

VANIER ACADEMIC VOICES

Volume 1, Issue 2

August 2018

In this issue

From Seed to Plate and Beyond: An In-Depth Look at the Vanier College Collective Gardens

Demystifying Vanier's Research Ethics Board Process

Science and Poetry: Crossing the Divide



1 Editor's Note
Julia Hall

2-5 From Seed to Plate and Beyond:
An In-Depth Look at the Vanier
College Collective Gardens
Brandee Diner

6-8 Allocation: A Collective
Responsibility and a Pedagogical Tool
Sylvie Tardif

8-10 Demystifying Vanier's
Research Ethics Board Process
*Philippe Gagné, Krista Riley,
and Karen White*

11-12 What Do the Amazing Race
and Nursing Ethics Have in Common?
*Tina Cinelli, Rivka Guttman,
Melodie Hicks, and Janice Stephenson*

13-15 Media and Marketing: An
Interdisciplinary Pilot Project
Colleen Ayoup

16-18 Creating a Respectful
Teaching and Learning Environment:
A Conversation with Vanier's Social
Service Officer
Caroline Chowjka

18-19 The Indispensable
Vanier College Library
Susan Bissonnette

20-22 UDL as a Tool for Building a
Culturally Responsive Classroom
Aurora Flewwelling-Skup

23-27 Science and Poetry:
Crossing the Divide
Marianne Lynch

28 Vanier Researcher Profile:
Maggie McDonnell
Krista Riley

29 Publications from Vanier Teachers
and Staff / Honours Awarded to
Vanier Teachers and Staff

VANIER ACADEMIC VOICES

Volume 1, Issue 2

August 2018

Editor
Julia Hall

Graphic Design and Layout
Jason Lozano

Cover Design
Judy Nguyen

Cover Photo
Julia Hall

Printing
Data Resolutions

Acknowledgments

This magazine has come together thanks to the generous contributions of Annie-Claude Banville, Shari Blaukopf, Gerald Nino, Joseph Zerbino, Olga Mardas, Isabelle Delisle, Michael Sendbuehler, Wilma Brown, Haritos Kavallos, Brandon Calder, David Spadotto, and all members of PSI: Elana Cooperberg, Patti Kingmill, Joanne Guay, Tamara Brown, Jane Hudson, Krista Riley, Zohreh Moradi, Nicklas Haglund, and David Hoida.


Legal Deposit: Library and Archives Canada ISSN 2561-5696

Publisher

VANIER
CÉGEP / COLLEGE

821 avenue Ste-Croix, Montreal, QC, H4L 3X9

514.744.7500
voices@vanier.college
www.vaniercollege.qc.ca/psi/
vanier-academic-voices

Articles in this magazine are licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0). 

Editor's Note

The mind is not a vessel to be filled, but a fire to be kindled.

I don't know about you, but these words, attributed to the ancient Greek biographer and essayist Plutarch, light a flame in my belly. As a mother, of course, I think of the great gift and responsibility I've been given – that of sparking in my kids a love for reading, creating, listening, and learning. As a former teacher, I think of the platform that was entrusted to me, day in and day out, and the honour it was to strive to open minds and spur exploration. As a pedagogical counsellor and editor of Vanier College's pedagogical magazine – a publication unique in our CEGEP network – I feel privileged to play a part in our collective endeavour to trigger deep engagement within students and inspire change.

The inaugural issue of *Vanier Academic Voices* was distributed at PED Day in January 2018. The idea of the publication originated with our Academic Dean, Annie-Claude Banville, who sought a means to allow Vanier's educators to share their expertise and creativity with other members of the community. Issue 1 was received with enthusiasm at Vanier, which met our initial goal. Additionally, we received requests to include the publication in academic library collections

across the network. *Vanier Academic Voices* has been archived in the *Centre de documentation collégiale* (CDC) collection and shared at international conferences. Moreover, I was invited to present the project at the 2018 Symposium of the *Association Québécoise de pédagogie collégiale* (AQPC) conference in June.

In keeping with the publication's *raison d'être*, we hope that the second issue will be used as a tool to drive synergistic connections among different sectors, services, departments, and people at the College. This issue is replete with articles and interviews illustrating the spirit of collaboration that drives so much of the brilliant work of Vanier's educators. These stories also serve to remind us that considering a variety of approaches is the best way to improve student success. Much like the jig-

saw method where learning is split between teammates who master one task and then teach it to their peers, this magazine can help us discover pedagogical tools in a simple, efficient way: through teamwork.

I would like to thank all of the authors and interviewees featured in this issue. Your generous contributions demonstrate the vitality and dedication of Vanier's remarkable faculty and staff; by sharing your effective practices, you are not only filling your readers with inspiration; you are lighting fires within us.

To the readers: we trust that you will enjoy reading through these pages; we hope that they will ignite your curiosity and awaken your imagination to new avenues to explore along your own pedagogical journey.



Photo credit Krista Riley

From Seed to Plate and Beyond: An In-Depth Look at the Vanier College Collective Gardens



The Collective Gardens have been a growing force at Vanier College since 2008, when a group of volunteers from the Environmental and Wildlife Management program began creating wildlife habitat around the college. Since 2015, under the tutelage of Myriam Mansour, Geography teacher and Coordinator of the Sustainability Major, the gardens have blossomed into a centerpiece of lush life, greenery, beauty, inspiration, and sustenance. In this interview, EWM program coordinator Brandee Diner sits down with Myriam to get her take on the history and importance of the Gardens as well as the opportunities and challenges facing the project as Vanier College strives to develop its expertise in the field of urban agriculture.

BD: What are the Vanier Collective Gardens?

MM: The Vanier Collective Gardens are a variety of areas around campus that have been cultivated for the purpose of growing specific plants. These include planters, beds along building edges, and boxes. Essentially, the gardens comprise anything other than lawn that is being used to grow perennials, annuals, herbs, and other edible and non-edible plants.

What inspired the creation of the Gardens?

The Gardens started officially in 2014 with the launch of the Sustainability Major, when Alena Perout (then Geography teacher) and Richard Dugas (then Sustainability Officer) recognized that students would need volunteer opportunities on campus in order to meet the criteria of the new major. Simultaneously, urban agriculture was on the rise; growing food in abandoned lots, in public urban spaces, on lawns, and on rooftops was becoming more popular. These factors, combined with the fact that Vanier students had already gotten involved in turning lawn into biodiversity services around the N building, resulted in the creation of the initial Vanier Gardens- a plot containing fruits, vegetables and herbs, as well as a shed, in front of the A-wing of the College's main building. The primary location of the gardens is now in the back of the college, where there is more space for future growth.

And what continues to inspire the development of the Gardens initiative?

Learning is what is really propelling the Gardens forward. Though the project was originally based in the sustainability major, its scope has grown over the years, and it now responds to teacher and student engagement with a range of current issues such as food insecurity, loss of biodiversity, and the use of natural resources. Students from programs all over the College are learning that as a society, we are not

Getting my hands dirty, meeting other people with similar interests, and being able to watch things grow thanks to the care and time of the volunteers was just a very healing and important experience for me.



Photo credit Gerald Nino



Photo credit Brandon Calder

well fed, and that developing collective gardens offers a solution to this fundamental problem. They are beginning to recognize the value of planting and growing organic food, of developing skills in self-sufficiency, of understanding the processes involved in food production, and fundamentally, in developing self-confidence.

Would you say that the gardens offer an opportunity for students to better appreciate what they are eating?

Absolutely. It also ties into many aspects of students' lives- psychological, social, cultural, economic, and environmental. The Vanier community is re-appropriating its own land to make something worthwhile and meaningful for itself. From a cultural viewpoint, for instance, it's always a pleasure to see a flash of recognition on a student's face when they realize there's a plant present that their Portuguese grandmother used to cook with, or a Caribbean plant that they used to eat all the time back home.

What would we see if I took my class on a tour of the gardens?

We offer tours by section or by theme, depending on the needs of teachers and students. For example, we could visit the Sports Complex where you would see a wildlife garden made to attract pollinators. It is local, diverse, and self-sufficient, featuring native plants like milkweed, which is a key food source for Monarch butterflies. Here you could also visit the plasticulture planter, which contains primarily edible annuals such as Swiss chard, tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, and kale; the plastic mulch film covering the soil retains moisture and heat, and it reduces weeds. Alternatively, we offer thematic tours: you and your students could explore the wildlife gardens near the N-building, the main food garden at the Open Garden, or the herbal medicine garden behind the K wing. Other important components of the Gardens you could share with your students include rainwater collectors, drip irrigation, three composting systems, an insect hotel, a cold frame greenhouse, and permaculture practices. Innovative elements are being added regularly thanks to collaborative projects and initiatives from members of the Vanier community. A guideline for teachers is available on the website.

We have 7000 people in our college community, and the gardens can't feed everyone, so how is the food distributed? What are the rules?

There are no set rules, but we believe that the volunteers deserve to be compensated for their hard work, so they are the first to get their hands on the harvest. We also try to make produce available to the community through Jake's Café. What is not claimed by community members is used to prepare dishes offered at the café. We're happy for passersby to take plants that are in abundance such as mint and lemon balm, but we trust that every member of the Vanier community will consume ethically. In other words, if a couple is strolling along and comes across a ripe cucumber, we hope that before taking it, they would ask themselves if they are entitled to it; if they worked for it; if they volunteered; if they helped it grow...

How can people get involved with the gardens?

Anyone, be they students, staff, faculty, or community members, is invited to get involved or simply stay informed by signing up via one of the links provided at the end of the interview.

Can students' volunteer hours count for academic credit?

Yes, under three main avenues- the Student Transcript Activity Record (S.T.A.R.) program, the Sustainability Major, and Explorations. Volunteer work in the Vanier Collective Gardens also looks really good on a C.V.; this kind of experience can give an applicant to a job or university a real edge. Furthermore, there is an annual student volunteer recognition ceremony where all students get a letter of attestation for their volunteer work.

We're an academic institution. How can the gardens be used in an academic context or as a teaching tool?

In 2015-16, the *raison d'être* of the gardens shifted from biodiversity and volunteering to academics. Since then, a concerted effort has been made to bring students and teachers out into the Gardens.

4 – VANIER ACADEMIC VOICES

The first class came out as a response to a need for labour, but the Gardens' need for students quickly turned into the students' (and teachers') needs for the Gardens, as discussions about how to incorporate them into the curriculum grew. At least a dozen classes from a wide variety of disciplines have taken advantage of this opportunity. For example, the psychology course "Health and Happiness" uses the gardens to illustrate how a healthy environment can contribute to happiness, and biology students were tasked with choosing a plant and filming it from seed to maturity before finally pressing a specimen. Poems inspired by the Gardens have been written in French and English classes. Chemistry and physics teachers have designed lessons around the Gardens' composting and irrigation systems. Likewise, individuals and student groups have used the gardens for Launch Box projects, and our new insect hotel was created by students in a French course entitled *La planète en danger*.

It sounds as though a positive, productive feedback loop has developed – a dynamic where the Gardens inspire the students and the students inspire more growth in the Gardens, and so on?

