



Brian J. Fleming Catholic Adult Learning Centre



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Catholic Adult
Learning Centre

Winter 2006

DINING ETIQUETTE A lesson just in time for Christmas



“For thousands of years, important business deals have been struck over a fine meal. Food and drink bring people together in ways that few other things can. At the same time, a meal gone wrong can sour a deal very quickly. That is why it is so important to know how to navigate a business luncheon or dinner with grace and poise.”

This is the advice of Adeodata Czink, the President of

Business of Manners. She knows the importance of proper dining etiquette and is now teaching it to others.

Have you ever sat down at a company dinner and wondered which utensil you should be using first? Your strategy might be to look around and see what others are doing. However, you might simply be making the mistakes that others are making.

Adeodata recently taught students in the co-op program for foreign-trained professionals at the Brian J. Fleming Catholic Adult Learning Centre, some rules of proper dining etiquette.

We learned that at the end of the meal that your dinner napkin should be placed back on the table where it origi-

nated at the beginning of the meal? Adeodata also taught us the proper way to hold the fork and knife and that the signal that you are finished is to place your knife and fork at the 5 minutes to 5 o'clock position on your plate.

As the class sat at this 'mock meal' we practiced with our individual set of silverware that Adeodata provided to all 25 students. One student even commented that the 'mock soup' was very tasty.

We all learned some of the important rules of proper dining from this informative and interactive workshop.

By Cathryn Glover
Co-op Education Instructor
Brian J. Fleming

www.businessofmanners.com

Christmas in Venezuela

Christmas is a highly expected time in Venezuela like everywhere else in the world. In my country it gives the opportunity to gather around the family and spend some time sharing stories, future plans, past news and cooking.

There are several Christmas traditions and symbols specific to Venezuela and Latin America as well. First, Venezuelan children do not expect for Santa Claus to bring gifts, it is new-

born Jesus who will receive a letter asking for the latest toys. On December 25th morning all children will wake up very early to open gifts that Jesus child left under the tree or besides the nativity. This is a another tradition that differentiates Spanish catholic customs from English, it is the holy nativity instead of a tree that symbolizes Christmas; many homes will have besides a Christmas tree, little figures representing , (cont'd page 3)

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Brian J. Fleming has forged a strong partnership with Siemens Canada and has successfully placed students in departments ranging from engineering to purchasing. We asked Catherine Doyle, Purchasing Manager, Siemens Building Technologies, to reflect on her experience with co-op candidates. The interview was conducted by Spomenka Boras, Co-op Education Instructor, Brian J. Fleming.



When/ how did you learn about the programme?

We learned about the Brian J. Fleming co-op program in the spring of 2004 from a colleague.

What motivated you to try it out and offer a placement to a student?

When we looked at the BJF website and discovered the benefits to the employee and the employer, we thought that this would be a win/win endeavour for everyone.

After discussing the opportunity with one of the BJF coordinators and seeing the calibre of professional experience and education in the resumes we were presented with, we decided it would be worth giving the program a try.

Do any of the students that you have had so far stand out? Why?

A number of students from BJF have stood out. Some of these students have found permanent employment at Siemens Canada Ltd., while others have found employment outside of Siemens after the completion of their placement with us. The majority of the students we have placed were very highly qualified with excellent professional and educational experience, great energy, attitude and work ethic. They were assertive in seeking additional work and responsibility above and beyond expectations. They also quickly developed networking contacts within the company which facilitated them in identifying employment opportunities.

What kind of skills (not only technical) are you looking for in employees in general?

We look for good communication and interpersonal skills; good attitude, work ethic, and initiative. It is also important for a candidate to be able to work well in a team environment.

Do you have any suggestions or word of advice for foreign trained professionals?

Present yourself in a positive manner, take initiative in seeking additional responsibilities when tasks are complete, ask questions, be friendly and personable.



Christmas in Venezuela (cont'd)

Joseph, Mary, and newborn Jesus, shepherds, some animals and the Three Wise Men.

A third tradition is food; there are some dishes that are particular to Christmas. The main course for any meal will be "hallaca". The hallaca is some sort of tamale that is specific to Venezuela, it takes a long time to prepare, requiring almost two days of work, but it gives families the opportunity to gather and spend some time. Elders and children will help with the hard work and run to take a chance to taste the stew filling before is wrapping in maize, bounded within banana leaves with string and then steamed. There is a little

rivalry between families about whose hallaca is better; when it comes to comparison your mom's is always the best.

