

carnets 39

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DU 1^{er} AU 4 JUIN 2021

LA
PAROLE
EST AUX
ACTES



IN THIS ISSUE

Dual-mode teaching : «2 en 1» illusion •

The challenges of teaching art history online •

Give Me Some Room to Breathe • News from the Regroupements • Feminist symposium for FNEEQ activists • The FNEEQ-CSN's 33rd convention • Back to the classroom, back to nature : Take a walk through campus greenery



Carnets is back after an 18 months absence which requires no explanation, but which does give you an idea of how the pandemic has disrupted our daily lives here at the FNEEQ since March 2020. It's too early to be able to give you a full picture of the impact the crisis has had and continues to have on us, but we wanted to start telling the story of the pandemic through the thoughts and accounts of the colleagues who contributed articles to this issue of *Carnets*.

It's no surprise that the pandemic has had a huge effect on teachers' working lives. In three separate surveys, our members have told us

about the new, demanding, ever-changing conditions with which they have to contend. We've surveyed a total of 3,700 members (over 10% of the FNEEQ's membership): members of the Regroupement Cégep in October 2020, members of the Regroupement Privé in December 2020, and members of the Regroupement Université in February 2021. These surveys produced one surprising and disturbing finding: in all three cases, teachers reported significant increases in all their tasks, and especially in course preparation and student supervision. The heavier workload has naturally caused considerable dissatisfaction, which has in turn led to high levels of psychological distress (as measured on the Kessler scale) in over 20% of the members surveyed. Over the past year, the FNEEQ has ceaselessly voiced teachers' concerns about overwork and other matters to officials such as ministers Roberge and McCann, whose policies and actions have been especially disappointing in this time of crisis.

The pandemic has also had major impacts on union activities. Unions have had to improvise online meetings on unstable technological platforms. Opportunities for debate have been limited under the static conditions of the pandemic. And mobilizing members has been especially difficult with public gatherings banned. From the outset, the FNEEQ has looked for the best ways to support its unions in activities such as general meetings and votes. The Federation has maintained and indeed expanded mechanisms for keeping members informed, meeting their needs and conducting collective actions. As these lines are being written, preparations for the FNEEQ's 33rd federal convention (which will of course have to be held by video conference) are well under way. We want to gather and unite our unions behind a shared vision, which will evolve over the coming three years. That is why we have chosen a slogan that is directly aligned with our values of activism and engagement: "La parole est aux actes."

Enjoy reading this issue of *Carnets*!

Caroline Tussnel

Summary

- 4 Dual-mode teaching : « 2 en 1 » illusion
- 6 The challenges of teaching art history online
- 7 Give Me Some Room to Breathe
- 8 News from the Regroupements
- 11 Feminist symposium for FNEEQ activists
- 13 The FNEEQ-CSN's 33rd convention
- 14 Back to the classroom, back to nature :
Take a walk through campus greenery

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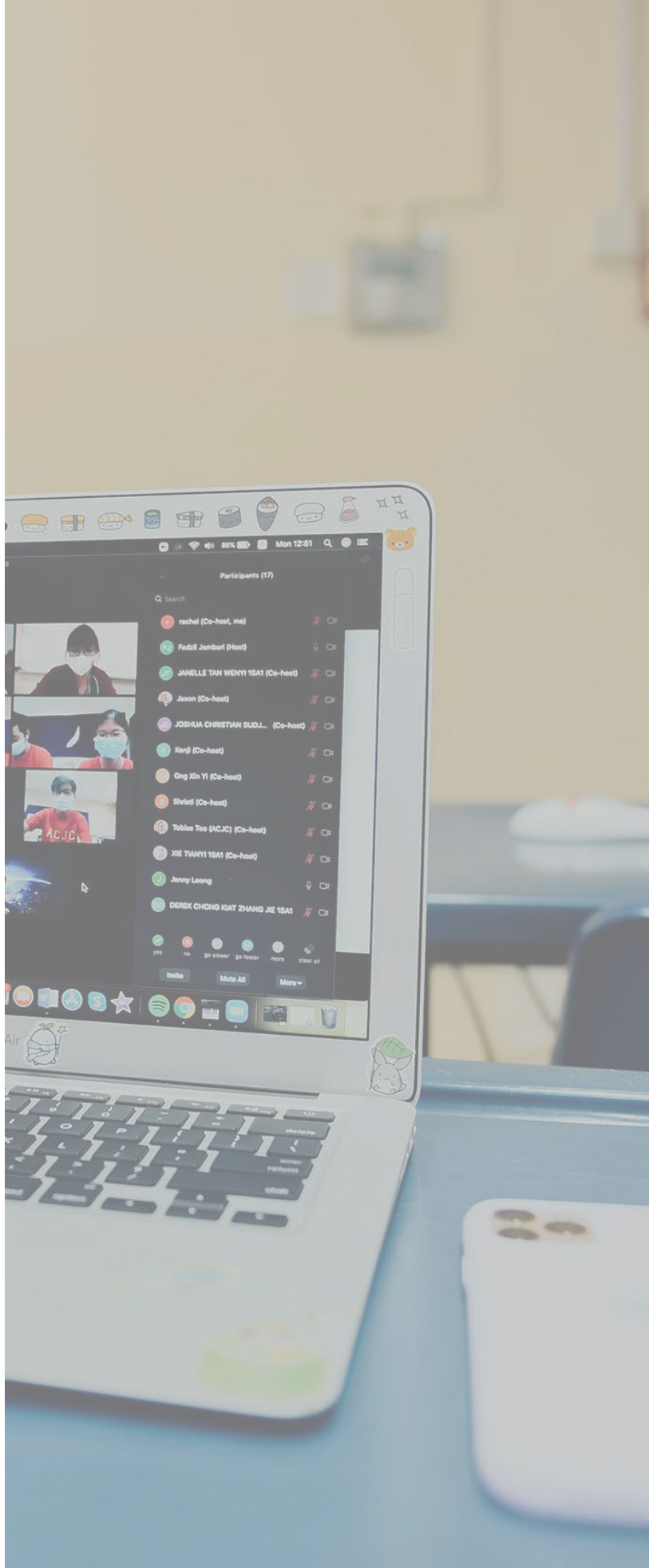
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Dual-mode teaching: the “2 in 1” illusion

