



Innovative Concepts  
Compelling Impacts

Applied Research  
Annual Review  
2009-2010





**Message from the President and CEO**

NorQuest College opens doors for learners, for employers and for the communities we serve through the delivery of high-quality, relevant and student-focused education. Contributing to the achievement of these outcomes is investigation, discovery and innovation spearheaded by faculty and staff at the College. Through our applied research activities we find answers and raise new questions in order to improve learning, add to the body of knowledge and strengthen our role as a community college. In this report for 2009-2010, we proudly showcase the progress NorQuest employees are making in our research initiatives.



Congratulations to the researchers whose findings are already making differences in the lives of learners, employers, and communities. I look forward to the future as we anticipate research trends and pursue exciting new research opportunities.

Jodi L. Abbott, PhD  
President and CEO

**Message from the Vice-President Academic**

As an innovative, vibrant college that inspires a passion for learning, NorQuest College enhances its teaching and learning by engaging faculty in applied research. Our scholarship and evidence-based research leads to innovative solutions that address learner and employer needs and support community sustainability.



The research focused on the scholarship of teaching and learning highlights our faculty's spirit of inquiry and instructional expertise while it addresses the changing and varied needs of learners and communities. Through applied research, NorQuest College collaborates with Campus Alberta partners to share services in support of quality teaching and learning in Alberta. The excellent work that was completed in 2009-2010 provides a solid foundation for expanding the depth and breadth of the College's applied research activity.

Norma Schneider, M Ed  
Acting Vice-President Academic

**Message from the NorQuest College Applied Research Unit**

The Applied Research Unit of NorQuest's Learning Resource Services Division is proud to introduce you to the people and stories behind our developing applied research initiative. The research findings have helped to address gaps in teaching, learning, and on-the-job processes, positively impacting the internal and external communities that NorQuest serves. We appreciate the passion, hard work, and dedication that the researchers brought to their projects, and look forward to assisting other NorQuest employees and stakeholders to grow the seed of an innovative idea into an applied research project.

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## Accessibility to eCampusAlberta for Persons with Disabilities: Systemic Challenges and Proposed Solutions

In the past 20 years, the number of persons with disabilities studying at the post-secondary level has increased dramatically. The emerging popularity of online learning made possible through eCampusAlberta has offered Albertans the opportunity to access courses offered anywhere in the province from the convenience of their community post-secondary institution or from home.

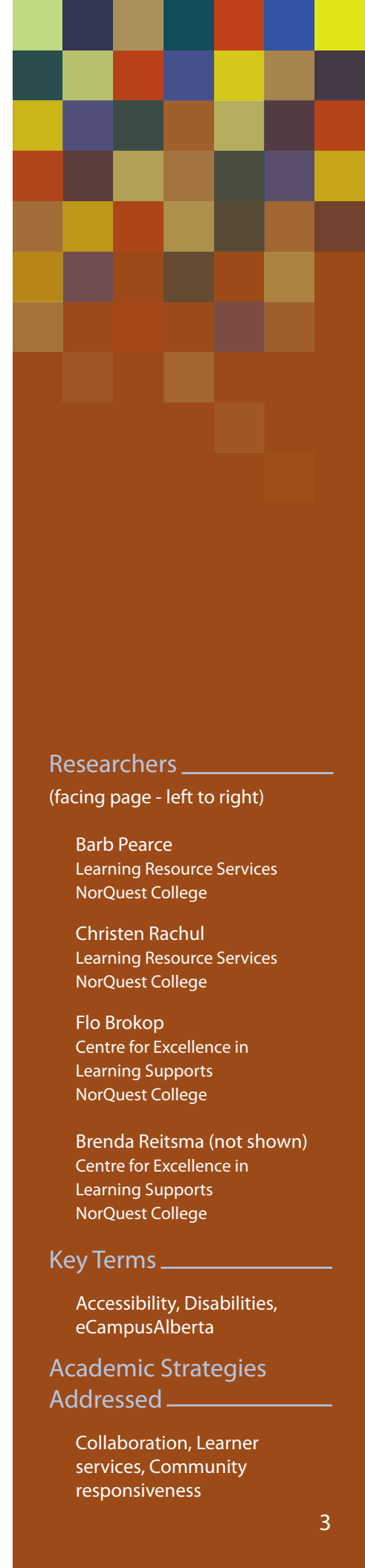
The possibility of accessing online learning is a particular boon to learners with disabilities. Those with mobility impairments are able to remain in their communities, where they often have well-established support systems and can avoid costly and inconvenient travel. Students who use specialized hardware or software are able to use their equipment in a familiar learning environment. However, because of systemic challenges unique to distance delivery programs, post-secondary providers of supports to individuals with disabilities are often unaware of an individual student's needs. This can result in additional expenses for institutions and most importantly, frustration for students.

