

The GOAL Post

Student Empowerment

Viewpoint

Priming young minds to create their own future

by Eileen Schofield, Littoral School Board



Here in St. Paul's River, a mind-shift is taking place and it involves all of us—students, teachers, professionals, parents and community partners.

Eileen Schofield Those of us who live in remote communities along the Lower North Shore can feel it coming. There's an upsurge of "sky's the limit" possibility if you are willing to create your own opportunities.

Out-migration is a real concern

Most of our young people have only ever been aware of three traditional career options—fishing, health and education—each with limited prospects. They have difficulty imagining a future here and out-migration is a real concern. Yet the region's natural beauty, lifestyle and strong sense of community draw us back.

Establishing a GOAL-framework for our high school and elementary students has become a priority. Earlier this year, an in-school event—combined with teleconferencing—enabled several community partners to tell our students about emerging

construction, tourism and hydro development.

And our community learning centre is transforming the school into a community hub. Sports, computer clubs and other organized activities are engaging youth in positive behaviours that are giving them a greater connection to school and community.

The kids are listening

Next fall, we aim to involve all of our 61 high school students in entrepreneurial projects of their own design. We will block time for this in the school calendar and teachers have already received some professional development. Some students are thinking about raising chickens so they can provide fresh eggs to the community.

careers in mining, infrastructure

Mind-shifts take time, but the kids are listening. They all know people who were able to make a



St. Paul's students discover opportunities in trucking during a visit to the vocational training facility in Lourdes de Blanc Sablon.

good living fishing, often without a high school education. They also know they must be able to live in their own century. Our job is to help them see that they can stay here and do something they love; it just may not exist right now and they may have to make it happen themselves. And education and training are part of the deal.

Eileen Schofield is principal of St. Paul's High School and Mountain Ridge Elementary. She has been a "Coaster" for 30 years.

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Making Dreams Come True

The GOAL Post goes paperless

The GOAL Post is turning 10. And starting next fall, we're celebrating with a versatile new electronic format that will feature prominently on the GOAL Web site. This Web-based platform will make us more timely, interactive, accessible and cost-efficient, even as we continue to highlight the many wonderful and diverse ways GOAL is being implemented in English schools across the province. So stay tuned and have a great summer!

— Your GOAL Network

How GOAL contributes to student empowerment

The Québec Education Program states that "one aim of a competency-based program is to ensure that students' learnings serve as tools for both action and thought . . ." (*Pre-School and Elementary, Section 1.4*). The Secondary versions of the QEP use the word "empowerment." GOAL helps students to understand who they are, where they want to go in life, what knowledge and skills they need to get there and what resources they can draw on. Those are all elements that empower young people to make effective choices. And the more effective the choice, the more likely they are to take their place as responsible members of society.



Empowered kids transform learning into action

A wildlife specialist's visit exposed Dorset students to career possibilities and got them asking how they could make a difference.

Christiane Laframboise, Stephanie Côté and a third teacher, Nancy Harwood, all run an environmental club at Dorset School in Baie d'Urfé. That interest carries over into their classrooms. Recently, Christiane and Stephanie wanted to develop their students' report-writing abilities in both languages. Reinforcing each other's efforts, they combined the English language arts and French curricula with a common project on wildlife.



This square is part of a quilt that students created to mark Earth Day.

ural habitats being preserved and how wetlands allowed birds to rest and feed during long migrations.

"When the presentation was over, the kids didn't want to leave," says Christiane. "They wanted to know how they could get involved. They also learned about different job opportunities. Kids who had talked about being a vet or working with horses were now excited about polar bears in the Arctic."

The two teachers added a GOAL component when they took advantage of an offer to have Amelia Page speak to their students about the environmental work she was doing. Amelia is a new graduate of Vanier College's *Environmental and Wildlife Management* program.

And what about improving their research and writing skills? "Even today, my students were talking in class about how they want to write letters about not destroying wetlands," notes Christiane. "So now we have more research to do about wetlands in our area and who we should write to."



Amelia Page and friend

“ They wanted to know how they could get involved. ”

Amelia told the kids why it wasn't just cats and dogs that needed care. She explained how the well being of wild animals depended on their nat-

Good news for GOAL practitioners

A 2011 study links career development activities with student retention and academic success.

