

Summary of a study

The State of Reception, Referral, Counselling and Support Services Offered to Adults in Québec School Boards



2008-2009

Secteur de la formation professionnelle et technique et de la formation continue

SARCA

SERVICES D'ACCUEIL, DE RÉFÉRENCE,
DE CONSEIL ET D'ACCOMPAGNEMENT

Québec 

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Introduction

From the initial project to this summary

1. Prior to the summary

The following three boxes describe the main aspects of the study that led to this summary of a more lengthy report on the state of reception, referral, counselling and support services offered to adults in Québec school boards.¹ The first explains the main steps in the survey, the second describes the questionnaire used and the third provides information about the respondents.

BOX 1

STEPS IN THE SURVEY

A) AIM

The decision to draw up a profile of the state of reception, referral, counselling and support services in the school boards was a direct consequence of the government policy published on May 2, 2002. The policy lists eight areas in which it recommends the “removal” of obstacles, including reception, referral, counselling and support services.² It states that “educational institutions should provide this type of service throughout their territories and should balance their functions so that adults have access to resource persons to help them”.³ The accompanying action plan discusses the issue in greater detail. The second measure under *Basic Education* (first section) is to “**improve reception and referral services for adults and offer counselling and support services**” (in bold in the original text).⁴

B) SURVEY

The Direction de la formation générale des adultes (DFGA) of the Ministère de l'Éducation (as of February 2005 the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport) devised a work plan based on the government policy and action plan. One of its priorities was to draw up a profile of the state of the services usually referred to as reception and referral services, but which, though often unmentioned, include counselling and support services, as well as guidance services. A questionnaire was prepared (see Box 2).

-
1. Réginald Grégoire inc., *The State of Reception, Referral, Counselling and Support Services Offered to Adults in Québec School Boards, Analysis and Synthesis of the Results of a Survey* (2005).
 2. Gouvernement du Québec, *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training* (Québec: Ministère de l'Éducation, 2002), p. 27-33.
 3. *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training*, p. 27.
 4. Gouvernement du Québec Ministère de l'Éducation, *Action Plan for Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training* (Québec: Ministère de l'Éducation, 2002), p. 7.

C) PRELIMINARY COMPILATION

In the summer and fall of 2003, The Canada Research Chair in Teacher Training (Université Laval) compiled respondents' answers, without paying attention to the attached documents.¹ The result was five documents totalling approximately 875 pages and containing hundreds of tables and highlights of each of the themes.

D) ANALYSIS AND SYNTHESIS

On the basis of this compilation and, for certain questions, the answers themselves and several other documents sent to the DFGA along with the questionnaires or under separate cover, Réginald Grégoire inc. analyzed and synthesized the survey results in a report dated August 17, 2004. At the beginning of 2005, the report was revised for publication and posted on the Web site of the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport.²

E) SUMMARY

This document is a summary of the 2005 version of the report (see section 2 below).

1. Respondents sent the DFGA dozens of documents by e-mail and hundreds by other means.

2. The document can be consulted on the Web site of the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport: <<http://www.mels.gouv.qc.ca/dfga>>. It can also be obtained from the person in charge of adult education at any of the Ministère's regional offices.

BOX 2**THE QUESTIONNAIRE**

- A) The questionnaire was prepared on March 24, 2003.¹ The questions were divided into ten sections. The eight questions in the first section were intended to help school boards draw up a general profile of the reception, referral, counselling and support services offered by their administrative centre or their institutions: organizational chart, orientations, important changes made since 1998, and so on. The 38 remaining questions were addressed directly to the institutions (see Box 3, B).
- B) Since the aim of the questionnaire was to obtain information about complex and diverse aspects of the situation, emphasis was placed on open-ended questions formulated in general terms. In three cases, the respondents were asked to complete a checklist.
- C) Each of the ten sections of the questionnaire dealt with a different theme. The report is organized according to the same ten themes, some of which were reformulated to more accurately and clearly reflect the actual results of the survey. The following is a list of the themes as they appear in the chapter headings of the report prepared by Réginald Grégoire inc.
1. An overview of reception, referral, counselling and support services
 2. Information about the people receiving services
 3. Orientations of reception, referral, counselling and support services, especially with respect to staff activities
 4. Partnerships
 5. Roles and duties of staff members
 6. Knowledge and skills required of staff, and professional development
 7. Intervention tools
 8. Promotion of services
 9. Cost of services
 10. Evaluation and quality management

¹. The questionnaire appears in its entirety in Appendix 2 of the full-length report.

BOX 3

THE RESPONDENTS

- A) Seventeen French-language and 3 English-language school boards participated in the survey.¹ The Tables régionales des directrices générales et des directeurs généraux for French-language school boards selected one school board per region. The English-language school boards used their own methods to select 3 school boards serving adults in six different regions.
- B) In these 20 school boards, 124 institutions (60 adult education centres, 52 vocational training centres and 12 other types of institutions) responded to the questionnaire. In early 2003 there were approximately 188 adult education centres and 177 vocational training centres in the 69 English-and-French-language school boards in Québec. Nine of the “other types of institutions” are administrative centres of school boards directly offering one or more reception, referral, counselling and support services. The other 3 are relatively autonomous institutions, dependent on one or more school boards.

2. The summary

Each of the ten chapters of the study on the state of reception, referral, counselling and support services ends with “highlights” that briefly present the major points. These highlights served as an outline for this summary. It was agreed, with the DFGA, to use the highlights in the following manner.

- a) Significant facts and statistics on which the highlights were based were incorporated
- b) The study itself was enhanced (see Box 1, paragraph D, and Box 2, paragraph C) via a reorganization of the results of the survey (other than around the ten themes). The work based on the 2005 version of the report (identical in content to the August 2004 version) resulted in the development of the following five themes:
1. Mission, orientations and organization of services in the school boards and their institutions
 2. Characteristics of adults receiving services and obstacles encountered in the recruitment of others
 3. Services offered to adults: components and staff
 4. Management of services
 5. Planning and evaluation of services

¹. A list of these school boards appears in Appendix I of the full-length report.

The five chapters of this summary are based on these themes. Along with the conclusion, they contain 46 items based on the clearest and most important information gathered from school boards and their institutions about the assistance they provide adults in choosing a learning process. It would be wise, however, to refer to the full-length report¹ for specific information and observations and for details about their scope and limitations.

Before beginning, please read the following caveats. The **first** is that the information gathered is not entirely consistent from one chapter to the next. In our opinion, however, there are no real contradictions in content. It would be more accurate to speak of a fragmented or unclear reflection of reality, or of the questionnaire's failure to capture the complexity of the situation. The **second** caveat concerns the interpretation of statistics. Because of the very general nature of most of the questions and the very specific nature of most of the headings in the compilation produced by the Canada Research Chair in Teacher Training (Université Laval), few adult education and vocational training centres provided responses that were deemed similar. Consequently, a result of 25% for a response under a given heading (and even 15% in many cases) can be considered high, and a result of 50%, very high. This should be taken into account when interpreting words such as "several" and "many," and numbers such as 9 (which corresponds to 15% of all adult education centres) or 8 (which corresponds to 15% of all vocational training centres). The **third** caveat is also related to statistics, in particular those in Chapter Two. Since not all respondents interpreted the questions the same way, some failed to answer certain questions and several responses were deemed unreliable, the items provide more of an overview than an accurate description of reality.

Lastly, note that we have chosen:

- to use the symbol "%" rather than the term "per cent"
- to round percentages off to the nearest unit
- not to spell out the numbers in the text

We have also retained a number of terms used in the questionnaire itself (such as "refer", "contact", "category of personnel", etc.) whose usage and the meaning attached to them could be criticized. In our opinion, a researcher engaged in the analysis and synthesis of a data set already collected and compiled must pay special attention to the terms used in the collection and compilation of the data, as well as to those terms used by the respondents themselves.

