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In this issue

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Editor's Note

There is nothing like an anniversary to spark reflection on where we have come from and where we are going. As Vanier College embarks on celebrations marking its 50th year, our community is sure to share a laugh and shed a tear reminiscing about all that has been accomplished, all the fun that's been had, the many challenges that have been overcome, and the great strides that have been taken in offering a rich and responsive learning experience to all who come here.

Even as we look to the past, this upcoming year, which will be marked by the implementation of several major institutional policies and the development of the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, will call upon us to turn our eyes and our efforts toward Vanier's future.

I hope that this edition of Vanier Academic Voices will inspire you to fresh thinking about who we are, where we are going, and why we're headed there. The issue opens with reflections from a teacher looking back on 37 years of teaching Vanier students, and it continues with articles about pedagogical innovations, support services, and unique educational programming designed to meet the needs of our dynamic, diverse, and ever-evolving community.

A retrospective interview will send you back in time with words and photographs that capture key moments from the history of the revolutionary Women's Studies program at Vanier. Our final article gives voice to the reason we all report to work in the morning: our students, who come from a wide variety of backgrounds, speak a vast array of languages, and strive for a limitless range of career and life goals. For many, the diversity for which Vanier is well known is a driving force in their decision to study here.

I hope that you all enjoy reading the articles that follow. They were written with heart, with care, and in the spirit of driving us all to grow in our own journeys as educators.

Julia Hall
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Photo credit Julia Hall

Our Students Are Our Best Resource! Reflections on My Incredible Journey of 37 Years of Teaching at Vanier

Looking at the website announcing the upcoming fiftieth year anniversary of Vanier College is exciting. Indeed, such an anniversary is an important watershed. Moreover, it is one that makes me reflect upon my own years of teaching here at Vanier, particularly the transformation that my pedagogical approach has undergone.

I began teaching English at Vanier's Snowdon campus in 1982. (Yes, for our youngest faculty, there *really* was a Snowdon campus!) For the most part, the students at that campus were drawn from anglophone west-end public and private schools without a great deal of ethnic or cultural diversity. In many ways, the "fit" was perfect for me, as the hiring committee must have perceived, since I had graduated from a similar high school.

The Snowdon English department's curriculum was equally well suited to my training and my own background. The department had adopted a traditional approach, with its *Introduction to English Literature* course following a chronological pedagogy. The first semester *Introduction* began with Beowulf and Chaucer and continued to the Renaissance writers. The *Introduction Part Two* picked up at that point, continuing to the twentieth century, with an emphasis on the "great works" of each genre. This "great works" approach was very much in keeping with McGill's doctoral program in English literature, which I had recently completed. In a sense, therefore, I could see myself in these students, having learned in a similar manner and having received an education that had been structured, both in terms of concepts and content, in the same pedagogical fashion. An acquaintance of mine, a history professor at McGill, used to joke that he saw his role as "giving" his students "the history of France….from the Gauls to de Gaulle!" Our teaching orientation was as follows: one narrative, one perception, one approach. And this was pretty much the way we were teaching English at the Snowdon campus.

The academic year 1987-1988 saw the amalgamation of the two "Vaniers" at the Saint-Laurent campus. In our department, the discussions regarding the curriculum were long, necessary, and challenging, given the fact that the two "visions" were quite different. At Snowdon, unlike the Saint-Laurent program, the four English courses were structured and sequential. At Saint-Laurent, the English department offered more courses that were in keeping with the teachers' individual areas of interest and expertise. Furthermore, the student body was now much more diverse, indicating that the Snowdon "pedagogy" was no longer quite so relevant to students who were no longer almost exclusively first-language English speakers.

By the mid-1990s, significant changes in the Ministerial objectives rendered all this moot. The objectives were now competency-based and the English program was overhauled quite dramatically. Our *Introduction to College English* (603-101) became a one-semester course (albeit with different levels to respond to the different language skills of our incoming students), with our 102, 103, and B Block courses clearly dedicated to genres, themes, and forms of discourse appropriate to one or more fields of study, respectively.

In a sense, every change in direction poses different challenges. As educators at Vanier, we have had to examine and re-examine our teaching methods in order to create pedagogical approaches and resources that are effective and empowering for a student body that is linguistically and culturally diverse. And all this must be done with a careful and conscientious view to the Ministerial competencies. Given all these demands, it is sometimes easy to overlook the fact that the incredible diversity of our students is actually our greatest resource!

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, I became very much aware of this. In fact, I experienced something that was transformational and incredibly energizing. I was teaching a 102-level literary genre course that I called *Hallmark of Success: The Adaptive and Adapting Short Story*. In keeping with the ministerial objectives, I would lead the students through the evolution of the short story genre, identifying its characteristic features. Naturally, I included the masters like de Maupassant, Poe, and London, while moving toward more contemporary international short story writers. And that is when I experienced my Eureka moment!

We were analysing the short story *Two Kinds* by Amy Tan, a writer who is often considered to be a major voice of the Chinese immigrant experience. A young lady in my class, who had been extremely solid in her work but not particularly involved in class discussions, blurted out "This is *my* story." A young man behind her, from another ethnic/religious background, then affirmed "it is *my* story too…." And so it went, up and down the rows, with students who had barely acknowledged each other, finding and responding to the common human challenges evoked in the literary work. What made this moment so significant for me was that I realized that literary works "outside" the common accepted "canon" of the great traditional Western masters were so much more important, so much more real and relevant to my students.

My teaching has never been the same since that class. I went home that day thinking about what had happened. I began to realize in a much more conscious way that the most incredible pedagogical resource we have at Vanier is actually the rich, complex diversity of our students. And I wanted to teach in such a way that would *involve*

Photo credit Giovanna Arcuri

them and *empower* them as never before! I revamped this course, all the while teaching to the Ministerial competencies. I reflected upon the literary materials that I had included up till that point and decided to choose different works. Simply put: I rolled the DICE. In other words, I adopted a new template, a new method by which to determine whether or not we would study a given literary work. The literature now had to conform to what I called my DICE, a template that simply popped into my head as I was driving home that afternoon. In other words, the works had to be

D ... dynamic, oriented toward the demographics
I ..... international, so that the students would feel included
C.... material that would foster collaboration and co-operation
E .... material that would be empowering

The energy level and enthusiasm of the class went through the roof! In fact, the sense of involvement and empowerment on the part of the students in that class and in subsequent groups of my *Hallmark* short story class was palpable.

I can provide many anecdotal examples to prove how students have transformed into much more active, engaged, invested learners as a result of the pedagogical modifications that I brought to this course. I will restrict myself to one. As a final assignment, I allow students to choose between a 20% final exam or the submission of a 20% creative short story, which must demonstrate an appreciation and awareness of the generic features of the short story that they have learned throughout the semester. In the first years of this course, the vast majority of students opted for the final exam. This was, after all, their comfort zone. With an average class size of about 42, thirty-eight would write the exam and perhaps four would submit a short story. However, with the pedagogical and curriculum modifications, the reverse is now true. The vast majority of students opt to submit a creative work of their own. Moreover, they talk to me of their desire to share their personal histories, to explore the challenges they face as college students in Quebec, often as the first members of their families to have the experience of being in schools where they are meeting and interacting with students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

Additionally, statistical evidence provided by the Registrar demonstrates that invested, empowered students work harder and achieve better results. I wanted to see how my pedagogical and curriculum modifications affected the grades in the course and the numbers speak for themselves. From 2003 to 2017, the grade averages for *Hallmark of Success: the Adaptive and Adapting Short Story* steadily progressed from 75.7 to 83.5 with similar cohorts of students drawn from different programs of study.

Finally, ridding myself of the old paradigm, the old pedagogical approach – "I give you English literature from Beowulf to Beckett" – has changed me as an educator. I no longer see myself as someone to transmit body of knowledge X, but rather as a facilitator who teaches certain skills that will mobilize the potential of our students, and will help them to articulate and to communicate their tremendous diversity and rich, varied perceptions. For me, learning to adapt my pedagogy to respond to Vanier's multilingual, multicultural student population has been exciting and personally rewarding.

Renee Joy Karp
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From the Theoretical to the Real World: How Actors Are Helping to Bridge the Gap in Nursing Education

Abstract

In popular culture, we refer to them as actors. However, in the world of healthcare education, they are Standardized Patients (SPs).

