Action Research Report

Support Services : A Promising Approach

2008-2009

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

SARCA

STATE OF RECEPTION, REFERRAL, COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Québec

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SARCA
State of Reception, Referral,
Counselling and Support Services

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Foreword

The action research report published here is one of a series of reports that present new initiatives tested by school boards as part of the renewal of reception, referral, counselling and support services for adults. The Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) is delighted with this new form of collaboration with the school boards, and with the ensuing contribution to the development of renewed services for adults. In particular, it appreciates the fact that these school boards were willing to involve practitioners in a research activity with which they were not necessarily familiar, and admires the level of commitment and professionalism shown by the practitioners during the research process.

The action research projects were presented, accepted and then implemented in 2004, and ended in late February 2005. During the projects, the MELS provided "light scientific" supervision to ensure that the results generated were potentially of interest to all school boards. Each action research project was distinctive to the community in which it was carried out. It addressed a problem faced by that community, and was carried out by players from that community, all of whom had their own practical experience, expertise and cultures. Had the results been presented without sufficient information on the processes used to obtain them, they would not have been useful to readers from other school boards.

Production of the final report was a difficult and time-consuming task for the teams and their authors. Several different stages, during which the MELS made numerous scientific and linguistic suggestions, were required to produce the end result, which is presented in this document. The MELS is most grateful to everyone involved in this fastidious and demanding task, and the value and quality of their work will be apparent to anyone who reads the report.

Although all the reports have very similar tables of contents to facilitate comparison, the style and spirit of each individual team is nevertheless apparent, constituting a further point of interest in these documents.

Enjoy!

Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport
Direction de l'éducation des adultes et de l'action communautaire

Chapter 1

Subject of the Action Research Project

This action research project is part of the renewal of reception, referral, counselling and support services. Related to the policy on adult education and continuing education and training, it focuses on support services for adults who have returned to school or who are contemplating doing so.

Carried out over nine months, from June 2004 to March 2005, the project was divided into three stages:

- **Research design (including a definition of the status of the situation and recruitment of different players): June to September 2004**

- **Experiment (including preparation and observation): October 2004 to February 2005**

- **Evaluation: February to March 2005**

The action research plan is presented in Appendix 1.

This report begins with a presentation of the context in which the action research project took place, along with a description of the problem under consideration and local characteristics. It then describes the target groups, the principles underlying our interventions, our basic philosophy, the proposed model and its objective, the research questions and the expected outcome.

Next, it explains how the project was planned, describing the research design and paradigm, the choice of human resources and the necessary partnerships.

It goes on to address the process, sampling procedures, the characteristics of the participants, the different stages in the process, partnerships established, the adaptation of facilities and methods, and the difficulties encountered. A later part of the report devoted to the results of the observation of our interventions describes the tools used: focus groups, observation checklist, logbook and evaluation sheets. It also addresses the strengths and weaknesses of the experiment and compares its results with the expected outcome. This is followed by recommendations, ethical considerations and, lastly, the highlights of the action research project.

In Québec and elsewhere, there has been a renewed interest in support services, in particular because of ongoing changes in the job market and society as a whole, and the development of a culture of lifelong learning.

Chapter 2

Context

2.1 Problem

Urgent need for new and dynamic solutions

Because of the limited resources allocated to complementary services in the adult education system, support services are essential if we are to foster perseverance and academic success. Adult learners often feel that they are left to their own devices, without answers to their questions and without solutions to the problems they face as they make their way back to school. These problems often vary considerably, since, as Vernet and de Fréminville put it:

> "They relate to aspects of education and training such as learning difficulties, difficulties relating to the instructor or difficulty adapting to the learning conditions. They can also relate to personal organization difficulties, such as financial costs, transportation and family organization. Lastly, they can be personal, for example, psychological, social, financial, legal or health problems, or an accumulation of life events such as accidents, illness, the death of a loved one or a separation. While these problems cannot all be solved directly by the adult education or vocational training centre, they definitely have an impact on the person's progress."[1]

These problems often result in a lack of motivation on the part of the adult and become an obstacle to the realization of his or her personal plan.

A summary analysis of the situation shows that these difficulties are encountered throughout Québec. Statistics and various analyses reveal that the dropout rates, difficulties experienced by individuals with a low level of schooling, motivational problems and problems related to the need to find meaning in life, the complexity of public systems and increasingly complex client profiles are part of our social reality.

Significant changes to the organizational culture

Current support services, as described in the document *Toward a Renewal of Reception, Referral, Counselling & Support Services in School Boards,* require significant changes to the organizational culture and new ways of doing things in order to be able to:

- describe a general method of intervention
- provide support for the whole person

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[1] Jean-Michel Vernet and Solange de Fréminville, "AFPA: l'accompagnement global de la personne en formation", *Actualité de la formation permanente*, 176 (Jan.-Feb. 2002), p. 58 [free translation].

- ensure that the adult learner does not have to go it alone
- ensure that what has been agreed upon is achieved
- establish personal and professional relations

Support services should also focus on continuity: adult learners should receive support throughout their time in school, regardless of the institution or learning method. All of these factors should be integrated into the new practices and result in consistent, realistic and appropriate interventions. Several factors already pose a challenge: changes to traditional intervention techniques, the training of resource people, the cost of new support methods, ratios, the gap between support practices and educational organization in adult education and vocational training centres, and the actual contribution of new practices to adult learners' perseverance and success.

A model to meet adult learners' needs

Resource people's need for an effective model to guide their practices that is consistent with current orientations and predictable in terms of pedagogical and administrative management, will determine the feasibility of intervention renewal. By implementing the strategic plan, updating the school board's mission, and bearing in mind their success plans, decision-makers and governing boards have already paved the way for such a renewal.

2.2 Local characteristics

A survey on the state of reception, referral, counselling and support services provided a profile of our services, helped us identify problems encountered in the school board and allowed us to begin developing this action research project.

Local internal and external studies of the situation helped us understand existing support services models in our region and the expectations of the different players. We visited the following Commission scolaire de Saint-Hyacinthe facilities:

- Centre de formation des Maskoutains (CFM), responsible for adult general education
- École professionnelle de Saint-Hyacinthe (EPSH)
- business services and reception and referral services, responsible for following up with Société de l'assurance automobile du Québec (SAAQ) and Commission de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CSST) clients
- Polyvalente Hyacinthe-Delorme, responsible for Secondary I to V general education in the youth sector

We also met with the following partners:

- Centre local d'emploi de Saint-Hyacinthe
- Carrefour Jeunesse-Emploi maskoutain (CJEM), in particular concerning the Solidarité jeunesse program

We also consulted several documents describing programs such as Ma Place au Soleil, Québec Pluriel and Mentorat 2001 at Cégep de Saint-Hyacinthe.

Using the reference sheet in Appendix 2, the resource people we met with identified the main reasons why students drop out of school:

- poorly defined choices or new goals
- academic difficulties
- lack of motivation
- financial problems
- personal problems
- social instability
- transportation problems
- difficulty balancing school and family life
- concentration difficulties related to physical problems
- an accumulation of various problems

During discussions, all the participants agreed that, although it will not prevent every adult learner from dropping out, support for the whole person is essential to their perseverance and the successful implementation of their plan of action. Several services are offered at Centre de formation des Maskoutains (CFM), including educational and vocational information, guidance counselling, social services, psychological services and pedagogical support. An effort is made to avoid overlap with teaching services. Consequently, we monitor the topics addressed in workshops, as well as tutoring sessions (which focus mainly on academic aspects).

At École professionnelle de Saint-Hyacinthe (EPSH), teachers also offer pedagogical support and supervision, and support staff monitor absences. Special support is offered to students benefiting from active employment measures at the local employment centre, but general support does not appear to be available for other adult learners. Although there are definitely good intentions, human and financial resources are limited, and adult learners do not have access to support or counselling services at school. Often, they do not have the means to consult a private counsellor, and find themselves on their own.

Consequently, the dropout rate in our centres is 22% in adult general education and 17% in vocational training. In 2003-2004, 53% of students who dropped out of Centre de formation des

Maskoutains (CFM) were between the ages of 18 and 20, and 60% were male. The same year, 36% of students who dropped out of École professionnelle de Saint-Hyacinthe (EPSH) were between the ages of 18 and 20, and 51% were male. These statistics are illustrated in the table below.

DROPOUT RATE IN COMMISSION SCOLAIRE DE SAINT-HYACINTHE ADULT EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES (2003-2004)

Adult education or vocational training centre	Overall dropout rate	Dropout rate, by age and sex			
		Age		Sex	
		18 to 20	Other ages	Male	Female
Centre de formation des Maskoutains (adult general education)	22%	53%	47%	60%	40%
École professionnelle de Saint-Hyacinthe (vocational training)	17%	36%	64%	51%	49%

The following table shows that the situation is similar throughout Québec, where the majority of dropouts are male, as indicated in the MELS document entitled *Boys' Academic Achievement: Putting the Findings Into Perspective.*[1] In 2001, 12.4% of male 17-year-old students dropped out, compared with 7% of female students the same age. Among 19-year-olds, 23.9% of male students and 13.4% of female students dropped out.

PROVINCIAL DROPOUT RATE (2001)

Age	Male	Female
17	12.4%	7%
19	23.9%	13.4%

In addition, only 13% of students who attended Centre de formation des Maskoutains (CFM) in 2003-2004 had less than a Secondary III education (i.e. nine years of schooling) when they enrolled.

The situation observed by both internal and external partners helped identify expectations, define the concept of complementary and continuous services, and establish the target groups for the action research project.

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[1] Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, *Boys' Academic Achievement: Putting the Findings Into Perspective* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2004), p. 9.

2.3 Target groups

These statistics lead us to our first observation: *male students are more likely to drop out of school than female students.* The literature abounds with reasons for this phenomenon. According to one study, "It appears that identification with gender stereotypes (i.e. social expectations traditionally specific to a gender) is stronger in disadvantaged environments and contributes to widening the gap between girls and boys."[1] Moreover, reading and writing are stereotypically viewed as "feminine." This might explain why boys are less likely to be proficient in writing than girls.[2] Also, boys, unlike girls, often place more importance on intelligence than effort.[3] Finally, "grade repetition affects students' self-esteem, feeling of competence and sense of belonging, to such an extent that it is one of the best predictors for dropping out of school."[4]

In our opinion, efficient support could enable boys to pursue their objectives and remain sufficiently motivated. In addition, the actions proposed in the Commission scolaire de Saint-Hyacinthe's 2004-2007 strategic plan should make it possible to analyze students' success rates by sex and to propose means of improving them. *Thus, young men between the ages of 16 and 24 will be one of the two categories targeted by the model presented in this action research project.*

The other category will be made up of adult learners with less than nine years of schooling, who are part of the target group for the policy on adult education and continuing education and training. The policy clearly stipulates that "the least educated... benefit the least from training provisions,"[5] and that certain groups should receive particular attention, including "those who do not have a basic education, i.e. all Quebecers without a Secondary School Diploma (SSD) or Diploma of Vocational Studies (DVS)."[6] These stipulations are consistent with those in an April 2001 publication, according to which "people with the lowest levels of schooling are less likely to participate in learning activities for a variety reasons, including previous academic failures, poverty and non-participation in the job market."[7] Indeed, according to our literature review, these people are more likely to be unemployed, and therefore poorer.[8]

In 1994, one out of every five adults in Québec was rated at the most basic reading level (Level 1) by the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS). Level 3, which corresponds to nine years of

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1 *Boys' Academic Achievement,* p. 13.
2 *Boys' Academic Achievement,* p. 13.
3 *Boys' Academic Achievement,* p. 12.
4 *Boys' Academic Achievement,* p. 12.
5 Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, Direction de la formation générale des adultes, *Toward a Renewal of Reception, Referral, Counselling and Support Services in School Boards: Discussion and Policy Document* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2004), p. 9.
6 *Toward a Renewal of Reception Referral, Counselling and Support Services in School Boards,* p. 18.
7 Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, Direction de la formation générale des adultes, *La population cible de la formation de base* (Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2001), p. 36 and 50 [free translation].
8 *La population cible de la formation de base,* p. 20.

schooling, is considered an acceptable level.[1] Since the subject of our action research project is not grade promotion, we did not consider people at this level. However, in our opinion, we must make an effort to keep them in school. A well-defined personal plan and effective support services enabling them to enjoy a positive experience would foster perseverance. We therefore chose to work with adults aged 25 and over, whose characteristics are markedly different from those of the other target category, young men between the ages of 16 and 24.

2.4 Basic principles and philosophy

The basic philosophy underlying our model is based in part on the report put together at the beginning of the project, on the Solidarité Jeunesse model, on several MELS publications, on the self-directed learning section of the *Univers de la réussite* kit developed at the Commission scolaire de Saint-Hyacinthe and used in the action research project, on a solution-oriented approach and on Jacques Limoges' job retention strategies. Some 88% of Limoges' subjects "said that they would be unable to pursue their personal plan alone, without outside support."[2] The importance of support services for adult learners is clear. It is crucial that they not be left to their own devices and forced to find their way in the complex system of services offered, and that a well-structured network be set up to bring together resource people from the different centres and other partners. In its article entitled "L'accompagnement global de la personne en formation," the AFPA emphasizes the importance of "moving from the current logic of having several specialized practitioners each addressing *his or her part* of the problem to a collective organization based on synergy among the different players. This internal and broader organization should also be more open to other partners."[3] Moreover, it came up several times at the meetings that there are no available competent resource people to refer adults to when a serious personal problem arises, hence the importance of an effective network.

In the same vein, it is important that the different resource people work in synergy. An internal and external network must be set up, taking into account the missions, philosophies and responsibilities of each party, as well as the issues at stake. Each practitioner should know what can be expected of the other and promote harmonized actions, while ensuring confidentiality. It is also important to hold adult learners accountable for their progress and to foster self-sufficiency and the ability to act, while supporting them throughout the process and even beyond, if possible. It is clear that the adult learner is the only person who can make decisions and take the appropriate steps. He or she is responsible for his or her own actions.

Helping the adult learner mobilize his or her personal resources, construct a more positive self-image and realize his or her full potential is at the heart of support services, since we believe

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1 *La population cible de la formation de base,* p. 5.

2 Jacques Limoges et al., *Stratégies de maintien au travail* (Sainte-Foy: Septembre éditeur, 2001), p. 72 [free translation].

3 "AFPA: l'accompagnement global de la personne en formation," p. 60 [free translation].

that this is an essential condition for all other types of learning. Thus, we want to help adult learners mobilize their strengths and personal resources, realize their full potential and perceive their personal plan as a series of small goals to be achieved. The methods used to achieve success in the past can be transferred to the adult's current project. It is important to foster a positive attitude and to emphasize the adult's prior accomplishments in the realization of his or her personal plan. This will give the adult learner a "boost" and maintain a sufficient level of motivation.

As we mentioned earlier, it is important to develop a model that takes every aspect of the person into account. We do not accompany adult learners in every aspect of their progress, but we do take these aspects into account. Since it is often an accumulation of problems that causes adult learners to drop out of school, we believe that it is important to help them find solutions as soon as possible and to refer them to a resource person if necessary, regardless of the source of their dissatisfaction. We therefore propose the following five elements for fostering perseverance and motivation:[1]

- a positive attitude
- a sense of humour
- an acceptable quality of life (hence the importance of considering every aspect of the person's life)
- motivation inherent in the circumstances
- lessons to be learned from failures

In order to help adult learners continue to make progress, we encourage them to consider the following, in individual or group meetings:[2]

- the quality of their support network
- activities other than those involved in their personal plan
- the value of their personal plan
- their conviction that their plan is appropriate
- the possibility that they might be obsessed with their plan
- the reasons why it is difficult to persevere
- feelings of guilt experienced if they deviate even slightly from their plan

Lastly, support services require a methodological framework based on a variety of adaptable tools, which is why they will differ slightly depending on the target clientele.

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1 *Stratégies de maintien au travail*, p. 149.
2 *Stratégies de maintien au travial,* p. 150.

2.5 Definition of support services

Because of the similarity of terms such as information, counselling, follow-up, tutoring, mentoring, buddying and guidance, we must be careful. Support practices in reception, referral and counselling cannot be substituted for other, similar practices in our adult education and vocational training centres. In our opinion, support is a stage in the educational process and requires follow-up and supervision. Our view is based on the definition in the document *Toward a Renewal of Reception, Referral, Counselling & Support Services in School Boards*:

> "Support is a relational and professional process established over time."[1]
> "Support encourages an individual's action, ensures a continued presence, focuses on the complete person and general intent of interventions, and monitors agreed-upon actions."[2]

Therefore, we want to prevent adult learners from having to go it alone and to provide a place where they can get the help they need to succeed in their course of action and to face difficulties that might get in the way of their personal plan. Professional actions can take the following forms:

- acceptance and active listening
- participation in the discovery of the meaning of the adult learner's experiences and personal quest
- accompaniment of the person in the implementation of his or her decisions
- referral services as needed, both internally and externally

It is therefore essential that quality partnerships be established between the different internal and external players with whom the adult learner must interact.

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1 *Toward a Renewal of Reception, Referral, Counselling & Support Services in School Boards,* p. 28.
2 *Toward a Renewal of Reception, Referral, Counselling & Support Services in School Boards,* p. 55.