FNEEQ School and Society Committee

On February 4, 2021, the Minister for Higher Education finally emerged from the shadows to announce measures allowing for more in-person teaching at Québec CEGEPs and universities. Since the pandemic began, the FNEEQ had been advocating in-person instruction as the preferred approach, so our natural reaction was to be pleased. But it turns out the minister wants the worst possible solution: “dual-mode” instruction, which means teaching in the classroom and online simultaneously. It’s like using a “2 in 1” shampoo and conditioner, which, as everybody knows, does both jobs only half as well.

Clearly, steps have to be taken to mitigate the impact of the current public-health restrictions, which may be with us for some time yet. Teachers have shown exemplary professionalism in this respect since the start of the pandemic, repeatedly adjusting to various remote-teaching arrangements in accordance with the government’s changing, improvised guidelines. After nearly a year of applying their creativity, exchanging ideas with colleagues, and taking training, often on a volunteer basis, in order to make the adjustments, teachers are now having yet another experiment thrust upon them. Despite the additional financial resources that the government has allocated, workloads will remain heavier than usual because the money is far from sufficient to meet the needs. The funds are not going to teaching staff but are instead being used to install equipment to support, on a permanent basis, remote education in a form that is improvised and not covered by the collective agreement.

Despite what the government and certain ill-informed journalists may say, teachers are in no way living in a “parallel universe.”¹ They have many solutions to propose for teaching during the pandemic—solutions that are evidence-based (which the champions of “good governance” should approve of) and on which teachers have reached a consensus within the democratic bodies that represent them. But Québec’s policymakers have long refused to really consult teachers. While the government conducts its so-called consultations prior to tabling its budget, teachers must mobilize to oppose the false promise of dual-mode instruction and demand the resources we need in order to

implement the solutions we have proposed, which should be adopted until we can return to full classroom mode.²

Reservations about dual-mode instruction

First of all, let’s be clear about what dual-mode instruction really means. We are being told that for now it “simply” means teaching in the classroom and online at the same time (which already entails its share of problems). But prior to the pandemic, dual-mode teaching was something far more complex and laborious. For example, Université Laval defines it as follows: “Unlike hybrid teaching, in which the instructor decides how the course will be delivered each week, in dual-mode teaching, it is the student who decides which mode suits him or her (in the classroom, remote live, remote recorded) from one week to the next...” Even the champions of this “client-centric” approach acknowledge that it is a complex undertaking that has some major drawbacks and requires considerable human and financial resources.

To begin with, there are numerous technical constraints. Dual-mode teaching requires a major deployment of expensive digital tools that have to be purchased, maintained and replaced. It puts pressure on the institution’s Internet bandwidth and raises issues of equitable access for students from less privileged socioeconomic backgrounds.

There are also many practical constraints. Because there is no way to know in advance which students will be in the classroom, lesson plans must either

1 Marie-Andrée Chouinard, “L’univers parallèle,” *Le Devoir*, February 6, 2021. We’re not linking to it here because we don’t want to ruin anyone’s day by directing them to an editorial that is so oblivious about the work of CEGEP and university teachers.

2 During the consultations on the CAQ government’s 2021 budget, the FNEEQ launched its [Avoir les moyens – FNEEQ](#) campaign.

stay within narrow limits or become extremely complex and provide multiple options depending on whether the student is in the classroom, online or watching a tape. The ministry is assuming that as lockdowns are lifted, these arrangements can continue with zero cost in human resources – in other words, on the backs of teachers, who will have to devote far too much unpaid overtime to making the necessary adjustments. The reality is that you can't just wing it; you have to think about each lesson and plan it in advance.