Flo Brokop is an academic strategist and project coordinator in the Center for Excellence in Learning Supports (CELS), and a member of the eCampusAlberta Accessibility Committee. Flo and her co-researchers Christen Rachul, Barb Pearce, and Brenda Reitsma recognized the importance of identifying and addressing systemic challenges for persons with disabilities within the present eCampusAlberta delivery model. Through a qualitative research project, the team gathered information from Post-Secondary Providers of Services to Students with Disabilities (PSPSSD) to do the following:

- Identify the accommodation supports needed for learners with disabilities who want to access courses offered through eCampusAlberta.
- Propose a systemic structure for the provision of supports to learners with disabilities. This structure includes recommended roles and responsibilities for the lead institution, which offers a course, and for partner institutions, which host a course.
- Outline the process for obtaining funding for students with disabilities who are accessing courses through eCampusAlberta.

Disability service providers identified systemic challenges through a series of interviews and questionnaires. These challenges were then critically evaluated with the entire group of service providers at an annual general meeting and through an online discussion group. The discussion group was also instrumental in offering suggestions to address the challenges and improve the system. The results of the project were disseminated through eCampusAlberta's web page, the PSPSSD listserv, presentations at the Alberta Student Services Conference, and the PSPSSD annual general meeting.

The research team found that the present systemic structure is based on a collegial and co-operative spirit that characterizes the philosophy behind expanding access to post-secondary education through eCampusAlberta. Lead and partner institutions support students with disabilities with this same spirit of collaboration and reciprocity. Research findings suggest that the present environment of economic restraint requires a clearer delineation of roles and responsibilities since the ad hoc provision of supports that characterizes the present model is unsustainable. The research team found specific challenges with the existing structure and made a number of concrete recommendations such as the timely identification of students who may require supports, provision of similar supports in rural and urban areas, and increased communication and supports for instructors who are teaching students with disabilities. eCampusAlberta and other partners within the system have already begun to implement some of these ideas into their practices.



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### Key Terms \_\_\_\_\_

Accessibility, Disabilities,  
eCampusAlberta

### Academic Strategies Addressed \_\_\_\_\_

Collaboration, Learner  
services, Community  
responsiveness



## Critical Incidents for Intercultural Communication in Health Care

Recent years have brought an increase in cultural diversity among hospital patients and staff in Alberta. This can be attributed to multiple causes, including skilled nursing shortages, changes in immigration trends, and global economics. Professionals in the current health-care environment are challenged to develop complex communication skills in order to meet the needs of patients and staff. The ability to communicate with people from varying cultures is an essential skill for all health-care providers.

Jake Evans and Sarah Apedaile, both employees at the NorQuest Centre for Excellence in Intercultural Education, developed the Critical Incidents for Intercultural Communication in Health Care project to address the increasingly diverse work and care environments for Alberta health professionals. The researchers conducted 16 interviews with health-care workers and collected stories from a variety of contexts and perspectives. The stories were then analyzed and developed to create a series of critical incidents: short stories that demonstrate interactions between people from different cultures with the aim of helping participants to increase the quality and understanding of their intercultural interactions.

The research team then developed an evidence-based educational resource to support the ongoing development of intercultural competence in Alberta health-care contexts. This resource will help to increase the effectiveness of communication for Canadian-born and international health-care professionals who work and live in culturally diverse contexts. It will also be used to prepare future health-care professionals to enter a culturally diverse workplace, and to enhance NorQuest health education programs, including the Practical Nurse and Health Care Aide programs, as well as the programming for internationally educated health professionals.

The draft resource will be piloted in a training context with three different groups of health-care professionals, including nurse educators, internationally educated health professionals enrolled in Canadian credentialing programs, and health professionals working in Canadian health-care facilities. Project results and the Critical Incidents for Intercultural Communication in Health Care resource will be available on the NorQuest Centre for Excellence in Intercultural Education website in spring 2011: <http://www.norquest.ca/cfe/intercultural/>.

