

CAUCE PROGRAM AWARD ENTRY 2018

McGill University School of Continuing Studies

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Submitted by:

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Project Background and Objectives:

In 2014, the School of Continuing Studies was awarded a significant portion of a McGill contract with Health Canada, through its *Health Services Access and Retention Projects* initiative, and committed to design, develop and deliver a comprehensive customized English language training program for professional purposes aimed at francophone and allophone healthcare and social services professionals and frontline healthcare administrative personnel in Quebec. SCS worked in close collaboration with the regional agencies (CIUSSS) of the Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux (MSSS) to identify the language training needs of the MSSS' three main competency profiles (healthcare, social services, and frontline healthcare administration). SCS' Language & Intercultural Communication unit and Instructor Services & Educational Technologies unit worked together to create these three English language-training programs for professional and specific purposes. The programs lead to McGill Professional Development Certificates and comprise 8 online courses and 8 "in class" courses. Consequently, SCS created 24 online courses and 24 "in class" courses in a period of one and a half years, a student portal, an instructor portal, online evaluation tools such as a placement test and a diagnostic test, bridging activities for between sessions, a website, and a series of pre-recorded webinars to be delivered in 18 regions throughout Quebec (as determined by the Ministère de la Santé et des Services Sociaux). The project ran over four years commencing with the development of the programs in 2014 and first delivery in winter 2015 and ending with the delivery of the final courses in March 2018, and with a very strong indication of renewal for another four-year term.

Adjudication Criteria

1. Value/Service: What value and/or service does the program provide to the student clientele, institutional or community collaborators or partners, as well as the home institution? What are the indications of its value?

- **Certification**

Focused on the adult learner, this training leads to a McGill University Professional Development Certificate in English for Healthcare/English for Social Services/or English for Frontline Healthcare Administration. The certification can be recognized by the employer for the advancement of one's career, and can act as an extrinsic motivator for learners. In addition, learners who complete a level receive ten (10) Continuing Education Units (CEUs) - six (6) for the online course and four (4) for the virtual/in class course. The CEUs can be recognized by various professional orders, and at the moment, the first Professional Order to recognize the *Professional Development Certificate in English for Social Services* is the Order of Social Workers of Quebec. A portfolio is currently being compiled for the presentation of the program to the Order of Nurses of Quebec.

- **Accessibility and Flexibility**

One of the requirements of the federal government was to develop a program that was flexible and accessible to the target audience. Given the nature of their work, healthcare and social service providers have irregular schedules and/or places of work. In addition, many live and work in remote regions in the province, and it is not easy to provide language training that can be accessed by all in one location. Consequently, the format SCS proposed, and subsequently developed, addressed the need for accessibility. Learners could participate in the synchronous "in class" courses through the virtual classroom. To provide learners with the flexibility required, SCS created asynchronous online, self-instructional courses that provided all the necessary language to be developed at the learner's convenience. The courses complemented one another and provided authentic scenarios that developed the language that was true to the targeted professions

- **To the MSSS and Health Canada**

The project provided both the federal and provincial governments with language training statistics of this scope in Quebec for the first time. It also helped standardize language placement testing and training within the MSSS so that employee mobility would not impede the continuation of language training should learners be transferred to other regions. Given the nature of the virtual classes, learners participate from various regions. Consequently, this project has also allowed for the sharing of knowledge from the target groups (ex. Nurses in the Intermediate 2 level) coming together to take part in the class from different regions in Quebec.

- **To McGill University**

This project is important to McGill University's School of Continuing Studies for a number of reasons. First, the University sought SCS' expertise--both for the content as well as in the preparation and negotiation of the contract. This is a very good example of the collaborative/partnership approach that has stood SCS in good stead and has helped build its reputation within the University as well as throughout the Province. Second, it helped SCS to advance its knowledge and skills in specialized language teaching as well as in online course development and delivery. Third, it related specifically to LIC's strategic goal to expand and diversify its offerings.

- To the English Community in Quebec

This project was created with the aim to help the English Community in Quebec receive essential healthcare and social services in English.

2. Complexity: What is the degree of complexity in program development; for example, negotiations with partner institutions, agencies or target groups, financing or delivery challenges, diversity of students, marketing strategies, and evaluation?