2.6 Research objectives and questions

First, we wanted to test two support services models with two different categories of clientele. The table below provides an overview of the two models:

Model 1	Model 2
Category: Young men between the ages of 16 and 24 ➢ Takes into account every dimension of the individual. ➢ The adult learner receives individualized support in all school board services, for example, preparation to take the GDT, enrollment in adult general education or vocational training. ➢ Partnerships are established with the local employment centre, the CJE and other organizations, and a tool called the Learning Development Passport is created for all participants in order to facilitate the exchange of information between the different partners, with the adult learner's consent. ➢ Recognition is given for achievements and simple goals are set.	**Category:** Adults aged 25 and over with fewer than nine years of schooling ➢ Encourages adult learners to reflect on the idea of a personal plan and, more specifically, on their own personal plan. ➢ Individualized support combined with group meetings enable adult learners to obtain the help they need to implement their plan of action. ➢ Problems are addressed as they arise, regardless of their source, and adult learners are referred to specific resources as needed. ➢ Group meetings can also be an opportunity for adult learners to discuss their personal plans and frequently encountered problems (e.g. stress management).

In our discussions, we came to the conclusion that the two models were similar in many respects and that it was difficult to come up with two entirely different models. Had we wanted to propose totally different ways of doing things, we would have had to involve peers in a buddying or mentoring system. We saw that, in both models, it was important to consider every aspect of the adult learners, refine their plan of action, provide support based on their needs, and work with partners if necessary. We finally decided, in collaboration with the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) and Université Laval, to combine the models. The resulting model was adapted to and tested on each of our two target groups.

Our objective was therefore to model, test and evaluate realistic support services adapted to the requirements of lifelong learning, for two specific groups.

At first, our two research questions were as follows:

- What are the main characteristics and cornerstones of a support services model that is efficient at both the pedagogical and administrative levels?
- What impact do these support services have on the adult learners in question?

However, given the time constraints and our choice of an interpretative paradigm, i.e. a paradigm based on the testimony of participants in the action research project, the research questions changed and we were left with the following question:

- Can the innovative support services model referred to as “Support Services: A Promising Approach” and aimed at the three objectives set out below be perceived as helpful by the different players involved (users, practitioners, administrators and the action research team)?

The model’s three objectives will be described in the following pages:

1. To enable adult learners to determine where they stand with respect to the proposed support services and to express their needs.
2. To encourage adult learners to draw up a profile of their experiences and to prepare their plan of action.
3. To hold the adult learners accountable and ensure that they implement their plan.

In order to achieve our goal, we need to define the process and the principles underlying it and our interventions. These elements apply specifically to this action research project and serve as guidelines for determining the parameters of our interventions.

2.7 Expected results

We believe that support services foster lifelong learning by promoting perseverance and success. However, because of the short duration of this action research project, we will be unable to see the medium- and long-term impact of our interventions. We will nevertheless select results indicators generally recognized as fostering success:

- motivation
- decision-making

The counsellor providing the support services should:

- assist adult learners in their choices and support them in their decisions and in the preparation of their plan of action

- ensure that they maintain the necessary motivation to persevere in the agreed-upon process

In our opinion, the result of efficient support services would be that the adult learner and the counsellor agree that the motivation needed to implement the adult's plan of action has been maintained or improved. This can be determined by:

- the value assigned to the proposed activities
- the adult learner's perception of his or her ability to successfully complete the activities
- the adult learner's perception of his or her ability to take charge of his or her personal plan

The ability to make decisions will be observed in adult learners' perception of their ability to make decisions concerning their plan and any other actions they take to get ahead, including withdrawal treatment, settling family conflicts or finding solutions to financial or transportation problems. Ideally, by the end of the project, adult learners should know that they are capable of applying their learning in other situations.

In addition, the action research project will help:

- raise awareness among internal and external players of the need to provide support services for adult learners
- establish recommendations to allow the interventions to be applied at the provincial level
- integrate answers to the questions raised in the process and its evaluation

Chapter 3

Planning the Action Research Project

3.1 Description of the support services model

Our support services model is an open and holistic model, focused on the adult learner. Although it is not a formal educational service, it fosters learning since it promotes the development of transferable competencies in areas such as stress management, decision-making and personal plan development. It involves three sequential and complementary stages, in which:

- the adult learner is welcomed and considered as a whole person
- his or her learning pace and rate of development are respected
- his or her efforts toward the achievement of simple goals are recognized
- the adult learner is encouraged to reflect on the idea of a personal plan and, more specifically, his or her own personalplan
- the adult learner receives support throughout the personal process in a formal setting such as a school or in informal settings such as a workplace or community organization
- the adult learner is referred to internal or external resources, as the case may be, to deal with various problems
- the adult learner is encouraged to produce a Perssonal Plan Development passport summarizing his or her course of action, goals and objectives. This document can be submitted to the various practitioners and partners involved if the adult learner so desires.

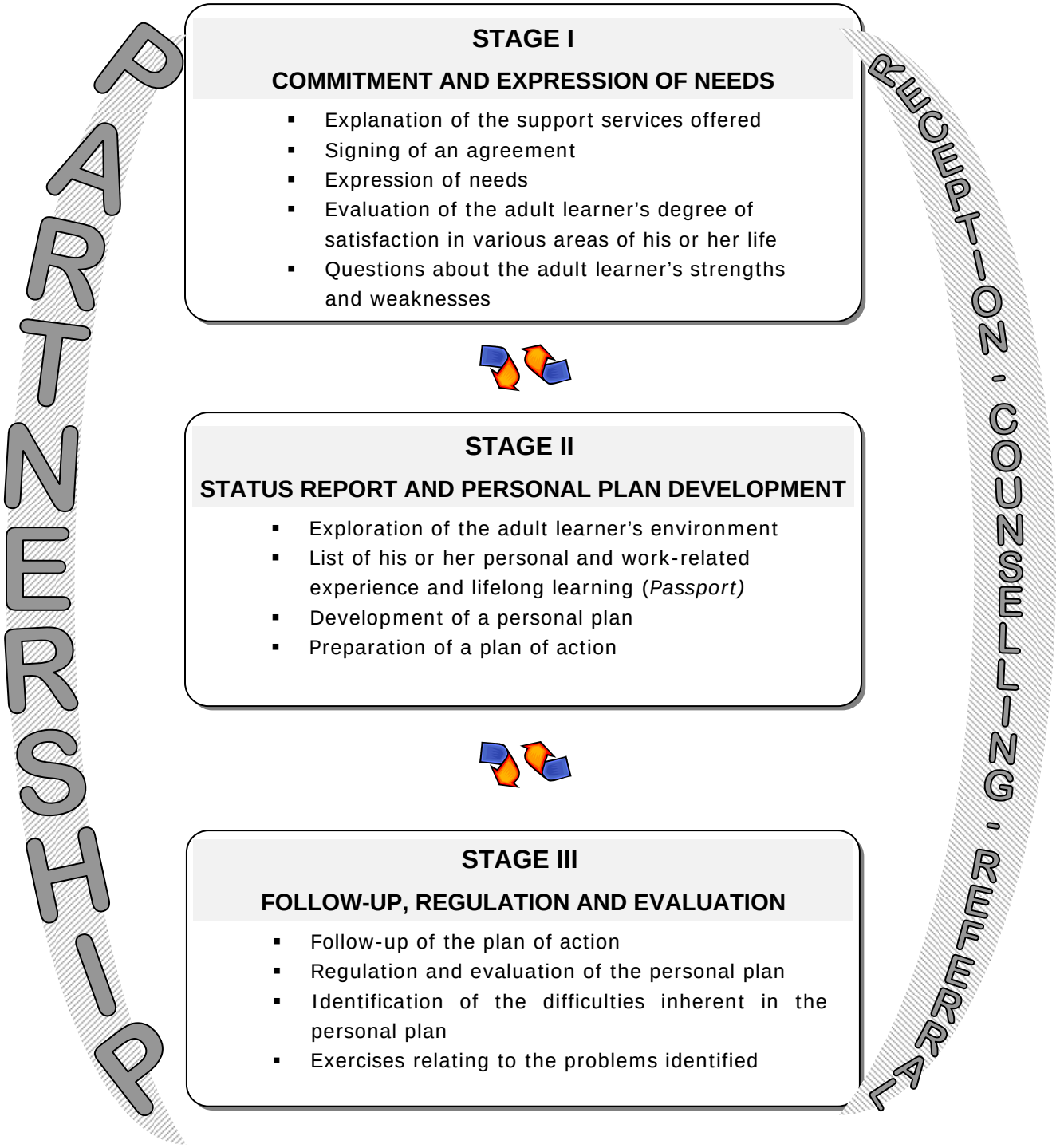
Our model is based on a global approach: every dimension of the adult learner's life is taken into consideration, but support services are provided only in the areas of reception, referral and counselling. After the adult learner is referred to an external organization, for example, a follow-up is done to ensure that the agreed-upon steps have been taken. Support services are adjusted in accordance with other services, but remain focused on their own particular role.

The fact that some adults are forced to return to school or to take certain career paths (to remain eligible for certain benefits, for example) makes it appropriate to consider the concept of personal plan in our support services model. We want to provide adult learners with an opportunity to define, analyze and evaluate their personal plan. The model must, however, be flexible and adapted to adult learners' needs throughout the learning process.

Reception, referral and counselling are an integral part of support services, to which they contribute as needed.

A diagram of the support services model, as well as a description of each of the three stages, follows. Examples of activities and tools are included in the appendixes.

SUPPORT SERVICES MODEL



STAGE I: COMMITMENT AND EXPRESSION OF NEEDS

Aim: One aim of the support services model is to enable adult learners to determine where they stand with respect to the proposed support services model and to express their needs.

Steps:
- Explanation of the support services offered
- Signing of an agreement
- Expression of needs
- Evaluation of the adult learner's degree of satisfaction in various areas of his or her life
- Questions about the adult learner's strengths and weaknesses

Notes:

This first stage consists in exchanging information. The counsellor should:
- create a relationship of trust
- define both parties' expectations
- explain the process and what will happen at the meetings
- see that the agreement reproduced in Appendix 3 is signed, if applicable

If they decide to engage in the process, the adult learners will then have a chance to explore their needs by talking to the counsellor. They can also indicate their degree of satisfaction with respect to their basic needs using the "sun activity" in Appendix 4. They rate the following areas of their life on a scale of 1 to 10: friendship, love, housing, health, happiness, transportation, learning, finances and family.

Throughout the process, the adult learners can be referred to different internal and external services. Activities such as the one in Appendix 4 are planned at the end of each stage in order to clarify the need for services.

Lastly, the adult learners are encouraged to take a look at their strengths and weaknesses. At that point, emphasis is placed on their strengths. Themes such as stress management and a healthy balance between school and family life can be addressed in later meetings. A self-evaluation sheet to help them identify their strengths and weaknesses appears in Appendix 5.

STAGE II: STATUS REPORT AND PERSONAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Aim: One aim of the support services model is to encourage adult learners to draw up a profile of their experiences, define their personal plan and prepare their plan of action.

Steps:
- Exploration of the adult learner's environment
- List of his or her personal and work-related experience and lifelong learning (passport)
- Development of a personal plan
- Preparation of a plan of action

Notes:

First, the adult learners are invited to define the context in which they are developing by exploring their immediate environment: family, spouse, friends, community, etc. They take a look at their academic career, what they expect out of life, school and the job market, their motivation, etc.

Then, with the counsellor's help, they list their work-related, academic and learning experiences on the lifelines in the personal plan development passport. This tool is designed to promote self-esteem and, when it has been completed, enables adult learners to provide the people who will help them throughout the learning process with the necessary personal information without having to tell their story over and over again. A sample personal plan development passport appears in Appendix 6.

In developing their personal plan, adult learners must take a look at their goals and objectives, as well as the time and resources they will need. Then, in order to carry out the plan, they analyze the situation and determine its feasibility. The self-directed learning section of the *Univers de la réussite* kit serves as a reference point and guide. A diagram of the personal plan and a description of the different stages appear in Appendix 7. It may be necessary to return to certain stages, since the process is not necessarily linear in nature.

Lastly, the adult learners prepare and implement their plan of action. Their objectives, the means or actions chosen and the timeline are indicated in their personal plan development passport, which now contains all of the necessary information.

STAGE III: FOLLOW-UP, REGULATION AND EVALUATION

Aim: One aim of the support services model is to make adult learners accountable for the learning process and to ensure that they take the agreed-upon steps.

Steps:
- Follow-up of the plan of action
- Regulation and evaluation of the personal plan
- Identification of the difficulties inherent in the personal plan
- Exercises relating to the problems identified

Notes:

It is important to remember that the plan of action is not set in stone: the adult learners should allow themselves the leeway to make changes and to adapt to changes in themselves and in their environment. At this stage, the counsellor should help them establish methods of regulating and evaluating their personal plan.

In individual meetings and during phone conversations, the counsellor ensures that the adult learners have done what they agreed to do. The learners are encouraged to evaluate the consistency between their objectives and the results obtained and to identify the difficulties and obstacles they encountered. Corrective measures or additional steps are then considered. The counsellor supports the adult learners in their regulation by providing frequent encouragement.

Stress management, adaptation to change, a healthy balance between school and family life, effort and perseverance are themes that are very likely to be seen as obstacles to the implementation of the personal plan. Activities and reference documents are therefore prepared ahead of time. In addition to tools fostering the development of various abilities, the *Univers de la réussite* kit offers self-directed learning modules on a variety of themes to meet individual needs.

Appendix 8 contains additional information about the support services model, including the content of individual and group meetings for the two target groups, materials, estimated times and methods.

3.2 Research paradigm

For this action research project, we used an interpretative diagram. Thus, the data were analyzed subjectively, from the point of view of participants, observers (administrators, teachers and counsellors) and the person responsible for support services. Four observation methods were used in the experiment.

- **Focus groups:** An evaluation meeting was held at the end of the experiment in order to gather participants', administrators', instructors' and practitioners' comments on various points. Lists of questions and comments appear in Appendixes 9 and 10.

- **Logbook:** The counsellor recorded various observations in a logbook throughout the process. Excerpts appearing in this report are indicated as follows: *[Log]*. They are based on notes in the counsellor's logbook. Thus, comments are paraphrased and do not appear verbatim.

- **Evaluation sheet:** The adult learners can also record their comments and perceptions at each meeting on an evaluation sheet such as the one appearing in Appendix 11.

- **Observation checklist:** In addition, the adult learners do a self-evaluation at the beginning and end of the process, rating the following factors on a scale from 1 to 10: the value they place on the proposed activities, their perception of their ability to successfully complete the activities, their ability to control their actions and their perception of their decision-making abilities. The counsellor also evaluates the adult learners using the observation checklists in Appendix 12 in order to regulate his or her actions.

3.3 Choice of human resources

A guidance counsellor was hired to work four to five days a week to test the support services model with adult learners participating in the action research project. Our choice was also motivated by the desire to have only one person ensuring follow-up.

3.4 Partnerships

First, it is important to consolidate the internal network and to establish direct contact with various practitioners in order to be able to refer people promptly, if necessary, or to discuss non-confidential aspects of the case. If the practitioners are unavailable, or if there are none in the centre or school board, it is essential that ties be established with external organizations. For example, adults can be referred to the CLSC, the Maison de la famille, the Carrefour Jeunesse

Emploi (CJE), Virage for alcohol and drug abuse, Clé sur La Porte for conjugal violence, etc. The local employment centre is also an important resource, since some adults were referred to adult education services by that organization.

Finally, the teaching staff is in direct and prolonged contact with the adult learners and can therefore identify certain problems and suggest possible solutions.

Chapter 4

Action Research Procedure

4.1 Sampling

First group

We selected ten adult learners based on the following criteria:

- They had to be 25 or older.
- They had to have fewer than nine years of schooling in French (at the time they were selected).
- They had to be enrolled full-time in day courses at Centre de formation des Maskoutains (adult education).
- They were not receiving substantial services from a psychologist or a social work technician working for the school board in order to avoid complicating the situation.

Using a student list provided by the centre, we randomly selected twenty names and called five adult learners at a time to a 30-minute meeting with the counsellor responsible for the project and an educational and vocational information counsellor at the centre. This enabled us to introduce the counsellor to the adult learners and to facilitate referral. After hearing our presentation of the action research project, its content and its requirements, all of those we met with accept to participate. Several said they would accept any help they could get to achieve their objectives. A major reason for their agreeing to participate was that no changes were made to their schedule targets. At the outset, we had to replace two participants, one because of a sampling error, and the other because of a long-term hospitalization.

Second group

We selected ten young men between the ages of 16 and 24 (one dropped out later) as follows:

- Four were attending Centre de formation des Maskoutains (CFM) and were enrolled full-time in day courses.
- Two were not enrolled in an adult education or vocational training centre and were not receiving (and had not recently received) educational services (general development test, secondary studies equivalence tests, etc.).
- Four were attending École professionnelle de Saint-Hyacinthe (EPSH) (one was on a waiting list).

We proceeded somewhat differently with this target group. First, we randomly selected six young men at Centre de formation des Maskoutains (CFM) and, at the meeting, four of them agreed to participate. One of these died at the very beginning of the project and we contacted one of the young men we had already met with, who agreed to take his place. Recruiting

participants from educational services was more difficult. Since contact was made by telephone, it was difficult to explain the usefulness of such support services. One of the two men selected never came to a meeting. *The second group was therefore made up of nine participants*.

In the case of students from École professionnelle de Saint-Hyacinthe (EPSH), the director chose those she wanted to meet with from among a group of students with academic difficulties. At group meetings, the counsellor was assisted by the assistant director. The candidates did not know why their names had been suggested and some reacted negatively when they found out. However, they all agreed to participate, since they realized they needed help. They said they would have appreciated being told ahead of time why they had been contacted. After the meeting, we noticed that one of the candidates was more than 24 years old and we randomly selected another name from a list of people who dropped out of vocational training that fall.

We also needed to recruit someone who was slated to start school that winter. The exercise was more difficult at École professionnelle de Saint-Hyacinthe (EPSH), since courses are intensive and we knew it would be better not to call on them too often. This why we chose people with difficulties or who were not in school at the time. In addition, we observed that it was easier to recruit the two people we needed in face-to-face meetings rather than over the telephone, because of their lack of interest in the project. We had to select several names before obtaining our two participants.

