

A Testimony to QAALity

Ana Osborne, B.A. TRS, M.A. (Candidate)

I am a QAAL member, a Graduate student in the Department of Education, and a lifelong learner who is deeply committed to supporting adult learning. I have attended a number of QAAL events over the years and have always been inspired by the passion for learning, the culture of collaboration, and the fierce determination to make lifelong learning accessible to adults in Quebec that I witness among the people from all walks of life brought together through these QAAL events.

If you are longing for a way to revitalize your own lifelong learning, if you are looking for a way to connect with others who are working hard to build the capacities of our communities through learning opportunities, then the Quebec Association for Adult Learning is a community of learning that you definitely will want to join.

At the QAAL 25th anniversary I had the pleasure of hearing Mr. Noel Burke share a preliminary announcement about a new initiative called Community Learning Centres targeted specifically for Quebec Anglophone communities and school boards. As I sat in the audience, my thoughts began to swirl with excitement and anticipation, ideas jumbling around in my head, all vying for immediate contemplation... but most importantly a vision began to emerge. A vision of a small and remote but vibrant Anglophone community buzzing with energy and development opportunities in the face of crippling depopulation and a dwindling fishing indus-

try began to emerge. In truth, it was QAAL and its board members that set me on my current journey of rediscovery to reclaim a sense of pride in my heritage and a sense of hope for its future.

I returned to the Lower North Shore for a year to conduct my graduate thesis research on the topic of *Education for Sustainable Development in Rural Communities: Cultivating collaboration, recognizing capacity, sustaining communities*. Upon my return, the first person I set a meeting with was the Principal of the local school to discuss the Quebec Community Learning Centre project. After months of preparations, consultations and reflections with the school and community our proposal was submitted. In December of last year, I had the pleasure of returning to Montreal for the launch of the Community Learning Centre project and to accept, on behalf of our school and community, the designation of one of the fifteen new Quebec Community Learning Centres. So Less than a year later after QAAL's 25th Anniversary celebration, I can attest with immense gratitude the value of QAAL's efforts. For, if I had not been at that QAAL event, I would not have had the opportunity of learning about this exciting initiative. A most definitely... life changing learning experience and just one example of what QAAL has to offer.

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As we began the preparations for the launch of our Community Learning Centre and inaugural community learning exchange in early January, the very first communication received was from QAAL's Board of Directors. They offered their congratulations and support, leading the way once again as partners in learning.

QAAL serves as a vital component of the adult learning community in Quebec, providing valuable services and support to people of all ages and backgrounds. I believe QAAL has a rich history and a bright future. Cultivating and maintaining supportive networks, partnerships and resources are fundamental to fostering the development and sustainability of a strong and vibrant community of learning and association.

I know that QAAL shares my vision of a future filled with exchanges and accomplishments that are not inhibited by the boundaries of time or distance. I encourage QAAL to continue its evolution of outreach and partnerships, in particular to the isolated, rural Anglophone communities of Quebec that are often the most marginalized and in need of support. I invite QAAL and all its members to imagine a future where adults from each city, region, nook and cranny of the province can be full and active members by embracing the technology that exists (maybe even videoconferencing in next year for the QAALabtrations Event) and subsequently reaping the many benefits QAAL offers.

So, if you would like to do something good to start off 2007... introduce a colleague, a friend, a family member, or a fellow learner to the Quebec Association for Adult Learning. You will do that person and all QAAL members a favour by opening a door to new learning opportunities.

QAAL NEWSLETTER

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Views expressed in this newsletter do not necessarily reflect the opinions of QAAL.

Tribute to Deborah Hook

by Eunice de Gruchy

I first met Deborah at the QCGN AGM 2001 in New Carlisle in the Gaspé where CASA (Committee for Anglophone Social Action) hosted the event as part of their 25th anniversary celebration. Her hiring represented a giant step forward for English language minority groups in Quebec. As Hugh Maynard remarked to me at the time, "We're lucky to get her" as the first QCGN Executive Director.

Subsequent years have shown me how very true Hugh's statement was. At every QCGN meeting since then, Deb, as she is popularly called, has proven to be the right arm of the leaders, first Hugh and then Martin Murphy. She brought all her care, experience, and passion to the position and deployed her considerable energy and intelligence to nurture and extend QCGN influence. From her office in Quebec City across the province to Ottawa and indeed across the whole country, she traveled not just virtually but in person to find and bring back the best examples and advice for our communities. I was many times privileged to observe her personal and political skills in action and see her pluck and determination impress key government officials and politicians.