In a scripted role, a Standardized Patient can be a 20-year-old experiencing a schizophrenic crisis, an 80-year-old with Parkinson's disease, or a diabetic experiencing the confusion of low blood sugar, among other examples.

Standardized Patients provide nursing students with the opportunity to practice and refine a variety of skills relevant to their future profession. As such, SPs have become an integral part of the learning platform in healthcare education.

This article will discuss the challenges in providing adequate patient clinical experiences to Nursing students and the invaluable contribution of Standardized Patients in addressing those challenges. It will also discuss the development of an SP program as part of simulation training in the Vanier College Nursing Program. In addition, excerpts of interviews with SPs and with Nursing students having trained with SPs will be provided.

Introduction

Simulation is defined as the creation of an event, situation, or environment that closely mimics what one would encounter in the "real world" (Sinclair, 2009). In healthcare education, it enables knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be acquired by healthcare professionals in a safe, educationally-oriented and efficient manner (Okuda, 2009). For instance, simulation offers the student the opportunity to experiment with treatments without fearing the consequences of making a mistake. In fact, in the simulated hospital world, mistakes are considered valuable learning experiences.

A Standardized Patient (SP) is a healthy person trained to create, in the most realistic and accurate manner possible, a history and physical and/or emotional scenario that a nurse may encounter in practice. The SP can also act as a confederate such as a family member or other healthcare professional. SPs provide nursing students with the opportunity to practice and refine a variety of skills including communication, interview, physical examination, clinical skills, and clinical interventions. In particular, in response to ethical and legal concerns involved with students examining each other, SPs are invaluable to mastering physical examination skills.

Photo credit Rivka Guttman

The use of SPs is based in theories of medical education, including experiential learning, deliberate practice, and situated learning (Abe, Cleland and Rethans, 2013). For years, Standardized Patients have been used successfully in the assessment of learner performance (Abe, Cleland and Rethans, 2013). In nursing, one of their most important educational contributions is the immediate feedback they provide from the patient's perspective. They also provide the student with the opportunity to ask questions the student might not feel comfortable asking a "real" patient.

The History of Standardized Patients in Nursing at Vanier

In 2007, under the leadership of former Faculty Dean George Archer, the Vanier College Nursing Department received funding to hire actors who would give our students the practice they needed to succeed in the practical or OSCE (Objective Structured Clinical Exam) portion of the provincial licensing exam.

Prior to this initiative, volunteers had been recruited from college staff or among the family and friends of faculty members. The process was time-consuming and hit-or-miss in terms of reliability and acting ability. Concurrently, our Nursing program, as well as other health care programs, faced decreased availability of clinical placements. As such, ensuring that each student would be exposed to and become proficient in all clinical competencies was becoming increasingly difficult. Students were feeling unprepared for physical examination and management of patients with a variety of health problems. Furthermore, modern-day ethical concerns limited the extent to which students could practice physical examination on each other.

With the removal of the practical portion from the Order of Nurses licensing exam in 2012, the role of the actors was revised to focus on formative learning and feedback. SPs are now an integral part of our simulation learning experience.

Making It Real

High fidelity mannequins are an effective and frequently-employed tool in healthcare education, but standardized patients are advantageous over mannequins when the scenario requires students to interpret facial expressions and body language, demonstrate compassionate care, or ambulate (move) the patient. The addition of props and moulage can turn a young SP into an older patient or create burns, wounds, and even swelling of the skin. Treatments, such as insertion of an intravenous, can be provided using a fake body part placed next to the real arm. As an artist uses real models to paint, the first-year Nursing course uses an SP to help students listen to lungs, heart, and bowel sounds.

Photo credit Rivka Guttman

Prior to engaging with students, an SP is sent a scenario that provides the patient's medical and social history, the situation and how it will unfold; it details how the SP should respond to questions and interventions. Although the SP is given a reasonable list of responses, they must be ready to answer ad lib to any of the students' questions and interventions. The SP must be keenly aware of what they can and cannot say, at what point in the scenario they must provide information, and when and if they can cue a student. The SP interactions are staged to lead the student to apply correct interventions, but if the SP leads the student down the wrong track, the intended learning can be affected. Therefore, the simulation facilitator reviews and practices with the SP to ensure consistency, especially when different actors are utilized for a scenario.

Following the nurse-patient interaction, the SP provides the student with feedback on their communication and empathy skills. Placing themselves in the role of a patient, an SP is in the unique position to experience the nurse patient interaction and to give the student constructive feedback. Feedback is given immediately following the scenario, in the first few minutes of the debriefing process.

> ***SPs provide nursing students with the opportunity to practice and refine a variety of skills including communication, interview, physical examination, clinical skills, and clinical interventions.***

What the Actors are Saying

Most SPs are graduates from Concordia or Dawson's theatre schools who work in cinema and commercials. Others are retired from a variety of professions. The SPs we've worked with report a shared view: that acting for education rather than entertainment gives them a different sense of purpose. It allows them to sharpen their craft in a different way, one that involves interaction and improvisation.

Many SPs found the process rewarding, saying that "doing what [they] love to do helps the future nurse" and sharing that they wanted to "do a good job for the student so that the student would succeed." Most expressed how challenging it was "to encourage the student without helping them and giving away too much." One SP said, "I wanted to tell them to just do this… but I could not." A retired SP noted that it keeps her brain young and that helping students now will ultimately help her should she ever be in hospital. "If they learn through me, it will help us and them," she noted.

What the Students Are Saying

"You can't look and assess a robot. You notice more things and it's more realistic. I notice a hand movement, posture."


Photo credit Rivka Guttman

"I appreciate receiving feedback in debriefing directly from the patient as opposed to no feedback from a robot and only from the teacher."

"Practicing with SPs helps my confidence because it makes me think how I would have communicated differently. I am able to pick up on things I don't usually pay attention to, both in the patient and in myself."

"The actors are so real that I realize what I lack in terms of caring. For example, I felt so nervous even though I was an observer. I realized that I can't take care of my patient if I am so nervous. It helps me to assess myself and what I need to work on."

"The SPs are amazing; they are right on point. It felt like we were talking with someone who was actually suffering the illness, we were able to see the side effects of the medication, the actor was really drooling."

"I know the teachers would not assign me a patient who is hallucinating or aggressive; maybe I would have seen it from outside the room. But, with the SP in simulation I can see what it really looks like and I get hands on experience rather than being an observer. I was able to see what escalating behaviour looked like and then try out the techniques I learned in class."

Conclusion

Simulations are labour-intensive productions. Although not presented on the big stage, they still require many of the same production staff, including scenario (screen) writers, a director, a talent agent, a production assistant, and a makeup and props coordinator.

A *Standardized Patient Handout* was created this year to provide consistency in information and expectations of the SP role. A copy can be obtained by contacting the author.

In the future, I hope to include actors in simulated multidisciplinary care in the roles of physician, social worker, and physiotherapist, among others.

Rivka Guttman
is a Nursing teacher.

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Demystifying RAC

Recognition of Acquired Competencies (RAC) offers individuals who have acquired skills, knowledge and behaviours pertinent to a given field, without having completed an Attestation of College Studies (ACS) or Diploma of Collegial Studies (DCS) in that field, the opportunity to obtain formal recognition of those competencies. At Vanier, we have three programs available through RAC: Early Childhood Education (ACS), Skills for the Administrative Assistant (ACS), and Special Care Counselling (DCS).

The following three scenarios exemplify the typical profiles of individuals who undertake RAC at Vanier College:

Scenario 1: Before undertaking RAC, one recent graduate worked in a daycare for 36 years. In time, he came to realize that administration was treating him differently because he was limited in his tasks due to being technically "unqualified." This led him to begin the RAC process.

Scenario 2: Another recent RAC graduate had studied in Vanier's Respiratory and Anaesthesia Program. However, after having children, she decided to take a different career path, finding work in a daycare. She worked in the daycare for 18 years prior to beginning the RAC process.

Scenario 3: A third graduate came from her home country with formal training in teaching elementary school. However, upon coming to Canada, she learned that her studies were not recognized. She found herself working as an unqualified daycare educator, until her employer recommended she consider RAC.