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### Key Terms \_\_\_\_\_

Intercultural, Health,  
Education, Newcomers

### Academic Strategies Addressed \_\_\_\_\_

Community responsiveness,  
collaboration



## Guide to English in the Workplace: Common Ground Phases 2 and 3

With the demographics of an aging population and a low national fertility rate, Alberta employers are increasingly relying on workers born outside Canada to fill their labour needs. As newcomers to Alberta become a growing portion of the workforce, employers are encountering challenges in managing such diverse groups. The communication challenges within multicultural workforces directly impact workplace safety, productivity, and employee retention rates. Newcomers working for rural Alberta businesses may be especially challenged to find opportunities to develop their English language skills, since limited options for English language programming exist outside urban centres. Offering language programming through employers is one way to address language, cultural, and integration challenges in the workplace.

NorQuest's Centre for Excellence in Intercultural Education (CEIE) is committed to innovative, integrated, intercultural solutions for communities and workplaces. As part of this commitment, staff members Douglas Parsons, Jaimy Miller, and Cheryl Whitelaw teamed up to further contribute to the existing Guide to English in the Workplace project. The Common Ground: English in the Workplace resource helps to reduce barriers in the workplace for newcomers by promoting better workplace communications. In doing so, it also supports enhanced safety and productivity, and more effective teamwork.

In Phase 2 of the Guide to English in the Workplace project, the researchers piloted a resource called Common Ground: English in the Workplace. The resource includes the Common Ground: English in the Workplace Training Manual with 10 training modules; a How to Guide for Employers on setting up and running a program; and a Facilitator Guide designed to support a supervisor or human resource manager in conducting training within a company. This resource was piloted in five communities with companies in the food processing, hospitality, and tourism sectors. A total of 48 employees participated in the pilot.

In Phase 3, Douglas Parsons disseminated the Common Ground: English in the Workplace resource through a series of Train-the-Trainer workshops in rural and urban communities across Alberta. These workshops helped to promote Common Ground and to facilitate adoption of the resource. Participants in the program demonstrated gains in the language of safety, pronunciation clarity, idioms, and conversation management, which includes such skills as dealing with conflict and how to ask questions. The research team also collected stories which indicated that participation in the program had improved learners' communication abilities, employee relations, productivity, and chances for promotion. In piloting the Common Ground: English in the Workplace resource, the research team demonstrated that an effective, feasible, part-time program model can be offered by employers to support employees' development of language proficiency as well as their understanding of Canadian workplace culture.

The Common Ground: English in the Workplace resource is freely available from the NorQuest Centre for Excellence in Intercultural Education website at <http://www.norquest.ca/cfe/intercultural/>.

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### Key Terms \_\_\_\_\_

English in the workplace,  
Intercultural, Newcomers

### Academic Strategies Addressed \_\_\_\_\_

Program development,  
Community responsiveness,  
Collaboration



## Guide to English in the Workplace: Gaining Access

In order to meet demand for skilled tradespeople, employers and trade unions for the oil and gas and construction sectors are increasingly recruiting internationally educated workers for industrial sites across Alberta. Newcomers typically have the required technical skills, but gaps in language proficiency and knowledge of Canadian safety compliance procedures can create barriers to their successful integration into Alberta worksites. Newcomer tradespeople can be perceived as unsafe workers when cultural norms, such as not speaking up to a supervisor, conflict with the need to identify unsafe work conditions.

Researchers Kerry Louw, Darcy McDonald, and Cheryl Whitelaw from NorQuest's Centre for Excellence in Intercultural Education created the Guide to English in the Workplace: Gaining Access project. This project was in response to a need identified in the Alberta trades sector to increase the percentage of newcomers passing basic industrial worksite safety training. The research team set out to research, develop, and pilot a welcoming model of new employee orientation for newcomers. They conducted a needs assessment through observations at four industrial worksites in the oil and gas and construction sectors, analysis of site orientation procedures and materials, and interviews with trade union training centre personnel. They then used the findings from the needs assessment to develop the orientation training materials. A project advisory committee with representatives from various trade unions, construction and oil and gas companies, and industrial electrical services reviewed the orientation training curriculum to ensure that they agreed on important topics. The resulting orientation training curriculum integrates the language of safety and the Alberta industrial workplace culture of safety to help newcomers develop the attitudes and skills needed to gain access to industrial worksites. It integrates accessible language for general safety orientation that can be adapted to other industries and workplace contexts.

After completing the orientation sessions, participants reported that they were able to use the skills they developed to refuse unsafe working conditions and to negotiate for the required equipment or training needed to complete tasks safely. The research team found that although the majority of participants reported making progress in the language and culture of safety, more time was needed to effectively train all participants.

