

the GOAL post

Why experiential learning is pivotal to my vision of education

Not long into my career, I coordinated work-study opportunities for some 400 high-school students of the then Protestant School Board of Greater Montréal. Those six years were intense, with frequent early morning phone calls to make sure my charges were up. Then there were the on-the-fly meetings in metro stations to give students last-minute instructions; the introductions to supervisors at work sites; and more calls in the

evening to check how the day had gone.

I recall one academically advanced grade 10 student who

turned his six-day job-shadowing experience into a letter of reference, a summer job and an eventual career in engineering.

Some years later, he came by to thank me for the timely support that had allowed him to find his focus. At the other end of the spectrum were the teenage moms who felt trapped by a cycle of family poverty and low self-esteem. Yet some, brave enough to commit to a work-study assignment, were transformed by the realization that they did indeed have potential.

“The kids who succeeded—and especially the ones who didn’t—made me a firm believer in GOAL.”

Although I didn’t know it then, this experience was my initiation to the guidance-oriented approach to learning. The kids who succeeded—and especially the ones who didn’t—made me see how vital it is to help students discover their

values, aptitudes and dreams. The exploration, reflection and other activities that GOAL promotes in every subject area can also give students a reason to acquire positive work habits and attitudes towards school.

As my mandate at the MELS draws to a close, my sincerest thanks go to all the GOAL network members and school teams I have worked with in various capacities. My thanks, too, to the educational specialists at MELS who have guided me all this time. GOAL’s emphasis on integrating experiential learning into the curriculum will remain pivotal to my vision of education.

Sandra Salesas

Sandra Salesas
GOAL (Anglophone sector), MELS



GOAL network members with Sandra Salesas (far left)



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Making Dreams Come True



UMMM good!

With help from students in Laval, these Ugandan kids enjoy fresh water and a first taste of ice cream.

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Photos: Future Leaders School, Uganda

In schools around the province, GOAL is making a difference



Learners without Borders

Angela Kallianiotis sums up her approach to GOAL in one pithy sentence: "School is meaningful when you are changing the world."

To inject real-life relevance into a lesson plan on children's rights, Social Studies teacher **Angela Kallianiotis** and her students at **Laval Junior High School** decided to exchange letters with children in a developing country.

That initial e-pal letter-exchange has evolved into an ongoing collaboration between Angela's class and the Ugandan village of Kajjansi. As the Laval students learned about the poor state of the village school, the lack of potable water, and the need for basic medical care, *Learners without Borders* was born. Long story short, the Laval students are now selling bead necklaces and bracelets handmade by 40 formerly unemployed village women. In one year alone, the students raised \$40 000 for a new water system, a freezer and other sustain-

able infrastructure projects that are dramatically improving village life.

To support their sales effort, Angela's students are applying numerous QEP competencies. They have teamed up to solve logistics issues, write letters and media releases, create ads, find sponsors and give presentations to other classes, neighbouring schools and a juvenile detention centre.

Life-changing experience

Students in *nine* other SWLSB schools have joined the *Learners without Borders* movement. **Laval Liberty High School's** Work-Oriented Training Path students handle the project's accounting. Special needs students at Laval



Learners without Borders founder **Angela Kallianiotis** and students, with a display of *Kajjansi* beads

Junior, who sort and bag the necklaces, are raising money to buy traditional drums for Ugandan kids. "This incredibly successful experiment in social entrepreneurship is changing the lives of children in both Uganda and Laval," says Angela.

Learn more at www.learnerswithoutborder.com

Navigating a media-rich world

Our information age demands expanded notions of literacy.

In his symposium workshop on Media Literacy, **Lake of Two Mountains High School** teacher **Lee Rother** noted that 80% of what students "read," or more precisely are confronted with day by day, are images (audio and visual). That statistic got the immediate attention of New Frontiers School Board GOAL consultant, **Tom Muirhead**.



Countless images bombard us daily.

"Most assuredly, kids' worlds are technology-driven," says Tom. "The media bombards them with information, entertainment, propaganda, advertising, news—but what are they hearing, learning and assimilating?"

"A media literacy approach in any class opens up all kinds of discussions relative to students' impressions of who they are, how the media affects their thinking and how it impacts on the communities they live in."

The Dragons' Den, Centennial-style

Students who pass through this "Dragons' Den" learn that success is earned, not given.

For the past six years, Secondary V students at **Centennial Regional High School** in Greenfield Park have been participating in an entrepreneurial challenge modelled on the popular CBC show "Dragons' Den."

