



Le bulletin de l'APRUO
The APRUO Newsletter

Fall 2026 Edition

Website: <https://apruo.ca>

E-mail: apruo@uottawa.ca

Editors: Christina De Simone & André Lapierre

E-mails: desimone.christina8@gmail.com & andre_lapierre@icloud.com

Editorial Consultant: Richard Clément

Distribution: Dany Laveault

Table of Contents

- **APRUO Board members**
- **A Word from the APRUO president**
- **APRUO Community Connections & Beyond**

Arts

Poetry

- **A Glimpse of Memory**

Literature

- **Keep My Memory Safe: Fook Soo Am, The Pagoda**
- **Between Worlds: Scholarship, Leadership, and Literary Creativity**

Education

Education & Learning

- **Son premier livre lu au complet**

Education & Mental Health

- **Care, Caution, and Possibility: A Care-Centered Framework for Artificial Intelligence and Postsecondary Student Mental Health/ Soins, prudence et possibilités : un cadre axé sur le soin pour penser l'intelligence artificielle et la santé mentale des étudiants au postsecondaire**

Science

Medicine/Health

- **À propos de la neurostimulation : Partie 2/Neurostimulation : Part 2**

Medicine/Health/Music

- **Third Ognanovic Lecture: Music and health in older adults: Improving wellbeing of older adults through community-based music programs/ Musique et santé chez les aînés: Améliorer le bien-être des personnes âgées grâce à des programmes communautaires de musique.**

Travel

- **Souvenirs de la Méditerranée et de l'Adriatique/ Memories of the Mediterranean and the Adriatic**

Volunteering

- **Volunteering in Ottawa**

Business News

Services for Retirees

- **Are You Getting Your CURAC Perks ?**
- **Health Care Spending Account (HCSA)**
- **APRUO Membership Renewal**
- **Updated Contact Information: Human Resources & IT**

Other News

- **In-Town Events: Events at Perfect Bookstore**
- **Call for Research Participants**

Reflections: Continuing the Conversation

APRUO Board Members

We represent the Association of Retired Professors of the University of Ottawa (APRUO). We are a dynamic and interconnected group of retired professors at the University of Ottawa. We seek to inspire collaboration, dedication, and transformation amongst ourselves and the larger community of retirees at the University of Ottawa. For a list of current Board members, please go to <https://apruo.ca>. If you are a retired professor or librarian and wish to become a member of the Board, please contact us at: apruo@uottawa.ca.

APRUO President's Message



Dear members of the APRUO,

I hope that you have all had a pleasant summer despite the unusual amount of rain.

In June we had our traditional meeting where we greet the new members of the Board and assign responsibilities for the coming year. There had been two vacancies: Doug Angus had passed away in January. He was our voting member on the Pension Committee. Denis Nadeau had been Vice-President and liaison with the President's office. Denis had played a key role in bringing about the visit of the President to our AGM.

Unfortunately, he had too many other commitments and had to step down.

Two new members were appointed at the AGM: Stéphanie Chitpin (Education), who takes over the CURAC file from André Lapierre, and Eda Kranakis (History), who replaces Sylvie Lauzon as Secretary and will be our non-voting member on the University Pension Committee. Sylvie Lauzon remains on the Board as Past-President. André remains the voting member of the Pension Committee and co-editor of Nexus. Richard Clément replaces Denis Nadeau as Vice-President, in addition to his duties as Treasurer. Dany Laveault is our webmaster. Christina De Simone remains our indefatigable Editor of Nexus. Finally, Andrée-Durieux-Smith and Raymond Leblanc organize our socio-cultural activities.

Currently the APRUO and the University administration are negotiating nonfinancial issues in view of a new Collective Agreement. Since our issues involve additional cost, they will be

discussed in January. I have been assured by Colin Monpetit, the President of the APUO, that I shall be invited to the meetings to make the case for our requests.

My warmest wishes to all for a pleasant Fall, wherever you may be. I look forward to meeting at least some of you at our social activities.

J. Douglas Clayton

President, APRUO.

APRUO Community Connections & Beyond



There is something about autumn that invites reflection. As the days grow shorter and the light takes on a softer, warmer quality, the landscape around us begins its quiet transformation. Leaves change colour, familiar routines return, and the pace of life gradually shifts. After the openness and ease of summer, fall offers a different kind of pause—one that

encourages us to look back, to take stock, and to consider what lies ahead.

For those of us connected to the university, autumn carries a particular resonance. The return of students, the renewed energy of the campus, and the beginning of another academic year remind us of the rhythms that have shaped so much of our professional lives. Although our roles may have changed, the curiosity, learning, relationships, and sense of community that have long been part of university life continue to connect us.

Fall also reminds us that change can be both an ending and a beginning. There is something reassuring in the return of familiar rhythms, even as each season brings its own possibilities. It is

a time to reconnect with colleagues and friends, to remain curious, to share experiences, and perhaps to make room for new interests and new conversations.

In this spirit of reflection, renewal, and connection, we are pleased to share the **Autumn 2026 issue of our newsletter**. We hope the contributions in this issue will inform, engage, and perhaps inspire you—and, most importantly, remind us of the community we continue to share as retired professors and librarians of the University of Ottawa.

Note to Readers: To further establish our connection with each other, we thought you would appreciate reading our colleagues' submissions in the language(s) in which they were written. Therefore, for the section beginning with ARTS through the section on VOLUNTEERING members' contributions have not been translated.

Christina and the rest of the team

ARTS

Poetry

By: Xavier Teng (Pen name)
 Librarian and retired sessional lecturer
 Common Law Section (Faculty of Law)

A Glimpse of Memory

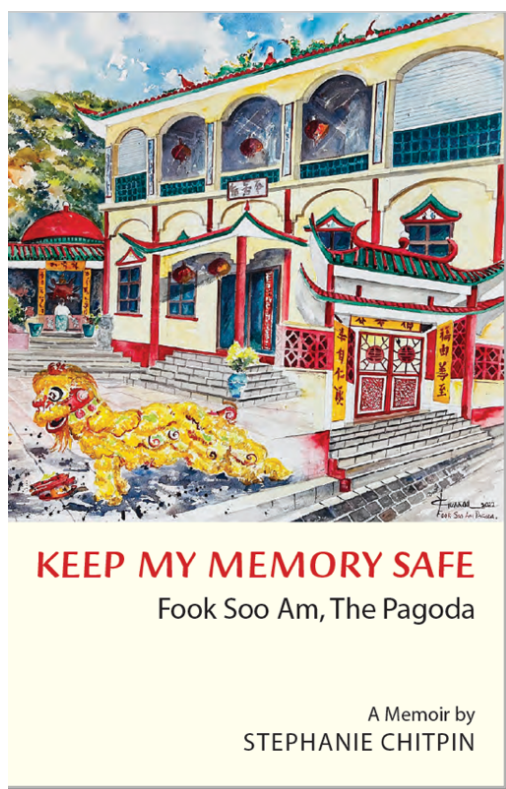
Memory gleams in my fading mind
 like stars flickering in the sky
 or the faint beams of the sunset
 settling o'er the grove in the West.
 Always in the air of glory,
 my memory outshines my days
 that are at best dull and weary,
 rarely glimmering, though decayed.
 Memory, the jewel of lasting love,
 shines nowhere except in my heart.

What mystery lying beyond that part
 could I perceive its unknown outlook?
 Your photo calls to my past in sleep
 when I am in a gorgeous dream.
 Again, your smile that transcends
 the steps of the sun I could never forget.
 O Lord, disperse the mists
 that blot the myth of our fate,
 and unfold the love embalmed in my bosom
 that soothes a beseeching soul.

Literature

By: Stephanie Chitpin, PhD

Email: schitpin@uottawa.ca



From Temple Orphan to Academic: The Story Behind the Book

Many of you know me through our shared work in higher education and our continued connections through APRUO and CURAC. However, before I became a university professor and researcher, my life began in a completely different world—one that I share in my April 2023 memoir, *Keep My Memory Safe: Fook Soo Am, The Pagoda*.

Today, I want to give you a brief glimpse into who I am behind the academic titles and share the exciting global direction this journey is heading.

A Glimpse Behind the Academic

Long before I walked the halls of Canadian academia, I was an infant transported illegally from Hong Kong to the island of Mauritius in a woven straw basket. Born to unwed parents, I was taken in by Ah Pak, the head nun of a Buddhist temple, and raised as an orphan ward inside Fook Soo Am, a temple known locally as the Pagoda. To the Mauritian government, I didn't even legally exist.