Yes! This is why we've chosen to call this project the Vanier Collective Gardens: the community creates and embraces the garden. Originally, the students were useful for the Gardens, but now the Gardens are useful for the students. When students are on a tour, I tell them, "This is your shed." "Here's the key." "This is your garden!"

Students from programs all over the College are learning that as a society, we are not well fed, and that developing collective gardens offers a solution to this fundamental problem.

What are the challenges and opportunities facing the Gardens today?

The challenges often come down to communication. How do we reach the students; how do we recruit and retain volunteers? How can we make students and other community members aware of all they can do with the Gardens? Another challenge involves getting the community to recognize the worth of the Gardens. We ask ourselves how to diversify the appeal and make people recognize that this is more than a hobby garden. The Vanier Collective Gardens project is an opportunity to learn life skills, build tools, get grounded in reality, and connect to food. We need to get people to think of this collective as not just a garden, but as urban agriculture. Furthermore, I'd like to see every member of the Vanier community take pride in the Gardens, to be aware of them, enjoy them, connect with them, and celebrate them. The Gardens can and should be used as a living laboratory, a place for experiential learning, a place for self-fulfillment and personal growth. If we allow our Collective Gardens to flourish and blossom, the opportunities are infinite; the sky is the limit.

Do you have anything else to add?

I wish to end with the acknowledgment that the Vanier Collective Gardens are built on unceded Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) land, a traditional meeting place for many First Peoples. As we engage in all of our garden-related activities, we should keep in mind and be thankful for the natural wealth that we get to interact with and which contributes to our growth.

Teacher Testimonials

The significance of the Vanier Gardens, from a pedagogical point of view, and with respect to the discipline of psychology, cannot be over-expressed. The Gardens represent an experiential, active learning opportunity for students. When students visit the gardens their stress levels decrease, which illustrates that gardening, and being outdoors in general, is wonderful for mental health. Being with other students and working in teams, the students experience the satisfaction of meeting shared goals and collaborating in a most convivial environment. With regard to my own course, Health and Happiness, learning in the Gardens vividly acquaints the students with the principles of sustainability, particularly with regard to the link between sustainability and the global epidemic of depression, which is one of the key links between psychology and the global sustainability movement, and which has, as its goal, not only the preservation of human sanity, but of life itself.

—Christine Lavoie, Psychology

When I brought my English classes to the gardens in the spring of 2016, I noticed something interesting. Some students who until that point in the semester had not participated much in class and had been quite quiet, came alive. A switch seemed to turn on, and they were clearing debris, moving border bricks, and digging with enthusiasm. We had been talking about sustainability in our class, but the activity seemed to make the concepts more real for the students: composting, weather conditions and climate change, the food we eat; all these ideas came up in our visit, and the garden, I believe, allowed students to make connections they wouldn't have made in the classroom alone.

—Mark Cohen, English

I teach a course on food studies. We examine where our food comes from as well as social and environmental issues that arise because of our current food system. The Vanier Collective Gardens allow my students to get out of the classroom and into the "field." Rather than simply listening to lectures about how urban agriculture builds community, grows healthy and affordable food, preserves biodiversity and beautifies urban areas, they are able to experience this for themselves. Several of my students have gone on to volunteer regularly in the Gardens; they are excited to have a place on campus to learn new skills, try new foods, decrease anxiety by spending time in nature, and build a new community. The Vanier Gardens are a wonderful use of our spacious, green campus.

—Maro Adjemian, Humanities

Student Testimonials

It was good working hard so there will be flowers that will bloom in a couple of months. I appreciate the fact that I had a part in making this happen.

—**Nikolitsa Elizabeth Baltas Lopez**

I really enjoyed this gardening activity! It allowed me to appreciate gardening as a way to be in touch with what we eat as well as to save money. Growing plants allows someone to have access to the freshest ingredients at all times. By planting my own vegetables and herbs, not only do I save money, but I am also doing a service to the environment by not buying products from big companies who pollute to transport all the veggies to big retailers.

—**Antonino Messina**

As for composting, I knew about it, but only compost with the city. We just dump everything organic in a bin and then put it by the road, and the city picks it up. The idea of layering the dry [biomass] with the organic matter to balance the chemicals released was new to me. As far as the visit went, I found it very interesting and informative; it makes me interested in trying my hand at gardening this summer.

—**Megan Parker**

I want to thank Myriam Mansour and all the members of the Vanier Collective Gardens for giving me the opportunity to be a part of the gardening project. There was a sense of belonging present through the many interactions with the other members. Through my interactions, I gained love for nature, sustainable education and health.

—**Melisa Edward**

The garden is a place where I can go to get out of my head and work to make something beautiful. It helps me deal with my anxiety and go back to class feeling rejuvenated.

—**Rachel Shelton**

Vegetables, herbs, and flowers aren't the only things that flourish in Vanier's Gardens; you can also find friendship, memories and endless knowledge blooming.

—**Sophie McCafferty**

My experience at the Gardens have brought me lots of happiness and joy. Getting my hands dirty, meeting other people with similar interests, and being able to watch things grow thanks to the care and time of the volunteers was just a very healing and important experience for me. It let me feel much more in tune with nature and other forms of life.

—**Janella Snagg-Romeo**

The gardening workshop was very interesting. It opened my eyes to how to garden in an urban setting while using the space available effectively. Moreover, it was interesting to see what possibilities are available when planting space is limited. I'm planning on moving out into an apartment soon, so it was great to hear that I could still garden even without a lawn.

It was very encouraging! On top of that, the actual gardening was a lot of fun. I'm always a fan of getting my hands dirty and getting some exercise. Overall, an enjoyable and eye-opening experience!

—**Claire Beeman**



Photo credit Gerald Nino

For More Information and to Get Involved:

Check out the Vanier Collective Gardens website for contact information, guides, and informative posters: <http://www.vaniercollege.qc.ca/sustainability-major/collective-gardens/>

Visit the Gardens' Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/956934947670755>, or sign up on Mail Chimp: <http://eepurl.com/b7vStn>



Brandee Diner is coordinator of the Environmental and Wildlife Management program.

Allocation: A Collective Responsibility and a Pedagogical Tool

A haze of misunderstanding seems to shroud the concept of allocation. To many, it may seem like a nugget of gold traded in exchange for the services of a master teacher leading a discipline course taught in a program... but is this truly the case? This article aims to answer some of the most frequently-asked questions about allocation to ultimately reveal its uses as a powerful pedagogical tool.

What is allocation?

A college's allocation is determined by financial procedures established by the *Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement Supérieur*. The detailed procedure, known as Annexe E002, is used to determine the total number of full-time professors (full-time equivalent or FTE¹) that a college is entitled to engage for a given academic year. It includes rules for the allocation of three types of teaching duties: Type 1 (in-class and department responsibilities **for all**), Type 2 (department responsibilities for some, **in each department**), and Type 3 (institutional responsibilities for some faculty **in the College**). The three types of workloads are outlined in Article 8-4.01 of the FNEEQ Collective Agreement. For the purpose of implementing the College's Strategic Plan and the Student Success Plan, guidelines for allocation are stipulated in a part of the collective agreement called Column D². These additional teaching resources are allocated specifically for the purposes of program activities, professional development for the development of teaching methods and for given subjects, the organization of fieldwork and workshops, improvement of student success rates, technology transfer, research, and professional integration. These varied categories of allocation lead to activities and involvement that reach far beyond the classroom!

Other ministerial envelopes (such as S051) bring resources to the College, providing further opportunities for teachers.

What is the staffing project?

The staffing project is a tool that details the use of the allocation received by a college. It includes:

- an estimate of full-time professors (FTE) generated by the PES formula³, details about release for department and program coordination, special support and program activities, as well as program development, implementation, and evaluation (all Type 2 workload teaching duties);

- details about release for professional development activities, pedagogical research and innovation, and subject-related fieldwork or activities in the workplace (all Type 3 workload teaching duties);
- details about release for student success initiatives and activities (Column D or Volet D);
- details about other kinds of release.

What is the difference between a *poste* and a *charge*?

Actually, both are annual contracts. A *poste* is most often comprised of a combination of Type 1 and Type 2 allocation. In essence, the workload belongs to the teacher to which it is assigned. A *charge*, on the other hand, is usually comprised of workload that has been "released" by a more senior teacher and is offered to the next most senior teacher who does not have an annual workload.

Is there a limit to the number of teachers the College can hire?

Yes. The allocation generated through the provisions of Annexe E002 along with the different types of release provides the resources for teacher workloads, but it is a college's responsibility to manage these resources in such a way as to ensure continuity and sustainability while maintaining quality program offerings. The teaching allocation budget given to a college is a closed envelope. This means that resources cannot be used for anything other than teaching activities, and that the annual balance (whether surplus or deficit) is transferred to the next year. A college must use the different funding envelopes wisely in order to avoid using too much allocation and creating a deficit. It is imperative to avoid creating or when necessary, reabsorbing layoffs of tenured faculty, otherwise known as *mises en disponibilité* (MEDs). Hence, Vanier College is constantly considering how best to manage its resources in order to provide stability for all of our teachers. To date, we have been very successful in avoiding MEDs,

¹ One FTE is 80 CI over the year

² See Article 8-5.06 of the FNEEQ Collective Agreement for more details.

³ PES is the acronym for *Période – Élève – Semaine*; it represents the number of student periods per week. This figure is calculated by multiplying the number of students enrolled in all sections of the course by the sum of the theory and laboratory components of that course in the given semester

but we have had to start making difficult choices with regards to the distribution of the allocation as we have been moving closer and closer to an overall annual deficit situation.

What types of measures can we take to ensure the best use and long-term stability of our teaching resources?

The distribution of allocation is a collective responsibility and should be done in a department setting⁴. All teachers make up the department and together, they should define its internal rules of operation, including how allocation will be distributed. This is not a responsibility that is limited to the coordinator, and seniority is not listed in the collective agreement as a criteria granting priority of choice for a specific workload distribution. A department must be wise in using allocation resources, as it is easy to artificially boost a teacher's CI⁵ by adding a third preparation or by splitting sections between multiple teachers. This will increase CI, but not FTE; in some cases, it will add to the amount of preparations on a given teacher's plate.

Workloads should be equitably distributed across all the teachers within a discipline. Normally – there are some exceptions to this rule – all full-time annual workloads should have an allocation value of between 80 and 85 CI, split over two semesters. Lowering the CI of permanent teachers in order to artificially inflate the value of contracts for non-permanent faculty should always be avoided.

Beyond this, there are a number of ways to protect teaching resources. For example, Annexe S051 indicates that funds are to be used to release teachers from their workloads so that they can dedicate their time to developing student success activities that improve accessibility for students with different needs. For the duration of the Fall 2018 semester, the granted releases were for the equivalent of one day a week or more (22 weeks/semester or 44 weeks/year) – this representing 20% or more of the workload for the semester or 10% or more of the annual workload (≥ 0.1 FTE). Instead of being determined based on a teacher's course load, project-related release should be based on the number of hours the project requires. The table below outlines the number of hours represented by different possible amounts of release time in a given semester:

Amount in FTE (full-time equivalent)	Number of hours per week	Total number of hours
0.1	6.5	143
0.125	8	179
0.150	9.75	215
0.167	10.85	239
0.2	13	286
0.250	16.25	357.5

If the release does not correspond to a typical release time for a given department, arrangements can be made with the Faculty Dean to balance a teacher's workload in order to better reflect the typical release time usually granted for the department.