Over an intensive two-month period, teams of two to seven students develop a marketable initiative of their own design. They then have 15 minutes to pitch their idea to a panel of "Dragons" (teachers, administrators and consultants). Those who survive the Dragons' scrutiny of their product, team and production plan can access up to \$100 in start-up funds. Teams use this money to produce their product and offer it for sale to the student body during an Entrepreneurial Fair that runs over four consecutive lunch hours.

Multiple competencies

Neal Dalzell, a Social Studies teacher, came up with the idea because he saw it as a perfect integrative learning opportunity for students about to graduate from high school. "Starting a company, or simply executing an innovative team project, is an essential life skill in today's economy. Experts on productivity are constantly reminding us that

Canada's future depends on entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs of all sorts."

To date, E-Fair profits have raised over \$10 000 for global, regional, and school-based charities. The "best overall" team earns the privilege of deciding where the profits are donated.

"Students draw on multiple competencies to move their project ahead and they see a direct relationship between effort and results," notes Riverside School Board GOAL consultant **Patty Arnold**. "It is the type of relevant learning experience they will remember for a lifetime."



Need more copies of the GOAL Post?

Contact **Doris Kerec** at LEARN.
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Check those assumptions at the door!



- Teachers who take the time to understand each student's unique "location" can set the stage for long-term success.



Kathleen Gould Lundy

"Location, location, location!" That's how **Kathleen Gould Lundy** summed up the combination of attitudes, needs, experience and aspirations that each student brings to school. And a wise teacher who acts as "an instrument of enlightenment" (as opposed to "a tool of torture") takes each student's unique location into account.

In her keynote address to the 2011 GOAL symposium, the York University educator and author gave the example of a young boy in the North who, one Monday morning, was asked by his teacher, "How was your weekend?" "Boring," came the one-word response. "What did you do?" pursued his teacher. "I hunted polar bears with my father," he replied.

But if we listen to their stories . . .

"Imagine the rich background that kid brings to the classroom!" Kathleen Gould Lundy urged her audience. And what a wealth of information his teacher obtained through just two simple questions . . .

As GOAL consultant for the Eastern Shores School Board, **Malcolm MacPhee** believes Kathleen hit the nail on the head. "We tend to judge students before we even get to know them based on past dossiers or others' comments. But if we listen to their stories, we can tailor learning to them and help them better understand how that learning can meet their needs as individuals."

Every kid needs to dream



Paulette Losier strongly believes that hope is a prerequisite for student success.

In her workshop "Reach Them Then Teach Them," she told symposium participants: "Neuroscience is showing that the presence of hope actually changes the chemistry of the brain."

Paulette Losier

As a *New Approaches, New Solutions* coordinator for the Eastern Townships School Board, Paulette cites the example of an elementary school with a #10 disadvantaged rating that asked its students to write down their dreams for the future. Teachers shared the students' work with a local newspaper that published what the kids had written.

GOAL has always been about "Making dreams come true" and this initiative demonstrates one more way that educators can provide the caring relationship, high expectations and meaningful participation that Paulette maintains will change students' self-perceptions from being "at risk" into "at promise."

Linking classrooms with the community



Does your classroom have experts on tap?

"Teachers aren't experts in everything," says **Beaconsfield High School** teacher **Brent Callahan**—which is why he happily shares his classroom with partners from the community. For a grade 8 science class on technical drawing, he invited an expert in 3D-design to conduct a 75-minute lesson. "I could have muddled through with my almost non-existent drawing skills, but instead we had an expert who right away knew the key things to show students."

"Think of your school's graduates . . ."

Brent works with **Nancy Battet**, the LBPSB's Community and Partnership Liaison coordinator, to identify what he calls "experts on tap"—community partners who have the knowledge and ability to hold a class's interest. "Ideally, you need a point-person who liaises between the community partners and the schools and who

can put together a simple turnkey solution for teachers." For schools that don't have access to a partnerships coordinator, Brent suggests: "Look at the people you know working within your community. Think of your school's graduates." All are potential resources who can add real-world credibility to classroom learning.



Brent Callahan with Nancy Battet

10 resources high school teachers should know



by **Cheryl Pratt, MELS (Anglophone sector)**

Each of these free career exploration resources can be adapted to your class or school.