¹. *The State of Reception, Referral, Counselling and Support Services Offered to Adults in Québec School Boards, Analysis and Synthesis of the Results of a Survey*

Chapter 1



**Mission, orientations and organization
of services in the school boards
and their institutions**

Mission and general orientations

1. According to the participating school boards, their mission in terms of reception, referral, counselling and support services is to support their adult education and vocational training centres' policies, action plans and success plans; to provide adults with information and various types of support and to recruit new adults; and to form partnerships with organizations in the region such as local employment centres and community organizations. Some school boards point out that their mission is also to meet the needs of specific groups of adults: young dropouts, immigrants and adults benefiting from government employment assistance, among others.
2. Very few school boards have a policy governing reception, referral, counselling and support services. Some, however, say that they are currently working toward developing one. Forty-five per cent of adult education centres and 32% of vocational training centres say they have a document describing their mission or orientations that also briefly describes the mission or orientations of reception, referral, counselling and support services. Often this document is the success plan, but in some cases it is the annual action plan or the information guide for students who have been admitted to the centre. In less than 25% of adult education centres, the explicit aim of this document is to describe the centre's mission and orientations, while the corresponding proportion of vocational training centres is at most 16%.
3. Not only are adult education centres more likely to make a connection between their mission or orientations and their reception, referral, counselling and support services, but these connections are more numerous and varied than in vocational training centres. In both types of centres, however, the connections involve follow-up and support and supervision. The most often cited reason for this is to ensure flexible program offerings adapted to adult learners. Because these connections are often referred to as guidelines rather than actual fact, it is difficult to determine where to draw the line between current practices and goals.
4. In the mission or orientations of reception, referral, counselling and support services:
 - mastery of the content of official programs of study, which several respondents associate with what they call "educational success", tends to be perceived as more important than their knowledge of the adult learner's career plans or life goals and whether the program content takes account of the demands associated with the adult's plans and goals
 - providing information about services offered in adult education and vocational training centres is more of a concern than providing information about trades or occupations in the world of work

A major orientation: The decentralization of services

5. According to respondents, the most important change to reception, referral, counselling and support services between 1998 and 2003 was the decentralization of services from the administrative centre to the education or training centres and, in some cases, to other institutions. About half of the participating school boards had almost completely decentralized services. The situation varied considerably in the 10 or so other school boards. The school boards' administrative centres were more likely to be directly responsible for promoting services, providing general information and recognizing prior learning (academic or other).
6. Of the 20 participating school boards, 14 said that, between 1998 and 2003, they made significant changes to their reception, referral, counselling and support services. Most of these changes were related to decentralization (in most cases) or centralization (mainly regarding the coordination between centres and the evaluation and recognition of prior learning). For example, administrative centre staff was either transferred to the education or training centres, or their job descriptions were revised.

Some respondents suggest that other changes took place, but very few are clearly stated. One that was indicated was the use of information and communications technologies for applications and some steps in the recognition of prior learning. In general, it appears that the changes were as much if not more the result of conditions external to the school boards as of decisions based on specific studies or a clear desire to change course. The causes cited include an increase in demand, the variety of programs, the size of the territory, inadequate funding, administrative or other requirements of the Ministère de l'Éducation, and changes in management practices.

7. School boards that "recentralized" services to the administrative centre or elsewhere said they were satisfied with the results. In their opinion, this means that adults can obtain more information in one place. They also consider that promotional activities are more effective. There is less of a consensus, however, when it comes to relationships with partner organizations and businesses: some school boards favour centralization, while others prefer decentralization.

Respondents were far more hesitant to discuss the consequences of decentralization than those of centralization. Those who gave only a general opinion said they were fairly satisfied with the results. Those who elaborated, however, almost all had reservations; for example:

- a) The information provided is neither complete nor objective, and not all the adults' needs are taken into account.
- b) Decentralization has resulted in an "erosion" of the adult education "culture" in the school board. The school board's mandate with respect to adult education has become unclear.

- c) Decentralization favours the segregation of general education and vocational training.
- d) The range of services offered varies from one centre to the next. Without someone responsible for the services, they are neither planned nor evaluated.

The development of partnerships

8. The development of partnerships or, according to the questionnaire, ties with other organizations, units or institutions is a concern. These ties are most often made for administrative, financial, recruitment or student placement purposes. Some partnerships are based on the fact that the partner organization offers services that complement those of the adult education or vocational training centre. Table 1 provides an overview of the situation. Among other things, it reveals that, when adult education and vocational training centres responded to the questionnaire in the spring of 2003, most of them had formed partnerships with local employment centres and community organizations (with 109 in the case of adult education centres and 43 for vocational training centres).

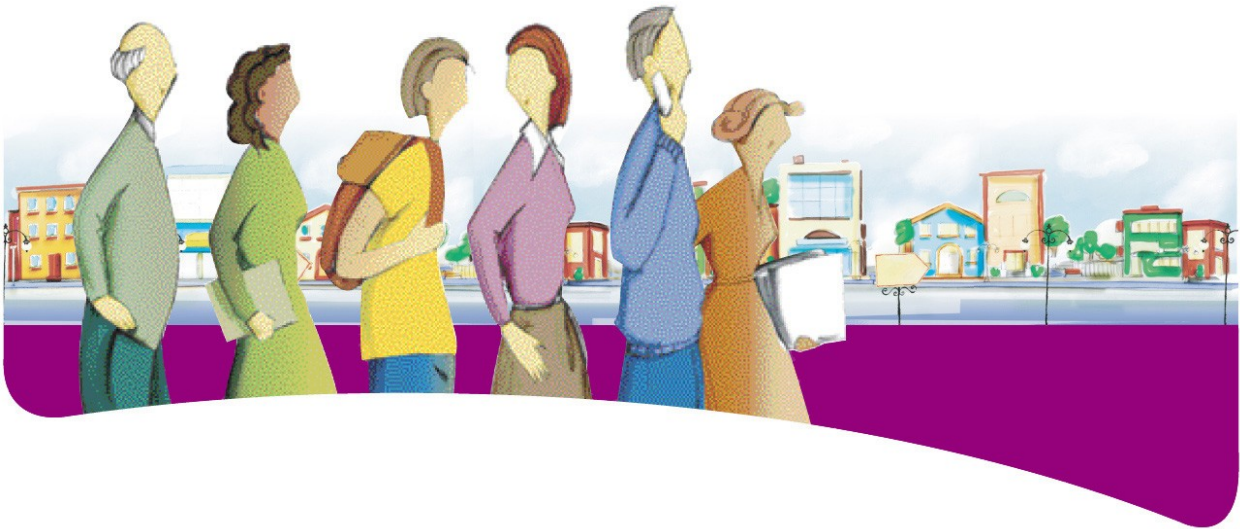
Nine out of 10 adult education centres and an equal number of vocational training centres said it would be useful to forge *additional* ties with certain organizations or institutions, for the most part community organizations. Thirty-two per cent of adult education centres and 27% of vocational training centres said they were interested in forging additional ties with one or more community organizations.

TABLE 1

ORGANIZATIONS WITH WHICH ADULT EDUCATION CENTRES AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES MADE TIES AND APPROXIMATE PERCENTAGE OF CENTRES THAT MADE TIES WITH EACH TYPE OF ORGANIZATION

TIES MADE WITH:	PERCENTAGE OF THE 60 ADULT EDUCATION CENTRES AND 52 VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local employment centre • Community organizations • Elementary or secondary schools • CLSC • School boards • Carrefour Jeunesse Emploi • Businesses or boards of trade • Vocational training centres or other vocational training centres • Adult education centres • Emploi-Québec • Government departments or parapublic organizations • CEGEPs and universities • Hospitals or regional boards • Professional associations, a local development centre or the Commission de la construction • Various organizations, units or institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 75% of adult education centres and vocational training centres • About 75% of adult education centres and 50% of vocational training centres • About 50% of adult education centres and vocational training centres • About 50% of adult education centres and 10% to 20% of vocational training centres • 20% to 30% of vocational training centres • About 40% of adult education centres and vocational training centres • 20% to 30% of adult education centres and about 50% of vocational training centres • 20% to 30% of adult education centres (with vocational training centres) and 10% to 20% of vocational training centres (with other vocational training centres) • 20% to 30% of vocational training centres • 10% to 20% of adult education centres and 20% to 30% of vocational training centres • 10% to 20% of adult education centres and 20% to 30% of vocational training centres • 10% to 20% of adult education centres and vocational training centres • 10% to 20% of adult education centres and less than 10% of vocational training centres • 10% to 20% of vocational training centres • Less than 10% of adult education centres and vocational training centres