According to the collective agreement (8-4.03), all teachers are expected to participate in 173 hours of collaborative school life activities each year. This time allows teachers to engage in pedagogical activities to enrich the learning experience of students and contribute to student success without requesting release.

It is also the case that any given department can propose to offer a new course with an expected initial lower enrollment, while at the same time providing allocation neutrality. By not offering one course of the same category (whether option or complementary) and by asking colleagues to accommodate one or two extra students in their section while maintaining a yearly CI below 85 (the maximum) and a PES below 415, the department can provide proper support and respect the initial allocated FTEs. As you may be aware, only eight months ago, I was a teacher and acting coordinator for the chemistry department. I remember working with my colleagues a few years ago to support a certain Physical Chemistry option course in these ways. I recall that none of us noticed a significant increase of daily workload as a result. The solution that our department came to collectively has worked. For the past 4 years, the course Physical Chemistry (202-HTQ-VA), has consistently been recording 39-41 enrolled students after validation in Clara.

How is the allocation value of an individual teacher's workload determined?

If you are a new teacher or you simply need a refresher on the tools of CI and PES, the following is a simple CI calculation scenario to consider. Sylvie is teaching the following two Chemistry courses in the fall 2018 semester:

- 202-NYA-05, General Chemistry
 - o The course has a ponderation of 3-2, meaning 3 hours of theory in class and 2 hours of laboratory, for a total of 5 hours of preparation.
 - o The course has 40 students.
- 202-HTJ-05, Organic Chemistry I
 - o The course has a ponderation of 3-2, meaning 3 hours of theory in class and 2 hours of laboratory, for a total of 5 hours of preparation.
 - o The course has 36 students.

⁴ See article 4-1.05 of the FNEEQ Collective Agreement for more details.

⁵ CI (*charge individuelle*) is a figure that represents an individual teacher's workload.

Her individual teaching load for the fall is calculated using the formula

$$CI = HP \text{ (Preparation Hours)} + HC \text{ (Contact Hours)} + \{[NES^6 \text{ (Nombre-Étudiant-Semaine)}] + [NES \text{ factor}]\}^7.$$

The CI for Sylvie’s courses is calculated as follows:

202-NYA-05, where 40 students are split into two lab sections of 20 students each:

$$CI = [theory \text{ (3 hrs HP} \times 0.9) + theory \text{ (3 hrs HC} \times 1.2)] + [first \text{ lab (2 hrs HP} \times 0.9) + first \text{ lab (2 hrs HC} \times 1.2) + 2nd \text{ lab (2 hrs HC} \times 1.2)] + \{[120 \text{ PES theory} + 40 \text{ PES lab} + 40 \text{ PES lab}] \times 0.04\} = [2.70 \text{ CI} + 3.60 \text{ CI}] + [1.80 \text{ CI} + 2.40 \text{ CI} + 2.40 \text{ CI}] + \{8.00 \text{ CI}\} = \mathbf{20.90 \text{ CI}}$$

202-HTJ-05, where 36 students are split into two lab sections of 18 students each:

$$CI = [theory \text{ (3 hrs HP} \times 0.9) + theory \text{ (3 hrs HC} \times 1.2)] + [first \text{ lab (2 hrs HP} \times 0.9) + first \text{ lab (2 hrs HC} \times 1.2) + 2nd \text{ lab (2 hrs HC} \times 1.2)] + \{[108 \text{ PES theory} + 36 \text{ PES lab} + 36 \text{ PES lab}] \times 0.04\} = [2.70 \text{ CI} + 3.60 \text{ CI}] + [1.80 \text{ CI} + 2.40 \text{ CI} + 2.40 \text{ CI}] + \{7.20 \text{ CI}\} = \mathbf{20.10 \text{ CI}}$$

The total number of students is $76 \geq 75$ students, therefore $76 \times 0.01 = 0.76$ CI is added for the NES factor.

Sylvie thus has a **total CI of 41.80** in the fall semester.

Hopefully, this article helps to clarify the concept of allocation, its uses, and how precious it can be considering that a deficit is anticipated for the 2017-2018 academic year. Allocation is a collective responsibility; we must all be diligent regarding its distribution so that we are sure to be living within our means!



Sylvie Tardif
is the Dean of Academic
Systems – Registrar.

Demystifying Vanier’s Research Ethics Board Process

Many Vanier teachers who are interested in doing research find the process of applying for Research Ethics Board (REB) approval a little daunting. In this conversation, teacher-researcher Philippe Gagné, teacher and REB chair Karen White, and pedagogical counsellor Krista Riley discuss the work of the REB and what the application process is like.

KR: Karen, can you start things off by giving a brief overview of the Research Ethics Board and the issues it’s here to address?

KW: The REB’s main goal is to protect the rights of potential research participants here at Vanier, primarily students, but sometimes faculty or other staff as well. The most important rights are those to

- *avoidance of harm* – participants should not be harmed by providing data to researchers, and if there is any risk of harm, that should be minimized, and clarified to the potential participants.
- *confidentiality* – participants should be assured that private information will not be exposed in a way that might allow others to know who they are.

⁶ NES is the total number of students assigned to a teacher on a weekly basis.

⁷ See Appendix 1-1 of the collective agreement for more details.

- *voluntary participation* – potential participants should not feel pressured into providing data, nor should they feel that in some way they will “pay” if they don’t participate (ie: by receiving a lower grade from a teacher/researcher), and they should understand that they can stop providing data at any point.
- *informed consent* – participants should know exactly what they are getting into when deciding whether to participate in a research study, including any risk of harm and any possible lack of confidentiality.

There are usually around eight people on the Research Ethics Board, including teachers from each faculty at the College. We work by consensus, following the ethics guidelines of the Inter-agency Advisory Council on Research Ethics, the TCPS 2,¹ and Vanier Research Ethics Policies. The VCTA and the DG appoint the members, but the Board is a completely independent decision-making body. Decisions can be appealed to a Review Board, and we can be audited by the granting agencies’ Panel of Research Ethics.

We make sure that all research projects are set up to protect the aforementioned rights *before* they begin recruiting participants.

KR: One of the most common questions I get as the pedagogical counsellor responsible for research is about the situations in which a project needs REB approval. The basic answer is that any Vanier teacher who plans to conduct research involving people, or any person who wants to conduct research that would involve Vanier students, staff, or faculty, is required to get REB approval.

But what does “research” mean in this context? Generally, research involves the collection of data (including through interviews, surveys, databases of student information, etc.), as part of a project that will eventually be published or presented outside of Vanier, for example as an academic article, a public report, or a conference presentation. It also includes any collection of data for academic credit outside of Vanier, such as for a university course paper or thesis.

It does *not* include the collection of data for internal course or program improvement purposes: for example, a survey or focus group to evaluate a particular course or program, if that data remains internal to Vanier and is only used to improve that course or program. The REB also doesn’t cover Vanier students who are doing research for a Vanier course. In that case, it is the teacher’s responsibility to ensure that research ethics principles are being respected.

PG: So what is your role in the REB process?

KR: When a Research Ethics Board application is submitted, whether by a Vanier teacher or by an external researcher, it comes to me first. My evaluation focuses on institutional suitability: is the project feasible at Vanier given the resources we have? Is it appropriate? For example, someone who wants to spend more than 20 minutes of class time for a research survey that has no direct pedagogical relevance will usually be asked either to change the survey or to plan to have students do the survey outside of class instead. This practice is in place because Vanier as a college should be focused on teaching and learning, and Vanier’s students shouldn’t have to give up too much in-class time to research unrelated to their class.

Often, when I’m evaluating applications for institutional suitability, I also look at other issues in the research design. While I’m corresponding with the researcher about the changes they need to make in terms of feasibility or suitability, I will suggest other changes to help improve the research. Sometimes I will also alert them to ethical issues with the research – for example, an incomplete consent form – so that they can make those changes before the application is forwarded to the REB.

As soon as everything is together, I pass it on to Karen for the REB’s review.

KW: Once we receive an application, the REB chair decides whether it is “low risk” or not, meaning that there is little or no risk of any of the principles above being problematic. If it is low risk, it’s usually examined by the Chair plus two Board members, each going over the project separately and submitting any concerns or comments to the Chair. If the project is complex or deemed a higher risk for some reason, it has to go to a meeting of the Board. Everyone reads it and prepares their comments ahead of time, and we discuss it, deciding together on any concerns that need to be addressed or changes that need to be made. Sometimes we have research quality suggestions, too, but those are “extras” and are never required.

The Chair prepares a feedback letter to the researchers. If the REB’s suggested changes are very minor, we assume they will be made, and we emit the certificate to allow the recruitment to go ahead. Most of the time, we need to see the changes, and there may need to be some back-and-forth about what is requested and how best to make changes while preserving the research goals and feasibility of the project. Once everything is good, the certificate is prepared, and recruiting begins!

¹ See <http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/initiatives/tcps2-eptc2/Default/> for the full document.

10 — VANIER ACADEMIC VOICES

It is extremely rare for a project to be turned down by the REB; I think it has happened twice in the ten years we've had an REB. Our goal is always to get the project into good shape so that it can go forward.

PG: As a researcher, I am interested in students' motivations for learning French as a second language. I "use" the services of the REB once or twice a year. I really see the REB's work as a contribution to the research proposals I submit. A proposal rarely comes back without any comments or suggestions. Even when this feedback suggests modifications that must be made in order to get the ethics certificate, I always perceive these modifications as improvements. For example, if I distribute a questionnaire in my classroom, the REB will suggest having a third party to recruit participants because students may feel pressured to participate if their own teacher is requesting it. I have never had the impression that the REB was some kind of a gatekeeper that was hard to please or fussy on details; much to the contrary! This is important to note because there is a common misperception that REB members at the college level are "*plus catholiques que le pape*," as we commonly say in French, meaning that they are punctilious or painstaking, and that they slow down the research process. A university professor once told me that she was not doing field work in CEGEPs anymore because of that.

KW: One of the things researchers are often not aware of is the extra level of participant protection that has to occur at the CEGEP level. Unlike university student participants, our students are often recruited by their own teachers, or *through* their teachers and classes. This may make students feel like they are under pressure to participate, even when the teachers are super careful to make it clear that they are not. Students may also worry that their teacher may have access to their data, or that a Vanier researcher may at some point be their teacher, threatening confidentiality. We've figured out ways around these issues, often involving the collaboration of the PSI office with recruitment and data analysis, but these projects need a little extra care because of that. And because our students are at an earlier stage of their educational path, they may not be as well informed about how research works as their counterparts in university.

KR: Karen, what are some of the biggest challenges the REB faces in doing its work?

