

Last October, three Vanier teachers travelled to Mexico City to attend the SOMECE (International Symposium on Information Technology in the Classroom) organized by the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México (UNAM). The SOMECE, which in 2009 was celebrating its 25th year of existence, is an international symposium on the use of IT in the classroom at all levels of education, from elementary school to graduate studies.

In this context, Vanier's recent pilot-projects brought a rich and unique perspective to the symposium's program. In the afternoon of October 19th, Marielle Beauchemin (Micropublishing and Hypermedia) started the Vanier presentations by sharing the fruit of her doctoral research which focused on the hybrid online courses offered at Vanier; Philippe Gagné (French) followed with a talk on a problem-solving approach to virtual teaching within an online course comprising of synchronous and asynchronous work periods; finally, Sophie Jacmin (Humanities) presented her virtual team-teaching experience with Cegep de Sept-Iles, a pilot-project in existence since 2006.

The largely Mexican audience was charmed by the rigorous and creative presentations, but also by the exotic geography of Quebec, skillfully explained by Marielle during her introduction. Our cultural and geographical differences led to interesting conversations. Some professors even expressed an interest in meeting as a virtual community of practice to further explore IT pedagogy in both countries.

Beyond its professional duties, the Vanier team was treated to cultural outings (the Teotihuacan pyramids, the Chapultepec Castle, the Historical Center) and culinary delights under the guidance of Dr. Enrique Ruiz –Velasco Sanchez, professor at UNAM and co-organizer, with Marielle Beauchemin, of the Vanier-UNAM project.

Marielle, Philippe and Sophie left Mexico City with a feeling of complete success on all levels, professional, cultural and personal. The three teachers formed a harmonious and joyful team. The torch will now pass on to the next selected teachers who will leave for Mexico in October 2010.