

Support Services for Adults with Respect to their Learning Plan: the Support Oriented Approach



2008-2009

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

sarca

STATE OF RECEPTION, REFERRAL,
COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Support Services for Adults with Respect to their Learning Plan: the Support Oriented Approach



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

SARCA

State of Reception, Referral,
Counselling and Support Services

Direction de l'éducation
des adultes et de l'action
communautaire

Report on the action research project entitled *Support Services for Adults With Respect to Their Learning Plan, or the Support-Oriented Approach*, carried out at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette in Rimouski from August 2004 to February 2005, as part of a large-scale project by the Direction de la formation générale des adultes of the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport.

Coordination

Lino Mastriani, coordonnateur
Direction de l'éducation des adultes et de l'action communautaire

Text

Mario Lévesque
Project Manager
Service de l'éducation des adultes et de la formation professionnelle

Production

Elisabeth Mainka

Update

Commission scolaire des Phares

Layout

Christiane Giroux
Direction de l'éducation des adultes et de l'action communautaire

English version

Direction de la production en langue anglaise
Secteur des services à la communauté anglophone
Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport

© Gouvernement du Québec
Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, 2010
ISBN 978-2-550-57905-2 (PDF)
Legal deposit —Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, 2010

Table of Contents

Foreword.....	1
Acknowledgments.....	3
Chapter 1	7
Research Question	7
Chapter 2	11
Introduction and Context.....	11
2.1 Social and geographical characteristics.....	16
2.2 Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette	17
2.3 Vocational training.....	18
2.3.1 Students' socioeconomic characteristics	18
2.3.2 Gender.....	18
2.3.3 Age	18
2.3.4 Origins	20
2.3.5 Loans, bursaries and other sources of income	20
2.3.6 Success rate	20
2.3.7 Dropout rate.....	20
2.3.8 Retention rate	21
2.3.9 Placement.....	21
2.3.10 In-house satisfaction survey	22
2.4 Adult education	24
2.4.1 Students' characteristics.....	24
2.4.2 Enrollments by service.....	25
2.4.3 Gender and age.....	25
2.4.4 Origins	26
2.4.5 Loans, bursaries and other sources of income	26
2.4.6 Psychosocial problems	26
2.4.7 Success rate and dropout rate.....	27
2.4.8 In-house satisfaction survey	27
2.4.9 Services offered at the centre.....	29
2.5 An argument in favour of a support-oriented service model	31
2.6 Description of the action research project.....	32
2.6.1 Initial question.....	32
2.6.2 Means	32
2.6.3 Actions	33
2.6.4 Anticipated outcomes	33

Chapter 3	35
Planning the Action Research Project	35
3.1 Actions stimulated by the action research project.....	37
3.2 Theoretical foundations.....	38
3.2.1 Aims of the support process	38
3.2.2 Conceptual framework for support services.....	39
3.3 Methodology.....	39
3.3.1 Partners' role	39
3.3.2 Samples for identifying support needs.....	39
3.3.3 Students.....	40
3.3.4 Teachers and others	40
3.3.5 Data collection	40
3.3.6 Data analysis method	40
3.4 Description of the situation.....	40
3.4.1 Analysis of data about students.....	40
3.4.1.1 Reception services	41
3.4.1.2 Difficulties encountered	42
3.4.1.3 Sense of belonging.....	45
3.4.1.4 Perseverance.....	47
3.4.1.5 Support services vs. mentoring	48
3.4.2 Analysis of data collected from staff members	50
3.4.2.1 Staff members' perception of the situation	51
3.4.2.2 Support needs according to staff members	53
3.4.2.3 The ideal world	54
3.4.3 Analysis of the data collected from partners.....	55
3.4.3.1 Field of expertise and target groups	55
3.4.3.2 Partners' perception of support services	58
3.4.3.3 Partnership	60
3.4.3.4 Second meeting with partners	62
3.5 Presentation of the tools needed for the project	63
3.5.1 Samples.....	63
3.5.2 Support services at the centre	64
3.5.3 Support needs	65
3.5.4 Methodology used in support meetings	67
3.5.5 Workshop for support providers.....	73
3.5.6 Internal support tools	74
3.5.7 Intradepartmental tools	74
3.5.8 Interdepartmental support services.....	74

Chapter 4	77
Analysis of Results.....	77
4.1 Workshop evaluation and the transfer of knowledge	80
4.2 Support providers' evaluation of the project.....	86
4.2.1 Highlights of the individual meetings and the half-day meeting halfway through the project	87
4.2.2 Evaluation and analysis of the questionnaire followed by a discussion and recommendations	88
4.2.3 Problems and needs of young adults.....	89
4.2.4 Impact of the process on the student.....	92
4.2.5 Discussion about the meetings	93
4.3 Analysis of the relevance of the three types of plans and the seven key benefits of work	94
4.4 Relevance of theory	94
4.5 Procedure with respect to the current context.....	96
4.6 Scenario	96
4.7 Advantages of such a procedure in adult education and vocational training centres	97
4.8 Analysis and discussion of the procedure used with students receiving support.....	97
4.8.1 Alliance	98
4.8.2 The types of plans	99
4.8.3 The seven key benefits of work	101
4.8.4 Other significant comments	103
Chapter 5	105
Recommendations	105
5.1 Recommendations based on the results obtained	107
5.1.1 Content.....	107
5.1.2 Structure	109
5.2 Recommendations based on the research team's intuition	110
5.3 Organizational and financial aspect	112
5.3.1 Organizational structure.....	112
5.3.2 Competencies required of staff members	113
5.3.3 Costs of the service	115
Chapter 6	117
Conclusion	117
Chapter 7	121
Summary.....	121
Bibliography	131

Appendixes	137
Appendix 1 Workshop for Support providers'	139
Appendix 2 Questionnaire to Identify Students' Needs.....	145
Appendix 3 Semi-Structured Interview With a Person Who Is No Longer in School	155
Appendix 4 Adult Learners Focus Group	165
Appendix 5 Staff Members Focus Group	169
Appendix 6 Semi-Structured Interview With Partners	173
Appendix 7 Brief Meeting With the Centre's Assistant Directors	183
Appendix 8 Evaluation of the Workshop for Support providers	193
Appendix 9 Mid-Process Evaluation of Learning and Transfer of Learning After an Activity ..	195
Appendix 10 Ethical Concerns and Consent Form	197
Appendix 11 Sample Icebreaker for Support Meetings	203
Appendix 12 Students' Evaluation Questionnaire.....	205
Appendix 13 Support Providers' Evaluation Questionnaire	211
Appendix 14 Student Focus Group for Evaluating the Process.....	217
Appendix 15 Theoretical Framework for Support	219

List of Tables

Table 1	Distribution of the Population by Age.....	16
Table 2	Number of Students by Age Group and Gender.....	19
Table 3	Origins of Students, 2002-2003	19
Table 4	Reasons for Dropping Out	21
Table 5	Enrollments by Service, 2001-2002	25
Table 6	Age and Gender of Secondary School Students Taking Day Courses, 2000-2001* ...	25
Table 7	Schedule	65
Table 8	Support and Related Needs.....	66
Table 9	The Support Process	72
Table 10	Summary of Support Needs.....	79
Table 11	Comparison Between Mentoring and Support (Proteau, 2001)	222
Table 12	Description of Support (Proteau, 2001)	225
Table 13	The Different Postures	227
Table 14	Differences According to Gender	241
Table 15	Rivière's Typology of Success	246
Table 16	Factors That Can Influence Academic Success Among Young Adults	247
Table 17	Identification of Stages How to Recognize That a Person Has Begun a New Stage (Limoges, 1990).....	252

List of Figures

Figure 1	29
Figure 2 Support Process and the Different Types of Plans	68
Figure 3 Support and the Key Benefits of Work.....	68
Figure 4 The Support Process Seen From Different Points of View	69
Figure 5 A Culture of Support	111
Figure 6 Individual/Studies/Work Triangle	223
Figure 7 Perception of the Human Experience (Based on Fournier, 2004)	227
Figure 8 The Three Roles of Education	232
Figure 9 From support Provider to the Person Receiving Support	234
Figure 10 Academic Success (Rivière, 2002).....	245



Foreword

The action research report published here is one of a set 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 unusual 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 text.

Although all the reports have very similar tables of contents to facilitate comparison, the style and spirit of each individual team is nevertheless apparent, and constitutes 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



Acknowledgments

We are fully aware that this research project could not have been carried out without the participation of a group of students at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette (CFRN). For reasons of confidentiality, they will remain nameless. Their wealth of ideas, generosity and honesty and their willingness to participate enabled us to design this support services model. We would like to thank them once again.

We would also like to express our thanks to the different partners who helped design gateways and methods to better meet adults' needs: Carrefour Jeunesse Emploi, Emploi-Québec, Formation Clef/Mitis Neigette, Les Maraîchers du Cœur (Action Travail Rimouski-Neigette), Transition Plus, Ficelles, Service d'aide et d'intégration de la personne handicapée and a CLSC employee.

We would like to thank the members of the Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette advisory committee, who made sure that we remained consistent with the project's direction. They are: Liliane Allard, Maurice Lavoie, Michel Saint-Pierre, Marie-Hélène Langlais, France Duchesne, Lise Godbout and Mariette Chabot. We would also like to thank Martine Landry and Carol Castonguay at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette for helping us carry out the research project.

We could not fail to mention the exceptional contribution of the ten teachers who enthusiastically participated in the project. They are all passionate about their students. We gained considerably by having the opportunity to work with them. Thanks to Caroline Rioux, Ginette Lévesque, Ginette Grandmont, Louis-Charles Langlois, Luce Blouin, Margot Michaud, Marie-Hélène Langlais, Monique Doiron, Suzanne Roussel and Sylvie Deschênes for their contribution.

This research project was made possible through the financial support of the Direction de la formation générale des adultes (DFGA) of the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport and Commission scolaire des Phares. We would like to thank the professionals at the DFGA, Élisabeth Mainka and Lino Mastriani, as well as Danielle Riverin-Simard of Université Laval for their invaluable advice.

We would like to thank two guidance counsellors: Jacques Limoges, who was a great inspiration and provided invaluable advice with respect to the design of the support process, and Chantal Proteau, who allowed me to consult her Master's thesis on support services.

We are extremely grateful to Diane Descoteaux, who revised this report to make it more intelligible. And, last but not least, our thanks to France Caron for the final page layout.

*Dare to become who you are,
or how to become who you are*

Chapter 1



Research Question

In a centre that offers reception, assistance and admission services, where a culture of student assistance has developed spontaneously over the years, could the innovative approach referred to as the “support-oriented approach” raise adults’ awareness and encourage them to develop and implement a self plan – a personal plan, a learning plan and a school-to-work transition plan?



Chapter 2



Introduction and Context

*The self-plan, as the end goal of a human being's personalization process,
is the ultimate plan, the very meaning of every component of the plan.
By rooting all plans in a self-plan, the person becomes one.*
Philibert and Wiel, 1998)

It is not a question of what the future holds for the person but rather of who the person becomes.. The Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) supported action research projects with a view to implementing services better able to meet the needs of adult learners. These action research projects are aimed at identifying and testing practices that foster perseverance, and promote the successful implementation and completion of the adult's learning plan. We view achievement not only in terms of academic success, but also in terms of personal and occupational success, and indeed of a happy life.

This perspective is consistent with the Ministère's policy, which is to foster lifelong learning. Adults can thus opt for conventional education or training, work-study programs, practicums, involvement in different life activities, and so on. Various measures have been put in place in support of these options and agreements have been reached with different organizations and government departments, for example, Emploi-Québec. Thirteen school boards were selected to study and enhance reception, referral, and counselling and support services. The Ministère expects to provide each participating school board with the financial support it needed to offer such services. Our centre was selected to carry out an action research project on support services for adults.

The preliminary study conducted by the Direction de la formation générale des adultes entitled *Accueil, référence, conseil et accompagnement*, revealed that support, information, guidance and counselling services are among those that are the least well developed in adult education centres while it is these same services that are the most capable of receiving and supporting requests for learning. In addition, it appears that adults' lack of motivation is one of the main causes of the low level of participation in learning. Adults' motivation is often related to their job or career, the latter being mentioned in 60 per cent of cases. It is therefore important to clearly define a career plan and to recognize needs in this area. Later on we will discuss how support services fit in.

Certain favourable conditions need to be in place to establish a support-oriented approach in an adult education centre. First, it is necessary to consider that notwithstanding their respective responsibilities, administrators, teachers, professionals and support staff contribute to the development of synergy and a culture of support. In effect, each person takes responsibility for placing the adult at the centre of his or her interventions while exercising a different role. Then, it is necessary to suppose that the adult can evolve and that he or she is capable of self-determination. It is necessary, as well, that the centre and its staff are realistic and situate themselves within the qualitative and quantitative limits of their specific context. In addition, the capacity to offer or "co-create" structural means for providing adults with the necessary support

with respect to their learning plan or self-plan should exist. All of this is aimed at making adults feel welcomed, making learning fun and helping adults identify their dreams and plans so that they can become self-fulfilled and participate fully in society. Lastly, adults must be recognized as unique individuals having their own particular characteristics.

Appendix 15 contains a list of documents consulted and the conceptual framework adopted. We did not include it in this section because we wanted to get down to business and avoid weighing down the text. We encourage those who wish to learn more to consult the appendix.

The support-oriented approach is not intended to shelter adults from difficulties (life has its challenges) but rather to help them through them. It is more a question of thinking about our own practices and suggesting different or complementary approaches, developing a culture of support—like we do with the guidance-oriented approach—fostering the desire within adults to develop plans that will enable them to take control of their lives. Support could become second nature in teaching. We will address this idea in the conclusion of this document.

Fostering learners' personal and occupational development, while enabling them to move successfully forward requires calling upon various means and strategies. An adult learner without a plan is often seen by others as marginal or even disturbing. Adults sometimes allow themselves to be pushed into adopting a plan, in order to not feel excluded, only to find they are excluded nonetheless when their plan¹ proves to be inappropriate. They must then consult a guidance counsellor and persist until they have a learning plan. Who exactly is under stress here? Choosing a career is a process that can be affected by a number of circumstances and experiences. Although, according to statistics, adults without a learning plan are more likely to drop out; a career plan cannot be the only motivation for learning. Many adult learners are still constructing their identities; their efforts need to be supported by providing them with different experiences, by eliciting within them the desire to learn and to learn about themselves, and by fostering discussions within the educational institution and elsewhere. In this way they will be able to take the time to think and consider various possibilities before they make their choice.

The goal of providing support is to encourage the emergence of a self plan (personal plan, learning plan, and school-to-work transition plan) without telling students what to do with their future and without replacing other professionals such as guidance counsellors and social workers. Support providers should remember that adult learners carry their past, their fears and their hopes around with them. They must deal with these realities and see each adult as a complete person. They must make the transition from instructing to supporting and guiding the evolution of the adults' school-to-work transition plan, always placing the adult learner at the centre of the process. We expect that teachers should experience these new paradigms

1. Young people without the necessary prerequisites have fewer academic choices: the programs they are eligible for are not as highly valued, recognized or attractive. Thus they can experience feelings of exclusion, inadequacy and incompetence. "My dreams are limited. My social destiny is related to my academic destiny."

themselves while receiving the support they need in order to create a support-oriented community.

Support, yes. But why? For whom? And how? Adult learners are often young and have their own reality, their own dreams and concerns. Can we offer them an honest and attractive learning plan? What are these young people like? What are their motivations? Can we provide direction for their learning plan? It is important to remember that many young people have encountered numerous obstacles and dropped out of school at some point. We are giving them a second chance to become adults, workers, citizens.¹ Social pressure to join the work force can be considerable. In our centre, mentoring was the first support service. However, Philibert and Wiel (1998) offer a word of caution.

Mentoring is a first attempt to produce a new educational response to the need to provide adolescents, young adults and older adults with support services. It is uncertain whether this response is sufficient, since, as we will see later on, this type of follow-up can be a new form of instructional pressure to force adolescents to conform to school requirements rather than a means of providing support with respect to their personal plan.

To answer our research question, we wanted to examine the support needs of students attending our adult education and vocational training centre with respect to their learning plans or self (life) plans; propose a support-oriented service model; and, make appropriate recommendations to the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport.

We will present statistics about the situation in our MRC and our students. This will help determine the context of the research project and how the results could be applied in similar or different contexts.

After presenting the social and demographic characteristics of MRC de Rimouski-Neigette, we will take a closer look at the student body at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette.

Then, we will analyze interviews conducted with students, staff members and partners. Based on qualitative data about participants' perceptions of the support-oriented service model² chosen, we will analyze the potential impact of the model on adult learners, staff members and partners.

An advisory committee made up of people in different positions at the centre worked with us throughout the project.

-
1. Many of them are constructing their identity. They are enrolled in adult education to finish Secondary V or in vocational training. In this respect, they are at the crossroads between the world of school and the world of work, which can be a thin line where they are trying to find reference points, bridges, opportunities.
 2. The support providers' workshop guide is provided with the report.

2.1 Social and geographical characteristics

In order to understand the local issues and our particular situation, we offer a few statistics on the region and the student body.

MRC Rimouski-Neigette has 52 289 inhabitants living in an area of 2 716 km². Table 1 presents the distribution of the population by age.

Table 1
Distribution of the Population by Age

	0-14	15-24	25-44	45-64	65 and over
Rimouski-Neigette	15.7%	14.3%	27.8%	28.4%	13.8%
Québec	17.8%	13.1%	29.9%	25.8%	13.3%

The city of Rimouski accounts for 80% of the population. Its unemployment rate¹ was 9.7%, compared with 13.2% in Bas-Saint-Laurent during the same period.

Economic activity in the MRC is heavily concentrated in the service industry, which accounts for most jobs (86.3%). Resource-based industry, in particular agroforestry, accounts for 4.2% of all jobs, and the manufacturing and construction industries, 9.5%. The MRC also benefits from the new economy, the diversification of leisure activities, and tourism and culture. Jobs are either highly specialized and well paid or seasonal, on call and often poorly paid. Our students hold jobs without job-security, which makes it impossible for them to devote themselves fully to their studies. They are, however, familiar with the job market.

The level of schooling of the population of MRC Rimouski-Neigette in 2001 was as follows:² 26.7% of those aged 15 and over did not have a secondary school diploma; 18.0% had a secondary school certificate; 10.2%, a trade certificate; 10.2%, a diploma of college studies; and 18.1%, a university certificate or degree. The population of the MRC has the highest level of schooling in Bas-Saint-Laurent, but 16.1% of those aged 15 and over have less than nine years of schooling. Because of the size of this largely rural region, many people do not have access to certain services. Distance and limited means of transportation can be obstacles to carrying out a learning plan.

The following is an overview³ of the groups to which the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport (MELS) gives priority and who require more support for their school-to-work transition.

1. Emploi-Québec Rimouski-Neigette, Plan d'action local 2003-2004.

2. Statistics Canada, 2001 Census of Canada, processed by Institut de la statistique du Québec, 2003.

3. Emploi-Québec Rimouski-Neigette, Plan d'action local 2003-2004.

- Between October 2001 and September 2002, 34.5% of those who were receiving Employment Insurance benefits (1232 out of 3570) were aged 34 or under. Many of them were required to improve their competencies in order to maintain or improve their work situation.
- In June 2002, 25.3% of those without employment constraints were aged 29 or under; 67% of those aged 24 or under did not have a secondary school diploma.
- The 1996 census indicated that women held 48.6% of all jobs in the territory. They held 40.9% of full-time jobs and 67.4% of part-time jobs. It is estimated that 40.7% of those considered without a limited capacity who were receiving Employment Insurance benefits in June 2002 were women.
- In the MRC, 35.6% of those aged 45 or over received Employment Insurance benefits between October 2001 and September 2002.
- Some people with functional limitations require more personalized and adapted preparation for the job market. Adult education and vocational training centres and workplaces must be aware of these needs.

2.2 Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette

The following section deals with the different services offered at the centre, including reception services and services related to the different types of plans. It also presents a typical course of action and related observations.

Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette is both an adult education and a vocational training centre. We therefore decided to include students and staff members from both sectors in the research project, well aware that their situations are different. We are, however, convinced that support services are appropriate in both sectors.

The two centres share many resources, both human and material, as well as services such as guidance and social intervention.

Note¹ – Representatives of Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette participate on a consultation and decision-making committee on the school-to-work transitions of inhabitants of the MRC between the ages of 16 and 30. We therefore decided to meet with people in this group to explain our project. Since some of our students are affected by these actions, it seemed to be a good idea to develop agreements for interdepartmental support services with them.

1. Throughout the report, the word **note** will be written in bold type. It indicates that important information about support needs follows.

Those consulted were interested, and some of them were even open to experiment. This component of support services involved the relationship to be established with the person seeking services within the centre or with external service providers. The experiment would involve the Carrefour Jeunesse Emploi, the local employment centre and an integration firm. We will address this experiment in a later chapter.

2.3 Vocational training

Vocational training offers 21 programs in eight sectors of activity. There are 69 teachers and additional support staff. The theme of the centre's educational project is "A work environment to help you develop competencies." In providing quality support services, the centre can help students develop generic competencies such as:

- motivation
- the ability to communicate
- flexibility
- a concern for customer service
- a sense of responsibility
- social ethics
- teamwork and cooperation.

2.3.1 Students' socioeconomic characteristics

It is important, in this action research project, to develop an accurate profile of students requiring support services. Eighteen-year-olds don't have the same needs as 45-year-olds. Nor do those who have just left their parents' home and those who have been on their own for a few years.

2.3.2 Gender

In 2002-2003, the student body was made up of relatively equal numbers of male and female students, i.e. 46% and 54%, respectively, compared with 52% and 48% in 2001-2002.

2.3.3 Age

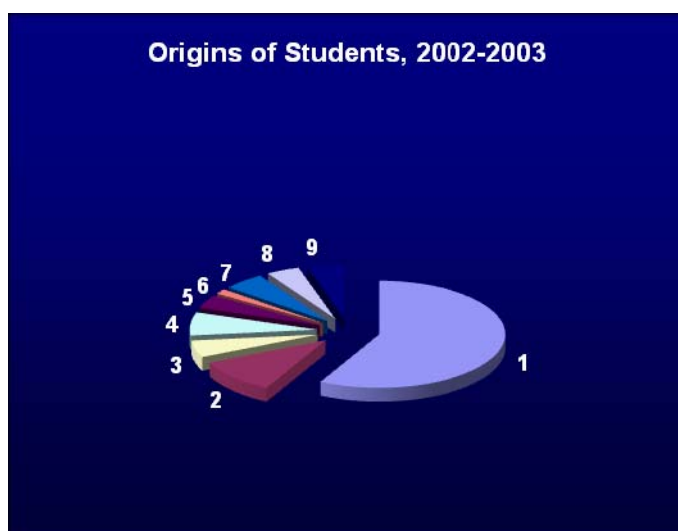
The average age of students was 23 in 1998-1999 and 1999-2000. It rose to 25 in 2001-2002 because of a cohort of students aged 50 and over enrolled in the Starting a Business program. Thus, the average age of the majority of our students is about 23. Interestingly, the proportion of young people under the age of 20 at the time they start their program rose from 39% to 56% between 1995 and 1999 and settled at 54% in 2001.

Note – There have therefore been changes to the student population in the regions we serve, resulting in an adjustment of the teacher-student ratio. This variable will be taken into account in our support-oriented service model.

Table 2
Number of Students by Age Group and Gender

YEAR	TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS	STUDENTS' AGES									
		< 20		≥ 20 and <25		≥ 25 and <30		≥ 30 and <45		≥ 45	
		F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
2002- 2003	705	157	120	89	119	36	39	84	28	15	18
		39%		29.50%		10.6%		15.9%		4.7%	
2001- 2002	736	149	133	114	111	39	37	67	36	20	30
2000- 2001	687	120	106	120	106	36	34	50	36	10	12

Table 3
Origins of Students, 2002-2003



1-Rimouski	58%
2-Mont-Joli	11%
3-Matane	5%
4-Vallée de la Matapédia	7%
5-Baie-des-Chaleurs	4,10%
6-Gaspé	2%
7-Témiscouata	5%
8-Rivière-du-Loup	4%
9-Other	5%

2.3.4 Origins

In 2002-2003, 58% of students were from MRC de Rimouski-Neigette. This proportion varies very little from one year to the next.

Note – Some 42% of students have to move to a new city, find an apartment and develop a sense of belonging and new frames of reference. Many have just left their parents' home, with all that implies in terms of constructing a personal identity and becoming a citizen.

2.3.5 Loans, bursaries and other sources of income

It has now been eight years since people enrolled in secondary level vocational training have been eligible for loans and bursaries. This is why certain adults now have access to vocational training. In 2002-2003, 191 students at our centre obtained a loan and/or bursary. It was noted by our professionals, that some of these adult learners have major responsibilities (e.g. car, family) and that financial constraints create serious difficulties for them.

2.3.6 Success rate

The success rate for the 2002-2003 cohort of students that completed its programs was 84%. This rate could be higher if those who did not receive a diploma, because they missed certain modules, took them later. We will see later on that the success rate could be affected by exam retakes, program changes, the dropout rate, etc.

Note – It is obvious that initial support and the confirmation of the learning plan contribute greatly to ensuring program completion.

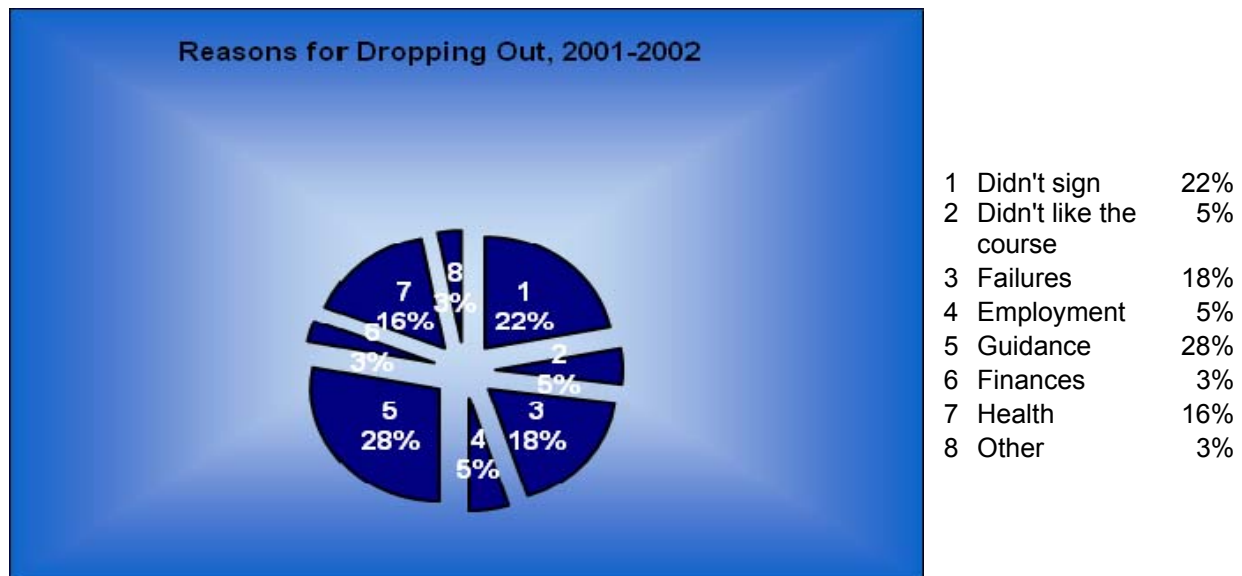
2.3.7 Dropout rate

There were 704 students enrolled in vocational training in 2002-2003. Of this number, 113 (or 16%) dropped out. This situation was comparable to that recorded in previous years.

The reasons given for dropping out in 2001-2002¹ could be divided into six major categories: health, inappropriate guidance, access to employment, financial problems, absences or failures, and a negative evaluation of courses (Table 4).

1. The reasons why students dropped out are not available for 2002-2003. We are presenting those for 2001-2002, which can give us a good idea. Since some people did not fill out the exit form, we are unaware of their reasons.

Table 4
Reasons for Dropping Out



2.3.8 Retention rate

Several means have been used to foster perseverance: reception activities carried out by teachers and administrators, more flexible schedules, special attention for students from outside the area, extracurricular activities, departmental social activities, different remedial measures and a promotion committee. In addition, innovative approaches have been developed by some departments to foster student commitment. For example, one Beauty Care teacher and her team follow up on absences and inappropriate behaviour. Unfortunately, these initiatives are too often isolated and not shared with others. Yet they are promising and give very good results. Other sectors have organized extracurricular activities such as award nights, participation of Secretarial Studies students in the provincial Le mot d'or contest, and visits to various fairs. These activities should be continued and supported by a "support-oriented school" committed to more than just teaching. A complete vocational training program has to include mechanisms for providing students with support at least until they get a job.

2.3.9 Placement

The Job Search Techniques and Entering the Work Force modules help graduates organize their efforts to find a job. Relationships with some employers can lead to jobs for students. In Automobile Mechanics, resource people from the Société d'assurance automobile du Québec come in to explain mechanical safety inspections. The Professional Sales program includes

several visits to companies. Practicums are included in most programs and give students practical experience that can help them find a job later on. These practices provide students with learning support and help them understand the requirements of the job market and develop a network of contacts, so important when looking for a job. They should therefore be maintained and further developed.

In late May 2004, the average placement rate for 2002-2003 graduates was 82%. Some sectors achieved almost a 100% rate, while others weighed in at 60%. Most graduates find jobs in Greater Rimouski (47%) and in different regions between Montréal and Gaspé; 3% to 8% end up in Québec City.

Note – We consider that it is important to improve support services in some programs. Collaboration with Emploi-Québec, job search clubs or Carrefours Jeunesse Emploi, among others, could help students enter the work force.

2.3.10 In-house satisfaction survey

We must mention an in-house survey conducted in February 2003 among students, staff members and partners. The information it contains is relevant to this research project.

Students' opinion

Students have a positive perception of instructional services (91%), support and supervision (88%), the development of skills and attitudes (83%), school life (59%) and administrative services (81%).

The most critical comments were directed at student activities and participation in student life. However, meetings with assistant directors, students and teachers revealed that almost everyone agreed that students want more extracurricular activities, but that their level of participation is very low. We are not questioning the relevance of this type of activity, but we need to find a winning formula. In addition to developing certain types of competencies, these activities foster a sense of belonging to the centre and affect students' level of motivation. It is also important to remember that the average age is 23 and that peers¹ still have a major influence at that age.

Note – It is important to take students' sense of belonging to the centre and their motivation into account in our support-oriented service model.

1. In a later chapter, we will present a developmental profile of young people this age.

Staff members' opinion

On a pedagogical day, staff members were asked what elements need to be maintained and improved to ensure success. It is sometimes difficult to differentiate between the two, since each department has its own ways of doing things.

For the purposes of this research project, several concerns were related to instructional practices and support for learning associated with the competencies expected in the job market. Teachers expressed a need for support in order to learn and implement practices to deal with these concerns.

Note – Support for students sometimes means helping teachers become more effective. The change in profile of the student body in the past fifteen years requires a relatively major adjustment to teaching and classroom management methods. Teachers must acquire new competencies, since it has been recognized that competencies have a five-year life expectancy. An education consultant is available for this purpose. ***In any support-oriented service model, the support providers' needs must be taken into consideration.*** In a later chapter, we will attempt to establish the support provider's profile and needs.

Partners' opinion

A questionnaire was sent to 18 organizations in the community. In general, respondents are familiar with the centre and see it in a positive light. The improvements they suggest include:

- partnerships with socioeconomic organizations
- placement services
- more practicums
- childcare services
- exploration practicums
- state-of-the-art equipment
- financial assistance
- more attractive advertising

Observation: This type of questionnaire provides information about perceptions, which must then be decoded and taken into account. In the context of support services, we must be aware of the above recommendations.

2.4 Adult education

2.4.1 Students' characteristics

The theme of the adult education centre's educational project is "Living and learning together". It promotes essential values for learning and teaching:

- motivation
- commitment
- method.

It also promotes the creation of a climate of communication and a desire to establish relationships:

- beyond the academic aspects (cross-curricular and social competencies): **living**
- beyond the transmission of knowledge (discussions, methods, projects): **learning**
- beyond the student's personal course of action (belonging, partnership, communication): **together.**

The centre offers all the services set out in the basic school regulation for adult education, except distance education. Most students are enrolled in secondary education. Table 5 gives information about enrollments in 2001-2002 by service, providing an overview and a more nuanced understanding of support needs.

2.4.2 Enrollments by service

Table 5
Enrollments by Service, 2001-2002

Service	Number of enrollments	%
All services	1082	100
Instructional support	111	10.3
Literacy	78	7.2
Presecondary	47	4.3
Secondary Cycle One	361	33.4
Secondary Cycle Two	265	24.5
Social integration	40	3.7
School-to-work transition	54	5.0
Francization	-	0
Preparation for vocational training	Included in Secondary Cycles One and Two	0
Preparation for postsecondary studies	124	11.5%

Note – It is difficult to determine how much support is needed and by whom. Everyone? Certain groups? A more detailed profile would help place certain needs in perspective.

2.4.3 Gender and age

In 2002-2003, the student body was made up of mostly male students. Of the 1212 students, 56% were male and 44%, female.

Table 6
Age and Gender of Secondary School Students Taking Day Courses, 2000-2001*

	Male		Female		Total
16-17	11	8.3%	17	17.9%	12%
18-19	40	30.3%	27	28.4%	30%
20-24	51	38.6%	25	26.3%	33%
25 and over	30	22.8%	26	27.4%	25%
Total:	132	100%	95	100%	100%

* These numbers exclude the detention centre. This is the profile as taken at one point during the year.

On May 1, 2002-2003, 15.6% of the total student population was between the ages of 16 and 18.

Note – There were more male than female students and most of the students were between the ages of 18 and 24 (66%); the female students were slightly younger than the male students.

2.4.4 Origins

We have no data on where students live, but the professionals we consulted consider that most of them are from the Rimouski area since general education is offered in all school boards, often in several municipalities.

Emploi-Québec referred 195 individuals to the centre in 2002-2003, which represents 27.5% of all enrollments. This number varies from one year to the next, but has been on the decline overall.

2.4.5 Loans, bursaries and other sources of income

Students in adult education are not eligible for loans or bursaries, unlike a quarter of adults in vocational training. They must rely on their parents or spouse, on income from a precarious job or on Emploi-Québec support measures.

Almost all students live below the poverty line, even though many have major responsibilities that affect their financial situation, such as a family, a car or an apartment.

Note – Several of the students we met with wanted to learn how to develop a budget.