KW: I'd say there are two. One, people often realize they need REB approval quite late in the research process, and then they need to collect data RIGHT AWAY! While we try to not dilly dally over reviews in general, and we attempt to move things along even faster when someone has a legitimate deadline, Board members other than the Chair have no release time for this work, so the work has to be done on top of everyone's usual responsibilities. It always involves multiple people, and often multiple steps, so time is definitely a challenge. The second challenge is when we receive projects from inexperienced researchers; there are often lots of small and medium-sized changes to be made followed by multiple rounds of feedback and fixes. But we get there in the end! And most of the projects are very interesting and engaged with important topics.

PG: As a member of Cégep de Saint-Laurent's REB committee, I have an additional perspective on this work, and I can attest to the fact that Boards try to get proposals accepted with as few delays as possible. During the evaluation process, we can be tempted to judge the academic or scientific value of the projects, but this is not an REB's duty. A Board would intervene with these kinds of judgments only in extreme cases where there are major issues and the committee estimates that participants (students, teachers, or staff members) will invest their time and energy in a project that will lead to poor data and unreliable or invalid results. In that case, it means a researcher would need to go back to improve his or her proposal substantially. This seldom happens, and it certainly does not reflect the vast majority of proposals that I have participated in reviewing.

If you would like to do your own research and have questions about the Research Ethics Board, please contact us!



Krista Riley
is a Pedagogical Counsellor in the Pedagogical Support & Innovation office.



Karen White
is a teacher of Psychology and the Chair of the Research Ethics Board.



Philippe Gagné
is a French teacher and researcher.

Links of Interest:

Application form to apply for Research Ethics Board approval at Vanier: <http://www.vaniercollege.qc.ca/psi/innovation/conducting-research-at-vanier/>

Tri-Council Policy Statement on Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans, which establishes the ethical guidelines followed by Vanier's REB: <http://www.pre.ethics.gc.ca/eng/policy-politique/initiatives/tcps2-eptc2/Default/>

Online Course on Research Ethics: <http://tcps2core.ca/welcome>

What Do the Amazing Race and Nursing Ethics Have in Common?



Photo credit Joseph Zerbino

Nursing ethics is a vital topic for our profession. The list of dos and don'ts of professional behaviour in the Nursing Code of Ethics is mandatory knowledge the nursing student must acquire before entering into patient care, but to many first semester nursing students, it seems dull. Despite the seemingly endless list of rules attached to it, professional behaviour and its relationship to bioethical principles are among the more complex competencies the student must achieve through the course of their program. It is a challenge to devise instructional strategies that bring our students to a place where they can understand and apply ethical principles despite having limited patient care experience.

We were looking for a pedagogical solution that would have the students collaborating, solving problems and working as a team, thus mimicking the reality of a nurse's workday in a hospital ward.

In a large classroom, discussion is limited and it becomes easy for many students to disengage. Traditionally, the consolidation of elements of the nursing ethics competency was covered in a case-based seminar on the final day of class, when attendance is usually poor, as students are focusing their attentions on the final exam. As teachers, we were looking for a pedagogical solution that would have the students collaborating, solving problems and working as a team, thus mimicking the reality of a nurse's workday in a hospital ward.

Well-designed games drive learning in a fun, collaborative and entertaining way. The use

of games has been shown to promote problem-based learning and enhance retention of knowledge. Overall, games help students become much more engaged in their learning. To get our students more

excited about nursing ethics content, we have tried using games with clickers, as well as apps like Kahoot and Socrative, but we felt our students needed more. Devising a fun but educationally-impactful game with a class of 80-90 students within a 2-hour time frame became our teaching challenge. To this end, The Amazing Race game, based on the television show of the same name, was chosen as the learning activity. We hoped that the game would encourage collaborative, situation-based critical thinking and problem solving while engaging our students' competitive natures. That a bit of physical activity was thrown in was an added bonus. For logistical reasons, we chose four activity stations, each manned by a teacher and administered in a double circuit.

Students entered the classroom to the tune of *The Amazing Race* theme song, and the game's logo was projected on the screen. The anticipation ramped up quickly as students had had no advance notice of the activity: they had no clue as to what was going on. Once everyone was settled, students were divided into clinical groups of 6 students each.

12 – VANIER ACADEMIC VOICES

They were instructed as to the rules of the game, and they were provided with a sheet to be stamped upon successful completion of the challenge at each station.

Rules of the Amazing Race Game Challenge

- Your entire team must be present at each station.
- You must complete each station and receive a stamp before moving on to the next station.
- No running or yelling in the hallways is permitted.
- When you arrive at your final destination, stand on the podium and take a selfie.

All challenges featured case studies dealing with nursing responsibilities and accountability, patient confidentiality, consent, and/or professional liability. For example, the first challenge was a video in which students had to identify “*what went wrong*” in a nursing scenario. As each team identified the correct response to the teacher, they received their first of four clues leading them to the next of three other challenge stations placed at different locations around the college campus. For example,

Here the “people” lie row by row, they wait for you to perfect what you know. They never complain, they never shout or yell, they listen to your secrets, they never show and tell.”

was the clue that led the students to the nursing lab, where mannequins lie in hospital beds. The clue

From these windows you will see Butterfly, Breast, Back, and Free, Float a boat or clock your time. This is a favorite place of mine.

led them to the Sports Complex swimming

pool where, in addition to solving the question provided, team members had to test their athleticism by throwing a ball into a basket.

Students arrived at the last station huffing and puffing. The last group arrived at the final station about 75 minutes after the race began, which left just enough time to catch their breath before debriefing. We provided some written case studies to complete for groups that arrived early. The final ethics challenge was the recitation of the nurse’s pledge to their patients. This pledge is our modern version of the Florence Nightingale pledge. All the students stood and recited the pledge together with their teachers. The first semester was over and the stage was set for their professional role in patient care in the next semester.

The Vanier Nursing Pledge

I solemnly promise before my colleagues in the Vanier nursing program to practice my profession faithfully. I will not participate in any non-professional behavior and will not take or knowingly administer any harmful drug. I will do all in my power to maintain and elevate the standards of my profession, and will hold in confidence all personal matters committed to my keeping and all family affairs coming to my knowledge in the practice of nursing. I commit myself to work within the interdisciplinary team in an atmosphere of respect and consideration, and devote myself to the welfare of those committed to my care.

Teacher Tips

- Inform campus Security as there will be some running despite the rules.
- Ensure that each student has a water bottle as some were very dehydrated at their final station.
- Be clear about the parameters of the college campus. The clue that read “*Here the ‘people’ lie row by row,*” led one group to the cemetery just outside the college grounds.
- The stations should be challenging enough so that all groups will not answer at the same time.
- If the activity takes place in the winter, students should arrive to class with coats and boots.

The Amazing Race game has proven to be an excellent method of consolidating the ethics content in our course. Students are most challenged by situations where there are no black and white, right or wrong answers, and because these are just the kinds of situations that arise most frequently in the nursing profession, these are the kinds of scenarios that we built into the Amazing Race activity. In our course evaluation, 81.6% of the students responded that they recommend the Ethics Amazing Race as a beneficial learning activity.

Student Feedback on Course Evaluation

- “*Definitely, it was a fun way to study and really got students thinking. It was an effective way to prepare for the final exam and doesn’t hurt that the winners got candy.*”
- “*We could apply and learn while having fun.*”
- “*It was a fun way to apply our critical thinking and knowledge.*”
- “*I wish there were more than four stations.*”



Tina Cinelli, Rivka Guttman, Melodie Hicks and Janice Stephenson are teachers in the Nursing program.

Media and Marketing: An Interdisciplinary Pilot Project

What do Communications, Media, and Studio Arts students have in common with Commerce students? They share more interests and knowledge than you might think. In an interdisciplinary course piloted for the first time in the Winter 2018 semester, both groups of students showed that they were keen to deconstruct how “commodity fetishism” is conveyed in advertising, but that was just the beginning. A shared interest in interdisciplinary experiential education and e-learning practices is what led then-coordinator of Commerce and current coordinator of Pedagogical Support and Innovation, Elana

Cooperberg, and me to develop a project that would bring together the students in two of our respective courses: *Marketing* and *Visual Literacy and Culture (VLC)*. Our primary goals were to enrich the student experience by engaging them in deep learning across disciplines and to create authentic learning situations wherein students could share the disciplinary expertise they are developing in their programs. As such, on six occasions throughout the semester, 67 students came together to deconstruct the role that commodity fetishism plays in television commercials through a process of teaching and learning from one another.

The idea of commodity fetishism originates in Marxist theory; it is a conceptual process whereby “mass-produced goods are emptied of the meaning of their production (the context in which they were produced, such as a factory and the labor that created them) and then filled with new meanings in ways that both mystifies the product and turns it into a fetish object” (Sturken & Cartwright, 2018). For the VLC student, learning how an advertisement achieves this through semiotics and aesthetically-based, creative attributes are key to media literacy. For the Marketing student, understanding the marketing concept and its relationship to consumption and consumer behaviour helps to define personal choice and identifies branding decisions.

The structure of this recent pilot project stems from a written research assignment that I assigned in my previous *VLC* courses. For the assessment, each student had been asked to find a television commercial for a product that they enjoyed. They were then required to research the creative marketing strategies of the company that produced the ad, and finally, they were asked to deconstruct the semiotics at play in creating a commodity fetish for the product. The methodology for the pilot course, by comparison, was to break down the required deliverables of the former essay into *segments* that would be discussed by our merged student population over the course of the semester. The goal of this multi-staged process was to help foster in the students a deeper understanding of the required terminology and concepts in their respective disciplines and, in turn, allow them to teach each other about their respective disciplines. Also, at the core of this project were the cultivation of inter-personal growth through interdisciplinary learning and the development of insight into how our two disciplines work together in the “real world.” After all, an advertising agency needs the expertise of creative professionals as well as marketing professionals to sell their products. Elana and I hoped that the learning situations we designed would offer an authentic window into professions that our students may be inspired to pursue.

For our first merged meeting in February, we assembled in a theatre space and teamed up the students into groups of four to six



Photo credit Brandon Calder

individuals. As an icebreaker and a means to introduce them all to “brand culture” and the foundations of commodity fetishism, each student came to class with a printed “starter-pack” that was meant to represent aspects of their own identity. Starter-packs are online memes, typically made up of four or more products and/or objects that represent a persona. To our surprise, very few of our students knew what a starter-pack was, despite the phenomenon being known as a very popular social media pastime among young adults. Our hope for this first assignment was that group members would find common ground within their personal collections of lifestyle/commodity interests, and from there, determine the product or brand that would be the focus of their group project on how a commodity fetish is created.

Once the teams’ products were established, the subsequent objective was for groups to decide on two television ads for the same product — one that was produced for their chosen product in recent years, and another that is older than ten years. The objective here was to help students to contextualize each ad by identifying evolutionary changes over time (e.g. intended audience and aesthetic differences).

As an e-learning environment for the students to produce and assemble their individual and team assignments, we incorporated a relatively new web application called Padlet into the design of our pilot project. The application was chosen for its usability, ease of digital content upload, and its attractive templates which promised to offer lots of room for individual expression.

With each assignment and meeting, the teams’ Padlet spaces began to flourish. Students were deconstructing the semiotics inherent in their respective ads and assembling researched sources to support their observations as well as their understanding of and ideas about the company they had selected. The learning outcome of these sessions was distinct; as team members compared their observations and findings, new vocabulary and deeper insights into the assignment objectives emerged.