It goes without saying that I have the greatest respect for Deborah but beyond that I value her warmth, humour and friendship. Here she is in the attached photo, totally surprised by the tribute dinner given in

her honour by the QCGN in Montreal, November 10, 2006. Thanks to clever Denise Giguere, Deborah's right-hand, she had no idea that her husband Roger, daughter Danielle, and son Alex would be there to share in the universal praise. Her obvious surprise shows another great quality, modesty. Indeed you are irreplaceable, Deborah! QAAL will miss you but we're so happy to count you as one of our own now. We wish you all the happiness and good luck your heart can hold in all your future endeavours.



Message from the Co-president

Leah Moss

There seems to be a buzz in the air of late – and no, it’s not the sound of the confused Canadian Geese who didn’t realize they were a month behind schedule in their flight south. The buzz is about a global society and a culture of lifelong learning. Where is this coming from? Everywhere! Look at some of the major international institutions renaming themselves, such as UNESCO’s adaptation from UNESCO Institute for Education (UIE) to UNESCO’s Institute for Lifelong Learning (UIL) or look at our own Government’s policy on adults and education entitled *Learning Throughout Life – Government Policy on Adult Education, Continuing Education and Training*. From a community-based organization’s perspective, the question becomes...how do we promote this culture of lifelong learning?

If you take a look at the offerings from QAAL’s Special Events Committee (please see the submission by committee chair, Elizabeth Paulette-Coughlin) you will see a very organic and spiritually holistic point of view. QAAL is also working with the MELS initiated Community Learning Centre (CLC) project (please see page 8) on building partnerships that will create a sustainable community of lifelong learning. We’ve even tried to make our Board meetings a venue for learning by beginning each with a twenty-minute presentation. Our most recent was a talk by Charles Taker, Liaison Officer, Quebec Region, for the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

We are also looking forward to “dancing at both weddings” and participating in both Canada and Quebec’s recognition of Adult Learner’s Week being held (April 24, and March 24-30, 2007 respectively). If all this activity hasn’t gotten you excited about adult learning it’s time for you to take action!

Call, e-mail or write to us and get involved. We need workshop facilitators, speakers, counselors, educators, consultants, volunteers and of course, learners. And if you’re wondering where to start, a great place would be one of our upcoming events or our Annual General Meeting scheduled for May 26, 2007. We hope to see you there.

QAAL is pleased to announce the:

RIVA HEFT HECHT SCHOLARSHIP FOR EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATIVE PRACTICE IN ADULT EDUCATION

WHAT IS THE SCHOLARSHIP?

In 2007 an award of \$500.00 will be granted to each recipient.

Recipients will also receive a framed certificate of excellence.

WHY?

To honour and recognize adult education practitioners who contribute to and support the diverse learning needs of Quebec English language adult learners in Quebec.

The purpose of these scholarships is two-fold:

- 1) to acknowledge the role of adult education practitioners in helping adults reach their personal learning goals,
- 2) to raise public awareness of their contributions to the field of adult education in Quebec.

WHO SHOULD APPLY?

Scholarships will be awarded to adult education practitioners on the basis of demonstrated creativity and innovative practice in formal, non-formal, and informal sectors of English adult education providers in Quebec.

AWARD CEREMONY

The scholarships will be awarded at the AGM, May 2007. Winners will be introduced and invited to read their entries.

Applications are available on the QAAL web page <http://doe.concordia.ca/> or by contacting the QAAL office at 514-848-2424 (2036).

**The due date for submission of applications is
March 15, 2007.**

QAAL Spotlight Shines on...



La Société GRICS

Technologies servicing education

Have you ever heard of La Société de gestion du réseau informatique des commissions scolaires? Would it surprise you to know that if you are employed by a school board, you rely on at least one of our services or products everyday? * **Who is La Société GRICS? (www.grics.qc.ca)**

In 1965, the Company's "ancestor", SIMEQ (Service informatique du ministère de l'Éducation du Québec), was created to deal with the Ministry of Education's information-processing needs. With time, the organization's mission was changed to include the computer-management requirements, both administrative and pedagogical, of all the province's school boards. Over the years, the school boards assumed a dominant position within the organization and demonstrated a great deal of leadership, to the extent that, in 1985, the boards took charge of the organization, which then became La Société GRICS, a not-for-profit educational cooperative with a Board of Directors comprising twelve school board representatives from all regions in the province.

