

**Transcripts – KPU Oral – Al Valleau FINAL APPROVED
Faculty Member – ENGL**

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[Beginning of transcript]

ROGER: Anytime you want to stop or you don't want to answer something that I might ask.

A Valleau: Don't want to go there.

ROGER: Yeah, right, you know, so you have an out, and then you'll also get to review the transcript.

A Valleau: Sure.

ROGER: And anything you want to take out or so on, you'd be able to do that.

A Valleau: Okay.

ROGER: And we will edit the videotape to match that.

A Valleau: Okay.

ROGER: Yeah, just so.

A Valleau: Yup.

ROGER: To make it fair.

A Valleau: I've read the documents though. [laughs]

ROGER: Okay.

A Valleau: I'm aware.

ROGER: Good. Good. But not everyone is as thorough in their reading as you. [laughs]

A Valleau: It's part of the training, I'm afraid.

ROGER: Yeah. Absolutely. So, continue on then, just tell us about the, we were just talking about how, just that era and the postsecondary system.

A Valleau: Yeah, well, it's interesting. I finished my master's degree at UBC, and the only jobs that were available in BC, there was one in Prince George, and they wanted someone who would not only teach English but also do drama productions. They said, "You have any production experience and interest?"

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I said, "Well, I've done some work on stage, but I've never directed or put together." "Oh, okay. Thank you very much." "Oh, okay." So, then I had friends in Toronto at the time who said that the CEGEPs [Collège d'enseignement général et professionnel] were expanding in Montreal, and I should basically send out letters and just say "I'm coming back!", which is what I did; I went back for the May long weekend, and had about four to five interviews in two days, and got back home and landed a job at Dawson College in Montreal. So, that's how my career started, three thousand miles away from where I grew up here in Vancouver. So, you know, it was interesting because I'd been to Montreal before during Expo, and it's a difference place entirely from being on the coast. You realize how far away you are from the centres of so much that's happening in Canada when you're in Vancouver. That Rocky Mountain divide, and the Prairies makes it a long way to really understand Canada. [laughs] And also the fact that Quebec is French basically, and that came out when I was there in spades. I remember being on the plane coming back, it was Christmas time, back to visit family, and the fellow next to me was francophone and he said, "Oh, where are you from?" I said, "I just moved to Montreal." And he said, "Okay, then I'll speak English with you, but if you were from Montreal, I would insist we speak French." [laughs] Now, that really was the test of the times, I think. That made...

ROGER: When did you start at Dawson?

A Valleau: Oh, let's see, it would be 1973.

ROGER: Okay, so before René Lévesque...

A Valleau: Yeah. Well, we were actually...

ROGER: ...Came into power.

A Valleau: I took a year off my job at Dawson and taught at Red Deer College in Alberta, thinking, "Oh, I'll be back in Western Canada." Well, I understood very quickly that Western Canada stopped at the Rockies, and one step over the Rocky Mountains, you were on the Coast, which was kind of an interesting revelation for me too. [laughs]

ROGER: Yeah.

A Valleau: You learn a lot about the country when you live anywhere else in the country. But, yeah, I spent a year in Red Deer, and decided that that was quite different from what I grew up

in, and I learned then how conservative Alberta was. The college actually had a KKK [sign] in the men's washrooms, I haven't forgotten this, KKK signs, and I remember asking my students about different things, and we used to go to Rocky Mountain House for the auctions on Saturday and he said, "Oh, the auctions." And I said, "Well, they are kind of fun." He said, "Now Native people come, they bid up the price of eggs!" I realized suddenly that I really was in a different land altogether. So, we

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went back to Montreal just after René Lévesque had been elected. Everyone was leaving, and we were going back, and you stop in gas stations along the way and people would say, "Oh, where you're going?" I'd say, "Montreal." "What!? You're going to Montreal?!" "Yeah, going to Montreal." So, Montreal was a second home in a lot of ways, and it did feel like home there, and it was such an amazing place to live during that period in time because Canada's future was on the cusp of changing radically. Cultural Identities come along in that period too. Just before the referendum, and our daughter was born in 1980, so you know, that's really kind of an interesting period in time for me.

ROGER: Yeah, for sure.

A Valteau: The conference that we had, we held, and you organized or helped organize through ACCC was fascinating, and I mentioned to you in the email that we had the concluding banquet at Trestler House which was just off the west end of the Island of Montreal, and the fellow, who was the maître d' of Trestler House was a francophone and he didn't quite understand the nuances of the comedy that Ross Paul and Harvey Berger were doing, which was a parody of the anglophones in Quebec, and he thought it was insulting, and he said, "You must leave." So, everyone was chased out of that place. It was amazing. [laughs]

ROGER: I think he thought that we were doing a parody of a priest that we met with earlier.

A Valteau: Oh, yeah.

ROGER: And he was a francophone.

A Valteau: Yeah, well.

ROGER: And so, he got everything totally...

A Valteau: Oh, he did. Yeah, and you realize how the nuances of language really in a sense are so easy, I mean, the two solitudes in Canada is partly a linguistic one, and it's the nuances of language, and it really showed, I think, in that evening, and I think the next 5 years in Quebec were part of that whole cycle, and of course, we were across - from Kahnawake or what it was then called Caughnawaga.

ROGER: Yeah.

A Valleau: So, all those things blended in together, the bridge you had to take to Kahnawake was the Mercier, which the Mohawks actually closed down during the Oka Crisis. So, I mean that

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conference was really quite fascinating in terms of being the centre of this strange vortex that was happening in Quebec and in Canada at that time.

ROGER: It was. So, you were in a CEGEP, so that was somewhat different than the system out here or at Red Deer for that matter.

A Valleau: Yup. Oh yeah. Well, it's fascinating, three provinces I've taught in, Red Deer, of course, had oil money and new campuses galore, all the community colleges that were opened up were brand new with gymnasiums and there were squash courts and stuff that, you know, anywhere else in Canada would dream of only. [laughs] Swimming pool even, for heaven's sakes. And yeah, that was quite a different existence. Dawson College was an old Frost 222 factory that had been converted and a block and half away was Imperial Tobacco, then a bubble gum factory the other way on Saint Antoine, and on a bad day, you got the mixture of tobacco and bubble gum coming into our classroom windows. [laughs] It was something else.

ROGER: Hmm.

A Valleau: And the parking lot was underneath the Ville-Marie Expressway, so you can imagine what kind of a place it was. It was really different. So, coming out here, it was fascinating because coming onto 140th in Surrey, and seeing the portables, I was like, "Yeah, this is normal." [laughs] Because, and I heard the history of what was at one point Douglas and then became Kwantlen-Douglas. One of the fellows that worked actually at Dawson, who was from BC too, had come out and done an exchange and he said, "Oh, the commuting! Oh, you got one class in New Westminster, then you're in Richmond." Yeah, it's true. The commuting was daunting, to say the least, but in terms of ...

ROGER: Yeah, did he do an exchange with Chris Rideout?

A Valleau: No, Chris came later.

ROGER: Or was that later?

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: Okay.

A Valleau: Chris came later. I remember Chris going to the Viger Campus of Dawson, he was on the other campus from me, and his whole comment was that students came up to him after the first class and said, "Hey sir, we got a buy'em or read'em?"