By May, the interdisciplinary teams assembled conclusions for the work they had achieved throughout the term on a “Team Padlet” page, and they delivered their findings in the form of a team presentation. With only ten minutes allotted per team, groups were

required to effectively manage their time, balance their delivery of information, describe connections between the content of students’ respective courses, and demonstrate the most impactful learnings that they had each gleaned from their work together.

At the core of this project were the cultivation of inter-personal growth through interdisciplinary learning and the development of insight into how our two disciplines work together in the “real world.”

The intention behind spreading the student-led group meetings over six sessions throughout the winter semester was multi-faceted. We reasoned that as students encountered new content in their respective courses throughout the semester, opportunities to teach the material to one another along the way would reinforce their understanding, thus providing rich opportunities for effective integration of learning — especially since their discussions were centered on one focused question that remained consistent throughout the project: how is commodity fetishism achieved?

The learning outcomes we envisaged for our students while designing the project included the development of a deeper understanding of the concepts presented in their own discipline, greater understanding of the vocabulary and thinking processes of another discipline (cross-disciplinary insight), familiarization with web-literacy practices, and peer-to-peer communication and collaboration. Appreciation for the fact that skills from various disciplines are required in “real life” professional contexts such as advertising was one of the values that Elana and I aimed for in the early stages of this project’s development. Providing our students with opportunities to break through the siloes of program disciplines may not be a steadfast means of improving students’ grades, but creating a context for deeper learning was, and remains, our most highly-valued objective.



Colleen Ayoup
is a teacher in the Communications,
Media and Studio Arts program.

Reference

Sturken, M., & Cartwright, L. (2018). Practices of looking: an introduction to visual culture (3rd ed.). Oxford University Press.



Photo credit Brandon Calder

Creating a Respectful Teaching and Learning Environment: A Conversation with Vanier’s Social Service Officer

In Spring 2018, Humanities teacher Caroline Chwojka interviewed Ginny Iaboni, Vanier’s Social Service Officer, to learn more about her role and the support she offers to students and teachers.

CC: What exactly does your role as Social Service Officer consist of?

GI: My title used to be Student Life Advisor, but it’s been changed to Social Service Officer. I’m responsible for both discipline and crisis intervention on campus, as well as providing teachers with support when dealing with classroom management.

What do you mean by “classroom management”?

Classroom management means organizing your classroom environment so that teaching and learning can be a positive experience for everyone. It means establishing procedures and rules that are clear, simple, and positive.

Prevention is key when managing your classroom. I usually give teachers a list of 10 strategies they can follow when creating a positive classroom environment:

1. Set the tone of your classroom at the beginning of the semester:
 - a. Clearly state your expectations.
 - b. Review class rules; make sure that they are clear and simple.
 - c. Do not impose classroom rules you are not willing to enforce.
2. Be approachable: You aren’t your students’ parent, and you’re not there to hold anyone’s hand, but you do have a responsibility to create a classroom setting that engages students and fosters mutual respect. Learning occurs when you work together to celebrate strengths and work out differences.
3. Be positive: Use kindness and humor to make your classroom a comfortable place for students to thrive.
4. Learn their names: Students will feel welcome in your classroom and will hold themselves accountable for their actions if they don’t feel anonymous.
5. Understand your students: Get to know them as individuals. Build relationships with them based on trust and understanding.
6. Be a role model: Mentor them, and teach by example. If students are encouraged, they perform better.
7. Be relevant: Include course material and learning activities that will resonate with your students.
8. Know the rights and responsibilities of both students and teachers as articulated in the College’s Institutional Policy on the Evaluation of Student Achievement (IPESA).
9. Acknowledge disrespectful behaviour in class; don’t ignore it.
10. Be aware of college resources: help students who struggle in your class by directing them to an appropriate resource.



If you adhere to these proactive strategies, you are less likely to encounter behavioural issues, but even with the best intentions and lots of effort, a teacher might come across issues. I have noticed that there is a growing culture of disrespect among students towards their teachers. It saddens me to observe this.

If you encounter behavioural issues in class, refer to the **Student Misconduct in the Classroom Policy**¹. The policy was established to provide procedures for handling cases where students disrupt the teaching and learning environment. Some examples are when students:

- Behave disrespectfully
- Are constantly late
- Don't pay attention
- Are consistently disrupt
- Use cell phones excessively
- Do not respond to direction

Could you explain when a teacher would need to refer to this policy?

It's when "students are not adhering to a positive learning environment and demonstrating conduct that is abusive to the teacher and/or other students, whether it's happening in the classroom, lab, clinical, or other instructional settings (on and off campus), including meetings or electronic correspondence between teachers and students." This quote comes directly from the policy, which was written in 2010. Revisions will have to be made to the existing policy as certain elements are out of date, but teachers should still follow the steps that are currently outlined in the policy.

It's really important for teachers to know that if you are encountering an **immediate threat**, you should bypass the aforementioned policy and go directly to the **Code of Conduct Policy**².

What is the difference between the Code of Conduct Policy and the Student Misconduct in the Classroom Policy?

It is imperative to know that both policies deal with misbehaviour. The Student Misconduct in the Classroom Policy only applies to students who are disruptive in the classroom. On the other hand, the Code of Conduct is a policy that applies to everyone on college campus including, students, faculty, administrators, employees, members of the boards of directors and visitors. It sets forth principles, guidelines, and norms of behaviour expected from all individuals present at Vanier College (Code of Conduct, Vanier College, 2017).

You referred to an "immediate threat." What do you mean by this?

Immediate threat is when the safety of either the teacher or students is at risk. This will prompt a call to Security. Some general examples that fall under the Code of Conduct Policy are:

- Intimidation
- Physical or verbal abuse
- Harassment and discrimination
- Threatening emails
- Cyberbullying

What are more specific examples where a teacher would need to call Security?

A teacher should contact security if they encounter any of the following situations in the classroom:

- Violent and/or aggressive student(s)
- A student is incoherent or out of control
- Student who refuses to get out of class
- Two students arguing disrespectfully
- Physical altercations
- Medical emergencies

Once the situation was under control, Security would report the incident to me, and I would meet with the individuals involved to assess the situation.

Over the years, teachers have noticed an increase in unmotivated students. What are the signs we should look for in these students?

Teachers will encounter some students who may exhibit signs of distress. Here are some signs that you should observe closely:

- Social isolation
- Chronic lateness
- Lack of concentration
- Missed class and/or meetings
- Procrastination
- Unusual or erratic behavior

Teachers contact me for two different reasons: 1. a student has revealed to them that they are experiencing a personal or emotional issue; 2. a student is constantly disruptive and teachers are seeking advice.

¹ See http://www.vaniercollege.qc.ca/bylaws-policies-procedures/files/2015/09/7210-19_Student_Misconduct-2.pdf

² See <http://www.vaniercollege.qc.ca/bylaws-policies-procedures/files/2017/10/CODE-OF-CONDUCT-APPROVED-BY-BOARD-OCTOBER-10-2017docx.pdf>

18 — VANIER ACADEMIC VOICES

In the Student Misconduct in the Classroom policy, it states, “If underlying reasons for the misbehaviour are revealed (e.g. medical, personal or family reasons), the student should be advised to seek help from Student Services.”

By supporting unmotivated students through counselling or other services, we can ensure that disruption is minimal. It is normal that not all uninterested students will seek help. Conflict can at times be inevitable.

How can we prevent unmotivated students from becoming disruptive?

All students have the potential to be disruptive. When challenges/disruptions occur, handle them in a firm and respectful manner. Not addressing or avoiding disruptive behavior only festers and makes matters worse. One should never ignore it. Holding students accountable for their behavior teaches them responsibility and ownership over their own actions. That’s such an important lesson for them to learn. To help them with these life lessons:

- Be consistent. When a teacher is inconsistent, students may try to take advantage of the situation.
- Display authoritative body language: “Non-verbals” are very important, so carry yourself with confidence and maintain self-control.

Students are constantly observing you. If they notice insecurity, they may try to undermine your authority. There are powerful steps that you can take at the beginning of a course to set the right tone. By following the 10 tips that I’ve outlined and by adhering to the Student Misconduct in the Classroom Policy, you will address potential disruptions and avoid escalation.

Should teachers document disruptive occurrences?

It’s imperative that teachers document incidents immediately after they occur. Documenting the complaints establishes a timeline and a record of the event. As the policy states,

The teacher should record details of the incident(s) of misconduct, the steps taken to resolve the behaviour, and the student’s response. These notes should be kept for the rest of the semester in case they are needed. The teacher should inform the Department and/or Program Coordinator of these steps, and may provide written documentation.” (The Student Misconduct Policy, 2010).

How do you convey all those important messages, rules, policies and nuances to teachers?

It is very important to understand your students; and that’s not always easy. I think that being comfortable in a classroom environment sometimes takes years of practice. It’s OK to make mistakes; only through experience do we improve. It’s imperative to build relationships with your students. There needs to be mutual trust and respect,

which will guarantee success in the long run. It’s also essential to make class engaging, so that the students actively participate and do not feel tempted to disrupt.

My colleague says that I should have a “Dear Ginny” blog where teachers ask me how to deal with uncertain situations. In all seriousness, I’m preparing a teacher’s toolkit to help educators deal with difficult events in the classroom environment. I am working with the PSI office to develop this essential tool. I’m also getting lots of requests to attend department meetings to describe my role and explain how I can be of support to teachers dealing with problematic situations. If teachers have questions or concerns, they can contact me at iabonig@vaniercollege or at extension 7104. Happy teaching!



Caroline Chowjka
is a Humanities teacher.



Suggested Readings from
The Indispensable Vanier College Library, page 19

Copyright Act of Canada (R.S.C., 1985, c. C-42). 1985. <http://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/PDF/C-42.pdf>.

Mathews, Brian, and Leigh A. Soistmann. *Encoding Space: Shaping Learning Environments That Unlock Human Potential*. ACRL, 2016.

Palfrey, John G. *Bibliotech: Why Libraries Matter More Than Ever in the Age of Google*. Basic, 2015.

Standards for Libraries in Higher Education. ACRL, 2011. <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/standardslibraries>.

Stewart, Christopher. *The Academic Library Building in the Digital Age: A Study of Construction, Planning, and Design of New Library Space*. ACRL, 2010.

The Indispensable Vanier College Library

Buildings, especially libraries, are symbolic. They represent the intellectual character and aspirations of a college, university or community. The condition of these facilities speaks volumes about what is valued.

Excerpt from Encoding Space: Shaping Learning Environments that Unlock Human Potential

Libraries provide resources that protect democratic ideals and help to eliminate misinformation. In an academic context, libraries are vital to the advancement of knowledge, understanding, and innovation; a quality library with well-designed spaces, quality resources, and library staff with expertise in information science is foundational to student success. A college library gives students a place to obtain knowledge, concentrate on their assignments and meet with classmates. The mission of Vanier College is “to provide a life-enriching learning experience that prepares students to succeed academically and professionally as engaged citizens of the world.” In so many ways, our academic library supports this mission.

