Maximizing Opportunities for Disadvantaged and Low-skilled Learners
Exemplary Practices of College and Institute Programs and Support Services

Colleges and Institutes Canada
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Colleges and Institutes Canada (formerly the Association of Canadian Community Colleges) is the national and international voice of Canada’s publicly supported colleges, institutes and polytechnics. Colleges and institutes work with industry and social sectors to train 1.5 million learners of all ages and backgrounds at campuses serving over 3,000 urban, rural and remote communities in Canada.
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Introduction

With demographic pressures intensifying and the need for skilled workers growing across Canada, employers report that a top challenge remains their inability to recruit skilled employees. One third of Canadian companies reported difficulties filling vacant positions in 2014, up from 25% in 2012. To address skills shortages more effectively, all levels of government must maximize opportunities for Canadians, particularly those who are not participating fully in the labour market.

This is where colleges and institutes play an important role. Colleges and institutes reach out to under-represented groups and those who may not otherwise have access to a post-secondary education. Disadvantaged and low-skilled learners face many barriers to entering and completing post-secondary programs: low literacy, academic unpreparedness, poor organizational and time management skills, or a lack of study skills. Learners may also lack confidence or be dealing with issues such as a disability or challenges related to physical health, mental health or addictions. A lack of access to transportation or daycare can also pose barriers for learners who want to apply to programs and see them through to completion.

Many disadvantaged learners are simply unaware of the types of programs available at their local colleges or institutes, or that they can acquire a high school equivalency in college. Application and admissions processes can often be complex and lengthy and the vast majority of educational and training institutions use Internet-based application forms. This presents a challenge because many Indigenous, immigrant and economically disadvantaged learners do not always have access to computers or the Internet. Many of these individuals may also have lower literacy levels and lack the technical skills required to complete online forms.

Despite these barriers, colleges and institutes are in the vanguard of offering innovative ways to reach and teach groups of disadvantaged and marginalized learners. Through specialized and targeted educational programs, colleges and institutes offer tailored language training for newcomers, adult upgrading, culturally appropriate support and skills training for Indigenous students, accommodation and skills training for learners with disabilities, and encouragement for mature students to return to school.

Essential skills development has been at the forefront of improving access and supporting learner success. A recent Colleges and Institutes Canada essential skills project funded by Employment and Social Development Canada demonstrated the value and impact of essential skills training. Completed in 2013, seventeen college pilot projects assessed learners and workers across Canada and found that more than 40% tested below level 3 literacy. Once 24 to 40 hours of essential skills training and individual coaching had been completed, additional tests 6 months later showed sustained learning gains and increased motivation and performance in both learning and workplace environments.

This publication demonstrates how colleges and institutes are committed to offering innovative programs that help Canadians develop relevant employment skills so they can participate fully in today’s economy.
Upgrading - The Path to a Better Job

I was tired of the only jobs I could get without a high school diploma”, says Danene Copping. “I was tired of minimum wage and [being] in search of stability.”

Plucking up her courage, Danene made a decision to change her life and enrolled in Algonquin College’s Academic Upgrading program.

“I was petrified of going back to school but the teachers helped me with my confidence level. They made me believe that I was worth it. The program was well organized for students like me who had difficulty grasping it in high school. It takes into account that there are different types of learners - we are individuals and we need to be nurtured.”

Algonquin’s Academic Upgrading program has a long track record of sending well-prepared graduates into post-secondary and apprenticeship programs.

Students choose from courses in communications, mathematics, biology, chemistry, computer skills and success strategies, depending on their individual goals. Some earn the Academic and Career Entrance (ACE) Certificate, a grade 12 equivalency, while others complete only the courses they need to meet program admission requirements.

A skills-based learning approach combined with different delivery options allows individuals with busy lives to reach their goals. Dedicated teachers and staff work with students to build their skills and support them through their studies.

After earning her ACE Certificate, Danene graduated with honours from Algonquin College’s Advanced Diploma Biotechnology Technologist program. She continued to follow her passion and now holds a Bachelor of Applied Science in Applied Bio-Molecular Science from Lakehead University.

“Our students are all ages and come from a variety of backgrounds”, says Claire Snasdell-Taylor, Chair of the Career & Academic Access Centre at Algonquin College. “Some did not complete high school, while others have academic credentials from overseas or from many years ago”.

In 2011-12, 611 former Academic Upgrading students used the training and skills they had acquired to access and thrive in today’s post-secondary learning environment.

Academic Upgrading is funded in part by the Ontario government as an Employment Ontario program. Students are also able to apply for financial assistance through Algonquin College’s Institution-Funded Special Bursary program. This ensures opportunities are available for every individual to gain the foundational skills required to achieve post-secondary success.
Access for Success at Confederation College

Cheryl Garrett came to Academic Upgrading under the 2011-12 Second Career Program after sustaining an injury at work that made it impossible to return to her job. She originally registered for a computer course since she felt her lack of skills in this area was preventing her from getting another job. However, once she was in the program, she realized she had a different dream and that Academic Upgrading would give her the opportunity to achieve it.

Academic Upgrading has been offered at Confederation College for more than 20 years. Initially developed to meet the academic needs of Thunder Bay and nearby Geraldton, the program was expanded to include distance delivery in 2004.

The primary target group is individuals who are interested in pursuing post-secondary education and training, although there are a number of students who choose employment and apprenticeships. The strength of the program is its accessibility and flexible delivery to meet the needs of a very diverse pool of learners. More than two-thirds of the students have not completed Grade 12, 24% of learners self-identify as Indigenous, 9% are over the age of 45, and 7% self-identify as disabled.

The overall goal of the program is to provide students with the literacy and essential skills they need to pursue individual goals. Academic Upgrading provides communications, mathematics, science, computer and employment readiness courses. Many of the students identify the completion of post-secondary programs as their goal and the college knows it has succeeded when they cross the stage at Convocation. This past year, former students continued their post-secondary studies and graduated from nine certificate programs, eight diploma programs and two Advanced Diploma programs. One of these graduates was Cheryl.

Cheryl completed chemistry, biology, math and computer courses and was accepted into the Medical Laboratory Assistant program at Confederation College. “I’ve enhanced my life by making myself employable,” she says. “I am looking forward to working as a Medical Laboratory Assistant.”

The program is fully funded by the Ministry of Training, Colleges, and Universities (MTCU) and is a key partner in Employment Ontario.
Personal Career Development for Adult Learners

The Personal Career Development (PCD) program at Confederation College is a 12-week program designed for adults of all ages who require additional support to build their confidence and develop skills to meet academic and career goals.

In the past two years, 54 students have attended PCD in Thunder Bay. Of these, 76% completed the program and 29 (71%) of these continued into Academic Upgrading. Every year, a number of students who transitioned into Academic Upgrading from PCD are accepted into post-secondary programs. Having these students graduate from post-secondary training is especially impressive because each of them has overcome many barriers and demonstrated inspiring perseverance to get where they are.

The PCD program has four components: self-development, education and career planning, academic upgrading and job placement. A College Certificate of Achievement is awarded to each successful graduate of the program.

Tawnya Thompson completed PCD, transitioned to the Academic Upgrading Program and then applied to Confederation College. She says: "The PCD program helped me move in the right direction on what I wanted to do with myself."

Tawnya completed the College Access Program and the Office Administration general certificate program. She is now employed as an invaluable staff member in an office—a career she never thought possible. "PCD is an amazing program that helped me achieve my dreams."
Bridging Gaps to Career Programs

Recognizing that student success is about more than marks, Red River College’s rural campus in Winkler, Manitoba identified a challenge with one of its main entrance requirements. The Degrees of Reading Power test is a special admissions requirement for all applicants who are over 19 and do not have a high school diploma. Each program requires a specific score for the student to be accepted to that program.

During past student intakes, some students scored only three or four points below the required mark. When college staff sat down to talk with them, they found that the students were still determined to pursue their program of choice and wanted to improve their reading skills to be successful.

So staff developed a reading comprehension course to accommodate the drive and passion exhibited by these students. The course combines independent study and one-on-one tutoring, with students managing their own learning schedules. Students work through a variety of texts and submit their work to an instructor for feedback and marking. The instructor is also available for one-on-one tutoring, accommodating the student’s schedule as much as possible.

If students complete all the requirements three weeks prior to their program start date, they are eligible for entrance. Students pay the full cost of this reading comprehension course, but the $150 cost is minimal.

Three students have already successfully completed the course and are now enrolled in the Dental Assisting program at the Winkler campus. Four more students working on the reading skills course aim to enroll in Dental Assisting, Health Care Aide and Early Childhood Education. Red River College will monitor the progress of these students through the next school year to ensure the course adequately addresses their needs. The College will then make adjustments to the program to improve the course and continue to bridge the gaps.
Walters Steel Learn and Earn Project

One of North America’s leading steel fabricators has joined forces with Mohawk College to get ahead of a looming skills shortage and give students a unique opportunity to learn and earn.

Walters Inc. and Mohawk have launched a two-semester Mechanical Techniques Welding and Fabrication certificate program. The inaugural class of 11 students work paid shifts doing structural steel fitting on Thursdays and Fridays at Walters’ new plant in Stoney Creek. When not working at Walters, students take classes at Mohawk’s skilled trades campus and learn a combination of Level 1 apprenticeship training along with courses in health and safety, professional practice, trades math, quality systems and communication.

“We approached Mohawk College about joining forces to help our company get ahead of a growing skills shortage in a critical area of our business,” says Walters Inc. Human Resources Manager Marty Verhey. “Together, we’re training people for in-demand jobs as welders and fitters and our company gets a great opportunity to assess the talent of potential future employees.”

Fitters use blueprints and architectural drawings to lay out, prepare, assemble and weld structural steel for shipping to construction sites. Walters Inc. employs approximately 70 welders and fitters at its 2 plants in Hamilton. The Bow Centre in Calgary, Western Canada’s tallest building, and the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg are among the projects Walters Inc. has worked on in Canada.

“Staying responsiveness to the needs of employers and industry trends is one of our greatest strengths,” says Mohawk Vice President Academic Cheryl Jensen. “Our new program builds on a long-standing partnership and gives students a unique opportunity to gain both skills and hands-on experience for rewarding careers in the skilled trades.”

Mohawk also offers Mechanical Techniques certificate programs in Electrical, Plumbing and Machining/Computer Numerical Control (CNC). Founded in 1956 and headquartered in Hamilton, award-winning Walters Inc. employs more than 300 people and fabricates and erects structural steel throughout Canada and the United States.
New Skills for Local Employment

Selkirk College has been delivering relevant workplace training to meet local employer and learner demand in the West Kootenay region of British Columbia for the past five years.

Training programs include a five-week computer skills training course, a nine-week professional driver training program, and 24-week courses in office administration, early childhood care and education assistant certification. All programs include career and employment counselling, job search support, mentorship and job readiness training. Most programs include work placements.

Students receive college support through academic and personal counselling, accommodation for disabilities, tutoring and learning skills development, financial support through work study positions and campus food banks, and ongoing coaching/mentoring from ESA staff.

More than 300 participants have received training through the ESA Program and all have gained a higher level of self-awareness and confidence. Over 90% of participants have completed their program and graduated. Today, 60% of the participants are in the workforce and 10% are continuing their education.

Selkirk’s Employment Skills Access (ESA) Program serves disadvantaged and low-skilled learners who are unemployed or underemployed, with funding from the Canada-BC Labour Market Agreement.

The ESA Program delivers training to marginalized youth, individuals with disabilities, indigenous peoples, immigrants, first generation post-secondary students and older workers. The goal of the program is to allow learners to develop or improve their skills for employment.

MG desperately wanted to provide for her family but could barely make ends meet cleaning office buildings before she entered the ESA program. With her new professional driver certification, MG secured a full-time position with a local trucking company and is home every night to care for her family.

RV recently emigrated from India and was not able to find work with her science degree from an Indian university. She had a significant language barrier and lacked confidence but was determined to complete the office administration program and find a job. Once she found work, her husband was able to move to Canada. He has since completed the professional driver training program.
This Program is the BEST

Reaching out to people where they are in the community is the foundation of Red River College’s Basic Employability Skills Training program, or BEST. For people over 30 struggling on low incomes or dependent on government assistance, not having basic skills is a primary barrier to obtaining job interviews, securing a rewarding job and achieving career advancement. For these individuals, this formidable challenge is exacerbated when they live in a community some distance from a major urban centre and cannot get the support they need to overcome these and other barriers to success. The BEST program provides learners with essential skills and job readiness training right where they live.

Through its regional campus in Steinbach southeast of Winnipeg, Red River College works with individuals to help them gain the foundational knowledge and skills needed not only to get a job, but to succeed in that job and in subsequent jobs as they progress through their careers.