The scope of the project was huge. SCS was responsible for:

- a. Needs assessment and analysis (academic, administrative, technological)
- b. Online Placement Test
- c. Diagnostic Test (after one year of study and/or at the end of studies)
- d. Program, curriculum, and course design
- e. Instructional design (for online courses)
- f. Program, curriculum, and course development
- g. Eight (8) Online courses for each of the designations (a total of 24 online courses)
- h. Eight (8) In-class courses for each of the designations (a total of 24 courses) (curriculum, course material, etc.)
- i. Program coordination (different levels of academic and administrative coordination and collaboration with the regional agencies)
- j. Communication with the regional directors of the Ministère de la santé et des services sociaux (MSSS)
- k. Pedagogical, administrative, and technical support to learners
- l. Training as well as academic, administrative, and technical support to the Online Tutors and instructors
- m. Orientation for learners, tutors and instructors at the beginning of each session
- n. Portal for learners, tutors and instructors
- o. Creation and moderation of communities of practice
- p. Program management & administration
- q. Registration
- r. Evaluation and assessment (formative, summative)
- s. Academic Quality Assurance
- t. Reporting

What was out of scope was direct marketing or promotion of the program to the target audience. This was the responsibility of the provincial government (MSSS) working through its regional agencies.

Negotiations were very delicate because of the sensitivity to the language issue in Quebec (federal funding was available to teach English to French Quebecers, for the most part).

Financing and delivery challenges were certain. SCS was expected to launch the program in winter 2015, but federal funding was delayed because of provincial elections. Consequently, SCS had to take a leap of faith and fund the development of the project itself while it waited for the funding to be dispersed. Delivery challenges entailed technical issues, inadequate hardware and software on the part of the learners and instructors, bandwidth issues, and inexperience with online courses and/or computers in general.

There were known constraints:

- Time constraints for delivery of pilot phase of the project (winter 2015) when negotiations were still ongoing in summer 2014
- Dependency on the regional agencies for information dissemination, recruitment and registration
- Time constraints of target population for course participation and homework
- Dispersion of candidates throughout Quebec, some in remote regions
- Collaboration of educational establishments in the regions

Our success markers were:

- Learner course evaluations and feedback
- MSSS & Regional Agency feedback
- Increased number of regions on board the “McGill Program”
- Learner retention and program completion
- Increased enrollment from one session to the next

3. Ingenuity and Innovation: Is the program innovative, imaginative or unique in terms of its overall concept, or in terms of specific curriculum? The focus of this criterion is on the ingenuity of the content, process, and delivery.

To our knowledge, in the field of language instruction, there are no other programs of this scale that comprise two required components - an online self-instructional course and a virtual classroom, and that were designed and developed specifically for three professional streams of health intervention (healthcare, social services, frontline

healthcare administration). All of the program content is original and authentic, and has been vetted by delegates of the Professional Orders (Order of Nurses, Order of Social Workers). The programs comprise an “At Work” component that contains targeted functional language used in the three streams and adapted to each of the eight levels. The video scenarios were created by or in collaboration with healthcare and social services professionals, and were filmed by a professional film production crew. LIC English as a Second Language (ESL) instructors and content developers created the lessons, exercises and assessments. The instructional design team provided the framework for and developed the online courses. All in all, there were approximately 200 people who worked on the creation of the programs and approximately 60 instructors and 35 Online Tutors who are involved in the delivery of the program every session.

In order to maintain students' knowledge, various “bridging” activities are offered throughout their training, between sessions, and beyond. Indeed, students have access to interactive content on social media that allows them to practice their written and oral communication.

Social networks

Students can also follow Anglais Santé on Instagram and Facebook to interact with the community. Various moderation methods are used along with different teaching tools, and a Community Moderator provides feedback to student comments and acts as a catalyst for participation.

On Facebook, three (3) posts are shared weekly:

- Content and activities to practice English
- Photos of student groups
- Technical assistance to use McGill tools (e-mail box, online course platform, etc.)

On Instagram, a highly visual account has been created to engage the Anglais Santé Community beyond the program by alternating "lifestyle" photos and quotes. Students are invited to share their images with the hashtag #AnglaisSante to get involved beyond classes in their daily lives.