Growing up in the temple, the odds were heavily stacked against me. I faced the harsh stings of childhood name-calling and the deep social shame of my origins. Ah Pak had very different plans for my life, but I harboured a fierce, unwavering determination to get an education. With the quiet, tactical diplomacy of a benevolent local businessman named Mr. Chui, I fought for my right to learn. Against all conventional paths for an orphaned temple nun, I finished high school at 16 and eventually won a scholarship that brought me to the University of Guelph, changing my life forever.

Where the Journey Is Going Next

This memoir is no longer just a look back at my past. It has grown into a forward-looking, global mission to transform the lives of other marginalized students:

Global Reach: To share this story across cultures, the Arabic version of the memoir was proudly published in January 2025, the Chinese translation is set to come out in early spring, and the French version is currently in development by the University of Ottawa Press to hit the shelves on February 24, 2027.

Funding Futures: I am thrilled to report that four scholarships have now been officially awarded to deserving students, entirely funded by the proceeds of the book's sales.

An Active Retirement Mission: Retirement has not slowed this work down; instead, it has given me the time to dedicate myself fully to this cause. I am actively managing the *Ah Feeti of Fook Soo Am Memorial Scholarship* (established in Dec 2021), overseeing its growth, and working closely with the university to ensure we directly support underrepresented students who are passionately fighting for social justice, inclusion, and equity. Every single royalty from the book goes straight into this endowment.

How to Purchase the Book & Support the Mission

If you would like to support this mission and read the full story, copies are widely available in both print and digital formats. You can order directly through the publisher or online retailers:

Print Edition: Available directly from the publisher at Baraka Books or via Amazon Canada.

Digital / E-Book: You can purchase digital copies instantly on the Kindle Store, Kobo, and Apple Books.

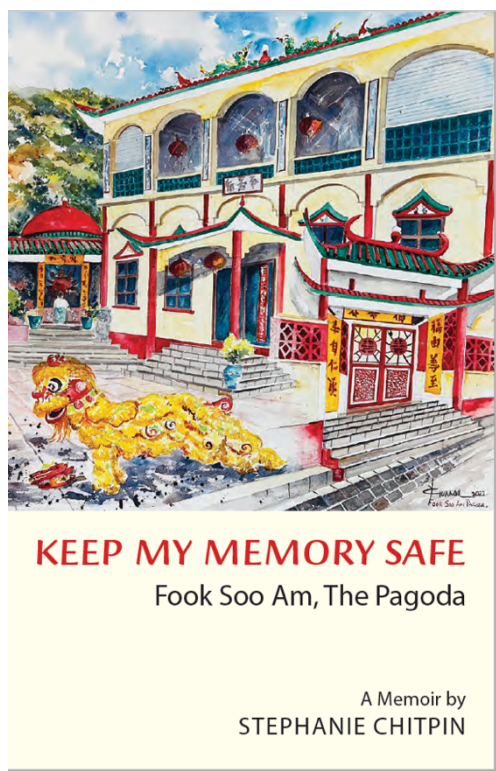
Direct Donations: If you wish to make a direct, tax-deductible contribution to the endowment fund, please use the official University of Ottawa Ah Feeti of Fook Soo Am Memorial Scholarship Donation Form.

Thank you for being part of this journey with me, and for proving that what we choose to save can truly rewrite futures.

Stephanie Chitpin, Ph.D.

Par: Stephanie Chitpin, PhD

Courriel: schitpin@uottawa.ca



De l'orphelinat du temple à l'université : l'histoire derrière le livre

Vous êtes nombreux à me connaître à travers notre travail commun dans le milieu de l'enseignement supérieur et nos liens continus au sein de l'APRUO et des ARUCC.

Pourtant, avant de devenir professeure d'université et chercheuse, ma vie a commencé dans un monde complètement différent — un univers que je partage dans mon mémoire publié en avril 2023, *Keep My Memory Safe: Fook Soo Am, The Pagoda*.

Aujourd'hui, je souhaite vous offrir un bref aperçu de la personne que je suis derrière les titres académiques et vous

faire part de la direction internationale et passionnante que prend cette aventure.

Un aperçu derrière les titres académiques

Bien avant de fouler les couloirs du milieu universitaire canadien, j'étais un nourrisson transporté clandestinement de Hong Kong à l'île Maurice dans un panier en paille tressée. Né de parents non mariés, j'ai été recueilli par Ah Pak, la nonne supérieure d'un temple bouddhiste, et j'ai grandi comme pupille orpheline au sein de Fook Soo Am, un temple connu localement sous le nom de la Pagode. Pour le gouvernement mauricien, je n'existais même pas légalement. En grandissant dans le temple, les probabilités étaient fortement contre moi. J'ai été confronté aux dures moqueries de l'enfance et à la profonde honte sociale de mes origines. Ah Pak avait des projets bien différents pour ma vie, mais je nourrissais une détermination farouche et inébranlable d'obtenir une éducation.

Grâce à la diplomatie discrète et stratégique de M. Chui, un homme d'affaires local bienveillant, je me suis battue pour mon droit d'apprendre. À l'encontre de toutes les trajectoires classiques d'une nonne orpheline dans un temple, j'ai terminé mes études secondaires à 16 ans et j'ai finalement obtenu une bourse qui m'a menée à l'Université de Guelph, changeant ma vie à jamais.

Les prochaines étapes de ce parcours

Ce mémoire n'est plus un simple regard vers le passé. Il s'est transformé en une mission mondiale et prospective visant à changer la vie d'autres étudiants marginalisés :

Rayonnement international : Afin de partager cette histoire à travers les cultures, la version arabe du mémoire a été fièrement publiée en janvier 2025, la traduction chinoise devrait paraître au début du printemps, et la version française est actuellement en préparation chez les Presses de l'Université d'Ottawa pour une sortie en librairie le 24 février 2027.

Financer l'avenir : je suis ravie d'annoncer que quatre bourses ont désormais été officiellement décernées à des étudiants méritants, entièrement financées par les profits de la vente du livre.

Une mission de retraite active : La retraite n'a pas ralenti ce travail ; au contraire, elle m'a donné le temps de me consacrer pleinement à cette cause. Je gère activement la bourse commémorative *Ah Feeti of Fook Soo Am* (établie en décembre 2021), en supervisant sa croissance et en travaillant en étroite collaboration avec l'Université pour veiller à ce que nous soutenions directement les étudiants sous-représentés qui luttent avec passion pour la justice sociale, l'inclusion et l'équité. Chaque redevance du livre est directement versée dans ce fonds de dotation.

Comment acheter le livre et soutenir la mission

Si vous souhaitez soutenir cette mission et découvrir l'histoire complète, les exemplaires sont largement disponibles en formats imprimé et numérique. Vous pouvez commander directement auprès de l'éditeur ou des détaillants en ligne :

Édition imprimée : disponible directement chez l'éditeur à Baraka Books ou via Amazon Canada.

Numérique / Livre électronique : Vous pouvez acheter des exemplaires numériques instantanément sur la boutique Kindle, Kobo et Apple Books.

Dons directs : Si vous désirez faire une contribution directe et déductible d'impôt au fonds de dotation, veuillez utiliser le formulaire de don officiel de l'Université d'Ottawa pour la bourse commémorative *Ah Feeti of Fook Soo Am*.

Je vous remercie de faire partie de ce voyage avec moi, et de prouver que ce que nous choisissons de sauvegarder peut véritablement réécrire l'avenir.

Chaleureusement,

Dre Stephanie Chitpin, PhD

Literature

By: Agatha Schwartz, PhD

E-mail: agathas@uottawa.ca

<https://professoragathaschwartz.wordpress.com/>

Emeritus Professor / Professeure émérite

President, Hungarian Studies Association of Canada/Association canadienne des études hongroises/Kanadai Magyarságtudományi Társaság

Département des langues et littératures modernes / Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, University of Ottawa / Université d'Ottawa

Between Worlds: Scholarship, Leadership, and Literary Creativity



Agatha Schwartz, Professor Emerita in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures, has been re-elected President of the Hungarian Studies Association of Canada, a position she has held since 2023. Her mandate will run until 2028. In addition to being active in scholarly publishing, Agatha also brought out her first collection of short prose written in Hungarian under the title *Világok között* (Between Worlds), published in 2025 by Corvina Publications in Toronto.