Given the administrations' intent to perpetuate dual-mode teaching after the pandemic,³ we will be setting a dangerous precedent if we agree to make all these adjustments for free. We must not let them entertain the illusion that it is possible to offer remote learning (in live, recorded or hybrid form) and to switch from one mode of teaching to another without a tremendous investment of human and financial resources, thereby encouraging them to cater to students as clients at the expense of relevant, meaningful teaching.

Even under optimal conditions (which the system cannot and does not want to provide), teaching in the classroom and online at the same time forces teachers to divide their energy and attention, demanding much greater concentration of teachers and students alike. Dual-mode instruction makes it harder for students to be engaged, whether they are in the classroom or online. Because of the limitations it creates, the students who have taken the trouble to come to class get a more static style of teaching and less attention. Meanwhile, it is impossible for teachers to pay as much attention to students who are online, many of whom turn their cameras off, depriving teachers of the last vestiges of student-teacher interaction. Needless to say, taking attendance remotely is difficult if not impossible. At the elementary and secondary levels, not taking attendance violates the Education Act. Under these conditions, how can teachers make professional judgments about their students' learning?

In fact, the only situation in which dual-mode instruction seems acceptable is for a lecture, and then only with technical support to operate the camera and additional staff to manage the chat function, compile and sequence questions, add information, and so on.⁴

Lastly, in an arbitration decision handed down on December 23, 2020, involving a teachers' union and a school service centre,⁵ the arbitrator ruled that before dual-mode teaching can be used, other measures must be considered, and that dual-mode teaching involves extra workload, for all the reasons mentioned above. Radio-Canada ICI Abitibi-Témiscamingue reported that arbitrator Ménard found that "the teachers were deprived of 'fair and reasonable working conditions,' because the school service centre focused its efforts on ways to provide quality instruction to students without considering the extra workload that dual-mode teaching would entail for the teachers, who were already affected by pandemic-related measures."⁶ So if dual-mode teaching cannot be the preferred emergency solution during a pandemic, it is even less appropriate as a long-term option, given its negative impact on students' learning conditions and teachers' working conditions.

What is to be done?

During the spring 2019 consultation on distance education, a broad consensus emerged at the general meetings of FNEEQ teachers' and lecturers' unions. These consultation led to the adoption of recommendations at the May 2019 Federal Council meeting aimed at regulating distance education and ensuring its quality. The recommendations were based on an abundantly documented report entitled *L'enseignement à distance: Enjeux pédagogiques, syndicaux et sociétaux*, which the FNEEQ School and Society Committee had prepared to inform the discussion. During the pandemic, the FNEEQ's position has therefore been that in-person teaching

....continued on page 12

3 In the wake of Minister McCann's statements about having more students on campus in September 2021, and a special emphasis on dual-mode teaching to make that possible, CEGEP and university administrations have rushed to adapt their classrooms to accommodate this approach. Presumably, it won't be for just the coming semester. Indeed, as the minister has repeated on many occasions, and notably to the Working Group on the Québec University of the Future in October 2020 and the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal on January 18, 2021, the approach to "distance education" now being developed is here to stay. However, dual-mode teaching is not consistent with the concern for quality of teaching that she expressed on those occasions.

4 Some institutions ask teachers to designate a student to manage the chat during class. In some, teachers have carry a laptop, camera, microphone and tripod from classroom to classroom.

5 *Syndicat de l'enseignement de l'Ungava et de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue (FSE – CSQ) c. Centre de services scolaire du Témiscamingue, SAE 9488 (T.A.).*

6 anya Neveu, "Un enseignant peut-il être obligé de filmer son cours pour les élèves en isolement ?" (Radio-Canada, February 9, 2021) de Tanya Neveu.

The challenges of teaching art history online

The multitude of training sessions in instructional technology that teachers have been offered since the pandemic began is indicative of the extent to which we have had to change our methods to shift from teaching in the classroom to online. In broad brushstrokes, the transformation means mastering new platforms and applications, teaching courses without being able to see our students' faces, following the online class forum every day, and devising new student evaluation methods. And that's not all. Teachers have also had to use dynamic new teaching methods and tailor their content to keep students interested online, learn how to communicate with everyone effectively online, address their concerns about the new demands of virtual learning, and find resources for help with computer problems. In short, when teachers leave the physical classroom and enter the virtual one, they are dealing with a new pedagogical landscape.

Anne Beauchemin, Ph.D.
Lecturer in art history, Université Laval

The program that I teach had not offered any online courses before the pandemic. I taught my first “hybrid distance” course last fall. It included a live component and a recorded component consisting of weekly narrated videos. Throughout the semester, I had to think about how to divide up the subject matter, what material to present live and what material to record so as to maintain consistency and complementarity. I spent several hours per week recording the videos. I had been strongly advised to keep them fairly short, so my explanations had to be concise and I had to avoid redundancies. I had to present things clearly and still bring out the finer points. This involved rewriting my course notes, preparing PowerPoint slides, and recording the final video in Screencast-O-Matic.