Chapter 2



**Characteristics of adults receiving services
and obstacles encountered
in the recruitment of others**

Adults admitted, adults enrolled and proportion of dropouts

9. Table 2 illustrates that, over a period of about three months in 2002, according to the information deemed most valid:

- an equal number of men and women newly enrolled in adult education centres
- 50% more men newly enrolled in vocational training centres than women
- 13.5% of students newly enrolled in an adult education centre dropped out within the first three weeks of classes
- 3.9% of male students and 7.2% of female students (5.2% of all students) newly enrolled in a vocational training centre dropped out within the first three weeks of classes

TABLE 2

NUMBER (N) AND PROPORTION (%) OF STUDENTS NEWLY ENROLLED IN AN ADULT EDUCATION CENTRE OR A VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRE WHO DROPPED OUT WITHIN THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF CLASSES OVER A PERIOD OF APPROXIMATELY THREE MONTHS IN 2002, BY SE

TYPE OF CENTRE	NEWLY ENROLLED STUDENTS	DROPOUTS	DROPOUTS / NEWLY ENROLLED STUDENTS
	N	N	%
Adult education			
• Men	10 675	1 451	13.6
• Women	10 285	1 386	13.5
• TOTAL	20 960	2 837	13.5
Vocational training			
• Men	6 838	266	3.9
• Women	4 565	328	7.2
• TOTAL	11 403	594	5.2

10. About 15% of adults enrolled in an adult education centre (i.e. 3 524 out of 24 198)¹ and 16% of adults enrolled in a vocational training centre (i.e. 1 487 out of 9 071)¹ do not attend the first day of classes. The rate is:
- 13% to 20% among adults aged 16 to 19 and 45 or older admitted to an adult education centre and among adults aged 16 to 19 and 20 to 24 admitted to a vocational training centre
 - between 20% and 25% among adults aged 20 to 24 and 30 to 44 admitted to an adult education centre and among adults aged 25 to 29 admitted to a vocational training centre
 - 25% or more among adults aged 25 to 29 admitted to an adult education centre and among adults aged 30 to 44 and 45 or older admitted to a vocational training centre
11. Table 3 presents the prior schooling of adults who enrolled in a learning activity over a period of about three months in 2002. The first column lists 13 possibilities. The second column indicates the percentage of students newly enrolled in adult education and vocational training centres whose “schooling” corresponds to each of the 13 possibilities. For example, 19.8% of adults enrolled in an adult education centre had a level of “schooling” referred to as “literacy”, while 14.2% had a Secondary V education. The third and fourth columns provide the same type of information about newly enrolled students referred by a local employment centre (column 3) or who dropped out within the first three weeks of classes (column 4).

Adults who were referred by a Local Employment Centre or another organization, or who were not referred by an organization

12. With certain reservations, it can be inferred that, over a period of approximately three months in 2002, about 9% of students newly enrolled in an adult education centre (1 849 out of 20 960) and 16% of students newly enrolled in a vocational training centre (1 842 out of 11 403) were referred to these centres by a local employment centre. Local employment centres referred more women than men to adult education centres (1 064, compared with 785) and slightly more men than women to vocational training centres (937, compared with 905).
13. Only 20 adult education centres and 8 vocational training centres said that another organization had referred newly enrolled students (2 613 of these referrals enrolled in adult education centres, while 380 enrolled in vocational training centres). It is important to note that 93% of all newly enrolled students referred to an adult education centre were

¹. These numbers differ from those appearing in Table 2, because they were not taken from the responses to the same question.

referred to the same 4 centres, and that 91% of all newly enrolled students referred to a vocational training centre were referred to the same 2 centres.

TABLE 3

PRIOR SCHOOLING OF STUDENTS NEWLY ENROLLED IN ADULT EDUCATION CENTRES AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES OVER A PERIOD OF ABOUT THREE MONTHS IN 2002, AND OF THESE, THOSE WHO WERE REFERRED BY A LOCAL EMPLOYMENT CENTRE OR WHO DROPPED OUT WITHIN THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF CLASSES¹

PRIOR SCHOOLING	NEWLY ENROLLED STUDENT					
	OVER A THREE-MONTH PERIOD		WHO WERE REFERRED BY A LOCAL EMPLOYMENT CENTRE		WHO DROPPED OUT WITHIN THE FIRST THREE WEEKS OF CLASSES	
	Adult Education Centre	Vocational Training Centre	Adult Education Centre	Vocational Training Centre	Adult Education Centre	Vocational Training Centre
	%	%	%	%	%	%
• Literacy	19.8	0	5.0	0	14.8	0
• Presecondary	6.9	0.1	7.5	0.2	8.7	0
• Secondary I	8.6	0.4	10.7	0.4	13.6	0.5
• Secondary II	11.0	1.2	14.2	2.3	14.6	0.8
• Secondary III	13.3	5.1	15.5	8.2	12.8	6.4
• Secondary IV	12.5	28.8	13.1	21.2	11.3	26.6
• Secondary V	14.2	42.0	8.4	40.1	11.5	43.6
• Without a statement of marks	6.1	1.5	14.1	0.2	5.7	1.2
• College	0.8	0.5	1.0	0.3	0.4	0.2
• University	0.6	0.1	0.7	0.1	0.4	0
• SSETs (Secondary Studies Equivalence Tests)	0.2	2.5	0.2	5.8	0.1	2.7
• GDT (General Development Test)	0.3	4.8	0.1	9.2	0	4.9
• Other categories	5.8	13.0	9.6	12.0	6.2	13.1
TOTAL	100.1	100	100.1	100	100.1	100

¹. In the full-length report, the information in this table is presented separately for each of the three groups of newly enrolled students by adult education centres and by vocational training centres.

14. Of students newly enrolled in an adult education centre who were not referred by an organization, the number of men and women is fairly equal (6 384 men and 6 407 women), unlike the case for vocational training centres, in which the difference between the sexes is marked (5 051 men vs. 3 202 women). In vocational training centres, the prior schooling of 72% of newly enrolled students not referred by a local employment centre or other organization was Secondary IV (31%) or Secondary V (41%). In adult education centres, the prior schooling of 69% of newly enrolled students was spread over the five years of secondary school: 9% had a Secondary I education; 11%, Secondary II; 16%, Secondary III; 16%, Secondary IV; and 17%, Secondary V.

Categories of target adults and obstacles encountered

15. Most adult education centres (23 out of 60) would like to recruit illiterate adults and candidates for francization. These are followed, in order of importance, by workers (15 centres), dropouts (12 centres), unemployed adults and Emploi-Québec clientele (8 centres), adults over the age of 25, allophones, immigrants and single parents (7 centres), young people between the ages of 16 and 24 (5 centres) and adults in rural or remote areas (4 centres). Only 3 adult education centres mentioned adults aged 45 or over and 1 centre, seniors and Amerindians.

Most adult education centres (18) cite poor publicity compounded with the difficulty of reaching certain populations as the reason why they are unable to recruit target adults. Other reasons mentioned include a lack of human resources (17 centres) and financial resources (17 centres), problems related to the schedule of activities and access to facilities (9 centres), adults' misgivings about education (7 centres), insufficient information about the targeted categories of adults (6 centres), the availability of facilities (6 centres), standards regarding the composition of groups (5 centres) and Emploi-Québec requirements (5 centres). Other reasons were cited by 4 centres or fewer.

16. Most vocational training centres (14) would like to recruit young people between the ages of 16 and 24. They would also like to recruit general education "students" enrolled in adult education centres, and it would appear, in one case or another, students in secondary schools (11 centres). Other categories mentioned by between 4 and 10 centres include women, unemployed adults, allophones and immigrants, dropouts and adults in rural or remote areas.