Central to these narratives are contemplations on female identity in its creative struggles across cultural and linguistic spaces of alterity. The texts are interconnected through themes such as the often suppressed multigenerational traumas brought about by World War II and the 1990s wars in (now former) Yugoslavia, as well as memory's battle against the passage of time and forgetting. The texts conjure up worlds of differences - across countries and continents, between generations, women and men - and the attempts to bridge them with humour, irony, and the fantastic.

EDUCATION

Education & Learning

Par: François-Pierre Gingras, professeur retraité de l'École d'études politiques et du Centre d'études en gouvernance

Courriel: fgingras@uottawa.ca



Son premier livre lu au complet

Par un concours de circonstances tout à fait inattendu, il y a quelques années, j'ai entrepris la rédaction d'une série de romans pour la jeunesse. Cette nouvelle carrière m'a rempli de satisfaction et fait vivre des expériences nouvelles. En voici une, choisie parmi tant d'autres.

C'était au début de décembre. Il se tenait un modeste salon de Noël dans la salle commune d'un organisme communautaire d'un quartier populaire de Montréal.

Parmi les bénévoles, il y avait cet adolescent sous un lourd costume de mascotte : il se promenait en saluant les exposants et en faisant rire les enfants.

Il était revenu plusieurs fois à mon stand pour feuilleter mes livres, mais n'avait pas assez d'argent pour en acheter un.

Quelques minutes avant la fin du salon, il fit un dernier tour des allées et s'arrêta à nouveau à mon stand, enlevant sa volumineuse tête de bonhomme de neige en papier maché.

Je causai superficiellement avec lui et je décidai de lui offrir un de mes livres*, à son choix, tout en lui proposant celui qui me semblait le mieux convenir à son âge (15 ans) et sa personnalité. Je lui donnai mon adresse de courriel et lui disant que j'aimerais bien recevoir ses commentaires.

Deux semaines plus tard, le 19 décembre, j'ai reçu ce courriel :

Bonjour monsieur Gingras je suis [...] je vous écris aujourd'hui pour vous dire que j'ai fini votre livre "Une fiesta pour un adieu" je tiens à surligner que je suis pas trop un lecteur mais lorsque j'ai commencé votre livre je suis resté intrigué du début jusqu'à la fin en tout cas sachez que votre livre c'est le premier livre que j'ai lu au complet en tout cas je l'ai aimé

et je souhaite que vous recevez mon message je vous dis à la prochaine et merci beaucoup pour le livre.

Devant ce témoignage émouvant, que demander de plus quand on est un enseignant de carrière et, de surcroît, un auteur pour la jeunesse? Ce fut mon plus beau cadeau de Noël, cette année-là.

Education & Mental Health

By: Christina De Simone, Ph.D., University of Ottawa, Faculty of Education

E-mail: desimone.christina8@gmail.com



Title: Care, Caution, and Possibility: A Care-Centered Framework for Artificial Intelligence and Postsecondary Student Mental Health

Published in: *International Journal of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE)*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.20431/2349-0381.1306010>

Article Summary

For generations of university educators, supporting students has meant more than helping them succeed academically. It has also meant recognizing when a student is struggling, knowing when to listen, and helping them find the right support. Today, artificial intelligence is becoming an increasingly visible part of university life, raising a new question: could AI also have a useful role in supporting student well-being? This article considers that question with both interest and caution.

Postsecondary students in Canada and the United States are experiencing significant pressures, including academic demands, financial concerns, social isolation, and uncertainty about their futures. At the same time, many students who need support do not seek professional help because of stigma, cost, long waiting lists, lack of awareness, or concerns about asking for assistance. AI may offer one additional way of reaching students early—providing accessible information, encouraging reflection, and helping students recognize when they may need further support.

The article does not suggest that AI should replace counsellors, psychologists, physicians, or other professionals. Rather, it explores a more modest—and potentially more useful—role for AI: helping students recognize concerns early, learn about mental health, reflect on their experiences, identify available resources, and take those first steps toward seeking appropriate human support. At the heart of the article is a **care-centred framework** built around five principles: prevention, transparency, human oversight, equity, and student agency. Together, these principles provide a way for universities and colleges to think carefully about when and how AI might be used to support student well-being while ensuring that students remain active participants in decisions affecting their own care.

An important theme throughout the article is the difference between what AI *can* do and what it *should* do. This distinction is particularly important when technology enters an area as personal as mental health. Just because AI can provide an answer does not mean that it is appropriate for the technology to do so, particularly when students are experiencing emotional distress or vulnerability. Mental health involves privacy, trust, judgment, and human connection. Any use of AI in this area therefore requires clear boundaries, appropriate safeguards, transparency about how the technology is being used, and meaningful human oversight.

The article also considers how differences in Canadian and American approaches to privacy and AI governance may influence institutional decisions about AI-supported mental health initiatives.

The central message is ultimately a simple one: AI may have a place in supporting student mental health, but technology should remain in the service of care—not the other way around. Its value will not simply depend on how sophisticated the technology becomes, but on the values, protections, institutional practices, and human relationships that guide its use. As AI becomes increasingly embedded in higher education, we need to ask not only what the technology can do, but also what kind of educational community we want to create—and how technology can help us care for the people within it.

Par: Christina De Simone, Ph.D., University of Ottawa, Faculty of Education
Courriel: desimone.christina8@gmail.com

Titre: Soins, prudence et possibilités : un cadre axé sur le soin pour penser l'intelligence artificielle et la santé mentale des étudiants au postsecondaire



Publié dans : *International Journal of Humanities, Social Sciences and Education (IJHSSE)*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.20431/2349-0381.1306010>

Résumé de l'article

Depuis des générations, le rôle des enseignants universitaires auprès des étudiants ne consiste pas uniquement à les aider à réussir leurs études. Il consiste également à reconnaître lorsqu'un étudiant éprouve des difficultés, à savoir quand il faut simplement être à l'écoute et à l'aider à trouver le soutien dont il a besoin. Aujourd'hui, l'intelligence artificielle (IA) occupe une place de plus en plus visible dans la vie universitaire, ce qui soulève une nouvelle question : l'IA pourrait-elle également jouer un rôle utile dans le soutien au bien-être des étudiants? Cet article examine cette question avec intérêt et prudence.

Les étudiants des établissements d'enseignement postsecondaire au Canada et aux États-Unis sont confrontés à des pressions importantes, notamment les exigences scolaires, les préoccupations financières, l'isolement social et l'incertitude quant à leur avenir. Parallèlement, de nombreux étudiants qui auraient besoin de soutien ne font pas appel à des services professionnels en raison de la stigmatisation, des coûts, des longues listes d'attente, d'un manque d'information ou de leurs inquiétudes à l'idée de demander de l'aide. L'IA pourrait offrir un moyen supplémentaire d'intervenir plus tôt, en donnant accès à de l'information, en encourageant la réflexion et en aidant les étudiants à reconnaître les situations dans lesquelles ils pourraient avoir besoin d'un soutien supplémentaire.

L'article ne propose pas que l'IA remplace les conseillers, les psychologues, les médecins ou les autres professionnels. Il explore plutôt un rôle plus limité — et potentiellement plus utile — pour l'IA : aider les étudiants à reconnaître rapidement certaines difficultés, à se renseigner sur la santé

mentale, à réfléchir à leurs expériences, à repérer les ressources disponibles et à faire les premiers pas vers l'obtention d'un soutien humain approprié. Au cœur de l'article se trouve un **cadre axé sur le soin**, fondé sur cinq principes : la prévention, la transparence, la supervision humaine, l'équité et l'autonomie des étudiants. Ensemble, ces principes offrent aux universités et aux collèges une façon de réfléchir attentivement aux circonstances dans lesquelles l'IA pourrait être utilisée pour soutenir le bien-être des étudiants et à la manière de le faire, tout en veillant à ce que les étudiants demeurent des participants actifs aux décisions qui touchent leurs propres soins.

Un thème important de l'article est la distinction entre ce que l'IA *peut* faire et ce qu'elle *devrait* faire. Cette distinction est particulièrement importante lorsque la technologie intervient dans un domaine aussi personnel que la santé mentale. Le simple fait que l'IA puisse fournir une réponse ne signifie pas qu'il soit approprié de lui confier cette tâche, particulièrement lorsque les étudiants vivent une détresse émotionnelle ou se trouvent dans une situation de vulnérabilité. La santé mentale repose notamment sur la protection de la vie privée, la confiance, le jugement et les relations humaines. Toute utilisation de l'IA dans ce domaine nécessite donc des limites claires, des mesures de protection appropriées, de la transparence quant à l'utilisation de la technologie et une supervision humaine véritable et significative.