4.2 Profile of participants

In addition to the general characteristics identified in the analysis of the target groups in section 2.3, this section contains a profile of the participants.

First the group of young men between the ages of 16 and 24 was made up mostly of individuals aged 18 to 20 (seven of them fell into this category). Furthermore, just one was only going to school and not working at the same time, which can have a major impact on the amount of time and energy available. None of the participants in this group were receiving financial assistance from Emploi-Québec. Lastly, half of them were still living with their parents.

All of the adults in the group aged 25 and over were between the ages of 25 and 45. Eight were over 30. Although we were open to the idea of accepting people with little schooling, we observed that almost all of the participants (eight out of ten) were on the verge of completing a basic Secondary III education. Lastly, the group was made up of as many men as women and nine of the ten were receiving financial assistance from Emploi-Québec. A more detailed profile of these participants appears in Appendix 13.

4.3 Stages in the support services model

The support services model presented in section 3.1 can be divided into three stages. The action research experiment took place during six meetings with the adult learners over a period of less than four months. Ideally, the model should be extended over a period of more than eight months in order to achieve the set goals.

Two types of meetings were held:

- The group of adults aged 25 and over attended four individual meetings and three group meetings.
- The group of young men between the ages of 16 and 24 attended six individual meetings.

The procedures differed because we wanted to adapt our model to the two categories and their specific characteristics. The procedure for the group meetings and the ice breaker activity appear in Appendix 15.

The counsellor met with the adults in their centres so that they would feel comfortable and avoid transportation problems. However, those who were not currently enrolled in courses could meet with the counsellor in her office at the school board's educational services.

PROCEDURE FOR STAGE I: COMMITMENT AND EXPRESSION OF NEEDS

Explanation of the support services offered and signing of an agreement

At the information session, we explained to the two groups the goal and procedure of the action research project and the level of involvement required of participants. Then, we had them sign a consent form and an agreement. The offer of support services came none too soon for many participants, and one of them even asked to meet with the counsellor immediately after the session, since she was experiencing difficulties and needed to talk. The first official meeting with the two groups took place individually and involved much the same content.

Expression of needs and evaluation of the adult learner's degree of satisfaction

We did the entire sun activity and used the results to quickly define participants' needs. The adult learners said they enjoyed the activity, since it enabled them to determine their degree of satisfaction with certain aspects of their life and to deal immediately with any areas of dissatisfaction. In addition, it allowed us to address other problems, since the participants in both groups began confiding in us. For example, the problems addressed often involved alcohol

and drug abuse, difficult relations with children and spouses, mistrust, etc. It is important to note that, at the beginning of the meeting, several young men said they had no special problems. However, after the sun activity and over the course of the meetings, they revealed several elements that could make it difficult for them to stay in school. The individual meetings appeared to foster the expression of needs in particular among these young men. Several of them said that they would not have been as open in a group, especially during the sun activity, which would have led to too much confrontation.

Results obtained in the sun activity

ADULTS AGED 25 AND OVER					
Areas addressed	Average (out of 10)	Age group		Sex	
		25-35	35-45	Male	Female
Housing	9	8	10	7	10
Health	8	9	7	8	8
Happiness	8	8	7	8	7
Employment	7	6	8	6	8
Transportation	8	7	10	7	10
Learning	9	8	9	7	10
Finances	6	6	6	7	6
Family	7	7	7	8	5
Friendship	8	8	8	8	8
Love	7	8	5	7	7
AVERAGE	7.7	7.5	7.7	7.3	7.9

All the adults aged 25 and over were less satisfied with their finances than any other area of their life.

- Men in general, and in particular those between the ages of 25 and 35, were less satisfied with the employment aspect.
- Half of the adults aged 35 and over were experiencing difficulties related to recent separations, custody issues, etc.
- Women were less satisfied with the family aspect. This could be explained by the fact that most of them were single mothers or members of a blended family and were dealing with all the problems that these situations entail.

MEN BETWEEN THE AGES OF 16 AND 24						
Areas addressed	Average (out of 10)	Age group		Program		
		16-19	20-24	VT	AGE	Other
Housing	8	9	7	8	8	8
Health	9	9	8	8	9	9
Happiness	8	8	8	8	9	8
Employment	8	7	8	9	8	7
Transportation	7	6	7	7	8	5
Learning	7	6	7	8	6	N.A.
Finances	5	3	6	6	3	6
Family	9	9	9	10	8	10
Friendship	8	8	8	6	10	8
Love	7	8	5	4	8	6
AVERAGE	7.6	7.3	7.3	7.4	7.7	7.4

All the men between the ages of 16 and 24, especially those aged 16 to 19 and those enrolled in general education, were less satisfied with their finances than any other area of their life. This could be explained by the fact that they are the only age group in which no participants were receiving financial assistance from Emploi-Québec.

- Those aged 16 to 19 who were enrolled in adult general education (AGE) appeared to experience more difficulties related to transportation and learning.
- Those aged 20 to 24 who were not enrolled in adult general education appeared to experience difficulties in their romantic relationships.

The sun activity made it possible to identify the difficulties experienced by participants. From the outset, we observed that the counsellor had difficulty following the established plan of action. In addition, several documents and activities arrived later than expected. We believe that the difficulties mentioned were also a result of the fact that several of the participants, especially the young men aged 16 to 24, failed to show up at more than one meeting. The main reasons cited included illness, job constraints and family problems.

In addition, several urgent needs made it difficult to remain in school. It was often necessary to talk to the participants before they could continue as planned. The following elements were recurring:

- alcohol and drug use among men aged 16 to 24 only
- difficulty balancing family and academic obligations, mainly among participants in the group of adults aged 25 and over
- financial difficulties

- lovers' quarrels
- academic problems (adaptation and results)
- stress management
- a healthy balance between school and work

Questions about the adult learners' strengths and weaknesses

The counsellor asked participants to establish their strengths and weaknesses in various areas. This activity is explained in detail in Appendix 5. Several people experienced difficulty associating the statements with everyday situations so the counsellor provided concrete examples. She frequently used this method to help participants understand, which was appreciated. The purpose of the activity was to enable participants to define their strengths and weaknesses and to learn more about themselves.

The activity also enabled the counsellor to identify recurring themes in the lives of adults aged 25 and over and to address them at group meetings (e.g. stress management and a healthy balance between school and family or work). In the case of the young men, the themes were addressed based on individual needs, but the counsellor observed that their problems were very similar to those experienced by the other group.

Organization

Setting dates for group meetings of adults aged 25 and over was not an easy task. Problems included scheduling conflicts and the fact that several courses and pedagogical support activities took place at the same time. Nevertheless, dates were set. However, one adult had to schedule individual meetings because he was unavailable at any other time.

Adult learners' evaluation

At the end of the first meeting, all of the participants said they liked being around people over the age of 25 because of their maturity and awareness of the importance of what they were doing. Three people mentioned that this might be their last chance to get an education and that they did not want to miss out. One participant had begun courses a month earlier and found it difficult to deal with the noise younger students make. Several others mentioned experiencing the same frustration, but said that, over time, they were able to improve their concentration. Almost all the participants said they were satisfied and interested in attending the next group meeting.

SURPRISING DISCOVERIES
Stage I

- ✓ *All of the adults signed the agreement.*
- ✓ *The average level of satisfaction with finances is low among both young men between the ages of 16 and 24 and adults aged 25 and over.*
- ✓ *Young men between the ages of 16 and 24 appear to experience a number of difficulties (even though they start off saying they have none).*
- ✓ *Both individual and group meetings were appreciated and were even a key factor in the decision of members of the two target groups to participate in the project.*
- ✓ *The difficulties experienced by most of the participants are very serious and are a major obstacle to staying in school and carrying out the personal plan.*

PROCEDURE FOR STAGE II: STATUS REPORT AND PERSONAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT

Exploration of the adult learner's environment

Participants were invited to think about all the people in their environment and to analyze their contribution to the implementation of their personal plan. The adults aged 25 and over often had a few more people to consider, such as their spouse, children and extended family. In the case of the young men between the ages of 16 and 24, their parents were often present, but not always a positive influence. Some said that their parents did not approve of their being in school and that they pressured them to get a full-time job.

Then, the adult learners were invited to take a look at their academic career, what they expected from life and school, their motivation and so on. It could be important that many women in the over-25 age group said they left school because of parental pressure, pregnancy, the need to work, etc. Men in the over-25 age group and the young men between the ages of 16 and 24 also mentioned the need to work and parental pressure, as well as behavioural and learning difficulties.

List of the personal and work-related experience and lifelong learning (passport)

The passport activity in Appendix 6 began during the first individual meeting and ended, for many participants, toward the end of the process. We wanted it to take place over a shorter time period, but it was more difficult than expected to identify participants' objectives, the methods

they intended to use, their aptitudes and so on. Overall, participants enjoyed the activity, but they did not get a chance to consult specialists during the action research project. Consequently, we cannot comment on its usefulness for partners. However, according to the counsellor, it appears to have at least helped participants learn more about themselves, visualize their personal plan and put the steps in perspective over time.

Development of a personal plan

The development of the personal plan was central to all of the counsellor's interventions. It was also the subject of the most frequently asked questions in both target groups. In almost all cases, participants were able to carry out all the steps in the personal plan.

Adults aged 25 and over

When they were developing their personal plan, several adults aged 25 and over already had an occupational goal, since they had been required to set one in order to receive financial assistance from Emploi-Québec. However, a few of them reconsidered their goal and two changed it. Although the others kept the same goal, questions about their personal plan allowed them to better understand it and to make sure it was what they really wanted. Then, the participants broke their personal plan down into phases in order to set objectives, determine the amount of time needed and the resources at their disposal. For example, one participant wanted to become a construction machine operator. We determined that she needed to pass the general development test (GDT), enroll in the appropriate vocational training program and, since the program was not offered in her region, she would have to consider moving and everything that would entail. Determining the resources at their disposal was an important step, since it gave participants a sense of security; some were forced to consider potential difficulties such as finding a babysitter for school holidays. Throughout the process, the counsellor was available to help the participants analyze their situation and determine the feasibility of their personal plan. All the participants were given the opportunity to reflect fully and completely on their personal plan. None of them came up with unrealistic goals, which facilitated the process.

Young men between the ages of 16 and 24

A major difference became apparent between vocational training students and those general education students or those who were not in school at all. The counsellor observed that the personal plans of students already enrolled in a vocational training program were far more precise and well developed, since the goal, objectives and time required had in large part already been determined and since the adult learner's situation and the feasibility of the personal plan had already been analyzed. However, the adults had not, in general, taken the time to consider the resources available. The situation was entirely different for adults enrolled in general education and those who were not in school at all. In many cases, these adults wanted to finish secondary school so that they could improve their chances of finding a good job, but they did not have a precise goal. Consequently, addressing the idea of a personal plan

seems to have been very beneficial, since the counsellor observed that, over time, participants in both groups became increasingly sure of their personal plans and would better explain their reasons for wanting to carry them out.

The counsellor, a guidance counsellor by training, was able to bring her counselling skills to bear on the development of individual personal plans.

The following tables compare the adult learners' situation at their last meeting with the counsellor with the goal of their personal plan as established during the experiment.

Adults aged 25 and over

Adults aged 25 and over	Goal of the personal plan	Situation at the last meeting
1	To become a sound technician	Continuation of general education and enrollment in vocational training
2	To become a medical laboratory technician	Continuation of general education
3	To become an attendant to patients in a health care institution	Enrollment in vocational training and job search
4	To become a beneficiary attendant in a health care institution	Continuation of general education and enrollment in vocational training
5	To become a cabinet maker	Continuation of general education and enrollment in vocational training
6	To become a plumber	Interruption of studies for an indeterminate period
7	To become a heavy equipment operator	Enrollment in vocational training and job search
8	To become a computer network manager	Continuation of general education
9	To become a nursing assistant	Continuation of general education
10	To become a building systems technician	Continuation of general education

Young men between the ages of 16 and 24

Young men between the ages of 16 and 24	Goal of the personal plan	Situation at the last meeting
1	To become an automobile mechanic	Continuation of general education and enrollment in the army
2	To become a criminologist	Continuation of general education and enrollment in CEGEP
3	To become a communications specialist	Active in the workforce (holds a job)
4	To buy a house	Active in the workforce (holds a job)
5	To become a carpenter	Continuation of vocational training
6	To become an electrician	Continuation of vocational training
7	To finish Secondary V	Active in the workforce (holds a job) and postponement of his return to school
8	To finish Secondary V	No longer in school
9	To become a carpenter	Possible return to school

The above tables reveal that almost all of the participants took steps that brought them closer to the achievement of their educational goal (for example, participant number 2 enrolled in CEGEP in order to become a criminologist). Three people, i.e. participant number 6 in the first group and participants numbers 3 and 8 in the second, do not appear to be in a situation that will help them achieve their educational goal. However, all of these people said that they needed to take a break in order to be able to come back and try again later. Indeed, as this report is being finalized, we have learned that two of them intend to enroll next term.

Generally speaking, the counsellor observed that the participants were able to refine their personal plan. The fact that almost all the participants aged 25 and over were receiving financial assistance from Emploi-Québec seemed to have a significant impact on their course of action.

According to one participant:

> *[Log][1] "This isn't my first choice, but it's the one my employment officer agreed to finance. I won't change, because I can't afford to pay for an education. I'd have to go back to factory work."*

[1] *[Log]* Excerpt from the counsellor's logbook (see section 3.2).

So, even if the courses were not in their subject of choice, some participants preferred to enroll anyway rather than borrow money to take courses that weren't paid for. However, some participants decided to modify their career goals, which had a serious impact on their finances. For example, one person decided to modify her goals and, since the new course took less time to complete, she finished earlier than originally expected and she was able to receive employment insurance benefits while waiting for her courses to start.

Preparation of a plan of action

The goal, objectives, means and required time set out in the personal plan are recorded in the adult learner's passport. This information provides a starting point for follow-up activities.

SURPRISING DISCOVERIES
Stage II

- ✓ *Unlike the women, the men in both target groups cited behavioural and learning difficulties as reasons for dropping out of general education in the youth sector.*
- ✓ *The personal plan activity appeared to be beneficial for all the participants, but especially so for those enrolled in general education.*
- ✓ *Most of the participants remained in school and showed true commitment to their personal plan.*
- ✓ *Setting objectives appears to be the most difficult step in the development of the personal plan, among both young men and adults aged 25 and over.*
- ✓ *The idea of a personal plan appears to be far more beneficial for those adults who are not in school or who are enrolled in general education and less so for those enrolled in vocational training.*

PROCEDURE FOR STAGE III: FOLLOW-UP, REGULATION AND EVALUATION

Follow-up of the plan of action

Throughout the process, the counsellor monitored and supported the participants, referred them to the appropriate resources when needed and made sure she knew how their personal plan was progressing. Because it is important to respect individual autonomy, participants made their own choices and decisions. However, the counsellor was always available to provide the

necessary support, encourage them and to help them find solutions. The agreed to level of support appears to have been motivational for the adult learners. They felt they were not left to their own devices but were accountable, in a manner of speaking, were accountable to someone who would recognize their efforts and achievements. Overall, the adult learners took the steps set out in their plan of action and were happy with their results. Some people were not able to undertake certain steps during the course of the action research project, since they need more time to think. However, they said they were relieved to know that they had access to a resource person. The meetings also enabled them to evaluate the status of their personal plan and to ensure that it was being implemented properly. The adults aged 25 and over said they appreciated the follow-up, since they felt more confident and at ease, despite all the changes they experienced since their return to school.

Adjustment and evaluation of the personal plan

The adult learners' adjustment and evaluation of their personal plan could not really be observed, since time constraints prevented us from proceeding as far as we would have liked. However, the counsellor believes that these two elements could constitute a logical extension of the project and, consequently, of support services. This would make it possible to help adult learners modify their way of doing things, if necessary, and to learn form their experience. Access to a resource person should difficulties arise was something the participants really appreciated. Some of them said that this kind of support could be effective in helping them stay in school and work toward their goal in the face of obstacles and difficulties.

Identification of the difficulties inherent in the personal plan

With the counsellor's help, the participants identified their difficulties as they arose. The difficulties identified (e.g. financial, family) appear to have had a significant impact on the adult learners' personal plans. These difficulties are in a sense part of their background, in other words, they are inherent in their living environment, the people around them and their own personality. For example, as one participant told the counsellor:

> [Log] "I don't know what to do anymore. I want to stay in school, but I need to put food on the table."

As we mentioned in the previous chapter, participants were encouraged to find solutions based on their strengths and prior learning.

Activities relating to the problems identified

Adults aged 25 and over

The second group meeting dealt with a healthy balance between school and family life, since several people had said they were experiencing difficulties in this area. They didn't expect it to

be as difficult as it was to strike such a balance. They would have appreciated more flexibility on the part of a staff members and administrators. We took advantage of this meeting to address stress management. The final meeting put an end to the group process and prepared students for the focus group. Some participants experienced health problems and could not attend all of the group meetings. However, we remained in telephone contact with them in order to continue the process and to ensure that they were receiving the necessary assistance. Some had finished their courses by the last meetings, but they agreed to continue with the experiment, since they enjoyed the opportunity to discuss their experiences with group members. At the third group meeting, almost half of the people present were no longer enrolled in the adult education or vocational training centre.