Researchers and staff at the Centre for Excellence in Intercultural Education are exploring ways to apply project findings to customized training for industrial employers and unions and to further develop the welcoming model for orientation of newcomer tradespeople.

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### Key Terms \_\_\_\_\_

English in the workplace,  
Intercultural, Safety, Trades

### Academic Strategies Addressed \_\_\_\_\_

Community responsiveness,  
Collaboration



## Teaching Writing to Students who are Deaf – Phase I and Phase II

NorQuest College instructors who engaged in one-to-one strategies in support of Deaf students noticed a marked weakness in writing skills. Although some students were better able than others to express themselves in English written language during classes, many learners seemed to need direct instruction in grammar, English syntax, and written expression. The majority of Deaf students had not had this instruction in previous educational environments.

Flo Brokop and Bill Persall work as academic strategists in the Centre for Excellence in Learning Supports (CELS). Bill belongs to the Deaf community, and in addition to building English literacy skills with students who attend NorQuest, he also builds their American Sign Language (ASL) skills. Flo is a hearing strategist with a keen interest in all adult literacy issues, and a special interest in English language learning issues in the Deaf community. Bill and Flo collaborated to devise strategies to help Deaf students with their English skills.

The research team hoped to decrease the gap between reading and writing skills by adopting best practice and research-based strategies with students. Phase I of the project consisted of a comprehensive literature review to determine what strategies and approaches are available to this particular group of students. Experts in the field of Deaf education were contacted and interviewed. Students were also interviewed about their perceptions of past writing experiences and asked to share the strategies they found to be effective. These best practice strategies were summarized in a document entitled Writing Strategies for Learners who are Deaf.

In Phase II of the project, three strategists from CELS selected a number of best practice strategies and tried them with students who are Deaf. At the end of one term, the group shared and documented their experiences. Some modifications to or commentaries about the strategies that were piloted were then included in the Phase 1 document.

The researchers found that some of the effective strategies for learners who are Deaf were the same as those found to be effective for English as a second language learners. As well, some strategies that develop hearing students' writing skills were discovered to be useful for learners who are Deaf. However, most of these strategies required modifications to make them applicable to the audience of students who are Deaf. The research team also found that students need individualized instruction and specific feedback in order to improve their written expression. Instructors and academic strategists saw the need for greater depth and breadth of vocabulary as a major instructional objective. Students who are Deaf who were able to learn more about and use ASL, their natural language, were better able to make the transition to English writing and therefore to increase their success in courses.

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Key Terms \_\_\_\_\_

Deaf, Deaf education, Writing,  
Writing strategies, Adult  
literacy

Academic Strategies  
Addressed \_\_\_\_\_

Learner services, Community  
responsiveness



## Clinical Development Model and Technology Framework

Teaching clinical skills typically involves students practising hands-on skills under the direct supervision and guidance of their instructors. Many post-secondary educational institutions are challenged with how to effectively offer clinical skills instruction and assessment at a distance. In order to address this challenge, Barb Pearce from NorQuest College, Philip Watland from Olds College, Brian Cooper from the Bell E-Learning Centre, along with Margo Mayo from Mayo Educational Strategies, collaborated to research and propose an instructional protocol. They aimed to develop a way to pursue online and distance clinical skill development and assessment with an integrated technology framework.

The project determined how technology can help reduce the amount of time required to attend face-to-face clinical instruction sessions while maintaining student learning through distance delivery. NorQuest College's Practical Nurse Program and Olds College's Animal Health Technology Program were used as examples to develop an instructional model. This model was developed to be flexible enough to be adapted to any subject area requiring online delivery and assessment of clinical skills.

The research team developed their instructional model by reviewing the types of skills students need to learn, and then determining the best way to teach them. The resulting clinical skills development model includes descriptions of instructional protocols for distance delivery. The team also investigated various technologies and how they can be used in a clinical skills setting. They then developed the technology framework to support the instructional protocols. The technology framework consists of the following:

- A virtual clinic to allow learners to learn and practise their skills in a clinical setting with patients and their significant others, other students, and other clinic staff
- A simulation model for true "hands-on" performance of the skill on a physical patient model using real or "smart" equipment at or near home

The Clinical Development Model and Technology Framework project was presented at the Canadian eLearning Conference in June 2010. The research team also ensured that project details are available to the general public through their website: <http://clinicalskills.norquest.ca/>.