2.4.6 Psychosocial problems

Without having done an exhaustive analysis, we can say that general education students appear to suffer more often from psychological distress than vocational training students.

A social work technician performed 400 individual interventions at the centre in one year.

Note – The types of problems encountered include a lack of self-confidence, financial or material problems (including food), conjugal violence, mental health problems, alcohol and drug abuse, conjugal difficulties, assault and abuse, and high-risk pregnancy. These probably represent just the tip of the iceberg. Many students do not request help, hide their problems or share them only with their peers. We consider there is a dire need for support services in this area, both in terms of prevention and crisis management. In the case of major distress, support services must be provided by a health care professional. It is important to remember, however, that 80% or more of problems are solved without the help of a specialist. According to Limoges

et al. (2001), 88% of people work through their problems because they are part of a network. Support services are an extraordinary asset in this respect.

2.4.7 Success rate and dropout rate

Students' goals include obtaining an SSD, acquiring prerequisites for another program, preparing for the job market or becoming better integrated into society. Some leave school temporarily and return the following year. Many students leave school after achieving their goals, while others leave for personal reasons such as employment or a move.

Note – More than 20% of students leave the centre without having achieved their goal and without a clear reason: the centre was unable to retain them. Support, follow-up and referral services could make the difference for some of these students or at least help them find a service that is better adapted to their needs. *We anticipate that effective support services would help substantially to decrease the dropout rate.*

2.4.8 In-house satisfaction survey

A survey like the one used in vocational training was conducted among students, staff members and partners in general education.

Comments concerning instructional and administrative services were positive in 78% of cases, while the rate was 54% for complementary services. The definition of the educational project was perceived positively by 68% of respondents, while 53% responded positively to the definition of student life. The support-oriented service model we selected reflects some of the suggestions and comments collected.

Students' opinions

Learning support should include:

- encouragement, understanding
- help in achieving the set goal
- the creation of a peer support team
- greater severity when dealing with students who disrupt the class
- help setting a goal that will ensure that the student stays in school
- help in getting people to treat the student with respect

Staff members' opinions

To increase the number of students and to help them progress, there must be:

- a more stimulating environment
- a greater variety of instructional approaches that engage the students more
- support services for teachers and students experiencing problems other than academic problems

Partners' opinion

In general, partners have a positive image of Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette. The aim of the survey was not to evaluate their relationship with the institution, but to learn how they perceive the centre and the aspects they think require improvement. The comments and suggestions gathered relate to:

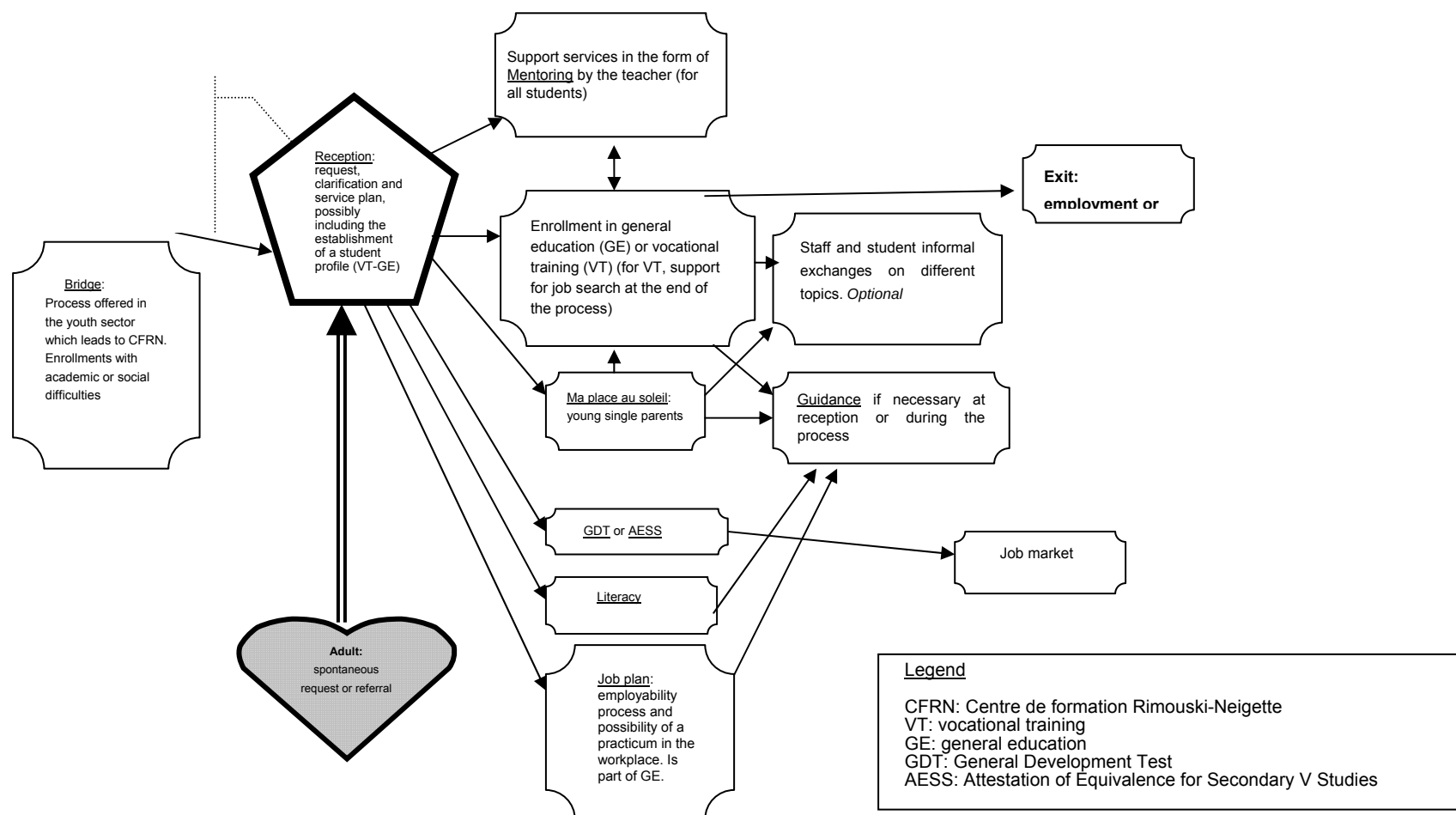
- geographical access
- resources for dropouts and illiterate individuals
- specialized resources
- childcare services
- waiting times for registration
- collaboration and partnership with organizations

The centre's success plan contains a number of actions aimed at fostering student success and at improving students' quality of life and their relationships with the community. That is why, in 2001-2002, the centre hired a recreation technician to help students organize sociocultural activities. This initiative, which was greatly appreciated, fostered the emergence of several activities at the centre. Unfortunately, because of a shortage of financial resources, the project had to be dropped. Subcommittees made up of students and staff members, however, were formed to foster the implementation of the centre's educational and school life projects.

The following section presents the pathways followed by a person who arrives at the centre.

2.4.9 Services offered at the centre

Figure 1



The organizational chart in Figure 1 traces the path of a person, whether or not he or she has been referred to the centre. First contact takes place in reception services, where staff members must:

- become aware of and clarify the person's needs. In a context of reception and active listening, different questions can be asked about the student's career choice and path.
- intervene with the adult by telephone or by use of forms when there is a change in career choice
- establish a service plan that could include an academic profile
- enroll the person
- refer the person to a guidance counsellor or partner organization
- engage the person in developing his or her learning plan and establish the appropriate course of action: general education in literacy or at the secondary level, vocational training, employment plan, general development test, learning plan to meet special needs

A person entering general education or vocational training is assigned a mentor, who accompanies him or her at the academic and administrative levels: support for educational activities, schedule changes, attendance, etc. This service, though unevenly available, still appears to be appreciated by students. Some teachers limit their mentoring interventions to the above-mentioned functions, while others extend it to different areas of the student's life. In the Health Care sector, as well as other traditionally female-dominated sectors, mentoring extends beyond the usual definition and the situation depends more on the teacher's background and training than on the mentoring requirements.

The *Dictionnaire actuel de l'éducation* (Legendre 2000) defines mentoring as follows:

Support and supervision of all of a student's educational activities; support and supervision of a student's learning approach (Tourmier, M. [05.78], MEQ: DGE). *Personalized actions taken by a human being to help another human being achieve one or more learning objectives* (Gaulin, H. [1992]).

There might be a way to optimize this relationship by adding support practices. The question is, however, whether all teachers can and want to provide support and whether all students are in need of them. The answers to these questions will guide the implementation of services to meet these needs and to reach people who could benefit from support during their course of action.

Services similar to support include those provided by a guidance counsellor, essential for defining and taking ownership of a personal plan. Would it be appropriate, as in the youth sector, to adopt a guidance-oriented approach to include a culture of guidance in the different centre and classroom activities? A support-and-guidance-oriented approach, perhaps? This new model will be addressed in the conclusion of this report.

The services of a social work technician are also useful and necessary in this respect. In addition to individual consultations, social work technicians can help with stress management, self-esteem and so on. According to our survey, these activities are appreciated, but few students avail themselves of them.

Several vocational training programs contain a module on job search techniques. Other support services are offered to people in particular situations: *Ma place au soleil* for single parents, *Projet emploi* for integration into the work force with the possibility of doing a practicum, and *Projet jeunes parents*.

In September 2004, a group orientation week entitled *Semaine projet* was offered to all students newly enrolled in general education. The aim was to help them define their learning plan and identify their motivations, and to provide information about the centre. The results should be promising and the activity could become the first step in a support process.

We presented the different services offered at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette. An analysis of the responses to questionnaires filled out by students and teachers will provide further information about the need for support services.

2.5 An argument in favour of a support-oriented service model

A preliminary analysis identified the following support needs, which could eventually be used to establish parameters for a support-oriented service model.

1. Staff members would like to establish inter- and intradepartmental relationships (information sharing and follow-up) concerning students.
2. Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette participates on a consultation committee on young people between the ages of 16 and 30. Since the organizations have expressed a need for communication and cooperation, this committee could help set up interdepartmental support services (referral to another service). Contacts with other organizations will be established for the different types of learning needs.
3. The average age of students at the centre is 23. These young people are part of a group targeted by the Ministère, and they require special support services related to their level of development. They have just left the youth sector and, often, their path has been littered with obstacles including behavioural difficulties, dropping out and attempted suicide.
4. The proportion of male students in some age categories is slightly higher.
5. Many students in vocational training come from outside Rimouski, which means they have to find an apartment, develop a sense of belonging and achieve a certain amount of self-sufficiency.
6. Job search assistance (with partners if necessary) for students, whether or not they have finished their program, should be maintained.

7. Maintaining motivation is essential.
8. Self-confidence and self-assertion are important needs for some students.
9. The need for support and assistance in solving financial, drug-related, health, family and other problems is widespread.
10. Up to 20% of students drop out during the year.
11. The teacher needs support with respect to students with major learning or behavioural difficulties.
12. In short, support services are necessary for students if they are to persevere in their learning, set goals or at least undertake a learning plan, maintain contact and nourish hope.

2.6 Description of the action research project

2.6.1 Initial question

Could support services help raise adults' awareness and encourage them to develop and implement a selfplan – a personal plan, a learning plan and a school-to-work transition plan?

2.6.2 Means

- Take a critical look at the current organization of support services and activities.
 - Suggest and test new ways of doing things.
 - In particular, obtain answers to the following questions.
1. What means can be used to provide support services, establish an atmosphere of trust, and help students carry out their learning plan and develop their problem-solving abilities?
 2. How can support services be provided in the centre, based on identified needs and a certain conceptual framework?
 3. What is the profile of a support service provider?
 4. What elements should be introduced into meetings and how often are meetings necessary?
 5. How can we promote relationships between internal and external services while protecting each institution's confidentiality and organizational methods?

2.6.3 Actions

1. Compilation of expectations.
2. Analysis of current efforts (begun in previous chapters).
3. Analysis of interviews and focus groups with partners, staff members and students.
4. Development of a support-oriented service model for students at the centre.
5. Referral of students to other organizations or support services in the centre:
 - 5.1 Agreement to be reached with partners with respect to the duration of the field test
6. Testing of the model:
 - 6.1 Choice and training of support service providers and students.
 - 6.2 Support services offered over a four-month period (September to December 2004).
There was a meeting halfway through the process for adjustments and a progress report.
7. Results, recommendations and report.

2.6.4 Anticipated outcomes

We expect that this course of action will enable students, on the one hand, to accept themselves as they are; to develop self-awareness; and to choose productive directions for their lives, and, on the other hand, to reduce absenteeism; improve motivation; clarify career plans, and, maintain better relationships with their family, their social network and the other people around them.

In this context, the aim of support services is to help adults develop self-knowledge (I am) so that they are better able to determine what they desire (I want) in order to take action (I do) and learn from the experience (I internalize).

Outcomes for the student

Based on a qualitative assessment (the perceptions of some of the individuals involved), it may be possible to ascertain if students are better able to:

- persevere in their learning plan or personal plan—or both—at the centre or with our partners
- remain motivated, thereby improving their academic results
- make their learning plan their own by showing more interest, reducing absenteeism and expressing their needs when they could have an impact on their success and on their life in general

- build bridges between their current situation and the situation targeted in their personal and career plans
- benefit from the on-going support and other available services provided to meet their needs
- develop a culture of learning and an openness toward lifelong learning in all of its forms

Outcomes for the institution and staff members

Based on a qualitative assessment (the perceptions of some of the individuals involved), it may be possible to ascertain if the institution and staff members are better able to:

- develop a “supporting” culture by adopting behaviours that place the adult learner at the centre of the process
- develop and adopt a support-oriented service model that could be adapted to the individual
- work together with partners
- adopt a support “posture”
- perform on-going follow-up with the students, if necessary, and at strategic points, for example at the beginning of the term to detect potential difficulties (prevention and maintenance) and establish a common approach of which everyone, in particular the student, is aware
- foster mutual-support opportunities for professionals and encourage personal and professional growth and development
- eliminate the isolation between teachers so that they can better help each other
- develop strategies for engagement and commitment while reducing control strategies.

Outcomes for partners

Based on a qualitative assessment (the perceptions of some of the individuals involved), it may be possible to observe if partners are better able to:

- establish relationships and shared interests in support services
- establish procedures for providing support or referring adults to another service by placing the adult learner at the centre of the process
- establish the parameters of the support services and the construction of shared tools
- establish procedures for operations and communications with respect to adjustment, continuity, meetings, etc.
- develop an overall culture of support and the sharing of discoveries and expertise in order to promote the aims of such support services

Chapter 3



Planning the Action Research Project

Action research projects could provoke change, but, if so, we need to know why and for whom. If the actions taken are to be meaningful and realistic, we anticipate that students, teachers, professionals and administrators should be involved. They need to be aware of the actions taken and be prepared to call practices into question and to accept changes.

Providing support services, yes, but why? - for life itself, for social harmony and cohesion, for growth toward maturity. We must go beyond the rhetoric and ask ourselves honest questions, bearing in mind that if there are people providing support services, there are people receiving them. If to provide support services means “to accompany,” and if we are talking about professionals, teachers and partners, can we move forward together? Can we establish a form of synergy or networking? We must remain vigilant in order to avoid playing the expert in the know. Providing support services does not mean transmitting our own truth.

Bearing these considerations in mind, we will present the different methods we employed to collect the data we used to identify needs.

3.1 Actions stimulated by the action research project

An advisory committee was set up to assist the action research project coordinator throughout the process. It was made up of two teachers, two reception employees, a guidance counsellor, administrators and the project coordinator himself. While the research project is the property of the body that commissioned it, the committee is its guardian. It accompanies the project coordinator in his reflections. It helps carry out the research, but is also intent on promoting a culture of support.

The following pages address:

- the theoretical foundations of the project
- the aim of the process
- the situation as students, staff members and partners see it
- the training given to support providers (Appendix 1 and support providers' workshop guide)
- the evaluation of the training session
- a support meeting scenario.

3.2 Theoretical foundations

(For further information, see Appendix 15)

The proposed support-oriented service model is based on the theories of six authors. First, there is Marshall Rosenberg's nonviolent communication theory (NVC). The point of NVC is to listen to what is essential in a message and to reformulate it based on feelings and needs. It provides the tools needed to understand the adult's world in order to help him or her progress. We also drew on certain concepts from studies by Christian Philibert and Gérard Wiel. These two authors obtained very promising results with students in a project-based approach. Their procedure involved learning about students' backgrounds and helping them get where they want to go using the necessary means. We also used elements from the work of Jacques Limoges with respect to the key benefits of work, ways of maintaining balance and the "retrospective/prospective/action" approach. We anticipate that the key benefits of work could, through their universality, provide the necessary reference points for dealing with the whole person. Lastly, we used Loevinger's work on the development of self and Kohlberg's work on moral development. These two authors identified different stages of personal development, which can help the support provider acquire a better understanding of the adult, adjust interventions accordingly and guide the adult from one stage to the next.

3.2.1 Aims of the support process

To help adults situate themselves with respect to their selfplan, this includes:

- a learning plan
- a personal plan, which could include a social and family plan
- a school-to-work transition plan

To help adults situate themselves with respect to the seven key benefits of work:

- income
- status
- completion of plans
- interpersonal relations
- management of time and space
- meaning of life
- role

If adults receiving support succeed at situating themselves with respect to these elements, will they become more aware, more engaged and more committed to developing and implementing their plans thus giving greater meaning to their actions? Will they be able to better channel their

energies to meet their needs? If the provided support prove to be inadequate, mechanisms for referral to another service would be established as a complementary measure.

Too often, poor self-knowledge prompts adults to take ineffectual action: they go around in circles (Appendix 15). The support process should result in a reframing that should promote life and hope. A reduction in absenteeism and an increase in involvement and motivation on the part of the adults should be associated indirect outcomes.

3.2.2 Conceptual framework for support services

All research must be based on concepts and theories. Appendix 15 and the support providers' workshop guide contain the theoretical bases for our beliefs and actions.

3.3 Methodology

3.3.1 Partners' role

First, the partners were asked about their perceptions of support services in a semi-structured interview. Partners were chosen based on their shared target groups. They were:

- Carrefour Jeunesse Emploi
- Emploi-Québec
- Ficelles, Transition Plus, Service d'aide et d'intégration de la personne handicapée (employability organizations)
- Les Maraîchers du Cœur, Action Travail Rimouski-Neigette (integration organization)
- CLEF (literacy organization)
- A CLSC employee.

Second, they were invited to participate in the construction of one or more common instruments to facilitate coordination and foster the continuity of services. We will present observations and recommendations in a later chapter. All of the partners, both internal and external, expressed the need to improve communication and build more bridges for students.

3.3.2 Samples for identifying support needs

We attempted to select a representative sample of everyone who might be interested in support services and could provide us with information about the needs of students—our main group under observation in the action research project—as well as teachers, professionals, administrators and key partners.

3.3.3 Students

The data were collected from 16 students, most of them in their twenties. The students were distributed as follows:

- Six students in a focus group: three in their twenties, one in his thirties and two in their forties
- Ten students¹ in semi-structured interviews: five under the age of 25, two between the ages of 25 and 30 and two between the ages of 25 and 30 who dropped out of school
- Of the eight students still in attendance, four were in general education and four, in vocational training.

3.3.4 Teachers and others

The guidance counsellor, the two reception employees, a teacher and two administrators participated in focus groups.

Two assistant directors participated in a semi-structured interview.

3.3.5 Data collection

The focus group and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data. Given our initial question, we were more intent on understanding the process than the end result.

3.3.6 Data analysis method

The content analysis will deal with data collected from three groups: students, staff members and partners.

3.4 Description of the situation

3.4.1 Analysis of data about students

We will present information that will shine light on the support needs of students at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette. The topics treated are:

- reception services
- difficulties encountered at the centre and in their personal life as well as their preferred solutions

1. Many were seen at the end of the term given the period during which the project was carried out. It was difficult to meet with more people who had dropped out.

- sense of belonging to the centre
- perseverance
- support services vs. mentoring

We will explain why we selected these topics in relation to our subject.

3.4.1.1 Reception services

Reception services are the gateway to an organization and provide a first impression. Reception is the first step in support services, or at least a prerequisite for establishing a relationship of trust from the outset.

At Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette, reception services offer more than information. Employees there receive requests, clarify them and suggest answers or procedures to follow. More often than not, the development of a learning profile is needed.

Most participants appreciated the first meeting. They described the approach as pleasant and professional. All but one of them knew the names of the employees. To the question about the topics addressed at the first meeting, one participant answered:

The first person I met here was X. She looked at my academic history, my goal and my profile. It was all very professional.

Other students interviewed felt that they had to wait too long between the first meeting and the first class. This delay can cause students to lose motivation and even to drop out. According to the reception employees, some students were no longer available when their classes start. We consider that this situation could be a contributing factor to the dropout rate if it is not corrected. Mechanisms should be set up to help adults maintain their momentum and carry out their plan. One or two months of waiting could be enough to lose motivation and drop out. One student said that he had to call back and that he was worried. He would have liked to at least receive a letter or a phone call.

There was a waiting period and no one was calling. I called to find out when I would start and they said tomorrow morning. I would have liked to receive a letter and a phone call so I could get ready.

This comment is not directly related to support services, but it shows the importance of establishing a relationship of trust and of letting adults feel that they are important and that we are taking care of their needs.

Most respondents mentioned that their first half-day at the centre involved an information meeting with the assistant director about the institution, absenteeism, exams, rules and

services. These meetings were appreciated, but because of the amount of information given, many participants didn't remember anything. Others did not receive information about the centre because of the continuous intake and exit in the different programs. This is mostly a problem in general education because most vocational training programs involve cohorts of students.

When I got there, I didn't know where my classes were. I walked into different classrooms and asked, and I didn't have a locker.

It is important to explain to new students how things work and to provide them with reference points as they go along. Here are two of the comments we received:

There should be occasional group meetings so we don't feel lost.

They should let new students know how things work.

As for solutions, some would like to see experienced students help new students and explain how things work in order to establish relationships. This response, however, was not unanimous. Some students want to successfully implement their learning plan and are not interested in helping others or in being helped.

To conclude this section on reception services, let's examine two points. First, there are few relationships with partners. Who establishes the relationship between Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette and the referring organization, if applicable? Second, the reception meeting does not address other aspects we believe are important to successfully implement a learning plan, such as the person's finances, life organization and life path. We should take the time to determine whether these aspects should be addressed at the reception meeting or at some other time. Students with special needs should already have been identified at this point and referred to another service.

3.4.1.2 Difficulties encountered

We address difficulties experienced by students not only to understand their support needs, but also to determine the type of support services that could help them overcome obstacles. These include behavioural difficulties, learning difficulties and difficulties of a general nature.

Behavioural difficulties

Many people think that there are too many students in some classes, which adds to waiting times for teacher support should they have trouble understanding something. This results in frustration, loss of motivation and poor concentration, which causes students to occupy their time in non-constructive ways. From having often heard it in interviews, we expect that certain steps should be taken to help students maintain their motivation. These could include grouping

them together by level in order to foster teamwork and providing peer counselling. Various solutions could be proposed.

Another frequently mentioned problem, both in general education and vocational training, is the lack of discipline. Since the average age has dropped in recent years, we must consider whether the current structure still meets students' needs. This point will be addressed more specifically in the section on interviews with staff members.

There are too many students in the class, they talk too much. They should put the younger students together and the older students together.

The teachers don't know what to do anymore. The director needs to intervene.

A 40-year-old added:

When I got here I started to shake. They were all so young, I couldn't get my bearings. Fortunately, I knew why I was there, or I would have left.

They should do something else with students who aren't serious.

A lot of students just get up and leave in the middle of the class, if they come at all.

If it were up to me, I would send them home and they could come back when they are interested in learning.

We know that the student population has changed in recent years and that many come directly from the youth sector. Many students experienced failure in that sector and their relationship with teachers is often confrontational. Many are sent to the centre by parents who don't know what else to do and who are worried about their child's situation: it is the parents' and society's solution not the student's. They want a secondary school diploma because society tells them that they need one to find a decent job. Young adults appear to have difficulty making their plan their own; they feel marginalized and inadequate if they don't meet society's demands. It is therefore urgent that they receive support, that they be accepted as they are, and that we talk to them and ask them what they expect out of life.

We asked one student who had dropped out—a word that evokes fear; dropped out of what, exactly, in this era of retraining; does the future belong to the rejected and excluded, as one of my teachers used to say?—and who wanted to come back to secondary school, why.

I want to come back because society keeps telling me I need my Secondary V. No one ever asked, but what I'm interested in is my music, and there is no reconciling the two. Maybe I could take evening courses?

The personal plan is often vague. Young adults require preventive rather than curative support measures. The current structure makes it difficult to offer services adapted to their age and their reality. Why are young adults “disorganized”? Why do they leave the classroom in the middle of class? What is it about their reality or what was it in their past that makes them ignore their own lives and the possibilities the future offers? What type of support services do they need? What if the structure is the problem, if the social messages conveyed are found wanting? Standardizing instructional methods may only create other problems. What we try to avoid for financial reasons or do in the name of the new pedagogy may end up costing more, in human lives and in money.

Teachers and other staff members often say there is not enough time to welcome students, not enough time to provide support services, not enough time to do all the necessary tasks, to do all the necessary marking. We are well aware of the facts but, at the same time, we are questioning the Ministère’s and society’s priorities. If we place the student at the centre of the process, priorities and parameters might reorganize themselves. What would the real needs be then and how would they be met? Perhaps then motivation, which is often lacking, could be developed. Can we, as a society, afford to lose these citizens and future workers? Could we not take individuals’ specific characteristics and needs into account when we teach?

Some researchers identify ways to respond to differences. Just consider multiple intelligences, project-based learning, teamwork, Glasser’s quality school, the desire to set up mechanisms for providing SARCA (reception, referral, and counselling and support services), etc. The establishment of these kinds of support services requires vision, the capacity to create new procedures, to add resources and to change attitudes.

At some point I need to get up. I can’t sit down any more. I just want to get up, go out into the hall and come back but they don’t understand and send me to the director.

Academic difficulties

As we mentioned earlier, the lack of discipline, the chattering and the comings and goings of classmates can considerably hinder concentration and motivation. Also, to obtain help solving an academic problem, students may have to write their name on the board and wait for the teacher to be available. The waiting period can cause students to drop out. Some are so shy that they are barely noticeable. Administrators and teachers play an important role in integrating these students and creating a living environment in which they can learn to live together. While individualized teaching works for some people, it doesn’t work for everyone. It is important to remember that adult education was set up for students aged 18 and over, or even for those aged 35 to 40 and over. For a 17-year-old, sitting still all day is quite a feat. But is it not so for every age group?

Other difficulties

Personal finances can be an obstacle to the student's learning plan and some must hold down a job while they are in school.

I have to pay for gas and rent. I have to work and the school is not always flexible enough so I can do both.

The \$225 a month I receive from Emploi-Québec to go to school pays for my gas and I can keep going to school. Not having enough money could be a reason to drop out.

We cannot evaluate the extent and severity of this situation. The problem should be raised at support meetings and students should be taught how to make and follow a budget.

Others miss school because of their children, either for medical reasons or because they cannot find a babysitter.

I've been here two years. The first year, I barely missed any days because of my child but the second year I missed a lot of days, which got me in trouble with the director. There should be special schedules for people with children. They didn't take into account that I hadn't been absent much the year before and that I did so well in my courses.

The desire to be self-sufficient or the need for support and supervision: - according to those we met with, the perfect balance that fosters accountability and maturity is difficult to establish and adjust. By definition, support services are personalized services that take the individual into account. The centre should be made aware of certain realities, such as single parenthood, while young adults should be aware of the reality in an educational institution. It's a matter of creating spaces for designing and building bridges.

3.4.1.3 Sense of belonging

Having a sense of belonging to a community, a family, a religion, a people, helps people identify with something, find their place. In some schools, a sense of belonging is promoted through a school uniform. In the movie *Dead Poets Society*, the students wear a uniform and are part of a group of poets which enables them, with their teacher's help, to believe in the search for their own truth. This is the case, for example, of the young man who decides to go into theatre against his father's wishes. He is spoiling his father's plans. On opening night, he is applauded by the public but reprimanded by his father, who rejects him in this area of his life. The young man commits suicide.

Because it allows them to identify with a group and a community, a sense of belonging enables young people to construct their identity, to inhabit a safe space, to gain the recognition of their group and to develop and excel. If a sense of belonging is absent personal development and maturity is difficult to foster. A climate of indifference, totalitarianism, submission and even rebellion may take hold.

Ideally, learning environments should foster the development of a sense of belonging if students are to find their place, construct their identity and want to attend. It is an educational value as useful as knowledge, skills, attitudes and perceptions. It should foster social awareness, open-mindedness and the contribution of a soon-to-be self-fulfilled citizen of the world. To this end, young adults must try out roles, compare themselves with others and establish significant relationships with their peers, their teachers and their school. Despite necessary limits, they can experiment and learn who they are and what their potential is. Rich learning environments support personal involvement; offer more life experiences, more opportunities to construct identity. We must foster a sense of belonging and remember that, without us, it will happen anyway, but how? A sense of belonging is developed within a certain framework, with a purpose.

Is students' sense of belonging at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette sufficiently well developed? If not, how can it be? It is important to remember that many students have faced serious difficulties, failures and negative family and social experiences. Belonging to a family or a group has not always been that important. Also, students' sense of belonging will differ depending on whether they are in general education or vocational training. In vocational training, students develop a sense of belonging to the trade and construct a form of identity: I am in Mechanics; I am in Health Care, in Beauty Care, in Cabinetmaking. Students also identify with a group: I am a mechanic; I am a nurse, etc. Therefore my actions are based on my specialty. Also, participation in different types of activities fosters involvement and encourages students to exceed their limits.

Participating in the Foire de l'habitation in Cabinetmaking or in provincial dictations in Secretarial Studies are laudable efforts on the part of administrators and teachers to provide students with support with respect to their learning plans.

Here is what some students said about their sense of belonging:

I'm a little isolated at the centre. No one came to get me, my motivation dropped and one thing led to another and I dropped out. I'm coming back in the fall.

The school doesn't foster a sense of belonging. We see each other at break time, that's all.

Here it is more a matter of the centre's reputation:

I was in Beauce and an employer told me about the reputation of the Mechanics program. It's a good program, modern equipment and the teachers are good. The only thing is that half the students are motivated and the other half fools around and the teachers don't know what to do any more.

Not so good. I wonder whether I'm where I should be. I would like more activities.

Other young people:

I feel out of place in evening classes. They're too old for me.

I don't really have a sense of belonging. I'm here to study, that's all. I made a few good friends - that's enough.

Staff members mentioned that many activities have been proposed over the years—often suggested by students—and that, unfortunately, the rate of participation was poor. How can we make the centre attractive to adults? It appears that a sense of belonging begins in the classroom, through the establishment of relationships during group activities. It then extends to student life. In planned and well-structured meetings grouping together representatives of different departments, Mechanics and Health Care for example, each participant could teach the others something.

A recreation technician was hired in 2001-2002 to organize several recreational and cultural activities with students. The results were encouraging and led to an increase in participation. Generic and cross-curricular competencies also apply to this type of activity, “lifelong learning” for example. We will not deal directly with a sense of belonging and how to develop it, but providing support with ‘sense of belonging in mind’ could foster success.

3.4.1.4 Perseverance

Why do some students succeed despite mistakes and difficult life situations while others in the same situation, faced with the first obstacle, begin by missing classes more and more often and end up dropping out? Could support services in the centre foster success and help students carry out their learning plan? Should we set up meetings in which students could tell their story, be listened to and encouraged to open up so that we can understand what they want? ***Of the motivations mentioned, the one we deem most important is having a goal, a reason to act; it is closely followed by the importance of the student's relationship with the teacher.*** The success factor, in combination with the goal, is important in maintaining motivation and ensuring progress.

I came because I had a plan.

The passion for the trade, the teachers' support, state-of-the-art equipment...

Being one of the best motivates me to study at night.

Having a trade, making my way, that's why I'm here.

The teachers' approach, the quality of their interventions and the concern they show for students are often mentioned in interviews. Teachers are an important factor in ensuring students' perseverance and often make the difference.

A student finishing the Beauty Care program said:

I stayed because of a teacher. She encouraged me and gave me a chance.

I keep going because of the quality of the teaching.

The teachers are very supportive.

It's very hard to change teachers at the end of the year. They know how you learn, they have a way of explaining things, you know them and they know you. All of a sudden you come in in the morning and you have to go to another room. You should have the same teachers all year.

These comments can help us identify key periods in the student's life, a transition or failure, for example. Support is then important: the teacher can offer the help needed to succeed. Success helps students regain confidence, improves their self-esteem and motivates them to continue. The quality of the teacher's interventions is related to his or her ability to listen and to be sensitive to feelings. This means going beyond the traditional teaching of a subject: the teacher 'forms' the learner. Teachers also play a mentoring role. Because of this privileged relationship, couldn't teachers transform their role and adjust it occasionally to provide support for certain students? Aren't they the ones in the best position to establish the relationship of trust that can contribute to awakening awareness? Teaching is a relational activity that prepares the soil so that it can produce.

3.4.1.5 Support services vs. mentoring

Currently, mentors establish a privileged relationship with students, a certain proximity that sends a message: "I care about you and your success." Success is a set of factors that facilitate the emergence of possibilities. To the question "What type of support services would you like at school?", most students answered that mentoring fulfills this function. We have observed that mentoring is very important but that its implementation varies considerably from one department to the next and even from one teacher to the next. Some mentors say they are very open to life

questions and to discussing small problems, while others limit themselves to academic concerns. Yet others consider that mentors fulfill the following four functions:

- academic counselling and follow-up: learning and learning strategies
- monitoring of absences
- schedule changes
- discussion of personal problems.

Some students do not know their mentor and are not interested but, overall, mentoring is valued and sought out by students. Here are a few comments:

Should be the first person you meet.

Talks a bit about anything, and when it's not going well.

Academic but not personal problems, person assigned for each term to validate and verify goals.

After a certain time you should be able to choose your mentor, especially when you don't get along.

Helps motivate and encourage.

Mentors already do that (provide support), you can get it off your chest when you have problems.

These comments demonstrate a variety of needs from purely academic meetings to more personal discussions. Should support involve a greater sensitivity to others, their reality, and their motivations? Should we train teachers in “supportive” mentoring to answer others’ questions, get them to open up, to tell their story in order to evolve? An appropriate amount of attention can sometimes give students the desire to unload the burden of temporary difficulties. Unresolved problems can affect academic success and the result is a vicious circle. Do teachers have enough time to provide such support? Do they need to do something different or something more? We will address this issue when we develop, test and analyze the support-oriented service model. To end this section on mentoring, we asked students what they expect from a significant relationship. Here are a few of their answers.