ROGER: [laughs]

[0:08:20]

A Valteau: So, [laughs] that was, it was kind of the unwashed. And what you were getting too, I think, in Dawson, which was different than Vanier, was that it was right below Westmount.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valteau: And I remember when we did an exchange to Vancouver, and I think it was CTV came and interviewed Dawson students, just when PQ was in power, so they wanted to ask a political question, the students didn't want to have anything to do with those questions, and they came back and they said, "They asked us political questions!" So, then they had the news report on the news that night, it was repeated in Montreal too, and they said, "Bunch of students from Dawson College in Westmount, Quebec..." [laughs] Of course, the person from Langara then contacted her MLA and complained, etc., etc., and CTV was slapped on the wrist for distorting the exchange, because most of the kids were not from Westmount.

ROGER: Westmount, yeah.

A Valteau: They were from below the hill from Westmount, and Verdun and places like that, they were working class kids.

ROGER: Yeah.

A Valteau: So, quite a difference. So, yeah, interesting, I mean, the campus where I worked down there was a working class campus...

A Valteau: Yeah, the three campuses were quite different because Dawson was working class, the one that I was on, then I moved to Vanier, to Snowdon, which was very middle class, and all the kids have been together since Grade 1. It was like teaching extended high school, and then up to Sainte-Croix, which was interesting too, because in the back of the campus was a graveyard for all the nuns who died during the flu epidemic after WWI. It's a huge graveyard. You can actually go down and see 1917, 1918, 1919, all the way along the lines. And that was interesting. I taught in a classroom in Quebec Canada Studies, which you would know about through ACCC.

ROGER: Right.

A Valteau: And our classroom looked out on graveyard, which was right next door, and every once in a while, they'd have a procession coming out to the graveyard to bury someone, so you could look at it and say, "Ah, for whom the bell tolls."

ROGER: Yeah.

A Valleau: Yeah, that was really kind of interesting because the kids came there from North Montreal, Italian kids, kids from West Island, kids from Saint-Laurent, really a different mix altogether. So, I guess in the places I've worked, I've had all kinds of different students from different backgrounds. The same as at Kwantlen too because you look at the old campus on 140th, the mix of kids we had there, they weren't all kids. A lot of them, they were people who've been out and back to college. They were mature. A lot more than what happened when we moved here [72nd Avenue campus] when we got kids right out of high school. So, the demographics of the population in the classroom changed, the type of student changed, the reason why they were here changed.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: I remember at one point having a student called James, curly haired and sandy haired kid, skinny as a rake, shouldn't have been in college, nice kid, harmless, but quite slow at processing, and we were talking in class – I don't think James, by the way, finished a course ever – but he sat there and he kind of had a puzzled look on his face, and we'd gone onto something else, about a minute and half later, James said, "Oh, I get it!" And the whole class kind of turned and

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looked at him and smiled and we went on with the conversation. Kwantlen's population has changed, the type of student it's got, and where the student is going has changed too.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: And if you think this institution has morphed from being a college to the university college to a university, and all the changes that are part of that is phenomenal when you think of the short period of time where this is happening.

ROGER: Yeah.

A Valleau: So, the whole post-secondary sector in British Columbia has changed. It's suffered from some of the growing pains, but it's transformed itself too. So, you know.

ROGER: Yeah. Those have been huge changes for sure.

A Valleau: Oh yeah.

ROGER: Absolutely. Did you find much difference because the CEGEPs, where after Grade 11, they go into CEGEP.

A Valleau: Yeah, a year younger

ROGER: So, they are all a year younger, and then you walk into a good mix of mature students and straight-out-of-Grade-12 students when you came to Kwantlen first?

A Valleau: I would say Kwantlen first was different, maybe more akin to the kind of students that you got in Alberta, which was more of a mix, because there you had, Red Deer was servicing the Central part of Alberta, and so you got kids who commuted in from Rocky Mountain House or in these villages south of or something like that, who weren't going at that point, of course, two universities, one in Calgary and one in Edmonton, so there you would get some older students, not as many as here, when we were on 140th, more a mix between what we have now, I guess, and what was on 140th. The CEGEPs, yeah, the first-year kids were a little bit whacked but no different than, for instance, the kids right out of Grade 12, [laughs] in first semester at Kwantlen, they are still not quite sure where they are, what the difference between the university and the high school is, and that demonstrates itself in so many different ways. I remember when I taught on the – I put in quotation marks here, “Langley campus”, ‘cause it was in Brookwood Secondary before we had a campus out there – I had a student who sat down in class, it was an interesting class because I had a fire chief, I had librarian, a person who had a master's degree, I think, in sociology, we had some really interesting students, it was a great class to teach, I had this guy who was straight out of Brookwood,

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and he said, “Hey, this is where I had my English 12!” [laughs] We all kind of looked at him. [laughs] He realized that the class was much different than English 12.

ROGER: Yeah, yeah.

A Valleau: So, you know, I mean, if you look at Kwantlen too, and the campuses were so different from one another, the personalities of the campuses, the students on the campuses. Richmond, I remember, the old campus where the office I had was a broom closet, and it was crowded, and I don't think I was aware that most of the offices were upstairs, as most of my classes were downstairs.

ROGER: Right.

A Valleau: And of course, then, part of being new, you were one class in Surrey, next class in Richmond, then back to Surrey, whatever. So, I never really got a feel for the campus except that the students were from all over the place, a lot of Tsawwassen, or as now I'll say scəwaθən, students from Ladner, and a mix of students from Richmond, who didn't get into UBC, were bitter that they're at Kwantlen. [laughs] So, that's kind of an interesting mix too. There was more of a high school feel to Richmond, I think, than there was in Surrey, which I think is fascinating. Now, Surrey campus has changed, and with the new campus [72nd Avenue] in Surrey, the demographics has changed there too.

ROGER: Yeah.

A Valleau: So yeah, and Langley was a different thing altogether. Yeah, I remember having a student who sat there with his Bible in front of him in class, [laughs] and we were actually doing a W.O. Mitchell novel, and there is a part there where there is a holy- roller priest, and the guy says, “Wait a minute! He said such and such”, thumbing through his book and then commenting

on what the Bible has to say about that. So, you really did get a sense of different personalities from campus to campus here, and that was interesting too, because you had to adapt to your audience. You didn't take anything for granted, that it was all gonna be the same because it wasn't.

ROGER: True. Yeah. Absolutely. So, this is, that was the big move from the 140th to here, our site.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: I actually ran into someone yesterday in the White Rock Market, a staff person, and she was saying that they all had a big feeling of family at the 140th, but then they came here and the family thing just kind of started to dissipate for the staff, but.

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A Valleau: I would say that was true for faculty too. I think the nice thing about 140th is that I shared my first office with a mathematician and a criminologist. It was closest I've had to a parking space in any institution I have worked in. On the new Surrey campus, the English Department was on the third floor of what was then the D Building, other people were in different locations, so this ghettoized departments. Yeah, you got to get to know the other people in the department outside department meetings, but you didn't get the same sense of the rest of the faculty because the buildings were larger, so you just didn't see people, and I think that changed the personality of the institution right there, because before, we really truly were in it all together because of the fact that the classes were shared by everyone, offices were all over the place in portables, and there was no sense of dividing up territories. And I think it was the size of the institution too: when you're smaller, you basically get to know people. But I would say that's true for any institution: when you start to grow, you lose something in terms of the sense of cohesion and family. It just goes.