Young men between the ages of 16 and 24

In this group, the themes addressed were similar to those dealt with in the other target group. However, the need to find a job and financial difficulties appeared to be more of a concern. Some people dropped out of the program to go to work, and it was a little more difficult to continue providing support services because they were less available. The need to leave home and pay off debts (e.g. parking tickets, car payments) were the reasons most often cited by this group for dropping out of school. Only one person decided to stop using the support services before the end of her program because she did not see the use and no longer had the time. Participants were free to contact the counsellor between meetings as needed. However, most waited for the appointments, even if they were experiencing difficulties, possibly because the meetings were scheduled relatively frequently. Many adult learners met with the counsellor every two or three weeks over a period of three months.

Finally, at the end of the process, we awarded a certificate of participation to the adult learners in both groups in order to recognize their participation in the action research project. A copy of the certificate appears in Appendix 14. These certificates were awarded only to those who attended every meeting making the certificate a source of great pride. Several participants said they had never received such recognition for having achieved their academic goals, which they would have liked, even if they did not succeed in earning a secondary school diploma. Having the prerequisites needed to enter vocational training is an achievement they believe should be recognized.

SURPRISING DISCOVERIES
Stage III

- ✓ *The follow-up process appears to give adult learners a sense of security, especially those aged 25 and over.*[1]
- ✓ *The adult learners in this group, even those who had completed their general education, continued to attend the group meetings.*
- ✓ *The adult learners seemed to greatly appreciate receiving a certificate of participation.*

4.4 Partnerships established

Since the participants experienced a number of problems (identified with the counsellor's help at individual and group meetings), internal and external resources were consulted early on in the process. This enabled us to learn more about the services offered and to integrate our support services. Teamwork was the preferred approach, since it enabled us to take full advantage of existing knowledge and contacts established by internal resources and to avoid repeating steps already taken with the participants. However, confidentiality was always a focal point, and obtaining the participants' consent was an essential step before sharing any information.

Internal partnerships

Overall, the practitioners, instructors and administrators collaborated on the action research project at various stages: recruitment, explanation of internal procedures to the counsellor and availability to answer questions or refer people to specific services. For example, in the case of an adult learner who was suspended because of excessive absences, the director agreed to allow meetings to be held in the centre. Another example of collaboration involves a social work technician who generously shared her knowledge and her network of contacts. According to the counsellor, the teachers were all prepared to discuss the participants' problems and truly wanted them to persevere and succeed. The counsellor observed that, like the teachers, administrators at both centres were also concerned that the action research project run smoothly and invested their time and efforts. According to the counsellor:

> [Log] "I felt a lot of openness and support on the part of several administrators. One at École professionnelle took the time to talk with me to stay abreast of

[1] See Appendix 9, comments 1.11, 4.2, 5.2 and 5.6.

developments in the action research project and provided support in difficult times. I really appreciated it."

At our visit to Centre de formation générale des adultes, which we mentioned in section 2.2, we became more familiar with the tutoring services offered by teachers, the pedagogical support program and the complementary social work and psychology services. Thus, the limits of our intervention, in accordance with those of the other services, were established from the outset, which greatly facilitated relations with personnel later on.

External partners

In all, 16 adults were referred to external organizations (e.g. Carrefour jeunesse-emploi). These were for the most part adults who were not enrolled in general education. The situation at École professionnelle de Saint Hyacinthe (EPSH) was different, since they have no internal complementary services. Administrators and instructors must often intervene when adult learners are experiencing a major crisis and suggest that they consult an external resource such as the CLSC; sometimes they even accompany them. The counsellor therefore relied on ad hoc partnerships to meet the needs of certain participants. In addition, because the participants lived in various different municipalities (e.g. Saint-Hyacinthe, Granby), some were referred to resources outside the school board's territory.

The following table shows where adult learners were referred. Meeting with them to discuss their personal plans resulted in a significant number of referrals to guidance and educational and vocational information counsellors.

Problems identified	Number of referrals	
	Internal	External
Financial difficulties (insufficient food and winter clothing, outstanding Hydro-Québec accounts, etc.)		3
Difficult parent-child relationships		1
Uncertainty with respect to academic goals and a lack of educational and vocational information	13	
Academic difficulties (adaptation and results)	2	3
Health problems		1
Psychological difficulties		1
Difficulty finding a job		4
Lack of information about occupations (visits to schools and organizations)		3

4.5 Adaptation of facilities and methods

During the support process, we had to adapt the times and locations of the meetings in order to accommodate participants. Consequently, some meetings were held very early in the morning, others in the evening, some over the telephone and even some during meal hours. Individual meetings at Centre de formation des Maskoutains (CFM) were held in an office used by different specialists, while group meetings were held in a meeting room. Participants appreciated being somewhere other than in a classroom (see Appendix 9, comment 2.3). In addition, the layout of the offices enabled us to make visual contact with everyone in the group, thereby facilitating discussion. At the vocational training centre, meetings were held in available classrooms. This probably had an impact, since participants tended to sit at the students' desks and left the teacher's desk for the counsellor. One solution we attempted was to hold meetings in the cafeteria after classes began. Some participants said they enjoyed getting out of a classroom setting, saying the meetings were then a bit more informal. Those who were not enrolled in an adult education or vocational training centre met with the counsellor in an office at the school board's educational services.

To adapt the information provided to participants, we took into account the data gathered during our literature review (see sections 2.3 to 2.5) for each of the two groups. First, according to our analysis, young men between the ages of 16 and 24 are less interested in reading and writing. Consequently, we tried to use fewer documents and to be as concrete as possible. We were able to validate this statement in our target group, since eight out of the nine young men told us they did not like reading and did so only when absolutely necessary.

We were able to observe another element that corroborated what we found in the literature, i.e. that young men have difficulty remaining motivated when their goal is far off. At least four of the young men said that they did not participate if they were not sufficiently interested and motivated. Six mentioned that they enjoyed the individual meetings; several believed that they would not have participated as actively and that they would not have taken the process as seriously in group meetings (see Appendix 9, comments 6.2, 6.3, 9.1 and 10.3). Also, nine out of the ten participants in the group of adults aged 25 and over said they really enjoyed the group meetings, since they were able to establish relationships with people experiencing difficulties similar to their own (see Appendix 9, comments 1.2, 1.9, 1.11, 2.4, 2.5 and 3.5). According to our literature review, "those with less schooling are less likely to participate in learning activities,"[1] and "one adult out of five demonstrated very limited reading skills."[2] Consequently, we attempted to cut down on the more theoretical activities involving reading and writing and focused on activities in which participants could make connections with their everyday life, move around and interact with each other (e.g. ice breaker activity, Appendix 15).

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1 *La population cible de la formation de base*, p. 36 and 50 [free translation].
2 *La population cible de la formation de base*, p. 5.

Also, as we mentioned earlier, we adapted the content of our meetings to the needs of participants, who were experiencing several difficulties. We therefore sometimes had to set aside our plan in order to meet the needs that arose and to refer the adult learners to the appropriate specialists. However, generally speaking, we were able to carry out the majority of the activities we had planned.

4.6 Difficulties encountered

Follow-up with adult learners who dropped out of school

One important question arose during the support process concerning the limits of our interventions. In the three months the experiment lasted, several participants finished their studies or left school to get a job. We decided to continue providing support services anyway and we succeeded with most of the adults aged 25 and over. However, the young men between the ages of 16 and 24 were much more difficult to motivate. Consequently, we wondered about the limits of our services, so we questioned the participants. Most in both target groups said that they would like to receive follow-up by telephone and to meet with the counsellor if they felt the need (see Appendix 9, comment 5.5). We tested this method with the young men, but did not have much success.

Follow-up once the adult learners finished their courses

Another question is related to the limits of the support services we should offer when the person is already receiving assistance from another organization such as Carrefour jeunesse emploi's Solidarité jeunesse program. Should we provide as much support for these people as the others? Should we meet with them to determine which organization will take the lead? One thing is certain: we should promote partnership between the different practitioners and organizations so that there is no overlap and to avoid complicating the process.

Vocational training without complementary services

Administrators expressed a number of concerns about services for adult learners with difficulties, since there are no internal resources to meet requests. Support services that foster the expression of needs will lead to an increased demand for complementary services. How can we meet the demand without resources? Of course, we could form partnerships, but do these other organizations have waiting lists and do they really provide free services available to everyone within an acceptable time frame?

Chapter 5

Results

5.1 Observations

5.1.1 Focus groups – participants

After their support sessions, participants were invited to join a focus group so that they could share their impressions and make recommendations and suggestions for the future implementation of the process. Before the meeting, participants were given an agenda, a notice of meeting (see Appendix 17) and a preparatory document touching on the main topics we wished to address (see Appendix 18). At the meeting, those who had received support services filled out an evaluation sheet (see Appendix 16). The counsellor recorded participants' comments. A list of questions and comments appears in Appendix 9.

Adults aged 25 and over

Members of the group of adults aged 25 and over were divided into two teams in order to facilitate discussion. However, it was very difficult to meet with the entire team and, on occasion, we were forced to meet with them individually or in pairs. Some participants were reaching the end of their program and were less available. Others had finished their courses and were spending most of their time looking for a job. Several people were absent for the first meeting for family or health reasons. Only one member of the group of adults aged 25 and over failed to attend any of the meetings: he was on sick leave and could not be reached. *Thus, we are very pleased to be able to say that nine out of the ten participants evaluated the support model*.

Most of the adults aged 25 and over were happy to be teamed up with people their own age (see Appendix 9, comment 1.13). It appears that this enabled them to focus more closely on their needs. Also, the possibility of talking to people with the same concerns (e.g. return to school after a long absence, management of family problems) was very helpful in maintaining their motivation (see Appendix 9, comments 1.5, 1.10, 3.1 and 3.3). Another strength was that the counsellor was at arm's length from the organization, since she was neither a teacher nor an administrator. For this reason, the participants felt that she could be more neutral in her interventions. More than half the participants would have enjoyed longer group meetings in order to discuss the topics more in depth (see Appendix 9, comments 1.7 and 1.11).

Young men between the ages of 16 and 24

For the most part, we met with the members of this group individually. *Out of nine participants, three did not show up and could not be reached after these meetings*.

According to participants' comments, group meetings are not the way to go, since many of them would not have agreed to participate if they had had to speak in front of others (see Appendix 9, comments 6.2 and 6.3). At first, many of the members of this group said they had no special

difficulties. However, over the course of the meetings, the counsellor observed that they often had serious problems that could result in their dropping out (see section 4.4). Consequently, participating in the action research project enabled them to get help for difficulties with which they would otherwise have been on their own. They also really appreciated the counsellor's flexibility, since meetings could be held very early in the morning, in the evening or at lunchtime (see Appendix 9, comment 7.2). They would, however, have liked to meet more frequently (see Appendix 9, comments 7.5 and 7.11). On the other hand, they often forgot their appointments, which forced the counsellor to go get them out of the classroom. We are therefore not sure whether increasing the number of meetings would be appropriate.

Summary

The support process was a positive experience, both for the adults aged 25 and over and the young men between the ages of 16 and 24 (see Appendix 9, comments 1.3, 1.9, 6.1 and 6.5). Our choice of group and individual meetings also appears to have been appreciated. We were even a bit surprised at the participants' interest in group meetings. A few people mentioned that they would have liked to have received this type of support when they first returned to school, since it might have prevented certain problems. Many of the participants in the 25-and-over age group said the services gave them a sense of security. Many had been a little lost, since they hadn't attended school in several years. Feeling that they were not alone and being able to talk to each other appear to have been particularly significant for participants aged 25 and over. Many said *[Log]* "that they often got together at breaks and for meals."

KEY ELEMENTS
FOCUS GROUPS

- *Most participants really appreciated the support process.*
- *The process and their relationship with the counsellor appear to have given participants a sense of security.*
- *Group meetings should be more frequent and longer in order to be able to discuss topics more in depth.*
- *The support process appears to help adult learners become and stay motivated.*
- *The participants liked the fact that the counsellor was well versed in helping relationships and guidance counselling (see Appendix 9, comment 5.1).*
- *The participants would like to have the same person follow them from beginning to end (see Appendix 9, comment 5.2).*
- *The process and the various tools appear to have helped clarify the participants' personal plans.*
- *Adults aged 25 and over enjoyed the group meetings more than young men between the ages of 16 and 24.*

5.1.2 Focus group — centre administrators and staff

We met with administrators and staff who were working with the participants in order to gather their comments. The form used to record their comments appears in Appendix 10.

Adult education centre

We met with an educational and vocational information counsellor, a guidance counsellor and a social work technician. According to these specialists, it is important to provide support services, as well as additional services:

> [Log] "In the current context, I hope that this project will be accompanied by more resources, and that it won't just be more for us to do."

Right now, adult learners are offered several services and practitioners refer those with difficulties to each other depending on their area of expertise. Then, they follow up with each other to make sure everything is going well. In addition, instructors provide a form of support and also refer adult learners with difficulties to specialists.

Right now, adult learners have several instructors, which means that they must establish relationships of trust each time. In addition, follow-up is not clearly assigned to anyone in particular. It is an informal process. Consequently, the practitioners we met with said that they liked the idea that someone be assigned to certain adult learners in order to ensure that the necessary steps are taken:

> [Log] “It would be good to have a more formal follow-up procedure. Adult learners often tend to develop an affinity for the first professional they meet and it is important to ensure that the person providing the support services is present from the outset.”

The practitioners liked the idea of group meetings, and they believe that it would be appropriate to focus on certain categories of adult learners with more serious difficulties:

> [Log] “In our school, we need to target young men, young single mothers and immigrants, since these groups often have more difficulty striking a healthy balance between their studies and other aspects of their lives.”

One practitioner said she noticed a very positive change in attitude in one of the young men who participated in the experiment:

> [Log] “From the very beginning, he became more polite and appeared to be more focused on his goal.”

In addition, several participants met with the educational and vocational information counsellor to get more information. This leads us to believe that the process made them more aware of the importance of knowing as much as possible about their personal plan.

Lastly, the assistant director at the centre was unable to attend the meeting, but we were able to talk to her later on. This is what she had to say:

> [Log] “Right now, it is impossible to follow up with graduates and I believe that it would be very useful if the person responsible for support services could help in that area.”

Vocational training centre

At École professionnelle de Saint-Hyacinthe (EPSH), we met with an administrator who said:

> [Log] “Support services could be very important, if not essential, in our centre, since there are virtually no resources to assist adult learners. When an adult has

> difficulties, I try, in collaboration with the instructors, to find solutions, but I often feel that I'm just putting out fires."

The assistant director saw support services as a way of targeting individuals with difficulties, referring them to the appropriate services and reducing the dropout rate. He believes that this would be consistent with the efforts made in recent years at École professionnelle de Saint-Hyacinthe (EPSH), for example, support services for adult learners receiving assistance from Emploi-Québec. In his opinion:

> [Log] "Support services should be offered to all those in need, but I believe that young men between the ages of 16 and 21 might benefit more than most, since the dropout rate for this group is higher."

KEY ELEMENTS
FOCUS GROUPS
ADMINISTRATORS AND STAFF

- *A practitioner should be assigned to adult learners from start to finish and beyond.*
- *It might be appropriate to focus on target categories such as immigrants, single mothers and young men.*
- *We should be able to follow up with graduates.*
- *Support services are essential, especially when there are few internal resources.*
- *Support services could be helpful in reducing the dropout rate.*

5.1.3 Observation checklist

One of the tools we developed is the observation checklist appearing in Appendix 12. At first, we believed that support services fostered learning by promoting perseverance and success. Since we could not measure these two elements because of the short duration of the action research project, we selected two results indicators: *motivation and decision-making ability.*

The two target groups achieved the following results:

Adults aged 25 and over	Age group		Sex	
First observation	**25-35**	**35-45**	**Male**	**Female**
Motivation	8	8	8	8
Decision-making	8	8	9	8
Second observation				
Motivation	7	8	7	8
Decision-making	8	9	8	9

Young men between the ages of 16 and 24	Age group		Program		
First observation	16-19	20-24	VT	AGE	Other
Motivation	7	7	7	7	7
Decision-making	7	9	9	7	8
Second observation					
Motivation	7	7	7	7	7
Decision-making	6	8	9	6	8

Motivation

We used an observation checklist to evaluate participants at the beginning and at the end of the process. One of our objectives was to have adult learners evaluate, with the counsellor's help, whether they had maintained or improved the motivation needed to implement their plan of action. We focused on three components of motivation:

- the feeling of being in control of their learning
- the perceived value of the proposed activities
- their perception of their ability to successfully complete the activities

The exercise was not as conclusive as we had hoped, since participants' motivation fluctuated depending on the situation (e.g. whether or not they passed a test, financial difficulties, family difficulties). Participants had difficulty connecting the various statements to their level of motivation and decision-making ability. Consequently, we now believe that the statements used did not clearly illustrate the concepts being measured. However, at the last meeting, most of the participants mentioned that they had maintained their motivation, and some said that it had improved slightly (see Appendix 9, comment 3.1). According to the participants, the support process played a role in helping them maintain their motivation. They believed that, in the long term, it could help adult learners stay in school and pursue their personal plan (see Appendix 9, comment 4.6). However, the counsellor and the team responsible for the action research project believe that:

[Log] "It is essential to remember the contribution of other elements to adult learners' motivation: instructors, personal and family environment, maturity, etc."

Decision-making

We were unable to evaluate this indicator using the observation checklist, since the participants had difficulty determining whether there had been any changes in this area. The results obtained were similar for both target groups and their subcategories. However, young men enrolled in vocational training scored slightly higher in this area than those in general education. We based our evaluation of this criterion on three factors: the desire to take on a challenge, the ability to analyze situations and the ability to accept the consequences of their decisions. It appears that young men enrolled in vocational training are more comfortable in these three areas. The fact that they have already made a career choice that will significantly impact their life may help explain this.