L'article examine également comment les différences entre les approches canadienne et américaine en matière de protection de la vie privée et de gouvernance de l'IA pourraient influencer les décisions des établissements concernant les initiatives de soutien à la santé mentale faisant appel à l'IA.

Le message central de l'article est finalement simple : l'IA peut avoir sa place dans le soutien à la santé mentale des étudiants, mais la technologie doit demeurer au service du soin — et non l'inverse. Sa valeur dépendra non seulement de la sophistication croissante de la technologie, mais aussi des valeurs, des mesures de protection, des pratiques institutionnelles et des relations humaines qui guideront son utilisation. À mesure que l'IA s'intègre de plus en plus à l'enseignement supérieur, nous devons nous demander non seulement ce que la technologie peut faire, mais également quel type de communauté éducative nous souhaitons créer — et comment la technologie peut nous aider à prendre soin des personnes qui la composent.*****

SCIENCE

Medicine/Health

Par: François Tremblay, Ph.D.

Professeur émérite | Emeritus Professor

Faculté des sciences de la santé | Faculty of Health Sciences

Courriel: francois.tremblay@uottawa.ca



À propos de la neurostimulation : partie 2

Introduction

Dans mon dernier article, je vous ai présenté une perspective à propos de mon expérience avec la stimulation magnétique transcrânienne (TMS). Dans ce deuxième volet, j'aimerais vous présenter une autre technique de stimulation non invasive s'étant développée en parallèle avec la TMS. Il s'agit de la

stimulation transcrânienne à courant continu, mieux connue sous l'acronyme de **tDCS** (pour *Transcranial Direct Current Stimulation*).

Les bases de la tDCS remontent au début du 18^e siècle avec les travaux des Italiens Galvani et Volta sur l'application de courant pour stimuler les muscles. Par la suite, il y a bien eu quelques tentatives visant à traiter des malaises comme la mélancolie (notamment par le neveu de Galvani, Giovanni Aldini en 1801, Source : Wikipedia), mais il faudra attendre plus d'un siècle pour voir une renaissance de la technique à la fin des années 90.

- **1998** : Priori et coll. montrent que l'application de faible courant continu au moyen d'électrodes disposées sur le crâne pouvait pénétrer à travers la barrière des tissus (cuir chevelu, os et méninges) et ainsi influencer l'excitabilité des cellules du cerveau.
- **2000** : Peu après, Paulus et Nitsche montrent que la polarité du courant appliqué influence l'excitabilité nerveuse soit à la baisse (stimulation cathodique) soit à la hausse (stimulation anodique).

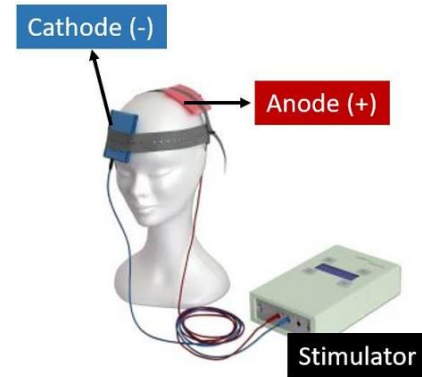
Ces travaux ont pavé la voie par la suite à une multitude d'études visant à documenter les effets de la tDCS au plan physiologique et comportemental.

Bases de la technique de tDCS

À la base, l'application de la tDCS est fort simple et requiert un dispositif moins onéreux et complexe que la TMS dont nous avons parlé.

L'équipement et la préparation :

- **Matériel** : Un petit stimulateur électrique alimenté par une pile de **9 V**, couplé à deux électrodes de silicone/caoutchouc (**4 cm²**) enchâssées dans une éponge.
- **Préparation** : L'éponge est trempée dans une solution saline afin d'assurer un passage efficace du courant entre les électrodes.
- **Placement** : Les électrodes/éponges sont appliquées selon un montage prédéterminé afin de cibler une région du cerveau. Une électrode (p. ex. l'anode) est placée sur la région ciblée d'un hémisphère, tandis que l'autre est placée sur la région homologue de l'hémisphère opposé ou près de l'orbite (la cathode).



Le fonctionnement :

Lors de la stimulation, on applique un faible courant (**1 à 2 milliampères**) pendant **20 à 30 minutes**. En passant de l'anode vers la cathode, une portion du courant va moduler l'excitabilité des neurones. La région située sous l'anode verra son excitabilité augmenter (les neurones deviennent plus faciles à activer), alors que la région opposée sous la cathode verra son excitabilité déprimée. Ainsi, en jouant avec la polarité et le placement des électrodes, on peut soit supprimer, soit rehausser l'excitabilité nerveuse de la région ciblée.

L'expérience du participant et la sécurité :

- **Sensation** : Une sensation de picotements est perceptible surtout dans la phase initiale (environ 30 secondes) pendant laquelle le courant croît graduellement. Une fois l'intensité atteinte (1-2 mA), elle n'est pratiquement plus perceptible pendant le reste de l'application.
- **Condition simulée (*sham*)** : Le fait que l'application de la tDCS soit peu perceptible offre l'avantage aux chercheurs de créer une condition simulée (*sham stimulation*) en appliquant le courant uniquement pendant la phase initiale de 30 secondes. Ainsi, il est

difficile pour un participant de déterminer s'il a reçu ou non une stimulation réelle, ce qui permet de comparer les effets réels des effets attendus liés à l'anticipation.

- **Risques :** Les risques sont minimes du fait de la faible intensité des courants utilisés. Il faut insister sur le fait que la tDCS ne fait que *moduler* l'excitabilité des cellules nerveuses sans les activer directement. Le seul risque documenté est lié au fait qu'une irritation cutanée peut survenir lorsque les électrodes/éponges sont mal préparées (en utilisant, par exemple, de l'eau plutôt qu'une solution saline). Autrement, le risque est minime, voire quasi inexistant.

Applications de la tDCS

En neurophysiologie humaine, la redécouverte de la tDCS comme outil de neuromodulation a permis de consolider les recherches visant à explorer son potentiel pour influencer les performances tant au plan physique que cognitif.

- **Performance sportive :** Chez les athlètes, l'application de la tDCS juste avant la pratique d'une tâche ou d'une activité impliquant la force ou la coordination visuomotrice permet de rehausser la performance subséquente à court terme (Chinzara et al., 2022).
- **Fonction cognitive :** Une étude récente (Krebs et al., 2021) a montré que l'application de la tDCS visant le lobe frontal chez des seniors semblait efficace pour améliorer les performances dans des tests cognitifs, bien que ces effets soient surtout détectables chez les participants ayant des scores bas au départ.
- **Dextérité manuelle :** On a également montré que des séances quotidiennes de tDCS pendant cinq jours consécutifs pouvaient conduire à des améliorations de la dextérité manuelle chez des aînés en santé (Rostami, 2020).

Potentiel en réadaptation post-AVC

De telles observations ont ouvert des avenues relatives au potentiel thérapeutique de la tDCS, notamment pour la rééducation suite à un accident vasculaire cérébral (AVC). L'AVC est la cause première d'invalidité chez la population adulte, près de 850 000 Canadiens vivant avec ses séquelles (Source : Santé Canada). Il conduit à des déficiences aux plans moteur (hémiplegie), sensoriel (déficit tactile) et cognitif (aphasie, négligence), d'où l'intérêt de la tDCS pour rehausser les effets de la rééducation et minimiser l'impact de ces déficiences.

À cet égard, nous avons mené une étude entre 2015 et 2020 (Palimeris et al., 2022) visant à déterminer les effets combinés des exercices et de la tDCS pour améliorer la fonction du bras chez des participants ayant subi un AVC. Notre étude a porté sur plus de 90 participants au stade chronique (+6 mois). Bien que nos résultats aient montré un gain fonctionnel chez tous les participants, l'effet « additif » de la tDCS combinée aux exercices n'a pas été détecté. Malgré ces résultats — que l'on peut attribuer en partie à la variabilité individuelle —, le potentiel de la tDCS demeure pertinent comme outil dans la réadaptation post-AVC. D'ailleurs, une revue systématique récente (Van Hoornweder et al., 2021) a conclu que la tDCS était efficace pour améliorer la fonction du bras post-AVC au stade chronique, mais *uniquement* lorsqu'elle était appliquée pendant les exercices et surtout chez les patients ayant un déficit moteur plus marqué au départ.