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### Key Terms \_\_\_\_\_

Clinical skills, Instructional Model, Technology integration

### Academic Strategies Addressed \_\_\_\_\_

Collaboration, Program renewal and realignment, Learner services



## Developing Faculty to Teach Using Simulation in an Interdisciplinary Health-Care Environment

Simulation is increasingly being used to teach interdisciplinary health science students. It is recognized as a credible and effective approach to facilitate learning psychomotor and communication skills. Therefore, it is important that faculty are prepared for their role in facilitating student learning in simulated and virtual environments.

This project is situated within a larger research study that is developing learning modules for health science students using virtual and simulated learning experiences. Originally these modules were being developed without consideration for the preparation of educators who deliver the modules. To address this omission, Margaret Wilson, an educational developer, was asked to chair a working group that would develop a workshop to support faculty when teaching in virtual and simulated environments.

The purpose of this study was to research, pilot, and evaluate an educational workshop for faculty that supports their teaching when using simulation in an interdisciplinary environment.

An interdisciplinary team with representation from NorQuest College, NAIT, the University of Alberta, Alberta Health Services, and MacEwan University worked to establish learning outcomes for faculty to teach effectively in simulated interdisciplinary environments. They also designed and piloted a workshop to teach debriefing skills to faculty who instruct using simulation. This workshop was evaluated to determine its impact on teaching practices and on the confidence of faculty participants. The research team used a mixed data collection method including pre- and post-workshop questionnaires, a satisfaction survey, and follow-up interviews to further investigate faculty responses to the questionnaires and surveys and the impact of the workshop on their teaching practice.

Preliminary results indicate improved levels of faculty confidence in teaching in an interdisciplinary environment using simulation. Results from this study will be shared across disciplines and between institutions.

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Key Terms \_\_\_\_\_

Interdisciplinary, Faculty  
development, Simulation

Academic Strategies  
Addressed \_\_\_\_\_

Program development,  
Collaboration, Community  
responsiveness



## Intersections: Supporting Rural Organizations to Better Engage Immigrant Volunteers, Phases 1 and 2

In many rural Alberta communities, non-profit and voluntary sector (NPVS) organizations provide arts, recreation, health, social, and education services that directly support community vitality. As the demographics of Alberta communities change, NPVS organizations are recognizing the need to match these changes by more effectively engaging newer community members as volunteers, audiences for services, and organizational leaders.

The Intersections project is focused on enhancing the capacity of Alberta non-profit and voluntary sector organizations to inclusively engage immigrant volunteers. The goals of the research team are to increase the number of immigrant volunteers in rural Alberta and to influence changes in policy and practice to reflect more inclusion of ethno-cultural diversity in rural organizations. The team also aims to create more diverse boards for NPVS organizations in rural Alberta, to enhance integration of immigrants within communities, to create stronger networks between NPVS organizations and immigrant serving agencies for mutual assistance and information exchange, and to increase knowledge of tools and resources available.

In Phase 1 of the Intersections project, Sarah Apedaile, Cheryl Whitelaw, and Rosanne Tollenaar looked at immigrant community engagement through volunteerism and sought ways to build the capacity of NPVS organizations to more inclusively engage immigrant volunteers. The researchers delivered surveys and focus groups to Canadian and newcomer participants to identify the barriers that newcomers could encounter to their participation in volunteer opportunities. Project participants who attended training sessions offered by the research team completed the Intercultural Development Inventory to generate a group profile of intercultural sensitivity. Research results informed the development of three self-guided training module resources and a one-day training session, which was delivered to NPVS organizations in eight communities to develop expertise in ethno-cultural volunteer engagement. The modules were developed to be relevant and accessible to the broadest audience possible in NPVS organizations in Alberta.

In Phase 2, the research team focused on supporting organizational governance and policy development for NPVS organizations to increase their capacity to build more inclusive organizations and communities. They sent a follow-up survey to organizations participating in Phase 1 in order to collect changes in inclusive voluntary management practices. The researchers also developed a guide for NPVS boards. Materials developed in Phase 2 will be integrated into the Board Development program through Alberta Cultural and Community Spirit, and participating NPVS boards will complete training sessions. Linkages between NPVS and immigrant serving organizations will also be developed and supported.