The main reason given by vocational training centres to explain their difficulty in making contact with certain categories of adults is the same mentioned by adult education centres: a lack of advertising (24 centres). The fact that external resources have little information about programs (16 centres) and a lack of human resources were also given as reasons by 14 out of 52 vocational training centres and 17 out of 60 adult education

centres. Other reasons cited include a bias against vocational training (14 centres), a lack of financial resources (10 centres), competition with other vocational training centres (6 centres) and various problems related to access to facilities, transportation, etc. (6 centres).

17. The responses to question 30 regarding obstacles preventing adults from using reception and referral services are similar to the responses to question 3, which appear in items 15 and 16. They have been divided into five themes: available resources, information, adults' state of mind or opinion concerning education, access to services, and administrative requirements and standards. The following is a brief summary of the responses.

a) Available resources

Financial constraints and a shortage of staff prevent adult education centres in particular from offering reception and referral services to more adults; providing adults with handicaps with the appropriate services; developing counselling, guidance and support services; and offering services on a daily basis and at different times of day.

Far fewer vocational training centres than adult education centres mentioned financial constraints and a shortage of staff.

b) Information

The public's lack of knowledge of adult education centre offerings and reception and referral services and the limited information these centres offer the public are obstacles that were cited a number of times in different ways. Lacking sufficient staff, some adult education centres stated that they are unable to provide the public with quick, accurate and comprehensive information over the telephone. To obtain the necessary information, adults are required to make an appointment, sometimes weeks in advance. In order to reach a greater number of adults, respondents believe that it is necessary to advertise more, in particular among adults with little education and a few other groups, and to offer systematic exploratory meetings free of charge and without obligation.

Vocational training centres expressed more concern than adult education centres about the need to promote their training programs. The widespread misconception of vocational training is a recurring theme and appears to be a major obstacle. Consequently, there is a need to increase visibility, first of all by more clearly identifying institutions that offer vocational training. The public knows even less about reception and referral services. Some respondents said that their services were not advertised at all. Moreover, in some vocational training centres, there are no structured reception and referral services; "everyone" is involved in this area.

c) Adults' state of mind or opinion concerning education

Respondents said they hear that “going to school won’t get you anywhere” and that, since the number of young people between the ages of 16 and 20 in adult education centres has increased considerably, there is no room for older adults. They also mentioned that quite a few adults hesitate to enroll in adult education because they are afraid of failing or being ridiculed by their peers, because they have a negative perception of school or of their own abilities, or because they are not really aware of their needs. Some adults also feel that the proposed training does not meet their needs or expectations.

“Vocational training does not have a good enough image.” This statement summarizes the responses of vocational training centres as to adults’ state of mind or opinion concerning vocational training.

d) Access to services

A fourth category of obstacles is access, and includes a number of aspects. The problem can be simply geographical, in that it is difficult to maintain contact with the population in certain regions. Even for many adults in cities and suburbs, transportation is a serious problem. The fact that many centres do not offer reception and referral services in the evening¹ or at other locations is also an obstacle. Another is that adult education centres have limited contact with specific communities or groups, and that they do not fully understand their needs. The absence of daycare services, the cost of certain services, poor scheduling and failure to recognize prior learning (sometimes formally recognized by other institutions), are also problems. In addition to fostering the creation of true reception and referral services, vocational training centres propose increasing the number of part-time courses; implementing a more well-organized, visible and open system for the recognition of prior learning; and offering general education and vocational training in the same centre.

e) Administrative requirements and standards

In this category, some adult education centres cited, among other things, the involved process of opening a file; government standards regarding the composition of groups; lack of flexibility on the part of local employment centres, and these centres’ quota systems and reticence toward distance education; the amount of time needed to obtain a first diploma; and the tendency to tell adults what to do rather than providing them with information and recognizing that they are responsible for their own actions.

¹. According to the responses given to another question, 22 adult education centres and 25 vocational training centres do not offer reception and referral services in the evening. Seven adult education centres and 15 vocational training centres offer reception and referral services five evenings a week, while others offer them two, three or four evenings a week.

Many of the obstacles cited by vocational training centres are similar to those mentioned by adult education centres, but vocational training centres also pointed out that funding for certification unduly limits services other than teaching; that relations with Employment Insurance, Employment Assistance and loans and bursaries departments are complicated; and that vocational training and training at the college level need to be harmonized.

Initiatives and incentives

18. The number of projects and initiatives to encourage adults to pursue their education is an indicator of the importance of this concern. These projects involve community-based education, customized training, innovative orientations and practices, adults with difficulties, and special groups. The following is a selection of these projects and initiatives.

a) Community-based education

Seven adult education centres and 7 vocational training centres mentioned community-based education as a means of offering adults more specific information about general education or vocational training. Community-based learning activities might include using software programs, general welding, cooking, hairstyling for self or for family and cabinet making.

b) Customized training

According to one respondent, customized training in the workplace or a vocational training centre is the type of training most likely to encourage adults to pursue their education. At least 6 other vocational training centres pointed out the potential of customized training for motivating adults. Actual experiences include a program that has been entirely adapted to the situation of the workers in question (e.g. schedule, availability of personnel, course content).

c) Innovative orientations and practices

As optional courses recognized for purposes of certification, one adult education centre offers a “music program” and a “drama program”. These courses are intended for young adults with a basic knowledge of music or an interest in the performing arts. In offering them, the centre is attempting to encourage young people to pursue their secondary studies while acquiring new knowledge and skills in a field that holds more interest for them. Many of the dozens of other orientations and practices mentioned involve what is generally referred to as support and supervision. Examples include tutoring, helping students solve personal problems, monitoring their progress and using different instructional approaches (including work-study programs and distance education). Several initiatives are also motivated by the desire to provide information for adults who might be interested

in enrolling or who are already enrolled. Student-for-a-day programs in vocational training centres and open houses are two examples of this type of initiative.

d) Adults with difficulties

Several adult education centres have set up projects intended to help adults with difficulties achieve social and vocational integration, sometimes in collaboration with other organizations. In some of these projects, the centre assumes responsibility for the adults' education and another organization takes care of recruitment and general management. One of the most popular programs of this type is the Emploi-Québec program known as *Ma place au soleil*, for young single mothers. Other projects involve, for example, supervised stints in the workplace or workshops to help adults prepare to return to school.

e) Specific groups

A number of initiatives have been taken by adult education centres to make francization education more practical and more open on society and its realities. One centre complements language courses with computer training in order to enable students to continue learning on their own. Some centres specifically target illiterate adults, parents of school-age children or young people, encouraging them to pursue their studies.



Chapter 3



**Services offered to adults:
components and staff**

Classes of employees in the institutions and scope of their activity

19. In the 20 participating school boards, 39 classes of employees work in adult education centres, 33 in vocational training centres, 16 in other institutions, and a total of 55 in reception, referral, counselling and support services. Table 4 below lists the classes of employees and indicates where they work.
20. Secretaries are most likely to be involved in reception, referral, counselling and support services in most adult education centres (68% of centres) and vocational training centres (71% of centres), and education consultants¹ in most other institutions (67% of institutions). These are followed by:
- in adult education centres: centre directors (52%), guidance counsellors (48%), training consultants² (47%), teachers (47%), receptionists (30%) and office clerks (30%)
 - in vocational training centres: centre directors (54%), education consultants (48%), teachers (40%), receptionists (35%) and training consultants (35%)
 - in other institutions: secretaries (58%), office clerks (50%) and training (or employment) consultants (42%)

The other classes of employees are involved in less than 30% of adult education centres, vocational training centres and other institutions.

21. According to Table 5, training consultants are considered to perform the greatest number of different tasks (119) in reception, referral, counselling and support services in adult education centres. The table also indicates that 28 adult education centres said that their training consultants performed one or more of these tasks. Twenty-eight different tasks are performed by training consultants in vocational training centres and one or more of these tasks are performed in 18 centres. In other institutions, training consultants also perform 28 different tasks, but these tasks are performed in only 5 institutions. Table 5 provides similar information for 10 other classes of employees.