For the live lectures, I had to get used to teaching alone in front of my two screens, with a list of my students' names as the only sign that they were there. I had to try to use that class list to start a conversation that I hoped would be stimulating despite the distance. I had to learn how to deal with students' questions in the chat box while still concentrating on my presentation. Teaching online means meeting many different challenges at once.

The instructional-technology training that I took to prepare to teach this course did give me some interesting ideas, and my teaching advisor suggested a number of helpful solutions. But I still had to make many adjustments to adapt them to the material that I teach. For example, I couldn't keep my videos to 5 or 10 minutes, because that would have meant

making one video for each work of art I wanted to discuss and would have broken up the subject matter into small pieces.

So there is no turnkey solution that you can just adopt with the click of a mouse. It takes time to make the switch from classroom to online teaching in a way that preserves the quality of instruction. This applies to all aspects of teaching. You have to take the time to reorganize your courses. It is also critically important to have appropriate instructional-technology tools and tech support.

As this adventure ended, I felt that despite all the hours I had spent adapting my material and my teaching methods, and despite the isolation of working in front of screens instead of students, I had met the challenge. It was a major personal effort — I didn't stint on the time needed to meet the objective that I had set for myself — but unfortunately, this effort has received little recognition. I know I am not alone in this situation. Shifting to online teaching required far more than a “slight adaptation” of my courses: it was a genuine transformation. ■

Give Me Some Room to Breathe

Is the greatest job in the world making you breathless? Or out of breath? I think it might be time to vent (before the air in the classroom puts us out of commission). We're being asked to keep the system from collapsing and to reinvent ourselves at the same time. If it were just that we have to keep redoing our lesson plans as we swing with the Premier's yo-yo decisions, it might not be so bad. But the situation is dire. Our mental health may soon teeter into the red (zone).



Kathryne Savard
Teaches at St-Joseph High School, in St-Hyacinthe

Here's a roundup of the high school experience during the pandemic, from every point of view.

The student

Online

What?! This freaking teacher wants me to keep my camera on? I'll just turn it toward the ceiling, and there you go! Gaming is on during school hours. She'll never see the reflection of virtual explosions in my glasses.

In the classroom

In math class, the class bubble has popped. No problem, they'll just put us behind this plexiglass screen. It's like being online, except that I'm in the classroom. My Bluetooth headphones can't connect to the school computers? I'll just pretend I'm listening. Problem solved!

What do you mean, my grades have gone down? No way!

The parent

How come... Why wasn't I made aware... He told me... The class average is low... Have you forgotten she has ADD and needs... What help... Can you send me... I can't believe...

We don't have a customer service department. We answer all complaints personally.

The administration

Together. Pull through. Buckle down. Support you. Safety. One big happy family.

Do we really need the full sentences?

Us, the Guardian Angels of Education

I plowed through the TELUQ training during the summer. (Yes, during teachers' infamous two-month vacation. Tell me about it.)

I'm sputtering into my mask, trying to be heard. Maybe they should do something about classroom acoustics too.

My newest skills are called asynchronous and hybrid.

My conversation is peppered with mystifying new vocabulary: Genially, Quizizz, Kahoot, Poptelt...

I'm fluent in both Meet and Zoom.

Je suis « fluente » en *Meet* comme en *Zoom*.

But I can still laugh about it because I'm not taking the full dose of my meds.

For now, I'm staying Zen, breathing deeply. Except that might not be a good idea when you have 38 people in a closed room. Where exactly are the whistleblowers? Is anyone ringing the alarm bell?

If nothing is done, they'll have to give us more than oxygen! ■

News From the Regroupements

Léandre Lapointe, vice-president, *Regroupement privé*



The COVID-19 pandemic seems to have exacerbated many existing problems in the world of education: some striking examples include teachers' conditions of practice and the resources available to support vulnerable students and educational success. The Ministry of Education says that, on the whole, the educational success of Québec's students

has not been overly compromised by the pandemic and the performance of elementary and high school students is relatively encouraging.¹ The ministry based these statements on the published data from the report cards for the first term of the 2020-2021 school year. We can only wonder how the ministry can draw such upbeat conclusions when the numbers actually show declining pass rates, especially in Secondary III and Secondary IV mathematics. Yes, it could have been even worse, but we have to be realistic and say that the failure rate went up during the past year and more students find themselves in a vulnerable situation.

Teaching after the pandemic

The coming years will have to be seen as a transitional period. It will be hard, if not impossible, for teachers to catch students up in a single year on all the things they should have been learning and all the material they should have delved into during the year disrupted by the pandemic. At both the elementary and secondary levels, the academic calendar, including the dates and weighting of each term, should be published at the beginning of the school year. The ministerial exams had to be cancelled this year and last. Although next year will be a transitional one, we believe the exams should be held but treated as optional exams. Recognizing students' learning in this way will help motivate them and also prepare graduating students for higher education.