More than twelve CEGEP libraries were recently renovated or are currently in the process of being renovated to reflect the Association of College and Research Libraries’ (ACRL) *Standards for Libraries in Higher Education*. The Vanier College library renovation was completed in 2017. Diverse spaces to reflect students’ study habits such as individual seating, group study rooms and a multi-use classroom were added. The Vanier Library is now a part of the Learning Commons, when includes the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Centre and the Tutoring and Academic Success Centre (TASC). These three areas work both separately and together to promote a positive academic experience for students.

To fully appreciate an academic library, it is necessary for students to learn about the value and beauty of library material. Moreover, the ability to effectively access high-quality and pertinent information in the digital age is a first-order skill for students of today. It is not easy to navigate through the many electronic database subscriptions, online

catalogues and shelves of books. For this reason, librarians offer bibliographic sessions in collaboration with teachers to respond to the informational needs of assignments, essays and research projects. Any copyright challenges, requests to access material that is not available at the College, and general assistance to anyone that walks into the space are expertly resolved through a short “interview” with a librarian or staff member. In addition, collection development policies can be found in every library. These policies describe the way in which library material is selected to assure the quality, reliability and accessibility of information.

The Copyright Act of Canada (R.S.C., 1985, c. C-42) determines the rules and regulations that protect the intellectual property of the creator of an original work such as a book, play, work of art, music score or film. Copyright falls under civil and criminal law in Canada. Monetary penalties and prison time may apply to any violation. In Canada, educational use (fair dealing) was prohibitively restricted. With the Copyright Modernization Act of 2012 (Bill C-11), teachers were given more flexibility in their use of resources. In Quebec, Copibec is the organization that makes sure the creator of a work receives payment for use of their property. Every three years, CEGEPs sign an agreement with Copibec and pay fees in accordance with the number of students enrolled. When the bookstore and the college report usage of copyrighted material to Copibec, the amount is subtracted from the fees already paid. Teachers are able to report the use of copyrighted material not located in the bookstore to librarians, or they can self-report to Copibec.

Through the Copyright Act (30.1), libraries have special rules that allow librarians to

make copyright easier to respect while still offering students the resources they need to succeed. Any course material can be placed on reserve so students can access books, articles and films for a short period to use in the library. Through the yearly budget allocated to the library, material can be purchased, catalogued and located on the shelves. Through inter-library loans, technicians can request material from other libraries for use by Vanier community members.

One of the greatest challenges to the survival of academic libraries is funding. Ideally, colleges should provide access to as many resources as possible. Financial support assures that our students will be successful world citizens. After they graduate, our students will be in competition with young people from all over the world, and currently, the digital divide is prevalent in Quebec. CEGEPs can and should be instrumental in abolishing it through investments in technology and creating hubs of learning – spaces for all.

Academic libraries, however cannot survive on their own. Teachers can contribute by adding library assignments to their courses to assure that students become more “information literate.” Not only will these skills help students learn how to use the library space and resources at Vanier College to enrich their work and their learning, but it will also provide them with tools to succeed in university and in their careers. Student success is dependent on a collaborative effort from the college community as well as the various spaces and services we provide for learning. Often called the heart of an educational institution, libraries should be recognized as indispensable and necessary.



Susan Bissonnette
is a librarian.

UDL as a Tool for Building a Culturally Responsive Classroom

In Kei Miller's book of poetry, *The Cartographer Tries to Map a Way to Zion* (2016), the poet imagines a dialectic between The Cartographer and The Rastaman in which the two speakers discuss different ways of seeing and knowing the world we live in. At one point, The Rastaman responds to The Cartographer's assertion of unbiased, scientific perspective with "draw me a map of what you see\then I will draw a map of what you never see\and guess me whose map will be bigger than whose?\Guess me whose map will tell the larger truth?"

As teachers in a mainstream, western educational context, we often play the role of the cartographer, "drawing maps" and creating guidelines from what we believe is an objective and dispassionate perspective. I would like to suggest that if we are going to design classrooms in which students from a diversity of backgrounds are going to thrive, we need to create an environment that gives them space to add to our maps of knowledge and experience.

One of the great gifts given to me in my teaching career is to have always taught in extremely culturally and racially diverse classrooms. In these classrooms, little snippets of experience and stories from my students that reflect the multiplicity of their lives and their experiences have expanded my world immeasurably, and I am unendingly grateful for this continued redefining and remapping. In her TED talk "The Danger of a Single Story," author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009) talks about prejudice and stereotypes as being a matter of only having one story about a person or a group of people. Vanier is a place where, if we are open to it, we can

learn many different stories about many different people and begin, as teachers, to work past our own biases and prejudices. Doing this is not only personally gratifying; it is fundamentally necessary if we are to teach effectively in an environment where so many different races, cultures, languages and identities are represented in our classrooms.

I want to imagine ways that we can educate in an environment that not only makes space for, but actively privileges the knowledge that comes with [students'] individual identities.

The central question of this article, then, is how can Universal Design for Learning (UDL) be used as a framework for creating culturally responsive classroom spaces that take advantage of the diversity of experience and expertise that our students, with their multiplicities of race, gender, language, and culture, bring with them into the college environment? I no longer want to focus on teaching them to conform to our expectations; I want to imagine ways that we can educate in an environment that not only makes space for, but actively privileges the knowledge that comes with their individual identities. This is important not just so that we can be personally enriched, but so that our students can use their own lived experiences and identities as a way to succeed at college and beyond.

Very roughly speaking, UDL is a framework, based on an architectural design concept, which envisions designing classrooms and

courses that are accessible – but not just physically – to all students, for the benefit of all. It is a shift away from the method of making accommodations for individual students who are seen to fall outside the "norm" due to physical disability or learning difference, and toward the mindset that difference is the norm. This shifts the

process of meeting our students' needs from a model that is reactive, reforming it as a proactive process that asks the designer/teacher to "define the universe" that is the classroom, with an expectation

of variety. The expectations of UDL are that a classroom is built with difference as the norm and that when the classroom addresses and adapts to differences, it benefits all the students in the class.

This anticipation of difference is, at least theoretically, suited to the needs of a racially, culturally and linguistically diverse classroom. As it is the teacher who defines the universe of the classroom, the place to start using UDL principles to create culturally responsive classrooms is the teachers. The ideal in an institution as diverse as Vanier is that the teaching staff would be a reflection of the student body; however, like many academic institutions in North America, Vanier's teaching staff is much less racially and culturally diverse than its student population. Various studies have concluded that racialized students whose teachers match their racial identities have better outcomes. A new study by Hua-Yu Sebastian Cherng and

Peter F. Halpin (2016), “The Importance of Minority Teachers: Student Perceptions of Minority Versus White Teachers,” goes a step further: Cherng and Halpin posit that all students have more positive perceptions¹ of their racialized teachers. It seems that there is a multiplicity of reasons for these more positive outcomes and perceptions. One is the issue of role modeling, wherein students see people they identify with at the front of the classroom and recognize that education and success are possible for them.

There are two other issues at play, however, which are, in fact, more compelling. The first is that teachers with non-white backgrounds have different implicit biases than their white colleagues, and they may be more aware of their biases in the classroom. Consequently, a more diverse faculty establishes a more level playing field for students, which in turn creates an environment where a wider array of students will feel motivated and be rewarded for their efforts. Finally, and maybe most importantly, racialized teachers, in a North American context, are better at creating multiculturally responsive classrooms: “A growing body of comparative



Photo credit Brandon Calder

better classroom environments (in classroom observations)” (Cherng & Davis, 2015). To bring this idea back to my analogy of maps and stories, non-white teachers may have an expanded map or bank of stories to draw on, and therefore become more responsive to a multiplicity of student perspectives. So if Vanier is going to create truly culturally responsive classrooms, it is urgent that diversity in faculty hiring be prioritized. This means going beyond the passive model of

waiting for racialized candidates to show up when we are hiring. We need to be actively recruiting candidates and then supporting those candidates, so that we keep

them. (There is a large body of work on the issues that racialized employees face when entering white dominated workspaces, and it would behoove us to deal with those issues

before they occur, rather than after). This is especially urgent in disciplines like my own, English, where the racial disparity is particularly obvious.

“But I’m white and I already work here!” you say. What do you do when you are, like me, one of the many white teachers at Vanier? How do we move towards creating a more responsive classroom? To begin, it is important for all of us, regardless of background, to consider our own implicit and explicit biases. We need to examine our internal maps of the universe, the stories we tell ourselves about who we are and what we believe about other people. When it comes to implicit bias, we are often talking about internalized messages we aren’t even aware we have absorbed about groups of people. In her article “Is This How Discrimination Ends?,” Jessica Nordell (2017) examines implicit bias and the effectiveness of anti-implicit bias training. She writes that attitudes about implicit bias are often associated with

We need to examine our internal maps of the universe, the stories we tell ourselves about who we are and what we believe about other people.

and quantitative work ... finds that Latino and Black teachers are more multiculturally aware than their White peers and that higher levels of multicultural awareness are linked to

¹ It is important to note that the study goes beyond a simple *like vs dislike* dichotomy and breaks perceptions down into very clear categories, and explores which of those categories are linked to positive academic outcomes for students.

who you are and how that affects the way you perceive the world. In other words, we don't necessarily see a bias if it doesn't have an impact on us. I observe this in myself all the time. I have become, after a lifetime as a cis-gendered woman, fairly good at picking up on gender bias, but my radar for picking up racial or cultural bias only has become active and more accurate as I have put some effort into seeing things from other perspectives. The key to implicit bias is that it's not purposeful; it isn't linked to what you *think* you believe, but rather the unconscious messages we pick up from society. It takes work to start to unpack, and it requires a fair amount of critical self-observation. Nordell (2017) quotes the facilitators of an effective anti-bias workshop she attended with a point that I think bears repeating here: "trying to ignore these differences [...] makes discrimination worse. Humans see age and gender and skin color: That's vision. Humans have associations about these categories: That's culture. And humans use these associations to make judgments: That [...] is habit". Therefore, our job is to break our unconscious habits. In the same article, Nordell (2017) continues, "Observe your own stereotypes and replace them [...]. Look for situational reasons for a person's behavior, rather than stereotypes about that person's group. Seek out people who belong to groups unlike your own." The good news for Vanier teachers is that we already work in an environment perfectly suited to exploding stereotypes. For every negative cultural or racial stereotype out there, we all have had multiple experiences with students who not only defy those stereotypes, but show them for the "single story" that they are. Breaking the habit of our own biases is not merely a matter of being in this environment, it involves opening ourselves to the environment and listening to the stories our students' very presences have to tell. Enter your classrooms expecting that difference is the norm.