> ***"Via the formal recognition of knowledge and skills, RAC fosters equality at work and pride in oneself. RAC is, at heart, a social justice process."***

Upon completion of their respective RAC programs, all three graduates described a feeling of pride, increased respect from colleagues, a salary increase, and increased stability in their positions. There are many other similar stories, which share in the theme that life often takes unexpected turns, that career paths change, and that things do not always work out the way we might anticipate. RAC is a process that allows a person to acquire college-level certification by using the resources they already possess (i.e. skills, knowledge, understanding, and experience) with the end goal of adapting and improving their current situation. Via the formal recognition of knowledge and skills, RAC fosters equality at work and pride in oneself. RAC is, at heart, a social justice process.

RAC is not new. In fact, the origins of RAC reach back to the late 1970s. RACs are offered at the vocational and college level in educational institutions across Quebec and in educational institutions across Canada, where they are called PLAR. In Quebec, RAC is included in the Ministry of Education's Adult and Continuing Education Policy (2002), in which the importance of valuing adult prior learning and skills and increasing access to the recognition process itself are addressed. The CEGEP network even has an organization, the CERAC, which allows CEGEPs to share resources and best practices. This organization contributes significantly to research and innovation for RAC programs.

The remainder of this article aims to further clarify what RAC is and is not, highlighting some key characteristics. It also describes the ideal RAC candidate as well as the RAC process.

What is RAC? RAC is a ministerial evaluation process that allows a candidate the opportunity to demonstrate the knowledge they have gained in a given field through formal, informal, and non-formal workplace and life experiences. The RAC process presumes that the candidate already possesses most of the knowledge necessary to successfully complete RAC.

Who is RAC for? A person who does RAC is called a candidate, rather than a student. As a group, the RAC candidates bear a closer resemblance to the Continuing Education population than to the day program population. This is evident, not only in age, as the median age of a RAC candidate is 37, but also in family and educational situation. All RAC candidates are already employed in the field and the vast majority are working full time to support their own families. Many also already hold university degrees from their home country or from Quebec or other provinces, and/or multiple certificates and training. As such, our RAC candidates are a mature population who already perform the tasks, fulfill the roles, and express the attitudes that are the end goals of learning a competency.

What does the RAC process involve?

RAC entails a six-step process (see Figure). Each successive step is designed to elicit a deeper expression of a candidate's knowledge, as well as a demonstration of skills and performance. This allows us to admit and later recognize only the most competent candidates. In other words, through the six steps, we drill down to find out what the candidates already know and what they already do, recognizing them for these competencies. A candidate works with a content specialist to progress through the recognition of the various competencies of an ACS or DCS program.

RAC is the ideal option for some people.

RAC is based on competencies, which is a set of skills that enable a person to perform a role or function. A person would choose RAC because they are already performing these roles and functions of the job, and would likely not see the relevance of attending courses to learn to do what they already do. They may choose to do RAC to increase their pay, to gain stability in employment, or to access other positions that require qualification.

RAC is not a shortcut.

RAC is not a shortcut. In fact, many people do not finish RAC because they find it too challenging, due to time constraints and the work volume required. However, coming from a place of social justice, we have a duty to provide the opportunity for potential candidates to complete RAC.

It is also important to state that RAC is not a fast track to a DCS or an ACS, nor does it teach the material that is to be evaluated. RAC is not a shortcut for people who are expelled from a program who want to be certified. RAC is also not for high school students, nor for people who were refused entry into a day program.

RAC is not a teaching activity.

RAC is often referred to as an evaluation process, but it is perhaps better understood as a *confirmation process* performed by the content specialist. The content specialist is there to *confirm* whether the candidate has successfully proven that they have the competency mastered. If the candidate does not prove this, various options are considered. In most cases, however, the candidate's competency is proven.

RAC assignments are rigorous.

The assignments in RAC are very rigorous, not just for the candidate, but also for the content specialist. As mentioned earlier, RAC candidates often find it difficult to juggle life, a full-time job, and the RAC evaluation process. All RAC candidates must be working in the field of study in order to qualify for RAC. In terms of the work required by the content specialists, each evaluation form requires copious writing and justification for their decisions. In addition, most of the RAC competencies have interview components, the majority of which are one and a half hours long.

There are safeguards against cheating.

One of the safeguards against cheating is the interview component. This helps the content specialist ensure that the candidate understands the competency well enough to speak about it. Another safeguard is the validation interview, which, along with several previous screening steps, confirms that the candidate is capable of successfully completing a RAC.

Conclusion

RAC addresses the reality of today's employment landscape. One of the most significant career theorists of the 20th century, Donald Super, posited that a career path is never static. For Super, career development is a life-long process, which is informed by environmental, situational, and personal determinants, much as it was for the RAC graduates described earlier. RAC functions to validate the candidate's path and allows him or her to establish his or her career identity. This identity has been built through multiple non-linear, non-conventional, academic, and non-academic experiences. The RAC recognition allows them to move forward, to be recognized, to aspire to better conditions and, especially, to obtain recognition for their hard-won achievements over the years.

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The RAC Process

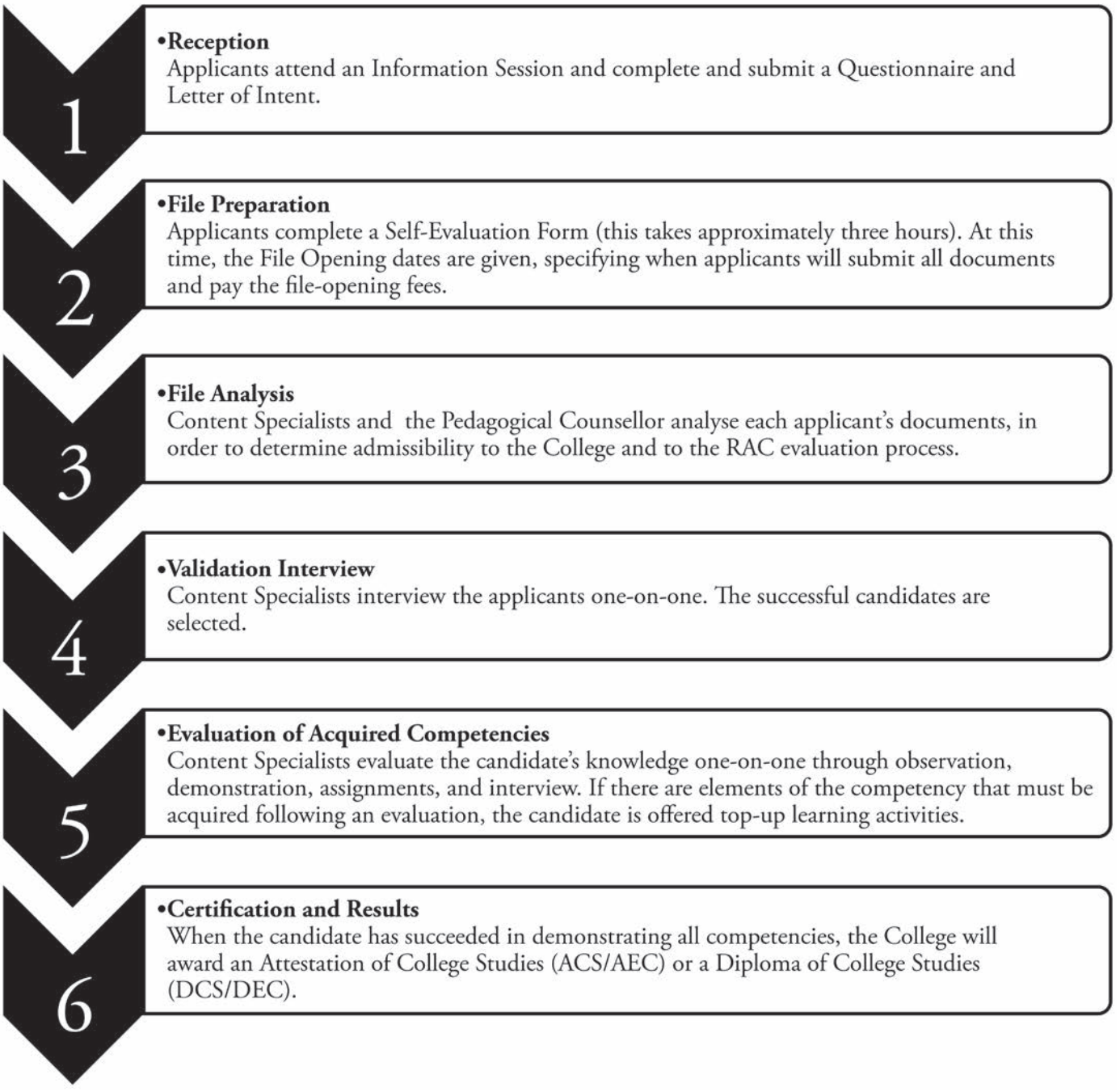


Figure modified from the *Schéma de la démarche RAC*, developed by CERAC. Used with permission.