The pandemic has accelerated the introduction of new tech-based methods, such as online and dual-mode instruction, which do not work well for all students. Vulnerable students suffer the worst impacts from remote instruction, but the lack of direct, in-person contact with teachers is detrimental to good students too. Although the failure rate numbers the education

ministry published in February are less dramatic than had been expected, no one should conclude that everything is fine for either students or teachers. Teachers report that many online learners are experiencing difficulties: major organization problems, a decline in attendance, concentration and motivation, and recurring challenges meeting course requirements.

Online instruction must remain the exception, the temporary expedient that it was during the pandemic. It must not become entrenched and systematized, for a number of important reasons. At the education ministry's "Rendezvous for Educational Success: Education Beyond the Pandemic" consultation, the Fédération des établissements d'enseignement privés (FEEP) clearly stated that it wanted amendments to the Act respecting private education to allow remote instruction after the pandemic. Claiming that it wants to support students who are absent for long periods (athletes, families abroad, etc.) and increase the services offered to gifted students who do not have access to private schools, the FEEP wants to make the current situation permanent and have teachers work in dual mode all the time. This vision is not acceptable, and the members of the Regroupement and the entire FNEEQ must mobilize. The coming years will be critical for improving teachers' conditions of practice and protecting our working conditions. In solidarity. ■

1 Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec, [Rendez-vous pour la réussite éducative : l'éducation au-delà de la pandémie](#), participant's notebook, p. 8, avril 2021.

News From the Regroupements

Yves de Repentigny, vice-president, *Regroupement cégep*

Here are the main issues the *Regroupement cégep* has been dealing with since the last issue of *Carnets*.

Teaching in the time of COVID

On December 15, 2020, at the end of the fall 2020 term, the *Regroupement Cégep* and the *Comité patronal de négociation des collègues (CPNC)* signed a letter of agreement amending certain provisions of the 2015-2020 collective agreement and covering a list of measures implemented at some CEGEPs because of the pandemic. About a month earlier, the Legault government, in its November 12 economic update, had announced a \$25 million injection to support access to and graduation from colleges, but it took us a few more weeks of lobbying to get confirmation that, unlike previous envelopes, this one would be used exclusively to hire teachers. We should add that some CEGEP administrations were hesitant to start allocating the money to their departments until they had seen details of the new budget in black and white, which did not happen until late February.

To try to secure additional funding and prevent a heavier workload this fall because of the pandemic, the FNEEQ's CEGEP and university professors' unions joined forces in a campaign to make their voices heard before the provincial budget was tabled in March 2021. As these lines are being written, we still do not know what portion of the reinvestment announced in the budget will reach the classroom. We also do not know what percentage of courses will be taught in the classroom starting in August, although we've had some meetings with the ministry on this subject.

Public-sector bargaining

After some progress in the fall on clauses with limited financial impact, bargaining for FNEEQ CEGEP professors bogged down during the winter (as did the bargaining talks for the CSN's other public-sector federations and at the central table on working conditions common to all job categories) and the climate at the bargaining table turned as chilly as the weather outside. So in March 2021,

the unions held general meetings which approved mandates to intensify pressure tactics and make preparations to strike. These were followed by strike votes. On April 23, the *Regroupement Cégep* achieved the required dual majority (an absolute majority of the unions and a plurality of the voting members).



Programs still under attack

The CEGEP-level Accounting & Management, Business Management and Office System Technology programs are still under threat and could be replaced by a single multi-purpose DEC. During the winter, the *Regroupement Cégep* continued to defend these programs and updated its action plan. It now includes a petition on the National Assembly website, forming a broad coalition which we will invite employers' groups to join, and, in early April, Québec-wide program meetings for Accounting & Management and Business Management (the meetings for Office System Technology were held in October 2020).

The FNEEQ also had to respond again to attacks from the *Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec (OIIQ)*. Québec's professional order of nurses is holding its estates general in May 2021 and plans to repeat its call for a bachelor's degree to be made a requirement for entry into the nursing profession, instead of a DEC. Anticipating this move, the FNEEQ produced a brief and presented it at a preparatory public hearing on April 19.

Currently, our Federation and the ministry are talking about how to make the program review process more transparent and give all teaching staff a greater role in it. ■

Richard Bousquet, vice-president, *Regroupement université*



Standing firm against damaging changes to our profession

The Québec government's recently tabled budget has confirmed what the consultations in which we participated had led us to fear: proceeding from their shared clientelist approach, school administrations are planning, in league with the government, to shove hybrid or "dual mode" teaching down our throats for the coming fall term and subsequently. It is becoming increasingly clear that they are intent on maintaining some form of generalized distance education after the post-pandemic return to the classroom. This plan is a fundamental change that threatens the teaching profession as we know it. We must oppose it – or, at the very least, make sure that it is regulated by our collective agreements.