Some student comments collected during the sessions:

"Excellent technical support. I had to use it once. I got a quick and effective answer. "

"It's always interesting to have opportunities to practice and improve your English and this course is an excellent platform for doing this in small groups."

"At any time, it is possible to ask a question directly or by writing it in the 'chat' section."

"It's interesting to talk to different professional bodies from all over Quebec. It is certain, on the other hand, that there are, on a few occasions, computer 'bugs' which make that the connection is slower, but on the whole, the virtual side did not interfere with my learning. "

"I loved the scenarios that exactly matched my work."

"It's very personalized and in line with our needs".

"We always had the opportunity to ask questions and we could send e-mails outside school hours, if necessary. We had a lot of practice time in class. "

4. Innovation in Delivery: Has the program developed innovative ways to deliver content or to support students to take the program? The focus of this criteria is on how the program is delivered to meet the needs of non-traditional students.

The programs are delivered throughout the whole province of Quebec, including Nunavik, and are supported by a technical, administrative, and academic team of about 30 full-time staff members. The platform that is used is Adobe Connect and Zoom (to reach the more remote regions). Students have an Orientation Session one week before the courses begin to make sure that they have access and the right equipment (hardware and software), and to get a glimpse of what their courses will be like before they begin. It is an opportunity to ask questions and address any concerns they may have concerning the technology and their courses in general.

The methodology is one of blended learning that combines online, self-instructional activities, in asynchronous mode, and virtual or in-class activities, in synchronous mode. It is, therefore, an approach that is both self-directed and personalized (in the pedagogical support the courses provide from the Online Tutor and the instructor). The approach is dynamic and learner-centered and fosters active, collaborative and task-oriented learning. It focuses on developing functional language that can be immediately applicable and pertinent to the learner's daily tasks at work. For example, functional language that is developed could be *showing empathy, delivering bad news, calming a patient, explaining a procedure*, etc.

This new approach of delivering concurrent online and virtual/in class courses could be adapted to other clients and other professional fields.

To support learning, the program comprises "bridging" activities:

Website, Newsletter and Social Media

In order to extend the reach of the training program, we use a variety of communication platforms. Through these tools, the Anglais Santé program becomes highly visible and accessible to all.

- Through the Anglais Santé website, students have access to information about the program, help with the registration process, and content to stimulate them during their training.
- A monthly newsletter is also sent to new and current students to share news about the program: student testimonials, content or activities to practice their English, information on current or upcoming sessions.
- In order to have optimal visibility beyond the website, Anglais Santé is actively present on social media (Facebook and Instagram) with various posts. Thus, awareness of the program grows with a very targeted audience according to their interests. Students become ambassadors for the program simply through their influence on their own networks.

Other means of promotion are being developed such as a Twitter account or articles in the digital press (blog, online newspapers, etc.).

To view the website, please visit:

<http://anglaissante.mcgill.ca/fr/>

The services of a web and interactive development agency (Akufen) were solicited to develop a signature and a visual identity. In addition, in the spring of 2016, LIC sent all regional MSSS directors a video and a brand new brochure designed specifically for the Anglais Santé Program (which is what the program has come to be known in French) for internal distribution to the target population. As well, they received a promotional kit including USB keys (video and flyer), flyers in paper format and pens with the logo.

5. Profile of Continuing Education: How does the program enhance the profile of continuing education within its home university and the community in terms of research, practice or service?

The program enhances the profile of continuing education because it is recognized as part of the professional development of employees of the MSSS. It has developed an excellent reputation among its users and the regional directors as well as among the Human Resource directors and supervisors in participating healthcare and social services facilities. The learner population has been growing consistently, and learners are beginning to be motivated intrinsically to take the “Anglais Santé” program. The accumulation of CEUs is enticing as well, as is the possibility for recognition of the CEUs by the Professional Orders and the possibility of obtaining the Professional Development Certificate in English for their particular stream.

It is noteworthy to mention that the Deputy Minister of Health, Mr. Pierre Lafleur, endorsed the Anglais Santé program in a letter of support, and stated that he would be pleased to recommend the renewal of the program for another four-year term.