An Interview with Two Pioneers of Women's Studies at Vanier

In the early 1970s, a small group of women at Vanier started meeting informally to discuss women's issues. They went on to create the team-taught course *Alternatives for Women*, Vanier's first universal complementary course, and by 1978-1979, succeeded in getting the Women's Studies major approved by the Board of Governors. As part of my research project on the history of Women's Studies at Vanier, I have been going through the archives for the Women's Studies program (now called Women and Gender Studies), which cover almost fifty years of WS/WGS activities at Vanier. According to their proposal for the Women's Studies program, the founders stated the program's goals were to "elucidate and delineate belief systems and conceptual frameworks which have maintained and perpetuated certain misconceptions about women. And [… to show] how these misconceptions restrict and limit the roles both men and women play in the evolution of society." They did this both inside and outside the classroom. In the process, they helped to shape Vanier's institutional structure. The impact of their work can be seen all across the college.

> ***In my university education, I had never been assigned a book or an article by a woman and I had never had a woman professor.***

Those involved in the Women's Studies program have left an impressive legacy, including an annual week-long International Women's Week program of events, one of Quebec's first Sexual Harassment policies, the Employment Equity Program, strong connections with community groups outside of Vanier, the Woman of the Year Award, and a Champagne Breakfast for women from all sectors of the college. Even before Women's Studies was officially a program, women at Vanier had been involved in feminist initiatives, most notably the Vanier Daycare. Greta Hoffman Nemiroff and future Women's Studies member Alanna Horner started the Vanier Daycare in 1972, in response to student demand. These were all hard-won gains. The women did all of this while forging deep and lasting friendships. They continue to inspire people of all genders working in Women and Gender Studies, to carry on the tradition of creating positive change at Vanier. Just recently, WGS was instrumental in designing the new Sexual Violence Prevention and Response Policy. The Open Door Network, which began in 2006, started as a Women's Studies Initiative. The ODN has led workshops, brought in guest speakers, and organized events to sensitize faculty and staff about sexual orientation and gender identity. WGS collaborated with the ODN and other groups to ensure that Gender Neutral Washrooms are available in all of the buildings at Vanier.

In the spring of 2019, I met with Arlene Steiger and Judith Crawley, two of the women who were involved with Women's Studies from its early days, to talk to them about their experiences building the program and what it meant to them. Judith Crawley also generously provided photographs for this article. As a photographer, Judith has documented Women's Studies at Vanier from the 1970s to today.

A couple of times in the interview, Arlene and Judith reference a panel. The panel, titled "Founders of Women's Studies," took place during International Women's Week in March 2019 as part of the 40th Anniversary of Women's Studies/WGS. Arlene and Judith were joined by Joanne Morgan, Shirley Pettifer, and Evangeline Caldwell.

Lisa: What brought you into Women's Studies?

Arlene: Coming to Women's Studies corresponded with coming to women in general. In my university education, I had never been assigned a book or an article by a woman and I had never had a woman professor. Then a friend suggested that I read Simone de Beauvoir, so I read Simone de Beauvoir. In my life I was coming to be interested in women. When I started to teach, it was something that I had thought about and was concerned about. At Snowdon [a former Vanier campus], I was hired because my background in Quebec Literature balanced their [Humanities] curriculum. They already had someone teaching about women. When I came to Ste. Croix two semesters later, it all came together. My interest in women's issues had increased and I was becoming active politically in the women's movement. Then there was this little group of women who were starting a Women's Studies program. Once it started it absolutely snowballed. The more we did, the more involved we became, and then we had a group. I remember feeling wonderful in this group of women. There were hardly any women in Humanities. We were a big department, about forty people, but there were maybe four or five women.

Judith: On top of the program, we wanted to do things for us. We had spring meetings, we did hikes, had book discussions. We got together outside of doing things for the program. I don't know how I got into thinking about women. I came to Vanier in 1970 from Loyola, with no background in Women's Studies. Nothing was offered when I was in university and I didn't really notice. I had read George Eliot (and we knew she was a woman) and Emily Dickenson. So I can't say we didn't study any women. But we didn't study women as a category. In my early years as a teacher, overwhelmed with developing courses and figuring out how to teach and also new to marriage, I was too busy to be engaging in women's issues. The first course I designed at Vanier was called *Man Confronting Death*. It didn't even dawn on me that there was a problem with this. It didn't take long before my eyes were opened; I began to unpack the

International Women's Day Champagne Breakfast 1989
Photo credit Judith Lermer Crawley

language, we all just accepted that "man" included everybody. I started paying attention to women's issues. I sat in on my friend Greta [Hoffman Nemiroff]'s evening *Women's Identity and Image* course at Sir George [now Concordia] and began looking at things from a women's perspective.

A: One of the things that struck me when we were doing the panel was that we all came to Women's Studies in different ways. I was involved in the women's movement. I was doing *Wages for Housework*, but I felt like it was a more academic entry. It came through reading and stuff like that, whereas Shirley came, really, through activism.

L to J: Your entry wasn't through activism. How did you become interested in Women's Studies?

J: It was slow. I sat in on Greta's course. And then Lib Spry, my colleague, tells me about the women's group at Vanier and brought me to a meeting. I felt like I could open up and breathe. It was a learning process. My artwork dealt with women. But that also just grew by photographing what we were doing.

A: That was one of the wonderful things about Women's Studies, for me. It just allowed everything to be of a piece. It just all sort of came together. My teaching, my life, my social life, everything responded to that. When I had kids, it was also part of the feminist experience. We would talk about what it meant to have children.

L: When you were starting Women's Studies you didn't really have any models for this because Women's Studies programs were in their infancy at that time. Very few programs existed.

J: Pat Armstrong was the one who initiated the idea of *Alternatives for Women* as a college-wide complementary course. She taught a course with that name at Trent University, and she brought it here. Her MA thesis had explored the double-ghetto of women's work – women having two jobs, both paid and unpaid labour. So she was a little ahead of us in that sense. When I went to my first meeting with the women's group, not only did I fit right in, but it was more congenial than all the other groups I was working with. We were coming together because we were volunteering. So we were all more drawn to each other, whereas in the other programs, you're thrown together.

A: It was the first time, for me, that I had worked with women. University, for me anyway, was really a man's world. And our [Humanities] department at Vanier was mostly men.

J: There was a feeling that you were meeting women who were more like-minded. And that you were sharing. And that you were politically more together. The union was also brand new. Those were really heady times.

Team-taught Alternatives for Women class Fall 1991
Photo credit Judith Lermer Crawley

International Women's Day Faith Nolan workshop 1994
Photo credit Judith Lermer Crawley

L: Was there a connection between the union and Women's Studies from the beginning or was that something that you forged over time?

A: Part of the connection was personnel. The same people were involved. One of the things that happened was that people who were in Women's Studies carried their values and their concerns about women and Women's Studies wherever they went, and so it spread throughout the college. I think that Shirley made this point too [on the panel], we were present and active in so many different areas. Thirty and forty years later you see that there are Women's Studies people in leadership positions in the college right across the board.

> ***That was one of the wonderful things about Women's Studies, for me. It just allowed everything to be of a piece. It just all sort of came together. My teaching, my life, my social life, everything responded to that.***

L: As you were establishing Women's Studies at Vanier, did you have a strong vision, or were you figuring things out as you went?

A: [shaking her head]. We didn't have a clearly articulated vision.

J: The women who wrote that whole proposal [Pat Armstrong, Sonja Grekol, Pauline Hansen, Kathleen Holden, Eleanor Tyndale, and Regina Wall] for the program and lobbied the Board of Governors had a vision.

A: There were some basic things that we agreed upon and knew what we wanted in terms of the structure of the program. I don't think that ideologically there was a line, because we all had quite different approaches to feminism. Pat was/is basically a Marxist, and certainly not everybody in Women's Studies had a Marxist analysis. So, the vision that we all agreed on was that we wanted to do Women's Studies and we controlled ourselves. We didn't have a lot of conflict on ideological grounds. And we did have commitments that we all shared: to feminism, of course, albeit in various forms. We were all dedicated to being as inclusive as possible. We were all committed to an anti-racist approach.