The final point here brings me back to story-telling. One of the underlying principles of the UDL classroom is the creation of an environment and an atmosphere where students are empowered to make decisions about their own learning. The idea is to

imagine the classroom as a place where there are multiple paths to find one's way to the goal of the course. To do this, we have to become very transparent about our own "story" and allow space for students to tell their "stories" and, ideally, to use those stories as a springboard to success. When it comes to issues of diversity in my English literature classroom, for instance, I have to remind myself to include texts from a diversity of viewpoints. When that isn't possible, I want to think about different ways that my students might view a text. The same work I am doing to dismantle my own implicit bias about people needs to be done for the work I assign. The same is true for assessment. Is it possible to come at writing about literature from different angles and viewpoints? Can I assess the same skills and knowledge (an ability to analyze and structure an argument, an ability to express oneself clearly) with a variety of assignments? Can I build assignments that allow students to bring their own experiences and knowledge into the classroom, to become experts in their own perspectives as a means to becoming experts in literature? Can I be very transparent about my own identity and experiences, so that students have permission to bring their own identities into the classroom? Ultimately, have I created space in the classroom for the kind of exchanges

and story-telling (literal and figurative) that allows both student and teacher to map their way towards knowledge? These are questions that are ongoing for me as an educator, and I'm thrilled to be working with the UDL taskforce to explore them in a more complex and comprehensive way than I've been able to in the past.

I'd like to end with a word of thanks to the Kanien'kehá:ka (Mohawk) students I encountered in my first teaching job who, through their presence, opened up a new map of the world to me. I would not be the teacher I am today if I had not been lucky enough to have this group of smart, funny, occasionally-mischievous, endlessly-talented and brave students in my first classrooms. I would also like to honour them and their ancestors by noting that we do this job at an institution that sits on unceded indigenous territory. Present-day Montreal sits on what was a traditional meeting place for different groups of indigenous people. It would do us well as settlers on this land and teachers in this space to embrace that spirit and remember that we are just one of the voices of this place. The more we can work to listen to and amplify the variety of voices we encounter here, the better we will do as human beings and as teachers.



Aurora Flewwelling-Skup
is a teacher of English and a member of
the UDL Task Force.



References

- Adichie, C. N. (2009, February). Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: The danger of a single story [Video File]. Retrieved from https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story
- Cherng, H. S., & Halpin, P. E. (2016). *The importance of minority teachers: Student perceptions of minority versus white teachers*. *Educational Researcher*, 45 (7), 407-420.
- Miller, Kei. 2016. Augustown. New York, NY: Pantheon.
- Nordell, Jessica. (2017, May 7). *Is this how discrimination ends?* The Atlantic. Retrieved from <https://www.theatlantic.com/science/archive/2017/05/unconscious-bias-training/525405/>

Science and Poetry: Crossing the Divide

Clearly a divide separates the disciplines of science and poetry... The divide is as real as a rift separating tectonic plates or a border separating nations. But a border is both a zone of exclusion and a zone of contact where we can exchange some aspects of our difference, and, like neighboring tribes who exchange seashells and obsidian, obtain something that is lacking in our own locality.

—Alison Hawthorne Deming



Photo credit Joseph Zerbino

For the last thirteen years, I have taught in the English department at Vanier, but, true confession: I was a teenage science student.

I remember Friday nights at a desk surrounded by wobbly pillars of textbooks, my dreams populated by huge, roaming integral signs; for a time, the number 4 was, for me, inexplicably but undeniably *red*. After completing a DEC in Pure and Applied Science, I went on to study mathematics at McGill: three more years of a mind swimming with vector spaces, Babylonian number systems, Möbius functions, and (shh!) discrete geometry.

Small wonder, perhaps, why I feel an affinity and sympathy with our students in the sciences and technologies who are so often overwhelmed by the information and procedures they must absorb in short semesters. Moreover, as students try to master calculus, organic chemistry or digital circuits, there is rarely time for creative expression.

To challenge this reality, I created “Rhymes with Relativity,” a B-block course aimed at students in science and technology programs. The English B-Block course is meant to address a student’s program while still focusing on the literary text; it is frequently the last English course a student takes in CEGEP, and for science and technology students, it is often the last literature course they will ever take. As such, it is an ending, but, like any border, it is also a beginning.

In this class, students explore both poetic language and their own subject areas by reading poetry with themes of science and technology, written both by scientists and by poets inspired by science and technology. Students also *write* poems: about scientific concepts or theories; about technological innovations or processes; about the impact of science and technology on all our lives. “Rhymes with Relativity” seeks to offer alternative ways of processing information, alternative ways of understanding concepts, and an alternative outlet for intellectual and creative energy. The result so far has been inspiring and beyond my initial expectations, and I would like to share the methods and some examples of the work with the Vanier community—perhaps to inspire others to think across their own disciplinary ‘divides.’

The Hunting of the Science Poem

After completing a B.Sc. in math, the ‘natural’ next step for me was an M.A. in English Literature and doctoral studies in Humanities. I was not done with math and science, however; my graduate work focused on the origins of modern science and texts from the 17th century onwards that explore natural philosophy and the scientific method. This includes letters, essays, plays and, yes, poetry. In 1611, John Donne writes that “new philosophy calls all in doubt ... ’Tis all in pieces, all coherence gone.” A century later, Alexander Pope ironically instructs us to “Go, wondrous creature! mount where science guides, / Go, measure earth, weigh air, and state the tides.”

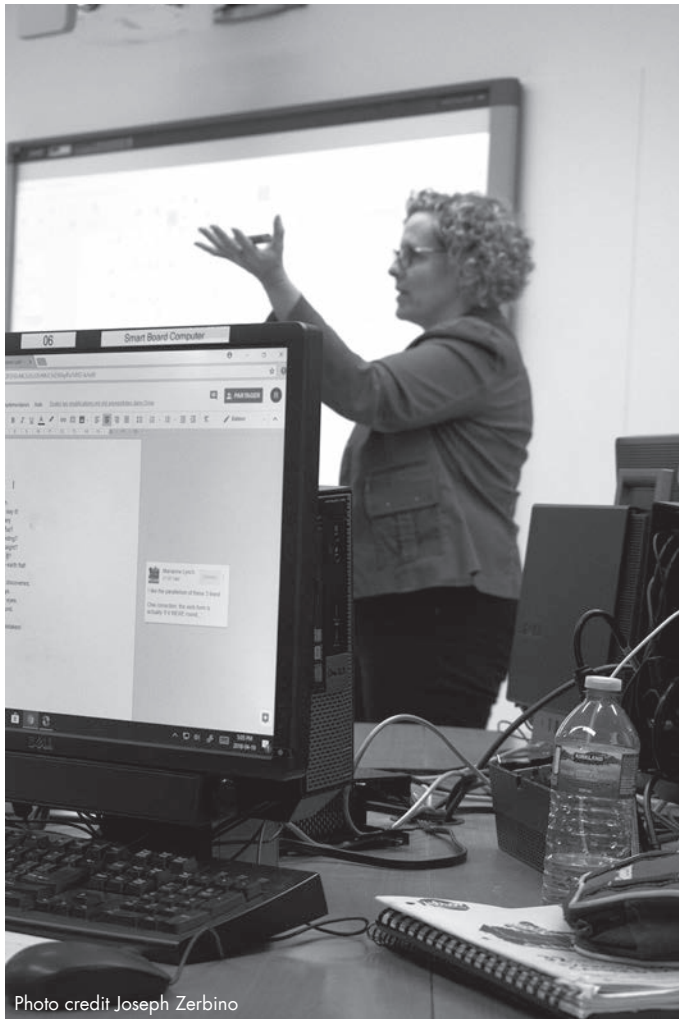


Photo credit Joseph Zerbino

Well-known scientists such as chemist Humphrey Davy and mathematical physicist James Clerk Maxwell were prolific poets. In the 19th century, Edgar Allan Poe calls out science as a “Vulture, whose wings are dull realities,” mathematician Charles Dodgson, better known as Lewis Carroll, produces playful verses about the mathematics necessary to capture the infamous Snark, and Walt Whitman extols the beauty of the locomotive—“Type of the modern! emblem of motion and power! pulse of the continent!” In the early 20th century, the science and technology of war are evident in Wilfred Owen’s graphic description of the effects of mustard gas, while e. e. cummings warns us that “Progress is a comfortable disease” and that “a world of made / is not a world of born.”

Students in my class are given a selection of these canonical poets and texts from past centuries; however, many readings are drawn from more recent times and more recent concerns: atomic power

and atomic annihilation; environmental deterioration and global warming; space exploration and industrial decay; genetic manipulation and the extinction of species. The themes are not always doom and gloom; there are love poems, limericks, even lyrical meditations on the Fibonacci sequence.

Zones of Contact

The content of the course sets up what Deming identifies as the “zone of contact,” where students can come to exchange their own understanding of science and technology for an understanding of poetry’s imaginative and emotional impact. Initially, students can be anxious about this borderland, hesitant to offer up their interpretation. There are, after all, fewer hard-and-fast rules for poetic analysis than, say, for integration by parts; there are rarely unique solutions, no infallible tests of validity to run.

And yet poetry, more than most literary genres, is often highly formalized and rule-bound. Science and technology students, accustomed to the strict rules and procedures in their program courses and labs, seem to find comfort and reassurance in the formal features of poetry: the rhyme schemes and metrical patterns, the precision of a sonnet’s *volta*, the repetition of a villanelle’s refrain. Recognizing these features helps students find their way into a poem: they learn the language and terminology necessary for communication with this neighboring tribe.

To further understand poetic rules, forms and terms, students put them into action. Students regularly and repeatedly write poems, in class and on their own; these begin as journal exercises that focus on imitating a form or concretizing a technique. These creative exercises give students ownership of poetic forms and literary techniques in practical ways. Students come to recognize and appreciate the complexity of seemingly simple creations, and they also develop the tools and skills to access, make sense of, and find meaning in ‘difficult’ or complex poems.

The exercises are also an opportunity for playfulness, creativity, imagination. Early last semester, students were asked to write a piece in which they took on the voice of an inanimate object, ideally something they had studied or that they might use in a lab situation. One student took on the voice of a chipped test tube, depressed at its impending fate; another wrote as an electron, jealous of its high and mighty rival, the proton; while a student in Animal Health gave the rectal thermometer the appropriately flinty voice of the battle-hardened soldier. After this writing exercise, literary terms like personification, imagery, conflict and persona are no longer abstractions, but practical tools that the student can recognize more easily and can use with greater confidence in their own writing.

A Voice of their Own

Another goal of these creative exercises is for students to find a voice of their own. They are encouraged to draw on their program courses for inspiration and to introduce their outside interests, their concerns, maybe their future goals. There is freedom of choice, yet they are also given objective parameters for each exercise. For example, when students take on the sonnet, they are given some leeway with the very strict structural rules of this form; their central goal may be to develop a distinct change of direction after eight lines—the *volta*, or turning point, of the Petrarchan sonnet. Though it may seem counter-intuitive, the “scanty plot of ground” of such activities generates great possibilities for students to explore their own ideas without what Wordsworth describes as “the weight of too much liberty.”¹

As students try to master calculus, organic chemistry or digital circuits, there is rarely time for creative expression.

