources are constructed to meet real needs and not just those which are assumed to exist. With a recent shift in the investment of my time and effort, I am

looking to establish platforms which enable others to take greater control over their decision rather than investing time in the creation of the tools for use by the end user.

- **Block Party in a Box** – *Block Party in a Box* is a resource kit that can be used by anyone wanting to plan a block party for their street, community, or neighbourhood of any size. With pre-made posters, checklists, games, and other resources, *Block Party in a Box* allows individuals to plan and execute a successful block party without breaking a sweat.
  - o Block Party in a Box website - www.blockpartyinabox.com
- **Civic Action Kit** - *The Civic Action Kit* was an online resource to help civic builders, community developers and city hackers do better work. Curating the best resources available, the Civic Action Kit aimed to have change-makers spend less time looking for the right tools and more time doing great work. *The Civic Action Kit was retired in 2014.*
  - o Civic Action Kit - screenshot of old website
- **Good City Co.** - *Good City Co.* is a civic organization based in London, Canada that creates projects, resources and activations to help citizens take greater ownership over the places they call home. Specializing in building stronger, more connected communities by transforming ideas into action, *Good City Co.* engages, educates and empowers citizens, building upon their knowledge, to harness the unused potential in communities.
  - o Good City Co. website - www.thegoodcity.co
- **NeighbourGood Guide** - The *Neighbourgood Guide* was an online platform that connected community members allowing them to communicate and coordinate a

unified voice to facilitate change in the community. Providing an open forum for

discussion, the site allowed residents of London to discuss issues important to them.

By writing blog entries, sharing images, video and other digital content, residents of

London had an opportunity to mobilize municipal policy changes. *The*

NeighbourGood Guide was shutdown in 2014.

- o <u>NeighbourGood Guide - branding</u>

Appendix B: Scholarship

In support of my professional practice, I participate in scholarship opportunities which better inform the understanding I have of myself and the action I take. Taking the form of formal education, non-formal training experiences and self-directed growth opportunities I have found great value in a broad spectrum of learning opportunities. Although they may seem disconnected and inconsistent to some, the variety of scholarship opportunities presented have helped to shape the understanding I have of myself as an individual and practitioner.

Certifications. Although not a requirement for teaching adults, I take great pride in holding the designation of Ontario Certified Teacher. The "skills, knowledge, trust and responsibilities" which form are the foundation of this certification are directly related and transferrable to my role as an adult educator. Believing that a Bachelor of Education is in many ways an applied communications degree, providing both the theory and practical tools to communicate with individuals of varying needs and abilities, I view this certification as an extension of this core beliefs that inform how I choose to interact with adult learners.

- Certification - Ontario College of Teachers - Certificate
- Certification - Ontario College of Teachers - Registration

Degrees, Diplomas and Transcripts. Although not planned at its onset, the path through formal academia I have taken to arrive where I am today has been an interconnected journey. This journey could have only resulted based on the scholarship choices I have made to date. Academically a high achiever, I have developed an expertise in navigating the process of formal academia to help me reach the goals I set out to obtain. When captivated by a topic and

curious about every element of its makeup, I fully invest the time, energy and focus to deeply learn about it and as a result complete the related academic tasks required. Although I found myself initially attending university at a time when I should not have been there, disinterested in the field of study (history) itself, the curiosity I have for learning can be found throughout the completion of my degrees and diploma.

- Degree - Bachleor of Arts - Western University

- Degree - Bachleor of Education - Western University

- Diploma - GIS and Urban Planning - Fanshawe College

- Transcript - Fanshawe College

- Transcript - Western University

Personal Inventories. Completed as part of professional development, coaching sessions and reflective practice, the inventories collected here have informed a deeper understanding of who I am as an individual and practitioner. Consistent among various inventories are themes related to being a nurturer and focusing on the needs of those I serve, being an analytical thinker in trying to best understand the problems I face, and an approach to learning both in professional practice and life founded upon a natural curiosity which raises questions such as, "what if?", "why?", "why not?" and "how can we?" Although conflicts exist between identified traits, an analytical and scientific approach to problem solving and the often-unsystematic approaches working with learners requires as a nurturer and teacher with a developmental focus, I have found that in understanding the strengths and weaknesses of each I can leverage and balance them to create a more fulfilling practice.