Québec's new budget for higher education provides practically nothing for student accessibility, progress and success, but earmarks large sums for technology infrastructure and digital education resources under "Orientation 4" (optimizing the deployment of digital technology to support student success).

When we met with the Deputy Minister for Higher Education on April 19, he told us clearly that teachers won't be consulted about this transformation of our profession in the coming semesters and that the matter will be discussed only with administrators.

In a letter to the Minister of Higher Education,¹ we warned her about the potential risks of this approach. These include less effective teaching and dissatisfaction and frustration for both in-the-classroom and remote learners because the teacher's focus will always be divided. Teachers will have trouble managing group assignments and discussions, interacting with students, taking attendance, managing movements in the classroom, and making professional judgments about students' learning, among other things. For now, university administrations have been relying on volunteers to implement dual mode teaching, but given the sometimes considerable costs being incurred to equip classrooms with new technology,

which some institutions are doing on a massive scale, what is voluntary now might well be made mandatory in the fall. We told the Minister that if she cares about student success, she should bear in mind that her proposal will put the students who have the greatest difficulties and who are learning online at a disadvantage.

The FNEEQ put out a press release expressing its disapproval of the measure,² and the School and Society Committee has also produced an excellent article on the subject, "Dual-mode teaching: the 2 in 1 illusion."³

In one example, Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) is planning to equip 90 classrooms so that lectures can be filmed digitally. It would be surprising if this major investment were being made just for the duration of the pandemic. It seems more likely that the administration wants to entrench this approach, which favours one kind of student, after the pandemic is over. Students could choose to come to the university, attend classes online, or watch the taped lecture later. In response to pressure from professors and lecturers, UQAM is finally planning for classes to be taught either in the classroom or online in the fall. The classroom will be the preferred teaching method, but it will depend on the size of the room and whether 1-metre distancing can be maintained. If the room is too small, the course will be given online. But this statement by the Vice-Rector for Academic Life is still disturbing: "Dual-mode instruction may be considered in certain situations, upon the recommendation of the program units, depending on teacher interest and space constraints."

Members of all three regroupements are concerned about this transformation of the teaching profession and the clientelist approach. Beyond the FNEEQ's *En présence c'est mieux* campaign, it may be necessary to start thinking about mobilizing all the unions in the Federation. ■

1 Letter to the Minister of Higher Education, Mrs. Danielle McCann https://fneeq.qc.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021-03-09-Lt-comodal_vf2.pdf.

2 FNEEQ press *Retour en classe des étudiantes et des étudiants* <https://fneeq.qc.ca/fr/retour-en-classe-des-etudiantes-et-des-etudiants/>.

3 Chronique 91 of the school and society committee *Enseignement comodal: le mirage du « 2 en 1 »* <https://fneeq.qc.ca/fr/publications/chronique-91-enseignement-comodal-le-mirage-du-2-en-1/>.

Feminist Symposium for FNEEQ activists

In January 2021, the FNEEQ Women's Committee held a virtual feminist symposium for FNEEQ activists. The event featured a number of speakers on women's issues in education and other spheres.

So, is feminism dead among teachers? Far from it! And it is also alive and well in the other CSN federations and central councils, as the questions asked by guests from other CSN organizations confirmed.

The first two speakers, Francis Dupuis-Déri and Mélissa Blais, began by describing how a historical discourse analysis shows that in antiquity men were already fearful that women might rise up against the holders of power. Masculinism and anti-feminism are recent concepts, but they describe forces that were operating long before feminism made its first inroads. Today, even some progressives talk about a "crisis of masculinity" and call for "space for men." There is still fear of gender parity. One common strategy is to try to divide women into good and bad feminists when it comes to issues such as child care, psychological suffering and academic achievement. Another is to trivialize violence against women by citing men's needs.

The next speaker, Sandrine Ricci, talked about issues of visibility and social justice in the context of denunciations of sexual violence on social media since the advent of the *#MeToo* movement. There are many myths around this subject. Women are recounting their experiences of sexual assault publicly in order to make the point that violence against women isn't just a private matter, but breaking the continuum of violence remains a challenge. Victims of violence are now using the means available to them, not just the courts, to prevent their assailants from claiming new victims and to shift the burden of shame onto them. Like other women, female students and teachers want, first and foremost, to be believed.



Violaine Dampousse
Member of the women's committee

On each day of the symposium, the speakers were followed by workshops. The first was led by Sylvie Beaudoin and dealt with gender equality and academic success. As the organization *Réseau réussite Montréal* points out, sexual stereotyping and socioeconomic status are much more important factors in a student's academic success than gender. The myth of academic failure among boys is tenacious. FNEEQ members should focus instead on the factors that contribute to keeping students in school.