ROGER: Yeah. I know it is a challenge to keep it rolling, and I think that for faculty, the home then kind of became more, as I think you were alluding to, the department, and for staff, that wasn't always the case, because often, unless they are in the Registrar's Office and they basically stay there their whole career, they kind of moved around a lot. They got moved to here and here and so on, so they didn't have a departmental home in the same way.

A Valleau: Yeah. And part of that was that funds were given out to build the new facilities, but I remember very clearly how the hallways got narrowed [laughs] because money wasn't there for the size that they were originally planned to be, and so everything shrunk down, and that was one of the problems. The other problem that I remember and you would appreciate this, I remember talking to you about it was when you did free time, if you wanted to stop this from being a commuter campus, you needed to have a time during the day when there are no classes where you can have events where you get cohesion, and, of course, that wasn't the formula that

government gave us to run the institution. It was you have to have X percent of fullness of classrooms, and if you don't, well, you are underutilizing it, you'd better do something about it.

ROGER: Yeah. The space utilization part.

A Valleau: Yeah, they love to drive you absolutely crazy.

ROGER: [laughs]

[0:19:32]

A Valleau: Because it runs counter to the whole notion of creating community, and I think that's what these places were really set to establish was the fact that there was a presence of post-secondary education systems within the communities, rather than going to Point Grey or up on top of that foggy mountain called Simon Fraser. I think that's a good thing about the community institutions, and the bad thing was that government just didn't get it in terms of what was needed to actually make these things really workable, interesting, complex places.

ROGER: It's an interesting paradox because the decree to get one, you have to have a referendum in each school district in order to have one established.

A Valleau: Yes.

ROGER: And yet, when push came to shove, they didn't put the money into, as you say, creating a sense of community, or even providing mechanisms to assist in community outreach, and then you have to do all of that, and continuing education wasn't funded, so in that kind of community, the outreach, there had to be cost for covering it.

A Valleau: Yeah. This is the only place I have ever worked where the working day started at 8 in the morning and went to 10 at night.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: Quebec, anything after 6 PM was in Continuing Education. There were problems with that because people in Continuing Education didn't get paid the same. So I understood why the collective agreement here covered from 8 to 10 at night, and it made sense, you know, treat everyone the same, but it also meant that sometimes your day was really [laughs] unreasonably long, and particularly when you were new too, because you took whatever was given to you and you smiled and said, "Yes, I will be in Richmond at 8 in the morning, and yes, I will be in Langley at 7 that night!"

ROGER: Yeah.

A Valleau: It's just wicked stuff. And you can't blame the institution. You can't blame the funding behind it all because it was serving the community and I don't have a problem with that. The problem was funding and how it worked in reality for the people who are actually working the jobs.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: And hard on the students too.

ROGER: It certainly was challenging for some students, especially when they had to travel between campuses to get courses.

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A Valleau: Well.

ROGER: That kind of changed with time more or less but I'm sure in the early days, a lot did travel.

A Valleau: Well, I still remember when they opened the new highway to Richmond, and they said, "Oh, it's gonna make it easy to get from Surrey to Richmond!" Well, yeah, unless it's rush hour and suddenly the Alex Fraser can slow down, [laughs] and God help you on the Richmond end. It's not as simple, and, of course, the demographics of Greater Vancouver are part of it, and this is south of the Fraser, and south of Fraser is so badly funded for transportation systems, trying to get from Richmond to Langley, well, just get yourself a gun and shoot yourself.

ROGER: Yeah.

A Valleau: It was just the ridiculous side of the stuff. So, there again, you look at what the government expects of an institution, what an institution can do, and have cohesion is a totally different thing. The personalities on the campuses grew divergently, and certainly that was true in the English Department where the people who taught in Richmond were different personalities than people in Surrey, and Langley was basically housing people who live there and therefore were happy to teach close to home. So, there is some interesting side effects to the spread and distribution of campuses and the staffing of the little different campuses too. So, it's a complex issue.

ROGER: It is. It's very complex, and it's quite interesting trying to bring your faculty together, let alone a department.

A Valleau: Oh, yeah. Well, we started out, if you remember, as English, Creative Writing and Communications. [laughs] I remember teaching Communications when I first started here. It's just applying your skills and teaching for people in business." And then we got the dividing up – as the institution grew, and this is another kind of offshoot – we housed people in Creative Writing, we taught English, and actually people like Leona Gom, who was quite at home teaching English or talking about creative writing, and then lo and behold, we got a different

kind of people teaching Creative Writing who wanted their own department. I understand; department meetings talked a lot about English and people in writing centres. [laughs]

ROGER: [laughs]

A Valleau: I felt sorry for them. I said, "Sure, no problem." But it was also a part of growing up and maybe also growing away from one another. And I remember creative writing wasn't a problem for English; communications was an interesting departure because they wanted to align themselves with the business program, and, in so doing, they didn't grow as quickly as they thought they would.

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ROGER: Yeah.

A Valleau: So, you know, I guess the politics are the best of part of what I'm talking about here, and they are very complex.

ROGER: Yeah. Oh, they are, and they change from time to time. They change with senior leadership and new directions. So, all of those things have an impact too.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: So, you actually did a lot of student exchanges.

A Valleau: Yeah, I did.

ROGER: You did a bunch with Leah and...

A Valleau: Yeah, I did two years with Leah [Skretkowicz – GEOG], I did two in Montreal, planned a third one, did travel/study, took students to Britain during the Olympics in Montreal, so yeah, kind of interesting. That was something, and ACCC, tip of the hat to you Roger, 'cause you really did back that program, which later ended up funding 4-H clubs visiting different regions in Canada.

ROGER: Oh really? Really?

A Valleau: I bumped into one of my students from Montreal at Toyota dealership in South Surrey. He said, "You're Al Valleau." And I said, "Yeah. Yeah." He said, "I was on the exchange from Montreal to Vancouver." I said, "Really?" He said, "Yeah!" He said, "Coming out here then changed my view of Canada. I moved out west because of that."

ROGER: Yeah.

A Valleau: I think those were transformational kinds of moments for a lot of students, and they were such great moments too. The ones in Newfoundland, and you were in Newfoundland this summer, so.

ROGER: Yeah.

A Valleau: Newfoundland is such a unique part of Canada. Thank god there is Newfoundland. They still know how to tell tales.

ROGER: [laughs]

[0:26:05]

A Valleau: They still know how to talk for half an hour and have a wandering conversation, and they are marvelous people, and there is a sense of regionality and difference in accents within Newfoundland itself. That is an eye-opener for someone from Western Canada, and it's such a unique place, because culturally and historically, it's a world unto itself, and just be glad that we have that part of Canada. Think of the comedians that come from Newfoundland in Canada. My gosh!

ROGER: Yeah. It's quite amazing when you think about it. It's sort of the population of Surrey plus a little bit.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: Same as New Brunswick. It's sort of like 750,000 that live there.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: And PEI is still like, I mean...

A Valleau: [laughs] It's true.

ROGER: Prince Edward Island is what it was at Confederation.

A Valleau: Charlottetown and a few of little communities, that's, yeah. Well, I can actually say I shook the hand of the last of the Fathers of Confederation. I met Joey Smallwood when I was on an exchange.

ROGER: Oh yeah?

A Valleau: I went to his house and I've still got two of his little books, *No Apology From Me*. Joey Smallwood signed the inside of it. Yeah, those were kind of interesting times. I think students were exposed to such an incredible richness of the regions in Canada through the exchanges.

ROGER: Did you work on the MILE Handbook?