Good listening skills, experience, counselling, maturity.

That they listen, don't judge what I say, be open-minded.

That they have been where I am, that they understand and be like us.

That they have experienced similar situations.

Special case

In this part of our analysis of students' responses, we present a special case that probably represents some of our general education students. What is interesting are his characteristics and the fact that he does not necessarily fit into this type of teaching setting. At least that's what he says.

According to Holland's typology, this person is an artistic type. He is a musician. He likes choosing his own lifestyle and way of thinking. At school, he was in the choir, worked on the student newspaper and participated in a few shows. Music and social involvement have always played a major role and he has had difficulty reconciling his different plans. Here are his comments.

Too much control, I feel torn between being an artist and going to school. I'm going to finish Secondary V in the evenings because everyone tells me I need a diploma. But personally I don't know why. I want contacts for my music. People talk too much in class. They should take these students and send them somewhere else for a while, to paint the school maybe, make drawings. There isn't enough colour!

I feel manipulated by the funding organizations. They give and they take away.

I feel like a pay cheque.

I had a good relationship with one teacher; I sang with him, it was motivating. I would like to reconcile the two, but can I take a day off, like I did to participate in a music contest? I feel like a child, always having to ask for permission.

We introduced you to this student because he may represent a different category of students, who do not necessarily fit in where they are. These people can require a different type of support.

3.4.2 Analysis of data collected from staff members

This analysis contains a description of the situation followed by staff members' perception of support services, as well as their expectations with respect to this research project.

3.4.2.1 Staff members' perception of the situation

To the question “Who in your opinion needs support services?”, staff members' responses can be broken down as follows.

General education

- 25% seem to have problems and would need more intense support services and sometimes the help of a specialist.
- 65% would need support and follow-up services. They also need to be listened to, to receive advice and to adjust their course of action.
- 10% appear to not really need support services except perhaps encouragement to carry on.

Vocational training

- 15% seem to have difficulty and would need more intense support services and sometimes the help of a specialist.
- 50% would need support and follow-up services, to be listened to and to adjust their course of action.
- 35% would need ad hoc support services and encouragement to carry on.

These numbers suggest that vocational training teachers see their students as having fewer difficulties. This can be explained by the fact that the students have chosen a trade or occupation, that they are closer to carrying out their plan and that they had the necessary prerequisites. Since some fields are subject to quotas, candidates were selected. Students succeed in concrete trade-related actions and identify with their field of specialty. Also, they have the same teachers and belong to the same group. Their training is more personalized, their support services are more significant and the teachers get to know their students. In general education, students' learning plans are not as well defined. Access to an occupation is further away and success is uncertain. These students need customized services: occasional support, preventive support or more structured support. Internal and external services could be mobilized as needed. However, we expect that everyone should have access to support, even if only to encourage them to carry on.

Staff members have their particular perspective on the difficulties encountered. Here is an example.

*Students often experience the same pattern and often this is a pattern of failure.
In a support process, they need to be questioned, listened to and made aware.*

According to the same staff members, most students are motivated at the beginning, but some are affected by events and their perseverance is fragile. It is important to remember that many

of them have come directly from the youth sector, that they are between the ages of 17 and 23, that they have experienced academic failure, had more or less significant relationships and need to develop citizenship and work skills. Some have dropped out and have children, a job and financial responsibilities. Is there room for academic learning?

We talked to the social work technician and the students she meets with. Their difficulties are often related to drug abuse, couple problems, family violence, financial problems, a lack of self-esteem and motivation, unwanted pregnancy and all sorts of physical problems. However, 70% of students or more have few difficulties and can get by on their own. It should be remembered, too, that some students may need support without showing it.

The support providers we met with at the centre are unanimous: to provide proper support services, the institution needs to want to do so, bridges must be built, positive relationships must be maintained with students and follow-up and support mechanisms must be set up.

The system offers services and provides appropriate support and supervision. However, many still consider that the services of a social work technician, the success plan, the educational project, and the quality and availability of teachers and other staff members are still not enough to solve problems. Some 20% to 25% of students drop out without intending to return to work or for any other good reason. Can we do better **together**? Here are a few comments from teachers and other staff members.

A student goes through a guidance process. Teachers want to know what happened and the guidance counsellor wants follow-up.

Each person does his or her own thing; there aren't enough connections, follow-up. We act in isolation.

We are familiar with certain organizations but we don't know that a person has gone there and we don't have the results. We need to be careful about prejudice, labels and confidentiality.

We would like continuity of services internally and externally, we want information to flow. We need simple tools that don't complicate things. Some tools were developed but we don't use them.

We don't always know what happens to them. If they are expelled because of absences, what happens to them? They don't have a safety net. They need alternatives.

Staff members propose that there be follow-up and that students be placed at the centre of the process. The exchange of information among services appears to be a priority; we must use the same tools, have a better knowledge of external services and know how to access them.

We need to work together with partners. We should share a common language and agree on what support services entail.

Staff members have observed changes in students' characteristics. In the past twenty years, older and more mature students have been replaced by younger students, many of whom have just left the youth sector. In the schools, many services are offered by professionals, from psychoeducators to remedial teachers to nurses. These people offer more specific support services. However, in adult education, a person with dyslexia, for example, cannot benefit from support services because of a lack of resources. Staff members need to help each other and find solutions to these difficulties.

Twenty years ago the clientele was different: there were problems with violence. Now some students have a 'don't give a damn' attitude. Nothing affects them.

The clientele has changed, needs have changed, but the structure, culture and way of doing things have stayed the same.

We have more mental health needs and not enough resources for these students.

These young people have adult problems: rent, family, car and, at some point, there is no room left for school.

These changes have affected support needs; even teaching methods must be modified to take the characteristics of the new adult target groups into account.

3.4.2.2 Support needs according to staff members

Staff members recognize that at-risk students should benefit from ongoing rather than preventive support services. While setting up the mechanisms intended to ensure the continuity of services, mentoring would undoubtedly make it possible to identify these students and establish means of intervention and support before they are mired in problems. The mentor and teacher can monitor absences, excessive waiting times before taking an exam associated with a module, attitude problems in the classroom, signs of trouble, etc. The quicker and more appropriate the action taken, the more benefits the student will derive. It is a question of being vigilant so that all students benefit from meetings and of adapting services for students who need or request them.

Because of the teacher's or mentor's privileged relationship with the student, action can be taken in time. Most problems could be solved with the support provider, or the student could be referred to the appropriate resources. This guidance and referral process is currently the responsibility of the social work technician.

As we mentioned earlier, the structure should be flexible and allow for a flow of information. Follow-up mechanisms should be set up. Staff members are aware that students are unfamiliar with the environment and would benefit from a better flow of information. The teacher is the person who is in the best position to identify and refer students who are experiencing difficulties.

Teachers often provide support services based on their intuition. Simple tools could provide connections between the services.

Staff members point out the importance of accepting students, being familiar with their needs and guiding them.

It takes someone who can help them see their potential.

In general education, we rely a lot on mentoring, but we need a shared vision, not only to monitor absences.

Going beyond the obligatory five minutes, offering help adapted to their needs.

Being available, having a relationship over time, showing them that they are important to us. It's a question of attitude.

3.4.2.3 The ideal world

In this final section of the analysis of data collected from staff members, we will present a few of their expectations related to the aim of this action research project, expectations based on their vision of the ideal world.

- Having a psychologist and other support providers 35 hours a week
- Having a description of the situation
- Seeing the results of our actions
- Having qualitative and quantitative results in teaching: fewer absences, more fun
- Identifying a process, a way of doing things, tailored to the needs of the adult
- Establishing relationships with partners
- Pursuing the process after testing
- Providing resources and support services for new teachers.

Before analyzing the data collected from partners, consider the eloquent comments of a centre employee.

In an organization, all human beings are interchangeable and, sometimes, one teacher is as good as the next. But to have a support relationship, the structure must foster a philosophy of personal development and not merely a utilitarian approach. Our vision should not be reductionist, the student is a whole person with his or her own emotional, affective and spiritual reality, and the relationship between two people is not interchangeable.

3.4.3 Analysis of the data collected from partners

Our meeting with the different partners was very productive. In addition to restating their intentions, they expressed the desire to participate in designing a tool or process for interdepartmental exchanges, which demonstrates their desire to collaborate. The partner institutions presented their own mission, their way of doing things and their clientele. While respecting each partner's mission, type of intervention and integrity, the challenge was to avoid exceeding set limits and to place the student at the centre of the cooperative effort. Since, more often than not, cooperation involves benefiting from the other partner's practices, the parties must be flexible enough to occupy a shared space, trust each other and communicate so that they can make adjustments. By placing the student at the centre of the process and respecting the mission of each partner, it should be possible to build bridges.

The analysis of the data collected from partners addresses fields of expertise, interventions with different groups of adults they deserved, their perception of support services and, lastly, their partnership needs.

3.4.3.1 Field of expertise and target groups

The mission of the different organizations we met with, except for the CLSC, involves the individual and his or her work and studies. Adults served include those between the ages of 16 and 35, those aged 45 and over, and all other categories. The organizations serve practically everyone who is capable of working. In addition, the CLSC serves seniors, children and people with mental health problems. These organizations serve people with one-time needs as well as with greater support needs.

Here is an overview of the comments gathered. Many target groups have needs that extend beyond simple employability. They include self-esteem problems, a certain lack of self-knowledge, sometimes obsolete competencies and difficulty finding work. Others suffer from drug abuse, problems adapting and difficulty developing positive work habits. Some do not have a plan at all and the workplace is often seen as more alienating than potentially fulfilling. There is also a certain lack of hope for the future and in their ability to find their place and choose a plan that suits them. Others base their plans on wishful thinking. The task is considerable, and requires different approaches and means such as integration practicums to help them take charge of their life, regain their self-esteem, break their isolation, and acquire new habits that will allow them to adopt a plan that has meaning for them.

Support services should help students define an inner space in which to accommodate the different aspects of a plan, and negotiate their place in their environment. Since fragile students often tend to drop out when faced with an obstacle, we must offer support and a sympathetic ear.

Young people need support services in various areas of their lives. They need to learn to make a budget and to go to bed at night, to communicate with others as adults.

Many of these young people dropped out because of situations they found unbearable. Dropping out may have been a way of demonstrating and preserving integrity and self-esteem.

For some young people, it's a bad "groove." They can make their way through it easily enough with a hand up and they're on their way. For others, it's a little more complicated. They have almost every problem imaginable: crime, running away from home, drug abuse, violence, behavioural and identity problems, no network, mental health problems, etc.

Organizations that work with these young people say that support providers even go to their apartment if they don't get up in the morning. They help them make regular adjustments to their learning plan, redirect them, offer them psychosocial assistance so that they can gradually take a step forward. This process slowly leads to a plan. Over time, hope replaces defeatism, self-destruction: the person faces reality and his or her existence is enriched.

Interventions require creativity and flexibility. By making the young people accountable, by helping young people define their expectations, we can encourage them to take small steps, to achieve small successes. With patience and commitment, the support provider must earn the trust of these young people, who have been hurt in their relationships. He or she must be prepared to deal with the instability of these young people in search of meaning in their lives, who are tentatively trying to carve out a place for themselves. It is sometimes necessary to help them differentiate between wants and needs, to put down roots; we must be able to help them organize their lives within a flexible framework and give them guidelines to follow. In order to help them persevere in their learning plan, the support provider must remain vigilant as they move from one service to another in order to avoid their falling between the cracks. For those who need it, support services continue with a partner organization. There must then be agreements and appropriate ways of doing things. The following is what one support provider had to say about a young person who went from one service to another.

They are used to our way of dealing with them. They get to another service and they come back upset. "They don't understand, I took time off and I had problems. I couldn't take it any more. I needed to take a step back."

These comments demonstrate the importance of accepting young people as they are and being aware of their reality, which becomes apparent only in a supportive and trusting ongoing relationship. Why do young people drop out yet again after seeking out services? They have their share of responsibility, but some people insist that support providers must take immediate action, hence the importance of introducing reference points, one or more meaningful relationships to support students' efforts. It is important to remember that these young people's lives have been marked by sometimes extremely hurtful relationships. Small gestures can make all the difference between returning to square one and continuing to build their lives.

We observed that there are periods in which support services are particularly important. If there is no relationship of trust at first, it is very difficult. After a time, they begin to take time off and, gradually, if we don't do anything to help, they get away from us. On the other hand, if the relationship was very good, they come back regularly after they have implemented their learning plan and we take it from there. But we always have to be there. One difficulty and bingo, they drop out. They are cyclical: one day everything is great and the next, everything is horrible.

The support providers who work with these young people identify the factors that could lead to foster success: they would need to experience success, however small, as soon as possible; we need to help them develop a learning plan that meets their expectations, even if it is only to persevere till the end. If the end is too far off, they will tend to drop out. It is therefore important to help them develop the ability to wait for greater satisfaction. We can encourage them to get up in the morning or to go to bed earlier at night, to acquire lifestyle habits that involve attendance and stability. This type of support takes time; it is an act of faith and of trust in the other person. As the saying goes, it takes the whole village to raise a child to adulthood.

And what about older people? Do they have the same experiences or are they different? Based on our meetings, the answer to both questions is yes. Some of their problems are similar to those experienced by young people, for example, drug abuse, couple problems, dependence on welfare, financial problems. Many of them are not thinking about the future: they just want to improve their financial situation and to break free from poverty. They want to be recognized and listened to, and they want their actions to have tangible results.

People aged 45 and over have a certain amount of work experience. They are prepared to return to school for a short time provided they get results.

They need to make readjustments and review their beliefs with respect to themselves and their environment. More often than not, they want a job that gives them a sense of self-worth and to have their experience recognized and put to good use. A record of their experiential learning would help them get a handle on their strengths. Accepting time-related limitations and the prospect of rapid success would help them review what they want to achieve. They are no longer interested in doing just anything. Their record of learning could help them take stock of

the different areas of their life. This introspection could help them realize that some dreams are no longer possible. Support services could help them in this process and reveal new possibilities, consistent with their basic values.

People aged 45 and over would need to set goals, to establish concrete means of achieving them and to receive help putting their situation into perspective. They need to overcome their fears to take a step toward what has meaning for them, to find pleasure in their actions.

With respect to literacy, the organizations we met with pointed out that motivations vary from one person to the next depending on their situation. For example, mothers want to learn to read so that they can help their children with their homework. Men are sometimes forced to take literacy courses in order to find or keep a job. In any case, these people need help acquiring basic language skills. According to an action research project and other studies carried out by Nathalie Lavoie et al. (2004), illiteracy is often a family legacy. Another study identified a correlation between language difficulties, dropping out of school and marginalization. Also, various studies show that, unfortunately, the more a person needs an education, the less he or she will ask for one. The reverse is also true. The more schooling a person has, the more he or she will be inclined to update his or her knowledge on an ongoing basis. Now let's look at mental health problems.

Practitioners at the CLSC have observed an increase in mental health needs related to psychological distress, physical health problems and work-related stress leading to burnout. Of course, CLSCs also deal with every other type of problem. Emploi-Québec statistics concur: the number of people who are incapable of working has increased. These include people with various physical or mental health problems. One CLSC practitioner¹ who works at the centre confirmed this. These are her comments.

I see every type of problem imaginable, including physical problems, severe anxiety, and mental health problems. Unfortunately, I meet these students in a crisis situation and I can't follow up with them on a long-term basis because I don't have the time (nine hours a week, next year: five half-days).

All of the organizations we met with confirm that their clients suffer from mental health problems as severe as suicidal tendencies. These serious difficulties require interventions other than those offered in most centres. It is therefore essential, according to these organizations, to establish close collaboration and, as far as possible, to provide a network of support services.

3.4.3.2 Partners' perception of support services

Each organization has its support and follow-up mechanisms based on its mission and functions. Each organization recognizes the importance of assisting people who want to

1. The CLSC lends the centre its social work technician and the cost is shared by Emploi-Québec and the centre.

establish a selfplan. They also realize that anyone can require more or less substantial and sustained support services. According to the practitioners we interviewed, people could be on a continuum of self-sufficiency, ranging from a personal ability to take charge of their life with the support of a social network to a total lack of self-sufficiency and the absence of a social network. Many people have specific needs that, on occasion, require joint action to help them stay on course between one service and another. The partner organizations noted that interventions often came too late, causing the student to drop out and to have difficulty returning to school later on. Some people have a passing need for support services; others are relatively seriously afflicted and require long-term psychosocial assistance and significant support services to heal their hurts.

In response to the question about their perception of support services, many answered that just being there is important, but that there must be a certain connection in the form of phone calls, invitations and so on. These contacts help students develop the reflex of coming to us when things go wrong. It is therefore an attitude rather than behaviour: being there, ensuring a constant presence.

According to the partners, each student should be met with quickly, and an appropriate plan of action should be developed. Support services make it possible to adjust the learning plan—sometimes scrapping it and starting over—or to give it new meaning. A person who has experienced failure must be met with quickly; otherwise he or she will lose motivation and start thinking about dropping out again.

In support services, the practitioner and the adult move from point A to point B together, the adult determining where point B is.

The client is my teammate, I provide services; if he or she gives up there's not much I can do.

According to the partners, support services involve welcoming, listening to, respecting and understanding adults and recognizing their experiences. They also involve showing adults that they have value on the job market and making sure they do not feel alone.

Support services are often qualitative in nature and require considerable flexibility on the part of the organization to adapt to various circumstances and needs of students: those in a work-study program; those who give up and leave; those who need to be pushed and cajoled into questioning their situations thus allowing for the emergence of a personal plan; those who need customized training; those who are starting or completing detoxification treatments; or those who need to meet in a group to review their progress and their learning plans. The support provider must be attentive to the adult and set aside his or her own perceptions of what the adult's life should be. It requires considerable listening skills and humility to help persons understand that they can find their own way and that, if necessary, someone will be available to help them with the unfamiliar and the frightening. This support provider proposes a structure, is

capable of being firm without being brutal, and can supervise the adult's progress in a meeting where sympathy reigns and where each party plays the appropriate role.

3.4.3.3 Partnership

The partners we met with expressed needs in terms of follow-up and the continuity of services. Some administrative actions have already been taken, sometimes through unofficial calls among acquaintances. It seems necessary to make these collaborations official, to adopt a common language and, especially, to find an effective and simple way of providing follow-up and support services. The challenge is in the ability to test ways of building bridges, to suggest innovative solutions that go beyond the sometimes rigid structures and shake up old habits and that can work well in some contexts but not so well in others.

It requires a change of culture, each organization has its own way of doing things and we need to see what each one is prepared to do. Their intentions are good; we need to establish formal procedures.

Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette could assign a support provider to meet with adults attending our centre and start building a relationship.

Referral could work both ways, it takes openness on both sides.

An operating protocol should be set up to facilitate transitions and we could have meetings once or twice a year to adjust our actions.

Some organizations point out that even if they provide support services, interventions are erratic and sometimes come too late because of the lack of official relations between the services. The adult drops out and we're back to square one.

When we refer an adult, we could quickly join forces with the partner if a difficulty arises. We need an evaluation, to know who did what, to meet with the person most likely to have this information and to agree with the person on an adapted plan of action.

When teachers see that a student is putting off his or her exams, is starting to take time off and is falling behind, we could meet with the student and refer him or her right away. Otherwise he or she ends up in the director's office for a more "authoritarian" intervention, although even this meeting can be part of a support process.

When people are in crisis, they need to be met with immediately.

Some organizations are prepared to come to the centre to present their services and establish relationships. They would like to be invited to establish relationships of trust that would have an impact on their operations. They are asking for follow-up mechanisms. The partners we met with are prepared to work in close collaboration to develop tools and procedures for this research project, and also to ensure ongoing collaboration. One of the partners recommended adopting appropriate support services for our students, then opening up to external partners and proceeding step by step.

Some partners realize that all organizations will soon have reception, counselling, support, referral and follow-up (SARCA) services. We need to be careful not to duplicate services and end up with what we are trying to avoid, i.e. having such well-developed reception services that the adult ends up in every organization in town. Also, they recommend that the tools used allow for closer follow-up and spare the adult the need to repeat the same story or process several times.

The partners' suggestions could be summarized as follows.

- That one support provider in each service be assigned to establishing relationships unless the adult requests another support provider;
- That the adult have a simple file containing an evaluation, a description of steps taken, a list of people he or she met with and any recommendations made;
- That the adult be present, depending on the need and the situation, so that he or she is aware of the process;
- That operating mechanisms or protocols allow for follow-up in the referring organization;
- That support services be provided quickly in order to act effectively and prevent the adult from dropping out;
- That organizations have the flexibility needed to provide support services, adopt innovative ways of doing things on occasion, meet over coffee; that a practitioner from another organization be invited to meet with the adult in a private office at the centre;
- That information and communications flow freely and more frequently;
- That it be possible to react quickly to certain situations;
- That it be possible to adapt support services to the adult's specific needs;
- That spaces be created to enable adults to take a break and express themselves, even if it is against the rules, which requires judgement;
- That programs be developed to alternate with observation or other types of practicums in order to keep the adult in school;
- That support providers be more aware of their milieu;

- That the adult be treated as a whole person, with financial, social, family, occupational and academic concerns;
- That support providers work closely with external services and that they make periodic adjustments to enhance and maintain the relationship of trust and improve interdepartmental support practices;
- That relationships be established from both sides;
- That administrative considerations respond to the needs of the adult and not be a hindrance to support services.

3.4.3.4 Second meeting with partners

We held a second meeting with partners in order to implement referral and follow-up mechanisms.

At this meeting, a support instrument to give the adult access to partners was suggested. The form proposed (the adult being the owner of his or her own file) was rejected for ethical and practical reasons.

Here are the recommendations that were made:

- That we work more closely together and invite organizations and adults to share information about our respective programs and services and to raise our profile among adults in the different organizations and in the centre.
- That Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette have a liaison-person who would establish links with partners; when necessary, he or she would inform an adult of a situation requiring special attention or take quick action in order to avoid “losing” the adult should joint action be required. The preferred means of communication would be the telephone. However, privileged relationships should be created and maintained.
- That there would be an annual meeting of support providers in the different organizations and staff members at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette. The aim of the meeting would be to promote our services, share our missions and achievements and improve our ways of doing things.
- That adults be informed in person of the steps taken in their case.

Although the above recommendations cover several aspects of a joint support services plan, there are still questions that remain to be answered.

1. If the person is placed at the centre of the process, how can he or she be made more accountable and encouraged to take action?

2. How can we help staff members at the different organizations (teachers, support providers, etc.) get to know each other so that they can better refer adults when necessary?
3. How can we prevent the adult from getting bogged down in administrative aspects when support services foster a personal process? How can we avoid getting in the way of each others' missions and roles? Can a person who requests temporary support services from a practitioner and who must switch to another organization continue with these support services for a while? Can the services be provided jointly and in the new organization?
4. If we adopt an interdepartmental support process, how can we agree on a common definition of practices?

In the Bas-Saint-Laurent region and in MRC Rimouski-Neigette, a service was set up to allow for cooperation among organizations for the referral, follow-up and support of adults with difficulties between the ages of 16 and 30. Known as *Communauté ouverte et solidaire pour un monde outillé, scolarisé et en santé (COSMOSS)*, its mission is to foster cooperation among organizations in order to provide better services. Its aims are to facilitate transition in referral, support and follow-up services.

At this time, information materials are being developed to provide better service. The organizations are examining their interventions and referral practices. Hypothetically, to facilitate the transition from one organization to the other when necessary, we determined that one person in each service would act as resource person and that the adult, with the help of the practitioners in the different organizations, would establish a brief plan of action to successfully make the transition from one to the other.

3.5 Presentation of the tools needed for the project

3.5.1 Samples

Students

The sample was made up of 20 students, 10 in adult education and 10 in vocational training. Since the distribution by gender was similar, we selected 10 men and 10 women in their first year. We handed out a group meeting form to every three people with the desired profile. Thus, 20 students were met as a group and the project was explained to them. They were free to choose to participate in the project or to drop out at any time. A consent form informing them of this procedure was developed (see Appendix 10).

Vocational training

20 years of age	20-25	25-30	30-45	45 and over
4 subjects	3 subjects	1 subject	1 subject	1 subject

Adult education

16-17 years of age	18-19	20-24	25 and over
1 subject	3 subjects	4 subjects	2 subjects

Support providers

Five support providers were chosen from the vocational training sector and five, from the adult education sector. The project was presented on the first pedagogical day and those interested gave their names. A workshop was offered at the beginning of September.¹

3.5.2 Support services at the centre

The project ran from Monday, September 13, to Friday, December 10, for a total of 13 weeks. The rest of the month of December was devoted to interviews and to compiling the results of the project. In January and February, the results were analyzed and the report was finalized. We met with the participating students every two weeks for between 30 and 50 minutes, unless they expressed specific needs.

Our procedure was aimed at meeting the main needs expressed, i.e. carrying out the personal plan, making the transition to the learning plan and the school-to-work transition plan, and finding the motivation needed to give meaning to the student's daily actions.

1. A four-day workshop enabled participants to integrate the different theoretical concepts so that they could apply them. Practical needs were dealt with in a one-day workshop.

Table 7
Schedule

Date	Step	Activity
End of August 2004	Meet with the advisory committee	Present results to date and coming activities
August 23 to September 3, 2004	Select candidates	Prepare reception employees and future students
September 6 to 11, 2004	Meet with candidates	Explain the procedure, discuss research ethics and requirements
August 23 to September 3, 2004	Select support providers	Present the procedure and offer a one-day workshop
September 13 to December 10, 2004	Test the support-oriented model	Begin the support process
September 13 to December 10, 2004	Meet with support providers during the process	Discuss their practices and the necessary adjustments; share ideas
December 13 to 21, 2004	Meet with selected students	Conduct interviews to compile impressions Organize a focus group and meet with others in semi-structured interviews
January to February 4, 2005	Analyze the results	Prepare the report with observations and recommendations

3.5.3 Support needs

Many needs were identified during the research interviews. Several of them were met by the mechanisms in place. The support-oriented model is not a miracle cure, but it should have an impact on certain elements that we presume are key to a student's learning plan. Below is a synthesis of the needs raised by students, staff members and partners, as well as those identified in the available documents.

Table 8
Support and Related Needs

Needs identified by students	Needs identified by partners and staff members, and other needs
▪ To learn to make a budget ▪ To have a self plan; find meaning; why the need for an SSD or DVS, for a goal; guidance ▪ To find balance between school, work and family ▪ To get help with their children ▪ To have fun ▪ To talk to someone when things aren't going so well ▪ To be informed about the centre from the outset ▪ To move, be active, not to be sitting down all day at a desk ▪ To be considered, that someone show an interest in them ▪ To develop a sense of belonging, to recognize themselves in others ▪ To have each student's learning styles taken into account ▪ To be motivated to carry out their learning plan ▪ To feel self-worth, to develop self-esteem and self-confidence ▪ To maintain privileged contact with the teacher ▪ To take control of their life ▪ To be supported when making the transition to other services ▪ To be encouraged ▪ To learn to assert themselves ▪ To be with people their own age ▪ To be with people at their own level so that they can help each other ▪ To try out new problem-solving models ▪ To get closer to the job market	▪ To share tools and to improve cooperation ▪ To have information flow between staff members at the centre and partners ▪ To provide support services adapted to their age and level of development (students) ▪ To reflect on their career choice (students) ▪ To make their learning plan their own while taking their social environment (parents, spouse) into account (students) ▪ To see the real issues at stake (students) ▪ To receive personalized support services (students) ▪ According to staff members, the subjective statistics are as follows. General education ▪ 25% have problems requiring more intense support services and perhaps even the help of a specialist ▪ 65% need support services with follow-up advice, a sympathetic ear and adjustments to their course of action ▪ 10% have hardly any support needs other than the need for encouragement to persevere Vocational training ▪ 15% have difficulties that require more intense support services and perhaps even the help of a specialist ▪ 50% need support services, follow-up, a sympathetic ear and adjustments to their course of action ▪ 35% need ad hoc support services, encouragement to persevere ▪ Needs of students from outside the Rimouski area. They can feel isolated or a sense of shock due to their newly acquired freedom and the responsibility of taking

Needs identified by students	Needs identified by partners and staff members, and other needs
	charge of their life. Also, they often have needs related to housing and transportation. Some are forced to work. ▪ Need for concentration, not to be disturbed in class ▪ Need for a greater variety of resources ▪ Need for childcare services ▪ Need for alternate solutions when the centre is no longer where the student needs to be (in collaboration with partners in building bridges) ▪ Need to act quickly when indicators show a drop in performance or motivation

3.5.4 Methodology used in support meetings

Now let's take a look at what happened in the support meetings. We met with the students in the sample every two weeks to discuss the past, the future and actions to be taken. Six support meetings were held over the course of 13 weeks. The aim was to welcome the students, listen to them empathetically in order to learn what they expect out of life, get them to reveal what they are going through and have them confirm what they are working toward. One or two topics were addressed at the meetings. The list of topics was based on Philibert and Wiel (1998) and Limoges (2001).

Figure 2
Support Process and the Different Types of Plans

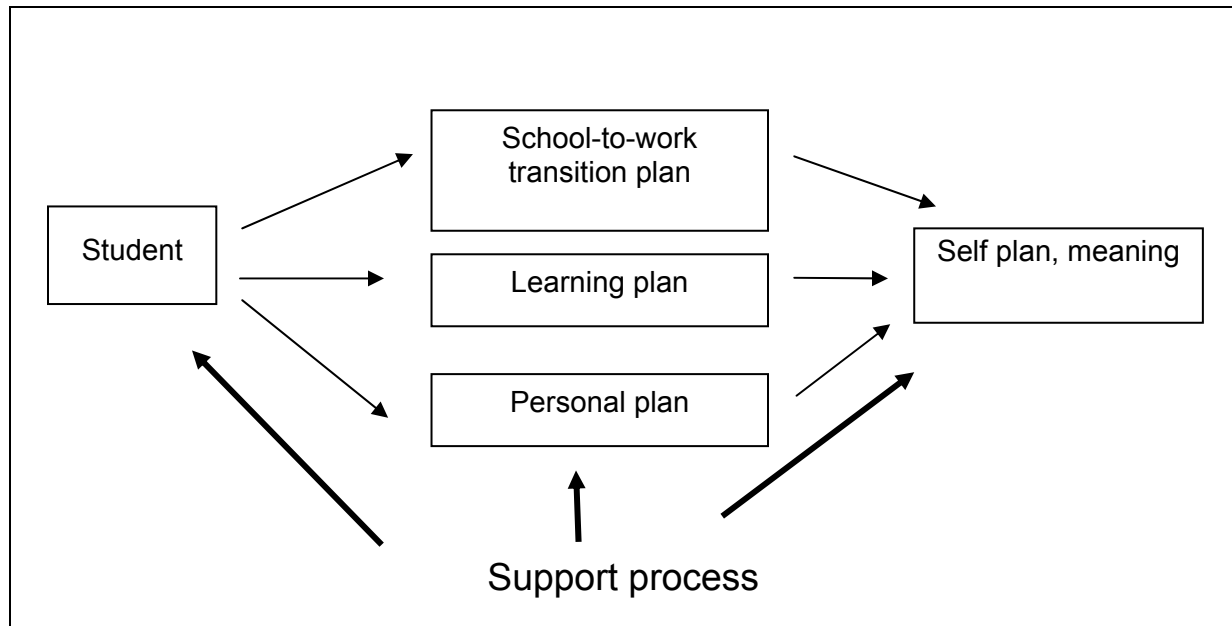


Figure 3
Support and the Key Benefits of Work

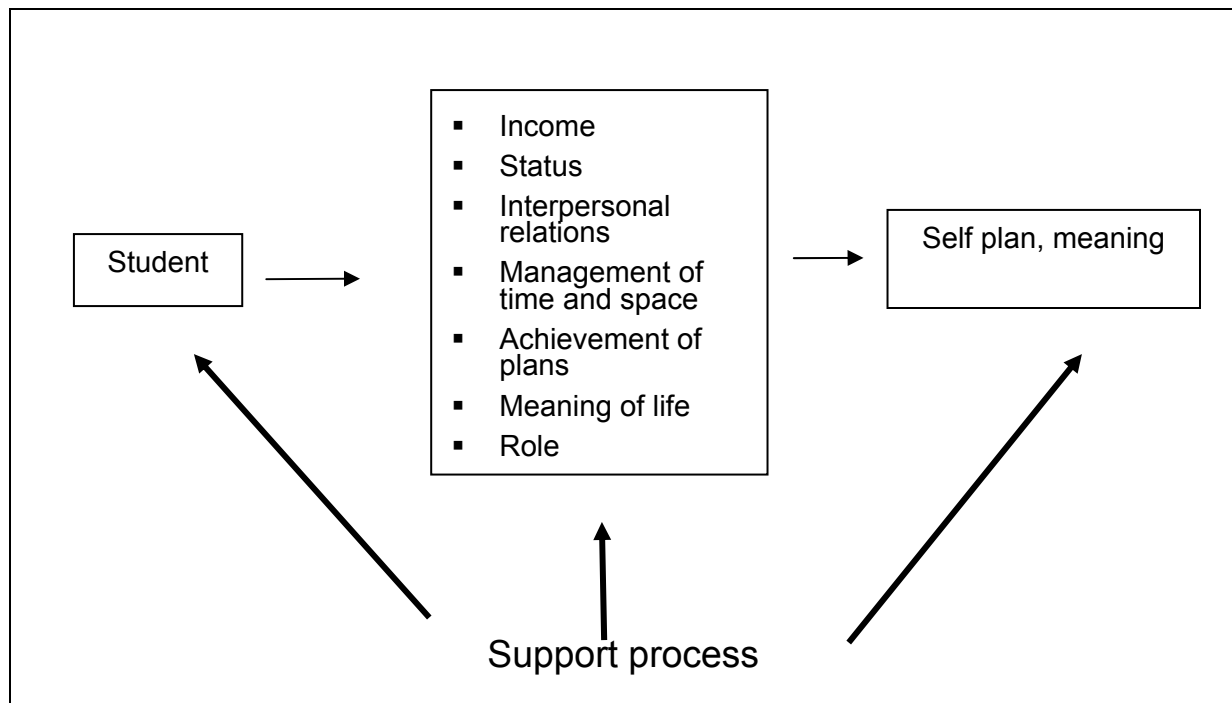
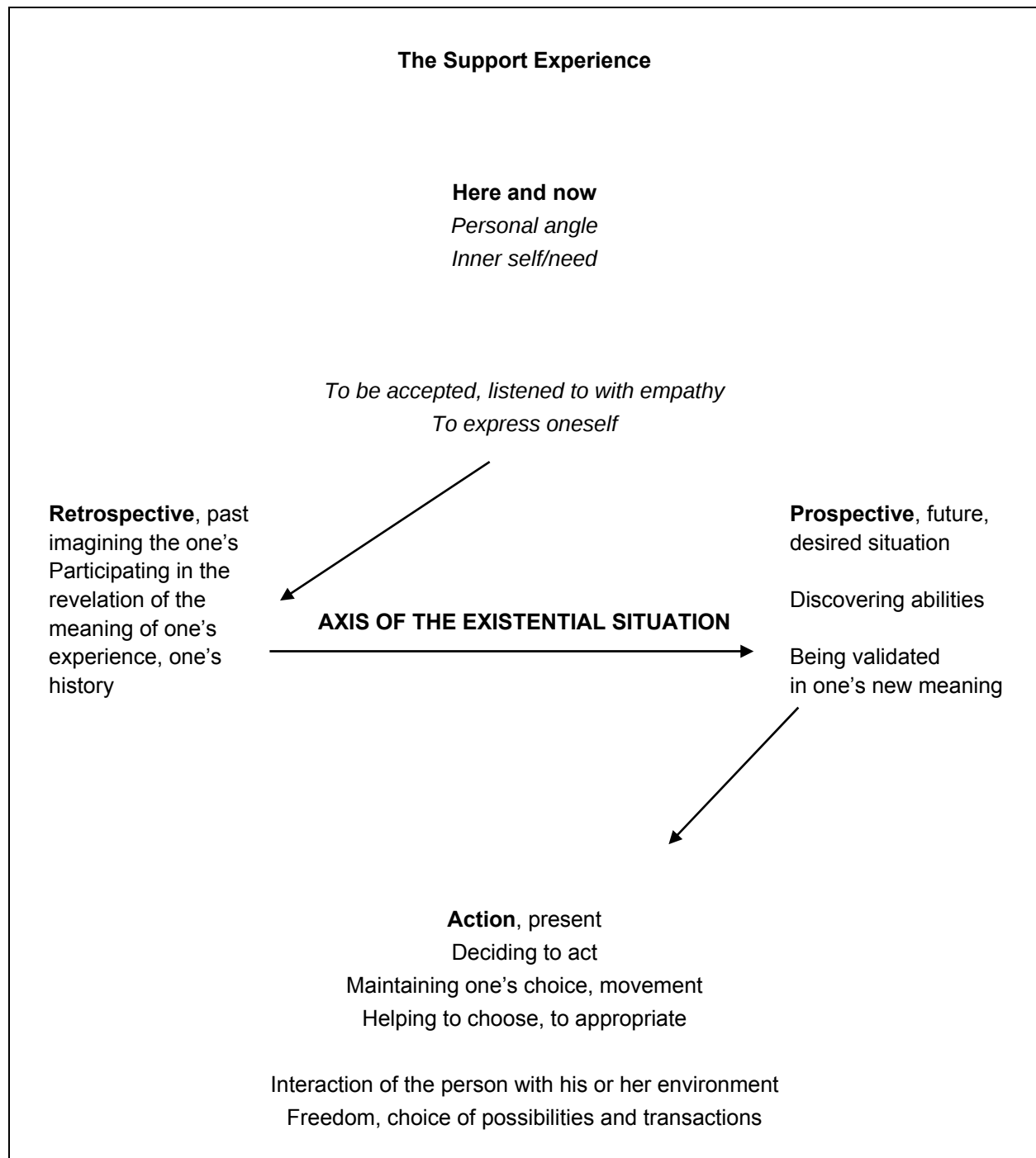


Figure 4
The Support Process Seen From Different Points of View
 Based on Philibert and Wiel (1998) and Limoges (2001)



Whether with respect to the different types of plans or the key benefits of work, each meeting addressed the three phases: retrospective, prospective and action, bearing in mind that support is not always based on results.

