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In our last issue, we told you about new activities under the Agreement on Culture and Education. Further to this announcement, we are pleased to inform you that suggestions for activities for all Québec Education Program subjects, along with student audiovisual productions illustrating ways of integrating the cultural dimension into the classroom, are now available on the MELS Web site. Teachers are sure to find lots of ideas for exploring the underlying cultural dimension of their respective subjects.

These audiovisual resources are intended to provide inspiration for activities marking the first Cultural Activities Month at School, currently under way. Throughout the month of February, teachers are encouraged to adapt these suggestions, organizing their own activities (perhaps calling on the services of an artist or writer), planning trips to a cultural venue or organizing a special event that involves one or more Arts Education subjects and highlights the community's cultural heritage.

Against this backdrop of cultural activity, we are very proud to present the second issue of *Arts and Culture in Québec Schools* for 2008-2009.

We begin with a look back at the launch of the new season of cultural activities and the announcement of the 2008 Essor award winners at the regional level.

This issue also features an article in which arts teachers share their experience with evaluation tools for the new certification of studies requirements for Secondary IV Arts Education. Their recommendations should prove helpful to teachers who will begin applying the new requirements this year.

A particularly upbeat story this month describes how two Secondary IV students put on a series of recitals for local seniors after returning from a concert trip to Italy. We also invite you to take a moment to appreciate the wide range of activities carried out by Montérégie students during the second annual Rencontre Scol'Arts, organized by the Comité culturel of the Conseil économique du Haut-Richelieu.

The *Arts in Action* section reports on a literary workshop given by writer Lori Weber. The students who participated had an opportunity to express their individuality through literature. In this section we also look at the multidisciplinary project *Beaulieu en culture*, which involved more than 800 students.

The final article, on school board cultural committees, underlines the important role they play in integrating the cultural dimension at school.

We hope you enjoy this issue.

**Georges Bouchard, Denis Casault and Diane Shank**



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## GETS UNDER WAY WITH THE PRESENTATION OF THE REGIONAL ESSOR AWARDS FOR 2008

Marie-Josée Lépine

Last October 7 to 16, participants in 17 arts and culture projects carried out in elementary and secondary schools across Québec in 2007-2008 were presented with Eссор Recognition Awards. During the awards ceremonies, the winning schools showed that the arts and culture are a vital part of students' education and development.

### 2008 regional tour

In Québec City, Sherbrooke, Laval, Montréal, Baie-Comeau, Trois-Rivières, Rimouski and Saguenay, without exception, students and project supervisors accepted their awards with tremendous pride, for not only were their efforts being rewarded, they were also being recognized.

Working with partners both within and outside their walls, the schools showed imagination in designing projects that students could relate to and, indeed, their enthusiasm during the awards ceremonies was convincing. Dressed in costume or in their stage finery, the students gave it their all, whether performing excerpts from musicals or songs from the Québécois repertoire. In recognition of the excellent quality of the projects submitted, school principals, artists, partners and dignitaries were there to cheer the students on.

In each region, Alain Lamontagne, 2008-2009 spokesperson for *Culture in the School: A Class Act*, gave lively performances, combining his talents as a storyteller, harmonica player and foot percussionist to enthrall students and adults alike. Lamontagne, who has worked with young people for over 20 years, expressed his pride in being associated with the Eссор Recognition Awards.

### Artists in the schools

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Christine St-Pierre, Minister of Culture, Communications and the Status of Women, took advantage of the occasion to announce that the new [Répertoire de ressources culture-éducation](#) had come online. This expanded version of the directory of cultural resources for schools contains the names of over 1700 artists, writers and organizations that offer workshops or cultural outings. “This tool,” St-Pierre commented, “is an essential source of information for organizing imaginative and interesting activities for young people.”

### **New designation**

Starting this year, the *Essor Awards* will be known as the *Essor Recognition Awards*. This change in name reflects the objective of the Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine and the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport to put more emphasis on recognizing the efforts, commitment and merit of teachers who organize quality arts and culture activities in which students play a central role.

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## THE 2008 ESSOR RECOGNITION AWARDS GALA

### Marie-Josée Lépine

On November 22, the recording studios of Télé-Québec welcomed students, school principals, dignitaries and teachers to a highly anticipated event at which 6 of the 17 arts and culture projects in contention would be honoured with a provincial Essor Recognition Award.

The evening began with outstanding performances by dozens of talented students from elementary and secondary schools across Québec. The students, from the youngest to the oldest, were visibly excited. The busy hours before the live taping had been spent getting into costume, sitting in makeup, rehearsing or, accompanied by the technical crew, discovering the recording studio, with its imposing cameras, coloured lights and control room.