- Leadership Inventory - Community Leadership Styles Assessment - Results

- Personality Inventory - Myers-Briggs Type Indicator - Results - INTJ

- Philosophy of Adult Education Inventory - Results

- Teaching Perspectives Inventory - Results

- Values Inventory - PWC Personal Brand Workbook - Results

Professional Development. In support of the roles I have held over the past decade, the professional development opportunities included here and those included in my Resume focus primarily on two main areas. In support of the Community Leadership strand of my practice I focus time and attention on defining myself as a leader. Developing the skills and abilities required to lead in community settings, I have identified how my unique traits can complement those of others while supporting collaborative change. In support of my Civic Engagement efforts, learning opportunities have centred on more traditional practices of community development and engagement. Understanding the theories driving more formalized development practices has helped me to establish a working rapport with other practitioners to co-create meaningful development opportunities.

- Certificate - Campus for Communities - Community Development for Practitioners

- Certificate - Campus for Communities - Foundational Community Building

- Certificate - Emerging Leaders - Leadership London

- Certificate - Fanshawe College - Orientation to College Teaching

- Certificate - Ivey - Understanding Your Customer

- Certificate - Seth Godin's Leadership Workshop

Appendix C: Evidence and Evaluation

Examples of feedback, press, awards and documentation from outside sources provide evidence of the impact and influence my work has had through the lens of others. Reflecting the more public work I complete as a community development practitioner, the included evidence supports statements made regarding servant-leadership, humanist and radical approaches to serving others. Most recognition has come from formal institutions within the community but in support of the less-formal actions I take as a community leader. In compiling evidence and evaluation in support of my professional practice there was minimal available related to the formal or professional roles I have held.

Awards. Highlighting grassroots volunteer efforts and community leadership roles, recognition has been bestowed upon me by employers and my alma mater. Identifying an ability to build empathy with others and work across sectors or disciplines, the awards and recognition received are often for efforts outside of those related to roles with the granting organizations themselves. Humble in receipt of such recognition, I often prefer *not* to receive such attention for my contributions as I feel a sense of duty to take such action in service of the individuals and communities that have provided me with so much.

- Award - Kings University College Young Alumni Award - Announcement
- Award - Kings University College Young Alumni Award - Remarks
- Award - Libro Growing Prosperity Award - Nomination
- Award - Libro Growing Prosperity Award - Nomination Video
- Award - Libro Growing Prosperity Award - Kevin's Reaction
- Award - Michael Barrington Hall Memorial Award - Certificate

- Award - Michael Barrington Hall Memorial Award - Letter of Reference

Letters of Reference. In recognition of the work I complete outside areas of direct interest, the reference letters I receive are from leaders within their respective organizations. Identifying my ability to shape programs at the strategic level while focusing on the needs of the end users, the positive, enthusiastic and progressive approaches I take to completing work are highlighted by many. Although in quantity the letters received in support of my professional practice are not numerous those I have received come from organization and individuals whom I highly respect and feel a noble sense of duty in supporting.

- Letter of Appreciation - City of London - Community Engagement Taskforce - 01
- Letter of Appreciation - City of London - Community Engagement Taskforce - 02
- Letter of Reference - UnLondon Digital Media Association
- Letter of Reference - Ladies Learning Code

Press. Sourced primarily from local newspaper publications, the press I receive focuses on work completed under the Civic Engagement and Community Leadership strands of my practice. Recognizing a creative approach to the work I complete, most press is positive in nature while often overlooking the legalities related to such work. Lacking in the press is mention of the influence my work has had on more formalized and permanent efforts developed by local municipalities and organizations. This lack of documentation is primarily due to official programming receiving far less media attention or failing to note the originating source of such programs.

Anderson, M. (2013, July 30). Londoner Chris McInnis creates life-size controller for Katamari Damacy. *The London Free Press*. Retrieved from http://tinyurl.com/ychhmca5

Bowness, A. (2012, Fall). Unofficial signs take first steps. *Spacing Magazine*, pp. 26. Retrieved from http://tinyurl.com/yaxrl2q9

Community change one neighbourhood at a time: The NeighbourGood Guide. (2014, January 7). *London Community Foundation*. Retrieved from http://tinyurl.com/y85hcwky

Donachie, M. (2014, April 30). Love London? Now you can wear it with pride. *Metro News*. Retrieved from http://tinyurl.com/ybbw4je4

Dubinski, K. (2010, September 20). Day in the park(ing spot). *The London Free Press*. Retrieved from http://tinyurl.com/y9q3lrbu

Dubinski, K. (2012, June 4). PodCamp draws a crowd. *The London Free Press*. Retrieved from http://tinyurl.com/7ffcbms

Dubinski, K. (2012, May 31). This isn't your typical business conference. *The London Free Press*. Retrieved from http://tinyurl.com/85fzv45

Faust, E. (2013, April 1). Third time's the charm for March's Awesome London winner. *London Community News*. Retrieved from http://tinyurl.com/ycycy3w2

