Quebec City (Canada)  
20 February 2023

Re: Robin Couture Matte

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing this letter of recommendation on behalf of Robin Couture Matte whom I would like to nominate for the Robert A. Fischer Outstanding Graduate Student Award 2023. I have served as Robin’s MA thesis director and currently supervise his Doctoral research.

I would like to confirm that Robin’s research both for his MA and PhD are in the area of virtual reality. His MA research dealt with a low-immersive game, Club Penguin, and was conducted with Grade 6 ESL students in a school in the Quebec City area. (As in the Province of Quebec, French is the official language, ESL is an obligatory school subject). An article in relation to this research was published in the Canadian Modern Language Review, a peer-reviewed journal, in 2022; Robin is the sole author. In his current Doctoral research project, Robin explored high immersive virtual reality involving the use of Oculus Quest 2 headsets with Grade 6 children. In both instances, the use of technology involved communicative tasks with a view to understanding the relevance for language learning. Robin expects to deposit and defend his doctoral dissertation in spring 2023.

In addition to his graduate research projects, Robin has also taken the initiative to engage in other CALL-related research projects, notably in the area of Intelligent Personal Assistants and the use of virtual reality with ESL high school teachers. As reflected in his CV, he has been very active in terms of his participation in conferences, including CALICO.

At Laval University, Robin has gained extensive experience as a sessional lecturer, including CALL courses aimed at students in our BA ESL teacher education program. Due to his extensive technical expertise, we called on Robin to teach a newly created course Immersive Technologies and L2 Teaching (DID-2949). This course which he taught for the first time in the 2021 summer session was highly appreciated by students.
My colleagues and I are involved in the promotion of eTandem Language Learning via the Tandem Canada platform (www.tandem.ulaval.ca). In the context of various grants, we have hired Robin as a research assistant to create YouTube video tutorials in English and French aimed at teachers and students who wish to use the platform.

As a candidate for the Robert A. Fischer Outstanding Graduate Student Award, I would like to underscore the initiative taken by Robin to explore virtual reality for language learning with elementary and high school students. Due to his technical expertise and his knowledge of and experience in ESL teaching, Robin is emerging as a leader in this innovative domain. His capacity to arouse interest in technology is evidenced in his ability to collaborate with elementary and high school teachers and in his courses offered to undergraduate students at our university. As a new scholar, he has demonstrated his ability to disseminate his expertise in conferences, including CALICO, and to publish in refereed journals.

For any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Susan Parks, PhD
Associate Professor
Email: susan.parks@lli.ulaval.ca
Formal training

**Doctoral degree, PhD** (January 2019 – Spring 2023), Université Laval, Québec, Canada  
Linguistics – Second Language Teacher Education – Specialized in teaching English as a second language, virtual reality, and technologies.

**Master’s degree, MA** (January 2017 - April 2019), Université Laval, Québec, Canada  
Linguistics – Second Language Teacher Education – Specialized in teaching English as a second language, immersive games, and technologies.

**Bachelor’s degree, BA** (September 2012 – April 2016), Université Laval, Québec, Canada  
Teaching English as a second language (TESL).

**Diploma of college studies** (September 2009 - May 2011), Collège François-Xavier Garneau, Québec (Canada)  
Degree in humanities - Specialized in history and geography.

**High school diploma** (September 2004 - May 2009), Collège de Lévis, Lévis (Canada)  
Specialized in sciences.

Professional experience

**Sessional lecturer** (Winter of 2019 –), Université Laval, Québec, Canada  
Tasked with teaching the following courses:

- Content-based Writing I (ANG-1029 – fall 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022);
- Content-based Writing II (ANG-2029 – winter 2019, 2021, 2022 and 2023);
- Computer Applications in ESL Teaching I (DID-1921 – winter 2019 and 2020);
- Computer Applications in ESL Teaching II (DID-2922 – fall 2019 and 2021);
- ESL Pedagogy II (DID-2921 – fall 2019);
- ESL Pedagogy III (DID-3920 – winter 2022 and 2023);
- ESL Pedagogy: Teaching Young Children (DID-2938 – winter 2020);
- On-line TESL Seminar (online – DID-3921 – fall 2019, 2020, 2021 et 2022);
- Portfolio Project (online – DID-3922 – winter 2019 and 2020);
- Introduction à la didactique des langues (DID-1960 – fall 2022);
Sessional lecturer (Winter of 2022 –), Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières, Québec (Canada)
   Tasked with teaching the following course:
   TESL - Program and Practice at the Secondary School Level (DLA1019 - Winter 2022 and 2023);

Coordinator, (Fall of 2019 –), Université Laval, Québec (Canada)
   Tasked with supervising conversation workshops.