To wrap up the symposium, Marie-Ève Surprenant gave us some food for thought about care-focused feminism, a more timely subject than ever with the COVID-19 pandemic. Much still needs to be done for the true value of health care and education to be recognized, including consciousness-raising to lighten the mental burden on our union sisters. ■

Dual-mode teaching: the “2 in 1” illusion (Continued from page 5)

should be the preferred option, but a combination of classroom and online teaching is possible under certain conditions, which we set out in the document *L'enseignement au temps du coronavirus – Balises pour l'automne 2020*⁷ (May 2020).

Other solutions could be considered to increase in-person teaching capacity while satisfying public health restrictions. For example, separate classes could be created for students who have to take their courses online. Additional space could be rented, an approach that has already been tried successfully in certain places, such as Sherbrooke. Renting space in the community is also a way to invest in the local economy instead of buying piles of costly electronic equipment for dual-mode classrooms. It is clear that reducing class size, for both classroom and online classes, must remain a priority.⁸

Lastly, we believe that Québec policymakers are motivated by goals other than pedagogy, and that their primary objective is to cut costs and digitize the job of teaching, with the privatization and Taylorization that entails.⁹ As a study prepared for Education International states, “The COVID-19 pandemic has been used as an exceptional opportunity for expanding privatisation and commercialisation in HE [higher education], particularly through the promotion of educational technologies (edtech)...and the positioning of private sector actors as catalysts and engineers of post-pandemic HE reform and transformation.... It exemplifies how ‘disaster techno-capitalism’ has

sought to exploit the pandemic for private sector and commercial advantage.”¹⁰

Remote teaching must be regulated in the collective agreement.¹¹ This is urgent. For example, at universities that have done it right, the equivalent of one to two lecturers are assigned just to developing the courses, and another to deliver them. Class size is limited to provide better supervision of students, help keep them in school and help them succeed, while also ensuring the quality of teaching and of teachers’ working conditions. We are right to resist dual-mode teaching and to demand priority for the solutions and guidelines we collectively advocate. ■

7 These guidelines include a table covering various scenarios for in-person and remote education in Fall 2020, available as a [separate document online](#). The School and Society Committee has also produced two documents about teaching under pandemic conditions: *Chronique 88 – Chronique d'un (dé)confinement annoncé* et la *Chronique 90 – Une rentrée « exceptionnelle » – De l'état d'urgence au marathon épidémique*.

8 On reducing class size, see Lawrence Tomei and Douglas Nelson, “[The Impact of Online Teaching on Faculty Load – Revisited : Computing the Ideal Class Size for Traditional, Online, And Hybrid Courses](#)” (*International Journal of Online Pedagogy and Course Design*, 9(3), June 2019, pp. 1-12) and Ricardo Peñañiel, “[Trimestre d'automne en non présentiel : Une “occasion d'affaire” pour l'UQAM?](#)” (Montréal Campus, August 28, 2020).

9 For more details on Taylorization in teaching, see *L'enseignement à distance : Enjeux pédagogiques, syndicaux et sociétaux* (p.75).

10 Ben Williamson and Anna Hogan *Pandemic Privatisation in Higher Education: Edtech & University Reform* pp. 1.-2.

11 In support of its bargaining demands, the FNEEQ's Regroupement Université presents a set of arguments concerning remote teaching in *Analyse de la formation à distance, constats et enjeux* (november 2020).

LA PAROLE EST AUX ACTES



The FNEEQ-CSN's 33rd convention

The FNEEQ-CSN's 33rd convention will be held from Tuesday, June 1 to Friday, June 4, 2021 by videoconference. The FNEEQ Convention is the Federation's largest body. Among other things, it is responsible for debating and adopting the Federation's major orientations for the next three years. We will discuss issues in education, social issues and union issues. The Convention is also the body that receives reports from the various committees, elects all of the Federation's officers and adopts the budget for the next three years. This year's event has been certified carbon-neutral again.

Information about the 33rd Convention:
https://fneeq.qc.ca/fr/congres_2021/.

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Back to the classroom, back to nature: Take a walk through campus greenery

Katherine Collin - Vanier College
VCTA Environmental Mobilization Committee
FNEEQ Environment Committee

Institutions of higher education offer an oft-ignored opportunity to promote green spaces. If the pandemic has taught us anything, it is that nature, especially in an urban setting, is a comfort and a balm. Many studies bear this out. Students who have regular access to green space on campus report greater satisfaction with their quality of life¹ and less stress.² Studies have also shown that students view green space not only as important to their institution's image, but also as an essential component of the campus environment.³ Even before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, student mental health was an important issue. There is evidence that students were experiencing high levels of anxiety: 41% of the 18-19 year old student population felt overwhelmed by their work.⁴ There is strong and compelling scientific literature on the benefits of regular immersion in nature, especially for young people,⁵ including longer attention span,^{6,9,10} decreased stress and anxiety,¹¹ and increased critical and creative faculties.¹²