Franks, H. (2014, April 17). League of Creative Interventionists April global hangout: Neighbor. *GOOD.IS*. Retrieved from http://tinyurl.com/yby48dsu

Gillespie, I. (2013, April 9). Innovative new funding program seeks off-the-wall ways to make London a better place. *The London Free Press*. Retrieved from http://tinyurl.com/ydgostnq

Ignite London. (2010, October 20). How to work 40 hours a week and not get paid a damn cent or how to stay sane. *Ignite London*. Retrieved from http://tinyurl.com/y9hlfr33

Platero, E. (2010, September 17). PARK(ing) Day documentary. *RedCat Film*. Retrieved from http://tinyurl.com/y9jpwpop

Meyer, S. (2013, July 14). London's little gems could yield one neighbourhood $5,000. *OurLondon*. Retrieved from http://tinyurl.com/y8yuljzu

Meyer, S. (2013, January 28). Looking for help collecting the written history of the Forest City. *London Community News*. Retrieved from http://tinyurl.com/y8pdl8kw

Meyer, S. (2012, January 10). New community engagement policy gets council support. *OurLondon*. Retrieved from http://tinyurl.com/ycc7gep9

Meyer, S. (2011, August 3). Calling all emerging community leaders. *OurLondon*. Retrieved from http://tinyurl.com/y87n7nj8

Montanini, C. (2014, May 5). Entrepreneurs put London on a shirt. *The Londoner*. Retrieved
    from http://tinyurl.com/y7m22tp8

Rizzotti, A [interviewer]. (2014, March 10). Awesome member of the week. *GOOD.IS*.
    Retrieved from http://tinyurl.com/y8ajozb5

Rodgers, K. (2013, August). 2013 Alumni awards. *Kings University College Alumni Herald*.
    Retrieved from http://tinyurl.com/y99a9zrd

Sharma, S. (2013, July 16). New app uncovers local neighbourhood gems. *The Londoner*.
    Retrieved from http://tinyurl.com/y7voecta

Sims, J. (2012, January 9). Report's goal to get everyone to adopt a vision. *The London Free
    Press*. Retrieved from http://tinyurl.com/yclngh6x

Turner, G. (2010, July 26). Park your creativity downtown. *The London Free Press*. Retrieved
    from http://tinyurl.com/2e3vsfl

UWO Journalism. (2010, February 18) Signs of change. *University of Western Ontario*.
    Retrieved from http://tinyurl.com/yb97wfrq

Weber, A. (2012, June 26). Sign, sign, everywhere a sign. *The London Free Press*. Retrieved
    from http://tinyurl.com/y8z6oypd

web.isod.es. (2010, October 16). Hack the Vote. *Hack the Vote*. Retrieved
    from http://tinyurl.com/y8v5ewra

web.isod.es. (2010, July 6). Change Camp London. *Change Camp London*. Retrieved
    from http://tinyurl.com/yaqde5ut

web.isod.es. (2012, May 1). Change Camp: The Fourth Wall. *Change Camp London*. Retrieved
    from http://tinyurl.com/y7tdxxmo

Who's London? Roundtable. (2011, May 28). *The London Free Press.* Retrieved
    from http://tinyurl.com/yagxvvta

Professional Evaluations. Evaluations included below identify a competency for

understanding vast subject matters and a natural ability to effectively convey this information to

others. Performing above expectations on a regular basis, my supervisors recognize my high-

achieving ability and how I often bestow this onto so that all can succeed to their greatest

potential. Unfortunately, there are few evaluations to include here as evidence related to work

completed as an adult educator. Given the lack of process for such evaluations of performance in specific roles, and the fact that I do not have access to the evaluation records I have received in the past, there are few examples to illustrate the impact I have made in adult education specific roles.

- Performance Review - Emerging Leaders - 01

- Performance Review - Emerging Leaders - 02

- Teaching Feedback - Fanshawe College - Russel Schnurr

- Teaching Feeback - Thames Valley District School Board - Bryan Kussner

- Teaching Feeback - Thames Valley District School Board - Mark Verbeem

- Teaching Feeback - Thames Valley District School Board - Steve Main

Testimonials. Offered by former employers, colleagues and clients, the testimonials included here have been primarily collected through LinkedIn. Identifying an ability to create impact across sectors through innovative and creative means, the testimonials below indicate that I am a committed and generous individual. Understanding larger strategic concepts and the minutia of tactical implementations, and possessing the ability to draw connections between the two, are common comments from those I have supported both in volunteer and professional capacities. Given my work as an adult educator is often secondary to other roles, comments regarding this strand of my practice are lacking amongst the testimonials included.