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### Key Terms \_\_\_\_\_

Volunteer, Intercultural,  
Newcomers

### Academic Strategies Addressed \_\_\_\_\_

Community responsiveness,  
Collaboration



## Rural ESL Enhancement: Roots and Connections Phase 2

NorQuest College's Rural ESL Enhancement: Roots and Connections project began as a response to challenges in immigration to rural areas. New immigrants to rural Alberta communities often experience cultural distance and isolation. Cultural distance is a measure of the difference between two cultures with regard to politics, technical and economic experiences, language, the size of and cohesiveness of the group, the attitudes of dominant and minority cultural groups toward one another, a lack of understanding or disconnect from the "system," and cultural patterns (gender, hierarchy, self, time, etc.). The experience of isolation can occur because of language barriers, segregation, racism, overwhelming responsibility, loss, disorientation, feelings of not belonging, and lack of access to community resources.

In developing this project, team members aimed to address community challenges in creating welcoming communities. These challenges include cultural awareness, cultural distance of newcomers, community responses to change, and a lack of services and resources to respond to increasing numbers of immigrants. Community organizations such as community adult learning councils expressed a need for a ready-to-use tool that teachers and volunteers (regardless of teaching experience) could use to offer an effective community orientation to newcomers.

NorQuest College Centre for Excellence in Intercultural Education (CEIE) staff members Sarah Apedaile, Cheryl Whitelaw, Kerry Louw, and Jaimy Miller collaborated to pilot a culturally integrated, English as a second language (ESL) curriculum called Roots and Connections that had been created during a previous phase of the project. Roots and Connections is designed to be relevant and responsive to the needs of, but not limited to, those newcomers at a higher risk of isolation, as well as to the challenges of service providers in meeting these diverse and complex needs. The research team piloted the resource with adult education learning associations in four communities across Alberta, with participants who included 32 learners and 8 program coordinators, instructors, and volunteer tutors. The research team administered surveys and the Intercultural Development Inventory to program coordinators, instructors, and volunteer tutors. They also conducted post-program interviews and focus groups with project participants.

Individuals who participated in the pilot project reported improved language abilities and knowledge of the community, as well as increased confidence in speaking English. These improvements influenced their overall confidence and ability to access services and resources within the community, and enhanced community connections. Canadian-born participants reported increased awareness of cultural diversity issues. The participating communities also indicated changes in their capacity to offer English as a second language programming, due to their participation in the pilot.

The CEIE is pursuing opportunities to promote and support adoption of Roots and Connections. It will be freely available in fall 2010 through the Centre for Excellence in Intercultural Education website at: <http://www.norquest.ca/cfe/intercultural/>.

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### Key Terms \_\_\_\_\_

ESL, Intercultural, Newcomers,  
Community development

### Academic Strategies Addressed \_\_\_\_\_

Community responsiveness,  
Collaboration



## Support needs of post-secondary students who experience mental health difficulties in Alberta: An exploratory study of adult students of Aboriginal background and from the immigrant/refugee sector

Evidence shows that increasing numbers of students who enrol for study in post-secondary institutions experience mental health difficulties that adversely affect their academic performance. Research indicates that with appropriate support, many of these students can be successful in higher education. However, a significant proportion of these students drop out of their study programs because of insufficient support.

Two faculty members from NorQuest College's Social Work Diploma Program collaborated with two professors from the University of Calgary's Faculty of Social Work to develop a research project that seeks to investigate the kinds of support needed by students who experience mental health difficulties, and examine the barriers they face to completing their programs of study.

The issues inspiring the project idea resonate significantly with Eugene Ip in his teaching experiences with the diverse student population at NorQuest College. Psycho-social issues and barriers to academic success often exist, and reproduce themselves prior to the students' arrival in post-secondary programs.

The overall goals of the project are as follows:

- Examine the lived experiences and challenges faced by adult students of Aboriginal background and students from immigrant and refugee sectors, and the effects on these students' psychological and emotional health.
- Examine the current supports these students have, and which supports they access.
- Explore the types of supports and resources these students need in order to continue their studies.

Currently, the research project is in the data collection phase at several post-secondary institutions. The data collection at NorQuest College will primarily focus on Aboriginal, immigrant and refugee, and ESL students. The team developed a semi-structured interview guide using information from existing research of post-secondary students who experienced mental health difficulties, combined with information from research experts in the field of mental health in post-secondary settings. The objective of the semi-structured interview guide is to look at how students balance their lives (family + school + work + relationships), how this juggling has affected their school lives, and what support systems are needed to help students achieve their school and career goals.

Following data collection, the research team will develop a conceptual framework of how students navigate through the potentially conflicting domains of their lives and ultimately how it affects their studies. The team will also develop supports and resources that will facilitate finding a balance between the differing areas of students' lives and helping students achieve their study goals. The findings of this study will assist educators in designing programs that can improve student retention and maximize course completion.

