

Factors Fostering an Implementation of Quality

Pilot projects at the elementary level and consultation sessions held over the course of the 2001-2002 school year made it possible to identify certain factors deemed essential for successful implementation of the service. Though these factors are imperative at the primary level, they are also relevant at the secondary level.

Information and training

It is clear that when we encounter resistance to the service, it is primarily due to a lack of understanding of what it really is. Once the **MEQ framework** is explained to school board administrators, school principals, school teams and parents, the relevance and nature of the service will be better understood and interest will increase accordingly. We emphasize the importance of **a serious appropriation** of the meaning given to both components of the service (spiritual life and community involvement), the role of providing guidance assigned to animators, the action-centred approach and the integration of the service into the reality of the school.

Support and guidance for the school environment

To facilitate an understanding of the service and its organization, it is deemed important that animators and the school team benefit from **guided support** similar to that offered to participants in the experimentation conducted in elementary schools. We generally assign people who are best suited to that role such as a spiritual, religious and moral education consultant.

Support from school administration

The **role of school administration is of utmost importance** for the successful implementation of the service. We expect that school administration will make sure that it is sufficiently well-informed on the nature of the service in order to demonstrate how beneficial it will be for the students and the school. It has been proven that when school administration is highly interested and values the service, it is more easily and efficiently integrated into the school life. Among other things, the role of school administration is to ensure that the school team and the governing board are well-informed, to encourage cooperation among animators and other members of the personnel as to planning and carrying out activities and to facilitate the task of animators.

Integrating the service into the reality of the school

The notion that the service is rooted in the reality of the school, as developed in the MEQ framework is favourably perceived. From among the important aspects of such an integration, the pilot projects emphasized the following:

- the animator is, **in all respects, part of the school team** and as such, is included in all interactions, cooperative efforts and discussions
- the service is well **coordinated with the spirit of school reform and the complementary services**, particularly by reason of the *laboratory for living* concept, the fact that student and school life are the starting point for learning and that the animator is on a learning path with the students.

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Animator training and skills

Because of the delicate and complex nature of spiritual and social questions, particularly in their relation to conscience and religious and political beliefs, it is evident that **solid training and appropriate skills** are required to animate the service (see sheet No. 14 entitled *Benchmarks for Hiring and Assigning Animators*). In this context, the perspectives of the MEQ framework have gained much support. In addition to basic training and skills, it is also necessary to pay special attention to **ongoing training** for animators.

Time allotted for the Service

In order for students to progress in their learning, **sufficient time** must be allotted for the service. Each school board must take into account the various factors such as the number of students and schools to be served and the size of the territory to be covered.

It is recognized that this type of service can only be effectively carried out if a significant number of persons **assume full responsibility** for it. This statement is justified by the fact that students are numerous and all different, that a specific expertise in this area is necessary, that other members of the school team must devote time to their own responsibilities and that the learning offered to students through the “acting, reviewing, renewing” approach requires time and continuity.

Moreover, we must acknowledge that the service cannot rest solely on the shoulders of the personnel assigned to the service. In the spirit of the school reform and complementary services, **the entire school team must cooperate** in the student’s spiritual and community involvement learning process.

Dialogue between the elementary and secondary levels

Even if the service at the elementary and secondary levels will vary somewhat in terms of educational and organizational issues, the general orientations are nonetheless the same. This highlights the importance of **dialogue** among animators to ensure not only **continuity**, but also **diversity** of learning. It also gives rise to great potential for **cooperation and mutual help** that can prove to be as beneficial for students as for the animators themselves.

In a context where the service at the elementary level is in its early stages, for instance, many insist that its organization not be undertaken to the detriment of the service at the secondary level.