The 13-week program is geared for people over 30 who have basic literacy and numeracy skills but need to learn other skills essential to their success. Funded by the provincial and federal governments, the course helps learners develop workplace communication and time management skills, work habits for success, resume writing and job interview readiness, as well as personal budgeting, customer service conflict resolution and team-building. Finally, and perhaps most important, students are assigned a workplace for three weeks to use their skills and gain the confidence they need to reach the next level of employability.

Before being admitted to the program, students are assessed for basic skills. In 2012-13, seven students entered the BEST program at RRC’s Steinbach Campus. Of the seven, two were hired immediately after completing their workplace practicum. One secured part-time employment while still in the program and moved on to full-time employment before the end of April. Another found full-time employment by the end of week four of the program and yet another completed the program and was referred for further vocational rehabilitation.

This program truly is the BEST, changing people’s lives... right where they live.
Building a Strong Foundation

Seeing a need for a program to attract and support disadvantaged, underprepared and undecided learners, Holland College launched a foundational project to help students fill gaps in their knowledge.

Four dominant needs emerged from the first cohort’s experience: essential skills, core skills, a transition for post-secondary preparedness, and career exposure. Based on these needs, eight core courses were developed. These courses, plus two elective courses, form the Foundation Program.

The goal of Holland’s foundational program is to provide students with the skills to succeed in post-secondary education by bridging gaps in learning, expanding current knowledge and providing avenues for exploring careers. While core courses fill in essential academic knowledge, electives provide an opportunity for career exploration. Electives may also be used as a springboard to other programs, as a transfer credit, or to help students re-evaluate their career choices and abilities realistically. The program is also designed to provide an avenue for students who find themselves unsuccessful in other programs, as they can transfer into the College Foundation program to complete their academic year. This option has helped to increase student retention.

The foundation program takes in a cohort of 25-50 students for the academic year, September to June. Approximately 40-50% complete the program, and 75-80% of those graduating move on to another post-secondary institution. Often students decide which parts of the program they need, choose to forego the credential, and take only a selection of courses.

One mature student who had left the public school system while in junior high school and who was just completing his General Educational Development (GED) certificate came to the College’s Foundation program. His previous educational experiences had left him with low self-esteem and distrust for all things academic.

The courses in the Foundation program provided him with tools for academic success and gave him the self-confidence to move forward. He learned to overcome his personal challenges and, as the year progressed, demonstrated a willingness to embrace lifelong learning both personally and professionally. He has since graduated from the Holland College Primary Care Paramedicine program and is employed full-time.
Upgrading and Essential Skills for Employment

Strategic Academic Supports

In recent years, instructors at Holland College in Prince Edward Island have noticed an increased number of learners who were struggling with course material. Often these students were not identified as having special needs prior to program entry.

To address this issue, a multi-step, non-categorical support process was established to support all students in need, not just those who meet specific diagnostic criteria or match certain demographic characteristics. As such, all struggling learners could be provided with support to facilitate their success in college. This is a non-discriminatory approach to service provision that allows equal opportunity for all learners to successfully complete college programs.

In the first step of the program, instructors identify and refer students to academic supports or students come to the centre on their own. Then a member of the academic support team meets with each student and instructor to evaluate the situation. Support services are implemented as required and student progress is monitored to ensure success. If struggles persist, further supports can be added or, a learner can be referred for psycho-educational assessment by a staff psychologist.

After hearing of the program, one student came to request support. She was struggling to obtain passing grades. While she had never been diagnosed with a learning disability, we did learn that she was a first generation post-secondary student with low literacy skills and was under-prepared for college. The College offered one-on-one tutoring support, a private room for test to minimize distraction, and regular meetings with a student support worker to learn study strategies. She graduated in June, and we attribute her success to her determination and the academic supports provided by the college.

The benefit of Holland’s program is the relative speed and ease with which learners can get access to services that tie directly to success. In a typical academic year, 150-200 learners receive services. Although success rates have not been tracked those who utilize services and are committed to their program are successful.
The Continuing Care Assistant LINK

“The learning process is always fabulous.” This enthusiastic statement is from Noreen, one of the adult learners in Nova Scotia Community College’s (NSCC) CCA LINK program that offers upgrading and practical experience to link mature students to higher skilled employment.

CCA LINK was designed to create a direct connection between the Adult Learning Program (ALP) and participation in the labour market. The program uses a blended cohort model of adult learning and Continuing Care Assistant training—a post-secondary certificate—to create a streamlined educational pathway to get accreditation. Reducing the time needed to gain qualifications for employment from three to two years is an appealing option for many adult learners with their additional life responsibilities.

Dual-crediting options are an essential component of the program. Courses from the Continuing Care Assistant Program are designated elective credits required for the Nova Scotia high school graduation diploma for adults. In addition, the extensive practicum placement requirement of the CCA Program results in a direct relationship and connection to an employer. Many learners are offered part-time employment while they are completing their studies. Upon graduation, learners receive both their high school diplomas and their post-secondary program diplomas. All of these benefits for the learner increase program retention—a significant issue with all adult-based programming.

“This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Life is wonderful! I never thought I would get a chance to complete my high school and have a career in the health sector. I left school over 20 years ago and now it is my turn. My last child graduated a year ago in June and my husband and children have been very supportive of my returning to school,” says CCA LINK student Heidi Hingley.

“I have rediscovered how much I love to learn. With a career in the health sector, I can follow my dreams of helping people. I am looking forward to working at the hospital. This opportunity has opened so many possibilities for me.”

CCA LINK is targeted to employment insurance and income assistance recipients who are 19 years of age or older and have completed Grade 10. Learners must commit to completing a long-term career plan that meets the demand in the Nova Scotia labour market for continuing care assistants. In addition, all learners are required to meet CCA compliance industry standards, which include a clean Canada-wide criminal record and updated immunizations. Participants also sign a statement of understanding that reinforces the career requirements of CCAs, such as the ability to work all shifts (evenings, weekends, holidays and overnight), to meet the physically demanding working conditions. They must also possess a driver’s license and have access to a vehicle.

This is a challenging and rewarding career for those who want to serve their communities in the health care sector. The program has produced 51 graduates and has been offered in three committees: Truro, Middleton (twice) and Sydney. The program is now being offered in Amherst and Lunenburg, in response to local labour market demand, with 34 learners in progress. The demand continues to grow and, as one employer recently said to the current student group, “If you successfully complete this program and you want to work, there is plenty of work.” Graduates acquire the credentials and skills required to secure long-term employment in the Nova Scotia workforce.

The success of CCA LINK is built on a unique partnership between the Nova Scotia Department of Labour and Advanced Education, the Nova Scotia School of Adult Learning and NSCC. The Nova Scotia Department of Community Services and Employment Nova Scotia are involved in the identification and support of the program participants.

CONTINUED
Making programming accessible is an important part of the College’s work. This includes opening pathways and providing equitable funding opportunities to students who want to enroll in the programs. This is only possible thanks to funding provided by all partners.

One student said (and all agreed with her), “I would never have been able to afford to come back to school. This was an opportunity to be seized and grasped.”... evidence that the program is a win-win partnership for everyone, especially the learners.

“The Best Thing I Ever Did”

On a warm September day in 2009, Vaughan Scrivers walked through doors of Fanshawe College with his 22 year-old son. His son was there to study Police Foundations, but Scrives was not there just to drop him off. This former factory worker was finally going to get the education his family had not been able to afford 30 years ago. At 46, he was going back to school.

“I had the grades coming out of high school back in the eighties,” he says. “But back then there was no financing.” Instead, Scrivers did a stint with the Navy, worked as a machinist, drove trucks, managed restaurants, joined construction crews and eventually wound up on the line at Sterling Trucks.

After 17 years at Sterling, he was laid off when the St. Thomas truck plant closed. He had also been injured on the job and he figured there had to be a better way to earn a living. So, with the support of a Workplace Safety and Insurance Board retraining program and his eye on a management job, he enrolled in Manufacturing Engineering Technology at Fanshawe College.

Three years later Scrivers is a new man. He made the most of his time at Fanshawe, throwing himself into campus life and student government, while simultaneously completing accelerated versions of both Manufacturing Engineering Technician and Technologist programs. He finished with a number of awards, including the prestigious gold medal for excellence in student leadership from Colleges and Institutes Canada (formerly the Association of Canadian Community Colleges).

Today, after receiving four offers right out of school, Scrivers has the job of his dreams: site supervisor at Ingersoll’s Robinson Solutions. He loves his staff and they love him. Scrivers says his successful leadership style has a lot to do with coming up through the ranks, but his time at Fanshawe helped even more.

“I took a great course in industrial psychology, which really prepared me for managing people. It also prepared me to negotiate my first job offer, so I was able to get an even better deal.”

Scrivers does not hesitate when asked to name the top three things about his Fanshawe experience. “No question. The people, the top-notch education and the whole experience of going to college. Best thing I ever did.”
Second Careers - Leading by Example

Chance Coombs was a millwright who had a back injury at work. Her strongest desire was to keep working as a millwright until she retired, and she tried very hard to achieve that goal, but the injury would not allow her to do it.

Chance came to the Police Foundations program at Fanshawe College in 2010 as part of the Second Career program. Though she was considered a mature student at age 50, she engaged fully with the content, the professors and her classmates. She became a leader in the class, guiding her classmates in areas of integrity and professionalism. She worked hard to adapt to college life and the demands of study, as she had not been in school for many years. She participated in the Emergency Services Volunteer Committee and was a member of the Student Auxiliary for the Campus Police.

Chance graduated with a 4.052 GPA and received the Health Systems Group Leadership Award from the college for her performance. Chance told us her motivation was to be a support and an example for her six-year-old daughter.

Overcoming Adversity

Dale Stonehouse was a student in the Pre-Apprenticeship Truck and Coach program at Fanshawe College in 2008. For a number of personal reasons, he was not able to complete his placement portion of the program so at the end of the project he was an incomplete.

Dale was determined this would not be the end. He had a number of things he needed to work out for himself and his family so that he could become the good role model he desired to be for his daughter. In February of 2012, he came back to meet with the Community Employment Services at Fanshawe and was finally ready to finish what he had started. Fanshawe arranged a placement for Dale with a London company called Challenger to get his apprenticeship started.

Dale is a happy man today, something that could not easily be said about him in 2008. He is working, has been signed as an apprentice, and is looking forward to returning to Fanshawe for his Level II apprenticeship training very soon. Fanshawe also offered the employer an Employer Signing Bonus for this candidate. Dale will do well in the trade when he becomes a licensed Truck and Coach Mechanic/Technician.
Indigenous Learners

Essential Skills Trades Training for Women and Indigenous Students

Catina Sheena is one woman who used Camosun College’s Essential Skills Training program to change her life. Homeless and couch-surfing, she saw an online ad for women in trades and decided to explore the opportunity.

“I was on Craigslist looking for jobs when I saw an ad for Women in Trades,” she says. “It turned out to be great.”

The 14-week essential skills program is made up of cohorts of 12 to 14 learners who mentor and encourage each other. Students are taught by experienced faculty and dedicated instructional assistants provide one-on-one tutoring and support. The flexible program delivers relevant trades-based English and math content needed for success in trades training programs.

One essential skills option is the Women in Trades Training Initiative (WTTI), the result of a partnership between Camosun, the Industry Training Authority (ITA) and the Bridges for Women Society. WTTI gives women the opportunity to try their hands at trades such as plumbing, welding, carpentry and horticulture, while also working to upgrade their academic skills.

Using targeted funding from the Canada-BC Labour Market Agreement administered through BC’s Industry Training Authority (ITA), Camosun focused on attracting women and Indigenous people into trades training programs. Some of these students do not meet the standard academic entrance requirements, so Camosun also provides upgrading to help them gain the essential skills in math and English.

Catina demonstrated true grit as she continued to go to school every day.

“The instructors were patient and the other women made the program fun and less intimidating. Working with power tools can be a challenge in itself, so receiving a certificate that says I am capable of using them was a real eye-opener.”

With new confidence, Catina followed up with the full-time Residential Building Maintenance Worker program, while continuing to upgrade her math at night. Her instructors describe Catina as extremely capable and intelligent and a real leader in a quiet way—just the kind of woman for whom this initiative was created.

With an expected skills shortage looming, Camosun College, as Vancouver Island’s largest provider of trades training, is providing part of the solution. This successful model at Camosun College has resulted in more women and Indigenous students entering and succeeding in the trades in Vancouver.
When 27-year-old Aleatha Hockridge started at Saanich Adult Education Centre, she had been out of school for 11 years and was more familiar with surfboards and motorcycles than books and classrooms. Extremely nervous at first, Aleatha recalls: “As soon as I got there, it was like a sigh of relief. I could always ask for help, and I don’t know if I could have done it anywhere else.”

