

# Chronicles of a Transformation

As part of the *When Everything Transforms* issue, the members of *Pédagogie collégiale*'s editorial committees explored their relationship with change. Here is a summary of key transformations in their respective professional trajectories.

The members of the journal's English and French editorial committees are volunteers from various colleges. They support the Editor-in-Chief in planning issues, selecting themes and evaluating article submissions. Occasionally, they write articles or solicit submissions from other network members.

The AQPC thanks the members of the editorial committees for their commitment, and their respective institutions for supporting their active participation in *Pédagogie collégiale*.

## A Professional and Personal Transformation

If I have to reflect on my relationship with change from a personal perspective, it's certainly the transformations I've experienced professionally over the past 10 years that stand out the most. In 2013, I was a teacher dedicated to my students, passionate about my subject, but also a little tortured. Despite the generosity of the members of my department, I felt isolated in my pedagogical reflections and helpless in the face of the magnitude of the changes I would have liked to introduce. I knew nothing about research and very little about pedagogy. And then a small door opened, thanks to a pedagogical counsellor who suggested that I do educational research (I take the opportunity to name her and thank her warmly: Debby Ann Philie, thank you!). Some ten years later (only?!), after several research grants, a doctorate, the creation of a centre of expertise and participation in a number of projects at various colleges and with different network organizations—projects that have allowed me to develop a network of professional friendships that have also enriched my personal life in incredible ways—it is now my turn to change colleges to become a pedagogical counsellor in charge of research. I deeply hope to bring about changes in others that will transform them as I have been transformed.



**Catherine Bélec**  
Pedagogical counsellor,  
Research, Cégep de  
Drummondville

## Teaching, at All Times

In my 16-year career, the energy I've spent trying to find the right grade for an assignment must be enough to send a rocket into space. I've experimented with a thousand ways of grading: changing grids, modifying weightings, marking evidence of competency achievement, revisiting shortcomings. Finally, I went round the bend and returned to a method that had horrified me a few sessions earlier. In my naivety, I dreamed of an impossible system, perfectly objective and unassailable in its logic and clarity. Then, at a conference given by teacher-researcher Julie Roberge, it dawned on me: what irritated me was the futility of my dream—the perfect system I so desired would not enable me to improve learning. When I grade, I don't want to justify an 84%, I still want to teach! Having delved deeper into the subject with a master's degree, my current process is unedited, candid audiovisual feedback without a grade, which I share with students as quickly as possible. For me, the grade is now reduced to obligations, i.e. submission on time with a minimum of explanation to comply with the Institutional Policy on the Evaluation of Student Achievement (IPESA).



**Jean-Philippe Boucher**  
Computer Science  
teacher, Cégep  
Garneau

## Self-Actualization, for the Development of Self and Others

The professional world often forces changes upon us. Most of the transformations I've experienced in my career in education have been the result of my own choices, motivated by the desire to take on new challenges and reinvent myself. I've changed my professional life many times: high school teacher, speech therapist, college teacher, pedagogical counsellor, adapted services counsellor. I have to admit that I love changes. They're not easy, they're confronting and unsettling, but these leaps into the new bring me more than consistency ever could. The Attestation of College Studies (ACS) in *Stratégies d'intervention en développement du langage* [Intervention strategies for language development, Ed.] has just been updated, with the first cohort starting in the Fall 2024 session. As speech therapists and teachers, my colleagues and I will have to completely revise the ACS. I will adapt to the changes, just as I guide my students who must modify their interventions to improve children's language skills. It's not easy to change work or work methods, but when the goal is the development of oneself or others, this transformation makes perfect sense.