Another particular feature of Venezuelan Christmas is music. Although there are the traditional Christmas carols, starting late October radio stations will start broadcasting the latest "gaitas". This is a very lively and bright music that comes from the western part of the country, Zulia state. Gaitas traditionally celebrates the nativity but also gives composers the opportunity to address other topics as social and political current affairs, celebrate geographical scenes, commemorate certain events or characters, and love ones. An important

aspect of gaitas is dancing, people goes to gaita concerts not only to listen different bands but actually to dance. Some of these concerts will last from dusk till dawn.

Some of these traditions are being substitute for english ones like Christmas trees and Santa Claus, but hallacas and gaitas remain as particular and strong characteristics of a country that strongly enjoys this time of the year.

By Lorena Quintero
BJF Co-op Student



Job Interview

A Manager of a retail clothing store is reviewing a potential employee's application and notices that the man has never worked in retail before. He says to the man, "For a man with no experience, you are certainly asking for a high wage."
"Well Sir," the applicant replies, "the work is so much harder when you don't know what you're doing!"

Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace

By Radmila Janjic, Co-op Education Instructor, BJF

There is a strong link between Emotional Intelligence (EI) and workplace performance. Numerous studies have shown that EI is a greater indicator of success than almost any other credential. Technical and academic competence will get you hired, your initiative, resilience, communication, leadership and teamwork success will depend on your emotional intelligence. Emotions impact thinking, learning, motivation, teamwork, and culture. People with EI are less depressed, healthier, more employable, and have better relationships.

Some people are more successful in their careers than others even when they have equal educational background.

Star performers stand out not only by personal achievement but by their capacity to work well on teams and with people. Those who are unable to restrain negative feelings such as anger and self-doubt can be toxic to the entire organization.

Emotional competences which are based on EI comprise: self-awareness, empathy, assertiveness, reality testing, impulse control, flexibility, self-regard, social responsibility, independence, optimism, stress tolerance, self-actualization, problem solving, happiness and interpersonal relationship. Emotional competencies are soft skills that can be learned.

Different jobs call for different emotional competences. Empathy is a particularly important aspect of emotional intelligence, contributing to occupational success. People who are best at identifying others' emotions are more successful in their work as well as in their social lives. A survey of retail sales buyers found that apparel sales reps were valued primarily for their empathy. The buyers reported that they wanted reps who could listen well and really understand what they wanted and what their concerns were.

Team skills are a key mark of leadership and teamwork became the most frequently valued managerial competence in studies of organizations around the world.

The skills that separate high-performing engineers from low performers are happiness, optimism, empathy and interpersonal relationship. This may not seem to make sense, however, most of the engineers have relatively high technical skills, so they don't distinguish their performance.

Building one's Emotional Intelligence has a lifelong impact. Many companies have included EI in their training programs.



Office Skills Co-op Program

Brian J. Fleming Adult Learning Centre

On February 14, 2005 I had the pleasure of attending my first class at Brian J. Fleming with Kelly Kozar and Allen Morris. When I looked around the room, I noticed that there were many different cultures and languages. I was not sure where I fit in and if I would make friends during the program.

I had been out of work for twelve years raising my two children and needed to go back in the workforce after a separation. I had worked as an administrative assistant twelve years ago and had volunteered most of my time in my children's school after that time. *Who would want to hire me?*

The course showed me the power of the mind and if you could see it, your vision that is, it was real! I soon found out that my volunteer skills were transferable and I had a lot to offer.

I was petrified when we had to do mock interviews, but what a learning tool. When you then go for co-op interviews, does it ever prepare you. Everything we learned was put to good use. I am sure I had every type of interview there was. When it came to my first interview for a paid position, I was confident, prepared and knew what I was getting myself into.

One thing I was definitely lacking was self-confidence. I knew I could do the work, but couldn't get that across. This course made me realize that I could do it and that I was worth it!

The resume writing was probably the best part of the course for me. I now know why my resume was not sticking out. You see the point of a resume is to **get an interview**, not a job! Once you get the interview, then you can sell yourself.

Finally, the people I now have come to know for 6 weeks, you know, the ones who were so different from me, had become my new friends. Ironically, we all had something in common, **WORK**. We have supported each other through our journey.

I am now working at the International Centre as the Sales Support. They did not even hesitate to hire me after such a long absence in the "paid" workforce. After two interviews with three different people, I now work for 8 people who after one week keep asking me if I am coming back!

My new journey has begun, and I can't thank Kelly and Allen enough for all they have done to empower me to take the necessary steps in gaining employment and a sense of self-worth. **You see, I always had the knowledge, skills and ability. I just needed to know how to use them and sell them. Trust me -- I would never have had the confidence to say that before my course!**

THANK YOU

by Julie Anderson

Sales Support

International Centre



MERRY CHRISTMAS AND HAPPY NEW YEAR