In 2004, Camosun College recognized the need to make it easier for people to begin or return to learning in a less intimidating place than on the college campus. The Community Learning Partnerships (CLP) department was created to take education to community-based sites in partnership with local Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

Partnerships were established with six local agencies: Bridges for Women, an employment training program for women who have experienced abuse and trauma; Literacy Victoria, an organization that provides literacy and employment training; Our Place Society, a street outreach center that provides shelter and drop-in programming; Songhees Learning Centre, offering employment training for members of the Songhees Nation; the Saanich Adult Education Centre (SAEC) offering educational programming for the Tsartlip, Tsawout, Tseycum and Pauquachin communities; and the Victoria Native Friendship Centre, which serves non-reserve Indigenous clients.

At most sites, Camosun provides the programming and the partner provides the space and facilities. Programs are paid for by partners, cost-shared or subsidized and courses are tuition-free for students.

Community offerings include online, face-to-face, and blended delivery of courses in English and math upgrading, computer studies, employment skills training, and courses and programs with an Indigenous focus. Customized programs include Indigenous Trades Preparation, Service Learning, and Essential Skills. The CLP department finds ways to integrate Indigenous ways of learning and teaching, and continually adapts to the changing needs of the community.

Aleatha upgraded her English and completed five math and two computer science courses in just eight months, landing on the 2011 Dean’s Honour Roll in the process. She went on to complete first-year Indigenous Studies at Camosun, and has now transferred to the University of Saskatoon for teacher training. She aims to teach elementary school someday.

Photo: Aleatha—from class in community to college campus
http://www.flickr.com/photos/26399591@N03/6378639303/in/set-72157628086291075/

“CLP-Victoria Native Centre” photo attached to email: Student-friendly class in community
Building Communities, Building Futures

Rob Stevely is well on his way to employment in the mining industry after returning to school at the age of 31. With the support of BC Indigenous Mine Training Association, Rob completed his Level 1 welding apprenticeship at College of the Rockies.

His overall grades, theory work, attendance and attitude were rewarded when the College presented him with the Welder of the Year award. Rob, a member of the Kootenay Region Métis Association, plans to continue his welding apprenticeship while also completing a Heavy Duty Equipment Operator program. The heavy equipment training will help him get his foot in the door, possibly driving a haul truck at a mine site, while he works his way up to the journeyman welder status required for trades position hires.

The College of the Rockies and the BC Indigenous Mine Training Association’s (BC AMTA) partnership began in 2012. A federally registered charity, BC AMTA works with industry, government and educators to provide training and support services to Indigenous participants, leading them to sustainable careers in the mining industry. As the college provides a variety of trades training options (including Introduction to Trades, Heavy Duty Mechanics, Electrical, Industrial Mechanic, Loss Prevention, and Mine Supervisor) the partnership with BC AMTA was a natural fit.

The BC AMTA program has had over 1600 registrants from more than 150 First Nations Bands. Some 542 former participants are currently employed. These numbers are expected to continue to grow with the impending labour shortage facing Canada’s exploration and mining industry and more companies looking for skilled workers.

BC AMTA operates with funding from Employment and Social Development Canada’s Skills Partnership Fund as well as industry and First Nations community support.
First Nations Students Working to Build Skills & Communities

Not long ago, the communities of Peepeekisis, Okanese, Star Blanket and Little Black Bear First Nations in northern Saskatchewan were in need of skilled maintenance workers to maintain community buildings and homes.

Parkland College saw an opportunity to provide training through its Residential Building Maintenance Worker program. The college entered into an agreement with File Hills Tribal Council in east-central Saskatchewan to provide Essential Skills upgrading for individuals with Essential Skill levels of 1 and 2. Individuals with skill levels under Level 3 (of 5) are often disadvantaged in the workplace because they have difficulty reading complex written instructions and learning technical skills.

The File Hills Tribal Council referred participants interested in this kind of training from its bands. Okanese First Nation provided the classroom space, as well as a building where students could practise hands-on skills. As a result, the students were able to learn theory in the classroom while putting their knowledge to work in the community.

Parkland College’s goal was to build individual skills while making some positive changes within local First Nations communities. It was a win-win for everyone: students acquired valuable skills and took pride in repairing buildings in their communities and the communities benefited from improvements to those buildings. Community members would stop by to investigate what was going on and were proud of the young people who were learning basic carpentry, electrical and plumbing skills. It soon became a community event.

The 13-week program aimed to help low-skilled First Nations people obtain a level of training that would allow them to enter the workforce and maintain employment. Six students went on to complete the program, and all six were employed at the end of the training.

As one student put it, “The whole program was excellent because I learned a lot of skills I never had before. I’m grateful for having participated in this program—thumbs up!”
DevelopMENTOR: A Holistic Approach to Work Success

Tedesi Lambert started as a front-counter customer service representative with Tim Hortons while he was a student at Algonquin College and impressed his employer so much that he was promoted to baker. Tedesi was enrolled in the General Arts and Science Pre-Nursing program at Algonquin College and had joined the DevelopMentor program that offers job-readiness skills and self-confidence to young Indigenous learners.

The DevelopMENTOR program is a job coaching process customized to the individual student depending on his or her level of experience and background. Once the student meets the expectations of the job coach, the student is then recommended for the experiential portion of the program, an eight-week work placement with an employer partner. The employer invests in the mentoring of the employee, in collaboration with the job coach, to ensure the student’s success in the workplace. The DevelopMENTOR Program was designed to help Indigenous students understand the importance of job readiness and build skills and knowledge including attitude, appropriate and open communication, and teamwork skills to help prepare them for the labour market.

The students are coached to build a stronger sense of self-confidence and increase their abilities to communicate and to cooperate with peers, authorities and the public. Coaching involves increasing students’ awareness and respect for societal diversity and enhancing their abilities to accept and act on suggestions for improvement.

Tedesi’s goal is to continue to develop practical work skills, knowledge and experience that will assist him with his future career.

“The DevelopMENTOR Program has helped me establish a firm foundation of what to expect and how to prepare for future employment,” he says. “I feel as though I have acquired and developed valuable skills and would highly recommend this program to anyone seeking employment.”

The DevelopMENTOR program is delivered continuous intake model whereby students can start any point from September to April and is supported by funding from the Ontario government with a focus on First Generation Students.
New Partnerships with First Nations in the Ring of Fire

Northwestern Ontario is in the midst of significant change. With the intensification of mining claims, the revival of the regional economy, and the ongoing self-determination of First Nations communities, it has become more important for Confederation College to be involved in training initiatives. Two initiatives at the college have shown great potential and changed the lives of local Indigenous participants.

Anishinabek Employment & Training Services (AETS)

In July 2012, these initiatives were launched by Confederation College, Anishinabek Employment & Training Services and Nokiiwin Tribal Council when the three institutions offered a Transferable Skills Development Program to eight First Nations communities in northwestern Ontario.

The program focused on the industry-based essential skills required to be successful in any of the sector-specific programs offered by the Natural Resources Training Initiative. This program was based on industry-recommended skills that included numeracy skills, communication skills, computer use and job readiness.

Following their essential skills training, each of the students was able to choose sector training programs in jobs in demand locally including Business Management & Entrepreneurship, Sawmill Worker, Forest Inventory Management, Commercial Fishing, Surface Diamond Driller Helper, Basic Line Cutting and AZ Truck Driving.

In January 2013, 10 students completed the Employment and Training Services program and received Certificates of Completion for the Transferable Skills Development Program. The students were thrilled to receive training and have the opportunity to work in the region where they live.

“Returning to school as a mature student has been a great motivator and confidence builder,” says Debora Desmoulin of Thunder Bay. “It has given me a feeling of accomplishment and a realization that anything can be achieved if you strive towards a goal.”

Surface Diamond Driller Helper Program

Webequie First Nation is a community situated within the Ring of Fire mining development area.

Training in surface diamond drilling skills was proposed by the community itself to prepare their members for the mining development that will be taking place on their land. The primary goal of the program was to improve personal/interpersonal skills that will assist the participants in seeking, securing and keeping employment for the residents of Webequie First Nation.

The Surface Diamond Driller Helper Training program had three phases: Transferable Skills Development, Surface Diamond Driller Helper Training (theory and practical), and on-the-job training. The Program provided the skills and knowledge to secure employment as opportunities develop within the Ring of Fire.

On May 28, 2013, a celebration was held in Webequie First Nation for the completion of the Surface Diamond Driller Helper Training program. Eight learners completed the 21-week program and received certificates for Transferrable Skills Development and five completed all three phases and graduated as Surface Diamond Driller Helpers and are poised to be hired.
In-Community Training for Health Care Assistants

Nicola Valley Institute of Technology (NVIT) has delivered the Health Care Assistant (HCA) program in remote Indigenous communities throughout British Columbia since 2007.

The HCA program is delivered in the communities because low-skilled learners may not have the confidence, self-esteem or academic ability to succeed in mainstream facilities. In addition to the regular health care curriculum, the program has a component addressing life skills, professional conduct and personal development.

By delivering HCA training in Indigenous communities, the program engages local elders to assist the students with cultural and personal support. NVIT is also able to use local facilities to house students and a temporary health lab to meet the needs of the program.

The HCA program allows graduates to become employed in local health facilities as well as to work in their own communities to support and serve the elderly. The program is designed to meet the needs of Indigenous and mainstream communities and organizations by providing participants with skills to care for elders.

The HCA program has a very high success rate and a very high employment rate. NVIT accomplishes this by ensuring all areas of the institution work together through Community Education to achieve a common goal. One of the main objectives of the Community Education department is to provide students with training, knowledge, and skills to assess and formulate strategies that will enhance the quality of life for children, families and communities.

NVIT is BC’s Indigenous public post-secondary institute and is grounded in Indigenous knowledge. Its mandate is Indigenous education and one of its institutional values is inclusion.

Math and Science ASKS for Mi’kmak Students

National, regional and local studies indicate that Indigenous people are not enrolling in science and math programs and are typically not working in employment sectors that require math and science. Nova Scotia Community College believes this must change.

Many Indigenous educators believe that for economic progress to be achieved Indigenous people must excel in broad employment sectors, including those that require math and science. Over the past few years, NSCC has engaged in discussions with the Unama’ki Economic Benefits Office about the need to involve Mi’kmak people and their communities in all aspects of Mi’kmak science and math education and training. NSCC and the Unama’ki Mi’kmak believe before this can be achieved we must educate and provide the critical support Mi’kmak students need to become employed in jobs that require math and science as core competencies.

NSCC has developed a program that will provide Indigenous learners with preparation for studies in academic math and science. Academic Skills for Success (ASKS) is an eight-week preparatory program using project-based learning to engage students in math, computer and science curriculum to refresh and review foundational concepts and skills.

The anchor course is Transition to College Learning that addresses academic skills, personal wellness and goal setting. Each student produces a personal Adult Learning Plan to guide his or her future learning dialogue. After the eight-week program is completed, students go on to two semesters of academic level math and science courses that are prerequisites to many health and technology programs.
Moving Notice... Trades are now on Wheels

To help address a predicted shortage of 75,000 skilled workers in Manitoba by 2015, the province opened the door to attract Indigenous students into skilled trades and technology careers. The government committed to connecting Manitobans with jobs in the trades through apprenticeships and training, by engaging First Nations and Métis people in labour force development, and by reaching out to Indigenous peoples to provide education and training in skilled trades and technology.

Red River College, with its reputation for developing innovative solutions, has responded to the challenge of reaching rural Indigenous students in Manitoba by putting a five-month trades training certificate program on wheels. Enter the Mobile Training Lab, a 53-foot trailer with pop-out sides that can quickly transform into a 950 square-foot training facility.

This pre-employment training provides direct access to trade-specific training seats in apprenticeship that can ultimately lead to an Apprentice Manitoba ticket in the trade of a student’s choice.

As long as there is a road, the college can reach Indigenous students across the province, particularly in remote, rural areas. Through the training lab, students are introduced to a wide range of trades careers, increasing their qualifications for local and provincial entry-level positions that may include apprenticeship agreements with a qualified employer or pre-employment training for trades.

In January 2013, Belinda and two of her classmates graduated from the Introduction to Trades MTL Program at Winnipeg River Learning Centre in Pine Falls. Soon after, they were hired as Level 1 Apprentices and are still employed in the Pine Falls, Manitoba area—their own community. As Belinda says, “This is a dream come true!”