Marwan Zayed, patient post-AVC et François Tremblay chercheur senior à l'institut de recherche Bruyère

Limites et recherches futures

La tDCS a également été étudiée dans diverses conditions, notamment pour soulager la douleur, traiter la dépression et comme outil pour « optimiser » les performances motrices ou cognitives. Évidemment, comme les autres techniques, elle présente aussi des limites et plusieurs questions demeurent :

- **Dosage** : Le dosage optimal en termes d'intensité et de fréquence reste à élucider.
- **Variabilité interindividuelle** : Comme la TMS, la tDCS présente des défis sur ce plan; certaines personnes sont plus susceptibles aux effets que d'autres en raison de facteurs anatomiques et physiologiques qui restent encore à déterminer.

Conclusion

En conclusion, la tDCS comme technique de neuromodulation offre des avantages évidents : elle utilise un matériel peu onéreux, simple à appliquer et facile à transporter. Son potentiel comme outil visant à optimiser les performances chez des populations en santé fait encore l'objet de nombreuses recherches. Pour ma part, je vois un potentiel immense à cette technique, surtout dans le contexte de la réadaptation physique à la suite d'un AVC.

Les besoins dans ce domaine demeurent importants et représentent un défi majeur dans le cadre d'une population vieillissante comme celle du Canada.

Medicine/Health

By: François Tremblay, Ph.D.

Professeur émérite | Emeritus Professor

Faculté des sciences de la santé | Faculty of Health Sciences

E-mail : francois.tremblay@uottawa.ca



Neurostimulation: Part 2

Introduction

In my last article, I shared my perspective on my experience with transcranial magnetic stimulation (TMS). In this second part, I would like to introduce you to another non-invasive stimulation technique that developed alongside TMS. This is transcranial direct current stimulation, better known by the

acronym **tDCS** (Transcranial Direct Current Stimulation).

The foundations of tDCS date back to the early 18th century with the work of Italians Galvani and Volta on the application of electrical currents to stimulate muscles. Subsequently, there were a few attempts aimed at treating ailments like melancholy (notably by Galvani's nephew, Giovanni Aldini in 1801, Source: Wikipedia), but it would take more than a century to see a revival of the technique in the late 1990s.

- **1998:** Priori et al. demonstrated that applying a weak direct current via electrodes placed on the skull could penetrate the tissue barrier (scalp, skull, and meninges) and thereby influence brain cell excitability.
- **2000:** Shortly after, Paulus and Nitsche showed that the polarity of the applied current influences neural excitability either by decreasing it (cathodal stimulation) or increasing it (anodal stimulation).

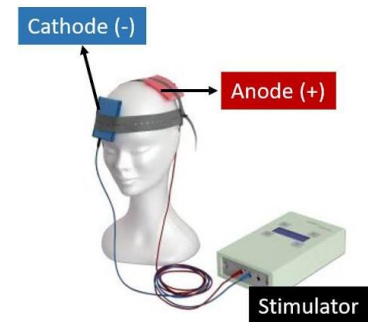
This work subsequently paved the way for a multitude of studies aimed at documenting the physiological and behavioural effects of tDCS.

Basics of the tDCS Technique

Fundamentally, the application of tDCS is quite simple and requires a less expensive and complex device than the TMS we previously discussed.

The Setup:

- **Equipment:** A small electrical stimulator powered by a **9 V** battery, coupled with two silicone/rubber electrodes (**4 cm²**) embedded in a sponge.
- **Preparation:** The sponge is soaked in a saline solution to ensure the effective flow of current between the electrodes.
- **Placement:** The electrodes/sponges are applied according to a predetermined setup to target a specific brain region. One electrode (e.g., the anode) is placed on a targeted region of one hemisphere, while the other is placed on the homologous region of the opposite hemisphere or near the orbit (the cathode).



The Process: During stimulation, a weak current (**1 to 2 milliamperes**) is applied for **20-30 minutes**. As it passes from the anode to the cathode, a portion of the current modulates the excitability of neurons. The region under the anode will see an increase in excitability (making neurons easier to activate), while the opposite region under the cathode will see its excitability depressed. Thus, by adjusting the polarity and electrode placement, one can either depress or enhance the neural excitability of the targeted region.

The Patient Experience & Safety:

- **Sensation:** A tingling sensation is noticeable, especially during the initial phase (about 30 seconds) as the current gradually increases. Once the target intensity (1-2 mA) is reached, it is practically imperceptible for the remainder of the session.
- **Sham Stimulation:** Because the application is barely noticeable, researchers have the advantage of creating a simulated condition ("sham stimulation") by applying the current only during the initial 30-second phase. This makes it difficult for participants to determine whether they received actual stimulation, allowing researchers to compare real effects against placebo effects linked to anticipation.

- **Risks:** Risks are minimal due to the low intensity of the currents used. It must be emphasized that tDCS only *modulates* the excitability of nerve cells without activating them directly. The only documented risk is potential skin irritation if the electrodes/sponges are poorly prepared (e.g., using water instead of a saline solution). Otherwise, the risk is minimal, if not virtually non-existent.

Applications of tDCS

In human neurophysiology, the rediscovery of tDCS as a neuromodulation tool has consolidated research exploring its potential to influence both physical and cognitive performance.

- **Athletic Performance:** In athletes, applying tDCS right before a task or activity involving strength or visuo-motor coordination helps enhance subsequent short-term performance (Chinzara et al., 2022).
- **Cognitive Function:** A recent study (Krebs et al., 2021) showed that applying tDCS to the frontal lobe of seniors appeared effective in improving cognitive test performance, though these effects were primarily detectable in participants with low baseline scores.
- **Manual Dexterity:** It has also been shown that daily tDCS sessions for five consecutive days could lead to improvements in manual dexterity among healthy seniors (Rostami, 2020).

Stroke Rehabilitation Potential

Such observations have opened avenues regarding the therapeutic potential of tDCS, particularly for rehabilitation following a stroke. Stroke is the leading cause of disability in the adult population, with nearly 850,000 Canadians living with its aftereffects (Source: Health Canada). Stroke leads to motor (hemiplegia), sensory (tactile deficit), and cognitive (aphasia, neglect) impairments, which drives the interest in using tDCS to boost rehabilitation outcomes and minimize the impact of these deficits.

In this regard, we conducted a study between 2015 and 2020 (Palimeris et al., 2022) to determine the combined effects of exercise and tDCS for improving arm function in participants who had suffered a stroke. Our study involved more than 90 participants in the chronic stage (6+ months). Although our results showed functional gains across all participants, the "additive" effect of tDCS

combined with exercise was not detected. Despite these results—which can partly be attributed to individual variability—the potential of tDCS remains highly relevant as a post-stroke rehabilitation tool. In fact, a recent systematic review (Van Hoornweder et al., 2021) concluded that tDCS was effective for improving upper-limb function post-stroke in the chronic stage, but *only* when applied concurrently with exercises, and especially in patients with a more pronounced initial motor deficit.



Marwan Zayed, patient post-AVC et François Tremblay chercheur senior à l'institut de recherche Bruyère

Limitations and Future Research

tDCS has also been studied across various conditions, notably for pain relief, treating depression, and as a tool to "optimize" motor or cognitive performance. Obviously, like other techniques, it has its limitations and several questions remain:

- **Dosage:** Optimal intensity and frequency have yet to be fully elucidated.
- **Variability:** Like TMS, tDCS faces challenges regarding inter-individual variability; some people are more susceptible to its effects than others due to anatomical and physiological factors that are still being determined.

Conclusion

As a neuromodulation technique, tDCS offers clear advantages: it utilizes inexpensive, simple-to-apply, and highly portable equipment. Its potential as a tool to optimize performance in healthy populations remains the subject of extensive research. For my part, I see the immense potential of this technique, especially in the context of physical rehabilitation following a stroke. The needs in this area remain significant and represent a major challenge in the context of an aging population like Canada's.

Références/References

Chinzara, T. T., Buckingham, G., & Harris, D. J. (2022). Transcranial direct current stimulation and sporting performance: A systematic review and meta-analysis of transcranial direct current

stimulation effects on physical endurance, muscular strength and visuomotor skills. *European Journal of Neuroscience*, 55(2), 468-486. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1111/ejn.15540>

Krebs, C., Peter, J., Wyss, P., Brem, A.-K., & Klöppel, S. (2021). Transcranial electrical stimulation improves cognitive training effects in healthy elderly adults with low cognitive performance. *Clinical Neurophysiology*, 132(6), 1254-1263.

doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clinph.2021.01.034>

Nitsche, M. A., & Paulus, W. (2000). Excitability changes induced in the human motor cortex by weak transcranial direct current stimulation. *Journal of Physiology*, 527 Pt 3, 633-639.