A Valleau: Yes, I did.

ROGER: I thought you were involved with that.

A Valleau: With Frank Longstaff and Susan Poteet.

ROGER: And Susan, yeah.

[0:27:27]

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: Well, Frank and I were at McMaster together.

A Valleau: Oh yeah?

ROGER: Kind of lived almost across the hall in these big apartment blocks where there'd be about 30 apartments full of students there.

A Valleau: Wow.

ROGER: That's how, kind of, then I ran into him, and he was new in the MILE, Mobile Intensive Learning Experience.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: From Seneca [College].

A Valleau: From Seneca. Yeah, that's right.

ROGER: And then actually, one of their group linked into our cultural identity conference at Cape Breton.

A Valleau: Oh yeah! That's right!

ROGER: That's how we got to participate in our week there on cultural identity as college students. So, that's kind of neat for them and for us.

A Valleau: Well, actually those conferences were really... I've heard so many stories about Cape Breton, eventually my wife and I went there, and toured around, trying to get a sense of what it was that you had experienced there.

ROGER: Yeah.

A Valleau: And then Olds [Alberta] where people were in giant teepees, I believe, at one point?

ROGER: We had a night in teepees, yes.

A Valleau: Yeah. Yeah. They were unique experiences. I don't think could be matched now, or could they?

ROGER: It would be a real challenge to do them because they involve faculty from essentially across the country.

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A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: And we ran one here where we actually took, we sort of did stuff around here, UBC, Indo-Canadian community, First Nations, etc.

A Valleau: Mm-hmm.

ROGER: And you know, the majority community, and then we took them on a converted minesweeper which was chartering out of New Westminster to Comox.

A Valleau: [laughs]

ROGER: And we landed them on the beach at Qualicum Beach.

A Valleau: Oh yeah.

ROGER: And stayed in the old Qualicum College, which had become an inn, Qualicum College Inn.

A Valleau: Uh-huh.

ROGER: So, they got this whole different perspective. These people from Quebec coming and you know, kind of doing all this sort of stuff. Some of them said, "Well, we can't stay quite to the end. We have to fly back." We said, "Okay, we will arrange for Scare-Air to fly you back. You can count the seagulls and the waves as you go over the Strait."

A Valleau: [laughs]

ROGER: So, it gave people a good sense of different parts of the country, and now they could bring that back to the classroom and use that profitably.

A Valleau: Well, I think the interesting thing about Canada is that we do have so many different cultures within the geographic differences across the country. You can live in one part of Canada and not be aware of that, and it's conferences like that or student exchanges that allow

people to understand the complexities of the country and the richness that complexity gives. That makes it really so worthwhile. It's a shame that program was dismantled, and the funding for conferences through the ACCC was cut back. What can you say?

ROGER: Well, that's how the feds, how all governments...

A Valleau: Yes, [laughs] I'm afraid so. Well, the governments have an incredible effect on the institutions.

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ROGER: Battle for scarce resources.

A Valleau: Yeah, well. It's where you want to put money to.

ROGER: Yeah.

A Valleau: It really is.

ROGER: So, I also taught in Brookwood High School.

A Valleau: You did!

ROGER: The night class in Poli-Sci.

A Valleau: Okay.

ROGER: Yeah. A couple of times around.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: So, that was a very unique experience because as you say, it was, we had a campus in Langley before that, and it was closed because of cutbacks.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: It was closed in, like, 1983, 82, maybe, right around then. Right after Kwantlen became a separate institution, basically.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: And we closed the campus that had been there for years, not a huge one, but it was portables and it was there.

A Valleau: Mm-hmm.

ROGER: So, to come and try to still keep this alive somehow, apart from the farrier who was still on the Langley site.

A Valleau: [laughs] Yes!

ROGER: Hank was still there, Hank McEwan, but you know, there wasn't a lot of ongoing presence, and to try to rebuild it and doing it in that kind of way, it was very interesting.

[0:31:42]

A Valleau: Well, I think that Langley is such a unique community too. When we first moved back out west, we lived in Langley. So, I had a couple of years of experience living in Langley City, and my wife taught in the school system in Langley for quite a while. So, you look at the communities that Kwantlen serves, and they are so different from one another. And I think when you start to realize that you start to realize how complex the Lower Mainland too. Langley is the first of the valley cities in some respects, and because of that, it has different expectations about what the college is and what is it going to do for it. I think that was one of the problems that Kwantlen had with it. The music school in Langley, very strong, and so Kwantlen thought, "Okay, we will have a music program." Great, but music is space-intensive and part-time-intensive. That's something that any institution that has had a music program learned the hard way. I've talked to people at Douglas who are in the music program. I actually have a friend who chaired the music program over there, and it's a nightmare and a half. Just because of the fact that you have someone who's really good at violin, can teach violin and cello, and nothing else. Okay, well, it's hard to get a fulltime job out of that. So, that was unique thing, and the farrier program was unique. The small, small, what did you call it, Alice?

ALICE: Outdoor power equipment.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: Outdoor Power Equipment Program was unique too [laughs]. I think Langley understood that it had to do something different. Horticulture was, I think, really a gold mine for Kwantlen, , that was, I think, a godsend, and of course, during the times we're in now with legalization of marijuana, that will also bring more attention to Kwantlen. It's been on the news as being the only institution in western Canada that has a program for growing marijuana, so. I think that recognizing the differences in that community and what the campus would mean was the first thing, but I remember how hard it was to keep that campus full, and how the farmer's market would take over half the parking lot one day a week because of the fact that they drew attention to the campus and because Fraser Valley was just up the road in Abbotsford, half hour away, and it was touting that it was a university and pushing very hard for that. And a different kind of personality. Really different personalities, these institutions.

ROGER: Yeah. They are_

ROGER: No. It's absolutely true, and you know, our campuses do vary quite a bit.

[0:34:48]

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: What's interesting about Langley was that the vocational programs, the trades programs, were kind of shipped there as a core, as a draw, and so on.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: And then of course, when the new campus was created for trades [Cloverdale Campus] that was all shut down, then the new core, sort of, draw program that you could capture people with, and they can't go anywhere else to get was Nursing.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: It's always been interesting for us to, you know, kind of making that a full, lively campus, a full alive campus.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: It's kind of getting more there now.

A Valleau: Yeah. I remember talking to Balbir Gurm about moving nursing to Langley, I said, "So, what's that gonna be like? Most of your students are not from Langley, are they?" [laughs] she said, "No. They are not." So, right away you get into the hole of transportation.

ROGER: Yeah.

A Valleau: It's just a huge albatross. It really is in a way. And one of the ironies in Langley was when a certain president decided to move his offices and took over the daycare.

A Valleau: I don't know if he ever understood the terrible irony that he was taking over the daycare and closing down the daycare at same... It was just immense. And the message it was sending out was maybe not the one he wanted to send out, but...

ROGER: Yeah. The other ,, Surrey hasn't kind of had that same, it's always kind of been a UT-focus to it as opposed to, like, you have to have a major program there to make it work, and Richmond has had the School of Design.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: And now with the new [School of Design] building, which of course, is a landmark kind of building, UT has kind of on the periphery; it's not been the core part of it, it had more of a struggle.

[0:36:44]

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: And with the closeness to Langara and UBC, probably that has always been in the back there.