The future is bright for these newly enhanced community-based programs. However, the wheels are still turning to create more opportunities. Red River College’s School of Indigenous Education is currently in discussions with several First Nations communities with the goal to begin construction of Ready to Move homes. With a focus on carpentry, electrical and plumbing skills, the college plans to train prospective journeyperson tradespeople while beginning to tackle the need for better and affordable housing for First Nations communities in Manitoba.
Combining Career Training and English as a Second Language

The Health Care Assistant—English as a Second Language program (HCA ESL) at Camosun College has offered immigrant students the chance to gain new English skills while preparing for well-paying jobs in long-term care facilities since the 1980s.

The Health Care and ESL instructors work closely together to support student success in this combined skills program. Instructional assistants offer additional support outside of classroom hours. Graduates have a high rate of success finding employment in the health care field. Yulan (Lisa) Shi decided to take the HCA ESL program to get a good job in Canada and now works regular hours as a health care assistant.

“I love my job,” Yulan says. “In the program I gained the knowledge and skills I need to do my job well. I also learned to be more patient, to think much more about the needs and feelings of others, and to communicate better both with my clients and people in the community.”

The ESL instructor supports success in the program by guiding students through the extensive reading that is necessary, explaining new vocabulary and teaching the skills needed to complete written assignments, presentations and quizzes. By participating in activities to practice new vocabulary and structures, students also enhance their knowledge of Canada and Canadian culture.

Core content is provided by Camosun’s HCA instructors and all materials, assignments, quizzes and skill checks are the same as for native English speakers. In addition, students have four ESL classes each week throughout the 49-week program, except when they are out on a practicum.

“I learned more about Canadian culture and many useful life skills which help me and my family to live a better life in Canada. I feel that others respect me for the job I am doing now and I have much more self-confidence,” Yulan says.

Although the program is designed mainly for immigrants, Camosun also offers a customized HCA program for an Indigenous cohort. Both the ESL and First Nations options are provincially funded.

Photo: Instructor, Rowena Hill, in the classroom with HCA-ESL students http://www.flickr.com/photos/26399591@N03/5614096926/in/set-72157626484604156/
New Canadians Gain Child Care Skills through Work and Play

Pinar started at NorQuest College in the school’s language training program and graduated from the Day Home Provider program in 2011. She found employment at a day care where she was placed as part of her practicum. In addition to working full time, she furthered her child development education at CDI College.

NorQuest College’s Day Home Provider program helps many new Canadians develop academic and occupational skills in early childhood training. The Edmonton college launched the 10-month integrated skills program in 2008 to support women who want to start a day home business or work in a childcare centre.

“Our students represent up to 20 countries,” says program instructor Darrell Giraldeau. “Before coming to Canada, many of the women did not have the opportunity for formal education due to war or internal strife.”

The Day Home Provider program combines hands-on play experiences and authentic materials, such as accident or incident report forms, to help students improve literacy, language and essential skills.

“Play experiences are paramount in the classroom as they provide the foundation for learning the theory and application students will use in the workplace,” says Giraldeau.

Program students are also given opportunities to work with young children through work placements and volunteer experiences. “Through these experiences, students are encouraged to explore the similarities between their rich cultural backgrounds and Canadian workplace expectations.”

The success of the program speaks for itself: more than 90 per cent of students are working within three months of graduation. With the wide range of learning opportunities the program offers, students leave with a portfolio that gives them added confidence.

“Many students have said employers are really impressed when they showcase their portfolio during interviews, and this helps get them the job,” says Giraldeau.

One of the program’s focuses is play experiences where students are actively involved in activities such as painting.
Talking Computers and a Lifeline to Literacy

Bow Valley College offers three programs for adult learners who need to increase their abilities to read and do math to improve their opportunities for employment and to help their children learn.

Lifeline to Literacy is an engaging and fun way that adult learners gain skills to read to their children, complete online forms, write basic emails and learn math for simple budgeting or shopping. Designed to be interactive and based on principles identified through research conducted at Bow Valley, the Lifeline program is designed to provide one-to-one and group support for individuals requiring basic reading, writing and numeracy skills. A literacy facilitator and trained tutors work with students.

Speech-Assisted Reading and Writing (SARAW) is a talking computer program that teaches basic reading, writing and math skills. The course is designed for adults who have physical or developmental disabilities. This computer program is tailored for adults who read and write at a beginner to Grade 6 level. Accompanying support workers are trained as tutors to help with all aspects of the course. Tutors may also be supplied for students who do not have a support worker.

Adult Basic Literacy Education (ABLE) is another program at Bow Valley that provides an inclusive classroom for students with disabilities and mainstream students. The course content is for students reading at a Grade 2 to Grade 4 level, who can add and subtract but need more skills to help them budget and shop wisely. The program is designed to give students the background and support needed to enter Level 2 Reading and Writing courses. A financial literacy stream addresses money counting and rounding, comparison-shopping, credit cards, debt and borrowing and budgeting. The program’s literacy facilitator and trained volunteer tutor also work with students in this class.

These three programs are funded by Calgary Learns, Alberta Enterprise and Advanced Education, the Laing Foundation, Harry and Martha Cohen Foundation and the local Rotary Club and Lion’s Club.
NEWCOMERS AND LITERACY

LINC Youth Photography and Video

Probably the most serious single challenge faced by many immigrant youth, especially those with a refugee background, is gaps in formal education. Too old when they arrive in Ontario to complete secondary school, they often do not have high school math and science that are prerequisites for many post-secondary programs.

The Language Instruction for Newcomers (LINC) youth photography and youth video projects provide access to Mohawk College for newcomers in the community including government-assisted refugees and other immigrant youth with interrupted education. These groups face many barriers to future success, including poverty, lack of information about education systems, an absence of role models and difficulty in ‘seeing themselves’ as college students.

The LINC youth classes in Hamilton are attempting to address this need in two ways. First, learning materials and tasks related to photography and video are used to teach concepts and vocabulary related to these subjects. Second, after completing English language admission requirements, youth are encouraged to consider taking a one-year preparatory certificate program before entering a diploma program. The range of these programs is increasing at Mohawk year by year.

LINC Youth Photography and LINC Youth Video at Mohawk are multi-level classes. Individual students are placed on a continuum into an intensive academic upgrading course that transitions graduates into post-secondary studies.

Project-based learning for youth was chosen for the LINC program because it offers several advantages. Project-based learning provides ongoing, systematic opportunities for language practice and is generally motivating for younger students. It develops both the technological and soft skills they may lack. In all ways, the project work prepares students for future success in post-secondary education and the labour market.

The LINC Youth program overcomes, or mitigates, some of the disadvantages immigrant youth face. It is tuition-free and held at the main campus. There are also partnerships with Admissions, the Learning Support Centre and academic areas to prepare LINC students for the transition to post-secondary programs.

The 40 seats, all funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, are offered on a continuous intake basis and are generally filled, often with a waiting list.
Enhancing Skills through Engaging Learning

Preparing immigrant and Indigenous learners for a career in the trades ... fast!

With a focus on young immigrants and Indigenous adults, NorQuest College’s Apprenticeship Preparation pilot program helps learners in Edmonton gain the skills required for a successful career in the trades.

“Students entering the program often struggle with multiple aspects of literacy, interrupted learning and limited or no work experience in Canada,” says Elaine McPhee, chair of Literacy and Essential Skills. “We offer customized skills upgrading, job training and work experience opportunities to help them hit the ground running within seven months.”

The program was especially valuable for Khalid Lahroudi. After arriving in Edmonton from Morocco four years ago, Lahroudi worked as a chef. Although he had 10 years of experience, it was not a high-paying job, which created financial stress. Now he is excited about the range of interesting and well-paid opportunities in Alberta’s plumbing industry.

During the four-month academic portion of the program, students focus on science, math, reading skills, computer literacy and workplace culture. The various teaching strategies used to accommodate multiple learning styles are what make this part of the program especially unique.

Manipulatives, for example, are often used to help kinesthetic learners understand math concepts. “Students receive tangible objects where they can actually practice, and therefore, perceive a concept,” says McPhee.

Within four months, students with improved academic skills successfully complete the apprenticeship entrance exams. Students whose chosen path is in the pipe trades enter a 10-week training session at Alberta Pipe Trades College. Those choosing non-pipe trades programming receive placements for the work experience component of the program.

Sponsored by the Government of Alberta, the program is a partnership between NorQuest College and the Edmonton Pipe Trades College (Union 488). It has been running for the past year and a half with three cohorts having already completed their training. The program boasts a 90 per cent completion rate and an 85 per cent employment rate at a 180 day follow-up.

“The Apprenticeship Prep program gave me the skills I need to pass the entrance exams and be ready for work in the field,” Khalid says. “Now I have a career to build on.”

Photo (Left): An example of a learning strategy where images are used to help visual learners understand different types of skill sets.
Bridge Program for Immigrant Youth

Wayne is very proud that he completed high school upgrading in three semesters after having his formal schooling interrupted. He had studied in the Bridge program at Bow Valley College in Calgary for a year and was then able to transition to high school upgrading.

The Bridge program at Bow Valley College is designed for immigrant youth with interrupted formal education who are no longer eligible to study in a high school setting. Bridge learners are a diverse group aged 18 to 25 who come from many different countries. While all of the learners have various gaps in their education, what they have in common is that they all have goals and aspirations.

Navigating the post-secondary education system can be a challenge. A learner’s ability to stay in school depends on whether or not they get the social support they need to manage and overcome their barriers. The Bridge program works to help learners recognize issues, access community resources and plan for independent navigation of the services they need in the future.

Wayne enjoys math and his dream is to become a computer programmer. While he was in the Bridge program, he organized and facilitated math tutoring sessions for other learners over the lunch hour. He currently works as a supervisor at Tim Hortons. Wayne says that communication skills he learned in the Bridge program have helped him in his leadership role at work.

Bridge focuses on developing learners’ language skills and giving them strategies to help them succeed in academic contexts. There is a focus on reading, writing, vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation and math. Project-based learning is a critical part of the program. Instructors focus on building learners’ essential skills through ongoing cooperative learning projects.

Funded by the Government of Alberta and Citizenship and Immigration Canada, the goal of the program is to help learners improve their literacy and life skills in order to transition to the next step in their educational and employment pathways. Transition programs, like Bridge, build capacity by giving learners the support and guidance they need in their studies, while at the same time building their confidence and encouraging them to become independent both as learners and individuals. In 2011-12, there were 89 program registrants over three semesters.
Moving Ahead .... To the Beat!

The Moving Ahead Program (MAP), based on the award-winning World Beat Program, is an inclusive developmental program for out-of-school immigrant young adults with challenging life situations and significant needs for supportive learning. Through an engaging process of experiential learning, the students become more skillful, confident, resilient, resourceful, and ready to embark on a new journey to access education and employment.

MAP is the product of a committed partnership between Vancouver Community College and SUCCESS, a non-profit organization working with immigrant families in British Columbia. VCC instructors and SUCCESS youth workers collaborate seamlessly to provide students with group learning opportunities and individualized support. The program integrates “multiple modalities of literacy” – language, music, art and photography – into a curriculum that aims to advance the essential and life skills of the students. It includes components on interpersonal communication, creative production, relationship building, educational planning and community exploration. Through a series of guided creative and reflective activities, the students explore identities, develop friendships, reflect on values, gain skills, connect with community resources, and formulate plans to move ahead.

In this phase of the project, VCC is running five 10-week courses per year for immigrant youth who have been in Canada less than five years. Highly personalized in many ways, the project naturally lends itself to continuing engagement beyond graduation. Faculty, staff and community members benefit from the enthusiasm and creativity of the young people in the program who perform regularly for the VCC community.
Intensive Language Training offers a Springboard to College Success

A significant number of foreign students who could potentially be admitted to a program of study at a Quebec college have gaps in their French language competency that could imperil their academic success. To meet the needs of these young immigrant learners, Montreal’s Rosemont College has designed a special program of intensive French language instruction.

The target for the college diploma Springboard program is students who did not complete their secondary studies in Quebec and who, at the time of admission, scored between six and seven on the MICC benchmark test required for post-secondary studies in Quebec. These students have overcome numerous obstacles in their pursuit of success at college in Canada. They are older than the average student and often have families to support and few resources.

The Springboard Program aims to develop aptitudes in French vis-à-vis work methodology and intercultural mediation so that students will have more knowledge and skills to draw upon once they are ready to pursue a program of higher education. The program is a 15-week course offering 240 hours of French through two courses, 45 hours of work methodology in higher education and 45 hours of intercultural mediation and integration into Quebec society.

The majority of students who have followed this path and then continued their studies demonstrate a very high performance level in regular programs. In the fall 2012 cohort of students, 13 of 17 students passed both French courses. Of these 13, two enrolled in a health technology program and were exempt from the general training courses and one enrolled at another college. The other 10 registered in a program at the college and nine of them passed their first literature course (90%). The average mark in this course for these summer school students was 83/100.

