

20-MINUTE INTERVIEW (FULL TRANSCRIPT)

Interviewer: Dan Labecki

Interviewee: Anna Rodrigues

Interview Setting: Interview conducted online and recorded using Camtasia (screen capture software).

Affiliation with interviewee: Colleague in MEd program at UOIT. We are currently both registered in the 'Special Topics in Education and Digital Technologies' course.

(Start of Interview)

Dan: Welcome Anna, I'll turn to my formal mode now; tell me about your educational background that brought you to this point in your life.

Anna: Okay, it's long and I can shorten this - I was in Portugal when I was 11. Before, I was living in California for ten years. I was born in Canada, but my parents left when I was little. The reason it is important to talk about the reason I moved to Portugal is that I attended school there but I didn't speak the language. I didn't read or write. Only thing I could do was understand a bit, because my parents spoke Portuguese at home. But I was never taught and didn't speak it at home. I actually ended up leaving home and school when I was seventeen. I was in the tenth grade at age of seventeen because there had been so many issues with us moving to Portugal. I didn't speak the language. I was put into lower grades. When I left California I was in grade six. When I went to Portugal, I was in grade four. Then after a year they decided to bump me to grade six. And then, I was kind of... still a year or two behind. In any case, I left the school and got married at sixteen. I was living in Portugal and then moved to Canada. My marriage didn't actually work out; I just found myself... I was single mother at age twenty. I didn't have a high school diploma from Portugal or Canada... from anywhere in the world. I'd say that my literacy was quite low. English was around the level of an eleven year old. I'm trying to think when I went back to school and I think maybe it was twenty-one or twenty-two... so, um; I did correspondence school through a program in Ontario. It was the Ministry of Education in Ontario. There was a course there that I don't think they have anymore, but it was for people like me who couldn't go fulltime, but where in need of their high school diploma.

They took into consideration what I had done in Portugal and they gave me credits and they said, "Okay, this is what you have left to do". I worked on that for about two years. I got my high school diploma and my grades were really good by the end of it. My grades had really gone up. I decided then that I would apply to either college or university. As a

child, I always wanted to be a journalist. I loved writing, I loved research, I loved writing up stories, and it was something I always had at the back of my mind. I looked at some programs at university but I just felt... being a single mother, unemployed - working part time was not what I wanted to do. I also wasn't sure about all the technical skills I'd get at university. Although there are programs out there that are joined, most were also like four or five years. So I ended up looking at colleges and it was a three-year program at Centennial College. What I really liked about it was third year was placement and if you got employment you didn't have to go back for the third. So basically it was a two-year program and their rate of success was something like eighty-eight percent. So I looked at journalism and found that the job options they were saying about people getting placed were not good. This was mid-nineties and we were already seeing jobs lost because of the Internet. So then, it wasn't my first choice, but I went into broadcasting. There was still writing and journalism... in the program there was also film and radio. So I had TV production, radio production, script writing and film. I thought okay, this will give me a lot of experience. So I did that, and while I was at college I volunteered at different places cause my goal was to get a job, a fulltime job, and graduate. And so I began volunteering at CityTV - I guess six months into my college, community college... and I just stayed there as an intern, as a volunteer, and I ended up doing my placement there. I didn't get a job for four months. I graduated in, sorry, I didn't get a job after my diploma's placement, which was in January, but in June, I was called in and I got a full time job. I was very happy.

Dan: At CityTV? Wow!

Anna: Yeah, so I basically did all of my volunteer work and placement there. I had volunteered in the newsroom, and over the weekend and new years. I was happy in the newsroom. So, that kind of ends my education at that point. I'll talk a little bit about work, and then I'll go back to the education.

Dan: That's great. It really is - riveting stuff!

Anna: Oh, it sounds exciting now, but...

Dan: No well, like any good story, it's not always about living it, but looking from the outside in. It's fascinating! All the arcs that some people go through, and sometimes you see someone with a life that's very atypical. Mine is scattered, but dealing with your struggles and everything, it fits right in with your research goals for this program.