A Valleau: Well, there is also a linguistic difference between campuses, and not to say that we haven't had a linguistically mixed population coming to this campus, the Surrey campus, but you look at the demographics of Richmond, you can see that Asian population is about 75-80% of the population right now, and the students that would come into UT courses would not necessarily be well-versed in English. It was a second language for some of them, and for some of them, they were still struggling, and I think that had an impact upon English, and certainly English is interesting, the argument about where English Studies fits into postsecondary education is fascinating. Every province has dealt with it differently. Quebec, you had four courses in English in two years in the CEGEP, and in Alberta, you had your first-year English definitely and if you are going on in the Arts, you had to have second-year English, and here, it followed kind of that design but as we extended ourselves into third and fourth years, that was a real reach in some respects, and, in hindsight, what some people feel in English was that maybe we missed our opportunity to design an English major that was not a traditional English major but one that actually took into account the fact that we're a polytechnic. And so, you know, how does that affect the students in the classroom? It affects them drastically because your course design is really different too, your understanding of the linguistic abilities of your students is going to be different too. So, it's one size doesn't fit all, and I think the hard thing for any institution growing is the fact that it looks to older institutions for advice. Older institutions are so caught up in their own development and their own way of seeing that they don't understand how that may not work in a new institution. It's got to forge its own way. But those are hard decisions to make at the time. I suspect that Kwantlen is going to go through a lot of adjustments in terms of what its programs are, who its students are, and how to best serve those students' needs. The traditional English Survey course, for instance, all the way from Beowulf to Virginia Woolf, oh my god. I remember what it was like when I took it in second year at UBC. [laughs] It didn't serve me at the time, and I end up being an English major. So, what does it say about a student whose first language is Cantonese or Mandarin? Or as in Surrey, from the South Asian culture? It's completely alien because it's Judaeo-Christian European history, a lot of the reference points are cultural or basically historical, and it's really hard to understand that, and to teach it, you have to understand that you're having to not only teach the material that you have in front of you but also the culture, the history, the religion, all of the baggage that goes with it, the mythology; it's totally different. And I think that's something that Kwantlen has had a hard time dealing with, because, again, you can't just take the standard UBC curriculum and say, "Oh, well, that will work in Kwantlen!" No. It won't, and for a lot of good reasons, it won't. And, so.

[0:40:36]

ROGER: Well, it's a very interesting sort of conundrum, and I think part of it was caused because the approval of non-technical degrees as university-college, everything had to go through DQAB, Degree Quality Assessment Board.

A Valleau: Yup.

ROGER: In order to get the Arts moving, because we went through all of those applied degrees when everybody thought we can only do applied degrees.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: So, we got Applied Psychology, and then we got Criminology which was an applied degree initially, and they got those two through, and then we sort of were wrestling with, "So, how do you do all the rest of them?" So, that's where we do the framework of an arts degree.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: Where the framework got approved by Degree Quality Assessment, and then everybody could fit into the framework.

A Valleau: Mm-hmm.

ROGER: Which was essentially a traditional university framework.

A Valleau: Absolutely.

ROGER: And that's when English later came to, you know, work on their major.

A Valleau: Mm-hmm.

ROGER: We sort of tumbled into that because we were a university-college, and because Kwantlen specifically believed that it had to only do applied degrees, which was later found to not actually be the case.

A Valleau: Mm-hmm.

ROGER: But anyway, that's how we were operating, and so you got that framework and then, bang, you just do all the majors.

A Valleau: Well, and I know very well, when our co-chairs were putting together the proposal and went around the province, talking to other places that already had their degrees in place, and, of course, what the feedback they were getting was, "Oh, our students like the traditional!" Well

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you're talking, to senior institutions, you're talking to institutions in small towns, not in a suburban community but in isolation from the rest of the province. So, your population is gonna be different, the expectations of that population is gonna be different as well.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valteau: And so, the type of thing they were getting back was fairly traditional advice, and so that's what we went for, although some of us were saying, "You need to be a little bit careful here, because if you don't distinguish our major from the majors in senior institutions which are in our backyard, why would the students stay here? Why wouldn't they go elsewhere?" As tradition had also been set in place that after one or two years at Kwantlen, you move to Simon Fraser or UBC, so that tradition is in people's minds to start with, so it's really hard to break that.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valteau: I know the first cohorts that went through the English major were an interesting little chatty group, because they had all their classes together, their expectations were that they were the first and that they could give feedback and get the program to run their way. And you had a funny way of building a program because it was a small cohort too.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valteau: I don't think that cohort is growing very much as well. That's an ongoing problem within the institution, and, I think, in particularly established disciplines like English. Maybe in History too, I'm not sure.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valteau: But it's really hard to design something original and different and new, and if you look at your faculty, that's another thing too, because faculty, for the most part, who were hired during that period in time were people who had their training in traditional universities, and so their view of their discipline was very [laughs] very conservative, so.

ROGER: Yeah. It's very interesting to look at curriculum and how you can develop it, especially if you want to have curriculum for change or curriculum that's aimed at serving a different type of students or having different outcomes, etc., so.

A Valteau: Yeah.

ROGER: I also can talk forever about outcomes and, so.

[0:44:42]

A Valteau: [laughs]

ROGER: Even dealing with that kind of change and trying to get people to think about outcomes of each course and outcomes of program, as opposed to, you know, just you will learn this and that, sort of.

A Valleau: Yeah. Oh yeah. I think designing a curriculum that has a sense of where you want to take your students after two years or four years of studies is a very complex thing, and you have to understand the job market, and here is the other argument, it goes back to the Victorian times about what is an education, the purpose of an education, is it to basically educate your population to be good citizens or is it to do something else? Is it job training? And there's the two poles of education that are still with us today and are still being fought out within the institutions, and it's not ever going to be easy to, in a sense, deal with those two poles. They are always going to be at loggerheads because, on one hand, you do want people who are educated for education's sake, that's really important in this society, for the society to understand its complexities; you also need to understand that there are people who are going to get a job out of their training. Four years and they want something out of it. Ironically enough, in the 19th century, the argument was exactly the same. I put X amount of energy into it and X money into it, I expect to get something out of it, and I remember some of the kind of sad visions of the two-year and the four-year institution, I remember Douglas College being called "Dougie Daycare".

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: That's a sad thing to say, and this is from someone who was working there at the time. To feel that your institution is basically holding people so that they are not out there unemployed is, boy, [laughs] are you in a wrong job, doing the wrong thing! Really sad.

ROGER: Yeah. Then of course, Kwantlen, I think, was "K-Mart".

A Valleau: "K-Mart". Yeah.

ROGER: Yeah.

A Valleau: Yeah. All things to all people cheaply.

ROGER: Yeah.

ALICE: Was Kwaulity, spelled with a K.

A Valleau: [laughs] Well, I think that at Kwantlen, as South of the Fraser is growing as Kwantlen's growing up too, you look at Surrey and Richmond today, they are such different communities, than they were, when 140th was open, and Fraser Highway was still a highway in a sense, it's a secondary

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highway but it still went between communities going up the Valley. It's now part of a huge cosmopolitan mix of peoples that is growing and changing. The same as looking at

Toronto. I'm looking at the city of Toronto versus Mississauga, Etobicoke, and all those places, which have changed the personality of Greater Toronto, although they still elected a very strange premier, but I won't go there. [laughs]

ROGER: [laughs] Yes, indeed. Oh yes, commuting. So, you did talk a bit about commuting, but I know that when we started, it was a huge problem without facilities.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: So, it was kind of using high schools and car trunks.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: But that continued into the time that you started here as well.