The Springboard program has been offered since 2010 and is funded primarily by Quebec’s Ministry of Higher Education, Research, Science and Technology.
Learning Disabilities and Accommodation

Humber’s Aspie Nation

Many students with Asperger’s syndrome (AS) have difficulty adjusting to the social demands of college and risk social isolation due to their challenges forming relationships, relating to others and understanding unwritten social rules in the classroom, in residence and on campus.

There has been tremendous growth in the number of students with AS enrolling in Ontario post-secondary institutions in recent years. Although these students have a high aptitude for learning and a capacity to succeed with appropriate supports, disability personnel in colleges across the province are concerned about resource constraints and a lack of preparedness to meet the unique needs of students with AS.

To address some of these challenges, Humber College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning created an Asperger’s Support Group in fall 2010. Jeff Szmyr, a disability consultant with experience supporting students on the Autistic Spectrum, formed the group which meets weekly during fall and winter terms for students with AS and other related neurological conditions.

Group sessions are designed to develop communication and interaction skills—the areas most impacted by their disability. Sessions are delivered in a visual, structured and interactive manner, in line with the characteristic learning style of those with AS. Topics covered in the group sessions include organization and time management, making conversation, handling group work, healthy relationships and dating, managing stress, dealing with feelings of depression and employment preparation. Jeff has also arranged for presentations by guest speakers from external support agencies. Students who have attended group sessions regularly say that it is one of the few places at college where they feel happy, natural, safe, accepted and connected.

Jeff has also delivered workshops for faculty and support staff at Humber on how they can better support students with Asperger’s syndrome. This year, Jeff made a presentation on service gaps for students with AS to an audience of applied behaviour analysis professionals from across provincial school boards. He also spoke on behalf of the college sector at High School to Post-secondary Education for Students with Asperger’s: Roadmap for Success, a conference attended by 200 representatives from the Ministry of Education, social services and local schools.

Photo: Three regular attendees of the group who later became executive members of Humber’s first ever student-run Aspie Club. Pictured from left: Miguel Sealey-Cobham, Kelly Vanveen and Kayla Pittman
Cultivating Employment Skills – Growing Self-Confidence

When Hanna began the EARTH Gardening program, she was extremely quiet, shy and unsure of herself. With some landscape contract experience and a passion for gardening, she wanted to increase her knowledge as well as her business acumen.

Through the 15-week Environmental Approaches to a Resourceful Thoughtful Humanity (EARTH) Gardening program, Camosun provides British Columbia’s only post-secondary program in horticulture that is specifically designed for students with disabilities. Through a unique blend of classroom and experiential activities, and supported by dedicated instructors and instructional assistants, students are able to learn complex horticultural concepts while developing entry-level horticulture skills. Measurable and meaningful goals are achieved by tailoring activities to suit the participants.

The activities are as varied and diverse as the people who participate. Students utilize the campus gardens and greenhouses as well as a unique worm farm to apply their classroom learning. Students develop and maintain the Camosun gardens where they are involved first-hand in food production from seed to harvest. The program also includes an entrepreneurial activity where students grow plants to be sold in “The Greenhouse”.

Because students apply learning from the classroom directly to what they are doing, basic essential skills are developed including customer service, pricing of items, making change and using a cash register. Throughout the program, students also gain knowledge about working with clients and operating their own small horticulture businesses.

Through her work in the program, Hanna’s confidence blossomed as her skills and knowledge increased. Confidence in her newfound abilities encouraged her to enroll in other Employment Training and Preparation (ETP) programs. She completed courses with distinction and was selected as a recipient of the Pamela Vickers Award. She reached her employment goals by gaining a paid position with Oak Bay GardenWorks as well as increasing her customer base for landscape contracting.

ETP at Camosun College offers programs for students with a variety of disabilities. Funded through the BC provincial government, ETP was developed to respond to the needs of those who are not well represented in the post-secondary setting. These students come from disability communities that include developmental, learning and physical disabilities, Autism Spectrum Disorder, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome Disorder, mild intellectual disabilities, mental health disorders and acquired brain injuries.

Photo: Hanna touring a nursery as part of her training
Now You Hear It ... Now You Don’t!

Learners with disabilities benefit from noise-cancelling headphones

It is time to write your exam. You sit down, log in and are almost ready to start.

The student sitting next to you is listening to an audio recording and you can hear the echo. The student behind you is shuffling papers. Another student has just completed his exam and is packing up to leave. You feel irritated because all this sound is distracting and you cannot focus.

“Would you like to try these headphones?” asks the exam room facilitator. “They’ll help minimize the noise to help you focus.”

You put them on and the noisy distractions are barely there. These headphones have come to the rescue! Before you know it, you have completed the exam and feel confident it went well. This scenario is an example of why NorQuest College’s Learning Support unit now provides noise-cancelling headphones to students with disabilities.

“We offer test rooms to accommodate students who require extra time to complete their exams,” says Paul Reid, assistive technology specialist.

“With space challenges, students often write in the same room and the various sounds can be distracting to those with attention issues. We wanted to find a technical solution to support the needs of students so they could write the exams with minimal distractions.”

Paul and his team discovered the headphones and students have been using them since March 2013. They dampen noise and filter certain frequencies, decreasing the distracting sounds that can interfere with student success.

“About 10 to 30 per cent of students taking exams in the test room at any one time use the noise-cancelling headphones,” says Paul. “Currently, we have 20 headsets available and expect to order another 20 to 30.”

Student Mary Wilke says the headsets add huge benefits: “I didn’t hear the neighbours beside me or behind me get up and leave,” she says. “I finished my exam earlier and I did better. I would use these again because the sound blockage helped me concentrate on my test. I didn’t feel so stressed. Plus, with less sound, I was more focused on how to do my math questions.”

Photo: Academic Upgrading student Krishna Patel using noise cancelling headphones.
Helping Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder Achieve Their Potential

Over the past few years, Collège Montmorency has seen a steady increase in the number of students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), and specifically with Asperger’s syndrome. The number has risen from two students in 2010 to 17 in 2013.

The skills profiles of ASD students are very different from those of typical students. They possess considerable intellectual and artistic strengths but are significantly limited in terms of social and decision-making skills and independence. Academic success and personal well-being go hand in hand and, after providing academic coaching to some of these young people, remedial teachers noted a need to support their personal and social development. Montmorency therefore implemented services to ensure both the personal success of students with ASD/Asperger’s syndrome and the development of their vocational skills.

To meet this need, a guidance counsellor and remedial teacher teamed up during the 2012-13 school year to offer multidisciplinary coaching services to these 17 young students. The staff offered coaching through several means: individual meetings to help Asperger’s students develop their independence; academic and professional guidance tailored to their requirements; meetings with faculty; meetings with parents; group activities to develop social skills; and establishment of a partnership with an employment assistance organization (Action Main-d’oeuvre) to develop their employability. An online blog was created to report on the activities carried out with these young people at http://acochandicap.blogspot.ca.

One example of the success of this approach involves a student with very limited interests and a pessimistic view of the labour market. He received guidance coaching that helped him to discover he had strengths in editing he had never suspected. On our recommendation, the college offered him a job as a French tutor. With his services highly valued by his peers, he felt useful and competent and, consequently, found validation for his plan to take degree courses in editing.

Our specialized multidisciplinary services for young people with ASD have led to academic success, increased self-esteem and preparation for the labour market and degree courses. These services will continue in the coming years as part of the regular operations of Collège Montmorency’s Learning Assistance Department.
Accessibility to Post-Secondary Education

A student diagnosed with panic disorder enrolled in a bachelor’s degree at the University of St. Boniface (USB) but needed specialized support to succeed. Throughout her studies at USB, this student was accommodated for writing tests and examinations. For instance, she was given up to 200% extra time for courses requiring calculations and 150% for other courses. She was also allowed a private room to lower her anxiety level and a reduced course load so she could better manage her disorder and pass her courses.

This student completed her four-year program in four and a half years, earning her Bachelor of Business Administration in January 2014. Her name will appear on the Dean’s Honour List. Here is a student who has learned strategies she can draw upon for the labour market.

USB aims to provide an accessible learning and work environment and therefore offers accommodation to meet the needs of individuals with documented disabilities.

As such, a special-needs policy has been developed for this purpose. The objective of this policy is to create a learning environment where students with disabilities have access to all programs for which they are academically qualified.

USB established the Special Needs Services unit in 2009. Since then, the university has been promoting the services available, responding to the needs of a growing clientele and sensitizing faculty to the challenges facing our students.

Special Needs Services (SNS) at USB provides support that enhances the learning experience and outcomes of disadvantaged or at-risk learners. This year, 44 students were enrolled in SNS and received accommodation for their studies. The majority of students enrolled in SNS who take advantage of accommodations demonstrate greater success in their studies.

The Province of Manitoba provides financial assistance for a full-time position devoted to special needs.
Student Access Centre Stepping up to the Plate

Institutions of higher education are experiencing an increased number of students requiring special accommodations and John Abbott College is no exception. Ten years ago, the college had approximately 50 individuals on our list of students that were in need of accommodations to achieve academic success; today that number has reached almost 400.

Students using the Student Access services at John Abbott have been diagnosed and assessed by professionals outside of the college as having a condition that requires specific accommodations to support academic success. These diagnoses include dyslexia, dysgraphia, ADD, ADHD, central auditory processing disorder, cancer, diabetes, chrohns’ disease, anxiety disorders, depression, bi-polar disorder, schizophrenia and more.

The mandate of the Student Access Centre is to work with teachers and staff in advocating for and implementing services and accommodations for these students. Services may include an attendant for wheelchair-bound students, pre-registration, extra time for tests, specialized tutoring, a reduced course-load, assistance with time management or guidance for behavioural modification.

John Abbott College students using the Student Access Centre have a success rate similar to the general student population, and the same success rates for entrance to university, the job market and careers.

Ashley Tritt is a former student of John Abbott’s Special Needs program, who was diagnosed with anorexia and depression upon entering CÉGEP. She is now studying full-time for a degree in Anatomy and Cell Biology at McGill University and is succeeding at the university level with a 3.74 grade point average. Ashley attributes part of her success to the Special Needs team at her former CÉGEP.

“The accommodations available to me at John Abbott College made all the difference,” she says. “The team made it possible for me to balance personal issues I was facing while still being able to pursue my studies. They made me feel like I had something to look forward to beyond the difficulties I was facing at that time.”
Peer Tutoring by and for Students with Disabilities

Special Needs Services at the CÉGEP de Sherbrooke has developed an approach to support students with learning difficulties that is quite simple but very promising: peer tutoring.

Peer tutoring is a widely used strategy of pairing a student who is struggling in a particular subject with another student who has developed winning strategies or special skills in this same discipline. However, peer tutoring in Special Needs Services is unusual in that it is students with disabilities themselves who are tutoring other students.

Tutoring is intended for all students registered with Special Needs Services. It was introduced in 2012 in response to requests from students who were struggling and looking for help dealing with specific needs not met by existing resources.

In addition to providing effective help, this method draws on the strengths of the tutors and, in so doing, enhances their feelings of competency. In addition, it broadens the social network of special needs students who are often isolated from other students.

The following example from 2013 is a good illustration of the success of peer tutoring in special needs. A student with a pervasive developmental disorder was struggling with philosophy and received help from another student experiencing similar difficulties. Thanks to the tutor’s specific strategies and explanations, the student did well in his philosophy course often failed by students grappling with this developmental disorder. At the end of the session, the tutor indicated how much he had enjoyed his experience and expressed a strong feeling of achievement.

Staff in Special Needs Services at the CÉGEP de Sherbrooke are very pleased with this initiative. They have not only seen improvements in the marks of individuals being helped but have also observed positive effects on the tutors—all at no additional cost. This practice will be resumed next year and will aim to serve a greater number of students.
Learning Support for Students with Disabilities

A number of disabled students in New Brunswick colleges faced academic difficulties in the past because a lack of appropriate support services compromised their success. In order to improve their chances of success, the Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick (CCNB) established a Learning Support Centre (LSC) on each of its five campuses, staffed with inclusion co-ordinators to ensure that students would receive the services they needed to succeed.

Experiential evidence showed that the earlier the involvement, the more positive and direct the impact on success. Therefore, the CCNB decided to intervene before students even set foot on campus. To increase their chances of success, students are encouraged to report their disabilities as soon as possible by filling out a self-disclosure form. In addition, there is a service transfer option between local high schools and CCNB that makes the transition easier for students who enrol in a college as soon as they have finished high school.