According to our theoretical model, described in Appendix 15, it is through this relationship—which represents the bridge—that students fine-tune their self plan. It is the relationship itself that helps.

We will now address the topics discussed and present a table of the content of the meetings. Adults show up for support services with their past, questions, concerns and the hope for a better future. They are in a particular place and they are filled with thoughts and emotions. Welcoming a person means accepting him or her as he or she is. It is necessary to take the time needed to make a connection: the relationship is just as important as the content to be addressed at each meeting. It is important, even before starting a meeting, to verify where the student is, what he or she is thinking and feeling, and accept his or her thoughts, emotions, intentions and behaviours. This is a personalized process, shaped by the fact that there are no expectations. The suggested topics serve as a backdrop and are not ends in themselves. The meetings are aimed at helping adults establish and develop their self plan. The steps in these meetings can be described as follows.

1. Establish a connection, an essential starting point.
2. Lend a sympathetic ear.
3. In relation with the suggested topics (the different types of plans, the key benefits of work), do a review to clarify the person's thoughts. (At this stage, it is important to focus on the person's successes and achievements, which can be used as a springboard, while examining what could be improved.)
4. Discover and explore possibilities. Where does the person want to be?
5. Make decisions and apply them. In life, the person will have to make additions, subtractions and equivalences.
6. End the meeting. Verify what the person is taking away, what he or she has learned about himself or herself.

It is necessary to always pay attention to the person's feelings and needs. Now let's take a look at what we mean by certain terms.

The retrospective/prospective/action approach is an attempt to fill the gap between what is, what has been and what will be. These three aspects are based on the work of Limoges et al. (2001).¹ According to these authors, the different types of plans, because they have meaning, channel the person's energies. Also, the process focuses on the person's commitment to

1. For further information, see the practitioner's workshop guide, pp. 33 to 42.

himself or herself. The process is aimed at achieving inner harmony among feelings, thoughts, aspirations and actions, while support services focus on alignment and congruence. Although the person is a student and not a worker, the seven key benefits of work are universal needs and, in this sense, the person must learn to satisfy them, thereby putting all chances on his or her side to successfully complete his or her learning plan, which becomes a relationship between the person and the centre. The following is a description of the key benefits of work.

Table 9 presents a process that includes the different types of plans, the key benefits of work and the three aspects of support services, i.e. retrospective, prospective and action

Table 9
The Support Process

Line of action	First meeting		Second meeting	Third meeting		Fourth meeting		Fifth meeting			Sixth meeting
	Learning plan	School-to-work transition plan	Personal plan	Income	Status	Interpersonal relations	Management of time and space	Achievement of plans	Meaning of life	Role	Progress report
Retro-spective											
Prospective											
Action											
Follow-up, if necessary											

Several topics can be addressed in a single meeting. The topics can be dealt with in the proposed sequence, but the table is designed to be flexible. What is important is to be attentive to the person's needs and to accompany him or her from one topic to the next. At the fifth meeting, the person should be informed that there is only one meeting left. The sixth meeting will close the loop, allowing the participants to take stock and share their experiences. It is important to take the time needed for separation.

3.5.5 Workshop for support providers

For the purposes of this research project, a one-day workshop was offered. However, with a process like the one we are proposing, two days are needed to integrate the related method and knowledge. Ideally, there should be a two-day workshop and meetings to make adjustments so that support providers can stay on course and adapt their interventions.

Aim of the workshop for support providers

By experimenting and using shared theoretical concepts, support providers should adopt their own “posture” (see Appendix 15) for helping adults with their project. The general objective includes several intermediate objectives. Thus support providers should learn to:

- see themselves as support service providers and find their “posture” as support providers in relation to the theory and the model
- become proficient in the theory and practice of nonviolent communication (NVC)
- situate themselves in the retrospective/prospective/action approach with respect to the different types of plans:
 - learning plan
 - personal plan
 - school-to-work transition plan

and, with respect to the seven key benefits of work:

- income
- status
- management of time and space
- interpersonal relations
- completion of plans
- meaning of life
- role

3.5.6 Internal support tools

- A logbook for recording thoughts and observations.
- A list of the topics addressed (the different types of plans and the key benefits of work) in meetings with adults.
- A document for support providers summarizing the support process and its objectives.

3.5.7 Intradepartmental tools

Internally, after a number of discussions, it was suggested that support providers should communicate more often in person or over the telephone in cases in which a student moves from one service to another within the centre (guidance counsellor, social worker, etc.), so we need a tool that will save the student from having to repeat the same information and provide better support for his or her success and the realization of his or her dreams.

That is why we suggested emphasizing communication. Paper tools were rejected. Professionals expressed a desire to develop the reflex of communicating more amongst themselves. Also, with a view to increasing accountability, students are given the option of sharing their progress with their teacher, on a basis of trust.

3.5.8 Interdepartmental support services

Implementation of the process of building bridges between the different services

For the purposes of this research project, the group was selected randomly. Therefore, we cannot predict which person will need to deal with an external service. This process is associated with several goals, including prevention, cooperation, transparency and effectiveness in order to establish a certain synergy.

According to the data gathered in interviews with the organizations, the use of the telephone is sufficient insofar as contact is frequent and personalized in order to establish a relationship of trust. Thus, students have the advantage of obtaining appropriate services, being received quickly and not having to repeat their needs because the person in front of them already knows about them. In a spirit of transparency and accountability, they receive the information they need either in person or over the phone. They are responsible for their file and can validate it. According to our theoretical principles (Appendix 15), the advantages for the support provider include follow-up for students and an understanding of their course of action and of changes in their situation. He or she can then provide better services. Partners can also quickly situate themselves with respect to the need; they know what has been done and where the student is now, enabling them to meet the student's needs.

Where necessary, and to facilitate transitions and the flow of information, a person at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette would act as liaison between the student, the support provider and the partner.



Chapter 4



Analysis of Results

Before we begin this chapter, let's take a look at our initial question: "Could support services help raise adults' awareness and encourage them to develop and implement a personal plan, a learning plan and school-to-work transition plan?" In other words, can the support provider facilitate the student's maturation process over a given period using a given approach; accompany him or her in the emergence of self? In order to place ourselves in the appropriate context and to see whether the process has been able to make up for certain shortcomings, we will review some of the needs expressed by students that could justify the support process and the proposed model.

Table 10
Summary of Support Needs

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To have a self plan, find meaning, set goals ▪ To receive guidance services ▪ To find balance between school, work and family ▪ To get help with their children ▪ To talk to someone when things aren't going so well ▪ To be considered, that someone show an interest in them (especially shy students) ▪ To develop a sense of belonging, to recognize themselves in others ▪ To try out new problem-solving models (sometimes students just need a new perspective in order to solve their problem) ▪ To get closer to the job market. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To be motivated to carry out their learning plan; to feel self-worth, to develop self-esteem and self-confidence ▪ To maintain privileged contact with the teacher ▪ According to the social work technician, to take control of their life, solve financial or material problems—including food—conjugal difficulties and violence, mental health, drug and alcohol abuse, high-risk pregnancy, etc. ▪ To be supported when making the transition to other services ▪ To learn to assert themselves. |
|--|---|

Action research takes place in a natural context and not in a lab where there is an attempt to control certain parameters. The results can be seen along the way, which can lead to adjustments and ongoing improvement. In this case, we added a new element without interfering with the structure of the centre. In a way, we parachuted the support-oriented service model into the centre in order to analyze its effects and understand the variables to be retained or modified in its application.

We begin with a brief evaluation of the workshop offered to support providers and an examination of the transfer of knowledge and competencies. The data provided by the support providers and those provided by the students will then be analyzed.

4.1 Workshop evaluation and the transfer of knowledge

Ten support providers attended the one-day workshop. It was understood from the outset that they would meet six times with each of two students.

The data on the workshop evaluation and the transfer of knowledge was collected by means of a direct survey and a preliminary evaluation, followed by a second evaluation halfway through the workshop (Appendixes 8 and 9).

Workshop for Support providers

Terminal objective

To provide the support providers, using theoretical and experimental concepts, with all the tools they need to provide support services for students with respect to the different types of plans and the seven key benefits of work.

The different types of plans

- Personal plan
- Learning plan
- School-to-work transition plan

Key benefits of work

- Income
- Status
- Interpersonal relations
- Management of time and space
- Completion of plans
- Meaning of life
- Role

Intermediate objectives

- To situate themselves as support service providers and to find their “posture” in relation to the theory and the model
- To become proficient in the theory and practice of nonviolent communication (NVC)
- To situate themselves with respect to the different types of plans and the key benefits of work, in a retrospective/prospective/action approach
- To learn to use different support tools internally and externally

Topics addressed

- The conceptual framework of support services
- The support provider profile and the necessary skills
- The client profile
- The functions of support services
- When are we no longer providing support? When should the adult be referred to another service?
- The basis of nonviolent communication (NVC)
- Intra- and interdepartmental support services
- The elements associated with a support process (the proposed model)

To evaluate the workshop, we used an unofficial questionnaire at the end of the day, and another evaluation halfway through the workshop (Appendixes 8 and 9).

Both tools address the objectives, content and methodology, the contribution of the resource person, support and supervision, learning and the transfer of knowledge.

Ratings: 1 = disagree; 2 = agree somewhat; 3 = mostly agree; 4 = completely agree; N/A = not applicable.

Workshop evaluation and support providers' comments

A. Objectives, content and methodology

- Participants mostly agree (3) and completely agree (4) with the statements, except for the number of hours spent raising awareness and explaining the tools used in the support process. We can therefore conclude that some of the learning objectives were achieved.
 - We recommend, for this type of program, that there be a half-day or daylong workshop to introduce support providers to support services and for their first support

meeting. Two other half-days could be devoted to the consolidation of learning and preparation for answering questions. The next point is extremely important: workshops and meetings for support providers provide an opportunity for mutual assistance, which was greatly appreciated, especially at the meeting halfway through the process.

A longer workshop with learning situations and time to practise listening methods.

Spread the workshop out over at least two days. Take more time to explain organizational and operational details.

For now, I don't quite know where to start.

Not enough time to read the documentation.

B. The resource person

- The instructor was well informed; he presented the content using a hands-on approach. He scored mostly 4s, followed by 3s.

C. Support and supervision

- Ratings ranged from 2 to 4. It was too hot in the room. The balance between work and training does not seem to be always easy since replacements must be found in order to avoid penalizing the students, especially in vocational training.
 - Plan schedules taking into account the modules the students are studying and the strategic times of the year.
 - Find a more comfortable room.

D. Learning and the transfer of learning

- Ratings ranged from 4 to 2. Participants found the workshop too short and they could not practise providing support as much as they would have liked.
 - The application of the recommendations in point A would facilitate the integration and transfer of learning.

Comments:

Some concerns for the first meeting, where to start?¹

The workshop should be spread out over at least two days.

How to reconcile this project with my regular duties?

How to provide services without taking it all on myself?

Practise more learning situations in the workshop.

Evaluation halfway through the workshop

The aim of this evaluation is mainly to measure the immediate benefits of the workshop and the perception support providers have of support.

- Most rated the statement “The activity enabled me to acquire new competencies” 3, followed by a few 4s and a 2. With respect to the duration of the workshop, which participants found a little short, the ratings for statement 8, “I have the tools I need to apply what I learned in the workshop,” ranged between 2 and 4.

Comments:

Better observation, better questions to make it possible to understand needs, with a touch of nonviolent communication.

Observation and listening.

Empathetic listening.

Listening, elements of their plan of action, balance in their personal lives.

The questionnaire in the first meeting, directing discussions around the three types of plans and the seven key benefits.

Rosenberg's nonviolent communication and Limoges' retrospective/prospective/action approach.

1. Some support providers requested tools to make a connection with the client, to facilitate the relationship. We therefore prepared tools to deal with the topics addressed, which was greatly appreciated. This help would also be appreciated in later meetings.

- A longer workshop would better equip support providers to begin the process and set the meetings in motion. In this sense, having content breaks the ice and facilitates alliances.
- All but one agreed that their approach changed with students and that the workshop helped improve their motivation.
- One of the benefits observed is that the relationship with the student in class changes and the teacher and student become closer. The concepts also worked for other students in need.

Comment:

Our relationship in class changed, I became closer to my student participants and even to other students.

We selected two essay-type questions for analysis.

What environmental factors could be improved to facilitate the application of the support process and what do you observe in the student at this stage?

The observations on the environment are as follows:

- There is enough time to go through the process with two students, but it would have been more difficult with a larger group.
- We need a private room for support meetings, for confidentiality and comfort.
- We need to change the current mentoring approach and enhance it with a support process.
- We need more internal and external resources to guide students based on their needs and to become familiar with these resources.
- We must foster meetings between support providers, so that they can help each other.
- The workshops should be longer.

Busy schedule, multiple tasks, a lot of adult students to have relationships with, discipline problems in class, large groups, no resources for referral.

Be familiar with all the resources.

Change the current mentoring approach for a support approach.

Time, place, joint services.

Places for meetings, recognized time out of the schedule, meetings with other teachers.

The time I have available to provide support services for adult students in need.

Support services could eventually be integrated into teachers' duties.

The organization of time, places for meetings. The harmonization of the centre's discourse and we still get by with what we have.

The observations about students are as follows.

- Greater motivation and improved self-esteem
- A better handle on the here and now
- Better student-teacher relationships
- Better integration into school life and a better definition of the personal plan
- A new vocational plan, so they're exploring a plan B
- Perseverance in carrying out the learning plan

A little more motivation.

Their motivation seems to have improved. A better handle on the here and now (myself and the student).

Motivation and better integration into school life.

They are both exploring a plan B, since plan A can be less satisfactory. They discovered that during the support process.

Improved motivation and self-esteem.

Better relationship between the student and the teacher. Shows an interest in the support project. Better communication. More involved in their personal plan.

The above recommendations were made at the meeting halfway through the session. They are accompanied by comments from support providers.

- Offer adult students credit courses in nonviolent communication.

- Hold structured meetings with support providers so that they can share their experiences and help each other. (Vocational training and general education support providers appreciated being together.)
- Implement a wide-scale support system.
- Offer this training to all staff at the centre and all adult students.

Consider offering students credit courses in nonviolent communication.

This workshop should be offered to all teachers, managers and administrators.

I think that this approach should be more widespread.

Important process for young adults looking for meaning in their learning and in their life.

Need more time (to share with other teachers). A half-day is not enough to discuss and apply.

In my opinion, a support system should be implemented.

4.2 Support providers' evaluation of the project

The project began in mid-September and ended in December of the same year. Of the ten support providers, one left on sick leave at the beginning of the project and was not replaced. Her adult students were notified and the process was cancelled. Another teacher, finding her schedule too busy, did not provide her two students with support services. This situation will be taken into account in our analysis.

We used different tools to collect data. Observations and comments received throughout the process were recorded in a logbook. At the halfway point, a half-day was set aside for an evaluation and, at the end, a full day. A questionnaire was also filled out.

We met with the support providers individually as needed. These meetings enabled us to identify certain needs and to adjust our interventions.

4.2.1 Highlights of the individual meetings and the half-day meeting halfway through the project

The support providers encountered specific situations and needed to talk about them. For example, one student was confrontational, and the teacher found the relationship destabilizing.

I don't know what to do any more with my student, he confronts me in class and I can't seem to stand up to him.

In another case, a student who lives away from home lost her mother and sister in a car accident over the summer.

The student lost her mother and sister over the summer. She comes from another region and I think she is being manipulated by her boyfriend. I think she is in distress. She needs help, that's for sure, and probably from an external resource.

These examples show just how important it is that support providers help each other and meet with a resource person as needed along the way to share ideas, clear their heads and equip themselves to deal with borderline or complex situations, to know when to refer someone to another service and to learn how, when necessary.

Some support providers mentioned that it is difficult to reconcile support services with their other tasks. Because of a lack of time, the support services required more careful planning.

There isn't enough time.

Organization of time, places for meetings.

The time I have available to provide support services.

One of the criteria used to select students was that the support provider be their teacher. At first, one general education student was moved to another class, which concerned the support provider. Since then, a slight preference has been given to the support providers' students, but other arrangements are also permitted.

That my student was moved to another class concerned me, but I realized that it wasn't important, it was more a question of trust and relationships.

All of the support providers observed changes in the relationship between teacher and adult student in the classroom. The personal contact makes it possible to get beyond traditional roles and establish a more genuine relationship. Students made the same observation. Such contact

allows adult students to get to know the teacher on a more human level. We will return to this topic in our analysis of students' comments.

I felt closer to my student participants. It extended to other students and even outside the usual framework.

Meeting of two human beings instead of two roles.

A student:

I realized that there was a person behind the scowl.

The fact that support tools were available (see Appendix 11 for an example of a tool for students) to begin the project was very much appreciated and also recommended. It broke the ice at meetings. These tools gave support providers a sense of security, improved the relationship between the two people and helped trigger the adult student's thought process.

For now I don't quite know where to start.

With respect to the questionnaire used and requested by support providers:

The questionnaire helped us take stock for the first meeting.

4.2.2 Evaluation and analysis of the questionnaire followed by a discussion and recommendations

At the daylong meeting, we examined experiences, the impact of the topics on support providers and adult students, and recommendations concerning the feasibility of a support-oriented service model. The final minutes were spent with administrators and a few guests in order to present the project and trigger a thought process to come up with possible follow-up to this research project.

We will now present and analyze the different points addressed at the meeting. We are including the analysis of the multiple-choice questionnaires when they shed additional light. They were filled out at the very end of the support meetings. Comments were accepted for some questions. The evaluation was divided into the following categories: support concepts, support practices, the student receiving support, and for the future (see Appendix 13).

The following topics were addressed on our final day with support providers.

1. Problems and needs of young adults
2. Analysis and relevance of the three types of plans and the seven key benefits of work
3. Impact of the support process on the student with respect to the initial goal

4. Discussion about support meetings: difficulties, successes, etc.
5. Appropriateness of the theory underlying support services and topics addressed at the meetings:
 - approach (retrospective/prospective/action, as well as the backdrop for support services, or NVC), Kohlberg's and Loevinger's theories and addition of basic elements of the theories
 - learning plan, career plan, school-to-work transition plan
 - seven key benefits of work
6. Procedure with respect to each person's situation:
 - number of meetings and time allotted for each
 - strengths and weaknesses of the procedure
 - recommendations
 - need for resources and support in the community
7. Different scenarios for the implementation of a similar model
8. Summary of the advantages of such a procedure in an adult education centre or vocational training centre
9. Recognition of each participant's contribution.

4.2.3 Problems and needs of young adults

In interviewing the support providers, we wanted to learn about the different needs expressed. Most agreed that these young adults have few opportunities to talk about themselves. They need to be listened to, to be understood and to be empathized with. They need to meet someone who will accept them as they are, where they are, and who will not be limited to his or her usual role. These meetings make it possible to get beyond the superficial and to realize that many of them can be hiding severe distress. If necessary, we will add comments from support providers and young adult students in order to establish a relationship between the two.

Support providers:

Support services enable us to identify problems, but especially to move forward together.

Master and apprentice shared experiences.

Enables us to better understand them.

Young adult students:

That someone pays attention and listens, that they take the time to ask how it's going.

The one hour a week when I left class to do something interesting.

The teacher helped me.

We wanted to see whether there were any differences between the needs of young adult students in vocational training and those in general education. We tread carefully, given the small sample available. We observed that all students have support needs. It appears that, there are more needs with respect to the development of the learning plan in general education. On the other hand, in vocational training, we observed that some young adult students needed to consolidate their choice and be supported in their plan. One student was questioning her career choice because of difficulties in school. She was able to consider her choice more objectively with the help of the support provider, aware that it is an ongoing process. She is still receiving support and, if she feels the need, she will be referred to the guidance counsellor.

My student is having difficulty in vocational training and compares herself to her friend. She is thinking of dropping out and is having serious personal problems. I support her and listen to her, while providing guidelines. She is thinking about her choices and I am there with her.

My student wants to drop out of vocational training because he realized he's not enjoying himself and has other plans. We are talking about it and I ask questions.

We recommend that support be offered in both general education and vocational training.

These meetings seem to provide an opportunity to move forward together, which could improve the adult's self-esteem. That someone is interested and takes the time to listen fosters self-emergence.

Support providers:

Support has an impact on motivation and attendance.

Enables us to move forward together and strengthens ties.

We address all the aspects of personality.

Young adult students:

It's easier to stay motivated.

I enjoy school more. I have a better understanding of why I go to school and where I want to work.

I will always remember that everyone has different needs, that it is important to consider your needs and values in everyday life in order to better understand the choices you make and to have a better opinion of yourself as a person.

The support providers told us that, in a sense, support had the same effect on them. On the one hand, they thought it was a worthwhile effort to provide support and, on the other, they learned a lot about themselves. It is by teaching that we learn. In this context, it would be more accurate to say that it is by developing a relationship with someone else that we develop a relationship with ourselves. As the support providers told us, the process enabled them to think about their own career issues, attitudes and people skills.

A better grasp of the here and now for me and the student.

I found it was a worthwhile effort.

These meetings enable us to develop a relationship that can be transferred to the classroom. Very interesting.

In the random sample used, some young adults had more urgent needs than others who were dealing with everyday difficulties. The needs expressed were very similar to those identified by the members of the focus groups and in the semi-structured interviews at the beginning of the project: shed light on the learning plan; quickly recognize whether the person has the right learning plan; set priorities; mourn a loss; have relationships and break the negative image of the adult, the teacher and the school system; be recognized and recognize themselves; take control of their life and make life decisions; situate themselves with respect to their family; break the isolation; reconcile their personal and school life; reflect on the values learned and those to be retained; consolidate personal plans and decisions; clear their heads when necessary; examine their academic difficulties; look at their motivations; benefit from the experience of a support provider; make life choices; settle conflicts with other teachers (for two students); etc. We see that students discuss subjects that extend beyond life at school into their personal life. Serious relationship needs were identified: learn how to communicate, to explain who they are, to explain their emotional universe and their inner thoughts while becoming aware of their vital needs with respect to their peers and their teachers. We see that teachers are frontline workers. The strategic position they hold enables them to quickly detect problems and intervene appropriately.

Providing this person with support services enabled me to see that she was mourning a difficult loss.

Way of seeing what students are experiencing outside school walls, to understand them better. Being a frontline worker to refer them.

Young adults who “stall” are easier to detect.

4.2.4 Impact of the process on the student

Support services appear to help students understand and accept an institution’s limitations. Through privileged contact, they can negotiate, qualify, take the time to talk and work together toward a better understanding of life rules—or of life itself—have a genuine relationship based on real things and throw out the lifeline before the student drops out. Students would become more aware and develop their ability to choose, take responsibility, even have an impact on their surroundings, make adjustments and negotiate. In a word, they could learn to take a stand and build in conjunction with their surroundings.

Support providers:

Support services make it possible to quickly identify when a self plan is inappropriate.

Students are troubled and the school is disconnected from real life. These meetings become a bridge between school and the living environment.

Support services make it possible to identify an institution’s framework and limitations.

Students:

I enjoyed participating in the project; it helped me in a lot of areas. I was able to make several important decisions because of the project and I also learned ways to succeed in school. It would be helpful for a lot of people, I think.

Helped me get closer to the teacher, talk about guidelines for school, etc.

I learned to trust myself and manage my stress at school and at home.

Support appears to have an impact on absenteeism. Overall, absences among participating students were fewer and, more importantly, justified. In fact, the support process makes it possible to quickly detect this type of problem and other specific situations. According to support

providers, the process acts on the students' motivation through the support offered and through the identification of problem situations.

Students:

The support of a mentor provides enormous help and makes things a lot easier.

4.2.5 Discussion about the meetings

In order to illustrate the needs expressed, we will present three real-life situations seen as positive by support providers and students.

A 47-year-old francophone adult had worked in construction for many years and was a competent worker. His goal was to finish Secondary V and to practise a construction trade so that he could teach it in vocational training. He studied Secondary III French and mathematics and experienced serious academic difficulties: he repeatedly failed. His support meetings helped him understand the process and realize that the plan was not his but his wife's and that he wanted his daughter to be proud of him. His single-mindedness prevented him from seeing and using his other talents.

We discussed with the support provider the meaning of these meetings and the limits of asking questions and amplifying perceptions. The support provider felt capable of supporting the student in his life questions and pursued the process. The student became aware of his other talents and especially his achievements. This led him to reconsider his choices, take a stand and negotiate with his family. He continued looking for a job, relying on his relationships. Despite a temporary disappointment, he is very comfortable with his new choices.

The second situation involves a 20-year-old francophone woman from outside the region who lost her mother and sister in an accident over the summer. She was enrolled in Secretarial Studies. The support process revealed the fragility of her situation because of the loss she experienced and the isolation that caused her to develop a dependency on her boyfriend (they moved in together). She also had difficulty in French. It was obvious that, because of her situation, she was not entirely available for her courses, despite the fact that she attended regularly and was very motivated. A relationship of trust was quickly established with the support provider and was very helpful in keeping her in school. Because of her loss, the support provider suggested she meet with resource people at an organization specializing in this type of situation. She did so. The role of the support provider seems to be providing support, listening and offering advice.

The third situation involves a young woman in her early twenties finishing Secondary V. She is from a comfortable background and is interested in the arts. According to her, her parents have a lot of plans for her and often compare her to her brother, who is very successful. Her oil paintings have won prizes. All her hopes and dreams revolve around painting and everything

that surrounds it. She intends to go out west in January. Her parents are concerned and this trip is not exactly what they had planned for her. The support process helped her clarify her plans, identify her achievements and discuss her parents' vision, her relationship with them and what she wants to share with them. At the support provider's suggestion, she decided to sit down and talk to her parents, presenting her plans and dreams and listening to their concerns. This enabled her to create a new balance and helped her parents understand her plans. The support process encouraged her to express herself more openly with her parents and helped her develop a time line for her career plan.

4.3 Analysis of the relevance of the three types of plans and the seven key benefits of work

The three types of plans and the seven key benefits of work must remain in the background (section 5.1.1); they are guidelines for dealing with the student as a whole person. The support provider, along with the student, uses the career plan (if there is one) to establish contact and get to the learning and integration plans, then returns to the career plan to close the loop.

The career plan is the gateway to meetings and also closes the loop. However, we spend a lot of time on the learning plan (because of the needs identified), which justifies the support process. The integration plan projects into the future, so today's actions have an impact on tomorrow and enable them to channel their energies.

4.4 Relevance of theory

The support providers recognize that they have not always respected the retrospective/prospective/action approach, but they were intuitively attempting to do so in order to avoid running around in circles.

I use the retrospective/prospective/action approach.

The retrospective/prospective/action and follow-up approach helped me with the learning plan, the school-to-work plan and the personal plans.

Rosenberg's nonviolent communication and the different steps: observation, feelings, needs, request.

The types of plans and the seven key benefits of work are relevant for the meetings, but remain flexible in the here and now.

They agree that they would have needed more learning situations to assimilate the concepts during the workshop. Kohlberg's theories of moral development and Loevinger's theories of self-development were not very useful. The support providers consider that it would have been better to learn about today's young adults in psychosociological and developmental terms. We attempted to do research on this subject in order to provide them with tools. Their main question boils down to this:

Who are young people in our region in 2004-2005 and what are they doing?

Theories are useful in small doses, they should be addressed in the workshop and explained in detail if necessary.

We had proposed a structured procedure and a certain sequence for the purposes of the research project. The support providers would have appreciated having a schedule of the topics to be addressed, but they determined it was more useful to stay in the here and now. The suggested procedure would serve as a reminder of the elements to be investigated. The first meeting was intended to set guidelines, provide an overview of the topics to be addressed and adjust to the student's needs. A central theme could be identified at the other meetings. The support providers, however, prefer being flexible at the meetings.

Relevant to have the seven key benefits and the types of plans but pay attention to what is going on in the here and now.

Rosenberg's NVC approach appears to have been greatly appreciated. It would have a direct impact on their methods and help them identify their paradigms. In the report, it was recommended that this approach be extended to all staff members at the centre, including administrators, professionals and support staff. It was suggested that workshops be offered for mixed groups, for example administrators and support staff, vocational training and general education teachers, etc.; that training in NVC be offered to all students and that the course be credited. We believe that teachers could be given training in support including NVC and others could be given special training in NVC. Note that this approach is offered in several schools in the United States and Europe and in all elementary schools in Israel. It is becoming increasingly popular.

Nonviolent communication: learn to foster it among students and between students and us.

Has an impact, helps them learn to communicate in a nonviolent manner because they have already experienced it in support services.

4.5 Procedure with respect to the current context

The number of meetings varies according to need. While six meetings were planned for each student, not all of them needed to meet that often. Some only needed encouragement. Others took advantage of the six meetings. Overall, the support providers believe that the number of meetings should be set based on individual needs. Imposing a set number of meetings could defeat the purpose. They would feel obligated, and that they were wasting their time or that of their students. This is what they propose in order to be able to identify people with needs and provide support for the others.

My student was very self-sufficient. We examined his plans, his family relations and the development of a plan of action. After four meetings, his need had been met.

After a few meetings, I continued with hallway meetings in order to make sure that everything was OK.

My student still needs support and especially to get things off her chest, she is very fragile. I referred her to an organization to help her mourn her loss, but I'm keeping an eye on her.

4.6 Scenario

- We recommend two individual meetings for every student at the beginning of the program to establish a privileged contact, to create an alliance with the support provider and to ensure a good relationship in the classroom (which we observed). Also, these meetings would make it possible to take preventive action and detect problems which, otherwise, would remain unnoticed. We could then decide who needs more meetings or refer the person to the appropriate resources (guidance counsellor, social worker, ACEF, etc.).
- A second meeting could be planned the following term to see whether everything is going well and to maintain the momentum.
- We could set a certain number of meetings for those with particular needs.

4.7 Advantages of such a procedure in adult education and vocational training centres

In short, here are the possible advantages of the support process *according to the support providers*:

- Improves motivation, channels energies and life choices, fosters academic success, reduces absenteeism and the risk of dropping out;
- Helps students learn more about themselves, understand themselves, and be attentive to their needs through nonviolent communication;
- Goes beyond the usual roles of teacher and student and fosters the establishment of a relationship of trust and an alliance (teacher and student learn more about each other and step outside the official structure);
- Helps detect problems and find tools to help students carry out their plan;
- Represents a first line of action to refer the student, if necessary;
- Fosters the well-being of all parties through the expression of each one's needs;
- Complements the program of study by showing more interest in the student;
- Develops the skills needed for school-to-work transition; helps build bridges between the centre and the outside world;
- Gives teachers and students a sense of worth.

Unexpectedly, some students who were not selected for the research project realized that their classmates were meeting with the teacher and spontaneously expressed a need to join in the experience, which led support providers to provide them with support as well. Also, support providers observed that some students had more needs than their project students, so they shared their time with them as well.