At times, the parameters are far more mathematical than poetic. Students are asked to create a Fib, a poem that follows the rules of the Fibonacci sequence: $x_n = x_{n-1} + x_{n-2}$ (the first 7 non-zero terms of the

sequence are 1, 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 13). A Fib may have the exact number of syllables per line corresponding to the sequence: for example, two 1-syllable lines, a 2-syllable line, then 3 syllables, 5, 8, and finally a 13-syllable line. But students are also invited to create their own mathematical rule: one student recently varied the pattern to describe the jellyfish life-cycle. Another wrote about pi—and pie—in lines of syllables that correspond to the first ten digits of pi. A third examined the ubiquity and irony of patterns in nature by following a pattern that *seems* geometric (2^n), but only for a few terms. [See examples of student work at the end of the article.]

Seashells for Obsidian

Over time, the drafts developed through class exercises come to center on a specific topic or theme, unique to each student. One student might focus on the technological innovations in professional sports; another explores the chemistry of love; yet another constructs a critique of animal experimentation through poems on animals famously exploited for scientific purposes.

To assemble the final portfolio, the major summative evaluation for the course, students select five to eight poems, representing a variety of poetic forms. Each piece is edited and polished in a guided process where the class is divided into small groups whose members share their creative drafts face-to-face, but also online, on platforms such as



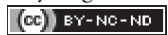
Photo credit Joseph Zerbino

Google Docs. This allows for an ongoing and dynamic collaboration and interaction between student and teacher, student and text, and most importantly between students themselves.

Building on the observation skills so important in science, students regularly provide written feedback to one another, following guidelines that help them to become careful readers and kind collaborators. The tone of this feedback is closely monitored: students always begin by commenting positively on a striking feature in their classmate's writing; subsequently, they identify sections that they find confusing or unclear, and they then provide concrete suggestions.

The final task for students combines self-reflection and objective analysis, with similarities to the description of method one finds in a lab report: students describe their own writing process, systematically explain the thematic and topical links that tie their poems together, and identify and analyze the key poetic devices that add to the impact of their work. In the end, students are not evaluated on raw creative talent or the sublime beauty of their poems, but rather on an analysis—not unlike the typical English essay—that is nonetheless anchored in their own creative choices and experiences.

The “Rhymes with Relativity” course provides a forum where students have the time, space, and tools to explore and experience creative writing. As a teacher, I have the opportunity throughout the semester to read, to comment, to discuss, to suggest—but in the end, I can also evaluate each student on objective criteria. For their part, students have the time to think and experiment, to create and scratch out, to blunder and (once in a while) to soar—and to find something they might not know they were lacking.



Marianne Lynch
is an English teacher and the English department's curriculum coordinator.

References

- Chesterton, G. K. (1908). Orthodoxy. Retrieved from www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/130/pg130-images.html.*
- cummings, e. e. (1944). pity this busy monster, manunkind. In 1 x 1 (one times one) (p. 14). New York: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.*
- Deming, A. H. (1998). Science and poetry: A view from the divide. Creative Nonfiction, 11, 11–29. Retrieved from www.jstor.org/stable/44363022.*
- Donne, J. (1611). An anatomy of the world: The first anniversary. In A. J. Smith (Ed.), John Donne: The complete English poems (pp. 269-85). Harmondsworth: Penguin.*
- Pope, E. A. (1829). Sonnet—To science. In E. Hirsch & E. Boland (Eds.) The making of a sonnet (p. 157). New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.*
- Pope, A. (1733). An essay on man. In G. Tillotson (Ed.), Eighteenth-century English literature (pp. 639-40). New York, NY: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc.*
- Rosenberg, L. (1997). Introduction to methods of mathematical physics. Poetry, p. 31. Retrieved from www.poetryfoundation.org/poetrymagazine/browse?contentId=39887.*
- Whitman, W. (1855). When I heard the learn'd astronomer. In Leaves of grass (p. 309). New York, NY: Random House, Inc.*
- Wordsworth, W. (1807). Nuns fret not at their convent's narrow rooms. In E. Hirsch & E. Boland (Eds.) The making of a sonnet (p. 62). New York, NY: W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.*

Student Poetry

"Nature"

D. Lopez

Nature
Is full
Of many interesting patterns.
We see the exponential growth of a population,
We see recursion in the arrangement of seeds that form perfect spirals on a sunflower's head.

But sometimes, we see faces on Cydonia that are not there. We find flower petals that do not follow the dance of the Fibonacci sequence. We hear total silence speak.

Jellyfish

X. van Maldo

Soft,
Bright,
Graceful,
Alien.
Moving up and down
Along the blue ocean's current.
Blooming off from a polyp, the flowers move away.
The young ones become a nebula and find a mate.
As their cycle comes to an end,
The seeds were planted
That soon form
Polyps
Once
More.

Water Cycle

M. Gheta

One
Wet
Little puddle
Disappears into thin
Air, rising up, up, away.
The puddle no longer a puddle, simply particles;
Far apart, detached, distant, distinct; solitary wanderers, searching the vast skies.
Until frigid territories are attained, too cold to face as a lone particle.
They reassemble, condense; cotton candy in the sky.
Soon released as dripping droplets,
The puddle particles
Unified anew
As
One.

Supernova

B. Hamilton

The death of a star is cataclysmic;
Violent expansion, almost artistic
In nature. Bursts of colour and bright heat
Exploding forth in space with Godlike speed.
A captivating scene that aches the heart
With beauty terrible in its splendour.
Atoms and elements are torn apart
A death the Universe keeps forever.

Are not all deaths destructive as a star's?
A person or creature meets its final fate
Shockwaves reverberate through time and space
Sending earthquakes to all who were a part
Of their life. A black hole sinks into place.
For all who exist, a supernova awaits.

Sonnet

J. Gadoury

Does glory make up for all the damage?
Though resilient, fighters are mortal.
Careers lasting years, pain becomes normal.
One day, the brain will fight too, to manage
The trauma. Our joints begin to crumble,
Our fists no longer solid, now they shake.
Old age will not hide the punches you take.
No jungle left in which you can Rumble.

You will not be remembered for your pain,
Your legacy highlights only the times
When your head was held high in victory
Or defeat. Time flies, memories remain.
Or so you thought, while still in youth and prime;
But when dementia strikes, those too, will flee.



Vanier Researcher Profile

Maggie McDonnell

English teacher Maggie McDonnell was not always planning on doing a PhD. With a Master of Arts in Literature already under her belt, Maggie decided to pursue her Master of Education through PERFORMA MTP, and while engaging in these studies, she realized that she wanted to take her exploration of teaching and learning further. She started her PhD in McGill University's Department of Integrated Studies in Education in 2015.

Maggie's PhD research examines how teachers in higher education learn their profession, especially with regard to how they see their own identity and role as educators. She notes that unlike their counterparts at the early childhood, primary, and secondary levels, most people teaching at the college or university level do not have formal training in pedagogy. Her research takes a narrative autoethnographic and ethnographic approach, looking at her own experience and that of nine other teachers to analyze their paths, their experiences, and their approaches to assessment. Maggie is interested in questions including how she and her participants became teachers, what moments of mentorship shaped them, and what pivotal moments drove the development of their identities and practice as teachers.

Maggie's current research project has its roots in the pilot study she did as part of her M.Ed. degree. As part of that study, she had several different teachers grade the same student essay. When she got the essays back, she noticed that while the grades were more or less aligned, the amount and nature of the feedback varied greatly. This led Maggie to dig deeper into the question of how teachers approach assessment and how their approach relates to how they see themselves as teachers.

Maggie observed that the requirement of providing a numerical judgment of a student's performance in a class is often frustrating for teachers who want to be reflective about their role in a student's learning. Some teachers, for example, sometimes have the feeling that what should matter most (for example, "would I hire this person?") is not adequately reflected or accounted for in assessments of student work. "Everybody hates assessment," she explained to me, "but it's a fundamental part of the job." The aim of her current research is not necessarily to identify solutions to the problems she observes, but rather to open up communication and foster a community of practice where teachers can better support each other and continue to reflect on how they assess and why assessment matters.

One highlight of the research process for Maggie has been the development of her methodology. Her research involves a series of interactive interviews with each of her participants. The interviews do not have pre-scripted questions; rather, they take place as conversations centered around a theme that changes each time. Maggie explained that the interactive nature of the interviews and the practice of conducting four interviews with each participant allowed for the development of a genuine connection, as well as time to reflect between conversations. Participants have expressed that they find the interviews beneficial to their own reflections. She has found that one measure of the validity of her results is the extent to which certain themes resonate for multiple participants.

When I asked Maggie about any advice she might have for Vanier teachers interested in conducting research, she said that teachers interested in doing research should simply

go ahead and do it. In her experience, it was easy for her to embark on research from her position as a college teacher; she already has a job and does not feel forced to do research in order to prove herself. Had her pursuit of a PhD not gotten off the ground, the worst fallout would have been that she ended up back where she started: working full-time in a job she loves. Although the risks were low, the process has not been without its challenges. Maggie has several different commitments to balance, including the classes she teaches at McGill and at Vanier, as well as her family, so she often feels that she does not have enough time to give her all to everything.

Maggie's final reflections in our interview related to the disconnect that can arise between teachers and students in the classroom. As she explained, "as a teacher, you're there because you're comfortable in an academic environment, but many of our students aren't." Especially in General Education classes, students often choose the class because it fits their schedule and they are required to take it. Maggie further explained that "the people in front of you aren't necessarily students in the way you were a student... They don't all learn the way we did." This observation may call teachers to think more about how to keep students engaged, and to continuously reflect on their practice as educators.

Maggie's recent publications are available on her Research Gate page at https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Maggie_Mcdonnell2. Her article "Finding Myself in Methodology: An Autoethnographic Account" goes into more detail about the methodology she uses in her research.



Krista Riley
is a Pedagogical Counsellor in the
Pedagogical Support & Innovation office.



Publications from Vanier Teachers and Staff

Duchesnes, C. (2018). Revelations: **Shari Blaukopf**/Canada. *The Art of Watercolour*, 30, 33.

Lima, J., & Timm-Bottos, J. (2018). This is not a pipe: Incorporating art in the science curriculum. *The Journal of Teaching and Learning*, 11 (2). Retrieved from <https://ojs.uwindsor.ca/index.php/JTL/article/view/5063/pdf>

Ali-Faisal, S., & **Riley, K.** (2018). How to write about Muslims. In R. Pennington & H. E. Khan (Eds.), *On Islam: Muslims and the media* (86-95). Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Honours Awarded to Vanier Teachers and Staff

In April, Vanier College teachers **Jailson Lima, Rhys Adams and Stephen Cohen** were honoured with a Ken Spencer Award for Innovation in Teaching and Learning.

In April, **Wilma Brown** received the PERFORMA Award for the Quality of Production and Pedagogical Intervention in College Teaching from the University of Sherbrooke.

In May, **Avery Rueb** was honoured at the *Gala des Mérites du français* for his educational video game *Prêt à négocier*.

In June, **Myriam Mansour** received an Honourable Mention at the 2018 AQPC Symposium, recognizing her dedication and creativity as an educator.

In June, **John Salik** received the Vanier College Teaching Excellence Award.

821 avenue Ste-Croix, Montreal, QC, H4L 3X9
514.744.7500
voices@vanier.college
www.vaniercollege.qc.ca/psi/vanier-academic-voices

VANIER
C É G E P / C O L L E G E