Judging by the lively conversation and laughter coming from an adjoining room, the adults gathered there were every bit as excited as the students. After months of work setting up an arts and culture project, after motivating dozens and sometimes hundreds of students and getting their commitment, after seeking the collaboration of numerous partners, the look of pride on their faces said it all.

### ...and roll camera!

Once the audience members had taken their seats, it was show time. A group of 20 or so students from École secondaire Jean-de-Brébeuf got things started with an excerpt from their project *Stadacona, 400 ans de musique populaire*. Singers and musicians delivered an energetic performance of a varied repertoire, from Les Colocs to Céline Dion.

During the awards ceremony, Sainte-Flore, J.-C.-Chapais and De Montarville elementary schools also presented excerpts from their projects. With humour and talent, the students by turns recited their own poems, joined their voices in an hommage to Félix Leclerc or drew the audience into an imaginary golf game inhibited by strange cannibals in the form of giant puppets.

In tribute to the quality of the projects honoured last October with the 2008 regional Essor Recognition Awards, short videos were played for the audience. The representatives of the partners associated with the provincial Essor Recognition Awards and the dignitaries present emphasized the excellent work the students had accomplished with the support of their teachers.

Alain Lamontagne, 2008-2009 spokesperson for *Culture in the School: A Class Act*, took the opportunity to encourage and congratulate the students and their teachers: “Having enjoyed the benefits of culture ever since I was young, it is important to me to communicate the passion I feel. I would like to commend the generosity of teachers who go the extra distance to kindle their students’ imagination and give them the support they need to practise an art.”

Special guest, singer-songwriter Andrée Watters gave a warm rendition of her song *Tout de moi*. Interviewed by gala host Marie-Christine Trottier, she took the opportunity to impress upon students the importance of school in their personal development. “It’s a time for discovering your limits and your capacities. It’s a time for finding all kinds of sources of inspiration.”

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## TEACHERS SHARE THEIR FINDINGS

Marie-Josée Lépine

Last October 6 and 7, school principals, teachers and education consultants took part in an Arts Education training session in Québec City. Teachers who had tried out different evaluation tools were on hand to talk about their experience working with the new certification requirements in Secondary IV Arts Education. In their presentation they stressed the importance of planning and collaboration.

This year, for the first time in the history of the Québec education system, students must pass Secondary IV Arts Education in order to earn a Secondary School Diploma (SSD).

As a result of this new requirement, teachers must keep records of each student's work throughout the year in order to prepare a competency report in June. By keeping records, they will be able to substantiate their professional judgment and determine the level of competency attained by each student.

Last year, a group of teachers experimented with a number of evaluation tools (see "Producing a Competency Report in Arts Education" in *Arts and Culture in Québec Schools*, volume 16, number 4, May 2008). Starting this year, all schools must comply with the new MELS requirements and so, to help ease the transition, teachers Annie Mirandette (Drama), Cindy Jutras (Visual Arts), Jessie Pellerin (Dance) and Isabelle Fillion (Music) described their experience working with the learning and evaluation file.

### Planning and collaboration: two essential principles

To make it easier to prepare the learning and evaluation file that will later serve in producing the competency report, Arts Education teachers would be well advised to plan the school year out before students arrive in class at the end of the summer. This entails organizing course content by distributing learning and evaluation situations (LES) over the entire year and finding the time and facilities for

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managing and storing learning and evaluation files (filing cabinets, digital cameras, recording equipment, etc.).

## Get students involved and everybody wins

In addition to the student records kept by teachers, the learning and evaluation file contains an individual file for which each student is responsible. At the start of the school year, the teachers clearly explained to their students what they expected of them. Essentially, students would each be responsible for their own file. The students had to agree to keep it in order and to ensure that all relevant documents would be in the file when it came time for the teacher to produce the competency report.

The teachers found that their job was greatly facilitated by having students take part in compiling the learning and evaluation file. Annie Mirandette observed that the students were managing their own files and had to be well organized to do so. For example, in Cindy Jutras' class, students had to photograph their work themselves in order to add a record of it to their file. "Secondary IV students are up to the task," Jutras noted.

## Lending a personal touch

Various tools, such as the portfolio and scales of competency levels, are available to help teachers evaluate their students. It is essential, however, that teachers make the tools work for them. Mirandette stressed the importance of this if teachers were to feel comfortable using them. Accordingly, the teachers chose from a selection of documents, simplifying some and adapting others to their own teaching practice.