Despite the fact that little information was obtained using the checklist, we believe that the participants in both target groups made decisions concerning their personal plan and their difficulties throughout the experiment. For example, some told the counsellor that they had taken steps to improve their relationship with their child (parenting skills courses), while others said they had approached other organizations to consult a variety of specialists. Consequently, the counsellor observed that the process encouraged many of the participants to adopt a proactive attitude and make significant life changes. This proactive approach, however, was more common among the adults aged 25 and over than among the young men between the ages of 16 and 24.

According to the counsellor:

> [Log] "I observed that some participants, especially those aged 25 and over, decided to make important decisions such as consulting specialists and taking steps during the support process. In my opinion, this is a major success."

5.1.4 Logbook and evaluation sheets

Throughout the process, the counsellor recorded her thoughts and participants' and staff members' comments in a logbook. A few of these are included in this document to support certain statements. We also used verbal comments recorded on evaluation sheets at the end of individual meetings.

Two points were not addressed in the focus groups or measured in the observation checklists. However, we believe they are important, because they concern the concepts of personal plan and the helping relationship, two themes that are included in the proposed support services model. At first, the research team believed that the personal plan development process would

be useful for any project, for example buying a house or preparing to take a trip. But, after gathering participants' comments (see Appendix 9, sections 1.10 and 2.2) and seeing their increasingly constructive actions, the counsellor observed that the intervention strategies used in guidance counselling and the helping relationships were very useful in the context of our support services model.

This is what she said:

> [Log] "My expertise in helping relationships and, more specifically, in guidance counselling, enabled me to establish relationships of trust, identify participants' needs in terms of the development of their personal plans, and help them become more familiar with this area."

5.2 Strengths and weaknesses of the experiment

The strengths of the experiment will be presented in the form of recommendations in the next chapter. The following is a short description of the most significant strengths and weaknesses.

Strengths

- The adaptability of the model in several respects: facilities, meeting schedule, duration, content, vocabulary, strategies and means of intervention. In other words, the model can be adapted to the clientele (see section 4.5).
- Having one person to refer adult learners ensures continuity, even if the teacher, goals and centre change (see Appendix 9, comments 5.2 and 5.3).
- The interventions focus on the adult learner. This model addresses every aspect of the person. Adult learners are respected, listened to and assisted in their search for solutions (see Appendix 9, comments 2.2, 2.7, 3.2, 3.3, 4.4, 6.4 and 8.6).

Weaknesses

- Since the counsellor was not a staff member at the centres, she could be more neutral and objective in her interventions. However, she was also less familiar with the centres and their teachers.
- The short duration of the action research project pressured interventions and did not allow us to study certain concepts in depth. This problem could be easily solved if support services are provided over a longer period of time.
- The complementary nature of the services could not be addressed in depth. Had the adult learners been monitored by other organizations such as Solidarité jeunesse, we could have made sure our actions complemented theirs, while respecting each service's role, and made interesting recommendations. However, administrative follow-up of employment insurance beneficiaries and others was done by the same people

using established methods. By trying to establish new partnerships, we always run the risk of multiplying the number of people involved in the same institution; that is why it is best to go through the designated counsellor.

- Stage three of the proposed model, i.e. follow-up, regulation and evaluation, was just beginning when the research action project ended. This stage could therefore not be observed as closely as the others.

5.3 Results obtained compared with the expected outcome

When we planned the action research project, we were hoping for the following five results:

- **That the adult learners, with the counsellor's help, evaluate whether they maintained or improved the motivation they needed to implement their plan of action**

  The results obtained using the observation checklist lead us to believe that most of the participants maintained their level of motivation, and that some managed to improve it a little (see section 5.2).

- **That the adult learners recognize their decision-making ability**

  Despite the difficulties encountered with respect to this area of the observation checklist, the results mentioned in section 5.2 indicate that the fact that the adult learners refined their personal plan and took steps to implement it can be considered an indicator of this objective's achievement. In addition, all of the steps taken by the adult learners to solve their problems (e.g. consulting a health care professional, a social worker, an employment counsellor or another specialist) can be considered examples of self-sufficiency and decision-making ability.

- **That the internal and external environments be made aware of the need to provide adult learners with support**

  At the internal level, those who worked with the adult learners in centres, for example, administrators, reception and referral staff, and complementary services personnel, were consulted, made aware of the experiment and allowed to observe it. These people therefore had a chance to express their needs and make recommendations. Teachers could have been asked to participate more actively and to help ensure complementary services but, because of time constraints, we had to set priorities. Educational services staff and general management closely monitored the research project, since it was part of the school board's 2004-2005 action plan, as well as its strategic plan. The results of the project will be presented shortly to various specialists and administrators; ways of applying the results at the local level can then be considered.

  Some external partners, such as the local employment centre and Carrefour jeunesse-emploi, helped define the status of the situation presented in section 2.2. These

partners received information about reception, referral, counselling and support services and were consulted concerning the eventual implementation of support services in the school board. In addition, the existing support services in our respective organizations were discussed. Adult learners were referred to several organizations, and the established networks were used. Later on, we can review the results obtained and consider forming partnerships with these organizations.

- **That the action research project lead to recommendations concerning such interventions at the provincial level**

  Chapter 6 contains recommendations related to the application of the model, its adaptability and methods of intervention. Other recommendations related to the necessary funding, the competencies required and the partnerships to be established are formulated as policy elements for reception, referral, counselling and support services.

- **That the action research project and its evaluation be guided by the initial question.**

  The experiment generated satisfactory answers to the initial question:

  Can the innovative support services model referred to as “Support Services: A Promising Approach” and aimed at the three objectives set out below be perceived as helpful by the different players involved (users, practitioners, administrators and the action research team)? In other words, does this model:

  1. Enable adult learners to determine where they stand with respect to the proposed support services and to express their needs?
  2. Encourage adult learners to draw up a profile of their experiences and to prepare their plan of action?
  3. Hold the adult learners accountable and ensure that they implement their plan?

  The counsellor’s observations throughout the experiment, the observation checklists and the focus groups made it possible to gather the information needed to answer these questions.

  - The approach is presented in section 4.3.
  - The results of the focus groups are presented in section 5.1 and Appendix 9.
  - The results of the observation checklists are presented in section 5.2.
  - The recommendations are presented in Chapter 6.

Chapter 6

Recommendations

The results observed and the intuitive skills of the research team helped identify means of applying the model at the provincial level.

With our initial question, we wanted, among other things, to determine the principal characteristics and cornerstones of an efficient support services model at the pedagogical and administrative levels. After analyzing the comments made by participants, practitioners, administrators and the counsellor in charge of the project (some of which are included in this report) we came to the conclusion that the recommendations in the following tables represent the optimum conditions for such support services.

6.1 Application of the model

	RECOMMENDATIONS
Target clientele	✓ *Support services should be voluntary and offered to as many adult learners as possible at the outset of their course of action.* ✓ *Support services should be offered as a priority to those most at risk, such as adults with little schooling, immigrants and single mothers.*
Basic principles	✓ *Recognition and encouragement should be an integral part of the support process.* ✓ *The person should be considered as a whole in order to identify any obstacles to the pursuit of his or her studies.* ✓ *The commitment of both the adult and the counsellor is essential.*

Interventions	✓ *A clearly identified counsellor should accompany the adult learner throughout his or her course of action both within and outside the centre (changes should be kept to a minimum).* ✓ *The three stages of the model are sequential and flexible, and can be adapted to the adult learners' most pressing needs.* ✓ *Meeting times should be flexible (e.g. mornings, meal times, evenings) in order to accommodate the adult learners.* ✓ *Meetings should not feel like lectures (the counsellor in front and the participants in rows of desks).* ✓ *Individual meetings are a better choice for young men between the ages of 16 and 24.* ✓ *Group meetings are a better choice for adults aged 25 and over.* ✓ *Individuals could be grouped together according to their characteristics (e.g. adults over a certain age, young single mothers, immigrants).* ✓ *Meeting times should be adapted in accordance with the adult learners' availability.* ✓ *Telephone follow-up should be offered, even when the adult is no longer in school, in order to ensure that he or she is taking the agreed-upon steps and to suggest further reception, referral, counselling and support services as needed.*
Activities	✓ *Clear vocabulary adapted to the target group is essential to good communication.* ✓ *Reading and writing exercises should be limited, since support services are not educational services.* ✓ *Work tools should be personalized in order to motivate the adult learner.* ✓ *The acquisition of the prerequisites for vocational training should be recognized in some way.* ✓ *The adult's personal plan should be refined and should lead to a precise and measurable plan of action.* ✓ *The tools should be adapted to the different characteristics of the target clientele.* ✓ *More time should be devoted to activities related to the personal plans of adult learners enrolled in general education.*

6.2 Structure

Partnerships	✓ *A network of internal and external practitioners should be established in advance in order to be able to refer adult learners to the right place.* ✓ *A meaningful relationship should be established from the outset between instructors, practitioners and the counsellor.* ✓ *The counsellor should participate in the creation of an internal and external network.* ✓ *It is essential that support services offered by the different partners be complementary. Reception, referral, counselling and support services should include services not provided by internal and external partners.* ✓ *The complementary nature of those services implies that the support services offered by school boards will vary from another in order to be adapted to the needs of the individual adult learner. Support services should be defined on the basis of local needs.* ✓ *The role of each partner should be clearly defined and well known.* ✓ *A method of conveying information about adult learners while respecting their confidentiality (Passport) should be established.*
Organization	✓ *Support services should be offered over a period of at least six months.* ✓ *The counsellor should not be an authority figure; this will encourage adult learners to open up.* ✓ *Arm's length distance is essential if the focus is to remain on the adult learner.* ✓ *Meetings should take place in the adult learner's centre or in a more neutral location, if the adult so requests.*
Expected competencies	*The counsellor should:* ✓ *possess knowledge and competencies in the area of the helping relationships in order to be able to establish a relationship of trust with the adult learners, define their problems and refer them to the appropriate resource person* ✓ *be able to work in a team with internal and external partners* ✓ *be familiar with the education system and the job market* ✓ *be empathetic, have active listening skills, refrain from judging and respect the adult learners' confidentiality* ✓ *have in-depth knowledge of the categories of individuals in question* ✓ *be trained in support services and personal plan development*

6.3 Adaptation of the model to different categories of individuals

As a result of this experiment, our second question: How can we develop and select a support services model adapted to the target groups? We can be answered as follows:

- First, we need to learn more about the characteristics of the individuals in question, based on local and provincial statistics, literary reviews, meetings or surveys, as the case may be.
- Then, we sould adapt the support services model to the characteristics of the target groups: types and locations of meetings, activities, interventions, etc.
- Lastly, while providing the support services, we should learn more about the target groups and their needs and adjust our interventions accordingly.

Here, we must ask the following question: Just how much adaptation is necessary? The answer is probably a function of the difference between educational services, which have compulsory content, and reception, referral, counselling and support services, whose precise objective is yet to be defined.

6.4 Necessary funding

At first glance, and without having to do any calculations, we can see that such a support services model would be expensive. The action research team made the following recommendation:

> “It is better to offer more complete, longer and more expensive support services to a smaller number of adult learners – especially if they really need them – than to provide limited support services for all adult learners returning to school.”

ADULTS AGED 25 AND OVER		
Intervention	**Calculation**	**Result**
4 individual meetings, including preparation	4 x 2 hours x 10 adult learners	80 hours
3 group meetings, including preparation	3 x 3 hours	9 hours
Total number of hours (multiplied by the approximate hourly rate)		89 hours x $40
TOTAL		$3 560
APPROXIMATE COST PER ADULT LEARNER: $356 (for four months)		

YOUNG MEN BETWEEN THE AGES OF 16 AND 24		
Intervention	**Calculation**	**Result**
6 individual meetings, including preparation	6 x 2 hours x 9 adult learners	108 hours
Total number of hours (multiplied by the approximate hourly rate)		108 hours x $40
TOTAL		$4 320
APPROXIMATE COST PER ADULT LEARNER: $480 (for four months)		

If we calculate the annual cost of these two methods (more specifically for a period of ten months), we note that it would cost $890 per adult learner for adults aged 25 and over, and $1 200 per adult learner for young men between the ages of 16 and 24. Thus, a counsellor earning approximately $60 000 could provide support services for between 50 and 85 adult learners a year.

Chapter 7

Ethical Considerations

7.1 Consent form

We based our protocol on a consent form appearing on the Web site of Université Laval (<http://www.cerul.ulaval.ca/doc/Guide_rediger_formulaire_consentement.pdf>). In our opinion, this form contains all the information required and answers most questions participants might raise. We believe that such a form must address the intended goal, the action research procedure and the expectations of both parties as concretely as possible. Confidentiality is also an essential issue. We addressed confidentiality in detail, since it appeared to make some people nervous at first. However, during the support process, everyone realized the importance and gravity of the situation and the professionalism of the practitioners involved. Consequently, we believe that it was absolutely necessary to describe our level of confidentiality in detail. In our opinion, this method may have had a positive impact on the development of a relationship of trust. As one participant put it:

> [Log] “It’s important to know that my comments won’t be used against me and that the counsellor won’t share information without consulting me first.”

The agreements participants signed appear in Appendix 19.

7.2 Exchange of information between partners

When providing support services, resource people are required to collaborate with others who work with the adult learners, such as the local employment centre officer, the SAAQ officer, teachers, administrators, and reception and referral staff. Confidentiality in the exchange of information among these resource people is important, and mechanisms must be set up to ensure that it is respected.

The personal plan development passport used in this action research project belongs to the adult learner. Only he or she can use it. It records useful information that should not be shared with other organizations or practitioners without his or her consent.

Chapter 8

Summary

Subject of the action research project

This action research project deals with support services associated with reception, referral and counselling services and related to the policy on adult education and continuing education and training. It took place between June 2004 and March 2005.

This report begins with a presentation of the context in which the action research project took place, along with a description of the issue under consideration and local characteristics. It then describes the target groups, the principles underlying our interventions, our basic philosophy, the proposed model and its objective, our research questions and the expected outcome.

Then, it explains how the project was planned, describing the research design and paradigm, the choice of human resources and the necessary partnerships.

It goes on to address the process, sampling procedures, the characteristics of participants, the different stages in the process, the partnerships established, the adaptation of facilities and methods, and the difficulties encountered. The results of the observation of our interventions, and the tools used: focus groups, observation checklist, logbook and evaluation sheets are described later in the report. The report also addresses the strengths and weaknesses of the experiment and compares the results obtained with the expected outcome. This is followed by recommendations, ethical considerations and, lastly, the highlights of the action research project.

Context

Because of the limited resources allocated to complementary services in the adult education system, support services are essential if we are to foster perseverance and academic success. The problem involves three major needs: an urgent need for new and dynamic solutions because of the difficulties experienced by adult learners, the need to make support services an integral part of our practices and the need to create models that meet adult learners' needs. In order to learn about existing types of support services models, we visited organizations and institutions in our region. We learned that, although it will not prevent every adult learner from dropping out, support for the whole person is essential to their perseverance and the successful implementation of their plan of action. We targeted two groups, i.e. young men between the ages of 16 and 24 and adults aged 25 and over with fewer than nine years of schooling. In order to learn more about the characteristics of these two groups, we did a literature review, which we used in the development of our model. Our objective was to model, test and evaluate realistic support services adapted to the requirements of lifelong learning, for two specific groups. We wanted to prevent adult learners from having to 'go it alone' and to provide a place where they could get the help they needed to overcome the obstacles they encountered. Since we could not measure perseverance and academic success, we decided to focus on the evolving nature

of the participants' motivation and decision-making ability. In order to achieve these objectives, we wanted to develop a network of internal and external resource people. In addition, we wanted to help adult learners mobilize their personal resources, construct a more positive self-image and realize their full potential. Lastly, the action research project had to enable us to raise awareness among resource people, identify the key characteristics of efficient support services and make recommendations concerning the types of competencies required, useful partnerships, an administrative support services model, costs, optimal conditions, etc.

Planning the action research project

In this action research project, we used an open and holistic model, focused on the adult learner. It involves three sequential and complementary stages, in which the adult learner is welcomed and considered as a whole person, encouraged, and invited to question his or her idea of what a personal plan is and to produce a personal plan development passport summarizing his or her course of action.

The model can be broken down into three stages:

STAGE I: COMMITMENT AND EXPRESSION OF NEEDS

- Explanation of the support services offered
- Signing of an agreement
- Expression of needs
- Evaluation of the adult learner's degree of satisfaction in various areas of his or her life
- Questions about the adult learner's strengths and weaknesses

STAGE II: STATUS REPORT AND PERSONAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT

- Exploration of the adult learner's environment
- List of his or her personal and work-related experience and lifelong learning (Passport)
- Development of a personal plan
- Preparation of a plan of action

STAGE III: FOLLOW-UP, REGULATION AND EVALUATION

- Follow-up of the plan of action
- Regulation and evaluation of the personal plan
- Identification of the difficulties inherent in the personal plan
- Exercises relating to the problems identified

A guidance counsellor was hired to work four to five days a week. One of her tasks was to consolidate the internal and external networks for the purpose of referring adult learners.

In order to be able to monitor the research and to ensure we achieved our objectives, we developed four observation instruments: focus groups, a logbook, evaluation sheets and observation checklists.

Action research procedure

The group of adults aged 25 and over was made up of ten full-time students at Centre de formation des Maskoutains (CFM). More specifically, they were between the ages of 25 and 45, most of them over 30. Almost all of the participants were on the verge of completing a basic Secondary III education. In the case of the young men between the ages of 16 and 24, four were from Centre de formation des Maskoutains (CFM), four from École professionnelle de Saint-Hyacinthe (EPSH) and one from educational services. Although it went well, recruitment was more difficult among those not enrolled in our centres. Despite our random sampling, most of the participants were between the ages of 18 and 20. All but one were going to school and working at the same time.