Nathalie experienced great academic difficulties from the time she entered high school due to a learning disorder. As a result of her perseverance and the support services offered by the Learning Support Centre, she overcame her challenges with flying colours and successfully completed a program requiring 75% as the passing mark. Her classroom teacher suggested that the CCNB give her a recognition award at the graduation ceremony.

During the 2012-13 year, 85% of students who had received support services completed their training programs or were in a position to continue their studies the next year. This initiative was funded by the New Brunswick Department of Post-Secondary Education, Training and Labour.

Once students have enrolled, the inclusion co-ordinators consult psycho-educational reports or medical diagnoses to identify student needs before implementing the recommendations and service evaluation measures. They also collaborate on an on-going basis with all the professionals who are involved with the students.
Learning Together to Celebrate Abilities

Imagine you are a 21-year-old learner with a developmental disability and you have completed seven years of high school in a Learning Support program. Members of your family and many others your age are attending post-secondary studies to prepare them for the workforce. No one has ever offered you a post-secondary option and you have often been left with the impression that you cannot go to college. More important, you believe you cannot. Then you hear about a program, Community Integration through Co-operative Education (CICE) and the possibilities begin to present themselves.

In spite of your apprehension, you decide to take the risk and move into residence four hours away from your family. It is hard, but you discover a community of support including teachers, facilitators, peers and employers who believe you can learn even on the days when you do not think you can.

Over the course of two years, you develop functional numeracy and literacy, practical employability skills and strong self-advocacy skills by participating in an inclusive curriculum. You find yourself beginning to believe that you CAN do it. Finding success in the courses you pick and excelling in the workplace creates a new view of yourself. At the end of the journey, you have earned an Ontario College Certificate in CICE and a permanent job with benefits. You have also increased your independence, developed lifelong friends and have a strong and clear plan for dealing with challenges.

This is the story of a young man who now lives on his own and has full-time employment in his home community.

It was the research and passion of one faculty member at Fleming College in Peterborough and the teamwork of the entire institution that resulted in the fall 2012 launch of a program that provides students with the unique opportunity to continue their education in an inclusive college environment. Funded by the Ontario Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities, the program has a strong academic focus, authentic learning and meaningful co-op experiences and is rooted in inclusive educational philosophy. The CICE experience includes Transitions to College, Functional Numeracy and Literacy across all semesters, inclusive program electives and three co-op placements. The first graduating class has given life to this vision.
Creating Opportunities for Meaningful Work

**Transforming lives and communities through learning**

Relationship building with individuals who have traditionally been underserved by educational institutions is an aspect of Centennial College’s “learning for all” value as a learning-centered college. The college believes that learning is at the core of everything we do and is the pathway to meaningful work and meaningful lives.

Bringing our vision to reality requires staff to be open and responsive in serving all learners and providing them with the opportunities to achieve their goals.

Centennial College’s Food Packaging program is an example of a unique partnership with the local community through Corbrook—a non-profit agency serving developmentally delayed adults and their families.

Corbrook is a community agency committed to providing opportunities to enhance skills, build self-esteem and increase independence for developmentally delayed adults who have left the public education system. With an office located adjacent to Centennial’s Progress Campus in Scarborough, the agency approached the college’s School of Hospitality, Tourism and Culture and proposed partnering in the delivery of training for adult learners in the packaging of spices, teas and dried fruits for retail sales. This involved education about the sanitary handling of dried foodstuffs, transferring product from large industrial size containers, re-packaging, and labelling in unit-size bags and containers.

The Corbrook premises would provide a sheltered workshop environment for the learners and Centennial College would guide them in equipping a classroom/lab to industry standards in order to meet food handling and safety requirements. The college would also provide faculty with the expertise to teach the participants. Centennial College designed and developed the program and it was approved as a locally developed certificate by the college’s Board of Governors. The governors felt strongly that the program was an important part of responding to the local community.

This is a story of Centennial’s commitment to its community and to ensuring access to opportunities for education that will enrich lives. The college’s vision of “Transforming lives and communities through Learning” has been put into action through the Hospitality, Tourism and Culture School’s responsiveness to community concerns that few opportunities exist for this vulnerable population. Centennial College is proud to be creating a culture of possibility that opens doorways to hope.
Easing the Transition to College

School-to-College Transitions for Aboriginal Learners

The daylong program brought to the college youth from three local high schools and from a local aboriginal community organization. Upon arrival, the students were welcomed by an Aboriginal elder with a prayer in Ojibway and a smudging ceremony. A keynote speaker talked with students about Aboriginal ways of knowing, encouraging learners to view the possibilities before them with the cultural teachings of the people.

The youth were then offered the choice of two workshop sessions that focused on experiences of successful Aboriginal graduates of college programs in business, computer repair, graphic design or Aboriginal healthcare issues.

A catered lunch prepared from heritage recipes was served, prepared by an Aboriginal small business owner who specializes in traditional foods. The feedback from all participants was extremely positive.

This day of introduction to Centennial College was the result of the combined outreach efforts of the college, the school board, local high schools and an Aboriginal community organization. Centennial’s School College Work Initiative project team undertook outreach efforts to identify local Aboriginal learners at nearby high schools and invited them on campus to learn about college learning opportunities and programs, and to hear from successful Aboriginal young adults who had benefitted from a college learning experience.

Centennial’s School-to-College Transitions for Aboriginal Learners is a partnership activity between Centennial College, the Toronto District School Board, the School College Work Initiative (SCWI) regional planning team for Greater Toronto Area Schools and the House of Ghesig in Scarborough. The college is an active participant in SCWI’s work to create connections and transitions for secondary school students to post-secondary opportunities and workplace entry.

SCWI funding for members of the regional planning team allows the college to develop activities on a theme of interest for secondary school students to help them achieve further education or workplace goals. These learning activity days are tailored to meet specific areas of learning or student interest.

Our SCWI Projects Team recognized that the House of Ghesig was the hub of an Aboriginal community in Toronto’s Kingston Road and Galloway neighbourhood, close to the college’s Progress Campus. It is also located near Robert Borden Secondary School that has a significant number of Aboriginal students.

Centennial created an Aboriginal Education Council to guide the development of the college’s learning offerings in an environment that would be meaningful for the integration of Aboriginal learners into the college population. This resulted in the creation of an Aboriginal Friendship Centre designed to reflect Aboriginal values about teaching and learning, and the collective sharing of thought, experience and support. The Centre is now a welcoming space for high school visitors and new students at the Progress Campus.

Centennial’s relationship-building with Aboriginal individuals and communities that have traditionally been underserved is proof of our desire to welcome them to our learning-centered college. The traditional holistic approach to learning in the Aboriginal Centre demonstrates how the college is engaging learners and respecting the diversity of thought, experience, race, religion, ethnicity and gender.
A Home Away from Home for Aboriginal Students

The Aboriginal Student Resource Centre at John Abbott College (JAC) opened in the fall of 1989 to offer support services particularly geared to Aboriginal students. The Centre offers a wide range of academic and professional services for Aboriginal students from diverse nations including Cree, Mohawk, Algonquin, Inuit, Ojibwa, Mi’qmak and Métis.

Since many students at John Abbott come from remote northern communities, their needs are quite different from local students. The culture is very different for them in a city like Montreal with its size and pace of life. As a result, many students get homesick and feel alienated at times. They can get discouraged and want to drop out. The Centre assists them in a number of ways to overcome these obstacles. With a reduced load and plenty of mentoring and academic help, these students are more likely to do well and graduate.

Aboriginal students represent around 1% of the total JAC population but are nevertheless an important cohort that benefits from services tailored to their academic and social needs.

One example of how the Centre can help is the story of a young man from an Algonquin reserve who entered the Youth & Adult Correctional program. He began experiencing serious academic and social difficulties in his first year and most likely would have not finished his program if college staff had not intervened. By working closely with his teachers, his program director who mentored him and helped him academically, and his counsellors who helped him complete his studies, the student graduated and landed a good job in his field before convocation.

Close links with the communities and the involvement of Aboriginal organizations are essential to ensure students’ success. For the past six years, the Cree School Board has sponsored a position of pedagogical counsellor to support Aboriginal students. Financial support for the activities of the centre has also been provided by the Ministère de l’Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) du Québec through their program Accueil et intégration des étudiants autochtones au collégial.

The Aboriginal Student Resource Centre at John Abbott College is truly a home away from home for Aboriginal students. It is a vital resource because Aboriginal students who graduate and enter the workforce—either in a city or back in their community—can make an important contribution to society and become a role model for others.
HYPE - Youth and Community Engagement

Centennial College has been working for more than a decade challenging conventional wisdom to help youth living in poverty to pursue an education and find meaningful work.

Through outreach initiatives with the local school board and community groups, Centennial has identified youth living in priority investment neighborhoods near its Progress Campus. These young people can benefit from a model of education that reduces barriers to participation in learning and supports their efforts to complete their schooling. The six-week Helping Youth Pursue Education (HYPE) program developed by Centennial offers free tuition, transportation, learning materials, and meals, and helps participants recognize their potential to pursue post-secondary education.

In 2006, Centennial received a grant from the Youth Challenge Fund (YCF), which supports capacity development and leadership through grassroots engagement with young people in response to youth violence. This grant acknowledged Centennial’s efforts since 2004 to engage youth in post-secondary education. With support from the YCF and TD Financial, Centennial created its award-winning HYPE program.

As the number of HYPE graduates who enrolled in college grew each year, college leaders recognized the need to ensure the program and community outreach continued after grant funding ended. In 2009, Centennial opened the Community Outreach Office to coordinate activities and find new opportunities for individuals from under-represented groups.

Staff from the Community Outreach Office have established relationships with more than 500 individuals from almost 300 organizations, city departments, community groups and professional forums to engage individuals from under-represented groups. Over 10 years, more than 1,000 young people have participated in HYPE. Today more than 50% of participants are referred by word of mouth.

The Community Outreach Office developed the award-winning Youth and Community Engagement Relationship Model in recognition that HYPE and first generation Canadian students face similar challenges to completing post-secondary education. These students often lack the personal resources, experiences and community and parent support needed to succeed. Through this model, individuals develop relationships with outreach staff that can understand their experiences and assist them in navigating their journey through post-secondary education. Mentoring, special bursaries and other college services complement staff activities.

This program offers a new model for Centennial College to fulfill its vision of “Transforming lives and communities through learning” through post-secondary education (PSE) programs for under-represented groups such as youth from Toronto’s Priority Investment Neighbourhoods, individuals who are the first in their family to seek post-secondary education (FGS), Aboriginal youth and women seeking non-traditional careers.
Centennial College’s START (Successful Transitions: Advocacy, Resources and Training) is an award-winning program that helps students with learning disabilities transition into college. It was developed and implemented by the disability counsellors, learning strategists, adaptive technologists and assistant technicians who work at the college’s Centre for Students with Disabilities (CSD).

START was the result of collaboration between the CSD, enrolled students with disabilities and new students transitioning into college. CSD staff used these connections to evaluate and continually improve the program as they developed a greater appreciation and understanding of the complexities and variables these students face upon entering college.

The START program begins with START Smart, a summer conference that provides new students—in the summer before they start college—with a comprehensive understanding of the tools, technology and supports available at the CSD and Centennial. The conference focuses on four major areas: self-awareness/advocacy, learning strategies, surviving the first two weeks and college orientation. In addition, CSD provides training in assistive technology so that the students are familiar with the technology prior to the start of classes.

During START Smart, 54 new students are matched with 12 peer mentors who also attend the summer conference. These mentors, second or third year students with learning disabilities, share their experiences with the new students and help them connect with the supports they need to succeed.

CSD’s research has shown that START Mentors play a pivotal role in keeping students with learning disabilities connected to all stakeholders. The stronger the connection, the greater the chances that the student will transition successfully, persist with their studies and succeed at college.

When students with learning disabilities are ready to graduate, CSD is there to help them transition to the work world with OUT Smart. This three-day conference includes workshops and networking opportunities. Participants can also meet with community employment service providers and participate in resume writing and job search clinics. Currently, Centennial is the only Ontario college to offer this program.
Loyalty Cards and College in Motion

Loyalty cards and roving recruiters are two innovative approaches Mohawk College has taken to encourage disadvantaged young adults to continue their education at their local college.

Through the Access Project, Mohawk is connecting with youth and starting conversations with hundreds of young people at their schools and in their neighbourhoods in Hamilton. The college is igniting the dream of post-secondary education and offering a helping hand, a vote of confidence and a head start on the journey to Mohawk.

College in Motion
Mohawk’s College in Motion team meets with young people in their schools and neighbourhoods. The team answers any and all questions that students have about Mohawk College and its programs. The College in Motion team has met with more than 5,000 young people so far, one-on-one and in small groups, to tell them about training and education possibilities at the college.