## Setting objectives

Isabelle Fillion advised participants against trying to accomplish too much the first year. "You have to set objectives that are realistic and attainable," she said.

According to Fillion, one way to keep objectives realistic is by adapting learning and evaluation situations. "Making learning and evaluation situations shorter doesn't mean they are any less complex or not as good," she said. Rather, they allow students to feel they have understood and have made meaningful connections among the three subject-specific competencies. "It's a winning formula for us and them," she concluded.

## Education consultants play an essential role

All four teachers agreed on the essential role played by the education consultant. "She was there to answer my questions," Jesse Pellerin noted, and "she taught me to have confidence in myself and to keep doing what I was doing."

In conclusion, Manon Côté hoped that this experimental project would be of help to teachers when they begin working with the learning and evaluation file this year.



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MUSIC STUDENTS LAUREN TYROS AND MOEGI EGAN

## SHOW HEARTFELT INITIATIVE

Marie Black

A learning and evaluation situation aimed at raising funds to send a 30-member chamber orchestra and three teachers to Italy last July has blossomed into a passionate sideline for a small group of music students at FACE, the Montréal fine arts school. And it has become a huge hit among pockets of seniors in the city. The idea is deceptively simple: Round up some musicians, learn a small repertoire, and play for people who often get short shrift in their autumn years.

In the buzz of back-to-school this year, Secondary IV students Lauren Tyros and Moegi Egan—still revelling in the excitement of their eight-day trip to Bologna to perform in the 2008 ISME (International Society for Music Education) Conference—took some initiative on their own. Together with four friends, they decided to revisit the seniors project, only this time, instead of performing for a fee, they would provide the concerts free of charge. The group booked three seniors' homes—two in Verdun and one in Saint-Henri—for shows in October.

### Students becoming empowered

"They decided they were going to do it voluntarily just to make those people happy. I thought it was so touching," says Theodora Stathopoulos, a teacher involved in the original fundraising initiative.

She sees it as a perfect example of students becoming empowered by taking the tools they have acquired in school and transferring them to the real world. Without teacher supervision and intervention, they alone are responsible for arranging gigs and determining rehearsal schedules. Learning to cooperate, problem solve and perform without a conductor is no easy feat, according to Tyros, who, along with Egan, is more of an inspirational guide for the group than a leader. "Together, we are improving as an orchestra," she explains. "But we ourselves have to figure out what we need to do to improve. It's not our teachers in the back of our heads anymore, it's us!" Their growing repertoire includes tango—very popular among audiences—as well as *Tuxedo Junction* and the theme from the movie *Schindler's List*.

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But their learning doesn't stop at music. Getting a firsthand glimpse of issues that touch older people—illness, loneliness and isolation—helps shape their own world-view. In the process, they are creating and establishing their identity “as artists, musicians, entrepreneurs, organizers, and individuals who want to give of themselves for the good of society,” explains Stathopoulos.

### **Giving back to the community**

Egan echoes this sentiment. “I think I can speak for the whole group when I say that we feel really good giving back to the community.” The concerts for seniors are informal: rather than a staged performance, the group plays for people wherever they are gathered in the establishment—in the dining room or living room, or on different floors. Tyros smiles at the memory of a woman they once played for whom she imagined to have been a musician in her heyday: “It was really sweet how she started mimicking playing the violin as we were playing.”

Tyros has learned a great deal about herself and society over the past year. “We shouldn't neglect others,” she says. Egan feels the same way. “Here we are, young people sharing what we have, opening up to others. And it's fun!” Tyros, who has been playing the viola for four years, plans to pursue a career in music, while Egan is considering law or medicine. Regardless, Egan says she will continue playing the violin as a hobby: “Music,” as she explains, “is the connection between people.”





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## CULTURE IS ALIVE AND WELL IN A REGION NEAR YOU

Sébastien Boulanger

Last September 26, the Théâtre des Deux Rives, in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, played host to the second annual Rencontre Scol'Arts. The goal of the event, which brought together over 150 participants, was to create awareness among teachers of the cultural offerings for young audiences in Montérégie. Rencontre Scol'Arts helps to create lasting ties between the culture and education communities while at the same time encouraging students to discover the professional venues on Québec's culture scene.

Organized by the Comité culturel of the Conseil économique du Haut-Richelieu (Centre local de développement, or CLD), the second Rencontre Scol'Arts elicited an enthusiastic response from all participants, who had an opportunity to appreciate the talent of the region's cultural artisans and the richness of the activities for children and teenagers.