4.8 Analysis and discussion of the procedure used with students receiving support

In this section, we will use two instruments, a focus group (Appendix 14) made up of half of the students, and a questionnaire (Appendix 12) filled out by all of them. The aim of these two instruments is to measure the following elements:

- alliance
- learning plan
- self plan
- school-to-work transition plan
- income
- status
- management of time and space
- interpersonal relations
- completion of plans
- meaning of life
- role

4.8.1 Alliance

This element measures the relationship of trust between the student and the support provider and their degree of openness to one another and precedes the types of plans and the key benefits of work.

Based on the answers to the questionnaire and the comments in the focus group, we can see that an alliance was established. The answers range from “mostly” to “completely.” Here are a few examples. “When I met with the support provider, I was treated like an adult.” “I always felt comfortable and safe with the support provider.” “During the meetings, I was able to talk about myself, which is important to me.” “The meetings helped me find answers to my questions.”

Here are a few of the comments we collected:

It allowed me to have closer contact with the teacher, talk about school. That someone pays attention and listens, that they take the time to ask how it's going.

I enjoyed the social aspect. Because it was my teacher, we can have a better relationship. I think it was too short.

For the statement “Generally speaking, the meetings improved my self-esteem and self-confidence,” answers ranged from “mostly” to “completely” and two answered “somewhat,” which we find interesting. The students in the focus group demonstrated an interest in this type of meeting and felt that their pace was being respected. Some said that they didn’t have serious problems, that everything was going well and that, if they had had a problem, they would have felt comfortable talking about it. Others said that they didn’t need six meetings and yet others appreciated them enormously. They were very useful for solving life problems: loss, career choice, lack of goals, learning plan, support for learning, and excessive emotions. We will return to this topic later on.

4.8.2 The types of plans

Learning Plan

The learning plan helps students find meaning in school. We wanted to verify the following points: their opinion of the school system, the clarification of their learning plan, educational and vocational information, self-knowledge with respect to their career, motivation with respect to the plan, etc.

Answers ranged from “mostly” to “completely” and “somewhat” and, for some, “not applicable”. It is possible that some students have a clear career choice and that the procedure is unnecessary. However, others should be referred to the guidance counsellor. Some admitted that their career choice was unclear and recognized the importance of clarifying it. One person pointed out that the process enabled him to stay in school and remain motivated despite a difficult personal situation.

I was able to stay motivated and I enjoy school more.

Others believe that the process helped them place learning and work in order of priority.

I understand better why I am in school.

I enjoyed participating in the project; it helped me in a lot of areas.

Support services help students in their thought process, so answers may come later on. One student said:

The process helped me clarify my future goal.

There is a difference between vocational training and general education. Many problems are similar, but a clear career choice is rarer in general education. In vocational training, needs concern encouragement and sometimes verification and consolidation of a career choice. Given the small sample, we are unable to draw general conclusions.

Personal Plan

The personal plan involves the social and family dimensions. These elements could have a direct impact on the other plans. The questions in this section address self-knowledge, family/school/work balance and self-esteem.

Personal needs include loss, difficult relationships with teachers and family members, couple problems, temporary difficulties related to this stage of life and more important difficulties that can have a direct impact on the learning plan.

In the comments collected mainly from the questionnaires and focus groups, students said they were better able to understand, analyze and satisfy their needs. Two people said that the meetings seemed to help them assert their needs to family members and enabled them to listen to their parents' point of view.

I was able to explain to my parents that I wanted to go to Vancouver and that I was interested in painting and it went well. They finally understood.

We observe that the answers to the questions in this section are diverse and that needs differ. Some students face family problems and recognize that the process could help them clarify them. For others, the meetings appear to have had a direct effect on their motivation and improve their self-esteem.¹

School-to-work transition Plan

The school-to-work transition plan concerns the student's goals as a future worker and his or her knowledge of the job market. This section contains statements such as: "I am starting to see myself as a future worker," "I am familiar with the different types of jobs I can get," "I know why I want to work," "I am more confident about entering the work force," etc.

This aspect encourages students to project forward in time, to make a connection between their current actions and their destination. According to the answers to the questionnaire, most were able to see themselves as future workers; however, some still needed time to think about their career plan. They are more optimistic about the job market. Also, according to the answers to the questionnaire, it appears that the help they received in determining exactly why they wanted to work gave more meaning to their everyday actions.

Clarification of my future goal.

Support provider:

We discussed his time-management difficulties. He wants to drop out of Professional Sales; he likes the program but he doesn't believe he can find work in the field. He talks about his plans to play hockey in the U.S.

1. In the focus group, it was not always easy to get students to talk about these more personal elements. Everyone recognized the relevance of the process and recommended it, but it was necessary to read between the lines. It is important to remember that they were all students at the same centre, but that most of them did not know each other. Also, putting words to emotions is not always easy for young adults. The questionnaire provided more detailed information.

4.8.3 The seven key benefits of work

Income

In this section, the goal is to determine how adult students meet their needs and find solutions, if necessary, so that this element does not become an obstacle to their plan.

Some students told us they had no difficulties in this area. However, others were offered tools to learn how to make a budget and, especially, how to live within their means. The support providers asked for tools and the names of organizations¹ that work in this area. This section made it possible to verify whether students had an accurate perception of the income associated with their future job. The answers on the questionnaire ranged from “mostly” to “completely,” “somewhat” and “not applicable.”

Status

Status is related to how students see themselves as students in a vocational training or adult education centre.

One student admitted that he feels better about being in school since the meetings started. All but one said they were proud to be at the centre. Most said in the questionnaire that they were better able to express their needs in school.

I enjoy school more.

Management of time and space

This is a question of managing time and space based on one’s needs, situation and priorities.

At their request, we provided the support providers with tools to help students better manage their time, tools that enable them to get an overview of their activities so that they can reorganize them based on their situation and their goals.

The meetings helped me learn to manage my time.

Some pointed out that this element did not concern them; others’ answers ranged from “mostly” to “somewhat,” and one answered “completely.”

1. The support providers made this request in order to meet certain needs. A document containing a list of resources and resource people in the community could be provided for referral purposes. They realize that they are unfamiliar with these resources, which can be very useful for students.

Interpersonal Relations

Interpersonal relations are relationships we have with others for functional or social purposes, depending on our needs.

We observed that some adult students, over the course of a week, spoke only with the support provider. The latter had to be vigilant not to create a dependency and not to confuse roles. Many students come from outside the area and can experience difficulty making new friends. The process fostered awareness of these needs and of the means required to meet them.

I really enjoyed the meeting.

Longer meetings with _____, since we trust her and she is interesting.

The social aspect, because he's my teacher, we can have a better relationship, so I'm more motivated.

A support provider:

My student is from Montréal and doesn't talk to anyone else but me, I'm looking at this aspect with him.

Completion of Plans

Completion of plans consists in performing tasks and experiencing success.

Many adult students have low self-esteem and are relatively unfamiliar with success. Several have difficulty seeing themselves as worthwhile.

This point was expressed forcefully. The students became more aware of their reasons for being at the centre and of the importance of becoming involved in order to achieve success. By taking control of their lives and making decisions, their self-esteem improves and they acquire power over their lives.

Talk more about guidelines at school.

It's helpful to talk about our plans, what we are going through, and the meetings make that possible.

Meaning of Life

This aspect involves giving meaning and direction to who I am and what I want to do. Meaning gives weight, involving both the student's state of being and his or her reasons for living.

What gives meaning to the lives of these young adults, who are building their identity and are in a fragile state? The statistics for Québec speak volumes. The suicide rate among males in this age group is one of the highest in the world. Support is more than just meetings between two human beings: support provides meaning, prevention, an opportunity to make contact with one's confidence in life, despite its vicissitudes.

These support meetings appear to have brought meaning to the students' lives. This is confirmed by their verbal and written comments.

That someone pays attention and listens; that they take the time to ask how it's going.

The advice I received.

I understand better why I am in school.

I will always remember that everyone has different needs, that it is important to consider your needs and values in everyday life in order to better understand the choices you make and to have a better opinion of yourself as a person.

One person answered "somewhat" to this section of the questionnaire, the other answers ranged from "mostly" to "completely."

Role

This element has students focus on their priorities and organize their other activities accordingly.

Most of the adult students were able to consider their organization of their life and made an effort to reconcile their different plans. By clarifying their plans, some of them organized their actions in order of priority, based on the different areas of their life.

The clarification of my goals.

. . . your needs and values in everyday life in order to better understand the choices you make and have a better opinion of yourself as a person.

4.8.4 Other significant comments

The following comments were made by adult students.

The meetings allowed us to get closer to the teacher and to realize that there's a person behind the role.

They respected our pace.

If the student does not get along with the support provider, he should be allowed to get another one.

If I had needed to, I could have talked about anything.

The teacher is in a good position to see what we need.

There could be group meetings to discuss certain topics.

The meetings played a role in our motivation and encouraged us to work a bit harder.

The meetings helped us solidify our plan.

The meetings enabled us to broaden our point of view.

That gives us means of developing our social life at the centre.

The meetings are a good place to get things off your chest.

Enabled us to answer our questions about courses at the centre.

Everyone agrees that the process should be offered to all students, depending on their needs.

You have to keep doing this, because it helps young people.



Chapter 5



Recommendations

An action research project like this can't but lead to a multitude of recommendations, in terms of both practice and organization.

Also, the information gathered on the questionnaires, in the focus groups, from the project itself and from the reports triggers an intuitive process of determining what actions need to be taken in the future. We will address these actions in the following pages.

5.1 Recommendations based on the results obtained

These recommendations are based mainly on support providers' comments.

5.1.1 Content

- Provide a private room to ensure privacy and confidentiality.
- Continue the process in the classroom. Wiel and Philibert suggest this very promising model in *Faire de la classe un lieu de vie*.
- Plan meetings of support providers so that they can clear their heads and help each other. This need was expressed at the evaluation meeting and in answers on the questionnaire. Support providers especially want meetings of vocational training and general education teachers. They were greatly appreciated and extremely fruitful.
- Set aside a classroom and a support provider so students can think and clear their heads. This recommendation is justified as follows:

What are the signs of a young adult who is about to drop out of school? Physical and psychological absences, compulsive behaviour, sabotage, continually leaving the classroom, confrontations, aggressive behaviour and drugs are all precursors, signals that things are not going well. The classroom could be a place to help them find themselves, take control of their lives and breathe a little. It would also help the teacher catch his or her breath. It would not be a place of punishment, but of reflection for the young person, who would be accompanied by an adult with a sympathetic ear. This could prevent some students from dropping out, help those who are losing motivation, who are going around in circles, who are experiencing a temporary crisis or who are thinking about suicide; it could help prevent suspensions, which don't solve much, although they provide respite for an organization that might feel helpless in certain situations.

- Enhance mentoring practices, among other things by providing training in support.
- Mentoring meetings followed by support meetings would be overkill. Support providers should be given training in both approaches. Combining the processes would save time.

However, by definition, support requires an investment in quality that cannot be measured in time.

- Form teams of two teachers per student so that they can support each other and better meet the student's needs. One teacher/support provider would be assigned to the student, while the other would support his or her colleague. There should be more teamwork to help students in difficult situations and in order to establish a shared intervention plan.
- Adjust the number of meetings to the situation and to needs. We observed that it is not always necessary to have six official meetings. The support providers and students recognize the importance of having one or two planned meetings, then to continue on as needed. Some students would have needed more than six meetings to help them pursue their course of action.
- Organize meetings between support providers in vocational training and those in general education. The goal would be to break the isolation and allow them to clear their heads and to help each other.
- Offer all staff members training in Marshall Rosenberg's nonviolent communication. This approach appears to be very much appreciated and the support providers could also use it in their everyday lives. Staff members at the centre should learn the basics of this type of communication, which raises awareness and establishes a different relationship with the other person. A credit course in this approach should be offered to all students.
- The support providers observed that it would be impossible under current circumstances to provide wide-scale support. They found it difficult to reconcile support with their other tasks.

Here are the main recommendations for implementing a support process.

- Enhance the mentoring process by including support (we would have to determine how many students could be entrusted to a teacher/support provider).
- Give a two-day workshop in support so that support providers can learn the philosophy and skills underlying the process. Also provide continuing training.
- Retain the different types of plans and the key benefits of work, adding a sociopsychological profile of young people today for the support process.
- Plan three official support meetings, two at the beginning of the process to create an alliance and identify students who might have more serious needs, and a third during the following term to see whether everything is going well.
- Plan meetings of support providers so that they can clear their heads and help each other.
- Provide a room for meetings.

- Set aside a classroom and a support provider to meet with students with urgent needs. Set up mechanisms for meetings and mutual assistance for support providers, perhaps using Adrien Payette's codevelopment approach.¹
- Produce a list of resources and methods for referring students to other services.
- Train all staff members at the centre in Rosenberg's nonviolent communication and offer students a credit course.

5.1.2 Structure

- See that the process is offered throughout the centre.
- Assign a resource person to assist the support providers. This person would offer support in reflective sharing and information and could act as liaison when a student is referred to another service. He or she could also provide support tools as needed. Lastly, he or she could supervise support services in the centre.
- Pair up support providers so that they can discuss complex situations and difficulties.
- Have access to the services of a psychologist or other specialist in complex situations.
- Assign a resource person to act as liaison between internal and external services.
- Have access to the services of other specialists, such as remedial teachers.
- Collaborate with external organizations (Carrefour Jeunesse Emploi, CLSC, CTAC, CALACS, etc.). One person could act as liaison with these organizations.
- Make sure that the structure is flexible enough to help teachers and organize it to take administrative, teaching and support tasks into account. The structure must be adapted in order to set up a support structure.
- Enhance the mentoring process by including support. Support providers recognize that providing support for two students, which they were asked to do, is difficult (some were unable to integrate this new task into their workload) and that providing services for 15 to 25 students would be impossible in this context.
- See what tasks could be delegated in order to save time.
- Examine the current structure in order to see how things could be done differently.
- Provide support to all students in general education and vocational training.
- Build bridges with partners in order to ensure the continuity of services or referral. A committee is currently examining this issue at the centre.

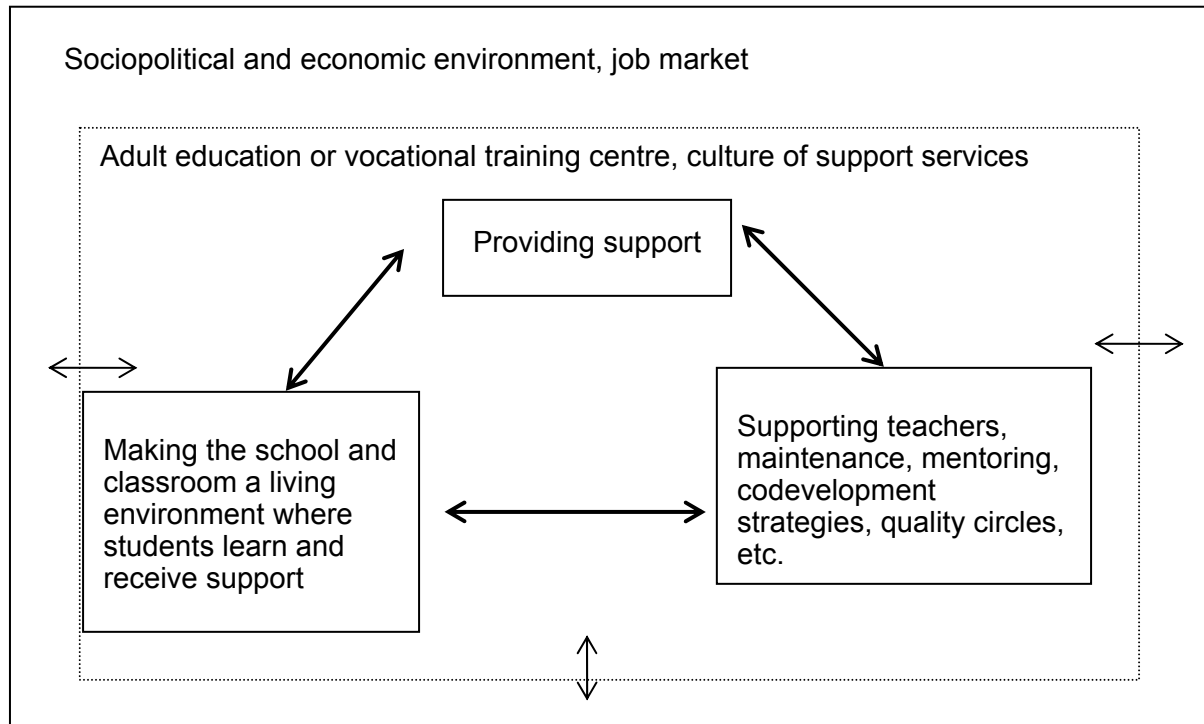
1. Many teachers expressed a serious need to clear their heads and face their students' problems on a daily basis. They too often feel helpless and alone. We believe that there must be mechanisms in place that go beyond a simple resourcing day.

- Include support in teaching tasks and have them continue in the classroom, which then becomes a place to acquire life experience as well as learning.

5.2 Recommendations based on the research team's intuition

- Set up other support or assistance mechanisms like those provided by peers, a success centre, etc.
- Include the philosophy of support in the educational project and in the success plan so that it becomes part of the centre's culture.
- Optimize pedagogical days.
- Make representations so that training in support is included in teacher training. Obviously, the process should be voluntary, but all teachers should provide support. In a way, this new function should be included in the specialized training curriculum. A teacher who only transmits knowledge should question his or her practices. Enrollments in adult education have changed, and so has the teacher's role. The mentoring process must be transformed into a support process.
- Create structures that foster support. The action research project was integrated into a structure with its own values and ways of doing things, and nothing was changed in the environment, except that the process was added.
- Include the philosophy of support in the educational project and in the success plan so that it is part of the centre's culture.
- Implement a more global support process, i.e. set aside time for support in class and transform the classroom into a living environment. Since students spend most of their time there, that is where they can experience something that will create the momentum they need to pursue their goals. This is directly related to the MELS reform emphasizing the acquisition of competencies and activities in a project-based approach. This type of experience would prepare students for their role as workers and citizens.
- Expect that such a process will result in a change of paradigm, a new definition of teaching and teacher. To ensure the feasibility of the project, the centre should adopt it as its own. In the words of Philibert and Wiel (1997), the classroom would become "a place where students learn to live together and learn together, a place where each student receives support." The classroom structure becomes the keystone of the centre's project and a condition for pedagogy based on the whole person. Support in the classroom and the centre would create a new dynamic for students. It is surprising that so many students do not like school. We must ask ourselves what we want to offer students. Are we brave enough to test new approaches? The following figure illustrates this reflection.

Figure 5
A Culture of Support



Other models could surely be used with a support process. Consider, for example, William Glasser's quality school: actions focus on quality and success. What is remarkable in this philosophy is that it ignores threats, fear and punishment and replaces them with the satisfaction of basic needs. It uses strategies of approval, accountability and maturation. Of course, there are always direct consequences to the student's actions, but other mechanisms enter into it when he or she loses control or cannot take it any more. Consider a place to reflect with a support provider. Areas in Québec and New Brunswick that use this approach have a higher success rate than other schools, and the absenteeism rate is lower.

5.3 Organizational and financial aspect

The following is a hypothetical portrait of such a service,¹ seen from the following three angles:

1. organizational structure
2. competencies required of staff members
3. costs of the service.

5.3.1 Organizational structure

This action research project involved examining support services provided by teachers. A few tasks were added without modifying the organizational structure of the job. This made it possible to identify needs for implementing it in a context such as ours.

During the evaluation, the teachers/support providers said that it would be difficult, under current circumstances, to provide wide-scale support. They therefore formulated the following proposals:

- Allot three meetings to all students and more if necessary
- Enhance mentoring meetings by including support
- Appoint a person to assist them and to refer students to other internal or external services in the case of special needs
- Develop an organizational culture of support in the different services (project week, guidance, administrators, teachers, etc.)
- Emphasize relationships with partners

Scenario:

- Add the necessary financial resources to reach an acceptable student-teacher/support provider ratio
- Determine what support for students who need more than three meetings would involve
- Plan times in the school calendar for supervising support providers or providing continuing training (need for supply teachers)
- Set up an advisory committee for the overall process (administration, support provider, social worker, teacher, other professionals and students)
- Appoint a resource person in each external organization (including the centre) for referrals and exchanges of services

1. We have addressed the fourth point that the MELS asked us to set out, i.e. partnership, throughout the document.

5.3.2 Competencies required of staff members

The competencies required of staff members and the job descriptions are proposed by the research team.

Job Title: Support provider in a learning context

Purpose of the job

Support providers achieve different support goals (raising awareness, encouraging, maintaining) with respect to the different types of plans and the seven key benefits of work.

Academic training

Teacher training or related training

Knowledge and competencies

Knowledge:

- Familiarity with the support process
- Familiarity with Marshall Rosenberg's nonviolent communication approach
- Basic knowledge of psychosociology and the stages of personal development
- Familiarity with the different types of plans and the seven key benefits of work
- Familiarity with the maintenance process (retrospective/prospective/action)
- Other basic knowledge related to problems frequently encountered by adult students (suicide, drug abuse, violence, etc.)

Competencies:

- Acceptance
- Ability to listen
- Ability to master different elements of a relationship (empathy, authenticity, specificity, respect, etc.)
- Ability to create an atmosphere of trust
- Ability to evaluate needs
- Ability to adapt to different people (flexibility)
- Ability to provide support
- Discretion

- Ability to refer to others, to cooperate
- Ability to respect their limits

This job requires good self-knowledge, introspection skills, the ability to analyze one's own life issues and the ability to question oneself.

Job Title: Resource Person for Support Providers

Purpose of the job

In connection with the centre's orientations and support goals, this specialist ensures the smooth operation and quality of support services offered.

Main responsibilities

- Planning and organization of the support structure
- Training in guidance for support providers
- Co-facilitation of peer assistance groups (support providers)
- Maintenance and development of internal and external collaboration to achieve support goals
- Verification of the quality of the process and of continuing training

Education

Guidance counselling or related occupation

Knowledge and competencies

Knowledge:

- In-depth knowledge of the support process
- Specialized knowledge in Marshall Rosenberg's nonviolent communication approach
- Knowledge of psychosociology and the stages of personal development
- In-depth knowledge of the different types of plans and the seven key benefits of work
- In-depth knowledge of the maintenance process (retrospective/prospective/action)
- Other basic knowledge needed to solve problems encountered by students (suicide, drug abuse, violence, etc.)
- Familiarity with the professional codevelopment or peer assistance approach

Competencies:

- Acceptance
- Ability to listen
- Mastery of different elements of a relationship (empathy, authenticity, specificity, respect, confrontation, etc.)
- Ability to facilitate
- Ability to provide support and supervision
- Discretion
- Ability to foster mutual assistance
- Ability to foster and maintain internal and external collaboration

5.3.3 Costs of the service

Support services require the creation of a new position for the resource person for support providers and a reorganization of teachers' tasks.

Teachers/support providers

Thirty to forty-five minutes per interview per student, two meetings at the beginning and a third later on

One teacher per 20 students: 45 hours x \$60 an hour = \$2700

Plan for supply teaching expenses: continuing training and supervisory meetings with the resource person.

Resource person for support providers (professional)

15 hours a week: approximate annual salary of \$25 000.



Chapter 6



Conclusion

Support services, or the common thread uniting all other areas of knowledge and skills.

We obtained qualitative answers to the research question.

Both students and support providers recognize the importance of this process in vocational training and adult education centres. For the students, it is a question of making a connection between their personal plan and their learning plan, facilitating the implementation of mechanisms to achieve their goals at every level. For support providers, it is a question of playing a role outside the classroom that allows them to give vent to their natural sensitivity to other human beings on the path of life. We could say that behind the teacher's trade lies the human trade, which is, for the most part, learned in the school of life. We developed the portrait of a typical support provider. We offered a one-day workshop to get future support providers to reflect on the role, to assimilate the knowledge and "postures" that can be used in support services.

In this action-research project, which extended beyond traditional roles, each participant learned from the other. According to the comments we gathered, the meetings changed the atmosphere in the classroom, brought teachers and students closer together and changed the dynamic. It is as if their way of seeing one another changed as they got to know each other. We could say that it is a secondary effect comparable to the tamedness of the fox and the Saint Exupéry's Little Prince.

According to comments by students and support providers, support appears to have an impact on motivation, confidence and perseverance. Only one student dropped out, and that was the result of meetings with the support provider. His choice was enlightened and well thought out and he took responsibility for it. In these meetings, students discussed their problems with their parents, their progress in school, their financial difficulties, their losses and other aspects of their personal life. They met with someone who was interested in more than just their success in school. This seems to show that students have a serious need to be listened to and that, at the end of the day, the process has an impact on their success.

Providing support means helping students figure out who they are, seeing the beauty behind the mask, revealing this beauty and rekindling their imagination so that they can dream and create a life for themselves.

We will end with two short comments from adult students: this research project was, after all, for them.

I learned to trust myself and manage my stress in school and at home. Having the support of someone really helps and makes things easier.

It improved my trust of others.

Chapter 7



Summary

This research project is consistent with the adult education orientations of the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, according to which learning is a lifelong process that can build identity and give meaning to life. We have attempted to focus on lifelong learning, while paying attention to the new profile of adult education students.

The Ministère hypothesized that by examining current reception, referral, counselling and support services and by proposing models, we could offer better quality services and promote a culture of lifelong learning.

At Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette, we decided to take a look at support services. In this summary, we present the research question, the considerations it raised, the expected outcomes, the process and conceptual framework, the results obtained and recommendations likely to ensure the success of the process.

1. Research question

Can the innovative approach referred to as the “support-oriented approach” raise adults’ awareness and encourage them to develop and implement a personal plan, a learning plan and a sociovocational integration plan?

2. Considerations

- How can we provide adult students with support, establish an atmosphere of trust, and help them carry out their plans and develop their problem-solving skills?
- How can support be defined in our context based on the needs expressed and the conceptual framework?
- What should be the profile of a support provider and what competencies does he or she need?
- What elements should be introduced in support meetings and at what frequency should they be held?
- How can we foster relations between internal services and partners while respecting adult students’ rights to confidentiality and the organizational methods of the other structures?

3. Anticipated outcomes

- We anticipate that support could help students understand themselves better in terms of who they are, develop their self-awareness and give their life direction. Other benefits would include a lower rate of absenteeism, increased motivation, a clearer career plan and better relationships with their milieu (teacher, family, network, etc.).

- Support is aimed at helping students develop self-awareness so that they can figure out what they want in order to be able to take action and identify the benefits of the experience.
- Teachers could also benefit from the experience: more involvement, a new role, personal satisfaction.
- The benefits for partners could facilitate interdepartmental exchanges and better meet students' needs.

4. Process

An advisory committee accompanied the project coordinator throughout the research project. Ten vocational training and adult education teachers participated as support providers in the project on a voluntary basis. Two adult students per support provider were selected based on their age and sex; all were enrolled in their first year at the centre and had to be taught by their support provider.

First, we examined the documentation available (success plan, annual report, educational project and other statistical documents). We considered what was done in the past and what is currently being done in terms of providing support to adult students. Then, to identify needs, we formed a focus group and conducted semi-structured interviews with students, teachers, professionals, administrators and selected partners.

This enabled us to identify support needs, to become aware of the lack of mechanisms in place to meet them and of the need to build intra- and interdepartmental bridges. The needs expressed by students ranged from having time to clear their heads, to being helped mourn a personal loss and deal with a lack of motivation and self-esteem, to contending with unclear plans and a perceived lack of career choices, to getting help in resolving family problems and to resolving conflicts with teachers and peers.

These needs caused us to question the nature of a support-oriented approach, identify the necessary conditions to implement one, and set limits.

We proceeded as follows. A one-day hands-on workshop was offered to support providers to address the elements listed in the tables below. Six individual meetings were planned with each student. A schedule was established to address the topics to be discussed as a group. At the end, we gathered information from support providers and adult students about the impact of the meetings. The project took three months and included six meetings with each student.

5. Conceptual framework

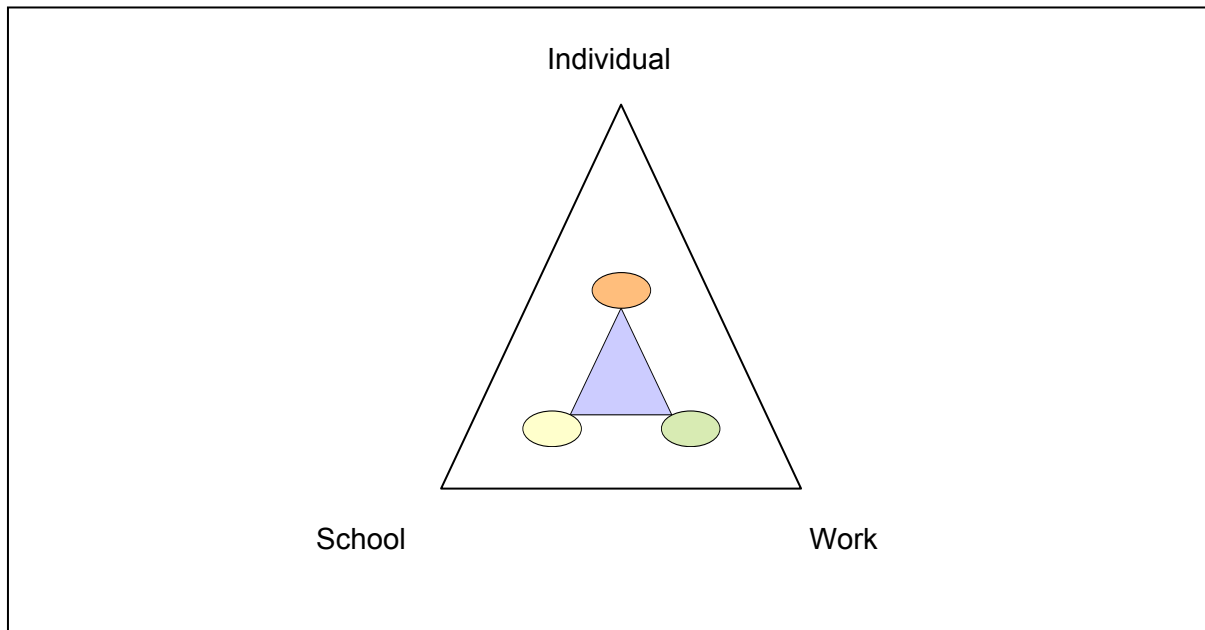
Our support-oriented service model is based on the work of different authors. From Jacques Limoges, we borrowed the maintenance approach, from Philibert and Wiel, the support approach, and from Rosenberg, nonviolent communication. We did not consider helping

relationships because we believe that helping relationships are not the purpose of the support process and that it would have taken too long to train teachers. We believe that support is relationship-based and that the quality of the relationship is the main ingredient.

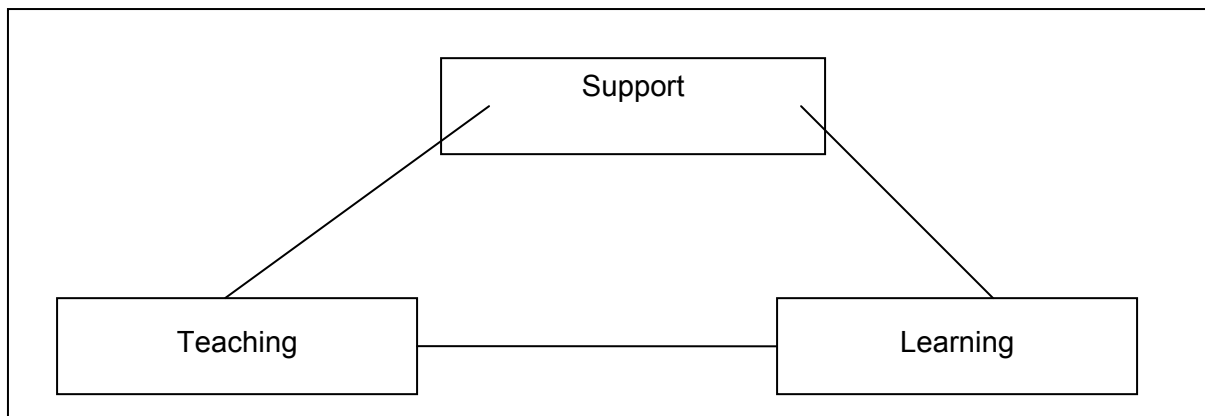
The workshop for teachers addressed the following elements:

- Identifying the different “postures” to be adopted and the qualities required of support providers, while determining in which situations students should be referred to another service
- Becoming aware of the “posture” adopted in support
- Understanding the meaning of support, placing support in perspective with respect to teaching and mentoring
- Defining the three stages of the meetings, i.e. retrospective, prospective and action, as well as the different types of plans and the key benefits of work (see tables)
- Becoming aware of nonviolent communication, a backdrop for support Other conceptual elements.