L: How did the anti-racist approach manifest in your work?

A: Different people did different things in the classroom. We were always concerned to address issues that came out of our teaching experience and our work with students. For International Women's Week (IWW), from very early on, we always included speakers representing diverse groups who could speak to issues of racism, and an anti-racist approach was central to these events.

L: You were organizing International Women's Week before any

Team-taught Alternatives for Women class 1982
Photo credit Judith Lermer Crawley

other department or program was doing anything like this. Your work became the model for all of the festivals and symposia that came after.

A: Yes. It started with International Women's Day [which the United Nations introduced in 1975] and wanting to do something to mark the day. Before long it became a week. It was hard to get things together for just a day. We also got into decorating the college for the week. And then it grew. We really discussed the ideas and the themes and what we hoped to do.

> ***We didn't have a lot of conflict on ideological grounds. And we did have commitments that we all shared: to feminism, of course, albeit in various forms. We were all dedicated to being as inclusive as possible. We were all committed to an anti-racist approach.***

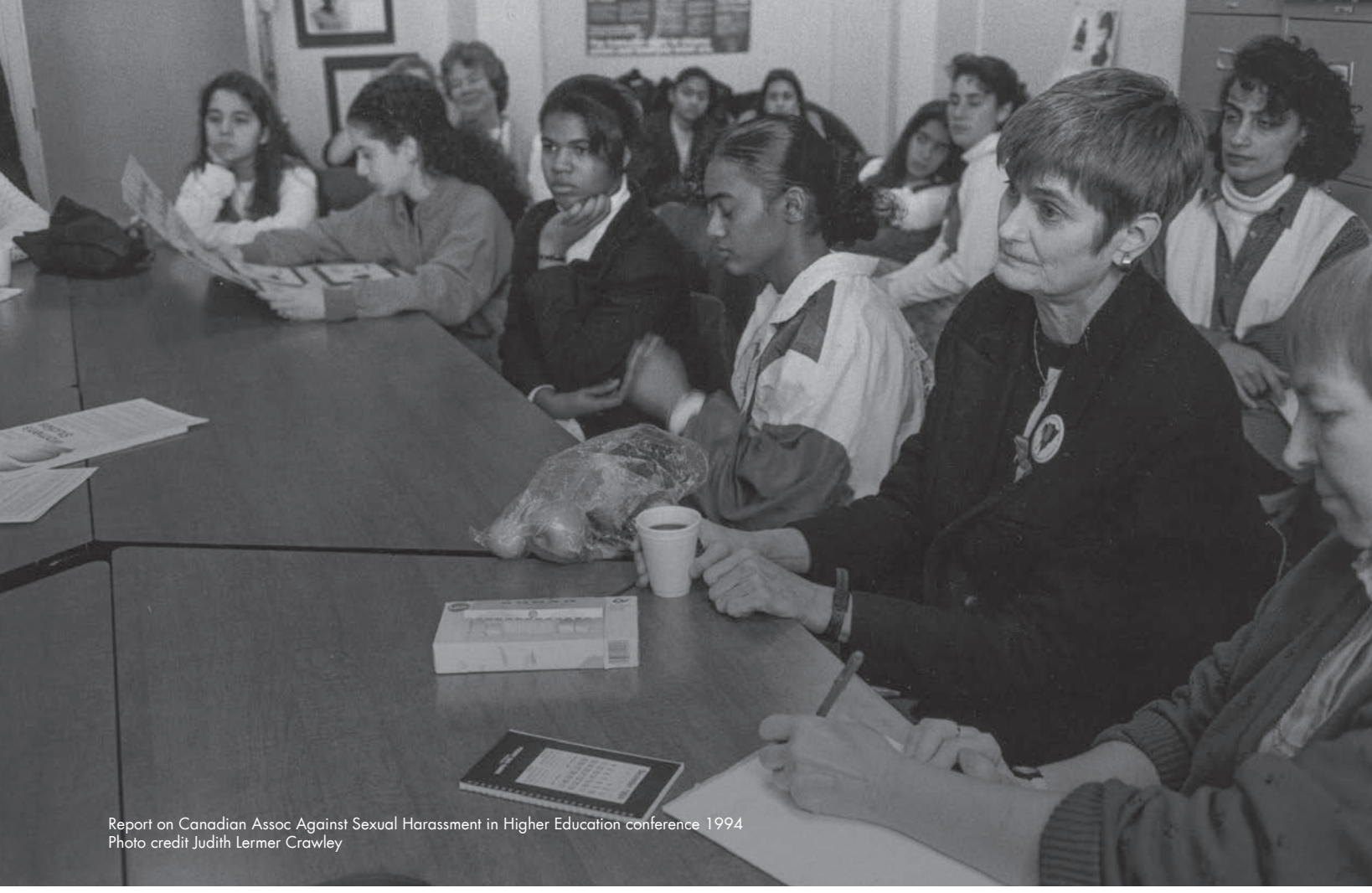
L: What kind of things were important for you to include in the *Alternatives* class? It's an academic course, but it also seems that you were trying to connect the course to students' own lives, their health, and those sorts of things.

A: The overarching vision of the course was determined by the particular teacher running the course. People would propose what they wanted to teach. You would put together the schedule and organize it.

J: Sandra Glashan, a biology teacher, came in and did a lecture called XX YY. Alanna Horner, a creative arts teacher, had the class drawing self-portraits. We worked with the particular talents available. We took two classes at the beginning to orient the students, and after that it became a kind of parade of people.

J: Marilyn Bicher did a class on sexuality. She brought in diaphragms, condoms, and other things for people to see and touch. She also distributed the *Birth Control Handbook*. At the beginning, we attended *Alternatives* classes so that we could learn from each other.

A: The interests changed over time. What was important to me and what was different from my teaching in Humanities, was that I wanted the students to feel that I was in it with them. It was kind of like a seminar. The person would come in and lecture. I would always try to reserve some time where we could sit around them and we could talk in a graduate student kind of way, not in an academic sense necessarily, but in that, we were sharing in something rather than just receiving. The last several weeks of the course, students did presentations. They were often amazing.



Report on Canadian Assoc Against Sexual Harassment in Higher Education conference 1994
Photo credit Judith Lermer Crawley

Students really did things that were personal and important.

J: Students had to keep a journal and write reflections on the different presentations to discuss how the material impacted them and the connections they could make. We were trying to get them to think about how the personal is political.

A: There were some wonderfully interesting moments. One of the courses was an "action-demonstration" from the Montreal Assault Prevention Centre. We thought that was important. They were fun because one part of the demonstration was that everyone would learn the self-defence shout, which was very loud. And then they would learn a few moves. There was a demo. The Montreal Assault Prevention Centre always contextualized their presentation in a feminist way, talking about how you feel about your body. And we would talk about it afterwards, how hard it was to shout.

J: We learned about how we were socialized.

L: How did you see the topics covered in *Alternatives* change over time?

A: It always reflected people's interests. In general, people's interests in their own departments often couldn't find a place in their standard departmental material. So, they were happy to develop these new courses that they were excited about in the same way that we were. When I was teaching *Alternatives*, I liked that people were teaching different topics. I tried to get the students to see that different people had different ways of looking at issues. So I would say, "did you notice that this speaker really focused on people's beliefs, and this speaker today is really focused on economic structures?" Students could understand that people had different approaches to feminism.

L: What obstacles did you face in building the program?

A: At the beginning, there were obstacles everywhere. Some of them were benign. In the sense that they weren't people who were actively engaged in fighting women. But they just didn't help. We had to fight to get release time every semester. As other majors came up, we had to compete with them. It took a long time before there was a sense in the college, which we worked to bring forth, that Women's Studies was just not like any other "studies." Women's Studies represented half of the college population and had an approach that was not just subject matter.

L: What were some of the central issues that you debated?

A: One of the big issues in the college was sexual harassment. There was an incredible amount of strategizing around that discussion because it brought us into conflict with the union. And there was a lot of energy devoted to this issue, especially by Shirley Pettifer and Fran Davis. It took a long time and the work went slowly. There were a lot of one-on-one meetings. They developed a policy that included

mediators made up of teachers and support staff who were extremely respected and not seen as being in anyone's camp. They were seen as very fair-minded people. It took a while, but when actual cases came forward, the union was comfortable with the idea that people's rights would be respected but that they were not going to defend harassers. Our harassment policy became the basis for harassment policies in other colleges.