Student lecturer (Fall of 2017 – Fall of 2018), Université Laval, Québec (Canada)
   Tasked with teaching the following courses:
   Content-based Writing I (ANG-1029 – Fall 2017 and 2018);
   Content-based Writing II (ANG-2029 – Winter 2018);
   On-line TESL Seminar (DID-3921 – Fall 2017 and 2018);

Teaching assistant (Fall of 2016 – Summer 2018), Université Laval, Québec (Canada)
   Tasked with helping professors for the following courses:
   Practicum 1: English (DID-1930 – Winter 2017);
   ESL Pedagogy I (DID-2919);
   Teaching Grammar in ESL Classes (DID-2929 – Summer 2017);
   ESL Pedagogy III (DID-3920 – Winter 2018);
   Online TESL Seminar (DID-3921 – Fall 2016 and 2017);

Teacher of English as a second language (Fall of 2015 –), CSSDN, Lévis (Canada)
   Teacher of English as a second language at the elementary and high school levels.

Camp counsellor (Summer of 2011 and 2014), Camp de jour, Lévis (Canada)
   Responsible for groups of children of 8-10 years old.

Specialized camp counsellor (Summer of 2012 and 2013), Camp de jour, Lévis (Canada)
   Camp supervisor.
Publications


Presentations


Funded Projects

I was a research assistant for a project funded by l’Entente Canada-Québec. This project was entitled Apprentissage de l’anglais et du français en tandem à distance. Création de la plateforme Tandem Canada (https://www.tandem.ulaval.ca/). In this project led by Susan Parks (main researcher), Laurence Capus, Thomas Michael Power, and Sabrina Priego, I participated in the creation of tutorial videos in French and English in 2021.

I was a research assistant for a project funded by the Fond de Recherche du Québec en Sociétés et Cultures (FRQSC) in 2020-2021. The project was entitled Re-envisioning the Teaching and Learning of Second Languages: The eTandem Approach – FRSQC (2020-2023). In this project led by Susan Parks (main researcher), Laurence Capus, Thomas Michael Power, and Sabrina Priego, I analyzed qualitative and quantitative data collected with participants in a tandem exchange project in 2021.

I was a research assistant for a project subsidised by the Programme d’appui à l’innovation pédagogique (PAIP) of Université Laval in 2019-2020. The project was entitled Création de vidéos dans le cadre de l’approche à l’apprentissage des langues secondes en tandem. In this project led by Susan Parks (main researcher), Laurence Capus, Thomas Michael Power, and Sabrina Priego, I participated in the creation of tutorial videos (French and English) for the Tandem Canada Platform (https://www.tandem.ulaval.ca/).
Specialisation in CALL
As a teacher, I implemented the following applications and technologies in different elementary and high schools in the Quebec region (Canada):

- Virtual reality application *Rec Room* with Grade 6 students (aged 11-12) – Winter and Fall of 2021;
- Virtual reality application *Anne Frank House* with Secondary 2 students (aged 14-15) – Fall of 2020 and Winter of 2021;
- Virtual reality application *Youtube 360° videos* with Grade 6 students (aged 11-12) – Winter and Fall of 2021;
- Intelligent personal assistants (*Amazon Alexa*) with Secondary 2, 3 and 4 students (aged 14-17) – Fall of 2019 and Winter of 2020;
- Online game (MMORPG) *Club Penguin Island* with Grade 6 students (aged 11-12) – Winter of 2018.

Bursaries/Grants
Perfectionnement longue durée (SCCCUL) – 20 000$ - Université Laval
Publication 1 – $750 - Université Laval
Publication 2 – $750$ - Université Laval
MA Merit Admission Grant – $2000 - Université Laval
Doctoral admission Grant – $2000 - Université Laval
Doctoral Exam Grant – $1500 - Université Laval
Research Continuation Grant – $1500 - Université Laval
I. To the candidates

Once you have completed this award application, please forward it and a current CV to your mentor professor for finalization and emailing to CALICO. Fill out the personal information and respond to the five questions with a maximum of 200 words for EACH question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Robin Couture-Matte</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University &amp; name of degree program</td>
<td>Laval University (Quebec, Canada); Doctorate in Linguistics with specialization in second language teacher education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Tentative) title of dissertation</td>
<td>Implementing Virtual Reality in the Context of Communicative Tasks with Young Learners</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Organization memberships (include dates) | CASLT (Canadian Association for Second Language Teachers – Since 2022)  
CALICO (since 2019)  
SPEAQ (Société pour le Perfectionnement de l’anglais au Québec - Since 2019) |

**1. Provide a description of your primary research in CALL with a short justification regarding its future significance to teaching and learning.**

My primary research in CALL concerns the use of extended reality and artificial intelligence in the context of second language learning. I specialize in the use of high-immersive games (e.g., Rec Room, Minecraft) and virtual worlds (e.g., Second Life) with students enrolled in English as a second language programs at the elementary (aged 6-12) and high school levels (aged 13-17). I also specialize in the use of Intelligent Personal Assistants (e.g., Amazon Alexa, Siri, Google Home). My research falls under the task-based approach to language teaching (TBLT) as I study the use of communicative tasks in the context of immersive technologies. In this regard, my research draws on socio-cultural theory, historical-cultural activity theory and the study of scaffolding and language-related episodes.