1. 'Conseiller pédagogique' was translated as 'education consultant' in the English version of the questionnaire.

2. 'Conseiller en formation' was translated as 'training consultant' in the English version of the questionnaire.

TABLE 4
CLASSES OF EMPLOYEES IN RECEPTION, REFERRAL, COUNSELLING
AND SUPPORT SERVICES

IN ADULT EDUCATION CENTRES ONLY

1. Administrative officer	7. Clerk	13. Psychoeducator
2. Development officer	8. Counsellor	14. Person in charge of the centre
3. Safety officer	9. Distance education coordinator	15. Person in charge of student monitoring
4. Addiction rehabilitation officer	10. Special educator	16. Special education technician
5. Teaching assistant	11. Instructor	17. Social service worker
6. Group leader	12. Reception and referral clerk	

IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES ONLY

18. Administrative assistant	23. Human resources consultant	28. Person in charge of student monitoring
19. Student life administrative officer	24. Professional	29. Recreational technician
20. Local employment centre and Fonds Jeunesse liaison	25. Person in charge of admissions	30. Homeroom teacher
21. Communications officer	26. Person in charge of financial assistance	
22. Project supervisor	27. Person in charge of loans and bursaries	

IN OTHER INSTITUTIONS ONLY

31. Analyse	32. Director of educational services
-------------	--------------------------------------

IN ADULT EDUCATION CENTRES, VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES
AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

33. Office clerk	37. Educational and vocational information counsellor	41. Administrative technician
34. Animator	38. Education consultant	42. Educational organization technician
35. Guidance counsellor	39. Receptionist	
36. Training consultant	40. Secretary	

IN ADULT EDUCATION CENTRES AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES ONLY

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 43. Executive assistant | 46. Centre director | 49. Psychologis |
| 44. Information officer | 47. Teacher | 50. Person in charge of
practicums |
| 45. Assistant director | 48. Tutor | 51. Social worker |

IN ADULT EDUCATION CENTRES AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS ONLY

- | | | |
|-----------------|----------------|--|
| 52. Invigilator | 53. Technician | 54. Monitoring and support
technician |
|-----------------|----------------|--|

IN VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS ONLY

55. Coordinator

22. Of the 39 classes of employees working in reception, referral, counselling and support services in adult education centres, and the 33 classes in vocational training centres:
- 16 work only in 1 or 2 adult education centres and 13 perform a maximum of 4 different tasks in these centres
 - 16 work only in 1 or 2 vocational training centres and 15 perform a maximum of 4 different tasks in these centres

Most education consultants, guidance counsellors, educational and vocational information counsellors, training consultants and so on, and, an undetermined number of other classes of employees, work, only part-time, in adult education or vocational training centres.

23. Approximately 50% of adult education and vocational training centres have employees specifically assigned to promoting reception, referral, counselling and support services. In both cases, the class of employees considered directly responsible for such promotion is administrative staff, although more so in adult education centres (19 centres) than in vocational training centres (9 centres). The other classes of employees mentioned most often were:
- in adult education centres: guidance counsellors (7 centres), teachers or instructors (7 centres) and educational and vocational information counsellors (5 centres)
 - in vocational training centres: training consultants (7 centres), support staff (including administrative technicians and administrative assistants) (7 centres) and education consultants (3 centres)

TABLE 5

**TOTAL NUMBER OF DIFFERENT TASKS PERFORMED BY THE MAIN CLASSES
OF EMPLOYEES IN RECEPTION, REFERRAL, COUNSELLING
AND SUPPORT SERVICES IN ADULT EDUCATION CENTRES,
VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS**

CLASSES OF EMPLOYEES	NUMBER OF DIFFERENT TASKS		
	ADULT EDUCATION CENTRES	VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES	OTHER INSTITUTIONS
	N	N	N
• Training consultant	119 (28) ¹	28 (18)	28 (5)
• Guidance counsellor	81 (29)	35 (8)	19 (3)
• Secretary	74 (41)	56 (37)	42 (7)
• Centre director	65 (31)	38 (28)	N/A ²
• Teacher	57 (28)	33 (21)	N/A
• Education consultant	51 (16)	43 (25)	24 (8)
• Office clerk	48 (18)	22 (10)	27 (6)
• Executive assistant	37 (15)	12 (7)	N/A
• Tutor	28 (11)	21 (8)	N/A
• Instructor	25 (8)	N/A	N/A
• Educational and vocational information counsellor	24 (9)	11 (5)	12 (3)

^{1.} The number in parentheses indicates the number of adult education centres, vocational training centres or other institutions in which the class of employees in question performs one or more tasks. Remember that 60 adult education centres, 52 vocational training centres and 12 other institutions responded to the questionnaire.

^{2.} N/A: Not applicable, since the class of employees in question does not work in these types of institutions.

Types of tasks performed by the different classes of employees

24. According to the information gathered in the DFGA survey, the types of tasks performed by members of the different classes of employees working in reception, referral, counselling and support services include reception, information, counselling, guidance, support and administrative follow-up services. As a reference framework, Table 6 specifies what types of tasks are included under each of these headings. Counselling and guidance are given as a single heading because, in general, the responses were not sufficiently explicit to make a clear distinction between counselling tasks and guidance tasks. This can be explained in large part by the fact that the questionnaire was not designed to obtain information about guidance services.

This reference framework reflects the responses received (and confirmed by several attachments), but it also becomes apparent upon interpretation of the information that, in general, concern for reception, information and administrative follow-up services appears to take priority over counselling, guidance and support services.

TABLE 6
REFERENCE FRAMEWORK FOR THE TYPES OF TASKS PERFORMED BY DIFFERENT CLASSES OF EMPLOYEES WORKING IN RECEPTION, REFERRAL, COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT SERVICES IN ADULT EDUCATION CENTRES, VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES AND OTHER INSTITUTIONS

RECEPTION

- a) Clarifying the reason for the adult's visit or inquiry.
- b) Giving the adult general information about the services offered and, if applicable, about people to see and steps to take.
- c) Collecting general information about the adult.

INFORMATION

- a) Providing general information about the activities or services offered by the centre or other institution.
- b) Providing relatively detailed information about learning activities or other services offered by the centre or other institution.
- c) Referring the adult to another person, service or organization.
- d) Providing the general public or special groups with information

COUNSELLING AND GUIDANCE

- a) Helping to make connections between what is known about the adult (from documents, tests and so on) and possible interpretations of his or her interests, expectations and abilities.
- b) Suggesting possible educational or occupational choices and helping draw up a learning profile.
- c) In terms of guidance, taking a structured approach in order to identify the adult's interests, expectations and abilities and make connections with a relatively specific choice of training paths, trades or occupations, or fields of activity.

SUPPORT

- a) Helping students implement their learning plan and clarify their career choice.
- b) Monitoring students who exhibit inappropriate behaviour or ask for help with personal problems.
- c) Helping students obtain a job or a practicum position, or pursue their studies.

ADMINISTRATIVE FOLLOW-UP

- a) Performing all tasks related to the student's admission, registration and administrative follow-up: opening files, collecting fees, drawing up a training profile,¹ checking attendance, ensuring conformity with centre rules, etc.
- b) In vocational training centres, helping students obtain loans, bursaries or other financial assistance.
- c) Preparing statements and reports for the institution or other organizations (Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport; local employment centres; Commission de la construction; Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail; etc.).

Components of services offered to adults

25. Once fully implemented, the course of action available to the staff of the Reception, referral, counselling and support services offered to adults will comprise five components: providing information, evaluating and validating prior learning, clarifying the adult's goals and needs, determining a learning activity and providing support. Given the variables involved (e.g. characteristics of the adult, how learning is perceived in the institution, the time available), the staff organizes and combines these components in any number of ways. Although some concerns are mentioned by most centres, approaches vary considerably in number and complexity.

¹. Depending on the case, this can be considered an administrative or an educational task. The student's participation in the development of this profile appears to vary considerably.