We began by explaining to participants the type of services we were offering, and had them sign an agreement. We addressed their needs and the problems identified in order to help them find solutions. This enabled us to determine the scope of the difficulties experienced and to identify the topics to be addressed in the group and individual meetings (e.g. stress management and a healthy balance between school and family life). Then, we moved on to Stage II of the model, a list of the adult learners' personal, work-related and learning experiences, using the passport. We also discussed the development and implementation of their personal plan, using the approach in the self-directed learning section of the *Univers de la réussite* kit. At the end of the support process, most participants were able to produce a passport containing all the information on the list and to develop a detailed personal plan. Lastly, we began the follow-up, regulation and evaluation of our actions. However, time constraints prevented us from proceeding as far as we would have liked.

We benefited from the excellent collaboration of internal partners. The different specialists, teachers and administrators were receptive to the requirements of support services and were genuinely concerned about our participants' success. Adult learners who were not enrolled in a centre and those who were enrolled in vocational training were often referred to external resources, since there were no internal resources available to help them.

Lastly, a number of questions came up during the experiment, such as the limits of our interventions when a person is receiving services from another organization, and the management of the demand for services when needs arise as a result of the support process.

Results

At the end of the process, we met with participants to hear their comments and recommendations. Both the adults aged 25 and over and the young men between the ages of

16 and 24 said it was a positive experience. We were a little surprised to learn that the participants aged 25 and over would have liked more frequent and longer group meetings. What many of the participants took away from the experience was the sense of security it brought them, which they had not felt for years. Overall, we believe that the process raised participants' awareness of the importance of knowing as much as possible about their personal plan.

We also set up a focus group with practitioners and administrators at the two centres involved. Practitioners at Centre de formation des Maskoutains (CFM) saw the importance of support services. They believe that it might be useful to target groups such as young men and immigrants. They thought it was a good idea that specialists be assigned to the adult learners, who must often move from one practitioner to another, establishing relationships of trust each time. In their opinion, following up with graduates and holding group meetings might also prove interesting. Lastly, the situation is totally different at École professionnelle de Saint-Hyacinthe (EPSH), which does not really have internal resources to help adult learners with difficulties. According to those we consulted, support services are essential in their centre.

We then attempted to interpret the results using other observation tools. First, according to the observation checklist, most participants were able to maintain or even improve their motivation. Their decision-making ability was more difficult to evaluate using the checklist, but according to participants' comments (some of which appear in this report), they took several steps and adopted a proactive approach. The other tools included a logbook and evaluation sheets, in which the counsellor and participants recorded their comments.

All of these observation methods reveal the following strengths: the adaptability of the model, having one counsellor and the fact that the interventions focus on the adult learner. Weaknesses include the counsellor's lack of familiarity with the centres and the time constraints.

Recommendations

An analysis of our results allowed us to formulate several recommendations at different levels. In applying the model, it is important that the process be voluntary and offered to those groups that are most at risk. The adult learner should be considered as a whole person and encouraged throughout the process. In our opinion, the choice of whether to use group or individual meetings should be based on the adult learner's characteristics. The times, locations and frequency of meetings should be flexible. In the activities, the vocabulary and tools used should be adapted to the target groups. For example, reading and writing activities should be limited.

From a structural point of view, internal and external networks should be set up and partnerships should be based on the complementary nature of their services. Internally, there should be a strong relationship between instructors, practitioners and the counsellor. We believe that working at arm's length from instructional services is essential if the SARCA services are to remain focused on the adult learner; however, meetings should take place at the adult learners'

centre, unless they request that they be held in a more neutral setting. Lastly, the counsellor should be skilled in establishing and maintaining helping relationship, be familiar with the job market and the education system, be empathetic, have active listening skills, refrain from judging the adult learners and respect the principles of confidentiality.

Ethical considerations

We based our form on the one developed by Université Laval (<http://www.vrr.ulaval.ca/deontologie/cdr/for_2.html>), since we believe it contains all the important information, such as an explanation of the research project, what is expected of participants and specialists and, especially, confidentiality issues.

We also think it is very important for specialists to exchange information. For example, the personal plan development passport used in the action research project belongs to the adult learner, who has full control over how it is used.

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Appendixes

Appendix 1
Support Services Action Research Plan

Commission scolaire de Saint-Hyacinthe

Activities and schedule

Steps	Schedule	Monitoring and follow-up measures
1. Status of the situation	June 1 to September 15, 2004	**A.** Literature review, choice and definition of useful sequences **B.** Contextualization of theoretical aspects **C.** Description of models and approaches used internally and externally **D.** Definition of sampling procedure and detailed description of clientele
2. Recruiting partners	August 15 to September 15, 2004	**E.** Involvement of the Table of Partners in the action research project **F.** Establishment of the CO-CISEP committee **G.** Interest and commitment of members **H.** Reports I and II for September 30
3. Establishment of the method of intervention	August 15 to November 1, 2004	**I.** Analysis and comparison of existing models **J.** Choice of pedagogical approaches **K.** Determination of results indicators and components of the interview sheet **L.** Modelling of two support processes **M.** Establishment of organizational and administrative parameters
4. Production of the report	For September 30, 2004	**N.** Report III for November 1
5. Preparation for implementation (feasibility)	September 15 to November 1, 2004	**O.** Organization of the experiment **P.** Organization of observation methods **Q.** Development of observation instruments **R.** Recruitment of adult learners based on defined criteria
6. Experiment	November 1, 2004 to February 1, 2005*	**S.** Experimentation of the two models and application of corrective measures as needed **T.** Individual and group interviews and completion of the observation checklists
7. Evaluation	March 1 to 28, 2005	**U.** Analysis and interpretation of data: - Experiment report - Evaluation of interventions, methods and approaches used - Formulation of recommendations for the application of results in other school boards **V.** Delivery of the final report

Appendix 2

Situational Analysis Reference Sheet

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1. Statistics on adult learners who drop out of school

    a. Sex
    b. Age
    c. Reasons

2. A) Support practices

    a. Types: group, individual
    b. Focuses: personal, academic, work-related
    c. Resource people: professionals, technicians, teachers, partners
    d. Characteristics of the target clientele: sex, age, referred by the local employment centre, the SAAQ or the CSST
    e. Meetings: frequency and duration
    f. Tools used: questionnaires, follow-up sheets, agreements

    B) Connections with reception and referral

    a. Who?
    b. When?

3. Needs and ideas about support services within the centre and in partnership with other organizations

    a. How could we help adult learners carry out their plan of action?
    b. What approach or what tool could be used to meet your needs?
    c. What is expected from a partnership?

Commission scolaire de
SAINT-HYACINTHE

Appendix 3 (1 of 2)

Personal Commitment

The support process in which I am about to participate will provide different tools to help me take stock of my current situation and analyze my personal plan. My participation and motivation are essential in achieving my goals and those of the research project.

I, _____, am aware of the goal and the nature of the meetings. I am also aware of the counsellor's qualifications and the approaches and tools that will be used.

The following points represent the moral agreement I am making with respect to myself, the other participants and the counsellor. I am committed to participating in the group and individual meetings.

I agree:

1. To participate actively, at both the physical and mental levels, in all workshops and meetings.
2. To be on time and, in circumstances beyond my control, to notify the counsellor as soon as possible of my absence.
3. To be open with the counsellor so that she can help me deal with the difficulties I am facing and help me with my personal plan.
4. To participate with an open, positive and trusting attitude.
5. To respect others' opinions as well as their personal approach.

Signed at St-Hyacinthe, on_____

_____ _____

Participant's signature Counsellor's signature

Commission scolaire de
SAINT-HYACINTHE

Appendix 3 (2 of 2)

Personal Commitment

The support process in which I am about to participate will provide different tools to help me take stock of my current situation and analyze my personal plan. My participation and motivation are essential in achieving my goals and those of the research project.

I, _____, am aware of the goal and the nature of the meetings. I am also aware of the counsellor's qualifications and the approaches and tools that will be used.

The following points represent the moral agreement I am making with respect to myself, the other participants and the counsellor. I am committed to participating in the individual meetings.

I agree:

1. To participate actively, at both the physical and mental levels, in all meetings.
2. To be on time and, in serious circumstances, to notify the counsellor as soon as possible of my absence.
3. To be open with the counsellor so that she can help me deal with the difficulties I am facing and help me with my personal plan.
4. To take steps with an open, positive and trusting attitude.

Signed at St-Hyacinthe, on_____

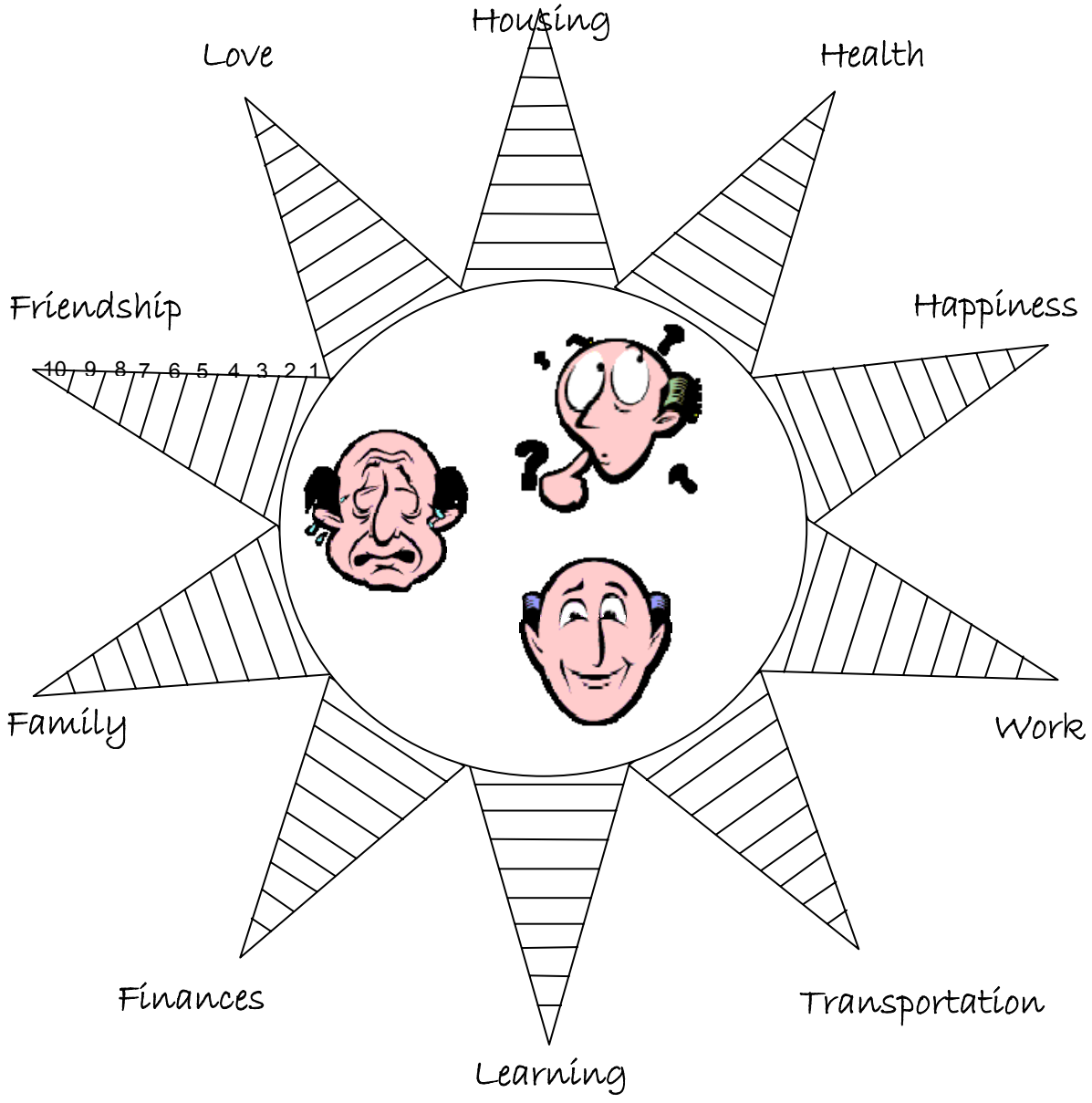
_____ _____

Participant's signature Counsellor's signature

Appendix 4

Sun Activity

On a scale of 1 to 10, rate your degree of satisfaction with each aspect of your life (1 being very dissatisfied and 10, very satisfied).



Based on the star diagram in Valérie Osmont, "L'accompagnement: au-delà des outils, une méthodologie," *Actualité de la formation permanente*, 176 (Jan.-Feb., 2002), p. 42, and the model in Richard Gingras, "Réseaux et besoins," p. 19.

Appendix 5

My Strengths and Weaknesses (Self-Evaluation or Interview)

WITH RESPECT TO	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
▪ stress management		
▪ school		
▪ time management		
▪ communication - with friends and family - with others		
▪ planning		
▪ change		
▪ the unexpected		
▪ money		
▪ work		
▪ authority		
▪ past projects		
▪ responsibilities - personal - work-related		

Appendix 6 (1 of 4)

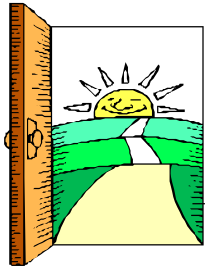
Personal Plan Development Passport

Action Research Project
"Support Services: A Promising Approach"

Commission scolaire de
SAINT-HYACINTHE

2255, avenue Sainte-Anne
Saint-Hyacinthe (Québec) J2S 5H7
Tel.: (450) 773-8401, ext. 6575

Adult learner's name



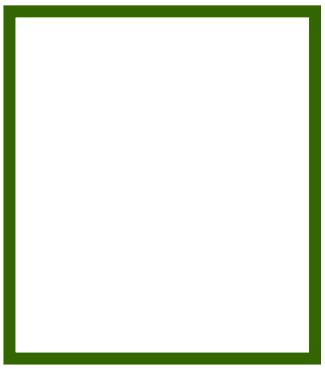
Learning Plan Development Passport

Commission scolaire de
SAINT-HYACINTHE

Appendix 6 (2 of 4)

Personal Plan Development Passport

Identification



Family name:

First name:

Telephone: (450)

Address:

Permanent code:

Current profile:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Date: _____

Notes:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix 6 (3 of 4)

Personal Plan

Goal:

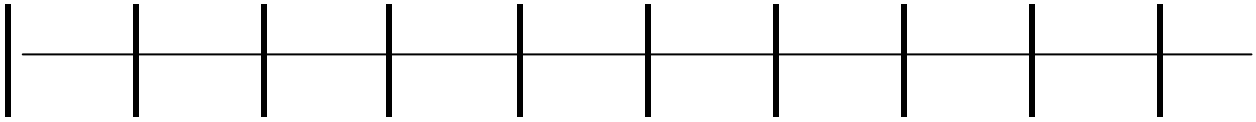
Objectives	*Means*	*Time frame*

Interests	*Aptitudes*	*Qualities*

Appendix 6 (4 of 4)

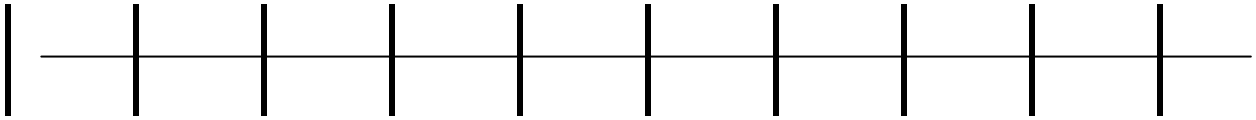
Personal and Occupational Lifeline

Indicate your important personal and work-related experiences and the year in which they took place.

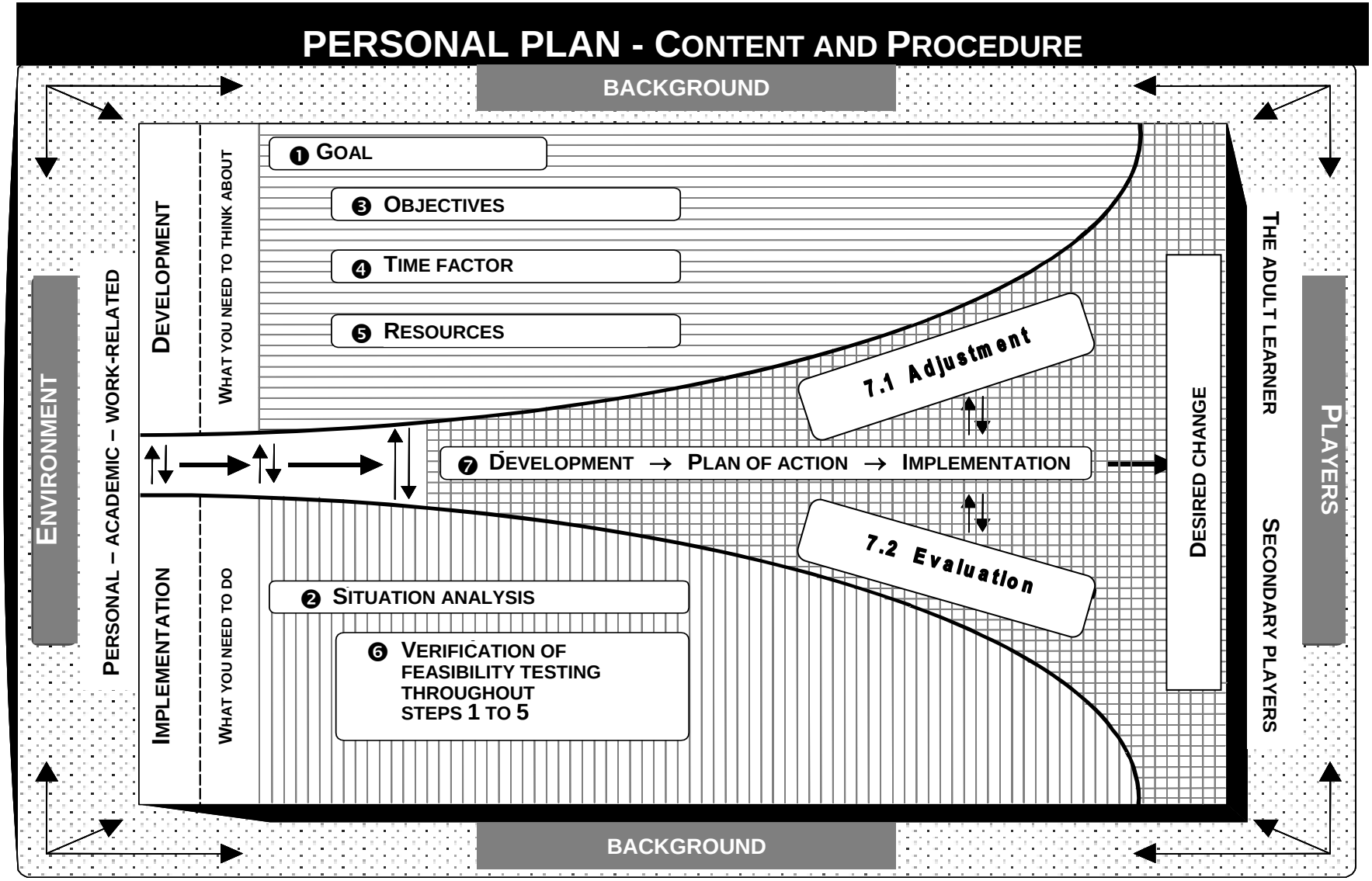


Learning Lifeline

Indicate your important learning experiences and the year in which they took place.