My primary research is significant to teaching and learning languages as it aims to confirm that immersive devices and tools can be used successfully in the context of communicative tasks with young learners. It also informs practitioners as to the pedagogical implications of the choices made regarding the use of such technologies. Finally, my research offers communicative tasks and procedures for teachers at the elementary and high school levels.

**2. Describe your CALL research undertaken: projects (e.g. CALL development, pedagogical modules, innovations…) completed and/or currently in progress perhaps as preparation for your dissertation or with another researcher.**

1. For my PhD dissertation, I developed and tested VR activities with a Grade 6 class (students aged 11-12). With the analysis now complete, I intend on defending my thesis this year and on presenting my results at the CALICO convention in 2024.
2. I have created and implemented several virtual reality pedagogical modules with students (aged 11-17). These modules were designed to be used with several virtual reality applications such as Mission ISS, Anne Frank’s House and Rec Room. Some modules were presented at SPEAQ in 2022 and CALICO in 2022. Other presentations are scheduled at the CASLT and CALICO conventions in 2023.

3. I created and implemented several teaching modules with Amazon Echo (Alexa) for high school students (aged 14-17). The project was presented at CALICO 2021 and at SPEAQ 2021.

4. In collaboration with professors from Laval University, I developed several training modules and materials for the Tandem Canada Platform (https://www.tandem.ulaval.ca/) in 2018-2020.

5. I developed and tested activities with Grade 6 students (aged 11-12) for a game called “Club Penguin Island”. This project was presented at SPEAQ 2019, CALICO 2019 and in a peer-reviewed article for the Canadian Modern Language Review.

My experiences using CALL for language teaching are three-fold:

1. As a teacher at the elementary and high school levels since 2017, I have been using immersive technologies (virtual reality, games, etc.) and artificial intelligence (intelligent personal assistants) in cooperation with different high school and elementary school teachers on different projects outlined in the previous section.

2. As a sessional lecturer for Laval University (Quebec, Canada), I have had the opportunity of teaching CALL in the ESL teacher education program. I have also been given the opportunity to create a new course entitled “Immersive Technologies and L2 Learning”.

3. As a member of the teaching team at Laval University, I have had the opportunity of being part of the team that deals with new technological acquisitions and training sessions for members of the Department of languages, linguistics and translation. These acquisitions and training sessions include the use of 3D printers, augmented reality, virtual reality, programming, and green screens.

My first publication entitled “Digital Games in the Elementary Classroom: Using Club Penguin Island with Grade 6 ESL students” was accepted in 2021 and published in February 2022 in the Canadian Modern Language Review (peer-reviewed). This publication describes my project in the context of the game “Club Penguin Island” with Grade 6 students in the province of Quebec in 2019.
My second publication entitled “Mediation in the context of learning a second language: Origins and perspectives” was accepted in 2021 and published in 2022 for the *Revue International du CRIRES: Innover dans la tradition de Vygostky* (peer reviewed). As the lead author, I was able to lead a research team of three graduate students in exploring and creating a literature review on the concept of mediation as found in Historical-Cultural Activity Theory when applied to second language teaching.

5. Describe your involvement with CALICO and your anticipated participation in its future.

As a member of CALICO since 2019, I have had the opportunity to present three times, and I am currently working on a fourth presentation.

In 2019, I presented a project I had carried out with the game “Club Penguin Island” in Montreal.

In 2021, I was given the opportunity to present a second time on the use of intelligent personal assistants with high school students.

In 2022, I presented the implementation of VR activities with high school students. The presentation described a project with an application called Anne Frank’s house which was used with Meta Quest 2.

I am also a member of two SIGs. I am a member of the Graduate Student SIG as well as a member of the Immersive Realities SIG.

At the 2023 conference, I intend on giving my name to Esther Horn to be of help during the presentations.

II. To the mentor professor

A. Please answer the following questions regarding the graduate student candidate.

1. Is the candidate in good academic standing? YES NO

2. Has the candidate begun dissertation research/data collection? YES NO

3. Is the candidate’s dissertation primarily focused on CALL? YES NO

B. Please provide a letter of recommendation focusing on the elements in section I of the application and speak to why this graduate student is deserving of the CALICO Outstanding Graduate Student Award.

*Please find attached the letter of recommendation.*
Please email this application cover sheet along with the candidate’s responses, his/her CV, and your responses and letter to Esther Horn at ec06@TXSTATE.EDU. Thank you very much for your participation in this process.