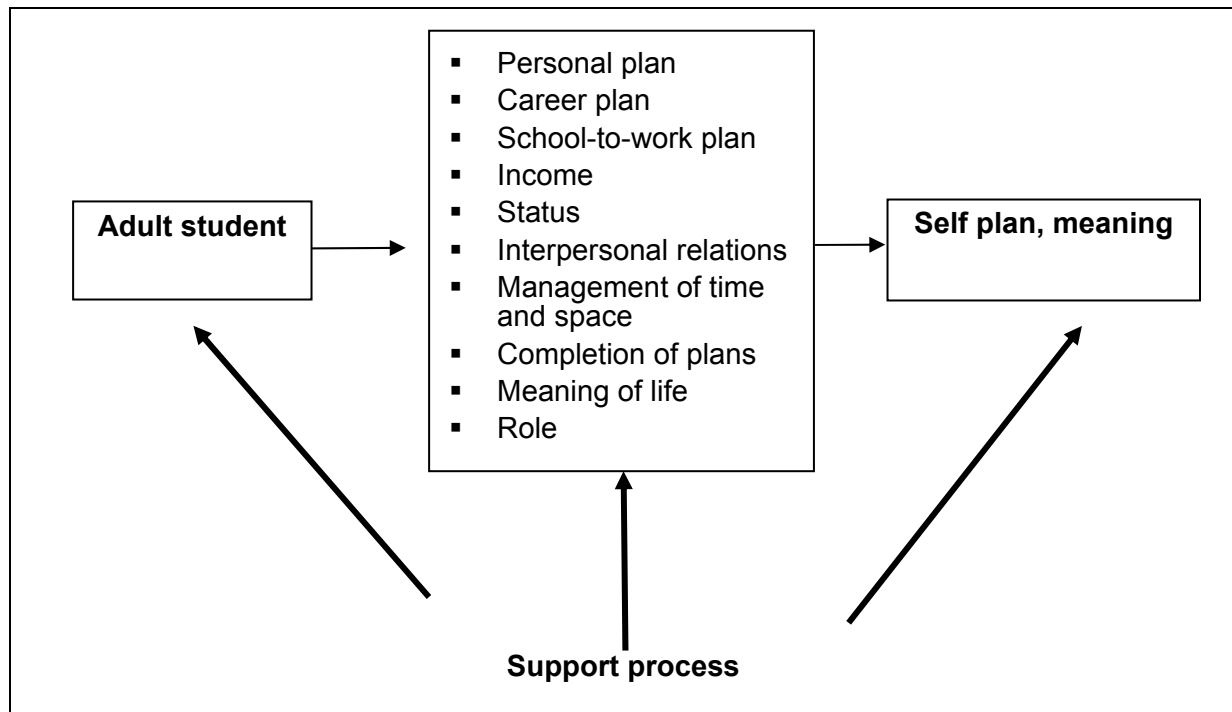
Individual/School/Work Triangle



Roles of Education (Philibert and Wiel, 1998)



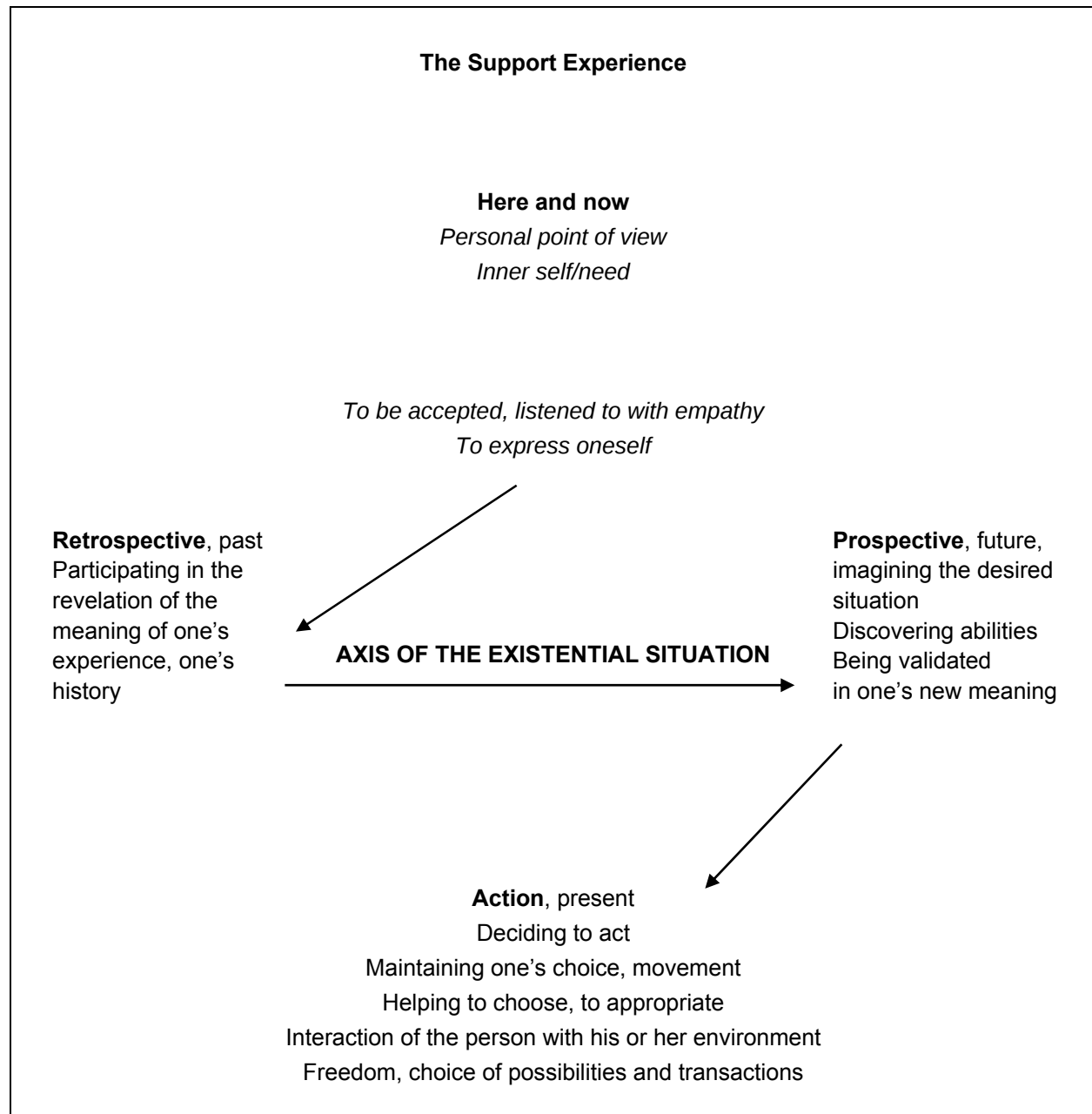
**Support Services, or the Common Thread Uniting
Different Areas of Knowledge and Skills
The Different Types of Plans and the Key Benefits of Work**



Possible Postures in Support

Posture	Desired effect
Ahead	"Modeling," teaching a task
Behind	"I'll follow you," making sure of what was agreed upon, providing support
Above	Interventionist, emergency situation
Below	Position "allowing" the other to exist
Beside	Attentive presence, opening up, awareness
Apart	Strategic withdrawal, allowing the other to live his or her life, to withdraw temporarily

The Support Process Seen From Different Points of View Based on Philibert and Wiel (1998) and Limoges (2001)



- **Providing support means: accepting the person and listening to him or her with empathy and purpose.**
- **Providing support means: participating in the revelation of the meaning of his or her life and what he or she is looking for.**
- **Finally, providing support means: being at his or her side to validate his or her new meaning.**

6. Results obtained

- The key players' comments revealed the relevance of support for both students and teachers/support providers. The meetings aimed at raising awareness and discussing issues seemed to have helped adult students access their inner selves and begin a maturation process. According to the support providers, the topics addressed at the meetings concerned school, personal life (couple problems, financial problems, etc.) and referral to other professionals where necessary (guidance counsellor and other support providers). The students appear to recognize the importance of having a safe place to talk and get help. While recognizing the importance of this process, they do not believe that they would need six meetings if everything were going well. The teachers/support providers agree.
- Only one of the students dropped out of the centre and this only after a meeting with his support provider. All of the others persevered and attended class most of the time. Their absences were justified. Support appears to improve attendance, self-esteem, motivation and the desire to attribute meaning to their presence at the centre and to take action in order to resolve their difficulties.
- Unexpectedly, the support providers and students observed that their relationship changed and that that had an effect in the classroom. The way they saw each other seems to have changed; the masks came off and their roles changed. Some students who did not participate in the research project requested support; some support providers observed that other students were having difficulties and offered them help.

7. Recommendations

The support providers observed that it would be difficult, under current circumstances, to provide wide-scale support. Overall, they found that it was difficult to reconcile support with their other tasks. They made the following recommendations:

- Enhance the mentoring process by including support.
- Examine the current structure in order to change the way things are done.
- Schedule three support meetings for all students, two at the beginning of the year to create an alliance and identify students who might have more serious needs, and a third meeting during the next term to see whether everything is going well.
- Participate in a longer and ongoing training process.
- Set aside time for support providers to meet with each other to clear their heads and to help each other.
- Provide a resource person for support providers to discuss more complex situations.
- Produce a list of resources that would also suggest intervention methods in specific situations (attempted suicide, for example) and referral to another service.

- Set up a room to meet with a support provider when a student needs to leave the classroom to refocus.
- Give all staff members at the centre training in Rosenberg's nonviolent communication and offer students a credit course in NVC.

There is still work to be done to ensure the continuity of services when referring adult students to another service and building bridges with partners. A committee is currently working on the issue.

We could conclude that providing support should be part of a teacher's tasks that could be pursued in the classroom, which would then become a place to acquire life experience as well as learning. Certain conditions, however, must be met.

Unanswered question

- What role does support services play in reception, referral and counselling services and the record of prior learning?

Comment from a student:

I will always remember that everyone has different needs, that it is important to consider your needs and values in everyday life in order to better understand the choices you make and to have a better opinion of yourself as a person.



Bibliography

- 25^e congrès international de l'AQETA. *L'expérience d'une recherche-action, Échec scolaire des jeunes : facteurs associés et propositions d'actions*. Montréal, March 2000.
- Blais, Lucie. *Revue de littérature étrangère sur l'accompagnement en contexte de formation continue*. Éditions Comité interministériel sur les services d'accueil, de références, de conseil et d'accompagnement, 2004.
- Bouchard, Robert, and Marcelle Bélanger. *Notes de deux ateliers suivis en communication non violente*. Québec, 2003 and 2004.
- Cancelliere, Vito Mariano, and Francis De Riba. *La réponse apaisante au stress*. Éditions Jouvence, 2003.
- CFRN-éducation des adultes. *Plan de réussite 2003-2006*. Rimouski: Commission scolaire des Phares, 2003.
- _____. *Rapport annuel 2002-2003*. Rimouski: Commission scolaire des Phares, 2003.
- CFRN-formation professionnel. *Plan de réussite 2003-2006*. Rimouski: Commission scolaire des Phares, 2003.
- _____. *Rapport annuel 2002-2003*. Rimouski: Commission scolaire des Phares, 2003.
- Covey, Sean. *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*. Simon & Schuster, 1998.
- Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. *Vivre, la psychologie du bonheur*. Éditions Robert Laffont, 2004.
- D'Ansembourg, Thomas. *Cessez d'être gentil soyez vrai*. Éditions de l'Homme, 2001.
- De Beer, Pierre. *L'accompagnement bénévole des personnes en fin de vie*. Anne Sigier, 2004.
- De Saint-Exupéry, Antoine. *Le Petit Prince*. Éditions Gallimard, 2000.
- Deslauriers, Jean-Pierre, et al. *La méthode de la recherche qualitative*. Éditions Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1987.
- Dionne, Hugues, and Institut de développement Nord-Sud. *La recherche action*. Éditions Harmattan, 1998.

- Duru, Marie-Chantal. *La fonction d'accompagnement dans les actions de formation et d'insertion vers l'emploi*. Le comité de liaison pour la promotion des migrants et des publics en difficulté d'insertion, 1997.
- Emploi-Québec. *Les MRC du Bas-Saint-Laurent en quelques mots et chiffres*. Emploi-Québec, 2003.
- Gauthier, Benoît, et al. *Recherche sociale : de la problématique à la collecte de données*. Éditions Presses de l'université du Québec, 2003.
- Glasser, William. *The Quality School Teacher*. Harper Paperbacks, 1998.
- _____. *Every Student Can Succeed*. Black Forest Press, 2000.
- Guide méthodologique de recherche pour le milieu de l'alphabétisation, document de réflexion et d'orientation*. Programme des initiatives fédérales-provinciales conjointes en matière d'alphabétisation. Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2000.
- Hardy, Marcelle, et al. *De la formation professionnelle au marché du travail*. Éditions Logiques, 1998.
- Houde, Renée. *Les temps de la vie*. Gaétan Morin Éditeur Ltée, 1999.
- "L'accompagnement des personnes en difficulté." *Actualité de la Formation Permanente*, 176 (Jan.-Feb. 2002).
- "L'accompagnement et la dynamique individu-étude-travail." *Carriérologie*, 9, 1 (2003). http://www.carrierologie.ugam.ca/volume09_1-2/index.html,
- La recherche-action : de Kurt Lewin aux pratiques québécoises contemporaines : actes du colloque de l'Association pour la recherche qualitative*. Sherbrooke, May 21, 1991. Les Éditions Association pour la recherche qualitative, 1992.
- Lafortune, Louise, and Colette Deaudelin. *Pour s'approprier une réforme en éducation*. Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2001.
- Lavoie, Louisette, Danielle Marquis and Paul Laurin. *La recherche action Théorie et pratique*. Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1997.
- Le Bouëdec, Guy, et al. *L'accompagnement en éducation et formation*. Éditions L'Harmattan, 2001.
- Legendre, Renald. *Dictionnaire actuel de l'éducation*. Éditions Guérin et ESKA, 1993.

Limoges, Jacques. *Stratégies de maintien au travail*. Éditions Septembre, 2001.

Limoges, Jacques, Cinthia Lampron and Céline Séguin. *Bien se maintenir en orbite autour du travail*. Productions GGC, 2004.

Limoges, Jacques, and Denise Paul. *Le développement du moi*. Éditions du CRP, 1990.

Limoges, Jacques, Robert Lemaire and France Dodier. *Trouver son travail*. Éditions Fides, 1987.

Martineau, Stéphane, and Denis Simard. *Le groupe de discussion*. Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2001.

Morris, Marika, and Martha Muzychka. *Participatory Research and Action: A Guide to Becoming a Researcher for Social Change*. Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women, 2002.

Myers, Wayland. *Pratique de la communication non violente*. Éditions Jouvence, 1999.

Nardone, Giorgio. *Psychosolutions*. Éditions l'Esprit du Temps, 1998.

Payette, Adrien, and Claude Champagne. *Le groupe de codéveloppement professionnel*. Presses de l'Université du Québec, 1997.

Peacock, Fletcher. *Water the Flowers Not the Weeds*. Open Heart Publishing, 2000.

Philibert, Christian, and Gérard Wiel. *Accompagner l'adolescence, du projet de l'élève au projet de vie*. Éditions Chronique sociale, 1998.

_____. *Faire de la classe un lieu de vie, socialisation-apprentissage-accompagnement*. Éditions Chronique sociale, 1997.

Pradervand, Pierre. *Le bonheur ça s'apprend*. Éditions Jouvence, 2001.

Proteau, Chantal. *L'accompagnement*. Essai de l'Université de Sherbrooke (unpublished), 2001.

Québec. Ministère de l'Éducation. *Plan of Action for Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training*. Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2002.

_____. *Government Policy on Adult Education and Continuing Education and Training*. Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2002.

_____. *Learning's Great When I Can Relate! Program to Promote the Return to School of People Between the Ages of 16 and 24*. Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2004.

_____. *Methodology Guide for Research in Literacy Training. The Joint Federal-Provincial Literacy Training Initiatives (JFPLTI) Program*. Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2000.

_____. *Toward a Renewal of Reception, Referral, Counselling & Support Services*. Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2004.

Québec. Ministère de l'Éducation, Ministère de l'Emploi, de la Solidarité et de la Famille and Emploi-Québec. *Suivi des priorités 2003-2004 Politique gouvernementale d'éducation des adultes et de formation continue*. Québec: Gouvernement du Québec, 2004.

Quincy, Raymond, and Luc van Campenhoudt. *Manuel de recherche en sciences sociales*. Éditions Dunod, 1995.

Rivière, Robert, and Josée Jacques. *Les jeunes et les représentations sociales de la réussite*. Éditions Logiques, 2002.

Rosenberg, Marshall. *La communication non violente au quotidien*. Éditions Jouvence, 2003.

_____. *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*. 2nd ed. Encinitas, CA: Puddle Dancer Press, 2003.

Rouleau, Louis-Marie. *Bulletin régional sur le marché du travail Bas Saint-Laurent 4^e trimestre et bilan 2003*. Emploi-Québec, 2003.

Simard Gisèle. *La méthode du 'Focus Group'*. Éditions Mondia, 1989.

Vézina, Jean-François. *Se réaliser dans un monde d'image*. Éditions de l'Homme, 2004.

Web sites on motivation, communication and nonviolent communication

<http://nvc-europe.org/france/>

<http://perso.wanadoo.fr/jacques.nimier/salome4.htm>

<http://stageweb.free.fr/stageweb/Motivationx.html>

<http://users.skynet.be/martine.marenne/index.html>

<http://www.econovateur.com/rubriques/anticiper/prminute160102.shtml>

<http://www.floramedicina.com/page66.html>

http://www.maieusthesie.com/chemin_decouverte_communication/communication.htm

<http://www.maieusthesie.com/nouveautes/article/articles.htm>

Web sites providing statistics for Québec

http://www.stat.gouv.qc.ca/regions/recens2001_01/01_index.htm

<http://www150.hrdc-drhc.qc.ca/job-futures/accueil.asp?LastPage=-7>

Appendixes



Appendix 1

Workshop for Support providers^{1, 2}

By the end of the workshop, the support provider will have integrated concepts of support and tested his or her “posture” in providing support for adult students at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette developing a personal plan.

Morning

Support

Preamble: Read a passage from Le Petit Prince by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, pages 64 to 74 (Éditions Gallimard, 2000).

Activity 1

OBJECTIVE: To develop the profile of a typical support provider and determine the adult's needs

Team 1: Profile of the support provider in words and pictures

Team 2: Profile of the student, feelings and needs, who he or she is, what he or she is going through, in words and pictures

Team 3: Profile of the teacher in words and pictures

Team 4: Profile of the mentor in words and pictures

Group discussion on the profiles and reasons for support: the difference between support services and other roles and the purpose of support services.

Activity 2

OBJECTIVE: To understand the theory underlying support and to distinguish it from other roles

-
1. Because of time constraints, the workshop is condensed into one day. This appears to be insufficient in order to integrate support concepts and everything surrounding the process in adult education. Other elements should be added, such as adults' psychosociological development. At least two intensive days of training should be sufficient.
 2. The document accompanying this report was produced for the support providers' workshop. It was distributed to support providers and complements the research project. Other tools that were used in the workshop are not included in this document. They address meetings between support providers and students, nonviolent communication, maintenance, etc. If you would like to consult them, please contact the author.

A little theory:

- Definition
- Objective of support (see figure 2)
- The three aims of support depending on the type of plan
- When is the need no longer for support, when should the student be referred to another service?
- When does the process end?
- The skills needed to provide support: empathy, ability to listen, etc.
- Distinguish among mentoring, teaching, other roles and support
- The different “postures” in support
- Discussions on the topic and questions about support

Activity 3

OBJECTIVE: To reflect on the contribution of support and on possible obstacles

In teams of three, exchange ideas about the benefits of support and possible obstacles.

1. Benefits
2. Possible obstacles

Each team presents its results. What do we do with them?

Activity 4

OBJECTIVE: To situate listening and acceptance as the basis for support

Read an article on listening entitled “Peux-tu simplement m’écouter?”

Nonviolent communication

Activity 5

OBJECTIVE: To understand the principles underlying nonviolent communication

In teams of four, each participant reads an article on nonviolent communication (NVC) and shares his or her understanding of it.

Activity 6

OBJECTIVE: To identify the steps involved in NVC and possible obstacles

1. Presentation of the theory of nonviolent communication:

- a. The giraffe and the jackal
 - b. The steps involved in the observation, feelings, needs and request approach
 - c. A heart-to-heart connection as a prerequisite for the meeting
 - d. Awareness as a process of the movement of life and the importance of breathing
2. Traps: thoughts, judgments, beliefs, prejudices, binary thinking, finding solutions for the other person
 3. Strengths: presence, desire to provide support, resources, experience, faith
 4. Empathetic listening
 5. The support provider's intention and the student's discovery of his or her intentionality.

Hand in the feelings and needs sheets.

Activity 7

OBJECTIVE: To experience a connection with someone and to be attentive to what is going on in myself and in the other person

Experience the connection with “the pencil.” In turn, experience the student/support provider connection.

Activity 8

OBJECTIVE: To make a distinction between observation, feelings, needs and request

Using a prepared text, identify whether the description is of an observation, a feeling, a need or a request.

Activity 9

OBJECTIVE: To pursue the integration of observation, feelings, needs, request

Participants explain, using examples: observation, feelings, needs, request.

Activity 10

OBJECTIVE: To experience NVC with a partner

In writing, participants describe a situation that touched them and discuss it in pairs. The other person listens with empathy and tries to help the other reveal himself or herself, feel better

about him or herself, identify his or her feelings and needs. End by asking whether he or she has a request.

Group review. The facilitator completes the reflection by indicating that, behind every belief, behind thoughts about self or the other and behind one's actions, there is a need. The same applies to future students. The intention behind behaviour is to meet a need; it is necessary to identify both intention and need.

Activity 11

OBJECTIVE: Using a kinesthetic and auditory exercise, provide support for a person trying to resolve a situation and understand that, behind his or her actions, there is a common thread

In pairs, try to understand your intentions and motivations.

Make a connection with support. What is there in the background that can be experienced, told, forgiven?

Afternoon

The different types of plans and the key benefits of work
--

Activity 12

OBJECTIVE: Theory behind the different types of plans and the key benefits of work

Discussion of the theory with respect to the situation at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette.

Activity 13

OBJECTIVE: Presentation of the retrospective/prospective/action approach

Using the table describing the approach, discussion of the three phases and their relevance in support.

Activity 14

OBJECTIVE: Integration exercise to situate themselves and assimilate the approach. Demonstrate the retrospective/prospective/action approach.

1. In writing, place the key benefits of work in order and, for the least satisfactory benefit, use the retrospective/prospective/action approach.

2. In pairs, present the benefits you lack. The support provider makes an effort to identify the feelings and needs related to the three phases.

Retrospective (past)

- a. Tell me about this benefit: why is it lacking? Until now, how have you constructed it? What feeling does it elicit? Are there others? What needs must be met? What constructive elements can you use as a lever? etc.

Prospective (future)

- b. In the future, what would you like to add, remove, keep in order to better achieve this benefit? How do you see it? When you look at the future, what feelings does that elicit? Is there anything else? What needs would it meet? How do you see the answer to this need, its context? Does it involve other people? etc.

Action (present)

- c. What actions must you take to respond to this need? What means and steps must you take? Do you need help? When you see yourself, feel yourself move, what feelings does that elicit? Do you have to negotiate with people? What request could you make? How will you know your need has been met?

Group review. If you have enough time, do the same exercise with respect to a type of plan. If not, review the day and participants' understanding of the process guide.

To end, the process guide and support tools.

Appendix 2

Questionnaire to Identify Students' Needs

Semi-Structured Interview

Procedure

Explanation of the context of the interview and overview of the support process

I am going to ask you questions about the support services you received at CFRN and those you would have liked to receive. I would appreciate it if you could be spontaneous with your answers and comments so that I can better understand the context, carry out the research project and establish means for ensuring the success of future students at CFRN. This process is entirely confidential and your name will not appear anywhere. Only data concerning sex, age and a few other elements will be used for statistical purposes. Do you have any questions?

Date: _____

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Level of schooling: _____

How long have you been at the centre? _____

What is your plan at this point? _____

Are you from the region? If not, how long have you been here? _____

1. How are you today?

2. How did you hear about the centre?

3. Were you referred by Emploi-Québec?

4. What did you think about the centre before you got here? (negative, positive)

5. What do you think about it now?

6. Who welcomed you at the centre?

7. How did the meeting go with respect to the topics discussed?

8. Who else did you meet with later on?

9. What difficulties have you encountered here?

10. When you need information, do you know who to contact?

11. Is it difficult to get an appointment when you have questions or needs?

12. Do you meet with different professionals?

13. How do you go about meeting with professionals here at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette?

14. Is it easy to talk to a staff member?

15. When you have a problem (personal, academic, other), what do you do?

16. What keeps you going?

17. Why would you leave the centre? (personal reasons)

18. What at the centre would make you drop out?

19. Do you have a mentor?

20. What do you think about this service? How is it useful and how is it lacking? When did you meet your mentor? Would you change anything?

21. What wouldn't you talk about with your mentor?

22. How do your teachers support you in your learning and other needs?

Are they available?

23. What was the best problem-solving meeting you ever had in your life?

24. What was so good about it?

25. In your opinion, what factors affect your well-being here at CFRN?

26. What helps you achieve your goals here at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette?

27. Do you have any suggestions for improving the support services offered? (lunch meetings, meetings during class, discussion periods, mentor, etc.)

28. How would you like things to be?

29. Do you think that an adult learner with experience could provide new students with support?

30. If you had to provide support, how would you do it? Would you be interested?

31. Would you like someone to be assigned to you (a professional at the centre) while you are studying: for a time or throughout the process?

32. If so, what would you expect from this person?

33. If there were group meetings to help you overcome certain difficulties, when would you like them to be? (At the start, throughout the process, etc.) What would be the advantages and disadvantages of this type of meeting?

34. When you start school, would you like to have a few group meetings on how to improve your chances of success or solve certain problems?

35. If so, how would you like them to go?

36. If you were in charge, how would you provide support for new students?

37. In your case, what are contacts between CFRN and other organizations (CLE, Transition Plus, Ficelles, etc.) like?

38. Was it difficult to negotiate your learning needs with the organization in question?

39. Do you think you received the appropriate support and information? Explain your answer.

40. Is it easy to deal with the different organizations? Can you name organizations in the region that could be useful?

41. Would you like to receive support/follow-up services to see how you are doing when you are referred to another organization?

42. Do you have any comments or suggestions to add?

Thank you for your cooperation

Appendix 3

Semi-Structured Interview With a Person Who Is No Longer in School

Procedure

Explanation of the context of the interview

I am going to ask you questions about the support services you received at CFRN and those you would have liked to receive. I would appreciate it if you could be spontaneous with your answers and comments so that I can better understand the context at the centre and establish means for ensuring the success of future students at CFRN. This process is entirely confidential and your name will not appear anywhere. Only data concerning sex, age and a few other elements will be used for statistical purposes. Do you have any questions?

Date: _____

Age: _____

Gender: _____

Level of schooling: _____

How long have you been at the centre? _____

What is your plan at this point? _____

Are you from the region? If not, how long have you been here? _____

1. Are you in a good mood?

2. How did you hear about the centre?

3. Were you referred by another organization (CLE, CJE, other)?

4. What did you think about the centre before you got here? (negative, positive)

5. What do you think about it now?

6. Who welcomed you at the centre and what happened?

How did the meeting go with respect to the topics discussed? Did it answer your questions and meet your needs?

7. When you needed information, did you know who to contact?

8. Who else did you meet with later on?

9. What difficulties did you encounter here?

10. Was it difficult to get an appointment when you had questions or needs? How did you go about it?

Was it easy?

11. What more could we have done to help you pursue your plan?

12. What would make you come back to Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette?

13. Why did you leave the centre?

14. If you had to do it over again, would you still leave Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette?

15. Did you have a mentor?

What do you think about the mentoring service? How was it useful and how was it lacking? When did you meet your mentor? If you had to do it over again, would you contact the mentor more often? Is there anything you would change?

What wouldn't you talk about with your mentor?

16. How did your teachers support you in your course of action or when you had academic difficulties?

17. What at CFRN helped or could have helped you achieve your goals?

18. Do you have any suggestions for improving the support services offered? (lunch meetings, meetings during class, discussion periods, mentor, etc.)

How would you have liked things to be?

19. Would you have liked someone to be assigned to you (a professional at the centre) while you were studying: for a time or throughout the process?

If so, what would you have expected of this person?

20. Do you think that an adult learner with experience could provide students with support?

21. If there had been group meetings to help you overcome certain difficulties or improve your chances of success, when would you have liked them to be? (at the start, throughout the process, etc.) What would be the advantages and disadvantages of this type of meeting?

22. In your opinion, does everyone need support services?

23. If you were in charge, how would you provide support services for new students?

24. What would you need right now to pursue your plan?

25. When you have a problem (personal or other), what do you do?

26. What was the best problem-solving meeting you ever had in your life?

What was so good about it?

27. Are you currently receiving support services from professionals (CLE, CJE, etc.)?

28. Are you currently in contact with any resources in the community (CJE, CLE, etc.)? If so, how is it going? Are your needs being met?

29. Has it ever been difficult to negotiate your learning or other needs with them?

30. Do you think you received appropriate support and information? Explain your answer.

31. Is it easy to deal with the different organizations?

32. Would you like to receive support/follow-up services to see how you are doing when you are referred to another organization?

33. Do you have any comments or suggestions to add?

Thank-you for your cooperation

Appendix 4

Adult Learners Focus Group

Steps

Rules of the game

Discuss among yourselves the topics I am going to propose. There are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your opinions, motivations, needs and comments. Try to listen to each other and not to talk at the same time. You are totally free to participate or not, but it would be very helpful for me if you did. So, if anyone wants to leave, please do so now. Everything that is said will remain confidential and your name will not appear anywhere.

Icebreaker

Please introduce yourselves and talk a bit about your leisure activities and what you intend to do this summer.

How long have you been here? _____

Who referred you? _____

1. How did you hear about the centre?
2. What did you think about the centre?
3. Who welcomed you at the centre?
4. Who is the first staff member you met and why?
5. What did you talk about? How did the meeting go?
6. Who else did you meet with later on?
7. What difficulties have you encountered here?
8. Is it difficult to get an appointment when you have questions or needs?
9. Do you talk to different professionals about your needs?

10. Would you like someone to act as liaison between the support providers in order to serve you better?
11. How do you go about meeting with professionals here at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette?
12. Is it easy to talk to a staff member?
13. Do you often have to repeat your needs?
14. Is it easy to meet with a secretary, a training consultant, a guidance counsellor, a social worker?
15. Do you find it easy to talk about your concerns with certain people at the centre?
16. When you have a problem (personal, academic, other), what do you do?
17. Do you have a mentor?
18. What do you think about this service? Is it useful or not? Why? When did you meet your mentor?
19. What wouldn't you talk about with your mentor?
20. How do your teachers support you when you have a problem that is not school related?
21. Do you find that teachers are available to provide support for your course of action?
22. If you have problems that are not school related, what do you do?
23. What was the best problem-solving meeting you ever had in your life?
24. What was so good about it?
25. What factors affect your well-being here at CFRN?
26. What helps you achieve your goals here at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette?
27. Do you have any suggestions for improving the support services offered?
28. How would you like things to be?
29. If you had to provide support services, how would you do it?

30. Would you like someone to be assigned to you (a professional at the centre) while you are in school for a time or throughout the process?
31. If so, what would you expect from this person?
32. Do you think that an adult learner with experience could provide students with support?
33. If there were group meetings to help you overcome certain difficulties, when would you like them to be? (at the start, throughout the process, etc.) What would be the advantages and disadvantages of this type of meeting?
34. When you start your program, would you like to have a few group meetings on how to improve your chances of success or solve certain problems?
35. Would you be prepared, after a time, to provide support services in a buddy system?
36. If so, how would you like that to work?
37. In your opinion, does everyone need support services?
38. If you were in charge, how would you provide support services for new students?
39. What are contacts between the CFRN and other organizations (CLE, Transition Plus, Ficelles, etc.) like?
40. Was it difficult to negotiate your learning needs?
41. Do you think you received the appropriate support and information? Explain your answer.
42. Is it easy to deal with the different organizations?
43. Would you like to receive support/follow-up services to see how you are doing when you are referred to another organization?
44. Do you have any comments or suggestions to add?

Thank-you for your cooperation

Appendix 5

Staff Members Focus Group

This action research project is for your centre: you will get out of it what you put in. A focus group is an interview technique involving six to ten participants and a facilitator, within the framework of a structured discussion/reflection period about a specific topic. The procedure is as follows: I ask questions and we discuss them. You react to what is said and add to it, or I ask for more details. Of course, there are only right answers. Several heads are better than one. I will start off with general questions and progressively become more specific. Reflection is an ongoing process and brilliant ideas are the result of going beyond the familiar. This exercise is not a final analysis, but a beginning.

1. How do you view the action research project on support services at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette?
2. How would you define support services?
3. In your opinion, what is not part of support services?
4. What were the best support services you have ever had? What type of support would you like to receive?
5. What are the qualities required of a good support provider at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette?
6. What are the current support practices at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette?
7. What does it mean to provide support services in an adult education or vocational training centre?
8. In your opinion, were some needs observed but not expressed?
9. If you were a student, what type of support would you like to receive?
10. In your opinion, do all students need support services?
11. Do they need the same type of services, the same formula?

12. Should we establish a profile of at-risk students and suggest support services for them?
If so, on what basis? The profile? What would be the advantages and disadvantages of this solution?
13. What are the support needs of the students you have met with?
14. What are the problems at CFRN and what needs improving in terms of support services?
15. At this stage, are we in agreement about the topic of the research project and the situation we want to change? If so, what is it? (The action research project will define the problem more accurately in the focus groups and individual interviews.)
16. Was this topic ever dealt with and how much importance is it given now?
17. Can you suggest any solutions (to be discussed) in terms of what you would like to try during this action research project?
 - a. Group support
 - b. The buddy system
 - c. Personal support
 - d. Support services at the start and throughout the process
 - e. Peer counselling
 - f. Mentoring
 - g. One or more support providers
 - h. Support in conjunction with other services and partners
 - i. No support services.
18. If the sky were the limit and everything were possible, what type of support services would you implement? If you were in charge, what would you do?
19. What are the limiting factors in the centre (resistance, finances, culture, philosophy, students' needs, management approach, physical space, resources, etc.)?
20. What factors are conducive to the implementation of a support model (students, mobilization, open-mindedness, leaders, management approach, physical space, etc.)?
21. Who is needed for the project and how will they be chosen (support provider, student, partners)?

22. When does a person no longer need support services, how do we know (criteria)?

Partners

23. In terms of partners, what support services are currently available for students at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette?

24. Do you think that the support services should be improved, with liaisons to deal with partners? (memorandum of understanding)

25. In your opinion, who should I meet with and what questions should I ask?

26. How interested are you in participating in the action research project? What would your role be?

27. How appropriate is the action research project?

28. Do you really believe it will change anything?

29. Do you really want to change anything? In your practices?

30. What would make you change your support practices?

31. What are your expectations with respect to this project?

32. Do you have any comments or suggestions after this first meeting?

33. What title would you give the project?

Appendix 6

Semi-Structured Interview With Partners

Procedure

Explanation of the context of the interview and overview of the support process

I am going to ask you questions about the support services you provide, about your perception of the support services at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette and about your current and ideal relationship with Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette. I would ask you to be spontaneous with your answers and comments so that we can better understand the process and the context, carry out the research project and establish means of ensuring the success of the future support process with students at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette or adults attending your services, and improve the relationships we have with them. This process is entirely confidential and your name or the name of your organization will not appear anywhere. It will be revealed that the organization was consulted, without any prejudice whatsoever. The aim of the information is to improve our practices with the clients we share with your organization. Do you have any questions?

Clientele

1. What is the profile of the clients you refer to Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette?

What are the current needs of your clientele?

Have you observed a change in recent years (age, sex, status, education, financial situation)?

2. Do your target groups express a need for support services? What type of support services?

3. What are your expectations with respect to the centre's interventions with the clients you refer?

4. How are the adult target groups distributed over the territory? (Rimouski, MRC)

Are some groups more difficult to reach and do you have mechanisms in place for reaching them?