Palimeris, S., Ansari, Y., Remaud, A., Tremblay, F., Corriveau, H., Boudrias, M. H., & Milot, M. H. (2022). Effect of a tailored upper extremity strength training intervention combined with direct current stimulation in chronic stroke survivors: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *Front Rehabil Sci*, 3, 978257. doi:10.3389/fre.2022.978257

Priori, A., Berardelli, A., Rona, S., Accornero, N., & Manfredi, M. (1998). Polarization of the human motor cortex through the scalp. *Neuroreport*, 9(10), 2257-2260. doi:10.1097/00001756-199807130-00020

Rostami, M., Mosallanezhad, Z., Ansari, S., Kidgell, D., Rezaeian, T., Bakhshi, E., . . . Jaberzadeh, S. (2020). The effects of consecutive sessions of anodal transcranial direct current stimulation over the primary motor cortex on hand function in healthy older adults. *Archives of Gerontology and Geriatrics*, 89, 104063. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.archger.2020.104063>

Van Hoornweder, S. et al. (2021). The effects of transcranial direct current stimulation on upper-limb function post-stroke: a meta-analysis of multiple-session studies. *Clinical Neurophysiology*. doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.clinph.2021.05.015>

Medicine/Health/Music



Dr Gilles Comeau, professeur à l'École de musique de l'Université d'Ottawa

Courriel: gcomeau@uottawa.ca

LA TROISIÈME CONFÉRENCE OGNANOVIC Musique et santé chez les aînés Améliorer le bien-être des personnes âgées grâce à des programmes de musique communautaires

La troisième conférence Ognanovic s'est tenue le 23^e septembre dans la salle de réunion située au douzième étage du bâtiment Desmarais. Dix-sept membres de l'APRUO étaient présents, et dix-sept autres ont suivi la conférence via Zoom pour écouter l'intervention du

professeur Gilles Comeau.

Gilles Comeau est membre de la Société royale du Canada, chercheur principal à l'Institut de recherche en santé mentale de l'Hôpital Royal, directeur fondateur de l'Institut de recherche sur la musique et la santé de l'Université d'Ottawa, ainsi que directeur et chercheur principal du Laboratoire de recherche en pédagogie du piano.

Il a été présenté par le professeur Raymond Leblanc de la Faculté d'éducation, où le professeur



Comeau avait été étudiant avant d'obtenir un doctorat en éducation musicale à l'Université de Montréal, puis d'effectuer un postdoctorat en pédagogie du piano au sein de cette même institution. En tant que professeur de pédagogie du piano à l'Université d'Ottawa, Gilles a été invité à solliciter une subvention auprès de la

Fondation canadienne pour l'innovation afin de créer un laboratoire de pédagogie du langage. Cela l'a amené à se rendre au laboratoire créé par Andrée Durieux-Smith, qui menait notamment

des travaux de recherche visant à dépister précocement la perte auditive chez les nourrissons et les enfants. Les parents de ces patients se sont par la suite tournés vers le laboratoire du professeur Comeau pour obtenir de l'aide dans l'apprentissage du piano à leurs enfants.

Les centres d'intérêt de Gilles Comeau portent notamment sur le trac, les processus impliqués dans la lecture musicale, l'audiologie, les neurosciences et le développement du langage. Ses recherches se situent à la croisée des sciences de la santé, de la biomécanique, du génie et des sciences humaines. Partant d'une étude du cerveau humain, le professeur Comeau a décrit l'évolution de ses travaux à l'Hôpital Royal, qui l'ont conduit à explorer l'impact de la musique sur les personnes âgées, ainsi que les effets de l'écoute musicale sur ces dernières, notamment celles souffrant de démence et de la maladie d'Alzheimer à un stade avancé. La conférence du professeur Comeau a suscité de nombreuses questions de la part du public, y compris de la part des personnes qui l'écoutaient en ligne.

Pour écouter l'intégralité de la conférence, cliquez [ce lien](#)



Dr. Gilles Comeau professor in the School of Music at the University of Ottawa

E-mail: gcomeau@uottawa.ca

THIRD OGNANOVIC LECTURE
Music and health in older adults
Improving wellbeing of older adults through
community-based music programs

The third Ognanovic lecture took on September 23rd in the meeting room on the twelfth floor of Desmarais Building. Seventeen members of the APRUO were present, and another seventeen tuned in by zoom to hear a lecture by Professor Gilles Comeau of the

School of Music at the University of Ottawa. Gilles Comeau is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada, a senior scientist at the Institute of Mental Health Research at The Royal, the founding

director of the University of Ottawa Music and Health Research Institute, the director and principal researcher of the Piano Pedagogy Research Laboratory.

He was presented by Professor Raymond Leblanc of the Faculty of Education, where Professor



Comeau had been a student before going on to receive a doctorate in Music Education at the University of Montreal and then hold a post-doctorate in piano pedagogy at that institution. As professor of piano pedagogy at the University of Ottawa, Gilles was invited to apply for a grant from the Canada

Innovation Foundation to create a lab of language pedagogy. This led him to visit the lab created by Andrée Durieux-Smith which included research activities to identify hearing loss early in infants and children. These patients' parents would later turn to Professor Comeau's lab for help in teaching their children piano.

Gilles Comeau's interests include performance anxiety, the processes involved in reading music, audiology, neurosciences and the development of language. His research is situated at the intersection of health sciences, biomechanics, engineering, and the humanities. Beginning with an examination of the human brain, Professor Comeau described the evolution of his work at the Royal Hospital to explore the impact of music on the elderly, and the effect that listening to music had on old people, including those suffering from dementia and advanced Alzheimer's disease.

Professor Comeau's lecture provoked many questions from the audience, including those who were listening online. To hear the lecture in full, click [here](#).

TRAVEL

Par : André Lapierre, professeur émérite, Département de linguistique, Faculté des arts.

Courriel : andre_lapierre@icloud.com

Souvenirs de la Méditerranée et de l'Adriatique

La compagnie de croisières norvégienne Viking est surtout renommée pour ses circuits fluviaux, notamment sur le Rhin et le Danube. Mais saviez-vous qu'elle offre aussi des forfaits sur d'autres mers et océans? Au printemps dernier, mon épouse et moi avons fait l'expérience d'une croisière de 13 jours sur la Méditerranée et l'Adriatique. C'était notre première expérience du genre. Notre itinéraire commençait à Barcelone et incluait des escales à Marseille, Monaco, Pise, Florence, Rome, Naples, Corfu, Dubrovnik, Split et Venise. Chaque escale comprenait une excursion permettant de visiter les hauts-lieux de chaque endroit.

Nous avons énormément apprécié notre voyage. À commencer par la compagnie Viking dont la réputation d'excellence n'est aucunement exagérée et dont le *modus operandi* convient parfaitement aux retraités que nous sommes : forfaits tout compris (repas, y compris les boissons, restos de spécialité, excursions, pourboires), navires relativement petits (930 passagers),

passagers adultes seulement, pas de casinos ou activités bruyantes, personnel attentif, programmes de loisirs, conférences sur les destinations et une atmosphère de jovialité en tout temps. Évidemment, tout cela comporte un prix, mais le forfait en valait pleinement la peine.

Le haut point de notre croisière a été Naples, où la visite du site archéologique de Pompéi nous a renversés par l'étendue et la qualité des restaurations faites par le gouvernement italien et l'empressement de notre guide à nous faire revivre la vie quotidienne des habitants de la ville quelques instants avant l'éruption du Vésuve.

Notre surprise a été Corfu. Nous nous attendions à y trouver les charmants bâtiments aux murs blanchis et aux volets bleus typiques de la Grèce. Mais la ville revêt plutôt l'aspect



d'une jolie agglomération italienne, rappel de son appartenance ancienne à la République de Venise. Le nombre de bateaux albanais dans le port, y compris des hydroptères remontant à la période soviétique, ont vite évoqué la proximité de la république des Balkans située tout à côté. En réponse aux collègues qui me demandent si j'aurais des conseils à suggérer, je dirais, en ce qui concerne le navire, choisissez une cabine sur un pont intermédiaire (the more you pay, the more you sway!). Sachez que les excursions terrestres durent de 4 à 6 heures et exigent une bonne dose de marche, souvent dans des rues et escaliers étroits. Nous avons trouvé qu'une excursion à presque tous les jours pouvait être épuisant à la longue et avons fait le choix délibéré d'en annuler une, la visite de Rome que nous connaissions déjà, et de profiter plutôt des aires de repos à bord du navire. Nous avons eu la chance de connaître le beau temps pendant toute la croisière, sauf à Venise où une pluie diluvienne et incessante est venue gâcher la journée.