Appendix 7 (1 of 3)
Personal Plan - Content and Procedure



Appendix 7 (2 of 3)

Table Explaining the Different Steps in the Personal Plan Development Process

STEPS	DESCRIPTION
ENVIRONMENT (BACKGROUND)	First, a personal plan must take the individual's environment (family, spouse, friends, etc.) into account. How congruent is the personal plan with the environment? What area is it targeting? What are the similarities? The differences?
PLAYERS (BACKGROUND)	The adult learner must consider his or her intellectual aptitudes, his or her academic history, what he or she expects to gain by returning to school, the seriousness of his or her intentions and commitment, and his or her motivation to learn. Secondary players can provide direction, guidance and support, but they can also hinder the plan's progress.
GOAL	This is the first step. It is an expression of the will to do something. It can be private or shared with another person or a group. It can also come from the outside but the adult learner must make it his or her own.
SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS	This step is crucial. It provides information about who the adult learner is, what he or she wants, and what he or she can and cannot achieve. The situational analysis should clarify the goal to be accomplished at of the process. To analyze a situation, the adult learner must take the current situation, the goal and the desired outcome into account.
GOAL AND OBJECTIVES	Objectives flow from the established goal. They will give credibility to the process, since they will identify concrete results to be attained along the way that will enable the adult learner to achieve the stated goal.
TIME	The concept of time as it applies to the personal plan must be considered from different perspectives the time needed to achieve the set objectives, the time the school gives adult learners to carry out their personal plan and the time the adult learner can reasonably expect to invest in the plan. Demanding personal plans will be easier to develop and implement if they are broken down into a series of smaller more readily achievable goals.

Appendix 7 (3 of 3)

STEPS	DESCRIPTION
RESOURCES	Translating the goal into a plan of action and achieving concrete results requires a certain number of resources and means adapted to the targeted objectives. These resources can be material, financial, personal, etc. They must be analyzed, evaluated and complemented if necessary.
FEASIBILITY	Studying a plan's feasibility means stopping to take stock and taking a critical and realistic look at what has been done so far in terms of development and implementation. Obviously, at this stage, the evaluation of the plan's feasibility can be decisive, since the second stage, the plan of action, has not yet begun.
PLAN OF ACTION	The plan of action must be open to adjustments. This means that, when it is developed, the adult learner, with the counsellor's help, must always remember that it will have to be implemented. It must also be consistent with the established goal, situational analysis, objectives, time, resources and environment. A detailed plan of action contains every step in the process.
REGULATION	In the case of a personal plan, regulation is a set of actions that are carried out over a certain period and that result in the creation of a habit. Regulation can be provided by secondary players in the form of encouragement, the regular recognition of achievements and feedback, or by the adult learner himself or herself in the form of self-evaluations.
EVALUATION	Evaluation is thus an ongoing process. It is a set of procedures, methods and techniques used to measure the achievement of the targeted objectives and to describe how they were achieved. It focuses on results, content and approaches, in short, on all the elements involved in the process. The aim of evaluation is to determine whether the results obtained are consistent with the plan's objectives. It can be carried out during the activity or by using instruments. Indicators and checklists should be used to observe progress or the achievement of the set objectives. We recommend self-evaluations followed by feedback.

Appendix 8 (1 of 2)
Content of Meetings
(Adults aged 25 and over)

WEEK	MEETING	CONTENT	MATERIAL	TIME
Nov. 15 to 19, 2004 Nov. 22 to 26, 2004	Individual	- Explanation and signing of the agreement - Explanation of the action research project, the procedure, etc. - Questions to establish the adult learner's profile - Evaluation of needs and degree of satisfaction - Explanation of the personal plan (academic, personal and work-related) - Explanation and use of the observation checklist	- Agreement - Questions - Sun activity - Observation checklist - Personal history - Plersonal plan development passport	60 min
Nov. 29 to Dec. 3, 2004	Group	- Presentation of meeting procedures and goals - Introduction of participants and ice breaker activity - Reminder of the importance of the personal plan - Personal plan development exercises - Review of the meeting and participants' comments	- Ice breaker activity sheet - Personal plan development exercises	75 min
Dec. 6 to 10, 2004 Dec. 13 to 17, 2004	Individual	- Review of the personal plan developed - Support for the duration of the personal plan - Suggestions for the next personal plan development meeting	- Personal plan development exercises - Based on needs	45 min
Dec. 20 to 24, 2004	Group	- Discussions about the difficulties inherent in personal plan development (e.g. stress management, attitudes toward change, etc.	- Based on needs	75 min
Jan. 10 to 14, 2005 Jan. 17 to 21, 2005	Individual	- Review of topics discussed as a group - Support for the duration of the personal plan - Suggestions for the next meeting - Evaluation of the adult learner's development	- Observation checklist - To be determined	45 min
Jan. 24 to 28, 2005	Group	- Review of the project procedure - Discussions about the difficulties inherent in personal plan development	- To be determined	75 min
Jan. 31 to Feb. 4, 2005 Feb. 7 to 11, 2005	Individual (optional)	- Support for adult learners who feel the need	- To be determined	45 min
Feb. 14 to 18, 2005	Group	- Focus group evaluation of the support services model used	- Documents on the focus group - Certificate of participation	60 min

Appendix 8 (2 of 2)
Content of Meetings (Men between the ages of 16 and 24)

WEEK	MEETING	CONTENT	MATERIAL	TIME
Nov. 15 to 19, 2004 Nov. 22 to 26, 2004	Individual	- Explanation and signing of the agreement - Explanation of the research project, meetings and roles of each player - Questions to establish the adult learner's profile - Evaluation of needs and degree of satisfaction - Suggestions for the next personal plan development meeting - Explanation and use of the observation checklist	- Agreement - Questions - Sun activity - Observation checklist - Personal history - Passport	45 min
Nov. 29 to Dec. 3, 2004 Dec. 6 to 10, 2004	Individual	- Explanation of the personal plan - Personal plan development exercises to refine each participant's personal plan - Review of the meeting and participants' comments - Suggestions for the development of the personal plan	- Personal plan development exercises	45 min
Dec. 13 to 17, 2004 Dec. 20 to 24, 2004	Individual	- Review of the personal plan developed - Support for the duration of the personal plan - Suggestions for the development of the personal plan	- To be determined	45 min
Jan. 10 to 14, 2005 Jan. 17 to 21, 2005	Individual	- Discussions about the difficulties inherent in personal plan development. Suggested themes: stress management, attitudes toward change, effort, tenacity and perseverance (these themes could change depending on participants' needs) - Suggestions for the next meeting	- To be determined	45 min
Jan. 24 to 28, 2005 Jan. 31 to Feb. 4, 2005	Individual	- Review of topics addressed the week before - Support for the duration of the personal plan - Evaluation of the process	- Observation checklist	45 min
Feb. 7 to 11, 2005	Individual (optional)	- Support for participants who feel the need	- To be determined	45 min
Feb. 14 to 18, 2005	Group	- Focus group evaluation of the support services model used	- Documents on the focus group - Certificate of participation	45 min

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Appendix 9 (1 of 4)

Questions and Comments
Adults Aged 25 and Over

Questions	Participants' comments
1. How would you evaluate your experience with the support services you received as a group? individually? • Identification and understanding of your needs • Referral to practitioners • Preference: group or individual meetings	1.1 I was given the opportunity to change my mind. 1.2 You're not alone in a group. 1.3 It was super, really positive. 1.4 It was good because you don't always know where to turn when you have a problem. 1.5 It helped me become more self-confident. 1.6 Group meetings are OK, but not as useful as individual meetings. 1.7 I would have liked to have more in-depth discussions in my group. 1.8 I would have liked to have more group meetings. 1.9 It's good to talk to other adults. 1.10 It was good for my self-esteem and I learned to talk more, to assert myself. 1.11 It gave me a sense of security, but I would have liked more frequent and longer group meetings. 1.12 Not enough individual meetings; it's hard for everyone to express themselves in a group. 1.13 It's better with adults aged 25 and over because we tend to focus on young people.
2. What helped you the most? The least? • Frequency of meetings • Support method (personal plan development) • Counsellor • Time • Location • Vocabulary used • Tools used • Target age group	2.1 I would have liked to have a group meeting to explain returning to school, loans and bursaries. 2.2 The counsellor was respectful, attentive and understanding. 2.3 The room was good because it wasn't a classroom. 2.4 The group 2.5 Other people's experiences 2.6 The counsellor's advice 2.7 I felt supported by the counsellor.

Appendix 9 (2 of 4)

Questions	Participants' comments
3. How did the support services help you? • Learning acquired • Changes in perception of events and personal plans • Application of experiences and learning to other aspects of life • Change in motivation since the beginning of the project	3.1 Helped me stay motivated 3.2 Four people mentioned a sense of security. 3.3 Support in achieving my goal 3.4 I enjoyed reconsidering my choice. 3.5 Talking to others 3.6 Helped me clarify my plans for the future 3.7 I felt less alone. 3.8 Helped me assert myself
4. How could this support services model help others? • Future of the model • Adaptations to be made • Possible application to other target groups	4.1 For adults my age but could also be good for others 4.2 It gives people more self-confidence and a sense of security. 4.3 It provides moral support. 4.4 It helps people find solutions. 4.5 It should be offered to everyone on a voluntary basis. 4.6 It provides access to someone before they give up.
5. Do you have other suggestions or recommendations? • Activities • Interventions • Clientele	5.1 It's important to have a person, like a guidance counsellor, who knows the answers to our most pressing questions about school. 5.2 It's important to always have the same counsellor. We often change teachers, it makes us feel insecure. 5.3 It's not easy to knock on everyone's door. You need a special person. 5.4 It's important that the person be able to talk with teachers or help us figure out how to talk with them. 5.5 It would be good to have telephone follow-up when we finish. 5.6 It should be offered as soon as we start school. It gives us a sense of security. 5.7 It's important that it be a neutral person from outside the centre, and that it not be an administrator or someone responsible for discipline.

Appendix 9 (3 of 4)
Questions and Comments
(Young men between the ages of 16 and 24)

Questions	Participants' comments
6. How would you evaluate your experience with the support services you received as a group? Individually? • Identification and understanding of your needs • Referral to practitioners • Preference: group or individual meetings	6.1 It was good. 6.2 I prefer individual meetings because they are more personalized. 6.3 If I had been at a group meeting, I wouldn't have talked as much. I don't like telling everyone my life story. 6.4 I felt that I was being listened to. 6.5 Support services can't hurt. 6.6 I was able to find answers to my questions.
7. What helped you the most? The least? • Frequency of meetings • Support method (personal plan development) • Counsellor • Time • Location • Vocabulary used • Tools used • Target age group	7.1 I would have liked to have a group meeting to explain returning to school, loans and bursaries. 7.2 I liked being able to contact you whenever I wanted. 7.3 One meeting a month is OK. 7.4 The counsellor was alright. She did a good job. 7.5 I would have liked to have more meetings. 7.6 I would have liked meetings to take place outside the school. 7.7 I enjoyed reconsidering my career choice. 7.8 The passport didn't hurt. 7.9 I enjoyed having direct contact with a person. 7.10 It's good that the counsellor was young. 7.11 I found that there wasn't enough time.
8. How did the support services help you? • Learning acquired • Changes in perception of events and personal plans • Application of experiences and learning to other aspects of life • Change in motivation since the beginning of the project	8.1 My questions were answered; things became clear. 8.2 I feel more motivated than I did in November. 8.3 They helped me stay in school. 8.4 My motivation improved when I defined my choice. 8.5 They were helpful, but the personal plan development exercises didn't help. 8.6 They opened up my horizons.

Appendix 9 (4 of 4)

9. How could this support services model help others? • Future of the model • Adaptations to be made • Possible application to other target groups	9.1 It could be helpful individually. 9.2 A source of more information 9.3 It could help even if the person drops out. 9.4 Especially for adults, since they take it seriously.
10. Do you have other suggestions or recommendations? • Activities • Interventions • Clientele	10.1 They should be offered to those who need them. 10.2 The counsellor shouldn't be a teacher. 10.3 Individually, so you don't have to hold back information 10.4 Avoid being sent from one place to another. One person to answer questions.

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Appendix 10

Questions for Administrators and Practitioners

Questions	Comments
What do you think about the action research project on support services we tested in your centre? • Impact on clientele • Impact on practitioners' tasks • Correspondence to a need in your centre • Target groups (young men between the ages of 16 and 24 and/or adults aged 25 and over)	
How appropriate are the support services we tested in your centre? • Large scale or target clientele • When would adult learners use these services (when they start school, as needed, follow-up after they leave the school system)?	
How would you evaluate the feasibility of support services such as those we tested in your centre? • Necessary resources • Correspondence with the situation in your centre	
Do you have any suggestions or recommendations? • Activities • Support methods • Clientele • Etc.	

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Appendix 11

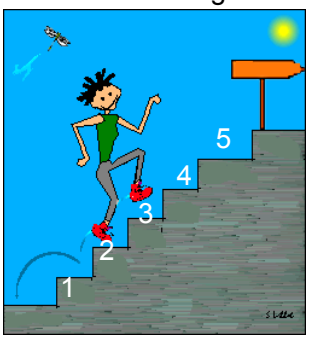
Evaluation Sheet

"Sometimes in life you need to know when to take action."

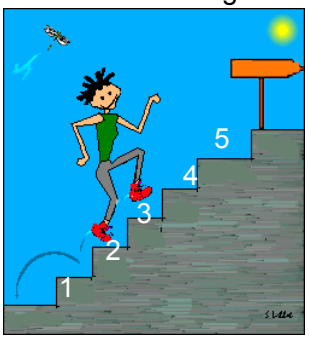
Fifth meeting:

On a scale of 1 to 5, evaluate your motivation with respect to your personal plan:

Before the meeting?



After the meeting?



Steps to be taken before the next meeting:

_____

_____

_____

Questions, comments and suggestions:

_____

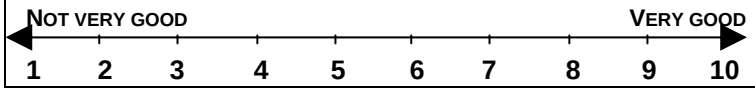
_____

_____

Appendix 12 (1 of 3)

Observation Checklist

Adult learner's name: _____ Counsellor's name: _____

ADULT LEARNER	COUNSELLOR
Instructions: On a scale of 1 to 10, evaluate your performance at different stages in the process. Write the numbers in the corresponding boxes.  	Instructions: Confirm or refute the adult learner's perceptions; check off one of the three boxes. Note: If you check off *Other,* you can record your comments in the space provided at the end of the document.

MOTIVATION: CONTROL OVER MY ACTIONS

1. When I set deadlines, I can meet them.	❑	❑	❑	❑	• Do the observable behaviours support the adult learner's perceptions of his or her progress?	❑	❑	❑	Yes
2. I enjoy a challenge.	❑	❑	❑	❑		❑	❑	❑	No
3. In school, I work as hard on activities that are not marked as on those that are marked.	❑	❑	❑	❑		❑	❑	❑	Not enough information
						❑	❑	❑	Other

Appendix 12 (2 of 3)

MOTIVATION: THE VALUE I PLACE ON THE PROPOSED ACTIVITIES

ADULT LEARNER					COUNSELLOR				
1. When a proposed activity is related to my objectives, I can recognize its value.	❑	❑	❑	❑	• Do the observable behaviours support the adult learner's perceptions of his or her progress?	❑	❑	❑	Yes
2. When I recognize the value of an activity, it is easier for me to participate.	❑	❑	❑	❑		❑	❑	❑	No
3. When I participate in an activity, it is easy for me to persevere to the end.	❑	❑	❑	❑		❑	❑	❑	Not enough information
						❑	❑	❑	Other

MOTIVATION: PERCEPTION OF MY ABILITY TO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE THE ACTIVITIES

ADULT LEARNER					COUNSELLOR				
1. I think my chances of success are excellent.	❑	❑	❑	❑	• Do the observable behaviours support the adult learner's perceptions of his or her progress?	❑	❑	❑	Yes
2. I usually succeed in what I do.	❑	❑	❑	❑		❑	❑	❑	No
3. When I set realistic goals, I am confident in my ability to achieve them.	❑	❑	❑	❑		❑	❑	❑	Not enough information
						❑	❑	❑	Other

Appendix 12 (3 of 3)

DECISION-MAKING: DECISION-MAKING ABILITY

ADULT LEARNER					COUNSELLOR				
1. I agree to take risks.	❑	❑	❑	❑	• Do the observable behaviours support the adult learner's perceptions of his or her progress?	❑	❑	❑	Yes
2. I analyze the situation before making a decision.	❑	❑	❑	❑		❑	❑	❑	No
3. I easily take responsibility for my decisions.	❑	❑	❑	❑		❑	❑	❑	Not enough information
						❑	❑	❑	Other

Note: If the counsellor answered *Other* in one or more areas, he or she may record his or her comments below.