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### Key Terms

Adult education, Minority students, Mental health, supports

### Academic Strategies Addressed

Program development, Collaboration, Learner services



## Enhancing Teaching Practice and Building Community through Mentoring

NorQuest College has implemented a peer consultation program that provides a method for faculty to examine and enhance their teaching practices through collegial mentoring. After participating in extensive mentor training, three NorQuest faculty members saw an opportunity to bring the spirit of mentoring to all their peers within the Faculty of English Language and Intercultural Education (FELIE). They proposed the introduction of a process of classroom visits, group reflection, and dialogue.

Barbara Penner, Debbie Stephen, and Shannon Boyer, instructors in FELIE, approached Margaret Wilson, Chair of the Peer Consultant group, as they were formulating their peer mentoring plan. This collaboration resulted in the formation of a research team to examine a method for initiating faculty conversations about teaching and learning. The team decided to adapt the highly successful "teaching squares" concept, which involves faculty in classroom observations and discussions around student learning.

The primary objective of this FELIE faculty mentoring project is to enhance teaching practice and build community through a structured, non-evaluative process of classroom observation and shared reflection. The research team will introduce the teaching squares concept to FELIE staff at the fall 2010 staff meeting. Research participants will complete a pre-study survey around their current dialogue with colleagues about teaching and learning. They will then form four-member teaching squares, and will observe how their group members' teaching impacts student learning and engagement. Resulting discussion among teaching square members will address the different teaching techniques they observed in diverse situations with diverse student populations. After participating in these observations and reflective discussions, the teaching square members will fill out surveys to determine the impact of participating in the experience on their own teaching practices and collegial interactions.

After the completion of this project, the research team plans to introduce the teaching square concept to faculty in other areas of the College.

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### Key Terms \_\_\_\_\_

Mentoring, Faculty  
development, Building  
community

### Academic Strategies Addressed \_\_\_\_\_

Community responsiveness



## Evaluation of the 2nd cohort of practical nurse (PN) students at Dickinsfield facility

Increased care needs for Canada's aging population have created a high demand for practical nurses in continuing care. The related demand for spaces in practical nurse programs is also high. In 2008, NorQuest College found they had more potential students than space. At the same time, CapitalCare had an excess of space in their Dickinsfield facility. The two organizations collaborated to set up an innovative Practical Nurse Training Program. This was done under the leadership of the Institute for Continuing Care Education and Research (ICCER), of which NorQuest and CapitalCare are two of the founding members. A team led by Sandra Woodhead Lyons, Executive Director of ICCER, evaluated the project.

The first cohort of practical nurse students at Dickinsfield started in January 2008, and 21 students graduated in August 2009. Students at both the Dickinsfield campus and the main campus received the same theory course, laboratory, and simulated practice. NorQuest College faculty taught the same program at Dickinsfield as the one given at the main campus; however, class size was smaller and two dedicated instructors provided all the nurse training. Each group had 20 weeks of clinical practice, but the Dickinsfield group received more practice in a long-term care setting by combining their long-term care rotation and their medicine rotation.

The evaluation showed that the combined rotation at Dickinsfield did not meet the needs of the students, nor did it increase their comfort with the continuing care sector. Based on recommendations from the initial evaluation, some changes to the program were made before the second cohort began in September 2009. For instance, the rotations for the Dickinsfield program are now the same as for the main campus.

The evaluation team was expanded for the second cohort, bringing in Jason Dunne and Pamela Young from NorQuest College, Francine Drisner from CapitalCare Dickinsfield, and Kari Elliott from Alberta Health Services to design and execute an ongoing evaluation of NorQuest's Practical Nurse offering at Dickinsfield. The evaluation was based on an action research model in order to work with, and provide feedback to, the administration at both NorQuest and Dickinsfield. As a result, NorQuest and CapitalCare are now exploring additional and more innovative ways to integrate the Practical Nurse Program and the long-term care facility more closely. This will give students a richer and more valuable experience in continuing care. An ongoing process of inquiry, feedback, and improvement is in place, as evaluations and changes to the program are carried out.

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### Key Terms

Practical nurse, Education,  
Continuing care, Evaluation

### Academic Strategies Addressed

Collaboration, Program  
renewal and realignment,  
Community responsiveness



## Beyond Access: Immersion to Integration Phase 2

Internationally educated professionals (IEPs) who are working in Canadian engineering companies with multicultural workforces often experience barriers to promotion and career advancement. Pragmatics—an understanding of how the context of spoken language contributes to the meaning in English—is critical to the integration of IEPs into the Canadian workplace, and to relating to leaders and leading others. This higher level understanding of the English language is critical if newcomers are to function effectively in the professional Alberta workplace; however, few instructional resources are available to help international professionals master this ability.