Studies have also shown that exposure to nature increases an individual's sense of community cohesion: "The perceived quality, views, and amount of time spent in nature were linked to more community cohesion, and in turn, the perception of cohesive communities enhanced individual well-being outcomes and contributions back to society through higher workplace productivity and environmentally responsible behaviors".¹³ This benefit is particularly relevant given the increase in

Photo : @Collège Ahuntsic



eco-anxiety among our student population (and in the college community in general). It is noteworthy that the American Psychological Association's guidelines for managing eco-anxiety recommend two crucial measures to lessen anxiety about the climate crisis: community connectedness and regular involvement in small mitigation efforts (Clayton Whitmore-Williams, 2017). These are both things that campus nature walks can provide.¹⁴

Many members of our institutions, especially students, care about sustainability and would like to build a sense of community through a shared commitment to climate action, but don't always know where to start. Responses to a province-wide survey ON sustainability conducted by Environnement Jeunesse¹⁵ show that students want a sense of belonging fostered by prioritizing sustainability as a key value, specifically through volunteering opportunities. A chance to engage in "citizen science" projects such as data collection on campus¹⁶ or to lead nature walks would let students – and everyone at our institutions – participate in volunteer activities that promote sustainability and give them a way decrease anxiety and build community.

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- 2 Holt, E. W., Lombard, Q. K., Best, N., Smiley-Smith, S., & Quinn, J. E. (2019). Active and passive use of green space, health, and well-being amongst university students. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 16(3), 424. doi: 10.3390/ijerph16030424.
- 3 Speake, J., Edmondson, S. E., & Nawaz, H. (2013). Everyday encounters with nature: Students' perceptions and use of university campus green spaces. *Human Geographies*, 7(1), 21-31. doi: 10.5719/hgeo.2013.71.21.
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- 5 Hartig, T., Evans, G. W., Jamner, L. D., Davis, D. S., Garling, T. (2003). Tracking restoration in natural and urban field settings. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 23(2), 109-123. doi: 10.1016/S0272-4944(02)00109-3.
- 6 Li, Q. (2010). The effect of forest bathing trips on human immune function. *Environmental Health and Preventative Medicine*, 15(1), 9-17. doi: 10.1007/s12199-008-0068-3.
- 7 White, M. P., Alcock, I., Grellier, J., Wheeler, B. W., Hartig, T., Warber, S. L., Bone, A., Depledge, M. H., & Fleming, L. E. (2019). Spending at least 120 minutes a week in nature is associated with good health and wellbeing. *Scientific Reports*, 9(7730). doi: 10.1038/s41598-019-44097-3.
- 8 Berto, R. (2005). Exposure to restorative environments helps restore attentional capacity. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 25, 249-259. doi: 10.1016/j.jenvp.2005.07.001.
- 9 Berman, M. G., Jonides, J. & Kaplan, R. (2008). The cognitive benefits of interacting with nature. *Psychological Science*, 19(12), 1207-1212. doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9280.2008.02225.x.
- 10 Faber Taylor, A., Kuo, F. E., & Sullivan, W. C. (2002). Views of nature and self-discipline: Evidence from inner city children. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 22(1-2), 49-63. doi: 10.1006/jenvp.2001.0241.

Campus green spaces are also an often-neglected way to protect and even increase biodiversity. The urgent need for action to protect biodiversity cannot be overstated: the massive loss of biodiversity is now well known. Two major studies that made shockwaves showed a 75% decrease in insects in Germany¹⁷ and a staggering decline North American bird populations, with three billion birds (30%) lost since 1970.¹⁸ We are also seeing declines locally,¹⁹ with habitat loss often one of the main culprits. Yet discussions of urban natural environments at the municipal level often overlook the protected green spaces owned by institutions. These are spaces at our doorstep where biodiversity can be observed and protected, with benefits for our students and ourselves. As researcher Pierre-Alexandre Bourgeois has noted, conservation efforts tend to focus on forests and wetlands, often ignoring the critical role of open fields in urban spaces: “We protect forests first, and of course wetlands. But we tend to destroy open spaces more quickly, and at this time there is a very rapid decline.”²⁰ There are many green spaces on our campuses, which are located within urban centers. These green spaces often offer the only access to nature in the neighbourhoods where they are located. Preserving institutional green space could help achieve the federal government’s current biodiversity conservation target (17% of terrestrial areas).

In short, it should be borne in mind that the bare minimum needed to experience the benefits of exposure to nature is two hours per week (White, 2019). Without a setting where we are in contact with nature, exposure to nature is likely to be sporadic rather than systematic, and even individuals who do occasionally immerse themselves in green spaces may not get enough exposure. As we enjoy getting

back to the campus, let’s not forget the role that nature played during the lockdown. Green spaces are part of our institutions, albeit in a limited form; exposure to these spaces is one of our most valuable and effective resources for enhancing wellness and increasing satisfaction at our institutions. ■

For more information about walks through the green spaces on campus, please contact the author at collink@vaniercollege.qc.ca.

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