A Valleau: Yeah. Oh, very much. Yeah. Certainly I was aware of two campuses, because I taught on the two, Richmond and Surrey, then when we started to venture back into Langley, I was helping Langley too and at that point I was living in Langley, so it was actually close to home, I would zoom through home, swallow food, and go to Brookwood and teach. ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: It was hard. I think, how do you deal with that? Well, that's part of a political perception about, "Oh, it's south of the Fraser, it must be one institution."

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: When in actual fact, it was probably two or three, and it didn't have enough population base to warrant there being three, and Langley is still the poor child between Abbotsford and Surrey, in terms of its institutional growth. I think there is no doubt about that, but yeah, just the commuting in itself was torturous, and, of course, when it was Highway 99 from Richmond to Surrey, and then Highway 10 out to Langley, you couldn't predict how long it would take you. I remember having a class ending at 6 in Richmond and I had class starting at 7 in Langley, and I told my students in Langley, "If I come in and I'm still burping, the hamburger that I thrust down my throat as I was commuting, please forgive me, but this is the reality that I live in, and I will stay late to make up for that time. I have no problem with that, but just understand I cannot control traffic flow." And I think I was on time for every class but that was whimsy, ironically enough. You really

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couldn't tell what was going to happen, and god knows today if someone had that same kind of configuration of classes, they wouldn't be able to make it.

ROGER: That would be a huge challenge.

A Valleau: Oh well. Massey Tunnel?

ROGER: Even 64th Avenue, is like, if you come out, you know, that way.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: It's even very slow now because all the housing that's all the way along there.

A Valleau: Oh yeah.

ROGER: And Highway 10, even though it's sort of doubled in size, it still can be a bottleneck.

A Valleau: Oh yeah. Cloverdale itself is a bottleneck.

ROGER: Yeah.

A Valleau: Going to Langley from South Surrey, we go all back roads. And even those are getting rather dangerous, ironically enough. [laughs] 192nd, maybe, and 16th, which used to be a nice little rural road, is now a...

ROGER: More of a truck highway.

A Valleau: Yeah, a truck highway, because they put the Cloverleaf off onto 16th, and all the trucks, instead of going down to 8th and doing the little horrible roundabout corners which they always couldn't do, they go off onto 16th and create chaos there.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: Now, there is incredible need for infrastructure planning, and it's at the provincial level, and that affects institutions too.

ROGER: So, I always found that commuting was not exactly writing lectures, but...

A Valleau: [laughs]

ROGER: What you're going to do in a seminar or so on, but it was your brain was working away as you're driving along too, kind of put this altogether, because you've just finished the class in one place, and you're heading off to another.

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A Valleau: Well, if you are teaching communications in Richmond and English in Langley, yeah, you had to remove that one compartment of your brain and put down and plug in the other one. Yeah, very much so. And you had to understand the personalities, I alluded to that before. The personalities of the students in classroom are different in different communities, and you just didn't go in with the same expectations of how the class was going to run, what the

personalities were going to be like, what the dynamics of the classroom was going to be like, because classes on each campus were radically different from one another, where you can say, something that will get people in Surrey asking you a question, you could say that in Langley and they would sit there writing down notes.

ROGER: Right.

A Valleau: One thing that I remember about Langley that I really appreciate was having music students in my classes.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: They understood rhythm.

ROGER: Mm-hmm. [laughs]

A Valleau: So, they understood prose and poetry from a way that the rest of the students in the class kind of go, "Huh?"

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: It was fascinating to watch them because I do have a little bit of a musical background. I was in band when I was in high school, so I can talk musical theory, and so, when you say, "Okay, we're looking at this, what does cadence suggest to you?" They'd get it.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: They'd get it, and suddenly they realized that "I understood what they were speaking about!", and so suddenly the classes became different. And that was a nice thing about Langley. You did get those kinds of students.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: Richmond was a little bit more staid, because it didn't have a program that really drove it in the same way. Surrey had a number of different programs, and so it was more divergent in the types of students you will have in the class. [laughs] I remember in English though, "Okay we got

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Nursing." and "who're we going to get to teach that There again, you have to understand your audience, and to use a metaphor, some English instructors were tone-deaf in terms of that, and that's hard in a classroom. So, I mean, there are different nuances and levels within the campuses. I think I learned that fairly early in my career teaching in different institutions, that personalities on the campus are really different from one another, and you best understand that right away, so.

ROGER: Those continue to be huge issues for sure. You talked a bit about the polytechnic.

A Valleau: Mm-hmm.

ROGER: Should there have been a degree developed, should the English degree, for example, have been developed with that in mind?

A Valleau: Mm-hmm.

ROGER: And of course, this is still an ongoing question whether Kwantlen is actually a polytechnic.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: Or whether that's just some title that was politically expedient to give to it at the time.

A Valleau: I think that, well, Gordon Campbell wandered around the province with a magic wand and said, "Let there be universities!" And there were.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: And there is a sadness to that too because it was done for political reasons, not for academic reasons, and I think that's the wrong way to develop any institution. Kwantlen was developing in a certain way. It did have cohesion. It did have a sense of what kind of programs it wanted to develop for itself. Suddenly a political statement was made, and it was a political statement too, because we have University of Fraser Valley, we have Capilano University, and then we have Kwantlen Polytechnic University. Why did Kwantlen get singled out? Partly because of Simon Fraser, I suspect, because they didn't want to have a competing university in their communities. Partly because we had a technical university which then became Simon Fraser Surrey on our doorstep and meant a real nasty kind of political problem for Kwantlen in its development, not just as an institution but in curriculum development as well.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

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A Valleau: Because some of these decisions are political: they don't have anything to do with what faculty want; they have to do with the politics of the beast, and the politics of the beast is beyond the ken of Kwantlen in some ways I think. I look at Ryerson in Toronto as an example of an institution that has evolved beyond its need, and where the word "technical" has disappeared.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: I don't know where Kwantlen's future lies but I think it shouldn't be unnecessarily replicating what UBC has done for almost a century and what Simon Fraser started out to do in

the wonderful 60s. I think that Kwantlen should understand its communities and understand what its communities' needs are, and develop programs around that, rather than necessarily trying to look for one-size-fits-all, or a curriculum that is designed for a certain function which is what sometimes a polytechnic becomes. If you look NAIT and SAIT in Alberta are examples of that too. You try and do something serving a certain part of society. The complexity of post-secondary institutions is such that it's demanding that you do more than just that. To get back again to the argument of what's the purpose of an educational institution, I think it has to transcend narrow restrictions.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: And that's the one challenge for Kwantlen. It really is. Not simple.

ROGER: No, it isn't. And even when you look at other examples, in like, California Polytechnic, MIT, Virginia, and so on, whether they are sort of polytechnics.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: They have a variety of ways of dealing with "the arts", and what is the role of the arts in their institutions.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: So, all of the disciplines trying to, generally, there is a push to provide service.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: Courses. And yet still maintain the discipline or the core of the discipline for each of the arts programs.

A Valleau: Well, if you go back to the 19th century – jeez, I harken back to it a lot today.