Career documentation resources

Plus Magazine

<http://plus.maths.org/content/Poster>

A multitude of downloadable, youth-friendly posters demonstrating the many practical applications of math

Canadian Veterinarian Medical Association

<http://canadianveterinarians.net/about-career-medicine.aspx>

Phone or email for copies of the CVMA's poster about careers in animal health. (Odd size of poster does not print well.)

Canadian Automotive Repair and Service

<http://www.carsyouth.ca/orderform.cfm>

On-line brochures, posters, etc.

Canadian Aviation Maintenance Council

<http://www.camc.ca/yip/careerinfo.php>

Brochures and career guide magazines

Alberta Learning and Information Service

<http://alis.alberta.ca/ep/careershop/>

Many booklets, posters, and other resources for youth (Shipping fee applies.)

Web sites

Career Cruising www.careercruising.com

This many featured, online, career guidance tool is relevant to Québec. Ask your guidance counsellor for your school's user name and password.

Academos <http://www.academos.qc.ca/>

A Québec site offering e-mentoring to youth. Teacher support is provided. Verify your school's Internet policy.

Canadian Youth Business Foundation

<http://www.cybf.ca>

"Canada's 'Go To' Place for Young Entrepreneurs!" Lots of resources for students to discover entrepreneurship, including a "Get Inspired" section with personal stories

Heading for Success/Tout pour réussir

<http://www.headingforsuccess.com>

A youth-oriented site focused on vocational and technical training opportunities in Québec

Newsletters

Career Development Info Newsletter

<http://learnquebec.ca/en/content/curriculum/career-dev/Newsletter/index.html>

This newsletter targets educators in POP, Explo, EN and features some articles on the WOTP.

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Classroom visits delight mentors and mentees

by Cheryl Pratt, MELS (Anglophone sector)

This mentoring community of practice gives new teachers timely support and resources.

Last fall, experienced teacher-mentors from various English school boards were paired with one or more mentees new to teaching POP, Explo or EN. Since then, they have been meeting online for half a day each month to share ideas and resources. MELS consultants have also been available to provide pedagogical guidance.

But the real highlight for many has been their actual classroom visit to see course delivery in action. Cree School Board POP/Explo teacher, **Jo Ann Buckshot**, learned a lot from visiting the class of her mentor,



Lynn Bourdeau welcomed several mentees to her class.

Sylvie Jackson, at the Lester B. Pearson School Board. “Without the mentoring program, my students would not have had the same quality of learning,” says Jo Ann.



Jo Ann Buckshot

Mentors benefit too!

Mentor **Lynn Bourdeau**, who teaches POP at the English Montréal School Board, opened her classroom to several mentees. Planning for their visit “gave me a chance to review my teaching practices . . . [and] explain how my kids got to where they are, what tools I used to get them there and where I was going from there,” explains Lynn.

She also took the opportunity to visit the POP class of LBPSB mentor, **Brent Callahan**. “Seeing the dynamic between Brent and his kids reminded me that POP course content—unlike language or other subjects—is always related to the students’ personalities, interests, abilities and goals. We constantly talk about what is important to them and lead them in their reflection about their future. I enjoyed my visit tremendously.”

Who’s who in the GOAL network???

Each issue of the GOAL Post features different members of the network.



Marsha Gouett

Career Development Consultant
English Montréal School Board

I remember leaving high school a strong student with many interests, yet uncertain of the path ahead. It took a dozen years, two degrees, a year in law school (I hated it!) and many jobs before I finally

took the teacher training that led me to my niche in education.

In 2004, after more than 15 years in the classroom, I became the EMSB’s English Language Arts consultant. On my second day on the job, I learned I would be responsible for something called “GOAL.” I thought the person giving me this news was talking to someone else. At that point, I’m not sure that I’d even heard of GOAL!

I soon became a supporter. With GOAL’s twin emphasis on self- and career-knowledge, I saw what an impact it could have on students, particularly in light of my own convoluted journey. I was inspired, too, by my new colleagues in the provincial GOAL network and their commitment to work together for student success. Later on, when the opportunity arose to become the EMSB’s consultant for Career Development, I was delighted to take on the challenge.

“GOAL puts all students on an equal footing.”

The needs of students in just one classroom are diverse and far-reaching, not to mention the needs within an entire school, board, or across the province. GOAL puts everyone on an equal footing. It encourages all students to learn about themselves and to find a place, or places, for their unique abilities in the proverbial “real world.” I wish I’d had that chance.

The GOAL Post is also available in PDF format on the GOAL Web site at www.learnquebec.ca/en/content/mels/goal

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