La Société GRICS has since been developing technologies to service the Quebec education sector. Our services are intended to fulfill the needs of teachers and educational specialists as well as pedagogical management teams, such as school administrators and educational coordinators and service providers.

GRICS now has the largest concentration of information technol-

ogy specialists in the field of education in North America. We offer more than 70 upgradeable products that address administrative, technical and pedagogical needs. GRICS' software helps administrators to efficiently manage success plans, finance and taxation, transport systems, material resources, payroll & human resources and student files. GRICS' products also address the pedagogical needs of the teachers by providing secure access to a database of validated evaluation tools, an educational portal, free on-line educational resources, multi-media video resources and Video on Demand, and classroom management software.

* What services and products are available to the English Adult Education and Vocational Education communities?

1. BIM, banque d'instruments de mesure (www.grics.qc.ca/bim)

Various services are offered as a complement to BIM. These include consultation, training, support, & technical assistance.

-**A Database:** Addressing the evaluation needs of teachers, pedagogical consultants, Directors of Instructional Services and school administrators, BIM is a database of validated, ready-to-use assessment tools.

-**A Software:** BIM software allows you to create and modify exams, efficiently manage access to the database, download the newest examinations and manage exam rooms.

- **A Partnership:** All evaluation material contained in the central data-

base is developed by committees of practicing teachers from the English educational communities.

The BIM-FGA Planning and Coordinating Committee oversees the development of evaluation tools in the adult general education sector. There are over 300 English language evaluation tools currently available to FGA teachers. In the Vocational and Technical Education Sector (FP), the Quebec Advisory Council on English language Vocational Education (QACVE) determines which examinations are priorities for the English sector. In cooperation with teachers and pedagogical consultants, BIM-FP coordinates the development of exams for all modules for which evaluation is a local responsibility. The complete catalogue of examinations can be viewed on our website.

2. Edu-group Portal (<http://portail.grics.qc.ca> NOTE: there is no www)

EDU-GROUP is a web-based portal which opens the door to a host of adaptable educational tools and pedagogical resources. It is a gateway to telecollaborative learning, providing a secure and customizable interface for members of educational communities. Users have their own personal areas which feature a wide array of resources including email, central hosting, single access point, a calendar, an address book, Web editor, etc. Users can also enter areas shared by the members of the communities to which they belong. Each community operates in its own environment and has recourse to a range

Grics Continued

of tools to exchange information, share expertise, manage documents, or simply invite colleagues to a virtual or actual meeting. Information related to student files stored in TOSCA databases (see below) can be viewed in Edu-Group thereby facilitating collaborative interaction among students, teachers, administrators and, when applicable, parents.

Examples of communities possible with EDU-GROUP PORTAL:

- > Class communities, by subject or homeroom (ex. Biology, Math 536, Auto Mechanics)
- > Specific communities for educational projects (ex. exam development committees)
- > Professional communities (ex. Secondary 1 math teachers, Pedagogical consultants)
- > Management communities (ex. School principals, ICT educational-project committees)

3. Tosca (www.grics.qc.ca/tosca)

Whether it is general adult or vocational education, individualized or traditional instruction approaches, TOSCA provides a management solution for all the activities of training centres. TOSCA simplifies the management of student files and allows for a rapid and complete student profile analysis. TOSCA.net allows teachers to easily access their school board's TOSCA databank in order to consult and complete attendance records and enter results from evaluations, from home or at the centre, via the Internet. The personalized follow-up component of TOSCA.net is a preventive and problem-solving tool for students in general adult or vocational education. TOSCA's computerized tools help the center's directors and service providers to quickly detect students in need of specific help and assist them in de-

veloping an intervention strategy.

4. Video on Demand (VoD) (password protected)

United Streaming video provides direct access to over 4,500 full-length up-to-date digital media programs, available as 45,000+ video clips. Digital images, a clip art gallery and a bank of sound effects rounds out this new service. Many of the videos include lesson plans, suggested activities, quizzes and handouts, all which can be customized by teachers. New units are added on a weekly basis and videos are updated every three months. A powerful search engine allows for search by keyword, subject or grade level. The Teacher Centre provides online training in using the VoD system and provides professional development opportunities, including a library of best practices in topics such as differentiated instruction and technology integration.