- Feedback - Libro - Thank You Gift

- Testimonials - LinkedIn - Adult Education

- Testimonials - LinkedIn - Civic Engagement

- <u>Testimonials - LinkedIn - Community Leadership</u>

- <u>Testimonials - LinkedIn - Misc</u>

Epilogue

Reflective practice is not narcissistic because rather than falling in love with our own beauty, we bravely face the discomfort and uncertainty of attempting to perceive how things are. We seek to uncover dark corners by asking difficult questions. We reflect in order to try to perceive ourselves with others' eyes (employers, clients, colleagues) to gain a clearer picture. ([Bolton, 2014, p. 17](#))

Crafting this professional portfolio is one of the most challenging tasks I have ever completed. This is *not* an overstatement. While I never thought the process of dissecting and reflecting upon my professional practice would be easy I could have never imagined that it would be this difficult. As someone who would rather *not* be the centre of attention, focusing so much on myself required more mental and physical energy than I have invested previously into a single activity, certainly any academic related task. And, if this process was not difficult enough on its own I found myself adding to the stress, pressure and process of reflection.

Having left an unfulfilling professional role in December of 2017 in search of greater meaning, I found myself searching for the right role, being rejected from many and eventually securing full-time employment in more recent months. Relevant to where I would like to head with my career and fulfilling one of the long-term career goals identified on my application for this Master of Adult Education program, this process was an extremely tiring and demanding activity on its own. And, over the past 6 months I found myself reading items I did not intend on connecting to this assignment. A dissertation about being a first generation academic from a blue-collar family ([Hodges, 2016](#)), a book about the nature of vulnerability as it relates to the roles we assume ([Brown, 2015](#)), literature about an African perspective on the nature of community ([Tschaepe, 2013](#)) and collections of highly personal accounts shared by individuals

whom have found ways to live in harmony with their depression. Consuming these items outside of the process I had defined for this portfolio required me to confront additional questions of myself and of my practice. Eventually many of these items, consumed for purposes unrelated to this portfolio, informed the final product. As I shared with my peers two months ago, the process of completing this portfolio has me questioning so much about my work and whom I am as an individual. When combined with searching for meaningful employment and reading more broadly, I have found myself in tears on more than one occasion in more recent months. But, all this energy and intention was not invested without reward.

Although initially intended as a tool to help find meaningful employment, with potential employers as the primary audience, as the process unfolded I was happy to identify *myself* as the singular audience for this portfolio. I realized that I needed to first understand myself and my professional contributions so that I could convey the nature of my practice to those I build relationships with. Beginning with an initial mapping of my work then connecting it to some adult education and community development theories, I needed to comprehend a practice that I often consider sporadic. The resulting portfolio has taken me down a journey of understanding and it is this journey, along with the creation of this product, that I find great reward within.

With that said, I am not happy or satisfied with the results of my efforts. The format of this portfolio leads much to be desired. Longer than I would have liked, but shorter than it initially was, this portfolio lacks additional graphics and is heavier in text. Created with myself as the primary audience and for academic purposes, I can live with the presented format as it contains what I require however, this is certainly not a portfolio I would present to parties outside formal academia or use as a marketing tool for employment purposes.

Finding it a challenge to better connect my work to adult education theory, I struggle to adequately evaluate my practice against the most relevant literature. In trying to understand the foundation of my work, through the strands of practice I focus so much time and attention on, I regularly find myself questioning the actual value of my professional efforts. Feeling that I have not focused my practice enough on relevant activities I am often uncertain whether it is appropriate to draw meaningful connections to the literature, or in some cases where to begin in drawing such connections. The result of this was an investment of time in trying to make greater sense of my practice more generally rather than specifically as it relates to adult education. I feel that I have fallen short in the efforts required to not only meet the requirements of this academic assignment but to leverage this portfolio as a tool to develop a deeper understanding of how my work connects to adult education beyond what is more obvious on a surface level. This is my failure and I find myself now asking, "How can I improve?" and "Where do I go from here?"

I believe that my new professional role which has me working with students in an academic setting will provide some stability and help to immerse myself in adult education. The steps I am taking in leadership and volunteer efforts, with an emphasis of integrating theories and praxis to serve adults in their communities, will support efforts to merge and understand the relationship between the strands of my practice. And, with the start of the next phase of this academic program, the literature review, I am interested in how a focused reading list aimed to connect research interests back to adult education can help me to better situate my studies and attention where they need to be. I am hopeful that the combination of these actions and recognizing a need to take greater strides to connect my practice and research to the most relevant adult education literature will help to focus, refine and improve my work.

- Reflection dated September 13, 2017