The day got under way at 8:30 a.m., when members of the school community began visiting the various booths and talking with the many artists and representatives of participating local cultural organizations.

Participants were then entertained by *Dans une Montérégie près de chez vous*, a lively production directed by Étienne Fortin and showcasing the quality and richness of Montérégie's cultural resources. The culmination of over six months' work, this original show drew inspiration from the French-language television series, *Dans une galaxie près de chez vous* (In a galaxy near you).

Three young actors kept the plot moving along for over an hour and a half while a succession of storytellers, actors and dancers took to the stage. Joining them were archaeologists, singer-songwriters, artists and writers in performances ranging from playful to poetic. Video excerpts, recorded in studio or by cultural organizations, gave the audience a glimpse of local cultural venues, such as the exhibition centre

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and the museum.

In the afternoon, an information session on the *Culture in the Schools Program* introduced teachers and other school personnel to the procedure for submitting a project proposal, the *Répertoire de ressources culture-éducation* (directory of cultural resources for schools associated with the program) and the local cultural resources listed in the directory. Each year, the program, which is jointly managed by the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport and the Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine, makes it possible for thousands of students to participate in cultural activities as part of their regular curriculum.

In May 2008, Rencontre Scol'Arts was awarded the Partenariat du Regroupement des commissions scolaires de la Montérégie prize, which recognizes outstanding projects that mobilize the education community and the general public.

The event, held under the aegis of the Comité culturel of the Conseil économique du Haut-Richelieu, is a reflection of the willingness of many stakeholders in the culture and education communities to work together. Participants included members of the Musée du Haut-Richelieu, the Coop créative art[o] and the Société pour la promotion d'événements culturels du Haut-Richelieu. The Commission scolaire des Hautes-Rivières was committed to the project and was very effective in encouraging the participation of school staff, especially Arts Education consultant, Lynda Touchette.

By drawing on professional resources close at hand, being innovative and adapting cultural content, the Rencontre Scol'Arts event did a brilliant job of offering teachers a unique cultural experience that they will in turn be able to share with their students.

Source: Sylvie Blais, Direction de la Montérégie, MCCCCF





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## SUPPORT FOR SCHOOL BOARD CULTURAL COMMITTEES:

### HELPING TO INTEGRATE THE CULTURAL DIMENSION AT SCHOOL

**Francine Gagnon-Bourget**

Since the adoption of Québec's cultural policy in 1992, the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) and the Ministère de la Culture, des Communications et de la Condition féminine (MCCCF) have formed lasting ties. Working together, they aim to promote culture in the schools through the creation of different bodies and support measures. School cultural committees are among the means that have been established to attain this objective.

#### The role of school board cultural committees

In the context of integrating the cultural dimension, MELS encourages school boards to adopt a cultural policy for the schools in their territory. Once the policy has been adopted by the commissioners' committee, the school cultural committee can act on it, planning, implementing and following up on initiatives.

This committee, which falls under the school board, is composed of people interested in promoting culture in their community. It can, for example, encourage schools to organize cultural trips and activities, including bringing in guest artists and writers; to collaborate with MELS and MCCCF regional offices on the application of the Culture in the Schools Program; and to establish ties with regional cultural organizations in order to allow students to discover these resources and develop a feeling of belonging to their community.

#### Snapshot of the 2008-2009 school year

Of the 69 school boards throughout Québec, 55 already have a cultural committee. Of these, 41 have a cultural policy and the remaining 14 are in the process of developing one.

To find out more about the different mandates of a cultural committee under a school board, go to the [Culture in the School: A Class Act!](#) Web site.

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## ARTS IN ACTION

### USING LITERATURE AS A TRAMPOLINE, STUDENTS ILLUSTRATE THEIR OWN UNIQUENESS

Marie Black

It doesn't take long for Lori Weber to issue her first challenge to students when she enters a classroom: Think about all the images and sounds you put *into* your body every day through technology. Her goal is to convince them that it's equally important to put out—to *express*. And, of course, to read. The author of five books for teens and a teacher at John Abbott College for the past 12 years, Weber has toured her message to many schools in the two years she has been part of the Culture in the Schools Program.

In a recent workshop at Lindsay Place High School in Pointe-Claire, Weber used literature as a trampoline, coupled with a Visual Arts exercise, to get a special literacy class of Secondary II and III students to "reveal something meaningful about who they are," and subsequently write about it. She used one of her novels—focusing on family breakup, friendship, illness and self-discovery—as a starting point.