26. The first component, providing information, involves the following five aspects: the adult himself or herself (Who is he/she? What does he/she want? What kind of education does he/she have?), the centre (What does it offer? Under what conditions?), other institutions or organizations offering evaluation or training that could better meet the adults' expectations or specific needs, the labour market and, lastly, the promotion of services among special groups or the general public. This aspect will be addressed in Chapter Four on the management of services (see item 36). Note that the second aspect, i.e. information about the centre itself, is considered the most important.
27. An analysis of the responses highlights three aspects of the activity of reception, referral, counselling and support service staff related to the evaluation and validation of prior learning: the adult's education (In what subject or field of study? Does the adult have the prerequisites needed to enroll in a specific vocational training program? etc.), the means used to evaluate his or her education (e.g. portfolio, tests), and the way in which the results of the evaluation are recognized or validated.
28. Helping the adult clarify his or her goals and the training he or she needs to achieve them, or perhaps helping the adult review his or her goals: these are the basic aspects of the third component of reception, referral, counselling and support services. In its broadest sense, information is the preferred means of helping adults clarify their goals, identify their needs and establish consistency between the two.
29. In adult education centres, the central aspect of the component "determining a learning activity" is developing a training profile and, in vocational training centres, admitting the adult to a program. Several factors, including the successful completion of tests, the content of the adult's academic record and the result of various interviews, influence these aspects and help determine whether the adult should continue in the same profile or program.
30. Lastly, the fifth component, providing support, consists in monitoring an adult's progress in achieving his or her training or employment-related goals other than the mastery of learning provided for in the activities in which he or she is enrolled. This type of support targets several needs, problems and objectives, and takes a variety of forms. In most centres, support services focus on attendance and what are referred to as "personal problems". This component also involves motivating students and helping them persevere in their studies, actively integrating adults into the centres they attend and, in vocational training centres, helping them find practicum positions and jobs. The development of motivation appears to be the most important aspect of this component.

Participation of the main classes of employees in the course of action

31. With this item, Chapter Three comes full circle. Now that we have:

- listed classes of employees involved in reception, referral, counselling and support services in places where such services are offered by school boards, and taken a look at the scope of their activities (see items 19 to 23)
- synthesized the type of tasks performed by these classes of employees (see item 24) and
- identified the components of these employees' activities (see items 25 to 30)

We would like to present a table for each of the components (see Tables 7 to 11), identifying the main classes of employees involved in each of them. These five tables provide information for the three types of institutions and, using one or two + signs, give an idea of the scope of activity of each class of employees. The classes of employees appear in order of importance. For example, in Table 7, we see that secretaries are considered more likely to be involved in providing information than the director of an adult education centre who, in turn, is more likely to be involved than the guidance counsellor.

The classification is based on the following criteria:

- a) The overlap between the task descriptions in Chapter Five and the description of the course of action in Chapter Three of the full-length report.
- b) The number of centres or other institutions in which the class of employees in question works. For example, the rating ++ was given only to classes of employees working in at least 30% of all adult education centres, vocational training centres or other institutions, while the rating + was given only to classes working in at least 7% of all adult education centres, vocational training centres or other institutions.

TABLE 7

MAIN CLASSES OF EMPLOYEES INVOLVED IN THE *PROVIDING INFORMATION* COMPONENT OF THE COURSE OF ACTION IN RECEPTION, REFERRAL, COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT SERVICES, AND SCOPE OF ACTIVITY, BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION, 2003

TYPE OF INSTITUTION	CLASS OF EMPLOYEES	SCOPE OF ACTIVITY
Adult education centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretary, centre director, guidance counsellor, office clerk, receptionist • Training consultant, educational and vocational information counsellor, teacher, education consultant, executive assistant, tutor, person in charge of the centre, instructor 	<p style="text-align: center;">++</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+</p>
Vocational training centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training consultant, receptionist, secretary, centre director, education consultant, teacher • Educational and vocational information counsellor, assistant director, office clerk, guidance counsellor, administrative technician, administrative assistant 	<p style="text-align: center;">++</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+</p>
Other institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education consultant, secretary, training (or employment) consultant • Educational and vocational information counsellor, receptionist 	<p style="text-align: center;">++</p> <p style="text-align: center;">+</p>

TABLE 8

MAIN CLASSES OF EMPLOYEES INVOLVED IN THE *EVALUATING AND VALIDATING PRIOR LEARNING* COMPONENT OF THE COURSE OF ACTION IN RECEPTION, REFERRAL, COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT SERVICES, AND SCOPE OF ACTIVITY, BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION, 2003

TYPE OF INSTITUTION	CLASS OF EMPLOYEES	SCOPE OF ACTIVITY
Adult education centres	• Guidance counsellor, training consultant, teacher	++
	• Education consultant, secretary, educational and vocational information counsellor	+
Vocational training centres	• Education consultant, training consultant	++
	• Guidance counsellor, educational and vocational information counsellor, assistant director, teacher	+
Other institutions	• Training consultant, office clerk	++
	• None	+

TABLE 9

MAIN CLASSES OF EMPLOYEES INVOLVED IN THE *CLARIFYING ADULTS' GOALS AND NEEDS* COMPONENT OF THE COURSE OF ACTION IN RECEPTION, REFERRAL, COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT SERVICES, AND SCOPE OF ACTIVITY, BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION, 2003

TYPE OF INSTITUTION	CLASS OF EMPLOYEES	SCOPE OF ACTIVITY
Adult education centres	• Training consultant, guidance counsellor, secretary	++
	• Education consultant, counsellor	+
Vocational training centres	• None	++
	• Teacher, guidance counsellor, education consultant, secretary, office clerk	+
Other institutions	• Training consultant	++
	• Guidance counsellor, education consultant	+

TABLE 10

MAIN CLASSES OF EMPLOYEES INVOLVED IN THE *DETERMINING LEARNING ACTIVITIES* COMPONENT OF THE COURSE OF ACTION IN RECEPTION, REFERRAL, COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT SERVICES, AND SCOPE OF ACTIVITY, BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION, 2003

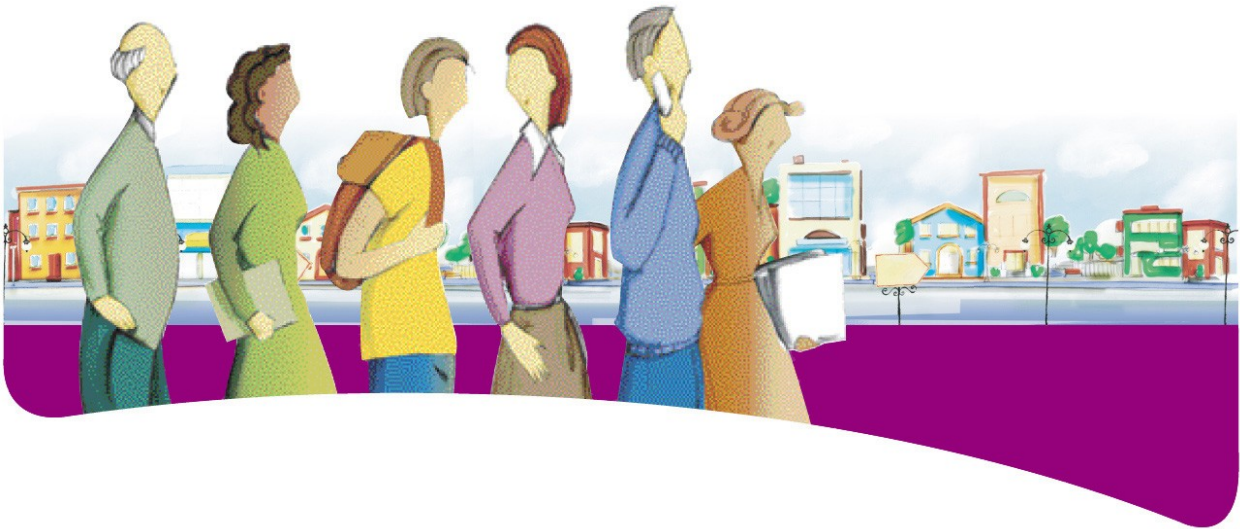
TYPE OF INSTITUTION	CLASS OF EMPLOYEES	SCOPE OF ACTIVITY
Adult education centres	• Training consultant, guidance counsellor	++
	• Education consultant, executive assistant, tutor, centre director, counsellor, assistant director	+
Vocational training centres	• Education consultant, training consultant	++
	• Guidance counsellor, educational and vocational information counsellor, centre director, assistant director	+
Other institutions	• None	++
	• Education consultant, training consultant, guidance counsellor	+