5. The Educational Video Collection (collection@grics.qc.ca for the English collection) (www.collectionvideo.qc.ca for the French collection)

In early 2006 the mandate of Télé-Québec was modified, and as part of the change process La Société Grics assumed responsibility for the Educational Video Collection. In the collection are over 800 English language video and multimedia resources, chosen for their educational value. More than 100 of the programs are accompanied by a free teacher guide. The Collection offers an online download service and new programs are constantly being added. Our consultants are available to suggest the right video resources for your classroom needs and to help you integrate these resources into engaging learning situations.

6. Carrefour Education (<http://carrefour-education.qc.ca>)

NOTE: there is no www)

Do your students need rights-cleared images and sounds for their multimedia projects? The two-fold mission of Carrefour Éducation is to collect, validate and diffuse pertinent free resources that may be used for educational purposes and secondly, to encourage the integration of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT). All documents housed on this site have been approved for use by the authors and it provides excellent references concerning copyright law and the Internet. Approximately 15,500 people use Carrefour Éducation resources each week.

7. Open Source Initiative (www.grics.qc.ca/libre)

The Open Source Initiative for education provides resources, information and access to shared and free software such as OpenOffice and Linux. GRICS will provide support to school boards as they field-test or implement these products.

8.E-portfolio (<http://webdemo.grics.qc.ca/portfolio>) NOTE: (there is no www)

Competency-based, the electronic portfolio is an exceptionally versatile learning, evaluation, communication, and management tool. Teachers recognize My Portfolio to be a practical, efficient evaluation and communication tool for ongoing individual and group assessment. Within the portfolio framework, teachers set up learning contexts geared to develop specific competencies. They can readily monitor all samples that students enter: text, images, mixed media products, assessment rubrics etc. and also provide timely comments and advice, when needed.

My Portfolio encourages students to actively participate in their learning, update and monitor their

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portfolios, communicate with teachers, classmates, and parents, enhance their computer and technology skills, self-assess and reflect on their progress, as well as assess and give feedback on the work of their peers.

E-portfolio can also be used as a professional development portfolio for teachers and administrators!

9. Perspective (www.grics.qc.ca/perspective)

Perspective offers school administrators an efficient and integrated tool to manage and monitor their educational projects, school success plans and strategic development policy. Perspective's tracking charts provide a quick overview of the performance of any given class at any given time. Perspective makes it easy to ascertain whether the measures that a school or organization has implemented to ensure student success have indeed been effective. Such measures might include a better understanding of the local school envi-

ronment, a concerted focus on best teaching and organizational practices, or on the quality of life in a school or organization.

10. REPERES (www.reperes.qc.ca)

REPERES is the official website for professional and education information. The database is updated daily and contains everything you need to explore requirements and descriptions of careers and professions, training and resources available, as well as relevant employment statistics. Although this database is available only in French, it provides a valuable tool for our bilingual adult learning communities.

* How can you become an active partner of GRICS?

In my present role as Coordinator of BIM FGA & FP, English Sector, I am always looking for practicing teachers to validate and develop evaluation tools with me. As the English sector moves toward Reform Implementation in the Adult Education sector, development of tra-

ditional tools will decrease and we will embark on developing instruments to measure competency acquisition in an authentic and meaningful context. Of course this will require me to partner with the content experts -YOU, the adult educators in the classroom. Or perhaps you would like to experiment with Open Office in your classroom and need support in doing so. You want to incorporate multimedia productions into your lesson plans and need some guidance. You would love to field-test the E-portfolio with your adult students or learn how to create your own learning communities. Maybe you have an idea for a great educational project that you would like to share with us.

Your team of consultants, educational technologists and technical support specialists are waiting to hear from you!

Submitted by Susan Oliver, Past-President, QAAL

SAVE THE DATE!

Thursday March 29th, 2007
Concordia University
5:00-7:00 pm

The Quebec Association for Adult Learning (QAAL)
is pleased to present:

Building Partnerships:

The Community Learning Centre Initiative

With

Noel Burke, Assistant Deputy Minister, MELS

Linton Garner, Community Development Agent

Check our Website for more info

<http://doe.concordia.ca/qaal/>

Greetings From

Special Events!

It gives me such great pleasure to introduce you to the Quebec Association for Adult Learning's Special Event series for the 2006-2007 season. We have called our series of workshops this year "The Great Re/ thinking: Educating Ourselves for a Sustainable World". In this series we hope to empower people, as Maxine Greene says, "to see through multiple perspectives, and to ponder diverse ways of Worldmaking".