The study carried out by the **University of Derby's International Centre for Guidance Studies** describes career development as "a range of practices designed to help people think about, plan for and manage their careers." It also "provides a mechanism for linking the curriculum with the learning that students do in extracurricular activities and their wider life." The study's findings have direct relevance for GOAL. Its results suggest that . . .

- Individuals who leave school early often cite their schooling's lack of work-and life-relevance as a factor in their dropping out;
- Students who have a career plan are more likely to stay in school;
- Career development, if combined with core academic learning, can improve retention, particularly if introduced with younger students;
- Career development programs can enhance academic achievement and have the greatest effect when introduced at a younger age and in systematic ways.

Publication of the study was sponsored by **Career Cruising**. The complete document can be found at <http://public.careercruising.com/pdfs/CareerDevelopmentImpacts.pdf>

Thorndale students put bullying on trial

An exercise in experiential learning enabled students to confront the issue of bullying head-on.

Rare is the child who isn't exposed to bullying in one way or another. So when **Mara Frost**, a teacher at **Thorndale Elementary** in Pierrefonds, learned that the Montréal Bar Association's annual essay competition was focused on bullying and violence in school, she wanted her grade 6 students to participate.

A moral dilemma

To get her students thinking, Mara asked her lawyer fiancé, **Fabio Zeppilli**, to help them stage a mock trial in class. The fictitious case involved a child who was so repeatedly picked on that he eventually lashed out at his tormentor and punched him in the face. That landed the bully in hospital and led to a lawsuit by the bully's family against the victimized child. The question posed to the class was: who was the guilty party?



The "defendant" consults with his "defence team" during the mock trial.

One student took on the role of bully, while another played the child who was bullied. Others acted as defence counsel, Crown attorney, jury and witnesses. Mara's fiancé was the judge. The students eventually concluded that both parties were in the wrong.

"The kids really liked the drama and the arguments they came up with on the spot were so insightful, it was clear they were getting something out of it," relates Mara. "The experience woke them up to just how serious bullying can be—that it can get so far out there that it has to be dealt with by the legal system. It has also made them more vocal. Now in class, they'll call each other out and say: 'You did such and such and it's not acceptable.'"

Exposure to the legal process showed the students how discussion and negotiation can be used to resolve problems. And to top off the experience, one of the Thorndale students won first prize in the English Elementary Cycle Three category of the "Write for Justice" essay competition.



www.academos.qc.ca

E-mentors give students the straight goods on careers

With free, safe and personalized access to 3,000 professionals in 80 fields, Academos E-MENTORING enables students to make informed career choices.

In 2011-2012 alone, Academos e-mentors responded to the career-related questions of some 17,500 students in 250 Québec high schools. The service is available to students in Secondary III and up. Once registered, they can continue to use it through to the age of 30.

It's easy to get started

If you would like to register your students, contact **Antoine Alavo** at 514-332-3006 ext. 6269 or email asmauffette-alavo@academos.qc.ca. Either he or another agent will come to your class, explain the service and get your students started with their first message, within one regular class period.

Exchanges between students and mentors take place by email within Academos' secure and closely-monitored Web site. "Students like the email format and they get practical advice they might not get elsewhere," says **Antoine Alavo**, who coordinates service for the English-language sector. "E-mentors tell students about the reality of their field—both the good and the bad. They debunk stereotypes and can help young people discover some lesser-known careers."



Mentors share one-on-one practical insights that students aren't likely to find elsewhere.

A recent review of mentor profiles on the public portion of the Web site revealed such diverse occupations as 3D animator, firefighter, speech therapist, criminologist, investigative and forensic accountant, quality assurance analyst and translator, to name a few.

“Academos is a great pathway for learning that helps students connect with professionals who can tell them what a job is really like.”

- Victoria Greer, Special-Education Technician, Riverside School Board

To access an e-mentor, students must be registered as part of a group led by a teacher (or sometimes a guidance counsellor). Each student's initial inquiry goes to the group leader to be vetted for tone and content. After that, students can email their chosen mentor directly, but teachers can always monitor who students are contacting and the frequency of their exchanges.

How student safety is ensured

- Students and mentors are assigned a private email box within the Academos Web site and messages are exchanged via a closed server.
- Mentors are recruited through recognized professional organizations and are background-checked before being accepted; they also receive training.
- To protect identities, both students and mentors use an alias to communicate.
- Academos staff monitors message exchanges daily.
- All emails pass through a filter that eliminates any message containing personal coordinates or harmful content.
- Students can only access the system once they are registered by a teacher or other school group leader.