**Marie-Hélène Gagnon**

Adapted services counsellor and speech therapist-teacher in continuing education, Cégep de La Pocatière

## From Tradition to Innovation, the Evolution of Pedagogical Practices

When I started teaching, the main learning strategy used by my colleagues (and my pedagogy professors) was the lecture. As a new teacher, I was faced with a double challenge: I had a lot to learn and a lot to unlearn. To help my students succeed, I embraced active learning and peer collaboration. Since becoming a pedagogical counsellor in 2014, and then a technopedagogical counsellor in 2016, the constant change in pedagogical approaches has become the norm. One new strategy that I've devoted a lot of effort to is online curation. This approach consists of empowering students to select, organize, annotate and share digital resources on a given topic, while providing feedback on the sites curated by their peers. It promotes the development of critical thinking, research, reading and communication skills, as well as digital literacy. Another strategy I'm passionate about is creating authentic learning activities using immersive, interactive 360° tours. With two colleagues, we design hands-on experiences, such as a machine lab (Electrical Engineering Technology) and a forest exploration (Bioecology Technology), providing our classes with authentic learning environments that are far richer than traditional 2D materials or textbooks.



**Patti Kingsmill**

Pedagogical counsellor, Vanier College

## Adaptation as Second Nature

In Electrical Engineering Technology, change is part of our DNA. We don't have a choice: technology is constantly evolving and doesn't wait for us. In just over 15 years, I've seen two program revisions. In 2007, we adapted to the emergence of the first TCP/IP industrial networks. In 2022, we had to adapt to the rise of robotics, additive manufacturing, megadata and cybersecurity risks, as factories were now connected to the entire world via the Internet. But the most striking transformation in my professional life came from my growing awareness of the importance of pedagogy, inclusion and student engagement. Initially, I believed that a strict, uniform sequence of learning activities was the way to go, but my graduate work showed me that there's nothing wrong with being flexible and adopting a modular approach that allows key concepts to be addressed through activities tailored to individual interests. A student wants to program two robots to compete in a tic-tac-toe duel? I see nothing wrong with that!



**Patrick Mainil**

Electrical Engineering Technology teacher, Cégep de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue

## A Career Path in Motion

Antoine-Laurent de Lavoisier's famous quote, "Rien ne se perd, rien ne se crée: tout se transforme" [Nothing is lost, nothing is created: everything is transformed, Ed.], which I first heard from my high school chemistry teacher, perfectly sums up my ever-changing career. Originally destined for a career in the health field, I began my college studies in health sciences, before branching out into pure and applied sciences. I was already making the first changes! After a year at university in Chemical Engineering, I returned to CEGEP for a second DCS in Laboratory Technology: Analytical Chemistry. I then went back to university to become a chemist, while working as a technician. A new twist in my path led me to a Master's degree in Paper Science and Engineering. That's how I ended up at the Cégep de Trois-Rivières, teaching in a non-credit industrial continuing education program. As if that weren't enough, I moved to another CEGEP to teach Laboratory Technology in the regular sector, a position I held for 18 years. It was then that I discovered a new passion: pedagogy. Sensitive to students' challenges, I became Associate Dean of Academic Organization, a path I've been following for nine years now. Through these professional transformations, I've come to realize that adaptability and creativity are constants in pedagogy and teaching. Lavoisier was wrong about one thing: creation is an essential feature of pedagogical transformations.



**Carl Pedneault**  
Associate Dean,  
Academic Organization, Cégep de  
Shawinigan

## Six Thousand Students Later

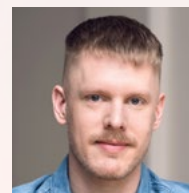
When I received my first statement from the Régime de retraite du personnel employé du gouvernement et des organismes publics (RREGOP) telling me I could retire in 2025, I thought it was so far away! But it was so close! Yes, life has changed since that first statement, but not that much. Yes, students want the same things: to be happy, to have a good job, to love and be loved. No, young people—and not-so-young people—don't have worse writing skills than before. They just have more to say. And it's a good thing we're giving them a voice, even if they seem to prefer their phones to real exchanges. Yes, students are still afraid of making a mistake: "What if I didn't choose the right CEGEP or university program?" We still have to reassure them. I can understand why they're worried: many of their jobs don't exist yet; the gender roles that were so clearly defined 30 years ago are much less so today; the uniformity of our classrooms is becoming less and less, fortunately. I'm about to retire, but one thing hasn't changed: I love my students.