CONTROL OVER MY ACTIONS	VALUE I PLACE ON THE PROPOSED ACTIVITIES
PERCEPTION OF MY ABILITY TO SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETE THE ACTIVITIES	DECISION-MAKING ABILITY

Based on the *Univers de la réussite* kit as used in the interior decorating and display program, École professionnelle de Saint-Hyacinthe, 2003-2004.

Appendix 13 (1 of 2)

Detailed Profile of the Sample
(Young men between the ages of 16 and 24)

Code	Sex	Age	Birth place	Parents' occupations	Current level of schooling	Centre or service	Current situation	Social status	Targeted level of schooling
1	M	18	Québec	**Father:** farmer **Mother:** secretary	Currently in Secondary V	CFM	Full-time job and full-time studies	Couple	University studies
2	M	24	Québec	**Father:** unknown **Mother:** information unavailable	Vocational training	EPSH	Full-time job and studies	Couple	Vocational training
3	M	16	Québec	**Father:** day labourer **Mother:** mail carrier	Currently in Secondary II	CFM	Full-time studies and job	With parents	Vocational training
4	M	20	Québec	**Father:** truck driver's helper **Mother:** at home	Vocational training	EPSH	Full-time studies	Single	Vocational training
5	M	20	Québec	**Father:** prison guard **Mother:** school bus driver	Currently in Secondary IV and V	CFM	Full-time studies and job	With parents	University studies
6	M	18	Québec	**Father:** special education coordinator **Mother:** customer service agent	Some Secondary IV	ES	Job	With parents	Secondary school diploma
7	M	18	Québec	**Father:** translator **Mother:** cook	Currently in Secondary III	CFM	Full-time studies and looking for a job	With parents	Vocational training
8	M	20	Québec	**Father:** truck driver **Mother:** beneficiary attendant	Secondary V equivalence	EPSH	Full-time job	Couple	Vocational training
9	M	19	Québec	**Father:** disabled **Mother:** at home	Secondary school diploma	EPSH	Part-time studies and job	With parents	Vocational training

Appendix 13 (2 of 2)

Detailed Profile of the Sample (Adults aged 25 and over)

Code	Sex	Age	Birth place	Parents' occupation	Current level of schooling	Centre or service	Current situation	Social status	Targeted level of schooling
1	M	44	Québec	**Father:** advertising, retired **Mother:** deceased	Some Secondary III	CFM	Full-time studies and part-time job	Separated, adolescent daughter	Vocational training
2	F	32	Québec	**Father:** information not available **Mother:** information not available	Some Secondary III	CFM	Full-time studies	Couple, 3 children in a foster home	College studies
3	F	41	Québec	**Father:** retired restaurant owner **Mother:** retired restaurant owner	Some Secondary III	CFM	Full-time studies	Single parent, 3 children, 1 in a foster home	College studies
4	F	39	Saskat-chewan	**Father:** retired mine worker **Mother:** at home	Some Secondary III (but has an SSD)	CFM	Full-time studies	Couple, 2 children	Vocational training
5	M	25	Québec	**Father:** absent **Mother:** deceased	Some Secondary III	CFM	Full-time studies	Single	Vocational training
6	M	28	Québec	**Father:** deceased **Mother:** at home	Some Secondary III	CFM	Full-time studies	Couple	Vocational training
7	F	36	Québec	**Father:** body repairer **Mother:** at home	Some Secondary II	CFM	Full-time studies and job on-call	Single mother of three	Vocational training
8	F	45	Québec	**Father:** mechanic **Mother:** at home	Some Secondary III	CFM	Full-time studies	Couple	Vocational training
9	M	35	Burundi	Orphan	Some Secondary III	CFM	Full-time studies	Couple, 2 children	College studies
10	M	31	Québec	**Father:** superintendent **Mother:** at home	Some Secondary I	CFM	Full-time studies	Couple, 2 children	Vocational training

Appendix 14

Certificate of Participation

CERTIFICATE OF PARTICIPATION

This certificate is awarded to

NAME OF PARTICIPANT

For his or her participation in the action research project

"SUPPORT SERVICES: A PROMISING APPROACH" 2004-2005

Person in charge	**Date**
Counsellor	**Date**

Commission scolaire de SAINT-HYACINTHE

Appendix 15 (1 of 5)

Ice Breaker Activity: Group Questions

Objective

To help the adult learners to get to know each other and to discover common interests.

Procedure

Ask the participants to form pairs and ask them a question. Give them one minute to answer, about 30 seconds each. When the time is up, have them change partners and ask them another question. The activity ends when every participant has spoken to each of the others.

Questions

1. What would you do with a million dollars?
2. What is your favourite movie or TV show? Why?
3. If you could travel anywhere in the world, where would you go?
4. What do you do on weekends to treat yourself?
5. If you were an animal, what would you be and why?
6. What are your favourite activities?
7. What do you do to relax?
8. What is your proudest achievement and why?
9. Share a childhood memory that has made a lasting impression on you.
10. Etc.

Based on Jean Monbourquette, Myrna Ladouceur and Jacqueline Desjardins-Proulx, *Je suis aimable, je suis capable: parcours pour l'estime et l'affirmation de soi* (Outremont: Éditions Novalis, 1998), p. 26-27.

Appendix 15 (2 of 5)
Procedure for the First Group Meeting
November 30, 2004

1. Presentation of group meetings:
   - Number of meetings
   - Frequency
   - Duration

2. Explanation of rules and their importance in the group:
   - Examples: respect, the importance of letting others speak, openness, tolerance, confidentiality

3. Introduction of participants:
   - Allow the participants a few minutes to share their name, where they were born and the reasons why they returned to school.
   - Ask them to fold the piece of paper with their name on it.

4. Ice breaker activity (Appendix 15)

5. Presentation and distribution of the passport:
   - Explain how it can be used for their personal documents: résumé, report cards, official documents. It will help them when they look for work or enroll in a program of study.

6. Review of the personal plan development process (presented at the individual meeting):
   - Hand out the diagram (based on the *Univers de la réussite* kit). Draw the diagram on the board and explain it in detail.
   - Explain the difference between a plan and a dream.
   - Explain the different types of plans as well as the idea of an overall life plan.
   - Address the importance of developing their own plan in detail (in order to improve their chances of success).
   - Ask participants to classify individuals in their surroundings according to whether they exert a negative or positive influence on their plan to return to school.

7. Review of the meeting:
   - Ask each participant for his or her perceptions, feelings and expectations for the next meeting.
   - Make appointments for individual meetings.

Appendix 15 (3 of 5)
Procedure for the Second Group Meeting
December 21, 2004

1. Ask participants to say how they feel using meteorological imagery. You might want to draw examples on the board with their meanings below: cloudy, sunny breaks, stormy, sunny, etc. However, don't spend too much time on the activity, and tell participants not to explain the reasons for their choice. The goal of this exercise is simply to determine **how the group feels**.

2. Address the topic of the meeting, i.e. stress management, especially as it applies to the management of school, work and family:

   A) **What is stress and how can it affect our lives?** You might want to ask participants about the impact stress can have on their personal life and write their answers on the board.

   Definition: Basically, stress is a state that has enabled us to survive as a species. Our ancestors depended on stress because they faced danger every day. For example, they had to be prepared to run if an animal decided to attack them. At night, they needed to be alert in order to protect their children. Today, we still need an occasional adrenaline rush and we must still be alert to certain dangers (e.g. a car is coming toward us at high speed or we feel that we are being followed). Stress can also be associated with a more positive experience, as in the case of stage fright. We all have examples of people who accomplished something incredible like a mother protecting her child from a wild animal.

Appendix 15 (4 of 5)

However, when stress paralyzes us, it becomes a problem. This can happen in the case of a particularly stressful situation or an accumulation of stressful situations. You can undoubtedly name a few, such as having difficulty making ends meet, tense relations with an ex-spouse, school-related stress, etc.

B) **Questions about their current stress level:** Have them answer the questions and think about their answers. Were they surprised at the results?

C) **What do they do to control their stress level?** You might want to have participants list ways of controlling their stress level at school, with their family, during the holidays. Then, hand out the documents in the *Univers de la réussite* kit that deal with **ways of reducing stress** (p. 27 to 43).

3. **Review of the meeting**:

A) Ask each participant for his or her perceptions, feelings and expectations for the next meeting.

B) Make appointments for individual meetings.

Appendix 15 (5 of 5)

Procedure for the Third Group Meeting

1. Ask participants to say how they feel using meteorological imagery. You might want to draw examples on the board with their meanings below: cloudy, sunny breaks, stormy, sunny, etc. However, don't spend too much time on the activity, and tell participants not to explain the reasons for their choice. The goal of this exercise is simply to determine the **group's state of mind**.

2. Explain that this is the final group meeting and that you will be explaining the final stage of the project, i.e. the focus group.

3. Hand out each participant's **personal passport** and allow them to verify the information in it. If there has been an error, give them the new version at the focus group meeting or an individual meeting.

4. Hand out and use the **observation checklist** to determine how the factors beinf measured have evolved.

5. Explain the focus group and register the participants. Hand out a preparation sheet.

6. Close the group meeting with a discussion of participants' impressions and thank them for their participation and their contribution to the action research project.

Appendix 16
Evaluation of the Activities

Activity	Level of interest	Comments or suggestions (optional)
Sun activity	☐ Very interesting ☐ Interesting ☐ Not very interesting	
Evaluation (strengths and weaknesses)	☐ Very interesting ☐ Interesting ☐ Not very interesting	
Personal plan development passport	☐ Very interesting ☐ Interesting ☐ Not very interesting	
Personal plan development workshop	☐ Very interesting ☐ Interesting ☐ Not very interesting	
Stress management workshop	☐ Very interesting ☐ Interesting ☐ Not very interesting	
Personalized guide	☐ Very interesting ☐ Interesting ☐ Not very interesting	
Evaluation checklist	☐ Very interesting ☐ Interesting ☐ Not very interesting	

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Appendix 17

Notice of Meeting

Dear *participant's name:*

"Support Services: A Promising Approach," the action research project in which you participated, is coming to a close and it is time for an evaluation. Since you participated in the research project, your are in the best position to tell us whether it was helpful or not and to make recommendations to the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport. **Your opinion is extremely important in the development of this project.**

You are therefore called to a group meeting on _____ in room 0012 (meeting room across from the cafeteria). If you cannot attend, please contact me at (450) 773-8401, ext. 6527.

In preparation for the meeting, you will find enclosed a few questions.

Thank you for your participation in the project. Please do not hesitate to contact me for further information.

Jasmine Sirois, guidance counsellor

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Appendix 18

Preparatory Questions

Instructions: Take a few minutes to briefly describe the points you would like to address. This will enable us to ensure a thorough treatment of the topic.

How would you evaluate your experience with the support services your received as a group? individually?

_____
_____
_____
_____

What did you think of the activities?

_____
_____
_____
_____

What helped you the most? The least?

_____
_____
_____
_____

How did the support services help you? Learning, change, etc.

_____
_____
_____
_____

Do you have suggestions or recommendations for a future group?

_____
_____
_____

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Appendix 19 (1 of 4)
Participants' Agreement

Action research project: **Support Services: A Promising Approach**

This action research project is funded by the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport in collaboration with the Commission scolaire de Saint-Hyacinthe.

It is part of the renewal of reception, referral, counselling and support services offered by school boards, as recommended in the government policy on adult education and continuing education and training.

The project is under the supervision of Julie Béliveau.

The nature of the research and its procedures are as follows:

1. The aim of the research project is to provide adult learners with support services in their progress through school and in the implementation of their plan of action in order to foster lifelong learning.
2. The experiment will take the form of between four and six 30- to 45-minute individual meetings.
3. The meetings could deal with the following issues:
   - Needs evaluation
   - Status of the plan of action
   - Motivation
   - Personal plan development
   - Stress management
   - Change and a positive attitude
   - Effort, tenacity and perseverance
   - Positive points
   - Obstacles encountered and means of overcoming them
   - References, if applicable
   - The characteristics of good support services
   - Evaluation of the process (points that helped and points needing improvement)
4. The ten participants (four from École professionnelle de Saint-Hyacinthe, four from Centre de formation des Maskoutains and two from educational services) were selected at random from among the target clientele, i.e. young men between the ages of 16 and 24.
5. Participants may withdraw from the research project at any time after discussing their intentions with the counsellor, without penalty.

Appendix 19 (2 of 4)

6. Participation in the research project will be an opportunity to take stock and make changes to your personal, academic and work life and to obtain the help you need to implement your plan of action. Participants may use their plan of action as they see fit and, if they wish, share it with other practitioners.
7. There is no risk in participating in the research project, especially since confidentiality is ensured.
8. In order to maintain confidentiality, the following measures will be taken:
   a. Participants' names will not appear in any report.
   b. A code will be used in the various research documents. Only the practitioners involved in the research will have access to the list of names and codes.
   c. The practitioners involved in the research project may consult academic documents such as report cards and transcripts.
   d. If information obtained in this research project is submitted to further analysis, only the code will appear on the various documents.
   e. The group results may be divulged, but participants' individual results will under no circumstances be shared with anyone.
   f. Information may be shared with the school board or external organizations with the participant's consent.
   g. A short summary will be mailed to participants who make the request.
9. A report on the results of the research project will be sent to the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport and may be used at the local level.
10. Any questions about the project may be addressed to the person in charge of the research project:

    Julie Béliveau
    Commission scolaire de Saint-Hyacinthe
    2255, avenue Sainte-Anne
    Saint-Hyacinthe (Québec) J2S 5H7
    Telephone: (450) 773-8401, ext. 6563

I, the undersigned, _____, freely consent to participate in the research project entitled "Support Services: A Promising Approach."

_____ _____
Participant's signature Date

_____ _____
Counsellor's signature Date

Agreement based on the consent form appearing on the following Web site:
<http://www.vrr.ulaval.ca/deontologie/cdr/for_2.html>

Appendix 19 (3 of 4)
Participants' Agreement

Action research project: **Support Services: A Promising Approach**

This action research project is funded by the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport in collaboration with the Commission scolaire de Saint-Hyacinthe.

It is part of the renewal of reception, referral, counselling and support services offered by school boards, as recommended in the government policy on adult education and continuing education and training.

The project is under the supervision of Julie Béliveau.

The nature of the research and its procedures are as follows:

1. The aim of the research project is to provide adult learners with support services in their progress through school and in the implementation of their plan of action in order to foster lifelong learning.
2. The experiment will take the form of three or four 30- to 45-minute individual meetings and four 75-minute group meetings.
3. Individual meetings could deal with the following issues:
   - Needs evaluation
   - Status of the plan of action
   - Motivation
   - Positive points
   - Obstacles encountered and means of overcoming them
   - References, if applicable
4. Group meetings could deal with the following issues:
   - Personal plan development
   - Motivation
   - Stress management
   - Change and a positive attitude
   - Effort, tenacity and perseverance
   - The characteristics of good support services
   - Evaluation of the process (points that helped and points needing improvement)
5. The ten participants were selected at random from among the target clientele, i.e. adults aged 25 and over in school, but with fewer than nine years of schooling.

Appendix 19 (4 of 4)

6. Participants may withdraw from the research project at any time after discussing their intentions with the counsellor, without penalty.
7. Participation in the research project will be an opportunity to take stock and make changes to your personal, academic and work life and to obtain the help you need to implement your plan of action.
8. There is no risk in participating in the research project, especially since confidentiality is ensured.
9. In order to maintain confidentiality, the following measures will be taken:
   a. Participants' names will not appear in any report.
   b. A code will be used in the various research documents. Only the practitioners involved in the research will have access to the list of names and codes.
   c. The practitioners involved in the research project may consult academic documents such as report cards and transcripts.
   d. If information obtained in this research project is submitted to further analysis, only the code will appear on the various documents.
   e. The group results may be divulged, but participants' individual results will under no circumstances be shared with anyone.
   f. Information may be shared with the school board or external organizations with the participant's consent.
   g. A short summary will be mailed to participants who make the request.
10. A report on the results of the research project will be sent to the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport and may be used at the local level.
11. Any questions about the project may be addressed to the person in charge of the research project:

    Julie Béliveau
    Commission scolaire de Saint-Hyacinthe
    2255, avenue Sainte-Anne
    Saint-Hyacinthe (Québec) J2S 5H7
    Telephone: (450) 773-8401, ext. 6563

I, the undersigned, _____, freely consent to participate in the research project entitled "Support Services: A Promising Approach."

_____ _____
Participant's signature Date

_____ _____
Counsellor's signature Date

Éducation,
Loisir et Sport
Québec