



INFO

learning
throughout life

ADULT-ED EXPRESS

NOW SHOWING
THE ACTION PLAN
OF THE GOVERNMENT POLICY
ON ADULT EDUCATION AND
CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING

January 2005
No. 6

CLOSE-UP

Reception, referral, counselling and support: these services are essential for adults who are thinking of going back to school and for those who have already done so and need assistance. That is why the government of Québec is making these services one of its development priorities by including them in the five-year Action Plan of the *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training*.

This sixth issue of *INFO ADULT-ED EXPRESS* outlines the context of renewal of the services in question and describes the work that has been done since 2003 as well as the work that lies ahead. The school boards that participated in this project are listed at the end of the article.

If you would like to learn about reception, referral, counselling and support services, take a few minutes to read the following article.

See you next issue!

ALAIN MERCIER,
Director
Formation générale des adultes

SPOTLIGHT ON...

RENEWING RECEPTION, REFERRAL, COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

The implementation of renewed reception, referral, counselling and support services in school boards and training centres will begin in 2005-2006. What is meant by the renewal of these services? What does it involve?

The renewed interest in these services primarily stems from the *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training*. Reception and referral services are explicitly mentioned as being able to contribute to "removing obstacles to access and retention." They are later mentioned in the second measure of the chapter dealing with basic education in the Policy's Action Plan: "improve reception and referral services for adults and offer counselling and support services." In another chapter of the Action Plan, it stipulates that a "record of learning in basic general education" will be established and that this establishment will become a "formal responsibility" of these services.





Since conditions are therefore favourable for a genuine revitalization of reception services in the school boards and in adult education and vocational training centres, the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) has implemented a project with this goal in mind.

WHY IS IT NECESSARY TO RENEW THE RECEPTION, REFERRAL, COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT SERVICES IN THE SCHOOL BOARDS?

The measures in the *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training* and in the accompanying Action Plan are based on several findings. The first of these findings is the following: in today's society, it is recognized that access to knowledge for all and sharing of knowledge are factors in personal growth, economic development and social cohesion. All governments of industrialized countries are involved in the development of *Learning Throughout Life*. The Action Plan based on the Québec government Policy is perfectly consistent with this logic: it sets an objective for the government to *significantly increase the level of basic education in Québec*. According to the 2001 Canadian census, about 1 800 000 Quebecers do not hold a diploma.

The connection between unequal access to training and adults' level of schooling has been widely documented by research. It is now clear that undereducated individuals participate less than others in training activities; similarly, when they do hold a job,

they do not receive as much support from their employers in this regard. That is why the Policy points out that certain groups "have special difficulties requiring support better adapted to their needs." The Action Plan also devotes particular attention to them.

Along the same lines, "the expression of learning needs is a key element" of the Policy. This is one of the proposed methods of transforming approaches and ways of doing things in order to reach the clientele that currently does not have access to services that are important to them and to encourage them to take advantage of these services. "In a context of lifelong learning, it is no longer sufficient simply to meet the explicit demand. Appropriate mechanisms must be found to stimulate the demand." This aspect will be developed within the context of proactive intervention in reception, referral, counselling and support services.

Lastly, the recognition of prior learning and competencies is a fundamental "structuring orientation" of the Policy and Action Plan. In fact, such recognition is one of the offshoots of the broad diversity of places where training services are provided and ensures that learning throughout life is not an exercise in futility. Although not a formal recognition of prior learning, the record of learning will enable adults to identify all the types of learning they have acquired, help them select a training plan with a better knowledge of the facts and draw on this same knowledge in order to promote retention and the successful implementation of their plan.

In this context, it is necessary to assess the role and relevance of reception, referral, counselling and support services. They will be able to especially help the clientele targeted in the Policy to express their demand, take action, develop training plans and receive the assistance they need to ensure their retention and success. In so doing, these services will also contribute to the attainment of the Policy's objectives.