Anna: It does, yes. And so... I had my fulltime job at CityTV, and I was really happy with that. I actually had been living in subsidized housing in Parkdale. I was able to get out of there, was really happy for my daughter. I was making good money - all of those things. It was hard working fulltime, but I was just happy I have this fulltime job. So I was in the

newsroom, I guess, for two or three years. Then, I had an opportunity to move... the hours could be heavy, I had to work weekends, and Christmas, Boxing Day and New Years - it was really hard. So I looked at trying to get out of the newsroom and I found this job with a woman called Mary Powers. She worked at city and she's just this wonderful woman – very supportive. I was her assistant for a year and learned a lot from her. She allowed me extra time to work on projects. I was doing freelance, so you know, I had time, and then I'd do some writing. I didn't even have a computer at home, so after work I'd come back and use it. This goes back to when I wanted to be a print journalist. I began freelancing, and um, I never took school but I read books and magazines and I started pitching stories and story ideas, and then I got printed, and I was excited about that. So, at that time I met my husband, Phil Raby, and we met in the newsroom, and we became engaged. We ended up working together to, you know, create stories. He was a photographer and I was a print journalist, so we kind of were able to put it together.

And um, we began writing, and he would take the photographs. We began selling them, so that was rewarding. And from there, um, I ended up working for a program called Cityline for CityTV. I was there for eight months. I really didn't like it at all.

Dan: Who was the host of Cityline?

Anna: It was Marilyn Denis. Marilyn is great. She's a great woman and everything but it was all women working together and it's awful when you get all women working together. One guy, but every producer, every writer, it was just too hard. I didn't like it. I didn't like the scene.

Dan: Was it also very competitive?

Anna: Yeah, some women were. I kept out of it, but it was around. It was... I wasn't doing anything fulfilling. They'd have life styles and recipes and, I mean, that's all nice, but it wasn't really me. I didn't think I was helping anything or contributing greatly to it.

So a job came up with Silverman Helps - they were an investigative reporting unit at CityTV. What they do is they usually deal with purchase issues, but we also got people with all sorts of problems.

Dan: Yes, I know of the program. Is it still on? Did the host pass away?

Anna: Oh, no, no, no! He's still alive. I'll have to tell him that.

Dan: Sorry for that! You know, there have been a lot of people passing away at City TV. A couple in the past year, but anyway, I shouldn't be leading like that so go ahead.

Anna: It's okay. A lot of people were let go as a unit a year after I left so I was lucky in a way cause they were bought. It was always a high rating part of the news... the program, but I was there for six years.

So it took me about six years before I started to feel drained - physically from all of the cases. My husband was noticing... by that time I was married. And my older daughter would say, "Oh my god, you're always upset or drained". I felt it was work related, so an opportunity came up at Durham and they needed someone to teach in the third year of the journalism program. Both me and my husband applied and I got it. And, um, when I started there, it turned out to be a good decision because Silverman Helps was sold - chum, who owned city, was sold. Rogers ended up with some part, CityTV ended up with some other part. So Rogers ended up with CityTV and it was only a matter of time because we did so many stories on Rogers on the show. We always felt, we had talked among ourselves, that it would be Bell or Rogers that would buy it. That was sad cause it was a good program, but it had been on the air for many years. But I guess when I left I wasn't really thinking about that, but it ended up working or otherwise I would have been having to look for a job since I was with that program for a long time.

Dan: How soon after did your husband get on?

Anna: Teaching?

Dan: Yeah, at Durham, did you both get on at the same time?

Anna: I think it was within a year that he started teaching. What happened with him in 2002 - we had a baby and we weren't living in Oshawa. He was travelling and doing more freelancing than I was, so he ended up leaving his job in the city in 2002, and he would stay at home, because I liked my job at Durham. It's a very long story, but we ended up moving and he was running back, and I think even when he was teaching - I'm trying to think - he was teaching at Durham and still running the business. So he was - he still does a lot of stuff, he owned an online business, everything.

Dan: Well this chapter in your life that involved your husband and yourself... your situation reminds me of the common belief that, with a good husband or wife behind you, together you can accomplish a lot.