Dawson's GOAL-friendly lesson plans link learning to marketable skills

Every day, teachers work hard to cover the curriculum even as students ask "Why am I learning this? What can it do for me?"

But just watch those same questions evaporate the moment students comprehend how math, English or biology can set them on a career path that they are passionate about.

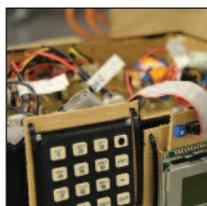
Thanks to collaboration between Dawson College's Council of Career Programs and the CaReer Education and Transitions to Employment subcommittee of the Directors of English Education Network

(DEEN-CREATE), teachers have a new set of tools to show students how high-school learning can be the foundation for a number of interesting and lesser-known careers.

As of now, 16 of Dawson's 21 technical/career programs have produced resource-friendly, vetted lesson plans for use by high-school teachers. Even more will be available in the coming year. **Steve Scallion**, GOAL consultant for Sir Wilfred Laurier School Board, worked with Dawson to adapt all 16 for use in a Personal Orientation Project (POP) classroom.

Each lesson plan relates to a three-year technical program and contains activities that introduce students to possible careers in that field. A science class might tap into *Laboratory Technology—Analytical Chemistry*, while a math class could try out *Accounting Management Technology* or an English class *Professional Theatre*.

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Free workshop at Dawson

To coincide with next year's QPAT convention, Dawson College will hold a "Career Showcase" workshop on November 21, 2013, during which teachers can try out the lesson plans. If you'd like to receive an invitation, go to:

www.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/careershowcase

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Fresh produce *and* a growing sense of place

Turning unproductive farmland into co-operative gardens will help young Anglophones to realize how much they can contribute to their community.

As one of 11 pilot schools across Québec, **Gaspé Polyvalente** has been busy identifying ways it can help build the entrepreneurial capacity of its region. One initiative scheduled to begin next September will unite students, teachers and the community at large in eco-friendly sustainable development.



support from the *Centre local d'emploi*, Entrepreneurship students will then publicize the availability of garden plots and manage the new co-op. Construction of a greenhouse on the grounds of **Gaspé Elementary School** will engage younger students in planting seeds and tending the seedlings that, come June 2014, will be transferred

Action plan being finalized

But first a little background. Over 600 hectares of what was once agricultural land lie fallow around the Gaspé coast. Working closely with 30 local business and economic development partners, the school is finalizing an action plan to turn one hectare of this unused land into a co-operative community garden in which both high school and elementary students will play starring roles.

Local farming families have already offered to provide equipment and teach students in the Work-Oriented Training Path and what is commonly called the 15+ Program how to prepare the land for production. With

to the gardens in a community planting day. A local shrimp plant will supply compost and, to close the cycle, the gardens are expected to provide summer employment for the 15+ students.

"Ties in perfectly with QEP's aim"

If all goes as planned, each year additional hectares will be converted to arable land. "We see it as our emblem project for sustainable community development," says Gaspé Polyvalente's principal, **Daniel Gallagher**. "And it ties in perfectly with the QEP's aim to have students become active partners in society."

Tourists delighted by student ambassadors

Last fall we reported that **Gaspé Polyvalente's** Entrepreneurship students had completed 30 hours of training to become community ambassadors to visiting cruise ship passengers. This spring those same students are back at it, buoyed by the positive feedback they received from tourists and cruise companies alike. Notes principal **Daniel Gallagher**: "A retired school administrator from California even told us that meeting such hospitable young people who were so passionate about their community was the highlight of his cruise."



GOAL-friendly lesson plans...

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"Many graduating students have little direction other than 'I'm 17 and good in school, so I should go to CEGEP and then university,'" says Steve. "Yet the employability rate right out of university isn't that great. Students are often unaware that after three years of study, a CEGEP technical program could get them a good paying job immediately. The employability rate for biomedical laboratory technicians is 100%, as is that for graduates of *Computer Science, Electronics Engineering Technology, and Nursing*. That's pretty interesting for a young person to know."

Two versions

Each lesson plan exists in two versions. The "teacher-led" version http://www2.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/career_showcase_teachers/ (password "csteachers") is appropriate for a GOAL activity with an entire class. The "POP" version http://www2.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/career_showcase_students/ is meant for individual student exploration within the Personal Orientation Project course.



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

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