Paul Homes, Erin Waugh, and Jake Evans collaborated on the Beyond Access: Immersion to Integration Phase 2 project to develop Personal Management in a Multicultural Organization, a course offered through the Centre for Excellence in Intercultural Education (CEIE) at NorQuest College. The course supports internationally educated professionals in becoming more mobile and visible within their organizations. Focus is on the development of pragmatic language skills, and the language of leadership—understanding how effective pragmatic language skills enable effective leadership.

The research team completed a literature review and conducted interviews that added to the development of the Personal Management course. The course was delivered to 45 IEPs. In addition, intercultural training was delivered to 750 organizational leaders and teams within engineering companies who partnered with the CEIE for the project. The project team also investigated the gap between performance expectations as understood by IEPs and by organizational leaders. This gap in performance expectations was critical to understanding the barriers to career advancement for IEPs. The research team evaluated the effectiveness of training and coaching supports that were provided throughout the project.

The Immersion to Integration Phase 2 project provided an approach to teaching and assessing pragmatic language abilities. The project also documented language and culturally appropriate communication competencies that would be helpful to advancement. In addition, it identified the gaps between Canadian managers' and internationally-educated engineers' understanding of what language skills are needed to be eligible for promotion.

Partner companies are using these findings to enhance leadership training within their organizations and to help inform internal business decision making practices. The Centre for Excellence in Intercultural Education is exploring ways to apply the findings from this project within other business contexts through corporate training and applied research opportunities.

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### Key Terms \_\_\_\_\_

Intercultural, Integration,  
Workforce development,  
Newcomers

### Academic Strategies Addressed \_\_\_\_\_

Collaboration, Community  
responsiveness



## Online Workplace Integration Language Resources

Newcomers to Canada require enough language fluency within the context of their jobs in order to successfully integrate into Canadian workplaces. They also need a range of competencies to successfully adapt to Canadian ideas of employability: language, culture, employment-based skills, and the ability to navigate the formal and informal aspects of the Canadian workplace. In addition to the knowledge, skills, and abilities required to succeed, newcomers need to navigate the perceptions of their Canadian born co-workers and supervisors as to how well they “fit in.” These perceptions can be impacted by newcomers’ challenges with pragmatics—an understanding of how the context of spoken language contributes to the meaning in English.

Canadians working in multicultural workplaces need a greater awareness of Canadian communication norms in order to support more effective communication. Canadians typically are implicitly aware of acceptable ways to interrupt someone who is of higher status, to raise a concern, to disagree, and to negotiate with others to achieve agreement. Co-workers from other cultural backgrounds will have different implicit norms for appropriate communication and non-verbal behaviours. A lack of awareness of different communication norms can create conditions for poor communication and less productive teamwork.

Erin Waugh, Kerry Louw, and Cheryl Whitelaw from NorQuest’s Centre for Excellence in Intercultural Education (CEIE) and Katherine Rankin from Learning Resource Services are creating a resource that addresses issues encountered every day by organizations dealing with multicultural workforces. The design of the online resources is informed by research results from the Immersion to Integration Phase 2 project, a review of relevant literature, and CEIE experience from workplace English language and intercultural training.

The goal of this project is to develop an online resource to support teaching and learning of workplace integration language skills for newcomers. The resource will include video clips of meeting scenarios to introduce culturally different norms of communication, video and audio clips of Canadian pragmatic language expressions, and a guide to teaching workplace-appropriate language use. The project uses an iterative design process that gathers input from target audience stakeholders and from representatives of the culture groups portrayed in the video scenarios. The resources are designed to be used flexibly to support teacher-led and learner self-study of pragmatic language expressions within workplace contexts. The resources will target pragmatic language expressions that can be described as high stakes speech acts: a failure to speak in culturally appropriate ways results in negative perceptions of the speaker’s credibility and competence.

Once completed, the resources will be piloted with newcomer and Canadian audiences. The published resources and lessons learned from the project will be available in spring 2011 on the NorQuest Centre for Excellence in Intercultural Education website: <http://www.norquest.ca/cfe/intercultural/>.

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### Key Terms \_\_\_\_\_

Intercultural, English in the  
workplace, Newcomers,  
Integration

### Academic Strategies Addressed \_\_\_\_\_

Community responsiveness,  
Collaboration



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