**Julie Roberge**  
French teacher  
and researcher,  
Cégep André-  
Laurendeau

## Words and Worlds: How Technology Transforms Language Education

Some twenty-odd years ago, when I took an introductory Spanish course at university, I was given a list of the 2,500 most common words to memorize by the end of the semester, while class time was spent learning grammar rules. Fortunately, thanks in part to advances in technology, language teaching is no longer just about rote memorization, making language learning not only more efficient, but also more authentic. Today, a new profound transformation is underway in the field of language education—a shift that mirrors broader societal changes in which technology is reshaping our interactions and even our identities. As an ESL teacher, I firmly believe that this requires me to develop my students' learnership (Anderson, 2023), to help them understand that automatic translation and generative AI should be seen as tools to enhance, rather than replace, their own foreign language skills. Language remains a vessel for culture, identity, and personal expression, and as we embrace new technologies, it is my fervent hope that language education will continue to celebrate what makes us quintessentially human. To find out more about learnership: [[jamesanderson.com.au/learnership](http://jamesanderson.com.au/learnership)].



**Andy Van Drom**  
English as a Second  
Language teacher,  
Cégep Limoilou

## New York, New Me Through NMUN

It all started with an email from my colleagues, Maude, a student life advisor, and Gabrielle, a political science teacher at Cégep du Vieux Montréal. They were looking for an English teacher to help prepare students for an upcoming week-long National Model United Nations (NMUN) simulation in New York. Would I be interested in collaborating with them? My curiosity was piqued; I agreed to meet the team. Just a few weeks later, I was warmly welcomed by Maude, Gabrielle, and the students at my first meeting, where I revised texts and coached the students in public speaking. Two and a half years on, I now regularly travel with the team to New York. In just one week at NMUN, I observed students transform from shy, hesitant teenagers into confident young adults, ready to deliver compelling speeches to a roomful of American university students. Above all, I witnessed a transformation in my beliefs about my own professional skills. Join a dynamic interdepartmental team? Chaperone a group of lively teenagers on a trip to one of the largest cities in the United States? Prepare students to speak eloquently and confidently in their non-dominant language about sustainable developmental goals? No problem!



**Danielle Viens**

English as a Second Language teacher, Cégep du Vieux Montréal

## Exiting the Comfort Zone

In many schools and learning institutions there exists a certain tension between teachers and the administration. We tend to sometimes work in silos, not fully understanding the breadth or challenges of each others' work. Eighteen months ago, I accepted an opportunity to take a leadership role as the language department head. With little time to train or be mentored, I took over large portfolios, and attended meetings with deans and other directors. It was overwhelming at first, and I felt a certain sense of imposter syndrome, but there was a guiding force that pushed me through the moments when I wasn't sure what to do. I asked myself what my teachers needed to ensure the best chance at student success. I understood that whatever trip-ups potentially happened, if the teachers felt supported, listened to, and that I was working to understand their reality, we would be successful. Being in a leadership role put me in the spotlight, which was stressful, but I have come to realize that teaching in the classroom fostered a certain skillset that is uniquely beneficial in my position. Moving out of my comfort zone after twenty-four years in a classroom has been a great and challenging experience. It's so important for teachers to stretch themselves professionally and lend their voices to the decision-making process.



**Margaret Wells**

Director of the language department, Royal Military College Saint-Jean

## A different Kind of Journalism

In nearly 25 years in journalism—learning, practising, teaching and relearning it—my passion has wavered at times. Recurring criticisms of the profession have contributed to this feeling: the lack of time, resources and diversity are daily burdensome challenges. Equally troubling are the abundance of issues to cover and the "bad news" that piles up. Then, a few years ago, Solutions Journalism (SoJo) emerged as a path I could explore to rekindle my flame and ignite the spark in my students. What does it involve? Essentially, it's about moving away from the traditional problem-based approach to present concrete, effective and replicable solutions to today's social challenges, while acknowledging their limitations. As a journalism teacher, I see this approach as a way to empower students and foster their ability to make a positive impact on society. It is this kind of journalism that drives me, and I firmly believe that it has the power to improve the profession and the teaching of journalism. To find out more about SoJo: [solutionsjournalism.org]. —



**Anne-Marie Paquette**

Editor-in-Chief, *Pédagogie collégiale*

Communications teacher, Cégep André-Laurendeau