Future Ready Loyalty Card
Mohawk offers loyalty card rewards for high school students who invest in college and career planning. The students earn points for taking part in Mohawk events, which range from meeting with our College in Motion team to attending open houses. Students can then redeem their points for up to $1,000 off their first semester tuition.

Mohawk @ School
Mohawk @ School gives high school students a head start on their college education. More than 85 students are taking Mohawk’s Success Strategies course at four Hamilton high schools. Students who pass the tuition-free course earn the General Education elective credit that is required for all first year students at Mohawk.

Mohawk is clearing a path to post-secondary education for young people from high-priority neighbourhoods. Together with education, community and industry partners, the Mohawk Access Project is reaching out to disadvantaged youth.
Success on the Court and in the Classroom

The Athlete Academic Student Involvement Program (AASIP) began at John Abbott College in 2009 as an academic support program for the entire student athlete population. Recognizing that student athletes have demands, time constraints and academic eligibility concerns that are very distinct from their student peers, AASIP focuses on orientation and early intervention with student athletes.

Prior to the first day of classes, John Abbott College student athletes attend an orientation session to better understand and appreciate the support system that will follow them through their college careers. The AASIP program and support staff members are introduced along with program information and links to college, Web and external resources intended to ease the transition into college life, academics and balancing participation in a competitive sport.

The program continues throughout the academic year with services that range from individual tutoring to subject-based group tutorials in the sciences, math and language arts. AASIP holds its tutorials Mondays to Thursday late in the day when most classes are finished and athletic practices have yet to begin. Scheduling is intentionally structured to fit the schedules of busy student athletes who may need to enhance their study skills and who may also need to work off campus to support themselves financially. Attendance at the tutorials may be voluntary or a team or academic coach may require student athletes to attend sessions based on their academic standing or particular circumstances.

Workshops are also available for specific teams on time management, note-taking, reading academic articles, essay writing and oral presentations. Each semester, workshops on topics outside the curriculum are available to all JAC student athletes, (including sessions on using the library research databases, nutrition, motivation, the university application process, NCAA information and career exploration). These workshops are designed to sustain the motivation of student athletes, foster further student engagement and encourage greater student retention and overall academic success. In the 2011-12 academic year, all members of the men’s basketball team were eligible for the winter semester for the first time in three years in large part because of AASIP.
Changing Lives through Championship

Statistics show that students who are Crown wards change foster homes and schools many times throughout their elementary and secondary education.

In Ontario, a Crown ward is a permanent ward of the province pursuant to a court order made under the Child and Family Services Act until the age of 21. Because these students are in care for a variety of serious reasons, the additional difficulties presented by continuous change of living and educational circumstances only exacerbate what are already complicated childhoods. This was a critical missing piece of knowledge that was required to enable schools to provide appropriate supports to these students as they entered college.

“My crown wardship ended at the age of 21, less than a year into my studies. Transitioning to having no support was the most difficult thing I had to overcome,” says former Crown ward Carolyn Bernhart. “It wasn’t long after that I realized I wasn’t alone, thanks to Sault College.”

In 2007, the Ontario Ministry of Education created the concept of Crown Ward Education Championship (CWECT) teams. The teams’ purpose was to remove barriers to educational success for children who were Crown wards. In 2011, the Algoma Crown Ward Education Championship Team was created with Sault College, the Children’s Aid Society (CAS) of Algoma, and local educational and community partners.

The Algoma team quickly discovered that gaps between institutions often prevented them from knowing which students were Crown wards. They determined that greater connectivity was required between various services and institutions.

“When I started at Sault College in the fall of 2009, I could never have imagined a school could become the support system I was lacking. It was one of the major reasons I was able to succeed academically,” Carolyn says.

In the first year, the team took steps to familiarize those in direct contact with the students (teachers, student service counsellors, etc.) with the reality of the situations faced by the students. A video was created and a Championship Day was held during which teachers, counsellors, CAS workers, foster parents and Crown wards interacted and discussed student needs and ways to address them. 

This was followed by an information night to support student planning for post-secondary education and a memorandum of understanding for data-sharing with post-secondary schools and school boards to support the educational needs of children in care. A Crown ward information page was created on the College’s website and a post-secondary promotion page on the Children’s Aid website. In addition, Crown wards at Sault College have been assigned a single point of contact, residence spaces have been guaranteed and resource transition guides have been developed to assist students to navigate of the system.

“I had someone to talk to when things got to be too much. There was financial aid for tuition, scholarships and bursaries I was fortunate enough to be selected for, gift certificates for groceries when I was hungry, on-campus employment, health care, a gym and so much more,” Carolyn says. “There were no closed doors at Sault College, just endless possibilities, help, kind faces and an education for my future. I couldn’t have made it without the services and staff at Sault College.”

Focus groups indicated the need for financial support and Sault College determined that the Ontario Access Grant for Crown Wards which provide 50% of tuition costs would be matched by the college to allow these learners to study tuition-free.

All of these supports have had a very positive impact on Sault’s students. At the end of year one, 14 Crown wards have availed themselves of the grants and retention into a second year of studies is projected at almost 100%. The Championship Team has met its intended goal of reducing barriers and offered these students the support they need to create a brighter future for themselves. That work will continue.
A Better Future for Young Parents and their Children

The College of the Rockies aims to provide young parents who have not completed high school with a supportive learning environment to help them earn their Grade 12 diploma. The college, in partnership with the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy, offers programs for both parents and their children to allow them to study and continue to be involved in their children’s care.

The Young Parents Education Program (YPEP) provides free academic support as well as life, parenting and work skills five days a week from September to May. Because YPEP is a parenting program with a continual focus on the parent-child relationship, a children’s program is also provided. The College of the Rockies contributes space, in-kind contributions and Adult Basic Education instruction to the program.

The program is based on the four-quadrant Family Literacy Model that includes learning for parents, learning for children, parenting skills and parent-child together time. Program outcomes for the parent participants include improvement of reading, writing and math skills as well as the development of employability skills. Longer-term goals include obtaining a high school credential or General Educational Development certificate (GED), meeting entrance requirements for post-secondary education or gaining employment.

Objectives for the children of participants include developmental progress in cognitive, language, social, emotional, physical and motor skills. Longer-term goals include improved school performance and increased interest in and commitment to learning.

YPGP aims to improve parent-child relationships by increasing the quality and quantity of time parents and children spend reading, writing, talking and playing together. It also assists parents in maintaining positive, supportive interactions with their children.

Taran Berg entered YPEP in the fall of 2011. She had been attending the local high school but did not feel supported there and wanted more time with her child. With the support of YPEP, Taran completed her Grade 12 requirements within a year and a half. She now plans to enter College of the Rockies as full-time student.

The 2012-13 academic year saw two YPEP learners obtain their Grade 12 diplomas and nine others complete credits toward graduation. Additional support for YPEP comes from Paq’mi Nuq’yuk Early Learning Years, the Infant Development program, the Community Action Program for Children and Bellies to Babies.

Photo: Taran Berg proudly displays a congratulatory certificate from the Young Parents Education Program. Taran received the certificate to recognize the achievement of her goal: obtaining a Grade 12 diploma.
Full Circle at Lambton College

Lambton College is a partner in a community-based poverty eradication program called Circles. Circles is a supportive, intentional, reciprocal relationship comprised of a Circle Leader, a family working to get out of poverty, and two to four community allies who are middle class people willing to befriend and support the family.

Lambton College hosts a weekly Circle Group on campus and a broad representation of college employees is involved with the Circles program.

Circle Leaders are required to complete a life-planning workbook, Getting Ahead in a Just-Gettin’-By World, that explores the hidden rules of economic class and the impact poverty has had on their lives. Unique to Lambton College, the Getting Ahead program has been developed into a full credit general education course available to any student. Students who have come from economically-challenging backgrounds and have completed the Circles program can get full credit at Lambton College for their prior learning and experiences. As well, students who are interested in getting involved in Circles can complete this course. Either way, students maximize their learning and are able to use this course towards their diploma or credential of choice. For many students, this is the first positive academic achievement in their lives.

Circle allies are required to attend Bridges Out of Poverty—Strategies for Professionals and Communities, a workshop based on the work of Dr. Ruby Payne, about the culture of poverty. Delivered by certified Bridges trainer, Gayle Montgomery, this workshop helps people from all economic classes understand and work together to create opportunities for success.

The most recent Circle initiative is with the Children’s Aid Society of Sarnia/Lambton in support of youth in care and young mothers. These participating leaders will have access to the resources and supports of Lambton College as they create their future plans regarding finishing high school and post-secondary education.

To date, 16 Circle Leaders have received their post-secondary credential through Lambton, with 10 additional leaders beginning their academic journey this fall. Some graduates have continued their education and their successful journey with further education at Lambton and beyond, with two of the leaders attending college degree completion programs at Nipissing University and the University of Windsor.
Loving and Learning

Children Lovingly Cared for While Parents Upgrade

Some parents with young children are unable to access or afford the childcare they need to move forward with their education goals. Some are simply not yet comfortable leaving their children and heading off to school.

Support for parents to go back to school is especially challenging in rural areas. In the Selkirk College region, three caring organizations have pooled their resources to remove barriers and pave the way for learners to succeed.

Selkirk has a mission to inspire lifelong learning, transform lives through education and training, and serve local communities. College partners include the Columbia Basin Alliance for Literacy (CBAL), which delivers literacy services in communities throughout the region and Kootenay Family Place that provides vital family services in Castlegar. Together, these three partners offer Adult Basic Education upgrading classes in a location with licensed childcare so parents can participate while their children are cared for nearby.

In this innovative collaboration, Kootenay Family Place makes space available, Selkirk College instructors bring in resources and teach, and CBAL funds the childcare. Everyone wins. Parents are introduced gently to time spent away from their children while benefiting from high-quality academic instruction in accredited courses. At the same time, foundations of family literacy are established with parents of young children through vibrant programs in a valued community centre.

Parents of young children who felt formal education was out of their grasp have experienced transformative changes in their lives. It is the comfort afforded by the unique structure of the program that enables the parents to build confidence, earn college credits and find a clearer path toward a career. The program is now offered in three communities.

Charity needed to upgrade her skills in order to re-enter the workforce but was very hesitant while caring for two children—one experiencing severe febrile seizures—until someone told her about this program. She completed her upgrades, continued on to Administrative Skills classes at Selkirk College, completed a practicum at Kootenay Family Place and now has a full-time job.

Charity says, “Thanks for helping me to gain the confidence that I needed in order to be successful.”
Learning Navigator

Learning Navigators are staff with special training to help new Bow Valley College students, including Aboriginal learners, first generation learners, new immigrants, ESL learners and learners with disabilities adjust to the college experience.

Staff Navigators are encouraged to meet with their first semester students twice a month and take part in campus events and workshops with them. Learning opportunities include leadership workshops, academic success seminars and campus events.

The Learning Navigator program provides unique leading-edge support with a meaningful connection between staff and first semester students while helping students develop a network of support on campus. It offers access to special events and workshops around the campus, provides materials and resources to support success and delivers campus knowledge and leadership experience that can be passed on to others. The program has been shown to have positive impacts on learner retention due to access to one-on-one support.

Learning Navigator is a new initiative based on staff mentoring programs and student-to-student peer mentoring models. Training, professional development and resources are provided to staff members wanting to become Navigators.

The pilot semester was held in the fall of 2012 with 43 learners signed up and 35 staff Learning Navigators trained. Approximately 70% of learners stayed in touch with their Navigator throughout the semester. Approximately 56% of employees who participated continued as a Navigator the following semester and another four Navigators chose not to participate in the second semester because they wanted to remain connected with their original learner.

Among learners, 26% felt increased confidence to help other students make their way around the college campus and 20% reported an increase in feeling knowledgeable about campus services and supports for students.

“I have benefited by having a person to talk to if I needed some assistance,” one student said. “I have been struggling with English so having a contact in the [department] is helpful for me.”
From Mental Illness, Addiction and Crime to Employment

Back from the Brink - Pathways from Mental Illness and Addictions to Sustainable Employment

People with a history of mental illness or addiction face significant barriers when trying to find education and training programs or obtaining and sustaining meaningful employment.

Since April 2004, George Brown College (GBC) and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH) have partnered to deliver Augmented Education, a unique education and training model for those with a history of mental illness and/or addiction. This innovative model combines elements of supported education and supported transitions to employment.

Two streams of Augmented Education are offered at George Brown—one in construction and one in cooking. The programs include one-on-one job coaching to help graduates maintain employment through life skills training, conflict resolution strategies and ongoing job development. Students are able to develop the interpersonal, self-management skills and necessary technical skills that lead to successful job retention. Each program takes 25-30 students per year who pay no tuition or fees.