Le réchauffement climatique affecte l'Europe assez durement ces dernières années et même si notre croisière a eu lieu au début de mai, la chaleur commençait déjà à se faire sentir. Nous avons aussi souffert du nombre invraisemblable de touristes à certains endroits : pas moyen de visiter le palais des Doges ni la basilique Saint-Marc à Venise: tous les billets étaient vendus avant même notre arrivée vers la mi-journée. Achetez vos billets en ligne à l'avance et essayez, dans la mesure du possible, de planifier votre croisière hors de la période estivale et des périodes d'affluence touristique.

Tout compte fait, je n'hésite pas à recommander Viking si l'envie vous prend de faire une croisière. La variété des itinéraires, la qualité du personnel à bord, le confort des cabines, le choix des restaurants, la composition des menus, les programmes de divertissement et de conférences, tout est marqué au coin de l'excellence. Dernière remarque : nous n'avons pas connu le mal de mer. Est-ce dû aux eaux calmes ou aux stabilisateurs du navire, nul ne sait. Peut-être le découvrirons lors de notre prochaine croisière!

By: André Lapierre, Professor Emeritus, Department of Linguistics, Faculty of Arts.
E-mail: andre_lapierre@icloud.com

Memories of the Mediterranean and the Adriatic

The Norwegian cruise line Viking is best known for its river cruises, particularly on the Rhine and the Danube. But did you know that it also offers cruises on other seas and oceans? Last spring, my wife and I took a 13-day cruise with Viking through the Mediterranean and the Adriatic. It was our first time on a cruise. Our itinerary began in Barcelona and included stops in Marseille, Monaco, Pisa, Florence, Rome, Naples, Corfu, Dubrovnik, Split, and Venice. Each stop included a shore excursion allowing us to visit the highlights of each destination.

We thoroughly enjoyed our trip. First of all, Viking Cruises, whose reputation for excellence is by no means exaggerated, and whose approach suits us retirees perfectly: all-inclusive packages (meals, including drinks, specialty restaurants, excursions, and gratuities), relatively small ships



(930 passengers), adults-only, no casinos or noisy activities, attentive staff, recreational programs, destination lectures, and a cheerful atmosphere at all times. Of course, all of this comes at a price, but the package was well worth it.

The highlight of our cruise was Naples, where our visit to the archaeological site of Pompeii left us speechless—not only because of the scale and quality of the restorations carried out by the Italian government, but also because of our guide’s enthusiasm in helping us relive the daily lives of the city’s inhabitants just moments before the eruption of Vesuvius. Corfu came as a surprise to us. We had

expected to find the pretty, whitewashed buildings with blue shutters typical of Greece. Instead, the city looks more like a charming Italian town, a reminder of its former affiliation with the Republic of Venice. The number of Albanian boats in the harbour—including hydrofoils dating back to the Soviet era—quickly recalled the proximity of the neighbouring Balkan republic.

In response to colleagues who ask me if I have any advice to offer, I'd say—as far as the ship is concerned—choose a stateroom on a middle deck (the more you pay, the more you sway!). Keep



in mind that shore excursions last 4 to 6 hours and involve a fair amount of walking, often through narrow streets and winding stairs. We found that going on an excursion almost every day could become exhausting over time, so we made a deliberate choice to skip one—the tour of Rome, which we were already familiar with—and instead enjoy the relaxation areas on board the ship. We were lucky to have good weather throughout the entire cruise, except in Venice, where unrelenting, torrential rain ruined the day.

Global warming has been hitting Europe pretty hard in recent years, and even though our cruise took place in early May, the heat was already starting to be felt. We also struggled with the unbelievable number of tourists in certain places: there was no way to visit the Doge's

Palace or St. Mark's Basilica in Venice—all the tickets were sold out even before we arrived around midday. Buy your tickets online in advance and, whenever possible, try to plan your cruise outside of the summer season and peak tourist periods.

All things considered, I wouldn't hesitate to recommend Viking if you're in the mood for a cruise. The variety of itineraries, the quality of the onboard staff, the comfort of the cabins, the selection of restaurants, the menu offerings, and the entertainment and lecture programs—everything is marked by excellence. One final note: we didn't experience any seasickness.

Whether that was due to calm waters or the ship's stabilizers, no one knows. Perhaps we'll find out on our next cruise!

VOLUNTEERING

By: Tony Horava

E-mail: thorava@yahoo.ca

Retired Associate University Librarian, Content and Access.



Volunteering in Ottawa

When I retired in 2019, one of my main goals was to volunteer in the community. I had had a fortunate life, a happy family and a very satisfying career in the UO Library. However I had never had the time or energy for volunteer work. Now I wanted to give back to the community, as it was obvious there are so many people in need, and I suddenly had precious time on my hands. Where to start?

I first signed up for an orientation course at [Meals on Wheels Ottawa](#) and then became a weekly delivery driver. I delivered in Centretown, Alta Vista/Elmvale, and Vanier, meeting with many grateful faces every week, mostly seniors and persons with disabilities. For some clients, the delivery person is the only human contact they have all day. Now I'm on the Board of Directors, and this has opened my eyes to the many challenges – financial, political, logistical - of the community and social services sector in Ontario. Meal delivery is a crucial service for the growing number of persons dealing with food insecurity.

I also signed up for an orientation program at [Hospice Care Ottawa](#), and this enabled me to understand the importance of a hospice for dying with dignity and living one's final days with compassion and respect for one's wishes. I then chose to become an in-home volunteer, which meant being matched with persons who were in their last stage of life or living with a life-limiting condition. Over the years I've had various clients, whom I would visit once a week for a few hours, to provide companionship and emotional support, until their condition deteriorated to the point where they couldn't see me anymore. It's been a real privilege to get to know these persons, hear their remarkable life stories, and simply provide a listening ear. It's also shaped my understanding and acceptance of mortality in ways that I hadn't anticipated.

One of the things that I missed from my work life was teaching. I had taught part-time at the School of Information Studies for numerous years, and it had been a very rewarding experience.

A couple of years ago I found out about [ELTOC](#) – a government sponsored non-profit that

provides informal English classes, free of charge, for newcomers who aren't enrolled in any formal language classes. In my classes I've met persons from Haiti, Iraq, Afghanistan, China, and elsewhere. I've heard their stories of struggle and survival and how happy they were to come to Canada, a peaceful and prosperous land. I've seen them improve their English and become more confident in themselves and their goals.

I also learned about [Café Ukraine](#), which is a community hub for the Ukrainian community since the start of the horrific war in 2022, and which includes an English teaching program. It is informal, conversational, and free, and there have been hundreds of participants of all ages and backgrounds. I started with a beginners' class and have since taught classes at intermediate and advanced levels. It's been truly inspiring to hear their stories and see their pride in learning English. Some return to Ukraine and others put down roots in Ottawa and Canada.

All of the above commitments are once a week, typically for two to three hours. And this means that I'm busy but not overly busy (certainly not as I was at UO!), with time left for other pursuits like music and sports. Over the past years, I've had many rewarding moments and experiences, and I've met people who are resilient and positive in spite of living through trauma and facing many challenges; I've seen some of the Ottawa's dynamic diversity; I've met highly dedicated volunteers and hard-working staff persons who demonstrate grace under pressure; I've seen what communities coming together can accomplish. It's been an inspiring ride, and paradoxically I often feel that I'm receiving more than I'm giving!

BUSINESS NEWS

Services for Retirees

Are You Getting Your CURAC Perks?

By Ron Champion, Chair, CURAC Affinity Marketing Committee and André Lapierre, APRUO delegate to CURAC (now replaced by Stephanie Chitpin)

As a member of APRUO, you can take advantage of the products and services of CURAC's Affinity Partners.

More than 40 retiree associations, including APRUO, are members of the College and University Retiree Associations of Canada (CURAC), which negotiates partnership agreements with companies and organizations on behalf of its association members and the tens of thousands of retirees they represent.

It's a simple and mutually beneficial arrangement: we retirees travel, buy various kinds of insurance, and probably need glasses and (maybe – according to our partners) hearing aids. CURAC works with organizations that provide those services or products – and discounts.

When you purchase a product or service from a CURAC partner, you help yourself, your retiree association, and CURAC. Some partners pay a rebate to CURAC, which is shared with member associations. All partners have discounts or special offers. Everyone wins. Our association has benefited from substantial rebates from CURAC over the years, from \$46.24 in 2019 to \$ 909.76 in 2024.