[0:58:11]

ROGER: [laughs]

A Valleau: Matthew Arnold, who wrote an awful lot about education in Britain, was dealing with exactly the same problems, about what is it you want to develop as a citizen for your country.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: Do you want a technocrat? Or do you want someone who transcends the boundaries of what a technocrat is? A Technocrat is someone who knows how to function within a system, who can basically deal with that system and deal with the outcomes of the system. Or do we want someone who can examine whatever the problem is and come up with a different way of looking at the problem and the solution for that problem. I think you want the latter.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: I think, even Matthew Arnold, who was fairly conservative, understood that education demands more of its institutions than simply replicating what is now happening in the society. You have to go beyond what is now happening. You have to go to what could or should happen in the future, and, as such, you have to design programs that give students the ability to think for themselves and to go beyond the narrow restrictions of the formal boundaries of their disciplines, and that's where Kwantlen can fit in in terms of being a polytechnic, in going beyond the disciplines themselves and creating something new.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: Because, quite frankly, to create something old is to basically be teaching Latin: it's a dying art that a few maybe really appreciate and can use, but it ends up being a bunch-punch of expressions that are used by doctors for parts of the body, rather than necessarily being a living, breathing thing that is developing and changing.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: So, you know, at own peril, do we not understand where we go in education, and to replicate what-is is only to, in a sense, fall behind. So, that's a real hard thing that Kwantlen has to deal with, and I don't think it's very simple to come to a conclusion about.

ROGER: No, it isn't. And I mean you've also got the challenge of, I mean, we used to teach in a universe where there was dearth of information.

A Valleau: Yeah! [laughs]

[1:00:29]

ROGER: Now, there is sort of this plethora of information, but the sorting and sifting and finding, critical thinking, critically analyzing information, teaching those skills to students in all disciplines, in all fields, I think, is a major role for postsecondary nowadays.

A Valleau: Yes.

ROGER: But how do you actually do that, especially where you've got content which is sort of dictated by some external body, whatever the body might be, but also within arts programs, where you got faculty, sometimes, who have been following, you know, a straight path.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: And usually it's been individuals writing their own papers to their prof, and that's been sort of their background and experience.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: And you've got, you know, this whole universe of information, which is shared development of information, sometimes, a lot of it is BS.

A Valteau: Yup.

ROGER: So, you got to take that out, but a lot of it is developed through shared mechanisms of some type.

A Valteau: Yup.

ROGER: So, there is a bunch of issues that are wrapped up in...

A Valteau: Oh yeah. Well, you've hit on a number of very interesting ideas, for instance, copyrighting material, I've heard an individual from Kwantlen actually talking on television about how open access texts are really a good thing, and you said, "Yes, they're going to be cheaper, free for students, no copyright." And I kind of rolled my eyes – mind you, I have vested interest in copyright, as you well know, Jack {Finnbogason} and I have done quite well off of our books, but you know, if you want a sense of culture, of your culture, of Canadian culture, you best not adapt open access texts that are from America.

ALICE: Mm-hmm.

A Valteau: When we started writing our first book, we were aware what we had: trying to Canadianize an American author's book. There were sentences in it, like, "When the first bullet hit the side of the wall, I ducked under the bed." And we kind of looked at each other and said, "This is

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not Canadian at all." That sentence goes! Culture is nuanced and it's subtle, and when you can find it in sentences in a book that is, by theory, there to teach language, you realize how complex it is. And so, nuanced in curriculum, nuanced in approach to curriculum, and it doesn't have to be. One of the solutions in the past has always been having core subjects, such as English or History, and you make your students take those courses and then they will be well-rounded, educated individuals when they graduate. Not true! I think you're questioning that too when you were saying that all disciplines have to take into account the wider framework within which their discipline sits, and something that we talked about years ago about having cross-disciplinary courses.

ROGER: Interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary.

A Valteau: Yeah. And there has been a resistance because people who were teaching are so engrained in their own disciplines, and it's hard for them to reach across to other disciplines and say, "Yeah, what you're saying in History, that shows up in this, in Literature."

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: If we can ever get away from the old disciplinary structure that, there is something that has been the centre of the universe for so long, and again, going back to my comment about Latin, Classical Studies, which used to be a large discipline, has shrunk and shrunk and shrunk. English is shrinking and it's going the same way. Psychology has probably reached its zenith and it's going into a shrinkage. Where does the future lie? What are students telling us about disciplines and what they want to study?

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: And that's something we best listen to because, although they may not have the actual background in those disciplines, they're sensing that what they want is different than what they're being given, and where does that lead us? I'm not quite sure.

ROGER: No, I don't know the answer to that because it is very complex.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: When I finished a master's in Carlton in Canadian Studies, interdisciplinary degree.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: If I wanted to go on to a PhD, I had to go to the University of Rochester.

[1:05:11]

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: To do an interdisciplinary Canadian Studies degree.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: It was at the University of Rochester.

A Valleau: [laughs]

ROGER: So, that hasn't changed dramatically because interdisciplinary studies, by and large, they haven't grown very much.

A Valleau: Well, you know, I used to give papers at the Irish Conference of Canadian Studies; I did about six papers there.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: And it was fascinating to see who attended, where they were from and what their view of Canada was, and about 30% of people who came to the Irish Conferences were American.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: I was always fascinated by America's view of Canada, because it was not a Canadian view by any stretch of the imagination. [laughs]

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: And what you realize is that when you are going across boundaries, you carry some of the baggage that you should drop at that boundary.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: So, to forge ahead in a purely interdisciplinary way is going to be extremely wrought with problems, and fascinating.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: You're going to have to have people who are hired who have like-minds and are hired because of their thinking that way, and that's going to be difficult because the people who are hiring, they're often so framed in their own disciplinary self-reinforcing vision of the world, that is going to be hard to escape that.

[1:06:41]

ROGER: It'd be a very interesting challenge. In my own family, my grandson has now started apprenticeship in HVAC, heating, you know, ventilation air conditioning.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: Which is kind of like his great grandfather, apprenticed in England as a tinsmith.

A Valleau: [laughs]

ROGER: And ended up with a company in Brantford, Ontario, manufacturing ducting and, you know, furnaces and so on.

A Valleau: Mm-hmm.

ROGER: Not much air conditioning in his era, but certainly all of the ducting and downspouts and replacing and repairing radiators, which were still on then.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: I mean, car radiators as well. It's sort of like this kind of a circle.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: and yet, how does that link into interdisciplinary studies, because my grandfather was a very successful businessman.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: Because he created a business out of being an apprentice, and reading the apprenticeship papers, I sent a copy to my grandson, and said, "Here is what he signed to become an apprentice then." But to link that to him as a successful businessman and how does my grandson in an apprenticeship program, how does he get a rounded education, or how do some of our students and some of our programs here, that are, kind of focused on the getting out, "Yes, you'll qualified, you have all these wonderful skills, and you will be able to grow and be very successful in your first job."

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: I remember we were in a conference and I asked the president of Cadbury and Firestone and of a major Canadian advertising company and said, and this was in, it was an ACCC conference, but it was kind of focused around colleges of applied arts and technology of Ontario.

[1:08:40]

A Valleau: Mm-hmm.

ROGER: I said, "What are you looking for when you're hiring somebody?" They said, "Well, if we want people who are going to be really successful long term in our company and provide the most to us, we're looking for people who are going to be useless when we hire them..."

A Valleau: [laughs]

ROGER: "...but they're going to have this ability to continue to learn."

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: "When they start, their productivity kind of is like this [flat], and then it starts slowly [pointing upward], and then it continues for a very long time, but if we hire someone who just has specific skills..."