Anna: Yeah, it's true.

Dan: I just wanted to give you an F.Y.I., that you're doing well, but you're at the eighteen-minute mark. As you said, it shouldn't really matter if we go over a bit. Maybe we want to talk a bit more about Durham, where you are now, and then we can talk about your perceptions of the special topics course.

Anna: Yeah, at Durham, I've been there for six years. I don't think it was really in my plans to go back to school. I kinda thought I would do professional development, but, um, it turned out, that I had to think about it. So I went through a few options, and decided to go the UOIT route, but that was taking a long time. I just kept at it and they finally let me in.

Dan: That's a real good lead-in to the next question.

Anna: Well, I completed eight courses for my Adult Certificate, and I was talking - I think I told you this part before - I was talking to Francois, and he said, "Well, you have four years of teaching experience, why don't you apply to the Master? There is no guarantee, but apply as mature student, show work experience, and life experience, and um, portfolio, and then send it in and see what happens". And as you know, I got in, and that's what I've been doing for the past few years.

Dan: Thank you, Anna. So what were your expectations after the Special Topics course, and did they change after the session?

Anna: Well, I took a certificate at Centennial when I first started teaching, as I mentioned. It was in adult education. One of the courses that was there, and I took this certificate cause I felt I needed those skills to teach adults - I didn't have those skills. I had a lot of knowledge, but, you know, at Durham they do offer things, but it's not always that great, so I ended up talking to my dean. It was Robin that was there, probably before you started. One of the courses was a digital portfolio. So I've kind of gone through this process before, where you are expected to talk about where you have come from, what you are doing now, and what your future aspirations are. So that is kind of the same. As well, talk about your teaching philosophy. So that was my impression of digital portfolios based on what I had done before. After talking to Lorayne, I feel it is going to be something more, where possibly the overall teaching philosophy will be a very big interest. Also, if you look at the program we are taking, it's digital knowledge and education, so that is going to have a much bigger part in the portfolio. As you mentioned before, I think it's a very exciting opportunity to help other people that are trying to get in. Because, when Francois told me, "Okay, put together your life experience, your work experience", -- but I ended up having to print things out and put them into a binder, and hand that in. So I think they are looking for a better system, and they are hoping our portfolios will be a good example, that will show students that want to apply and show bachelor level equivalency.

Dan: Comparing what you did with your original portfolio, and where you think this one is headed, is there anything in particular that you hope to get out of this one versus what you did originally?

Anna: The other one was more -- there wasn't any theory at all or learning principles, so I think this one is headed more towards that now. We have a better understanding now; I think it will be a deeper portfolio, something more that we will reflect on. The other one was more of a resume, and the only parts that were a bit different had you list your future aspirations. It wasn't really open to reflect on a lot of topics. It was kind of just like 'gather a lot of things together'. The inventory is actually good, because I think we forget a lot of things "oh I've don't this, I've done that, I've done freelance, I did peer work", and all that can be really important. Choosing, I'm hoping Lorayne will offer us some direction in helping us choose what is important, and I think we'll be using the Bachelor equivalencies to help guide us... This is to show that I know 'x', need to show them that I have learned this, or I've done this, and I need to demonstrate this. I'm really hoping Lorayne will help us with the process, and I think she will have a better idea cause in the end it is Lorayne and the other people in the program that are choosing the candidates and whether they have the equivalency or not. I'm hoping they have a good idea.

Dan: Yeah, exactly. I think they are expecting us to gauge where we are coming from. It's interesting that even though we are all college professors, it's going to be different for each of us. It will be interesting for them to determine a baseline, since there will be a lot of variance among our six. Will they choose some out of the six, or all of them, when using them to test for equivalency next year? I imagine we'll find out over the course of the semester.

Thank you Anna, that was just over twenty-five minutes. I was very interested in what you had to say. I'm going to take that all in. I've been jotting some notes as well, but I'll certainly rewatch it. I guess that leads us to task two so I'm going to stop the video right now.