#### We talked about how symbols can represent people

The workshop began with a brief presentation designed to empower the students. Weber questioned them on the titles they loved as children and demonstrated how books had been significant to them at an early age. She then showed copies of her books, including the one that would anchor the rest of her workshop. "Who here has a tattoo?" she asked, and no one raised a hand. "Who would like one?" she ventured, provoking an overwhelmingly positive response from most of the class.

"We talked about how symbols can represent people," explains Weber, who offered a brief synopsis of the plot and elicited predictions on what tattoo each of the main characters would end up with. Primed, attentive, they followed along in their own copies while Weber read an excerpt in which the main character gives a girl with leukemia a nonpermanent, homemade tattoo of an angel.

Afterwards, Weber handed out paper and art supplies, and challenged the students to draw an image that would best reflect their own personality, passions and interests, and to write a short paragraph explaining

their choice. With a little coaxing from Weber and their teacher, they all managed to produce something that illustrated their own uniqueness.

### **Everyone was able to shine**

“What I did was ask them to open up and look inside, find what they know well and share it,” said Weber, whose recollection of one student’s powerful image of a heart cracked in half still gives her goose bumps. Providing an opportunity for students to express themselves in a supportive environment, Weber was able to empower them by bridging that sometimes daunting gap between text and reader, and making them active participants responsible for their own learning. “In the end, everyone was able to shine a little bit.”

Educators understand the importance of a rich, literate classroom environment, access to a wide range of reading material that appeals to adolescent readers, and the encouragement of reading for pleasure as well as for information. But there is more. According to Karen Slattery, the 23-year teaching veteran who welcomed Weber into her class and who insists her at-risk students—several of whom suffer from lack of confidence and low self-esteem—benefited enormously from the workshop. “Bringing authors into the classroom helps to make literature come alive for students, highlights the human face behind the words, and offers inspiration for those who are reluctant readers.”





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**CULTURE TAKES CENTRE STAGE AT ÉCOLE SECONDAIRE BEAULIEU**

**Sébastien Boulanger**

During the 2007-2008 school year, the 800 or so students at École secondaire Beaulieu (Commission scolaire des Hautes-Rivières, in Montérégie) took part in a project called *Beaulieu en culture*. Organized by a cultural committee made up of teachers, other education professionals and the school administration, this multidisciplinary project brought together resource persons with a range of expertise—in French language and literature, theatre, journalism and graphic arts. Support was provided under the Culture in the Schools Program, and several members of the school staff along with various cultural partners, including the Société pour la promotion d'événements culturels du Haut-Richelieu and the Théâtre des Deux Rives, in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, played an instrumental role in getting the project off the ground.

École secondaire Beaulieu, in Saint-Jean-sur-Richelieu, accommodates students from Secondary III to V in arts-study and sports-study programs as well as Secondary IV and V students following the regular curriculum.

The *Beaulieu en culture* project, which was divided into sections based on the cultural resources and education levels concerned, combines all the cultural activities offered by the school. As a result, all the students were involved to varying degrees in an activity during the year, depending on their skills and interests.

**Performances and workshops at the Théâtre des Deux Rives**

In class, the students in Secondary IV French (language of instruction) were given an introduction to the

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theatre, read excerpts from plays and watched performances of dramatic works in different genres. They then attended three performances at the Théâtre des Deux Rives: *La Barbe Bleue*, by the French theatre company La Cordonnerie, *Assoiffés*, by the Théâtre Le Clou, and *Cette fille-là*, by the Théâtre la Catapulte.

Back in the classroom, the students discussed their experience, reflected on what they had learned and wrote a review of the plays. They then shared their reviews with a wider audience on the radio and in the student newspaper; the local newspaper, *Le Canada Français*; and the magazine, *L'Entracte*, produced by the Théâtre des Deux Rives.

At the same time, the students were asked to create a scene based on one of the three plays they had attended. These excerpts were performed during the year-end show.

Secondary IV and V students in music, communications and journalism were given the opportunity in class to learn about theatre-related jobs and to take part in training workshops. Here, they explored different occupations, such as lighting design, sound engineering, set design, ushering, and technical and artistic direction.

The students wrote about their experience in the school paper, as well as in *L'Entracte* and the *Journal des métiers de la scène*. Entirely produced by the journalism students, the *Journal des métiers de la scène* was displayed in the school library. With their newfound experience, the students provided technical assistance for the year-end stage production.