J: And then the whole society became involved. There was some legislation introduced that made institutions responsible for their employees. And the harassment policy expanded to include all forms of harassment.

L: You were so ahead on this issue. Some colleges and universities are only now developing sexual harassment policies.

A: It was one of the things that galvanized a lot of our energy. Also, we were the first college to get a grant from Quebec to study the employment equity situation at Vanier. Pat Armstrong applied for the grant and Susan Gottheil did the research.

J: It was ground-breaking research.

A: Susan's report included complex statistics. It revealed that we had a terrible imbalance in gender on the administration. There were zero women. It was easy to calculate. The report resulted in a signed Employment Equity policy in 1987.

J: Women's Studies organized a display in the Carrefour to highlight the lack of women in positions of power at Vanier. After that there was a pilot project. It became part of the civil service commitment to affirmative action. In the past 10 to15 years, all government agencies have had to do a gender equity study every couple of years.

J: The role of men in Women's Studies was also something that we debated.

A: It was a wedge of change. We had always felt that men could teach feminist material. But we felt that women needed a space of our own. Some new people in the 2000s didn't like it. We had debates about the subject. [Men were invited to attend meetings in 2009.] I think that those changes ushered in a quite fundamental change in the vision of women and what constitutes Women's Studies. It seems to me that there is more discomfort now in talking about women and women's issues in a general way. Perhaps more focus on looking at how the patriarchy is damaging for all kindsof people.

L: How did being involved with Women's Studies affect your lives?

A: It was my life.

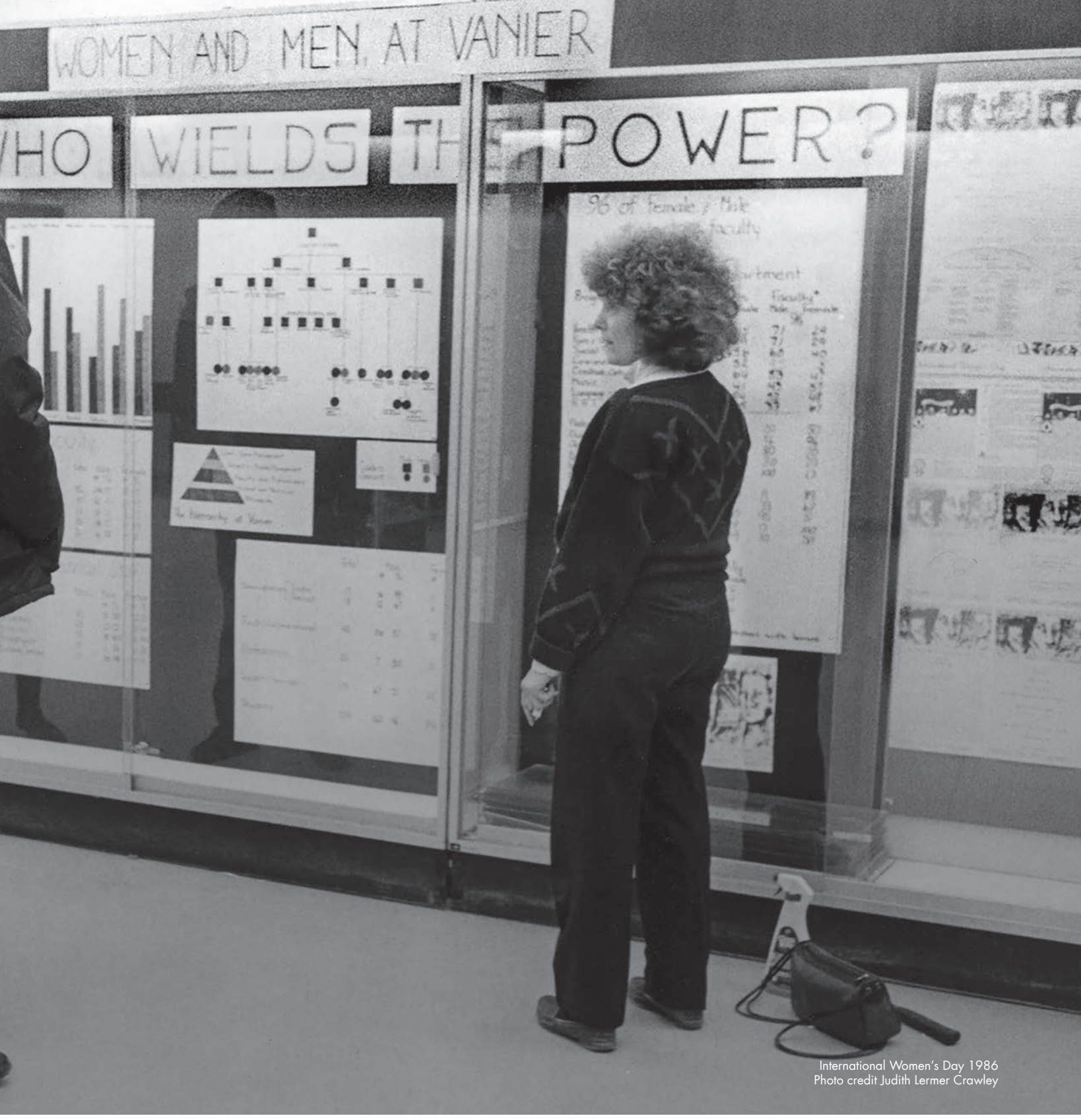
J: It was an important part of my connection to Vanier and to everything I did. It was where real, long-lasting friendships were formed.

L: What advice do you have for us who are still here?

A and J (in unison!): Keep going!

J: Keep up the fight.

A: Insist on the extent to which women's issues still count. I think that there's always a tendency to allow other issues to come before women's issues.



International Women's Day 1986
Photo credit Judith Lermer Crawley

For more information about the Women and Gender Studies Program today, contact current WGS co-ordinator Maggie Kathwaroon (kathwarm@vanier.college)

You may find more of Judith Lermer's photographs of Women's Studies at Vanier at her website, www.judithcrawley.ca.

Lisa Jorgensen
is a Humanities teacher.

Room to Write: Supporting Students Through Vanier's Writing Centre

HISTORY

The Writing Centre, based out of Vanier's Tutoring and Academic Success Centre (TASC), has been active for three semesters now, and it is consistently growing its resources and services.

While TASC does have peer tutoring services available, it had become clear that more was needed to help students with their writing skills. Some issues that students were having with writing surpassed what a peer tutor could effectively handle. Secondly, some students require direction when being tutored; in other words, some students respond and adopt information better when being told directly what is expected from them, rather than being tutored with a more questioning approach. Some students also prefer to have their questions answered by people with more writing expertise than a tutor could offer (Thompson, Whyte, Shannon, Muse, Miller, Chappell & Whigham, 2009, p. 82). As such, in Autumn 2017, The Tutoring and Academic Success Centre began a pilot project to develop a new service to help with student success: the Writing Centre. The goal was for TASC to work with three teachers from General Education to develop a model for the Writing Centre over the course of one semester, and then for the teachers to take on the role of writing consultants the following semester, working directly with students on their writing skills.

The three teachers selected, Vanessa Vandergrift from English, Jennifer Mitchell from Humanities, and Ruby Viray from Physical Education, along with myself as a member of the TASC team, researched various models of Writing Centres in colleges and universities in Canada and the US. It was at this point that the team created the centre's mission statement: "In support of the college's mission statement, the Writing Centre provides an environment that fosters the development of writing skills that lead to current and future academic and professional success. The Writing Centre seeks to support success in writing across disciplines through the development and implementation of writing resources, including workshops, the facilitation of individual and small group consultations, and the promotion of writing-related activities and events."

After meeting regularly, as well as requesting feedback and ideas from the Vanier community, the Writing Centre was ready to start offering its services in Winter 2018, providing writing consultations to students on a drop-in basis.