Our World is in serious trouble. We cannot turn away. Pollution, war, violence, global warming, genocide, greed, despair and disease...there is no question that we must transition from a materialist, industrial growth society to a more life sustaining one. As educators and life-long learners from so many different disciplines and domains, we have the potential to play an important part in shaping how that transition happens...and if we are to live together on this Earth and with this Earth in sustainable, creative, interconnected community. How we think and act, how we educate ourselves in these times, therefore, is tantamount to the survival of the rivers and the lakes, the forests and the wildflowers, the trees, hummingbirds, bitterns, whales and tadpoles... and you and me... and our most precious children...and all of "Our Relations".

It is said that our postmodern malaise and deepest suffering stems from our alienation from ourselves, our bodies and each other, and from the Earth which is our Home. Separation and fragmentation have become the postmodern World Body. But, quantum physics, deep genetics and Living Systems Theory are verifying what the mystics, poets and indigenous peoples have known all along. We are Whole, we have just been taught to think otherwise. It seems, then, that this call to Re/think ourselves...to Re/imagine ourselves, is no more than a call to Re/member our Wholeness; to Remember our deep relatedness and interconnections.

"As the crickets soft hum
Is to us
So are we to the trees
As are they
To the rocks and hills"

Gary Snyder

We, on the Special Events Committee, Elizabeth, Patricia, Julieta, Leiba and Eunice, feel so privileged to present to you, our membership, this season's Special Events Series. We invite you all to come and share in this experiment of Re/imaging new possibilities for

Namaste,

Elizabeth Paulette-Coughlin
Special Events Committee Chair

QAAL Special Events 2006-2007

- November 1, 2006 "Learning with the Whole Mind" with Steve Gruber
- November 12, 2006 "Awakening Connections: Living in Literacy" with Rebecca Luce-Kapler
- December 8, 2006 "Evening of Poetry & Song of Leonard Cohen"
- January 21, 2007 "A Learning Circle on How we Experience Birth" with Kathryn Delaney
- February 25, 2007 "A Learning Circle on The Power of Awareness" with Steve Sims
- April 15, 2007 A workshop is being planned on "LEAD (Leadership for Environment and Development)" with Hugh Maynard

QAAL Celebrates Adult Learner's Week

QAAL will be participating in the "Proud to Learn Contest" with the Montreal Table and the Institut de coopération pour l'éducation des adultes (ICEA). For more information you can check out the ICEA website at www.semaine.icea.qc.ca for a chance to win a bursary of \$125.

Also QAAL will be participating in the Literacy awards for learners and their teachers/tutors. We will be partnering with the Laubach Literacy Canada-Quebec/Literacy volunteers of Quebec (LLCQ-LVQ) and the Quebec Literacy Working Group (QLWG).

Save the date, March 29 for QAAL's Special event "Building Partnerships: The Community Learning Centre Initiative" with Noel Burke & Linton Garner

This is the first of a series of articles on the Community Learning Centres (CLC) project in order to keep you up-to-date on QAAL's involvement in the newly initiated endeavor.

What Are Community Learning Centres?

Briefly, Community Learning Centres are both a place and a set of partnerships between the school and other community resources. Using public schools as hubs, Community Learning Centres bring together many partners to offer a range of supports and opportunities to children, young people, families and communities.

Community Learning Centres focus on integrating academics, health and social services, and youth and community development. These centres provide an exceptional opportunity for local citizens, schools, agencies and institutions to become active partners in addressing education and community concerns by bringing community members together to identify and link community needs and resources in a manner that helps people to help themselves in raising the quality of life in their communities.

Community Learning Centres embody a unique

type of educational approach that embraces a number of beliefs. Chief among these are

- * that education is a lifelong process;
- * that everyone in the community - individuals, businesses, public and private agencies - should share in the responsibility of educating and providing services to all members of the community; and
- * that people - citizens - have a right and a responsibility to be involved in determining community needs, identifying community resources, and linking those needs and resources to improve their community.

Strengthening community engagement leads to improved student learning, stronger families and healthier communities. When schools become centers of the community and are open to everyone - all day, every day, evenings and weekends - everyone in the community can benefit.

And that's good. Very good.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Corporations/Businesses/Educational Institutions	\$75
Community/Nonprofit Organizations	\$35
Individuals	\$25
Fulltime Students (proof of status required)/Seniors	\$10

Name _____

Position _____

Organization _____

Address _____

City _____ Prov. _____ Postal Code _____

Tel: _____ Fax: _____ E-mail _____

Areas of interest/expertise _____

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