IMPACT OF RENEWING RECEPTION, REFERRAL, COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

For the MELS, the renewal of these services has certain similarities with program renewal, for which it is necessary to establish and share frameworks, aims and objectives with the school board network, discuss development prospects and develop new content. This renewal should have an impact on the quality of services offered to the entire population, on the nature of these services and on partnerships that may be created.

Renewed reception, referral, counselling and support services should allow adults to:

acquire

- a better understanding of themselves, their resources and their limitations
- relevant information concerning their environment
- an increased capacity to set their objectives and define their aspirations

determine

- their training plan and actions to implement in order to carry it out

receive

- the assistance they may need to successfully carry out the actions undertaken

WORK CARRIED OUT WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THIS RENEWAL

The work undertaken by the MELS varies in nature and scope. It consists of the following aspects:

Profile of the current context of reception, referral, counselling and support services

To produce this profile, the MELS collected data in May 2003. Twenty school boards, along with their adult education centres (60) and vocational training centres (52), responded to a series of generally open-ended questions enabling them to describe the services they offered to adults in their community, the types of staff responsible for these services and the tasks they carried out.

The purpose of this study was to:

1. get a general idea of the current state of these services in the school boards
2. assess the shortfalls in order to improve the situation

The analysis of this data is nearing completion and the report should be published within the next few months.

Preliminary discussion and policy document

The document *Toward a Renewal of Reception, Referral, Counselling and Support Services in School Boards* was sent to the school boards at the beginning of 2004 to inform them of the direction of renewal that the MELS is considering. This document also provided a framework for implementing action research that the school boards were asked to carry out.



The planned renewal of reception, referral, counselling and support services, whose temporary acronym is RRCSS, will thus be implemented in keeping with current expertise within the network and in line with the provisions of the *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training* and its accompanying Action Plan.

This renewal is based on goals that guide the development of services and that place adults at the centre of intervention. The RRCSS will carry out general functions, such as providing reception, support and referral services, and counselling functions, such as providing career guidance, general information and information on the record of learning. They will also assume general responsibilities, such as proactive intervention and partnership. The restructuring of each of these functions will be carried out by adapting the services to adults' needs and characteristics.

Research action

The call for projects to carry out research action has led to the adoption of 13 projects by the MELS, including two on the record of learning and the other 11 on various topics described below.

- Two research action projects deal with reception services: one is aimed at developing joint reception services with partners, the other at implementing a more systematic reception process between frontline service providers and second-line professional staff

- Two other projects are aimed at identifying and testing models for support services
- One project seeks to establish a referral system to help service providers offer assistance to adults
- Two research action projects address career guidance services: the purpose of the first one is to provide support to young adults from cultural communities undertaking a career planning process; the purpose of the second one is to develop a concerted guidance approach with English teachers in order to encourage adults to become involved in a training and professional development process
- Three other projects have to do with proactive intervention: one was undertaken by a school board wishing to reach out to a new area in its region by integrating into the socioeconomic fabric; the other two school boards aim to publicize their services by enlisting the support of community organizations and leaders
- The last project, which deals with partnership, involves all the school boards and partners of a given region with a view to designing and testing collaborative models

All the projects will be completed in February 2005 and the lessons learned from these experiences will be utilized during the implementation of renewed RRCSS.

Regional tour

In the fall of 2004, the ministerial team responsible for the renewal of RRCSS visited most of the regions of Québec. The meetings will conclude in February 2005 with the English school boards. The purpose of this tour is to share the work and reflection underway, to help define the future services and to establish foundations for a shared culture concerning RRCSS.

The topics dealt with are mainly based on the discussion and policy document entitled *Toward a Renewal of Reception, Referral, Counselling and Support Services in School Boards*, which was distributed in the school board network in February 2004. They describe the frameworks and orientations for services and the functions and responsibilities that they assume, emphasize the record



of learning and explain its origin and nature and the organizational structure. This document can be consulted at the Web site of the Direction de la formation générale des adultes at the following address: <<http://www.education.gouv.qc.ca/dfga/english/policy/accueil/reference/index.html>>.