A Valleau: A technocrat.

ROGER: "...who doesn't have, you know, the ability to go beyond it, then, yeah, their productivity is fantastic in year one, but then it plateaus, and it doesn't go much beyond that."

A Valleau: Yeah. That's always been a problem, I think, in the argument between a liberal arts education and a specific training education, and the problem with training for a specific task is the fact that the task can get dated very quickly, and we have a very dynamic society, the skills

and abilities that are needed today are not going to be needed tomorrow, and studies have shown again and again, whereas, for instance, my father could have stayed in one job his whole life – he didn't but he could've, whereas now students, that's not the future they face. They are going to have to change, they're going to have to grow, they they're going to have to adapt. And so, the types of training that they need are really quite different from a specific training, and that's something that I think is really a problem for educational facilities because it's just like disciplines, you teach what you know, you get caught in a dogma of what has worked in the past. Well, we know, for instance, in the automobile industry, there are changes afoot now that are huge, and we're on the cusp of change that is going to happen, regardless of what the petroleum industry wants, it's going to change. What that is? That's fairly interesting, but how are we going to get there? That's yet to be decided. So, we need people that think laterally rather than linearly, and that's a different kind of skill altogether.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: And hopefully, and I don't care what discipline you're in, your teachers are people who think laterally, are able to connect the dots that are not necessarily obvious but are parallel.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

[1:11:11]

A Valleau: And that's where the future lies. So, the person who is in History is also able to think about what happened in Criminology that affected history. When you're making those connections, you are making connections that in a sense are useful, and what happened in technology that caused this problem in labour and labour shortage. If we want to in a sense be ahead of the problem, that's where we have to go.

ROGER: Yeah. We don't have a lot of lateral thinkers in government.

A Valleau: [laughs] Yeah! Okay!

ROGER: So, you talked a bit about the books you've done with Jack Finnbogason.

A Valleau: Mm-hmm.

ROGER: So, can you kind of elaborate a little bit more about those and what was the driving force behind it? What was the sort of the underlying approach to how you were writing them in order to do X or Y?

A Valleau: Jack and I were approached by Nelson Canada, and both asked if we were interested in writing a handbook for writing. They mentioned to me that Jack had been approached, so I just went down the hall and said, "Nelson was by. Understand that they talked to you the same as they talked to me. Interested in doing something together?" That's how it started. And at first, we were going to adapt an American text, and we did adapt a handbook, and Jack, being Jack, [laughs] it was kind of fascinating, how we ended writing our own book, he phoned the

lady (whose book we were Canadianizing) because there was a grammar error in one of the sentences, and he thought he'd phone her, and he said, "You know, you realize you have this error?" She said, "That's not an error."

ROGER: This was the author?

A Valleau: This was the author. Yeah. And so, word got back, and so we finished that, we were told that we would never lay our hands on that book again, but we signed a contract with Nelson, and so they said, "So, do you want to write your own book?" We said, "Sure!" So, well, four editions of the big one, five editions of the small one, two editions of an anthology of literature, short stories, poetry and essays, and a book that's a handbook for writing. So, that's a number of things, and it's been very lucrative too. Yeah, it started with that one simple thing, and I actually then said to them, "Are you interested in having us do an anthology?" And they said, "Oh." And I said, "We'd call it the Nelson Anthology of Literature." And they said, "Oh!"

I2: [laughs]

[1:13:43]

A Valleau: So, lo and behold, two editions of that came out. It is still being used, we're still getting royalties from it, and we're smiling as we go to the bank. So, yeah, kind of fun to do it, and it was really a learning experience doing it too because, and writing with someone else, number one, you get to know that person really well, number two, you get to know each other's frailties, so we got very good at editing each other's work and passing the work back and forth. In the first edition, each chapter went through four or five drafts before we would finish with it, yeah, and then it goes to an editor, a copyeditor, and that's an interesting and humbling experience too. We had some really good editors, and we've had one really Toronto-centric editor who wanted to take out all of our example sentences. We kept tossing the changes out and said, "No! We're not doing that!" So, it was an interesting experience.

I2: Isn't this the Scarborough Edition?

A Valleau: [laughs] Yeah. Oh yeah. It is interesting. It was so obvious what her bent was, and after that we had two editors who were the nicest people. I remember talking on the phone with them, just great human beings. To be an editor, you have to have really honed skills and incredible tact, because you're dealing with people whose writing you're wanting to change, informing them that "Maybe you should do it this way." Really interesting. So, yeah, and it also brought to my attention really more fully something that I believed in from the very beginning that this country really wants to have the strength to better protect its culture, and that includes its texts, its authors, and copyright under Harper [PM Stephen Harper] that went sideways, I'm afraid, and we're still fighting that battle as colleges and universities are not paying copyright royalties on photocopying. So, that hurts my bank account. [laughs]

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: I will be frank about that.

ROGER: Yeah. What was the philosophy that underpin some of those?

A Valleau: We wanted a Canadian text for Canadians. Simple as that. We thought that the texts that were out there and said, "Hmm, that's really American." And the literature too. Even in the handbook, your references, your cultural references, your sports references, they are all American. You're really giving the wrong message to your students.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: And to not understand the subtlety of that message is really wrong too. So, we were very conscious of those types of things, and we tried to be conscious about regions in Canada as well, the linguistic makeup of the nation, all those things go into writing, which you don't think about until

[1:16:33]

you're faced with a task of writing an exercise that's going to have 15 errors and it's going to talk about, "Hmm, let's see, which province haven't we written about?" [laughs] It was really a daunting, interesting task, and you came across all sorts of fun things doing that, like place names in Canada.

ROGER: Mm-hmm.

A Valleau: We had made an exercise up with place names, and it was just fun to look at some of the crazy wonderful things beyond the places like Moosejaw, that we know right away, or Batchawana in Ontario.

ROGER: There are lots of examples in Newfoundland.

A Valleau: Oh yeah! No kidding!

ROGER: [laughs] Yeah, it's quite a, well, for Marie-Claire [Interviewer's wife], this summer.

A Valleau: Yeah.

ROGER: She's been back to, we've gone around the Gaspé, we went down into Halifax for an event, but she'd never spent that much time going all the way across the country, and seeing all these places, so the names of places, and often when you're going through, you will know this, going through the Eastern Townships.

A Valleau: Yes.

ROGER: The south of river, all the names, it's like, de Beauce, like names that don't make any sense at all.

A Valleau: Yeah.

I2: One must understand the history.

ROGER: Well, yeah, but even sometimes the history, because some of them are new names as they got more communities, and yet there are still a lot that are, so they kind of here's [*78:04] and Beauce, and here and Saint Maurice de Pocatière de Beauce put at the end of whatever, so it's kind of, they keep adding things to them.

A Valleau: Yeah, they do. And then you could also see the conquest of Quebec too, and even when you go south of Montreal, you get Châteauguay and then you get an English town after that, so you go back and forth through English and French, then you realize what was happening historically, and the townships are exactly the same thing,

ROGER: Yeah.

[1:18:29]

A Valleau: You get the interspersing of English and French names all the way across, and you realize that this was political. [laughs] I remember taking my friend Paddy from Ireland south of Montreal to, right near Covey Hill which is on the American border, we visited Michael Godfrey, who was one of my friends from Dawson College, he had a farm out there, and Michael took one look at Paddy and said, "Are you interested in seeing an Orangemen's Hall?"

[End of transcript]