5. Can you explain the path of an adult who comes to you for services?

6. Generally speaking, what steps do adults take before they get to Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette?

7. What mechanisms have you set up to provide information? (services, job market, trade or occupation, etc.)

Are you and your clientele satisfied?

Support services

8. What is your view of support services?

9. What support services do your target groups need in order to carry out their plan?

10. What type of support services do you offer? (reception, employment consultant, tools, etc.)

Do you have tools for your support services?

11. What are your limitations with respect to support services?

12. Do you address more personal issues with your target groups? Are you comfortable with this type of discussion as an organization?

Partnership

13. What do you think of Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette?

14. How do you follow up on adults who come to Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette (before, during and after their time at the centre)?

15. Do you feel a need for partners in providing support services?

16. Do the adult students who are in school express a need for support services?

17. What factors are conducive to an adult's pursuit of his or her plan? (apartment, financial situation, clear plan, social network)

18. In your opinion, why do adults give up? Why do some drop out?

19. What are the means of communication currently in place with Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette?

20. What are the aspects that work well and those that require improvement with respect to Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette?

21. How would you like things to work between you and Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette with respect to the support/follow-up of adults who are in school?

22. Is it easy to reach a professional at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette concerning an adult who is in school?

23. What do you think Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette should begin or continue doing to provide support services for adults who are in school?

24. How could we establish a procedure for discussing an adult's situation (when necessary) that would ensure the adult's accountability and satisfy ethical concerns?

Do you think that the adult could or should be present?

25. Would you like to have a liaison between your organization and Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette?

a. What would be the advantages and disadvantages?

b. Can you think of another way of doing things?

26. What do you expect from Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette?

Research

27. Would you agree, for the duration of this research project, to using a joint planning/integration (or other) model to provide support services with respect to the adult's life and school-to-work transition (target group)

a. Would you be interested in helping design such a tool?

b. How much time could a professional at your organization devote to such a project? What form would the collaboration take?

28. Do you have any suggestions or comments?

Thank-you for your cooperation

Appendix 7

Brief Meeting With the Centre's Assistant Directors

Vocational Training and General Education

1. Do you think that the action research project at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette will be useful?

2. What are your current support practices?

3. In your opinion, what is not part of support services?

4. What are the qualities required of a good support provider at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette?

5. What are the current support practices at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette?

6. What support services have been offered at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette in recent years?

7. Should there be only one support provider and how many students can a support provider handle?

8. In your opinion, what is the profile of an effective support provider?

9. In your opinion, do all students need support?

10. What is the current profile of students receiving support services? (sex, age, financial situation, status)

a. Has it changed over time?

b. Is attendance a problem?

11. What is your role in the organization?

12. In your opinion, what variables are conducive to an adult pursuing his or her plan?

13. What variables can cause an adult to give up on his or her plan?

14. Should we establish a profile of at-risk adult students and suggest support services for them? If so, on what basis?

What would be the advantages and disadvantages of this solution?

15. What are the support needs of adults who are in school?

16. In your opinion, what are the problems at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette and what requires improvement in terms of support services?

17. What interdepartmental support mechanisms exist?

18. In your opinion, what needs to be changed?

19. Has the problem ever been addressed and has it ever been given this much importance?

20. In your opinion, who should provide support services?

21. Of the possible solutions, what would you like to try during the action research project?

- a. Group support
- b. The buddy system
- c. Personal support
- d. Support services at the start and throughout the process
- e. Peer counselling
- f. Mentoring
- g. One or more support providers
- h. Support services in conjunction with other services or partners.

22. If the sky were the limit and everything were possible, what type of support services would you implement?

23. What are the limiting factors in the centre? (resistance, finances, culture, philosophy, students' needs, etc.)

24. What factors are conducive to the implementation of a support model? (students, mobilization, open-mindedness, leaders, etc.)

25. If there is a field test, how should we choose the support providers, adult target groups and partners?

26. In terms of partners, what support services are currently available for students at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette?

27. In terms of partners, do you think improvements should be made to support services, perhaps the use of liaisons, etc.?

28. In your opinion, who should I meet with and what questions should I ask?

29. How interested are you in participating in the action research project? What would your role be?

30. Is this action research project useful for Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette?

31. Do you really believe it will change anything?

32. What do you really want to change in terms of support practices?

33. What would make you change your support practices?

34. What are your expectations with respect to this project?

35. What do you think about the centre?

36. Do you have any comments or suggestions after this meeting?

Thank-you for your cooperation

Appendix 8

Evaluation of the Workshop for Support providers

Title of activity: _____

Date: _____

Instructor's name: _____

Circle the number that best describes your opinion, based on the following scale:

1 = Disagree

2 = Somewhat agree

3 = Mostly agree

4 = Completely agree

N/A = Not applicable

Objectives, content and methodology					
1. The objectives of the activity were clear and precise.	1	2	3	4	N/A
2. The content was in line with my needs.	1	2	3	4	N/A
3. There was a good balance between theory and practice.	1	2	3	4	N/A
4. The number of hours was sufficient.	1	2	3	4	N/A
5. The objectives were achieved.	1	2	3	4	N/A
6. The documentation provided was useful.	1	2	3	4	N/A
7. The methodology and techniques helped me learn.	1	2	3	4	N/A
The resource person (instructor):					
8. was familiar with the content	1	2	3	4	N/A
9. presented the content well	1	2	3	4	N/A
10. respected each participant's pace	1	2	3	4	N/A
11. sparked my interest in the activity	1	2	3	4	N/A
Framework					
12. The schedule was appropriate.	1	2	3	4	N/A
13. The room and setup were satisfactory.	1	2	3	4	N/A
14. It was easy to strike a balance between the workshop and my job.	1	2	3	4	N/A
Learning and transfer of learning					
15. I feel that I understand and have integrated most of the content of the activity.	1	2	3	4	N/A
16. What I learned can be applied directly to my work.	1	2	3	4	N/A
17. As soon as the workshop is over, I will have an opportunity to use my new knowledge and skills at work.	1	2	3	4	N/A

One thing that I found useful and will be able to use in providing support services:
One question I have at this point:
Other comments and recommendations:

Appendix 9

Mid-Process Evaluation of Learning and Transfer of Learning After an Activity

Title of the activity: _____

Date: _____

Instructor's name: _____

Circle the number that best describes your opinion, based on the following scale:

1 = Disagree

2 = Somewhat agree

3 = Mostly agree

4 = Completely agree

N/A = Not applicable

1. The activity enabled me to acquire new competencies.	1	2	3	4	N/A
2. The activity enabled me to update some of my knowledge and skills.	1	2	3	4	N/A
3. Since the workshop, I have been more competent at work.	1	2	3	4	N/A
4. I modified certain behaviours and attitudes at work.	1	2	3	4	N/A
5. The workshop allowed me to be in closer contact with students.	1	2	3	4	N/A
6. Since the workshop, my support practices have changed.	1	2	3	4	N/A
7. The workshop improved my motivation.	1	2	3	4	N/A
8. I have the tools I need to apply what I learned in the workshop.	1	2	3	4	N/A
9. The elements I learned in the workshop that I use most often are:					
10. The elements I learned in the workshop that I use least often are:					
11. The factors in the workplace that make it difficult to apply what I learned are:					
12. The factors that could be improved in the workplace in order to facilitate the application of the knowledge and skills I acquired during the workshop are:					
13. My observations of the student (motivation, clarification of the plan, attendance, etc.) are:					

14. Other comments and recommendations:

Appendix 10

Ethical Concerns and Consent Form

This section on ethics could have been titled *Ensuring Human Dignity*. Throughout the research project, we have endeavoured to respect confidentiality and human dignity, regardless of the life issues in question. In situations such as discussions about a student or referral to another service, the student was never named. If it became necessary to do so, the student was notified. In such a case, we would need a form authorizing us to reveal the student's name. For the research project, we did not need such consent.

We used the following mechanisms in order to respect the ethical aspects of this research project.

1. Random selection of participants
2. Detailed explanation, to participants and students, of their involvement in interviews, focus groups and the support process. We wanted them to understand and answered all of their questions and concerns.
3. Consent form for support providers and students. See the explanations below, followed by a copy of the form.
4. All of the forms are kept safe in a filing cabinet in the director's office.
5. During the project, interviews with support providers and students took place in a private and confidential area. Also, in meetings with students, as provided for in the support process and mainly in the basic "posture" which is "to accompany" (although, in our opinion, there are other possible "postures" in support services depending on the context and needs [see Table 13]), we made the support provider aware of the emphasis on discussion followed by action rather than an expectation of a result at any cost. The process fosters the emergence of awareness in the student and is not intended to impose personal or organizational values.
6. The questionnaires were designed to respect the student's anonymity and confidentiality. The information gathered is solely for the purposes of compiling statistics. The purpose of each questionnaire is explained (see the questionnaires in the appendixes).
7. So that no prejudice is caused to students with respect to their peers, the research procedure and the selection method were explained to other students where necessary.
8. The support process can reveal needs or elicit destabilizing life situations in the student and support provider. Given our concerns, we set up control mechanisms to avoid exceeding the limits of support services (or of the support provider) and to refer students to another service at the right time.

Here is how we proceeded:

- a. During the workshop for support providers, we explained the limits of support and clarified guidelines for referring students to another service (see Appendix 15, “When should a student be referred to another service?”).
- b. Individual meetings were planned with support providers. The project coordinator was available at all times to discuss problem situations. Also, two group meetings with support providers were aimed at discussing borderline situations and taking steps to refer certain students.
- c. The student was notified by the support provider when there were only two meetings left and was asked what he or she thought about that. At the last meeting, attention was paid to the student’s emotional state in order to ensure he or she left in a stable condition. If he or she had a serious problem and the support provider was available, steps were taken to make sure support services continued, even if the research project was over.

Consent Form

The same consent form was used for both students and support providers (see copies below). We explained the research project to students in a personal meeting and we made sure they understood. The same information was given to support providers at a group meeting.

Steps

1. Explanation of the aims of the research project, its objectives and the reasons for asking the parties in question to participate
2. Contact information of people able to answer questions about the research project: the project coordinator’s name and contact information of the person in charge of the project at the Ministère de l’Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport
3. Explanation of the consent form, specifying that participation is on a strictly voluntary basis. This section of the form indicated that refusal to participate in the research project or withdrawal from the study at any time would not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which the participant would otherwise be entitled.
4. Signature of the document by the parties. This document is kept in a filing cabinet in the director’s office and participants were given a copy.

SAMPLE CONSENT FORM

Sample consent form from the *Tri-Council Policy Statement for the Ethical Conduct of Research Involving Humans*, which we adapted for the purposes of this research project

CONSENT FORM

Title of research project:
Researchers' names:
Sponsors:

This consent form is only one element of the enlightened decision-making process aimed at giving you a general idea of the nature of the research project and the implications of your participation. Please do not hesitate to ask for details or further information. Please take the time to carefully read the following and to make sure you understand all the information.

(The researchers are obliged to provide all of the information below in clear and comprehensible language and to avoid all jargon. All of the important words must be explained. This document is a template. You are not required to use the elements that do not apply to the project.)

1. Aim of the research project
2. Description of all people and procedures involved in the project, including those which would not normally be available given the current state of knowledge
3. Explanation of research design aspects such as randomization and double-blind studies. In the latter case, specify when and how a code can be destroyed. When he or she has been deceitful, the researcher must provide a complete research report and solicit the participant's consent once again
4. A description of the probability of any inconvenience or discomfort associated with participation, as well as known or foreseeable short- and long-term damage
5. An accurate description of the implications of involvement in the project (routines, nature of tests, procedures, etc.)
6. Evaluation of the probability and nature of the direct and indirect advantages of the research project for the participant and for others

7. Presentation of treatments other than those proposed by the research project, accompanied by a discussion of the advantages, disadvantages and risks of the alternatives. (This description may, when necessary, be given verbally. If it is, specify the method and record in the file that verbal consent was obtained.)
8. The names of the people who will have access to the information gathered and the participant's identity, and a description of the measures taken to ensure confidentiality
9. Explanations notifying participants that they will receive new and updated information throughout the research project
10. Description of all the financial costs likely to be incurred by the participant as a result of his or her participation in the research project

CONSENT FORM

Your signature attests to the fact that you have clearly understood the information concerning your participation in the research project and indicates that you have agreed to participate. It does not mean that you agree to alienate your rights and to exonerate the researchers, sponsors or institutions from their legal or professional liability. You are free to withdraw from the study at any time without compromising your right to the care required by your state of health. Since your participation must be as well informed as your initial decision, you must be aware of all aspects related to the research procedure. Consequently, you must never hesitate to ask for details or additional information over the course of the project. For all information about the research project, please contact:

Name and telephone number of researcher in charge or qualified replacement

For all other questions about your rights as a participant in this research project, please contact:

Indicate the name and contact information of the resource person outside the research team.

Participant's name	Signature	Date

Researcher's name	Signature	Date

Witness	Signature	Date

Appendix 11

Sample Icebreaker for Support Meetings

We will be meeting six times to exchange ideas about different topics related to your plans and factors that can affect your success. This process is voluntary, and my role is to be there for you and to accompany you in your thought process. It is not complicated, I will be honest with you and I would like you to be honest with me as well. If, along the way, there is something you want or something you don't like, tell me. If you agree, I would like you to consider these meetings an opportunity to think about your plans: it's important. Tell me what you want. Here is the list of topics we will be discussing at the six meetings. Do you have any questions?



Think about someone important to you. Which of this person's qualities would you like to develop?



Make a list of ten things you love to do, whatever they are (singing, tinkering, dreaming, listening to music, flipping through magazines, etc.).



Describe a moment when you felt particularly proud of yourself.

If you could spend a day somewhere studying or doing what you like most, whatever that is, what would you do?

If you could spend a day with someone, no matter who or from what era, who would you pick and why? What would you ask him/her?

If your life were a movie, what would the title be and what role would you play? Who else would be in the movie?



What do you expect out of life? What do you dream about?



Why did you choose school as a way of getting what you want? Why are you here? What do you expect?

Appendix 12

Students' Evaluation Questionnaire

2004

Male ☐ Female ☐

Age group

16-20 ☐ 21-25 ☐ 26-30 ☐ 31-35 ☐ 36 and over ☐

Thank-you for filling out this questionnaire, which will help us offer better services to future students. There are no right or wrong answers. Please be as honest as possible. Your first reaction is often the best answer. All personal information is confidential. In any case, do not write your name on this sheet. There is no time limit. Please return the form to me tomorrow at my office (B.206.1).

Thank-you for your participation

Indicate whether you agree completely, mostly agree, somewhat agree or disagree with each statement.

1. When I met with the support provider, I was treated like an adult.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

2. I always felt comfortable and safe with the support provider.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

3. I always felt that the support provider was listening.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

4. During the meetings, I was able to talk about myself, which is important to me.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

5. The support provider was able to refer me to the appropriate professional resources.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

6. Generally speaking, the meetings improved my self-esteem and self-confidence.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

7. The meetings helped me find answers to my questions.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

Learning plan

8. The meetings gave me a more positive opinion of the school system.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

9. I clarified my learning plan and now I know why I am here.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

10. Because of the meetings, I feel better as a person (about my preferences, values and abilities).

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

11. I got the information I needed about programs I might be interested in.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

12. If not, the support provider was able to tell me where I could get the information I needed.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

13. In general, the meetings improved my motivation to carry out my learning plan.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

14. When I had academic difficulties (in a course, staying motivated, in class), I was able to find solutions with the support provider.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

15. I learned how to better balance school and my personal life.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

16. Because of the meetings, I am better able to manage my time and my priorities.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

17. Since the meetings, I have been absent from class less often.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

18. Since the meetings, my learning pace has improved.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

19. I sense that my marks are going to get better.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

Personal plan

20. I learned more about myself at the meetings.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

21. The support provider helped me understand myself better.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

22. I am better able to satisfy my needs.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

23. I am better able to manage my family life.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

24. I am more sure of myself since I have been participating in the meetings.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

25. The meetings helped me better manage my personal life and my learning plan.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

26. Generally speaking, I feel better about myself since the meetings.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

27. The support provider was a source of motivation and support.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

School-to-work transition plan

28. I am starting to see myself as a future worker.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

29. My view of the job market is more optimistic than it was before my meetings with the support provider.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

30. I clarified my learning plan at the meetings with the support provider.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

31. I am familiar with the different types of jobs I can get with what I am studying now or what I will be studying later on.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

32. I am more confident about entering the work force.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

33. I know why I want to work.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

Income

34. The meetings helped me take stock and find financial solutions.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

35. As a future worker, I was able to identify what sort of income I could expect given my career choice.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

36. The meetings helped me better manage my budget.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

Status

37. I am comfortable with the status of student at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette and I find it easy to tell people that I am here.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

38. I am prouder to be here since the meetings.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

39. Since my meetings with the support provider, I am better able to communicate with the people around me, and I am aware of my real needs and what I want out of life.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

Management of time and space

40. Since the meetings, I am better able to manage my time and space.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

41. My activities are more balanced (groceries, children, outings, leisure activities, sleep, etc.).

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

Interpersonal relations

42. Since the meetings, I am more familiar with my needs in terms of friends and contacts.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

43. I was able to take action to meet my relationship needs.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

Completion of plans

44. Since the meetings, I am more aware that I am achieving self-fulfillment at the centre.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

45. I participate more in my own self-fulfillment.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

Meaning of life

46. The meetings helped me give meaning to what I am doing.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

47. Since the meetings, I have more hope for the future.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

Role

48. Since the meetings, I am better able to reconcile my different life roles (personal life, school, family, social life).

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

49. I started cleaning up my life and getting better organized.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

50. Overall, I am satisfied with my meetings with the support provider.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

51. I would recommend these meetings to all my friends.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

52. I think everyone should have meetings like these.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

One useful thing I got out of the meetings:

One thing I didn't like about the meetings:

Other comments that could help improve the process:

Thank-you very much

Appendix 13

Support Providers' Evaluation Questionnaire

Thank-you for filling out this questionnaire, which will help us offer better service to future students and teachers. There are no right or wrong answers. Please be as honest as possible. Your first reaction is often the best answer. All personal information is confidential. In any case, do not write your name on this sheet. Please return the form to me tomorrow at my office (B.206.1) or in my mailbox.

Indicate whether you agree completely, mostly agree, somewhat agree or disagree with each statement.

Support concepts

1. In my opinion, I have a good understanding of the theoretical aspects of support services.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

2. I was sufficiently well equipped to apply the support process.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

3. I would have needed more discussions with colleagues so that we could help each other and share ways of doing things.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

4. I would have needed more information in order to provide better support services.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

5. I met with the student six times.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

How many meetings and why that many?

6. I was able to strike a balance between teaching and the support meetings.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

Support practices

7. Overall, I think I helped the student in his or her course of action.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

8. I sometimes felt alone during the process.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

9. I think this process would be useful for most students.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

10. In the current context, the practice considerably increased my workload.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

11. I found the support process gratifying.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

12. I was able to transfer my learning to the classroom or to other areas of my life.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

13. I had enough time to get through the three types of plans and the seven key benefits of work.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

Comments, if any

14. The process allowed me to think about my own life and career issues.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

Comments, if any

15. I was able to keep the appropriate distance with the student.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

16. It was easy or would have been easy to know when to refer the student.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

Comments, if any

17. The resources in the community are helpful and/or accessible (administration, internal resources, social worker, external resources, etc.).

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

Comments, if any

18. The current support formula is satisfactory.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

Comments, if any

The student

19. In my opinion, the number of meetings was sufficient for the student.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

Comments (how many, organization, etc.)

20. I believe that this type of process has a direct effect on the student's motivation.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

21. I think the student is clearer about his or her plan.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

22. I think the students enjoyed the process.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

23. I think the student is now more intent on and involved in the learning process.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

24. I think that, overall, the student's life is better organized.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

For the future

25. I think that all teachers should take the workshop and provide support services.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

26. I think such a process is appropriate at Centre de formation Rimouski-Neigette.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

27. I think implementing a support system would be impossible.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

28. I think the centre has to share its vision of support services and that support services should become a way of being and thinking.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

Comments, if any

29. I think that both concept and process require improvement.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

Comments, if any

30. I think we need to develop the concept of support services in the classroom.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

Comments, if any

31. I think we need more human resources for support services.

Completely ☐ Mostly ☐ Somewhat ☐ Disagree ☐ Not applicable ☐

Comments, if any (roles, who, what, why)

One thing I found useful in the meetings:

One thing that bothered me during the meetings:

Other comments to help improve the process:

Thank-you for your help

Appendix 14

Student Focus Group for Evaluating the Process

1. The process itself Keywords: how did it go, your overall evaluation, your impressions, trust, open-mindedness, availability, topics discussed, number of meetings, duration, etc.	2. What I learned at the meetings Keywords: need, belief, motivation, problem, reality, self-knowledge, etc.	3. Learning plan Keywords: clarification, adjustment, achievement, future plans—worker, if necessary, I took the necessary steps with the guidance counsellor or social worker	4. Motivation in school Keywords: outside the walls, self-esteem, attendance, learning, etc.	5. Overall impact on my life Keywords: family, social, personal, balance, solutions, time management	6. My recommendations for this type of process (Would I recommend it?) Keywords: where, when, how, who, for whom?
Feasibility: too long, too short, number of meetings, etc.					Support services in the classroom Keywords: discussion, time for the plan, career education, life philosophy, etc.

Appendix 15

Theoretical Framework for Support

Introduction

The concept of support is ambiguous. Some people associate it with how we deal with the dying: listening attentively, showing an almost religious respect in a time of transition. Others associate it with holding a child's hand on the first day of school; accompanying someone looking for a job, in need of advice; providing moral support or simply saying to a friend, "I'm here."

First we need to define support and answer a few questions. When are support services appropriate? What are we doing exactly when we provide support? How do support services differ from mentoring or other "postures"? Should a person be trained in the support process? How many types of support services are there? What qualities and competencies are required to provide support services? What are our motivations for providing support services? Finally, do support services complement other specialties?

Society's interest has shifted from the group to the individual. In the 1950s, and up until the 1970s, religious, family and cultural references formed a more or less rigid structure that helped people understand their life and their environment. The answers to their life and career questions came from the clergy, or from professionals (engineers, family doctors). The development of tests in the field of vocational guidance appeared to satisfy the need to match people with the appropriate job, counsellors adopting the following "posture": "I know, so follow me and that's where you're going." Since this reasoning did not provide the expected results, researchers in vocational guidance developed a more educational approach based on the individual and his or her past, present and future, while establishing a process to foster occupational maturity.

According to Pasquier (2001):

Since the above-mentioned major integrators did not work, social relationships became distorted and representatives of Family, School, Work and Religion, until then uncontested, began promoting interindividual relationships to the detriment of intergenerational relationships, raising questions of authority. The entire order of things was called into question. We then entered the era of the personal, individual plan, which every person must develop upon penalty of being excluded.

These major integrators' loss of legitimacy led to other roles such as those of mentor, mediator, sponsor and guide, to borrow from Pasquier (2001). Obviously, expertise still has a role to play in evaluation, diagnosis and providing technical answers, but in support of a support process. De Beer (2004) discusses these themes, which apply to professionals and support providers in every field. He promotes a "posture," a quality of presence:

Support services are first and foremost words, wherever they come from. Of course, they start with the patient, the person who is suffering and who feels listened to by the professional and whoever else can hear. They are also the words of professionals who are not paid to speak, but to perform a technique. The words they add to their actions will comfort or hurt the patient, or render him or her indifferent: "You understand me."

A terminally ill person is undoubtedly faced with the greatest transition. Can we make an analogy with any transition resulting in a loss of reference points, such as a student who hesitantly, fearfully, decides to return to school? With his or her own past and present, he or she must make decisions he or she has not necessarily chosen or taken responsibility for and which, for now, are outside his or her reality, accompanied by very demanding responsibilities that he or she is not necessarily prepared to face. We need to ask what place there is for school in this student's life. This period of adjustment, of transition, which affects his or her entire being, is very important and we must be careful to facilitate the course of action he or she has undertaken. There is a fine line between staying in school and dropping out.

According to Prodhomme (2002):

Changing careers, analyzing one's course of action, thinking into the future are not superficial operations that concern only a person's career. On the contrary, transitions are a time for serious reappraisals, they raise questions about the person himself or herself, his or her identity, values, choices, relationships with others, his or her place in society, the meaning of his or her life.

The role of the counsellor has evolved from giving meaning, to accompanying the adult, who chooses what meaning he or she intends to give his or her own course of action, his or her story. It is a support process that helps the client get where he or she wants to go, define and identify his or her own reference points, his or her own future.

The precarious balance between marginalization and social conformity is a development issue. How can a person integrate into society and develop social and work skills all at the same time, while learning to negotiate his or her uniqueness? In this sense, isn't the goal of support services the process rather than the result? Life is, after all, movement and transformation. We can respect this principle without adopting a laissez-faire attitude. The middle road, or the "right posture," involves understanding one's own paradigms, developing empathy and a balance between presence and withdrawal. We are talking about the distinction between the support

provider and the person receiving support and not about the therapeutic distance between support provider and adult, which we believe does not apply in this context. This requires a understanding of sociopsychological development issues, as well as of the immediate and more remote issues of the environment in which such development takes place. In addition to this theoretical understanding and quality of presence, the meetings must last long enough to allow for co-creations that are not always goal driven, but that leave room for innovation.

In the field of education, students are searching for reference points; they are seeking meaning in what they are doing in order to stick with their plan. An estimated 20 to 35 per cent of students leave school before they have carried out their plan. Others leave to go to work, because of a move or a new baby. Whatever the reason, too often, the student has not completed his or her search. He or she might have appreciated help leaving school or making the transition to the now more meaningful life project. For the reasons cited above, students benefit from the usual support mechanisms that provide mentors and sometimes the “posture” of teachers who, at times, ‘walk alongside’ the students. Evidently, there are not enough mechanisms such as support services to deal with this type of situation. Fortunately, vocational guidance counsellors provide support services beyond those discussed here.

Not everyone, though, can support students, but there is a place where the student should be able to find a sounding board for his or her “voice,” his or her requests, where he or she can find someone who is available and attentive. Specialists have their place but, too often, “playing expert” seems to create a distance that prevents the student from hearing the sound of his or her own “voice.” It is reassuring to define the parameters of a process while allowing students to talk, to reveal themselves, to understand themselves.

Vocational training and adult education centres have different mechanisms for keeping students in school. We try to avoid repeated absences, lack of motivation, behavioural difficulties, etc. We will attempt to clarify the advantages and limitations of mentoring.

Mentoring

The *Grand dictionnaire terminologique* defines the term mentor as follows:

Teacher, selected from among the teaching staff (or related corps) in a secondary school, whose role consists in making himself or herself available to a group of students to provide counselling and information in personal, psychological, academic or family matters.

This definition is similar to the one in Legendre’s *Dictionnaire actuel de l’éducation* (2000). We could say that mentoring is related to group atmosphere, academic results and student motivation, as well as to behaviour, although some teachers address considerably more personal issues, issues we consider important for students’ success and self-fulfillment. Mentoring is usually related to students’ academic difficulties. Mentors offer advice about

integrating learning styles and about the trade or occupation, as well as clarifications with respect to their chosen career. Each teacher appears to have developed his or her own mentoring style. In this privileged relationship, is there room to develop a support services “posture” and to optimize this role?

Since teachers’ workloads are already considerable, how many students can they provide with support services without resorting to purely administrative follow-up or dealing only with a few students with urgent problems? Since each student has a mentor and a relationship of trust has already been established, we could consider broadening the role. To demonstrate, the following is a partial table comparing mentoring and support services, based on Proteau (2002).

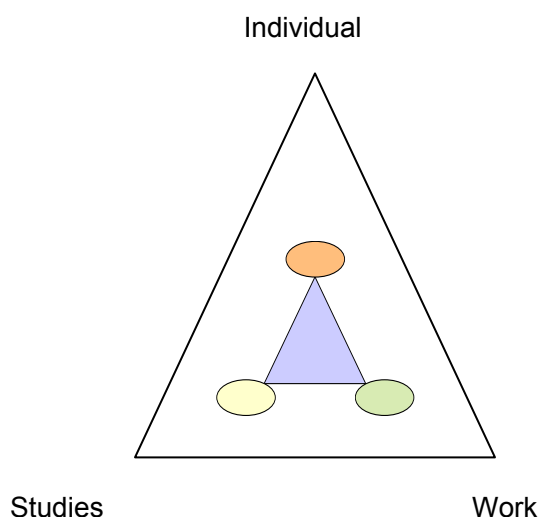
Table 11
Comparison Between Mentoring and Support (Proteau, 2001)

Mentoring	Support
Learning activities based mainly on skills	Genuine learning activities fostering the development of a life project based on a holistic approach
Learning activities and technical or professional interventions	Learning activities developed to adapt to the student’s needs
Development of competencies with a view to promoting self-sufficiency	Actions fostering a search for meaning
Formative, pedagogical and professional interactions with the student	Intersubjective and integrating interaction with the support provider
The mentor’s role involves teaching, guiding and assisting the student in a relationship often focused on the individual or small groups	The support provider welcomes and receives the student, letting him or her be, while taking responsibility for the relationship
The mentor elicits respect through this or her professional competencies	Mutual and unconditional respect is the basis of the relationship between the two parties

Adult learners can benefit from several internal services (e.g. guidance) and external services (e.g. budget planning with a specialized organization). In this context, does the mentor act as liaison between the services? Can we consider a type of service network (perhaps two support providers, one official and the other acting as liaison) with bridges that allow for follow-up? The student could be responsible for his or her own file. In the proposed model, we will attempt to operationalize the process.

We must consider when the support provider should refer the student to another service, in other words, identify the moment at which support is no longer the answer. The following triangle proposes guidelines.

Figure 6
Individual/Studies/Work Triangle



This figure represents a person who is studying and who has a job. If the problem extends beyond the triangle, the adult must be referred to another service and, in extreme cases, continue receiving support services as well. Let's examine this in more detail.

When should a student be referred to another service?

- When the student needs to make a career choice, he or she should be referred to a guidance professional. It is important to remember to help the student feel the “call” of the career plan and to make sure he or she carries it out to the end.
- When the student has health problems, the intervention of a specialist may be necessary.
- When the student has psychosocial problems, he or she must consult a specialist in the field.
- When the support provider or the student expresses a desire to end the relationship, the student must be referred to another support provider.

The support provider

We have attempted to establish the profile of a support provider based on a few authors. We will address the following aspects:

- a description of support
- the different support service “postures”
- the importance of awareness in support by using nonviolent communication as a support tool

While support involves the concept of sharing, of attentiveness in order to foster the student’s completion of his or her self plan and search for his or her identity, the relationship must be genuine and based on unconditional respect. The relationship requires that there be a “distance,” while ensuring availability and a certain outwardness or it will turn into a parental relationship. We will begin with a table inspired by Proteau (2002) and with further comments in order to fine-tune the support provider profile, and end with the student profile, if there is one.

Table 12
Description of Support (Proteau, 2001)

Basic principles Knowledge	▪ Support involves a spatiotemporal concept associated with accompaniment. ▪ The support relationship is part of the individual's self plan. The result is not as important as the process. ▪ Support involves a search for meaning. ▪ Each person is seen as subject and player and not as someone needing help.
Relationship skills	▪ Mutual trust in the management of distance and proximity ▪ Reception ▪ Listening, hearing, awakening and, at times, confrontation ▪ Genuineness and integrity ▪ Empathy ▪ Use of available resources, mainly the individual's ▪ Unconditional respect ▪ Ability to accompany oneself and others. Spiralling relationship that leads to the heart and self-discovery ▪ Other ingredients: humility, spontaneity, flexibility, generosity, open-mindedness, tolerance of differences, ability to deal with silence, faith (not in the religious sense but in the sense of "possibility" closer to the Rogerian model) and imagination
Approach	▪ Mainly nondirective leadership based on the relationship and the process
Support provider's role	▪ To "propose" as well as help and, although listening, perhaps to say "no." Based on the student's request, the support provider may have to adopt different "postures": sometimes ahead, sometimes behind, above, below, beside and apart.
Goal(s) of the change	▪ The support relationship is not aimed at change, but a person can change and adjust to the needs expressed by the other person in the relationship. With this awakening, this self plan, the student can move from awareness to desire, action and integration. Awareness is an inspiration and takes shape in reality: it is a gradual maturation.



Possible “postures” in support

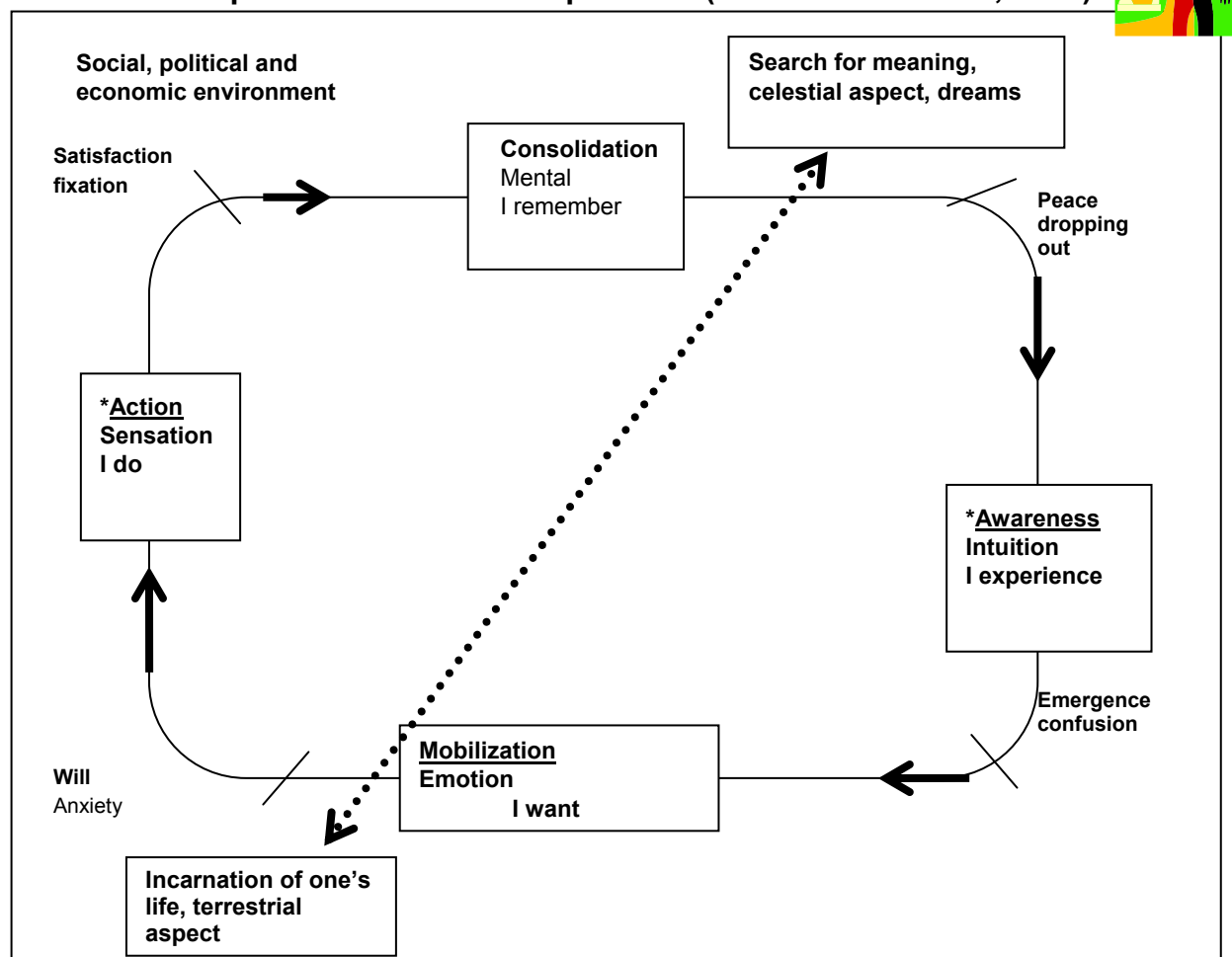
The support provider can adopt different “postures” depending on the situation and the needs expressed. The support process is voluntary and is not part of the institution’s normal structure but, without this structure, it is impossible. It relies on volunteers, availability, authority and unconditional respect.