Read on for a summary of current offers. For more information about the partners and their offers, visit the [CURAC website, <<Member Benefits>>](#).

Travel

	• Travel • Guided tours	• Save \$100 /person • Plus 5% loyalty bonus • Details at CURAC
	• Travel – book anything you see online! • Custom group trips	• Member Travel Savings Up to 50% Off • Plus any third-party loyalty bonus • Plus TM's 2% loyalty bonus

		• Custom website for CURAC • Trip giveaways • Details at CURAC
--	--	--

Insurance - RTO/ERO is now Entente Education Canada, <https://entente.ca/>

	• Extended health care <i>with travel insurance included</i> • Dental plan • Trip cancellation and travel interruption	• Mention CURAC and identify your retiree association • Details at CURAC
 	• Travel (formerly Johnson) • Car and home	• Mention CURAC and identify your retiree association • Details at CURAC

Health

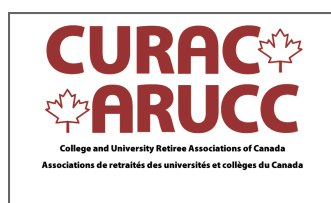
	• Eye exams, eyewear, contact lenses	• Two pairs of eyeglasses for \$149 (with single-vision lenses, a scratch-resistant coating, and UV protection) • 60% off lens upgrades with proof of retiree association membership • Details at CURAC
	• Hearing aids • Custom noise protection	• 10% discount for members, spouse, children, parents

		• Details at CURAC
--	--	--

Retirement Living

	• Independent living • Retirement apartments • Full-service retirement suites • Assisted care • Memory care • Long-term care	• Complimentary meeting space and more for CURAC retiree associations • Ontario, various cities • Details at CURAC
---	---	--

For legal and other reasons, products and services may not be available in your province or city.



You may be asked to provide proof of your retirement or membership status. For more information, visit the CURAC website or search for “CURAC membership benefits.”

What other affinity partnerships should CURAC explore? Send your suggestions or comments to CURAC, c/o Ron Champion, ron.champion@uwaterloo.ca or Stephanie Chitpin at schitpin@uottawa.ca

Health Care Spending Account [HCSA]

A friendly reminder! Please remember to promptly use your 2026 HCSA credits if you have eligible medical and/or dental expenses. Detailed instructions on how to do this are on the APRUO website at: <https://apruo.ca/benefits/health-care-spending-account>.

As of July 2025, as in past years, a substantial number of credits [\$332,816.05 to be precise] has been forfeited. There are several reasons for this. However, if one of the reasons is that you are having difficulty navigating the Canada Life website for submitting a claim, kindly contact us at APRUO@uottawa.ca. We would be more than happy to guide you through the process.

If you chose **not** to avail yourself of this benefit, we would be interested in knowing the reason why. It would be helpful if you sent your comments to APRUO@uottawa.ca.

N.B. *CanadaLife has created a separate option for those who wish to claim health insurance premiums. After logging in, you will be offered a choice—to reclaim reimbursement of itemized expenses or to be reimbursed for premiums paid for a supplemental insurance plan.*

Renewal of APRUO Membership

The key to our effectiveness as an association lies in the financial support of our members. Membership does more than sustain the operations of APRUO. It supports advocacy on issues affecting retirees, scholarships for students, educational events, community-building activities, and the continued exchange of ideas among colleagues. We are grateful for the ongoing support of our members.

If your membership has expired or will expire at the end of this year, we will contact you as part of our annual membership renewal campaign.

Renewing your membership is very simple:

- Click here <https://apruo.ca> and, under “Membership”, follow the instructions for current members [“Renew my membership”] or for new members [“Become a member”].

OR

- Make an INTERAC e-Transfer of \$25, \$50 or \$75 (1, 2 or 3 years) to the email address treapruo@uottawa.ca

OR

- Send a check made payable to APRUO, for the amount of your choice, to the following address:

Treasurer of APRUO, University of Ottawa

141 Louis-Pasteur Street, Ottawa, Ontario K1N 6N5

For any questions regarding membership, please contact the treasurer

at treapruo@uottawa.ca

Updated Contact Information: Human Resources & IT

Please note that phone numbers and e-mail addresses may vary depending on your request.

You can contact **Human Resources Service Center at 613-562-5000, option #3** or [click here](#)

for the following requests:

1. **Change your address.** You can also do this directly in Workday. HR receives a report and sends it to RBC investor & Treasury Services, the pension plan trustee.
2. **Change your bank account.**
3. **Obtain information about life insurance and related T4A slips (taxable benefit).**
4. **Obtain your pension income tax slips (T4A/RL2).** You can also contact **RBC at 1-800-668-1320.**

Other Requests

5. **Group insurance plan** (coverage, health spending account, claims):
 - **Canada Life**
 - **Dedicated UOttawa hotline: 1-833-794-0225**
 - **Benefits Team**
 - avantagesrh@uottawa.ca
 - **613-562-5163**
6. **Pension Plans** (bank changes, address or personal information changes):
 - pension@uottawa.ca
 - **613-562-5375**

Other News

In-Town Events

Perfect Bookstore holds weekly book launches. If you would like to attend, please go to Perfectbooks.ca for further information.

Call for Research Participants

Volunteers Needed for University of Ottawa Research Study

Researchers at the Human and Environmental Physiology Research Unit (HEPRU) at the University of Ottawa are seeking **healthy, physically active men aged 50–69 years** to participate in a study examining how the body responds to consecutive days of physical work in the heat.

The study aims to better understand how overnight recovery temperature influences recovery between workdays and may help inform future occupational heat health and safety recommendations for older workers.

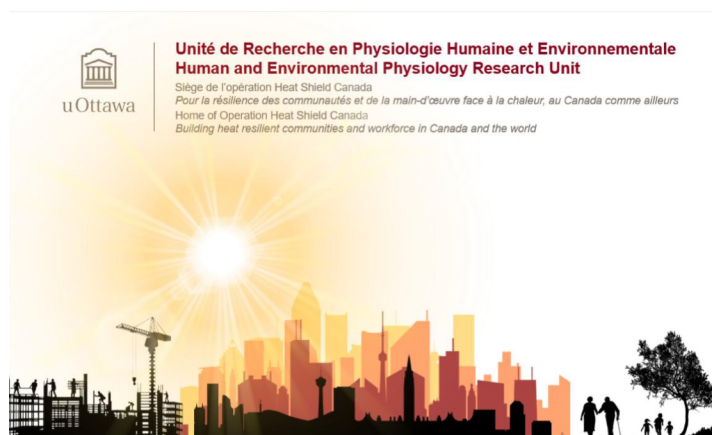
Participation includes:

- A fitness and health assessment
- A laboratory visit to assess how your body responds to heat during exercise
- Two separate 2.5-day experimental trials

Participants will receive personalized information about their aerobic fitness (VO_{2max}), body composition, blood glucose control (HbA1c), and physiological responses to exercise and heat.

If you are interested in learning more, please contact:

Sarah Johnson
sjohn202@uottawa.ca



Reflections: Continuing the Conversation



As we come to the end of this issue of *Nexus*, perhaps one idea connects these very different contributions: *retirement does not mean that our stories, our curiosity, or our contributions have come to an end. They simply take different forms.*

Throughout these pages, our colleagues have invited us into those different forms. We have encountered memory through poetry and personal history; the enduring power of education through the experience of a young person discovering the pleasure of reading; questions about care, technology, and student well-being; continuing scientific curiosity; the pleasures of travel; and the deeply human rewards of volunteering. Together, these contributions remind us that learning and engagement do not belong to any particular stage of life.

There is another thread running through this issue as well: *connection*. We remain connected to ideas, to one another, to the University community, and to the wider communities in which we live. Sometimes that connection involves sharing what we have learned over a lifetime. Sometimes it means learning something entirely new. And sometimes it is as simple—and as important—as listening to another person's story.

Perhaps that is one of the possibilities of retirement that deserves greater attention. After careers devoted to teaching, research, scholarship, service, and the life of the University, we carry considerable knowledge and experience with us. But retirement can also give us the freedom to ask new questions, pursue interests for which there was once too little time, contribute in unexpected ways, and continue learning from others.

Nexus is one small place where those experiences can meet.

We hope that something in this issue has made you think, remember, smile, question, or perhaps consider sharing an experience of your own. *The conversation does not end with the final page. In many ways, that is where the next one begins.*

Take good care,

Christina and the rest of the team. See you in the winter!