Feedback from participants during these meetings has generally been very positive. The meetings also make it possible to disseminate the same information throughout every region of Québec.

Improving counselling services

A specific project for improving counselling services for adults is currently underway. Following the example of other countries in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), Québec is examining the counselling services available for adults. Transformations in the economy and the labour market and the advent of lifelong training practices have brought about far-reaching changes, sometimes resulting in the loss of jobs and increased mobility. It is therefore important to focus on the provisions for counselling services that should be present to support adults, but also to examine their nature. Career guidance and professional development throughout life is currently an important concept: in the education community, how can it be translated into helping adults meet their short- and long-term guidance needs?

At the request of the MELS, Danielle Riverin-Simard and Yannick Simard conducted preliminary research to determine guidance trends and propose a model or focuses of development to improve the services offered to adults in the education network. This research, which serves as the basis for the MELS' current reflection, will soon be available on the Web site of the Direction de la formation générale des adultes (DFGA) at the following address: <www.meq.gouv.qc.ca/dfga/english/portail.html>.

Amending the basic school regulations

Amendments to the regulations governing basic adult general education and basic vocational training will be proposed in order to add a section specifically dealing with reception, referral, counselling and support services. This section will explain these services in greater depth and pave the way for potential funding, which has been proposed for 2005-2006.

Preparing the implementation

With a view to implementing renewed services in September 2005 in the school boards and adult education and vocational training centres, the upcoming months will be spent preparing this implementation. Three documents will be produced: a general organizational framework; a document dealing with the staffs' competencies; and a document setting out the tools available to the staff, the most important of which will be the record of learning.

The supply of continuing education and training should complement the whole and may be offered by the beginning of 2005-2006 in order to equip school boards and adult education and vocational training centres.

For the ministerial team, this is an exciting project that is arousing great interest everywhere it is presented, and will undoubtedly continue to do so in 2005-2006.



In the next issue of

INFO ADULT-ED *Express,*

Check out the **SPOTLIGHT**
on the *International
Adult Literacy and
Skills Survey.*



Lino Mastriani is responsible for this project. For more information, please contact Élisabeth Mainka at the following address: <elisabeth.mainka@meq.gouv.qc.ca>.

The school boards that are carrying out research action on specific topics are:

Commission scolaire des Affluents
Commission scolaire de L'Amiante
Eastern Townships School Board
English-Montréal School Board
Commission scolaire du Fleuve-et-des-Lacs
Commission scolaire De La Jonquière
Commission scolaire de Laval
Commission scolaire de la Seigneurie-des-Mille-Îles
Commission scolaire de Saint-Hyacinthe
Commission scolaire de la Région-de-Sherbrooke
Commission scolaire des Phares
Western Québec School Board
Commission scolaire de la Région-de-l'Estrie

PRODUCTION TEAM

■ CONCEPT AND EDITORIAL SUPPORT
■ Andree Racine (MELS)

■ TEXT
■ Élisabeth Mainka (MELS)

■ GRAPHIC DESIGN
■ Maxine Jutras (external contributor)

■ PUBLICATION COORDINATION
■ Suzanne Bélanger (MELS)
■ Sharon Melanson (MELS)

■ ENGLISH VERSION
■ Direction de la production en langue anglaise
■ Services à la communauté anglophone
■ Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport

Previously in SPOTLIGHT ON:

- The Program to Promote the Return to School of People Between the Ages of 16 and 24 (June 2004, No.1)
- The Families, Schools, Communities Succeeding Together Program (June 2004, No.2)
- Words and Woes (September 2004, No. 3)
- Learning in Prison (October 2004, No. 4)
- The Assistance Program for Emergent Literacy in Disadvantaged Communities (November 2004, No. 5)

Knowing how to **r e a d** write and count,

lets you get more out of life!

Infoalpha

1 800 361-9142



Éducation,
Loisir et Sport

Québec