The students in the Augmented Education programs study in the same labs, use the same equipment and achieve the same standards of competence as students in the college’s regular construction trades and culinary programs. Both programs provide students with industry-recognized training and certification. This is an unusual feature of George Brown’s approach, as programs for under-served populations rarely lead to standard credentials.

Most of the students in these programs believed they would never work again. Instead, more than 72% of our graduates have received offers of employment and maintained employment in their related fields.

George Brown College currently offers two Augmented Education Programs. The Construction Craft Worker Extended Training Program (CCWET) is a six-month program with 160 hours of work placement. The Assistant Cook Extended Training Program (ACET) runs for eight months with 150 hours of work placement. The CCWET and ACET programs are partially funded by the Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services, The City of Toronto, and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities. The funding covers the cost of all materials and tools.
Education – A Window to Freedom

Danny Lavallée began his college diploma studies through CÉGEP Marie-Victorin (CMV) classes in the penitentiary and, once out of prison, successfully completed Social Work Techniques studies in a CÉGEP. While in this program, he performed volunteer work and received a citation of excellence. Following graduation, he completed a university certificate and published two books.

Danny is an example of a learner whose experience of college education while in prison set an example of success for others. Currently, Lavallée is the clinical co-ordinator of the Carrefour le Point Tournant Inc. drug and addiction centre in Longueuil.

For many years, prisoners in Canada were only able to continue their primary and secondary studies through individualized modules, with no interaction among learners. It was not until 1973 that CMV offered credit courses for federal penitentiary prisoners in Quebec. The CMV gradually introduced more diverse college training at all 13 penitentiaries in Quebec.

College training is now available to groups and this allows for meaningful student-teacher encounters. Detainees identify themselves more as students than as prisoners. This is a step forward in terms of their ability to think and act as full citizens.

As soon as the student detainees enter the penitentiary, the teachers and teaching assistants coach and guide them towards academic success and graduation—essential elements on their path to employment and successful reintegration into society. Moreover, thanks to the implementation of the College Study Assistance Program for Detainees in Transition (PRET 2000), student detainees can be supervised while in the community. The average success rate for the 252 student detainees participating in this program from 2000 to 2010 was 86%.

The in-prison and in-community programs and services offered by the college allow student detainees the freedom to think differently and to acquire the values that will make them confident, productive citizens. In 2011, CMV received recognition from the UNESCO Chair in Applied Research for Education in Prison as a result of these innovative prison practices.
Never Again Steal Carz!

NASCARZ is an award-winning program designed to promote social inclusion for young people from Vancouver’s Downtown Eastside through social and educational opportunities.

The idea behind NASCARZ is to harness and transform the resourcefulness, ingenuity and courage of young people with a history of auto theft into a positive pathway that involves cars and mechanics and introduces them to a new social network. Interaction with faculty, classmates, community partners and the Vancouver Police Department around what interests these students—cars and mechanics—helps to give them a new cultural and social environment where they can develop their skills and confidence.

NASCARZ was developed by officers of the Vancouver Police Department and RayCam Community Cooperative Centre. Together, they realized that youth with a history of car theft could use their interest in cars to work towards a viable career. They approached Vancouver Community College (VCC) with the idea of partnering to bring youth to the college’s training facility and develop programs to encourage students to never again steal cars. Instead, they could learn to work on them! This has developed into a program promoted in public exhibits and shows that highlight youth and car culture in Vancouver. Through these public events and other fundraisers and through successful partnerships, the program is close to becoming self-sustaining.

At the VCC auto trades facility, young people aged 13 and up work with college faculty to restore cars and learn automotive skills. Youth are involved with the program from February to August every year and can elect to participate for a number of years, thus strengthening connections with their new social network, and gaining appreciation for college and the importance of studying. Food and transportation are provided and some incentives are offered.

Students are supported by youth workers from RayCam, with at least one youth worker on site during program hours. Learners also obtain college credits for the courses they take. To date, NASCARZ students have completed courses in job search, career exploration and communication skills for the workplace.
The Power of Street Humanities

An innovative program called Street Humanities is offering new opportunities for individuals in Prince George who are socially excluded due to poverty, addictions, homelessness and unemployment.

This collaborative program was developed and delivered for the first time in September 2005. The first group of Street Humanities students was introduced to college studies by attending non-credit liberal arts survey classes twice a week at the College of New Caledonia (CNC). Participation in the course was a powerful enabler students to continue on their path of learning.

One young man who came from the Baldy Hughes Therapeutic Community for men suffering from addiction completed the program this past year and plans to pursue a Social Work diploma at CNC in the fall of 2013. His drive to pursue education and transform his life was ignited by the program. Success stories like this one are the foundation of the Street Humanities program that empowers lives through education.

Through the department of Community Education at the college, disadvantaged students are offered access to post-secondary education. The Street Humanities program is a unique project that brings marginalized men and women with multiple barriers and from diverse backgrounds and cultures into the college community. Once in the classroom, the students begin a journey of empowerment through education.

The program provides inclusive educational activities to challenge and stimulate adult learners while helping them develop critical thinking and problem-solving abilities. Students attend class six hours a week where they learn from college faculty volunteers about literature, poetry, music appreciation, First Nations studies, art, sociology, journalism, history and leadership.

The ultimate goal of the program is to empower the participants and decrease barriers to education. Many of the students have gone on to continue education at the college and other post-secondary institutions.

A core value of the College of New Caledonia is to enhance the learning experience and outcomes of the Prince George community. Today, Street Humanities is funded and supported by community partners such as the Northern John Howard Society (NJHS), the Association Advocating for Women and Children (AWAC), Baldy Hughes Therapeutic Community and the City of Prince George. It is also supported through funding from the Vancouver Foundation and the Prince George Community Planning Council.
Non-Academic Support to Overcome Barriers

Over the past few years, Parkland College has run 21 Essential Skills and Employment projects. Many barriers have been encountered in delivering these projects, especially for First Nations students. Chief among these is the lack of personal identification, such as a birth certificate, social insurance number or health card—documentation required when applying for a driver’s licence. As Saskatchewan is a largely rural province, a driver’s licence is a must for most jobs.

Because many students did not know how to obtain these important pieces of identification, Parkland College decided to teach them. Staff assisted students in obtaining forms for birth certificates, walked them through the daunting process of completing the forms and paid the fees through the college’s Adult Basic Education programming for First Nations. College staff members sat with the students and verbally worked through the forms. By receiving one-to-one assistance, those students saw their self-confidence increase and felt like they could move forward.

The story of one student stands out. When she was younger, she was caught driving under the influence and ticketed for driving without a valid licence. Her career goal is to become an addictions counsellor, but she felt the greatest barrier to her success was her lack of a driver’s licence. With the help of a college staff member, she completed the required Saskatchewan General Insurance (SGI) form, arranged an appointment for addictions counselling and wrote to her band requesting funding for a driving course. She received the funding, successfully passed the course, earned her learner’s licence and was granted a driver’s licence in July 2013.

Sometimes little things make all the difference. Without this service, many students fall through the cracks and the barriers remain.
So, What Do I Do Now?

For a young woman in an abusive relationship with a four-year-old child and no steady income, going back to school seemed like a distant possibility. But the College of New Caledonia (CNC) Mackenzie campus had a program that offered her a chance to get training that would lead to a job.

Through funding from the BC Ministry of Tourism, Jobs & Innovation, CNC has offered its Pre-Employment Strategy to newcomers and locals who are unemployed and do not qualify for Employment Insurance under its Jobs Options program. Once enrolled in the program, students are guided through six weeks of in-class curriculum involving learner-centred participation in essential skills upgrading, career building and human relations techniques. These courses are augmented by students gaining formal certification in Level One First Aid, Traffic Control and FoodSafe.

This young mother started the program late with many serious issues. During the remaining weeks of class, she gained the confidence to obtain her learner’s driver’s licence. On graduation day, she ended her abusive relationship and moved to another town where she secured a long-term job in a women’s resource centre. She has since obtained her full driver’s licence.

The Jobs Options program is a cooperative effort between CNC faculty and CNC’s WorkBC Mackenzie Employment Services Centre. It culminates in a learner-designed work practicum where students practice their newfound skills with subsidized host employers for four weeks. The program organizers also anticipate seasonal hiring patterns by offering to provide local retailers with staff for the busy Christmas shopping season. The program has helped about 60% of its graduates find employment, with a further 20% opting for further upgrading through other CNC programs. The college has delivered the program twice a year for three years.

“There was definitely a need to develop a starting point for those who have exhausted other forms of income assistance,” says the program’s core instructor, Daniel Gunter. “Our goal is to provide a program that helps people transform their lives, giving them the supports and certification needed to gain lasting employment.”
Member Colleges & Institutes

British Columbia
- British Columbia Institute of Technology (BCIT)
- Camosun College
- Capilano University
- Collège Éducacentre
- College of New Caledonia
- College of the Rockies
- Douglas College
- Justice Institute of British Columbia
- Kwantlen Polytechnic University
- Langara College
- Native Education College
- Nicola Valley Institute of Technology
- North Island College
- Northern Lights College
- Northwest Community College
- Okanagan College
- Selkirk College
- University of the Fraser Valley
- Vancouver Community College
- Vancouver Island University

Yukon
- Yukon College

Alberta
- Bow Valley College
- Grande Prairie Regional College
- Keyano College
- Lakeland College
- Lethbridge College
- Medicine Hat College
- NorQuest College
- Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT)
- Northern Lakes College
- Olds College
- Portage College
- Red Deer College
- SAIT Polytechnic

Northwest Territories
- Aurora College

Manitoba
- Assiniboine Community College
- École technique et professionnelle, Université de Saint-Boniface
- Red River College of Applied Arts, Science and Technology
- University College of the North
- Manitoba Institute of Trades and Technology

Nunavut
- Nunavut Arctic College

Saskatchewan
- Carlton Trail Regional College
- Cumberland College
- Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research
- Great Plains College
- North West Regional College
- Northlands College
- Parkland College
- Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies
- Saskatchewan Polytechnic
- Southeast Regional College

Ontario
- Algonquin College
- Cambrian College
- Canadore College
- Centennial College
- Collège Boréal
- Conestoga College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning
- Confederation College
- Durham College
- Fanshawe College
- Fleming College
- George Brown College
- Georgian College
- Humber College Institute of Technology & Advanced Learning
- La Cité
- Lambton College
- Loyalist College
- The Michener Institute for Applied Health Sciences
- Mohawk College
- Niagara College
- Northern College
- Sault College
- Seneca College
- Sheridan College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning
- St. Clair College
- St. Lawrence College
- Université de Guelph, Campus d’Alfred
- University of Guelph, Kemptville Campus

Quebec
- Cégep André-Laurendeau
- Cégep Beauce-Appalaches
- Cégep de Chicoutimi
- Cégep de Drummondville
- Cégep de Jonquière
- Cégep de l’Abitibi-Témiscamingue
- Cégep de l’Outaouais
- Cégep de la Gaspésie et des Îles
- Cégep de La Pocatière
- Cégep de Matane
- Cégep de Sainte-Foy
- Cégep de Saint-Félicien
- Cégep de Saint-Hyacinthe
- Cégep de Saint-Jérôme
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- Cégep de Sept-Îles
- Cégep de Sherbrooke
- Cégep de Thetford
- Cégep de Trois-Rivières
- Cégep de Victoriaville
- Cégep du Vieux Montréal
- Cégep Édouard-Montpetit
- Cégep Garneau
- Cégep John Abbott College
- Cégep Limoilou
- Cégep Marie-Victorin
- Cégep régional de Lanaudière
- Cégep Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu
- Champlain Regional College
- Collège Ahuntsic
- Collège André Grasset
- Collège de Maisonneuve
- Collège de Rosemont
- Collège Gérald-Godin
- Collège LaSalle
- Collège Lionel-Groulx
- Collège Mérici
- Collège Montmorency
- Collège Shawinigan
- Dawson College
- Heritage College
- Institut de technologie agroalimentaire – Québec
- Institut de tourisme et d’hôtellerie du Québec
- Vanier College

New Brunswick
- Collège communautaire du Nouveau-Brunswick (CCNB)
- New Brunswick College of Craft and Design
- New Brunswick Community College (NBCC)

Newfoundland and Labrador
- Centre for Nursing Studies
- College of the North Atlantic
- Marine Institute

Nova Scotia
- Université Sainte-Anne - Collège de l’Acadie
- Dalhousie Agricultural Campus of Dalhousie University
- Nova Scotia Community College

Prince Edward Island
- Collège Acadie Î.-P.-É.
- Holland College

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