TABLE 11

MAIN CLASSES OF EMPLOYEES INVOLVED IN THE *PROVIDING SUPPORT* COMPONENT OF THE COURSE OF ACTION IN RECEPTION, REFERRAL, COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT SERVICES, AND SCOPE OF ACTIVITY, BY TYPE OF INSTITUTION, 2003

TYPE OF INSTITUTION	CLASS OF EMPLOYEES	SCOPE OF ACTIVITY
Adult education centres	• None	++
	• Training consultant, executive assistant, guidance counsellor, centre director, tutor	+
Vocational training centres	• Training consultant	++
	• Guidance counsellor, assistant director, tutor, executive assistant	+
Other institutions	• None	++
	• Educational and vocational information counsellor	+

Chapter 4



Management of services

Procedures in effect and intervention tools

32. In response to a question concerning “procedures in effect”, adult education centres, vocational training centres and other institutions stated that reception, referral, counselling and support services employees used about 75 different forms in the course of their duties. Most of these forms are related to three fields of activity: the administrative aspects of admission and registration; prior learning; and the act of choosing, changing or dropping a learning activity.
33. Two other questions address the use of “tools”, which respondents deem “the most relevant” or “lacking” in reception, referral, counselling and support services. In response to the first of these questions, respondents mentioned 37 tools. The tool referred to as the “registration and follow-up sheet” was cited by more than 50% of all adult education centres and by about 40% of all vocational training centres. This is the only tool that was cited by more than 25% of adult education or vocational training centres. Other tools cited include guides, software, information documents and Web sites.

The registration and follow-up sheet mentioned in the preceding paragraph is also the tool most often cited as lacking, i.e. by 28% of adult education centres and 17% of vocational training centres. Also, a number of adult education centres would like to see this sheet contain more information. The only other category of tools lacking that was cited, according to the compilation produced by the Canada Research Chair in Teacher Training (Université Laval) (see Box 1, C), by more than 20% of adult education centre respondents, was “Web sites, video documents, leaflets, CDs”: 23% of vocational training centres said these tools were lacking. Other tools mentioned by at least 8% of adult education or vocational training centres were a more comprehensive database, diagnostic evaluation instruments, a manual on the recognition of equivalences and prior learning, tests measuring aptitude and interest, computerized guidance and follow-up tools, and information documents about programs offered.

Meetings in which services are discussed

34. In slightly more than two thirds of adult education centres, slightly less than two thirds of vocational training centres and all other institutions, employees working in reception, referral, counselling and support services attend meetings to discuss their work. The most common topic on the agenda in adult education centres and other institutions is information about services; in vocational training centres it is planning. About half of all adult education centres and 40% of vocational training centres would like there to be meetings in which services are discussed or that there be more such meetings.

Information required for management purposes

35. The documents required to admit and register adults in a learning activity are most often the statement of marks and the academic record (which indicates which courses were taken and successfully completed). Slightly more than half of all adult education centres, one third of all vocational training centres and nearly one half of all other institutions require the academic record. Half of all adult education and vocational training centres require no other documents. However, adult education centres require more information than vocational training centres.

According to the compilation produced by the Canada Research Chair in Teacher Training (Université Laval), in 20% to 35% of adult education centres, additional information required concerns prior learning and equivalences, general information about the adult himself or herself and his or her work experience, an information sheet and various tests. In vocational training centres, only the birth certificate is required in as many cases.

An extremely limited number of items of information not required would be considered useful. The most often cited is “personal information”; it is mentioned by 5 adult education centres out of 60 and 3 vocational training centres out of 52. In all, adult education and vocational training centres mention 6 items of information, which have all been mentioned except the résumé.

Promotion of services

36. Very few centres carry out activities to promote reception, referral, counselling or support services. Adult education centres, vocational training centres and school board administrative centres are far more likely to promote the learning activities offered.

Five types of promotion are used: the print or electronic media, booths and other types of participation or intervention among specific groups, more flexible media (such as leaflets and brochures) targeting potentially interested sectors of the population, documentation handed out or visits within the education system, and documentation distributed outside the education system to partner associations or organizations.

The print or electronic media and newspapers in particular, are the most commonly used. Leaflets, student-for-a-day programs in vocational training centres and other means considered flexible and intended for potentially interested sectors of the population are also common.

Knowledge and skills required of staff, and professional development

37. Table 12 illustrates the importance that adult education and vocational training centres place on 7 areas of knowledge and skills for 11 classes of employees working in reception, referral, counselling and support services. Communication skills are clearly a priority; all the adult education centres and all the vocational training centres consider them essential for all classes of employees mentioned. The table also reveals, among others, that:

- at least 75% of adult education and vocational training centres believe that guidance counsellors, educational and vocational information counsellors, training consultants and student trainees in guidance or educational information should be proficient in the 7 areas of knowledge and skills mentioned
- the same requirements apply to education consultants, with the exception of “knowledge of the labour market”, if they work in an adult education centre
- for 5 classes of employees (psychoeducators, social workers, receptionists, office clerks and secretaries), fewer than 75% of adult education and vocational training centres believe that “knowledge of the labour market” and “knowledge of the school system” are important

38. For the period between 2001 and 2003, 13% of the adult education centres and 25% of the vocational training centres had no professional development activities for reception, referral, counselling and support services staff. During the same period, the professional development activities that did take place focused on computers. If only the “other” professional development activities directly related to reception, referral, counselling and support services are taken into account, most had to do with attitudes and behaviours toward life and others (e.g. prevention of depression, psychological support, conflict management).

Adult education centres offer more professional development activities than vocational training centres, but adult education centre staff and managers who work in reception, referral, counselling and support services also “request” more professional development activities than their colleagues in vocational training centres. Computer tools in general, and more specifically in guidance, are a major focus of these requests.

TABLE 12

MAIN AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS REQUIRED OF DIFFERENT CLASSES OF EMPLOYEES WORKING IN RECEPTION, REFERRAL, COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT SERVICES IN AT LEAST 75% OF ADULT EDUCATION CENTRES OR VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES¹

AREAS OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS	COMMUNICATION SKILLS		GROUP LEADERSHIP SKILLS		KNOWLEDGE OF THE LABOUR MARKET		KNOWLEDGE OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM		ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS		TEAMWORK SKILLS		SKILLS IN HELPING RELATIONS	
	AEC	VTC	AEC	VTC	AEC	VTC	AEC	VTC	AEC	VTC	AEC	VTC	AEC	VTC
CLASS OF EMPLOYEES														
1. Guidance counsellor	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
2. Educational and vocational information counsellor	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
3. Training consultant	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
4. Teacher	√	√	√	√				√	√	√	√	√	√	√
5. Psychoeducator	√	√	√						√		√		√	
6. Student trainee in guidance or educational information	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
7. Social worker	√	√	√						√	√	√	√	√	√
8. Receptionist	√	√									√			
9. Office clerk	√	√										√		
10. Secretary	√	√								√		√		
11. Education consultant	√	√	√	√		√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

¹ The number of adult education and vocational training centres that filled out the checklist on which this table is based varies considerably in terms of class of employees. For example, 58 adult education centres out of 60 and 47 vocational training centres out of 52 indicated the areas of knowledge and skills required of teachers, but only 8 adult education centres and 2 vocational training centres indicated anything for psychoeducators.

Budget, and fees payable by adults

39. According to the responses received directly from the school boards, reception, referral, counselling and support services are funded by the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport and local school taxes, and by income from services rendered to businesses and organizations (e.g. Commission de la construction, Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail). In 3 out of the 20 participating school boards, the entire budget allocated by the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport for general education and vocational training goes to the centres. In one of these, the centres also receive "a large portion of school taxes".