PEDAGOGICAL MODEL

The team opted to follow a model similar to what Stephen M. North (1984) called for in his notable essay, "The Idea of a Writing Centre," where the writing consultants work on helping the writer, and not just improving the text (p. 435). Rather than become an editing or proofreading service, the primary goal is to help students become better writers, to be more attentive to global issues in writing and written communication, such as the ideas, purpose, organization, and analysis (Thompson et al., 2009, p. 82). The writing consultants' role is to explore these issues rather than more local ones, such as grammar and sentence structure (Thompson et al., 2009, p. 82), which are issues that peer tutors can address. The focus of aid is on the writing process, which can include the purpose of the writing assignment, the audience, the organization of the ideas and the clarity of the analysis (Harran, Knott, & Weir, 2011, p. 1364). However, writing consultants will also offer a balance of feedback that addresses a student's grammatical concerns.

The second goal central to the Writing Centre's mission statement is the fact that it exists to serve all students, and not just students within a certain discipline (Grabow, 2013, p. 97). Having a centre that emphasizes the importance of writing and communication, regardless of the discipline, is necessary. Clear communication is valued in any field, and students are encouraged to visit the writing consultants with assignments from any class. In fact, in Winter 2019, a fourth teacher, Stephen Cohen from Physics, joined the team as a writing consultant, again highlighting the idea that writing is indeed valuable across all disciplines.

Each writing consultant spends five hours per week working one-on-one with students. The amount of time they spend with a student can vary from five or ten minutes to an hour. Some students simply need reassurance that they are on the right track with what they are writing, while others require assistance that is more involved. Students will often bring something they are working on, request feedback or assistance from a writing consultant, and then continue to work on it on their own in the Writing Centre, checking in with the writing consultant occasionally.

Some of the more common issues that students seek assistance with are organizing their thoughts, preparing outlines, incorporating analysis into essays, and grammar. While essays for English and Humanities classes are the most common type of assignments brought in, there is a wide variety of other types of assignments that students bring to the Writing Centre, such as reports and journals. The assignments come from many different disciplines and courses as well, particularly from Psychology, Early Childhood Education, Economics, Commerce, and Integrative Project. Students also visit with their

Photo credit Pamela Espinosa-Smith

letters of intent for university and for assistance with their APA and MLA referencing. In order to address the high need for assistance in these two areas, the Writing Centre offers letters of intent workshops and regular citation clinics.

It is important that the Writing Centre is not seen solely as a remedial service. One of our mandates is also to promote writing as a pursuit to be enjoyed and celebrated. Along with the creative writing and academic writing contests already hosted by the Writing Centre, a new "Creative Writing in Science" competition was created in Winter 2019. A partnership has begun with Vallum, a local literary journal, allowing professional writers to facilitate creative writing workshops.

CHALLENGES AND MOVING FORWARD

There have been challenges to meet as well. While students appreciate the flexibility of having drop-in assistance available, there are situations where students require something more regular and scheduled. In order to address this need, we are planning on working out a system that allows for both drop-in and scheduled assistance. We also want to be able to help the largest number of students possible, particularly with the implementation of the SPLI (Student Proficiency in the Language of Instruction) policy. As such, we will be adding more human resources to the Writing Centre in 2019-2020, with writing consultants coming from each of the faculties of General Education, Science and Technology, and Arts, Business and Social Science. These writing consultants will be working in the Writing Centre for the entire academic year, offering the stability and consistency that is so important to the students (Sturman, 2018, p. 73), as well being more able to work on developing various writing resources, workshops and tools. Peer tutors will be better integrated into the Writing Centre and work more closely with the writing consultants; this will allow students struggling with expression or grammar the more accessible feedback that they need and are hoping to find (Moussu, 2013, p. 59).

As the Writing Centre moves forward, we look forward to collaborating with the Vanier community. We host regular open meetings for the Vanier teachers and staff to come and share their ideas, and we send surveys to collect feedback. We hope to work with more programs to better help and serve their students, as writing is a necessary skill for everyone's success.

What People Have to Say

I found the writing centre to be a super resource for writers of all skill levels and for all parts of their work, paper, or essay. It's a great help for students whose first language is not English, as well as students with strong writing skills will also benefit from the writing centre.
(Ruby Viray, Physical Education teacher)

It has been fun to leave the confines of Science and consider writing as an art. I enjoy working with students of all abilities and on content that spans the entire spectrum of courses offered by the college.
(Stephen Cohen, Physics teacher)

It's amazing. You learn through one-on-one discussion, which is the best way to learn.
(Student, Anonymous survey response)

[What I appreciated most is] learning about grammar and the flow of my writing.
(Student, Anonymous survey response)

Kim Muncey
is a Learning Specialist in the Tutoring and Academic Success Centre.

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Perceptions of Diversity in the CEGEP Experience: Student Voices

Strength in Diversity

What does diversity mean to CEGEP students? How do students develop a sense of belonging to the college community?

Since its creation in 2015, the Vanier College Critical Diversity in Higher Education (CDHE) research group has been employing a student-centered approach in working with issues surrounding diversity and belonging in CEGEPs. With funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), the CDHE organized the (Dis)Comfort Zones conference in 2017, providing the CEGEP community with student recommendations and effective teaching methods in managing issues surrounding diversity in the classroom.

The research project conducted in the fall of 2018 represents a natural extension of the CDHE's continued work on diversity. This project involved interviews with students about their perceptions and experiences with diversity at Vanier. The pilot research project intended to identify key variables in the integration/marginalization of students and to explore how students perceive and engage with diversity in their CEGEP experience. The goal is to better understand student strategies in establishing networks and developing a sense of belonging to the broader Vanier College community.

"I'm just passing through. Being accepted: It's enough."

The theoretical framework for this project was based in an intersectional approach (Brah & Phoenix, 2004) in order to allow for greater understanding of the complexity of individual identities. This approach focuses on how variables such as race, class, gender, sexual orientation, religion, (dis)ability, and other factors overlap in understanding individual realities and background to respondents' experiences. Respondents for the project (all of whom were students) were volunteers, referred to the project by faculty and staff based on the student's involvement in formal and/or informal groups on campus. Among the recognized formal student groups, respondents in this study were associated with or participated in Model UN Club, the Chess Club, CORE, Badminton or Volleyball. Informal networks, on the other hand, tended to group friends from a program, friends from high school and/or friends with similar ethno-cultural backgrounds/religion from networks outside of college.

Findings and Discussion

Choosing Diversity

CEGEP often gives students a first real opportunity to represent themselves and feel represented: a space where *"they're encouraged to think for themselves"* and practice self-identification and self-authorship. In choosing a college, Vanier College's reputation as a diverse multicultural institution was a deciding factor for students: half of respondents explicitly chose to come study at Vanier College over other colleges because of the CEGEP's reputation as being a diverse institution. For many, attending Vanier College represented a precious socio-academic opportunity:

"Diversity: that's what Vanier stands for. In the same hallway, you encounter a Black person, an Asian person… That's why I'm here."

The Importance of Belonging in College

Belonging is a meaningful measure of student success (Love, 2009). Students who associate or participate in ethnocultural and/or religious student groups actively employ these formal and informal networks as means of social integration and differentiation within the existing diversity of the College. The CEGEP experience being in itself short -*"2 years: it's so temporary"* - students feel like *"they can connect, foster a community"* while they pursue their studies at Vanier College. Moreover, results indicate students from self-described visible minorities derive their sense of belonging to Vanier College from simultaneous representation and inclusion in identity-based groups and informal networks:

"It makes so that people who look like me have a support system."

In their associative choices, students attempt to find a balance between the desire for similarity, representation, and support and the opportunity to engage with different identities. Students seek out networks that meet their needs: self-described immigrant students gravitate towards formal groups to make contacts, whereas students from visible minorities seek out clubs for representation. LGBTQ students tend to find support in informal networks in order to maintain a certain level of invisibility. The social functions of identity-based and interest-based student networks reveal themselves to represent cultural comfort zones that foster a sense of belonging. This involvement in college life can, in turn, encourage civic interest and provide potential socio-professional connections for the future (Gudeman, 2001; Kawashima-Ginsberg & Levine, 2014; Joshee, Peck, Thompson, Chareka, & Sears, 2010). As one student explained:

"It's the experience of figuring out what fits with you. The social aspect. They're good connections to have and, you know, being sociable, being involved in society."