## Poster

Secondary IV and V communications and journalism students were assigned the task of producing an effective poster. To better equip them, they were given a crash course on cartooning, publicity and poster ads in the Québec context. After participating in a workshop given by a professional graphic artist/cartoonist, they were introduced to different techniques used in cartooning and advertising. The students then made a poster to promote their school's year-end show. The students' cartoons and posters were exhibited in the main entrance of the Théâtre des Deux Rives.

## Literary workshop

Another activity held in connection with the *Beaulieu en culture* project was a reading group for students in Secondary Cycle Two French, language of instruction. The group was created to provide students with an opportunity to discuss books and hone their literary analysis skills. A number of group members went to the Salon du livre in Montréal and participated in workshops held as part of World Book and Copyright Day. At the workshops, they met established authors, explored the process of literary creation and learned more about being a writer. The students later presented their literary discoveries at the year-end show.

Carried out by an enthusiastic school staff in collaboration with many major cultural partners, École secondaire Beaulieu's multidisciplinary project helped broaden the cultural horizons of all its students. In addition to delving into the world of theatre, they discovered different occupations in literature and the arts and different areas of creative activity.



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## ARTS IN ACTION

### MARIO BÉRUBÉ AND THE BANCROFT SCHOOL MURAL PROJECT: MAKING A CONNECTION WITH QUÉBEC HISTORY

Marie Black

When Nacera Krim signed on to have visual artist Mario Bérubé introduce her Elementary Cycle Three students to mural painting, she hadn't anticipated just how powerful an impact it would have on the learning curve. Bérubé's assignment was to help students create three large murals for the school: one depicting the 400th anniversary of Québec, one of New France and one symbolizing Canada today.

Krim, who has been teaching at Montréal's Bancroft School for the past 11 years, still raves about the experience: "The project touched so many of the competencies enumerated in the Québec Education Program. It's the best way to teach." It also happened to be a perfect fit with her school's mission to foster in students creative thinking, cooperative learning, self-esteem, respect for others and a sense of pride in the school's multicultural community.

#### Helping students understand their world

Bérubé's visit was part of a larger school project celebrating the 400th anniversary of Québec, which included a musical and theatrical performance for parents. But Krim seized the opportunity to link her mural project with the social sciences, a discipline that provides students with the tools to help them understand their world, integrate harmoniously, and contribute to its development. She felt that art would lend itself to conveying certain aspects of Québec history that might be lost to students through a more traditional approach to teaching.

For his part, Bérubé, who grew up in Rimouski, Trois-Rivières and Montréal, likes the idea of having students work together as a team to carry an idea to fruition. "The mural is a sizeable work that kids rarely have the opportunity to explore. This project allows them to learn about large surfaces," explains Bérubé, who trained in architecture and plastic arts at the Université de Montréal. At Bancroft, each of the three murals involved working from text, images and the imagination to produce a small-scale drawing, which

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was then proportionally enlarged and chalked onto plywood, using the grid method. For colour, students used latex paint. The entire project took about two weeks to complete and crossed over into other subjects such as French (Bérubé held the workshops in French), math (students had to consider accuracy and measurement) and, of course, art. Where students might once have thought painting was something easy to master, Bérubé demonstrated—through mini-lessons on perspective and technique and how to hold a brush, mix paint and work three-dimensionally—that it was harder than they had imagined.

### **Problem solving, creative thinking and cooperation**

And yes, sometimes there were arguments, admitted 11-year-old student Rachel Cobb. But nothing that a little problem solving, creative thinking and cooperation couldn't handle. All in all, she says she and her classmates welcomed the opportunity to learn from someone as experienced as Bérubé, since teachers are not necessarily professional artists. "He taught us how to draw. We were drawing and learning history at the same time. That's fun."

Her teacher agrees. Using art to make a connection with cultural references in Québec history, students acquired an openness to the world and gained a better understanding of their own identity. Krim points out that working on the murals of Jacques Cartier and New France developed students' ability to think logically and gave rise to questions: What did people wear back then? Why did they build forts? How did the Native peoples feel toward the colonizers? Trying to get a grip on the material, the students lived out history.

Krim is still impressed by how respectful students were of one another while they collaborated on *Canada Today*, the mural reflecting the ethnic diversity of their school. Going out of their way to paint the face of a culture other than their own, not wanting to insult anyone, they laboured long and hard on their drawings. "They understand we are all the same," says Krim.

Charlie Krawitz, 11, can hardly contain his pride, not only for a job well done, but for the kind of immortality artwork affords: "Now we have something that we can come back and visit once we're in high school."