In these 3 school boards, the centres determine their own priorities and, consequently, the proportion of their budget that will be allocated to reception, referral, counselling and support services. The other 17 school boards set their centres' budgets. About 7 of them also determine how much will be allocated to the different services. In the other 10 or so, the centres themselves make this decision.

Of the school boards that set their centres' budgets, 7 provided information about their criteria. However, in response to another question, 59 adult education centres and 52 vocational training centres also indicated which criteria, in their opinion, were used to determine how much is allocated to reception, referral, counselling and support services. Table 13 presents these two sets of criteria, with their similarities and differences.

40. In most adult education and vocational training centres, adults pay for a portion of the following services and, in some cases, for all of them: establishment of a file, tests prior to registration in a specific learning activity, registration in an activity, admission to a vocational training program, various student services, course-related exams, and copies of documents. Only 4 adult education centres and 5 vocational training centres said they did not charge any fees. The cost of services varies considerably from one centre to the next but, in most cases, it amounts to between \$26 and \$60.

TABLE 13
CRITERIA USED BY SCHOOL BOARDS, ADULT EDUCATION CENTRES
AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES TO DETERMINE HOW MUCH IS ALLOCATED
TO RECEPTION, REFERRAL, COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

SCHOOL BOARDS		ADULT EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES	
		AEC	VTC
	N	N	N
• Expected number of students	3	• Number of students (adult education centres) or number of enrollments (vocational training centres)	19 10
• Costs for current year or previous years	2	• History of needs	7 15
• Centres' needs based on the annual enrollment plan	1	• Annual priorities	15 —
• Priorities of the success plan	1		
• "Dedicated general revenues"	1		
		• Centre's responsibilities	13 7
		• Number of students	— 3
		• No specific criteria	7 16
		• No financial resources	2 5

Difficulties encountered

41. Of the 20 participating school boards, 14 said that a shortage of staff was a major difficulty in managing services. Because of this, few guidance and support services can be offered free of charge, professionals spend their time doing work that is more administrative or clerical than professional, and some services, especially counselling, guidance and support services, are stagnating. The same school boards mention several other difficulties in managing services, including poorly trained staff, a lack of cooperation among staff members, an excessively drawn-out process for developing training profiles (unrealistic in many cases) and, in the case of school boards covering a vast territory (and, in some

cases, more than one administrative region), ensuring satisfactory relationships with all the necessary organizations.

The only question about difficulties asked of the institutions themselves deals with relationships with partners. The four main difficulties cited are the imposition and complexity of rules and administrative criteria, the duplication of procedures, poor dissemination of information and a poor understanding of their mission and role. More adult education centres insisted on the first two categories of difficulties, and more vocational training centres, the last two.



Chapter 5



Planning and evaluation of services

Planning

42. Vocational training centres are more likely to plan reception, referral, counselling and support services on an annual basis than adult education centres. At least that is what we conclude from the fact that only 24 adult education centres out of 60 answered a question pertaining to such planning, while 41 vocational training centres out of 52 responded. The main criteria for such planning and the number of centres that use them are as follows:

	Adult education centres (out of 24)	Vocational training centres (out of 41)
• Needs expressed and specific requests	11	16
• Educational project, success plan or action plan	8	12
• Available budget	3	15
• Number of enrollments	4	6

Twenty-seven adult education centres, 14 vocational training centres and 4 other institutions consider fluctuations and fluidity in the target population the main obstacles to planning activities. The most often cited obstacles also include available resources (e.g. financial, human, time), the large number of people to work with (and the high turnover rate), and the lack of a long-term vision.

Overall, the information gathered suggests that, in most centres, especially in adult education centres, no special attention is paid to the planning of reception, referral, counselling and support services.

Evaluation

43. Few centres have given much thought to the evaluation of the management and quality of their reception, referral, counselling and support services. This is perhaps why the information gathered is scanty and limited in scope. The following can be gathered from the responses to questions asked in different sections of the questionnaire:
- a) Between 1998 and 2003, none of the participating school boards did a methodical evaluation of changes made to reception, referral, counselling and support services. Every time those changes resulted in an increase in the number of staff members or the amount of time devoted to the services offered, however, results were deemed

positive. Also, as can be seen from item 7 in Chapter One, school boards are ambivalent, and sometimes rather critical, concerning the results of the decentralization of services.

- b) Fifty-six per cent of adult education centres and 66% of vocational training centres are very satisfied with the relationships they have with partners. Having shared interests and working together to meet common needs are the reasons most often cited.
- c) About half of all adult education centres and vocational training centres feel that their promotional activities have produced an increase in requests for information as well as in enrolments. They also note improved public awareness of the centres, their learning activities and their services.
- d) In adult education centres, the most important indicator is the number of enrolments in a learning activity; one third of the adult education centres cited it. Also, about a quarter of the adult education centres mentioned the retention rate, the graduation rate, “client” satisfaction or the annual report of counsellors/consultants. Another quarter of the adult education centres said they have no specific criteria.

The information concerning vocational training centres was compiled by school board rather than by centre. In this case as well, the number of enrollments is the main indicator. The compiled information, however, indicates that 12 out of 20 school boards do not have any specific criteria.

- e) Thirteen per cent of the adult education centres and 37% of the vocational training centres say they have no standards for evaluating the quality of their reception, referral, counselling and support services. Fifty-two per cent of the adult education centres and 35% of the vocational training centres say that their standard is a concern for professionalism. What is referred to as the “client approach” is also very important: 43% of the adult education centres and 42% of the vocational training centres cited this criterion. Finally, the same proportion of adult education centres and vocational training centres (27%) mentioned the waiting period for services.





Conclusion

Results need verification

44. The DFGA survey collected a considerable volume of facts and indications about the state of reception, referral, counselling and support services offered to adults in the school boards. The results obtained suggest interesting and potentially useful hypotheses both for reorganizing activities and for further research. In this sense, they provide a checklist for many items that can be used as a starting point for relatively well-defined verifications and consultations. However, these results cannot be considered, a priori, as, an accurate and reliable source of information about the actual state of reception, referral, counselling and support services. Further inquiries, using a variety of methods of greater rigour, are necessary. These results are limited in particular by the initial selection of school boards, which does not necessarily represent the entire adult education system; by potentially different interpretations of several questions in the survey by the respondents; by the considerable number of vague and incomplete answers; and, by an initial compilation based on a relatively inexplicit methodology and the imprecise definitions of the terms used to classify the collected information.

A necessary renewal

45. Notwithstanding its limits, the information gathered is sufficient to confirm that a comprehensive renewal of reception, referral, counselling and support services is needed. The following facts are sufficient argument:
- a) The nature and quantity of services offered varies considerably from one centre to the next.
 - b) The regulatory framework for these services is often unclear.
 - c) Young adults receive more attention than adults over the age of 40, and even over the age of 30.
 - d) The classes of employees, and the tasks performed by each, raise a number of questions.
 - e) According to several indicators, information and administrative follow-up receive disproportionate attention in comparison with counselling, guidance and support services.

Themes for priority consideration

46. The information gathered, analyzed and synthesized illustrates the need to reconsider basic orientations and practices. Three themes in particular stand out: the vision of services and activities to be promoted, service staff, and conditions for revising services and their effectiveness in the medium term. The following are some of the questions that might help delve into these themes:

a) The vision of services and activities to be promoted

- Do the terms “reception”, “referral”, “counselling” and “support” refer to substantial, tested and timely concepts, and are they based on well-founded theories?
- Could (or should) some of these services be offered outside the network of school boards?

b) Service staff

- What is expected of staff in terms of training and duties?
- What is the difference between the versatility expected of a guidance counsellor and that expected of a secretary?
- Does the staff spend most of its time providing information and performing administrative tasks?

c) Conditions for revising services and their effectiveness in the medium term

- How are each of the following viewed and how important are they (in addition to those mentioned above)?
 - collaboration with other organizations
 - promotion of services
 - availability and mastery of a certain number of tools
 - appropriate funding
 - quality management of the services offered



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