Indeed, the college's diversity may operate as a form of social control among students, encouraging tolerance:


Photo credit Giovanna Arcuri

"There's a large LGBT presence at Vanier. You can't be outwardly homophobic"

Learning from Challenges

Effective and active diversity management on campus is correlated with student success and student retention (Barnett, 2011; Packard, 2013). Students interviewed report resistance to diversity as the main challenge in and out of the classroom, with teachers perceived as largely responsible for actively managing tensions and microaggressions. In the classroom, students report feeling overwhelmingly positive about having the opportunity to engage with peers of different cultural backgrounds although many pointed out that exchanges could force students to engage outside of their comfort zone:

"In class, it's like forced interactions. There's reluctance (…) It's harder to navigate because sometimes, the source of discomfort is unknown."

Equally important to students is the increased diversity among faculty, ideally coming to reflect the multicultural composition of the classroom. Many respondents echo the following sentiment in some way:

"You need to see people who look like you."

Some studies indicate that ineffective management of diversity, or avoidance of issues in the classroom can encourage students to seek out groups or networks on campus that provide social capital and self-identification (Boysen, 2012; Strachan, & Owens, 2011).

Indeed, the need for representation on campus might at times compromise students' desire to integrate. Identity-based comfort zones on campus create a sense of belonging but many students inteviewed perceive falling back on racial or religious networks as a threat to inclusive diversity:

"People are connected as a group. But it excludes others… It's good for the person in it. Makes them feel welcome."

On the other hand, all of the respondents relay the importance of mixing in the classroom. In fact, the classroom represents a social arena that permits exchanges between different student identities that might not otherwise associate on campus or elsewhere. The controlled environment of the classroom represents a sometimes rare and precious opportunity for students to positively engage with diversity because of many students' tendency to fall back on existing identity-based networks otherwise.

Immigration and the CEGEP experience

Overall, the CEGEP years represent a pivotal moment for students in their socio-professional lives, and this is particularly important for first-generation immigrants (Lapierre & Loslier, 2003). A significant portion of the sample for this research self-described as first-generation immigrants, i.e. individuals who had themselves migrated to Canada. These respondents describe the significance of getting involved with formal groups and networks during their studies at Vanier College because these groups symbolize pre-cious opportunities to meet people and transit between different student communities.

"I came here for my program. Networks provide names, friends that perhaps will follow to university."

First-generation immigrant students actively employ networking strategies to facilitate sociocultural integration into the college community as well a civic society at large. The value placed on belonging to a formal and academic student group is high because of the group's recognition within the College and the potential socio-professional contacts that may be made.

> ***Students' sense of accomplishment comes from being good citizens and extends beyond academics. As they graduate, most students expect to maintain their College networks through university and beyond.***

Diversity Breeds Success

Previous research conducted on American campuses supports the positive correlation between students' sense of belonging, academic success and civic involvement (Barnett, 2011; Packard, 2013). Students' sense of accomplishment comes from being good citizens (Quaglia &Corso, 2014) and extends beyond academics. As they graduate, most students expect to maintain their College networks through university and beyond. Students currently enrolled in honors programs and smaller programs also feel their networks would play a role in their lives beyond the CEGEP years in that they provide emotional support and motivation.

Conclusion

Going forward, additional inquiry into the college experience in relation to multiculturalism and minority populations is needed so that we may better reflect and respond to the existing diversity on campuses and develop intercultural competence in and outside of classrooms to prepare students to effectively engage with diversity. Supposing active engagement with diversity positively influences levels of integration into socio-professional networks and civic society (Guo, 2014), Vanier College could be leading the way in shaping well equipped, accomplished students as well as involved citizens.

"The takeaway, at Vanier, is a general sensitivity to other cultures."

Sophia Grabowiecka
is a Sociology and Research Methods teacher.

Resources and Research Report

Perceptions of Diversity in the CEGEP Experience: Student Voices
https://www.vaniercollege.qc.ca/psi/files/2019/01/Pilot-Diversity-Research-Report.pdf

(Dis)Comfort Zones Conference Proceedings
http://www.vaniercollege.qc.ca/psi/files/2017/10/Discomfort-Zones_Final.pdf

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Prof. Sophia Grabowiecka is a faculty member who joined Vanier College's Social Science Department in 2009. She teaches Sociology and Research Methods and collaborates with the Critical Diversity in Higher Education Research Group: her research focuses on issues surrounding immigration, diversity and identity.

Vanier Researcher Profile
Catrina Flint

Catrina Flint has been a teacher and researcher in the Vanier College Music Department since 2003. When the PSI Office approached Catrina about featuring her in the Researcher Profile for this issue of *Vanier Academic Voices*, she promptly volunteered with noticeable enthusiasm, a sentiment that endured throughout the entire course of the interview that follows. I quickly realized that this sentiment undeniably echoed her love of music, her passion for conducting research in her field of expertise, and her desire to share her acquired knowledge with others.

Like many musicologists, Catrina began her study of music in the performance stream. She later transitioned to academic studies, beginning her scholarly journey by completing a BA in English and Music, an MA in Music History with studies in performance, an MA in Musicology, and a Doctorate in Musicology. Prior to assuming her faculty position at Vanier fifteen years ago, she worked as a teaching and research assistant at Northwestern University, and as a graduate student lecturer at McGill University. Although Catrina now finds her herself primarily in an academic stream, she firmly believes that her experience as a performing musician was and remains a defining experience for her academic career. In her own words, she considers that **"every musicologist houses a performing musician within."**

From a young age, Catrina's activities in various sports nourished a strong sense of connection between physical motions or gestures and musical sounds. In the context of musical performances, specifically, music and the body are intuitively connected. Although this connection exists in most live performances, music is separated from the body in other contexts, such as when we listen to music in the classroom. Consequently, a part of her research has focused on understanding how our musical ears may have become separated from our bodies during the nineteenth century. Another part of her work looks to develop methods that would allow music students to reconnect to music in a physical way. In her research, Catrina has collaborated with the *Équipe musique en France* at the University of Montreal and with the British-based *France: Musiques et Cultures*.

During the course of her academic career, Catrina has received numerous external research grants from major federal (SSHRC) and provincial (FRQSC) funding agencies, either as a primary investigator or as a co-applicant. She has also served on five national SSHRC committees. Most recently, Catrina received a new FRQSC grant to continue research alongside the *Équipe musique en France*. She was also granted a Vanier College Development and Support Opportunity (DSO) for the 2019-2020 academic year, along with Glen Ethier (Music) and Grace Valiante (Psychology). Based on the Dalcroze Method, a whole-body approach to music education, her DSO will enable her to develop a series of exercises to underpin student sight-singing abilities. She hopes to integrate these Dalcroze-related activities seamlessly into classroom teaching and to monitor their efficacy.

> ***"Research feeds teaching, and teaching feeds research."***

Catrina's initial inspiration for becoming a teacher came from her family. Her great-grandmother, grandmother, mother, and sister were all teachers. **"Teaching seemed like an inevitable career path for me,"** she explained. Catrina's fondness for teaching only grew stronger with time, fueled by her own rewarding teaching experiences throughout the years. In addition, she came to realize that the practices of teaching and conducting research are deeply intertwined, and that **"teachers, researchers and students form an ecosystem."** The most fulfilling and rewarding part of Catrina's job is when her research intersects with her teaching, either because her students are studying the subject of her research, or because in-class discussions focus on fundamental, underlying questions related to the historical narrative. Catrina ultimately feels that **"research feeds teaching and teaching feeds research"** and she cannot imagine doing one without the other.

Catrina's advice for Vanier teachers who have contemplated conducting research of their own but have hesitated to embark on the endeavour up until now is to choose a topic of study from a place of personal interest, as she has, and to reach out to other researchers who share this interest.

For more information about Catrina's research, please visit http://emf.oicrm.org/ and http://musiquespourloeil.emf.oicrm.org/.

Angela Vavassis
is a Pedagogical Counsellor in the Pedagogical Support and Innovation Office.

Publications from Vanier Teachers and Staff

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Honours Awarded to Vanier Teachers and Staff

In September 2018, **Marlene Grossman** was appointed to the Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP) Academic Board of Advisors.

In March, **Jacky Vallée** was named Vanier's Person of the Year by Women's and Gender Studies, in collaboration with the Faculty of Arts, Business and Social Science and the Communications and Corporate Affairs office.

In May, **Christopher Gregg** was recognized by *Alliance Sport Études* for his exceptional support for student athletes.

In June, **John Salik** received an Honourable Mention at the 2018 AQPC Symposium, recognizing his dedication and creativity as an educator.

In June, **Shawna Lambert** received the Vanier College Teaching Excellence Award.

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