- The posture ahead of the student could mean starting with a need expressed by the student. It can involve “modeling”: “I suggest that we try it together, I’ll teach you and we will do it together.”
- The posture behind the student (one step behind because, more than three steps behind, the student will not feel sufficient support) means: “I’ll follow you” without making it a supervisory relationship. It is important not to pass on one’s beliefs and solutions, which would hinder the relationship of trust and the paradigms of support services. Based on a request, support services could involve observation, questioning, hypothesizing, sharing feelings or verifying what was agreed upon.
- The posture above the student presupposes a more directive type of support services. It is circumstantial and requires honest intervention adapted to the situation. Could be adopted when the student is thinking about suicide or in a violent context, and the support provider must establish a more interventionist strategy; the student must be attentive and become aware of the situation.
- The posture below the student is a lower position like the one proposed by the Palo Alto school to foster the emergence of the other person. “I temporarily yield some of my place so that he or she can take his or her place and we can achieve a more egalitarian position.”
- The posture beside the student is the most common in support services. This quality of attentiveness allows for the emergence of the self plan. This awareness that reveals my inner being, my quest, my inner world, gives me both meaning and direction.
- The posture apart occurs when the support process ends because the student’s needs have been met. It can also be interrupted for reasons of incompatibility or because the support strategy gives the student an opportunity to pursue his or her course of action on his or her own, if necessary, at least for the moment.

Table 13
The Different Postures

Posture	Desired effect
Ahead	"Modeling," teaching a task
Behind	"I'll follow you," making sure of what was agreed upon, providing support
Above	Interventionist, emergency situation
Below	Position "allowing" the other to exist
Beside	Attentive presence, opening up, awareness
Apart	Strategic withdrawal, allowing the other to live his or her life, to withdraw temporarily

Figure 7
Perception of the Human Experience (Based on Fournier, 2004)



The ultimate goal of support services is to develop this special relationship, to make sure the student gives meaning to his or her self plan and, ultimately, that movement takes place for the development of the plan. Otherwise, it is all illusion. However, it is not up to the support provider to provoke this movement; he or she can at least foster it by his or her availability and invitation to the student to talk about himself or herself. Life finds its way and the relationship fosters movement.

Figure 7 presents a perception of the cycle of human experience. The backdrop, or the social, political and economic environment, represents the context in which the student is evolving. Support services must foster this interaction with both the centre and the living environment in general. We believe that, in the cycle of human experience, support needs can differ (see asterisks in the table).

1. At the first stage, i.e. the stage of awareness or times of confusion, a welcoming presence that listens and objectifies is related to long-term support services.
2. It is important to emphasize one's presence when the student takes action. This movement toward the search for self raises fears. Appropriate support services can make the difference between extraordinary success and a disappointing step back.
3. It is important to remember that times of transition and more frightening times such as starting a new project or changing career paths, leaving and breaking up can require more sustained support services, or at least a presence.

The support provider must therefore be part of this world and be aware of students' life situations so that he or she can help them in these transitions. The Ministère's working document entitled "L'accompagnement en contexte de formation continue" (Riverin-Simard, 1998-2001) refers to this aspect.

Every change, every discontinuity, causes the individual to reposition himself or herself and to reconnect with his or her major vocational orientations. When these orientations are undefined, or are constantly being redefined, confusion sets in, since the orientations are the source of meaning in his or her personal and social life.

As we mentioned earlier, awareness is the starting point for human experience. Our society is based on efficiency, production and action. By focusing on a keener awareness, we can improve the student's mobilization. The aim of support services is the "self plan." Dreams without action are an illusion, action without dreams or meaning makes the person "subject" to time. That is why we based our perception of support services on awareness leading to mobilization, then on action leading to integration.

Of the other tools the support provider must master to facilitate transitions and raise the student's self-awareness is Marshall Rosenberg's method. It involves building bridges, fostering awareness and respecting the appropriate distance between support provider and student. This method, known as nonviolent communication (NVC), is the backdrop for the support relationship.

NVC emphasizes listening with empathy and leaving room for neutral and objective observation of what is going on in terms of feelings, needs and possible requests. Also, it fosters awareness of self and the other. It creates distance based on one's own awareness, one's need to influence, to convey one's own values, beliefs and judgments, and to exceed binary thinking (all or nothing, black or white). The Ministère's discussion and policy document (2004) gives this warning:

At the same time, adults have their own membership group or group of origin and share the group's culture, communication tools and way of seeing the world, which is often very different from that of the service provider.

The approach also fosters the resolution of unfinished situations using the healing techniques or processes they offer. Thus, it fosters the connection between self and self, self and the other. Bélanger and Bouchard (2004) discuss this type of empathetic listening in a context of nonviolent communication or conscious communication, as they call it:

Listening draws its power from curiosity, compassion and a true desire to provide support for the other person in his or her exploration. Empathy enables the listener to hear what is being said as well as what is left unsaid; it gives meaning to silence and hesitation. It is without judgment and without expectation. It is a presence offered to the other person.



This approach, disarmingly simple in technical terms, is complex in its application. It requires gaining control over and transforming one's conditioning in order to develop an attentive presence. It is therefore necessary to observe a support process related to this approach in order to master the knowledge, skills and attitudes. Here is Marshall Rosenberg's (2003) definition:

Nonviolent communication (NVC) is a language, a way of thinking, a communication skill and a means of influencing people that enables me to do three things:

- *free myself from cultural conditioning that is in conflict with the way in which I want to live my life*
- *acquire the power to connect with myself and others in a way that enables me to give naturally, from the heart*
- *acquire the power to create structures that support this way of giving*

Eloquent explanations and comments from a few support providers were taken from a Web site (2003).

NVC is a means of expression and listening that is both very simple and extremely powerful and that makes it possible to acquire practical, precise and effective knowledge that can help people:

- develop a relationship with themselves and others by using the healing power of empathy and breaking down ways of thinking that lead to anger and depression*
- facilitate the prevention and resolution of conflicts (personal, occupational or political) by transforming potential conflicts into peaceful dialogues*
- enjoy quality communication in which each person's needs can be identified, respected and satisfied along with a respectful understanding of all messages received and successfully saying what we want without eliciting a hostile reaction*

Much more than a process, NVC is a road to freedom, coherence and lucidity. It is a tool that makes it possible to radically improve our relationships with others and make them more genuine.

What is NVC?

NVC involves two fundamental aspects:

1. Expressing oneself fully and sincerely, without blame or criticism
2. Listening to others with empathy, without hearing blame or criticism, even when the expression is hostile

NVC proposes a four-step process for integrating these two aspects into our daily lives:

1. Observe facts without evaluating them.
2. Express feelings, not interpretations.
3. Express the needs underlying these feelings.
4. Formulate clear and concrete requests for action.

This approach encourages the support provider to be attentive to himself or herself and the other person, to deliberate with the student so that he or she can understand his or her needs and set up mechanisms for finding answers. We believe that with a two-day workshop and reading on the subject, the support provider could at least master the approach enough to use it in a support setting.

To conclude our definition of the support provider profile, he or she should be supported by other support providers in order to be able to progress and evolve in his or her self plan, in his or her ability to be with the other person. Payette and Champagne's co-development approach,¹ which is consistent with the aims of support services, would be excellent in the context of lifelong learning. For the purposes of this research project, we met with support providers in the middle and at the end of the process. We believe it would be important to include a few support meetings for support providers during the implementation of a support program.

Profile of Student Receiving Support

We believe that every person carrying out a learning or career plan should receive support services and that their support needs can differ. A student who is losing motivation, who begins to miss class, should be met with quickly and more than once. A person with behavioural difficulties should be met with quickly, a student whose plan is moving along well and who is self-sufficient may request services to help him or her make the transition to the next step, or follow-up services.

The support process is developed over time and requires a attentiveness, frequent meetings and times of withdrawal to allow the student to get on with his or her life. This relationship may give the support provider a sense of importance to have the student under his or her wing. However, it is important to remain vigilant in order to avoid falling into a relationship of dependency. Providing support should be the only motivation and the only reward; otherwise, the support provider should examine the meaning of the relationship and his or her own intrinsic needs. Both people learn from the process. The support provider becomes a mirror for the student, and they work together so that the student can choose his or her own path. The student can request an end to the process if his or her confidence and motivation are strong enough that he or she feels the need to carry on alone and return to consult the support provider as needed.

Finally, all students should receive support as proposed in this document. The support provider should take each student's needs into account and be able to refer the student to another service if necessary.

What could a support meeting look like?

If the mentor is to act as support provider, it is necessary to clarify the different roles he or she can play. Teaching in itself is a form of support. The difference lies in the goal one tries to attain. We agree with Philibert and Wiel (1995) and Proteau (2002) that teachers play different roles, including:



1. Adrien Payette and Claude Champagne, *Le groupe de codéveloppement professionnel* (Sainte-Foy: Presses de l'Université du Québec), 1997.

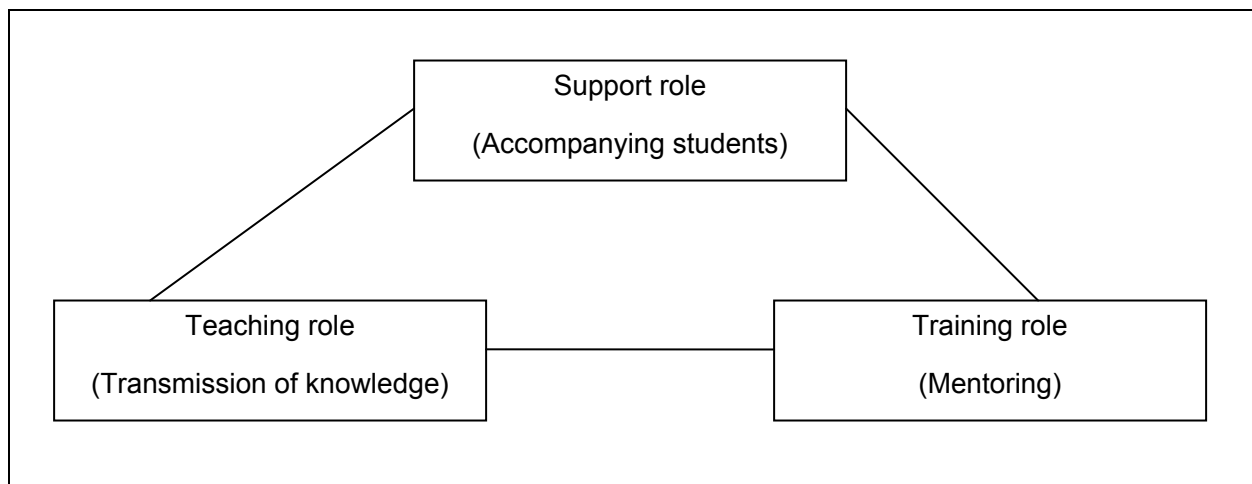
- That of teacher, teaching students something; this involves the transmission of knowledge (teaching is telling the truth)
- That of teacher mentor, providing students with 'know-how' in some domain; this involves acquiring knowledge in order to develop skills and competencies (training or formation means giving shape to something)
- That of support provider, accompanying students in the evolution of their project; support is intertwined in the dynamics of the student's project which is itself embedded in the student's process of 'becoming', his or her self-plan

The following figure illustrates these different roles. These should be easily incorporated into an adult education or vocational training centre considering introducing support services. In their proper balance, they are coherent and take the whole person into account, as Philibert and Wiel (1998) propose:

Being taught, being formed and being accompanied in one's process of becoming (self-plan)

Figure 8
The Three Roles of Education

(Philibert and Wiel, 1998)



The teacher continues to teach and the mentor continues to provide mentoring services. The support aspect is a state of mind, a presence, an attitude, an organizational culture. A centre is support-oriented when it offers time and space to help raise students' awareness and kindle their desire to carry out a project. These strategies involve suggestions rather than restrictions. Du Crest (2001) suggests a complementarity while maintaining a distinction between mentoring and support:

1. *Mentoring: that which brings knowledge and know-how to the realm of education/career*
2. *Support: that which creates mutual trust, in times of doubt, discouragement and hope. Here is where the support relationship is important. It embraces the other person's reality, not by being a "pal," a psychotherapist or a father, but by listening attentively, by getting closer or by moving away, by always adopting postures that elicit the self-plan, the learning plan, the school-to-work and personal plan that raise self-awareness, awareness of one's knowledge, skills, perceptions, attitudes and of one's 'becoming'.*

Thus the role of mentor is enhanced when support is included.

The following figure, based on Du Crest (2001), illustrates the axes of support. If support issues from the support provider, it draws upon his or her expertise and learning (linear, temporal, and quantitative); if the process extends out from the student, it draws upon his or her search and goals (circular, spatial, and qualitative). For the purposes of this research project, we will focus mainly on the needs issuing from the student.

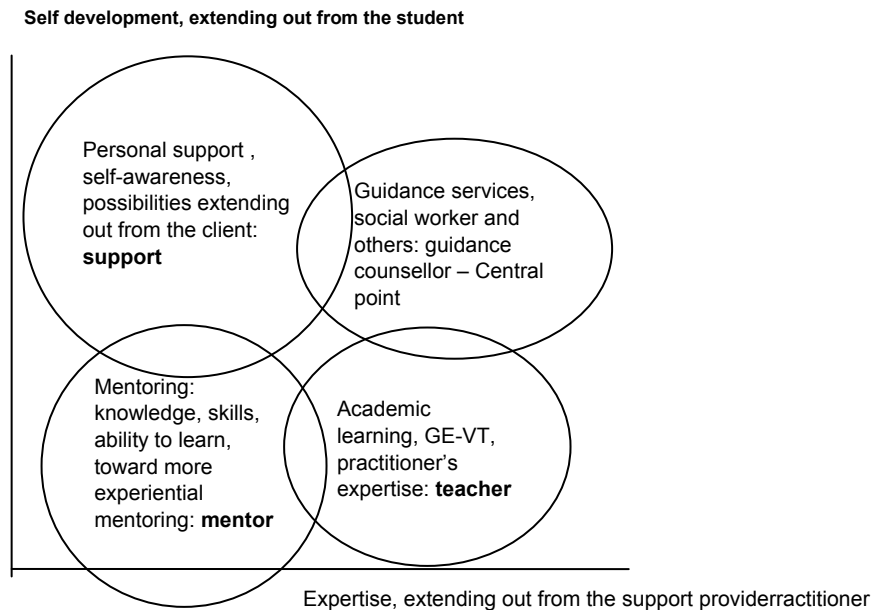
We would like to draw your attention to the fact that support services require time, depend upon certain intangible elements, as well as on the duration and frequency of meetings.

Can we know what the outcomes of a support process will be? It is here that the support-oriented approach confronts the paradigms of productivity and efficiency. Of course we can achieve results, but what kind of results? Results that protect the status quo? Results that keeps the student on track? Results that makes room for innovation? This requires the collaboration of everyone in the learning environment, including the administration, and willingness to a gamble on the student's success that goes beyond the arithmetic administrative formulas used to calculate absences and grants.

Although outcomes are more long term they begin when the student takes a step forward, at least within himself or herself, as Du Crest (2001) points out.

But we cannot speak of support in terms of pre-defined specific results with anticipated timelines and content.

Figure 9
From support Provider to the Person Receiving Support



As was mentioned earlier, support meetings are intended to help students learn more about themselves, to pursue a “vocation that gives life meaning,” and to help them see what distances them from themselves and others. A meeting can make the difference between integration and exclusion, between creating and recreating social relations. Support meetings foster inclusion. Its one of life’s challenges, an invitation to become part of society, a society that too often marginalizes individuals?

It seems the support dynamic depends on two things. First, the student’s request, next, the support provider’s commitment to making the encounter genuine and alive. This means knowing when to remain silent and when to suggest a new direction to re-engage the student and stir him or her into action. This brings us to the functions of a support meeting.

The functions of support

Le Bouëdec (2001) suggests three essential functions of every support meeting. We have included them below.

Providing support means: accepting and listening to the other with empathy and purpose



Here, it is not a question of taking action, but of accepting students as they are. It means listening attentively so that the students know they have been heard and, especially, that what they are going through has been understood—their fears, anxieties and secrets—while firmly believing that they possess the necessary resources, that they have the potential even if, for the moment, these resources are disabled and unexpressed. Being listened to actively is enlightening for students and the quality of the relationship encourages them to open up. They may begin to become aware of new possibilities without the support person's offering solutions. A technique that can facilitate dialogue is noting and naming their feelings and needs (see the section on nonviolent communication) and on occasion, re-stating their comments. Re-stating is not a mechanical replay of what was said, but rather a response that fosters self-awareness, self-knowledge. It is genuinely hearing what the other is saying. Re-stating that is not merely repeating but clarifying. Re-stating projects empathy without assuming responsibility for problems. The support provider must remain self-aware and maintain an emotional distance to make it possible to accept and hear the other. According to Philibert and Wiel (1998), an unqualified presence is available to the other in order to elicit in the other the desire for expression: the retrospective phase.¹

Providing support means: helping the student discover the meaning of what he or she is going through and what he or she is looking for



Here we add an important relational ingredient: discernment. Along with empathy and purpose, discernment focuses on the essential aspects of a message in order to facilitate the other person's understanding of who he or she is. Everyone in transition experiences hesitation, questions, doubts, withdrawals, "periods in the desert."² These communication techniques help the other person discover his or her reality, his or her constructs. Le Bouëdec (2001) distinguishes three phases. The first is openness to the question, "What is this person trying to tell me; to tell himself or herself?" The answer to this question can at first be confused with ambiguous problem-solving strategies. The support provider's goal is to help students recognize the answer and get back on track. The second phase is deliberation, in order to examine, alone or with others, the pros and cons of one's actions before making a decision. The duration of this phase is variable and depends on the individual's awareness and progress, which sometimes requires students to give themselves time to reframe and integrate. This phase ends once a decision is made and at the beginning of

-
1. We will take a closer look at the retrospective/prospective/action approach in the section on methodology.
 2. Term borrowed from Bridges to describe that period of uncertainty, of wandering, which accompanies transitions in which everything appears dead but which, in spite of appearances, is one of creativity, which can result in new meaning, in new life plans. Support during this difficult period is needed and demands confidence of the support provider in the process, and requires that he or she be able to wait without hurrying the student and without projecting his or her own anxiety as to the results of the process.

the implementation stage. The third phase is obvious because of the resulting actions and the enthusiasm and confidence with which they take place. Support continues in order to review the appropriateness of students' actions and to help them ensure that they are the right course, so that they can make any necessary changes. The support provider must remember that it is the student's path, not his or her own, that is important and that he or she must allow the student to find, test and shape his or her own reality. Philibert and Wiel (1998) use the terms "self-expression," "enlightened self-experience" and "self-clarity." This corresponds to the prospective phase.

Lastly, providing support means: accompanying the student while he or she validates his or her new direction



Le Bouëdec adds:

We can only imagine the quality of the humanity and the competency required to provide support.

When leaving on a long journey into the unknown, it is good to know that a "companion" is there to provide reassurance and give us the pat on the back that tells us to keep on trucking, to pursue our path, which can be littered with obstacles. The support process helps students improve on their plan. The difficulties they overcome make them stronger. The support provider accepts students with their weariness, fears, joys, regrets and their need to adjust their plan, while fostering their strength and helping them make the necessary transitions while "protecting" them from a relationship of dependency in which he or she can solve all their problems. As we mentioned earlier, support must result in a broader social net so that students can develop the ability to thrive in the world, as well as the means they need to shape their journey through life. The support process contributes along with other life experiences to help students in their search. Support is embodied in the support provider's "humanity". It must be borne in mind, however, that the support provider sometimes needs his or her own support services and that this is a never-ending story, a story of life. Philibert and Wiel (1998), believe that being listened to elicits the desire to take genuine action. The support process contributes to the decision-making process.

The duration of support

The duration of support can vary according to the student's need, and the support provider's availability and capacity. Support requires time, which means that the results are not necessarily immediate. According to Du Crest (2001), support is coupled to means, methods and space, not results.



Hands-on intervention

The meeting involves direct contact with oneself and the other person. The framework for the services focuses on raising awareness of the student's experiences, the levers for action and the obstacles in his or her life. The support process helps students take a step back to look at their life and their future in order to see their "potential" and to create movement. It takes place in the present with the student's desired actions; this is a process that allows for the expression of imagination and co-creation. The support provider will often have to question his or her own paradigms and habits.

Intra- and interdepartmental services

A person who is searching for a self plan must often confront his or her beliefs, sometimes defeatist, sometimes uncertain, and the environment he or she is trying to understand. Often, students drop out for a while, give up and lose contact with their social net. It seems important, if not essential, that bridges be built to help the student stick to his or her plan or, at least, to remain "hopeful."

Internal and external services are too often compartmentalized and there are not enough bridges between them to provide support. Students at times find themselves disoriented when they meet with several support providers in different departments, often without understanding why. They often must repeat their story, re-explain their needs, and re-formulate their requests. They know they have dropped out before, they are often ashamed and vulnerable, and here they are again explaining their life to a stranger. They find themselves in a process that does not help them learn about themselves, but that requires them to manage a personal file. Too often, they may experience a similar evaluation process. Because of their uncertain motivation supported only by fragile possibilities, they return to the "pattern" of exclusion. Without trying to lay blame, we could ask ourselves whether they have failed to persevere and were unable to adapt or whether the system is making less of an effort to offer services, and more of an effort to manage State funding. By trying to control everything, the system can forget its primary mission and fail to place the student at the centre of the process. One thing is sure, we must foster self-sufficiency.

If support meetings are to be a meaningful experience for students, then it would be appropriate to build a network that uses the same tools. It would be a matter of developing simple tools and placing the student at the centre of the process, while adopting the same goals:

- to help the student pursue his or her plan
- to foster the continuity of services and act quickly, without multiplying interventions
- to show the student that he or she is accepted.

The student could be in charge of his or her own plan and process and make the connection between the different services. In each situation we must be attentive to the students' situation,

abilities and limitations. We must help students clarify their needs in order to determine how far support should go. Students should be informed of procedures that concern them and professionals should, if needed, contact each other by telephone. (See the section under “Methodology” dealing with inter- or intradepartmental partnerships.) The process should take up where it left off, respecting the unique role of each department.

The Development of Adults and Young Adults

First we will present a few characteristics of the development of adults and young adults by gender and with respect to success in school. Given the limitations of this research project, we cannot give a full description of the population, which would include information about steps taken previously, where the students come from—the youth sector of the job market—how many of them live with their parents or are themselves single parents. We will, however, attempt to present a few relevant elements. Second, we will present two theories of psychological development: moral development and ego development.

Success among young adults

For the purposes of this project we will focus on personal development, rather than vocational development, which is related to success in school. Also, educational success is related to the socialization process and the transmission of values (Rivière, 2002).

Personal success has more to do with the intention and desire to achieve self-fulfillment beyond requirements, standards and the obligation to succeed. It is related to the goal of support, which is to help students learn more about themselves, to increase the awareness that gives meaning to what they do and, hopefully, to develop the concept of self and the motivation needed for self-actualization. Without denigrating academic and vocational success, we believe that by acting on personal success, on what has meaning for the student, we can increase his or her chances of school-to-work transition success (Bouchard et al. [1994] in Rivière [2002]).

Educational success is the student's application of values, knowledge, skills and experiences that enable him or her to become involved in society at the personal and vocational levels, depending on his or her abilities and goals. It implies a more mature career choice and involves a personal aspect.

Thus we could say that students' success is a function of their self-knowledge and the knowledge of what they are becoming, through the integration of personal, academic and vocational facets. It is important to remember, however, that, behind these concepts, there is a person looking to carve out a place for himself or herself in a culture that values success at any cost, first in school, then at work, then in personal life, if there is still room. Society says that if I do more I will have more and therefore be more. In a support context, we should introduce more

of I am, more of I will do and more of I will have. According to Salomé (2004), success in life and school involves attitudes, plans and creativity.

This movement toward an emphasis on the “self” translates into a circular process involving the different types of plans. Can an educational institution place value on people and relationships in order to foster academic success? This would involve a change in paradigm. Is there any middle ground? Socioeconomic pressures so emphasize technique and competency that students can feel oppressed and focus solely on perfection in order to find a job. What hope is there for those who are less successful? What message are we sending about the possibility of achieving vocational and personal success? The main road leads from school to practicum to job market. According to Rivière (2002), most students who have difficulty fitting in in school have poorer results. Their plan is often unclear and they see school as a necessary evil. We will return to this topic later on.

Fournier et al. (1993) created a typology of five types of beliefs that unemployed young people hold with respect to school-to-work transition. We wonder whether it would be appropriate to verify where the adult stands with respect to these beliefs.

The typology follows for information purposes.

1. Defeatist beliefs: the environment is hostile and work is slavery. Money is the main motivation to work. Success is outside self and ideals, which are sometimes unrealistic, are unattainable.
2. Beliefs based on dependency: the person is not responsible for his or her career path. Vocational integration is essentially dictated by job market and employment conditions. The person waits for things to happen and does not do anything.
3. Beliefs based on requirements: school and work are necessary evils, supported by the prevailing discourse. We go to school, then to work. School and work enable the person to interact with others without the involvement of personal and career goals.
4. Beliefs based on self-responsibility: academic and vocational successes depend only on the self. The person minimizes the influence of environmental factors.
5. Proactive beliefs: the individual plans a career and interacts with the environment. He or she focuses on long-term rather than immediate gratification. He or she is capable of analyzing situations and their characteristics, and envisioning possibilities.

These beliefs are a representation of the self and the world of work related to the concept of the self. It is important to examine them with the student and to determine how they satisfy his or her needs and aspirations (which we must sometimes stimulate or even elicit). We must pay attention to the student's manner of transacting with the environment. Depending on how much the student's beliefs are based on self-responsibility, we reel out responsibility to the student. We should not allow the student to believe that school-to-work transition is the only source of satisfaction and happiness. We will address these elements by gender in the following paragraphs.

It is never easy to discern what belongs to nature, what to nurture, and what influences how male and female students learn. From this standpoint, should we adapt school to males and females or, as Caouette and Bégin (1992) propose in Rivière (2002):

If programs of study were less standardized and more focused on students' interests, the gap in the success rates of male and female students would be smaller. Academic difficulties could be attenuated by modifying learning conditions.

Current studies mention the difference between the academic behaviours of male and female students. It appears that female students are intrinsically more motivated than male students and adopt more appropriate behaviours with respect to academic success. On the other hand, males are at an advantage in the job market.

Many authors have pointed out that male students, from kindergarten to college, adopt behaviours that are typically incompatible with academic tasks. They are noisier, more tactile, more reckless, more focused on pleasure and immediate gratification. Also, many of them believe that there is little correlation between school and finding a job. Female students adopt certain behaviours that appear to favour success, such as remaining silent, not taking up too much room, being patient, making an effort to meet requirements, working with more steadfastness and discipline. These strategies allow them to obtain better academic results. Rivière (2002) analyzed the differential psychosociology of the genders, which we present in table form.

Table 14
Differences According to Gender

	Female students	Male students
1. Teachers' requirements	Need to satisfy and even exceed teachers' requirements (Noircent, 1991)	Negotiation of teachers' requirements (Noircent, 1991)
2. Teachers' expectations	Importance of decoding, guessing and getting ahead of teachers' expectations (Duru-Bellat, 1994) Silence gets results (Noircent, 1991)	Self-sufficiency with respect to teachers' expectations (Duru-Bellat, 1994) Noise gets results (Noircent, 1991)
3. Competency	Increased perseverance compensates for the lack of recognition of their competencies (Bouchard et al., 1994)	Easily achieved recognition of their competencies enables them to make less of an effort; they can always get by later in a real-life situation (Bouchard et al., 1994)
4. Character traits	They are more sensitive, creative, imaginative, verbal, methodical, reflective (Baudelot, 1992)	They are more rational, practical, utilitarian and physical (Baudelot, 1992)
5. Relationships with others	Relationships with others as a subject Attachment to others (D'Havernans, 1987) Exploring the social and relational world is more important than political, social and scientific issues (Duru-Bellat, 1994) They depend more on others and need more (Eagly and Crowley, 1986) Intimate friendships are important (Cloutier, 1982)	Relationships with others as an object Attachment to the territory (D'Havernans, 1987) Power, technique and self-control are more important than the affective world (Duru-Bellat, 1994) They are more self-sufficient and need less protection (Eagly and Crowley, 1986) External events are important (Cloutier, 1982)
6. Mathematical aptitudes	Mathematical and scientific aptitudes are innate, political and economic	Mathematical and scientific aptitudes are acquired with effort, depending on the urgency of the need, political and economic

7. Linguistic aptitudes	In all studies containing results, female students do better in French, language of instruction (Ministère de l'Éducation, 2003)	The reverse is true for male students (Ministère de l'Éducation, 2003)
8. Academic success	Despite good results in school, it is better to make less ambitious career choices in order to preserve a certain quality of life (Duru-Bellat, 1994) CEGEP is a place of learning, getting information, discovering (Bouchard et al., 1994) They have fewer competencies despite better marks (Freeman, 1989) The job market is demanding, hence the need to earn a diploma (Bouchard et al., 1994) School is intended to help students develop personal culture (Gadrey, 1994)	Academic failures do not limit career ambitions (Duru-Bellat, 1994) CEGEP is a place of restrictions, tedium, obligations (Bouchard et al., 1994) They have more competencies despite lower grades (Freeman, 1989) They will always get by, even without a diploma (Bouchard et al., 1994) School is a means of preparing to earn a living (Gadrey, 1994)
9. Vocational success	Career should not adversely affect one's role in the family (Duru-Bellat, 1994) It is better to avoid stress than to endure worries related to vocational success or social responsibility (Freeman, 1989) It is important to make compromises in one's career choice in order to stay in contact with family and friends (Duru-Bellat, 1994) Prospects end when one starts a family (Duru-Bellat, 1994) It is more important to work in the service sector than in the resource or	One's role in the family comes second to one's career (Duru-Bellat, 1994) Stress is the price to pay for success (Freeman, 1989) Career comes before family (Duru-Bellat, 1994) It is better to have a career plan above all (Duru-Bellat, 1994) The resource and processing industries are preferable: researching, inventing,

	processing industries: helping, caring, providing information, teaching, creating, communicating (Duru-Bellat, 1994) More pessimistic about the future (Duru-Bellat, 1994)	organizing, supervising, directing, manufacturing, producing (Duru-Bellat, 1994) Less pessimistic about the future (Duru-Bellat, 1994)
10. Vocational success	Happiness is in the home (marriage, children) (Gadrey, 1994) Emotional life (Gadrey, 1994) Immobility (Côté, 1995) Free time (Vignault, 1987)	Happiness is in material wealth (Gadrey, 1994)Future possessions (Gadrey, 1994) Mobility (Côté, 1995) Money (Vignault, 1987)
11. Standards	It is necessary to conform to standards: hygiene, nutrition, use of objects (Noircent, 1991) They are more sensitive to pressure to conform (Downling, 1982)	They are the standard, resulting in serenity and even nonchalance (Noircent, 1991) They are more independent with respect to pressure to conform (Downling, 1982)
12. Consideration of others	Are entitled to less interest and attention (Noircent, 1991)	Their interests are more important (Noircent, 1991)

Certain elements appear to be contradictory. This brief presentation should not be generalized or considered absolute to the detriment of difference and uniqueness. It could be dangerous to establish stereotypes and design one school for male students and another for female students: each of them benefit from the abilities of the other. Knowing what can sometimes be specific to one gender enables us to remain vigilant and adapt our interventions. It also allows us to identify our own stereotypes and to see how a teacher or support provider could convey his or her own clichés. On this issue, the Ministère de l'Éducation (2003) promotes a proven form of intervention: **systematic intervention against sexual stereotypes**. The aim of this presentation of differences between male and female students is not merely to identify our own projections. According to studies conducted by the Ministère de l'Éducation (2003), stereotypes are more of a social construct.

“Girls do better than boys.” That’s what we often hear in education today. Yet the third Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS-1999) reveals that, in Québec, the marks received by male and female students in mathematics and science are equivalent (MEQ, 2001). General statements

suggest that male (or female) students form a homogeneous group. In our opinion, there are socioeconomic, cultural and ethnic differences that may be more important than gender. Male students are associated with competition and agitation, while female students are associated with cooperation and calm. By choosing to present statistics that categorize male and female students, we are emphasizing stereotypes.

Other studies show that male students say that they are successful because they are good and that they fail because they did not make an effort; female students attribute their success to the fact that they made an effort and their failures, to their inability. These elements are presented as part of the student profile and can be a source of information to help us understand and counter certain stereotypes, and provide better support services. Isn't the aim of support to foster the overall development of the student regardless of his or her gender?

With this in mind, support providers and teachers must consider and determine the values they want to transmit to students. If male students are more often physical than female students (hormones? culture? stereotype?), they will obviously be more "disruptive," and more subject to reprimands and punishment. But does this excessively encouraged type of culture not foster servility and conformity, as Piaton (1974) suggests in Rivière (2002)?

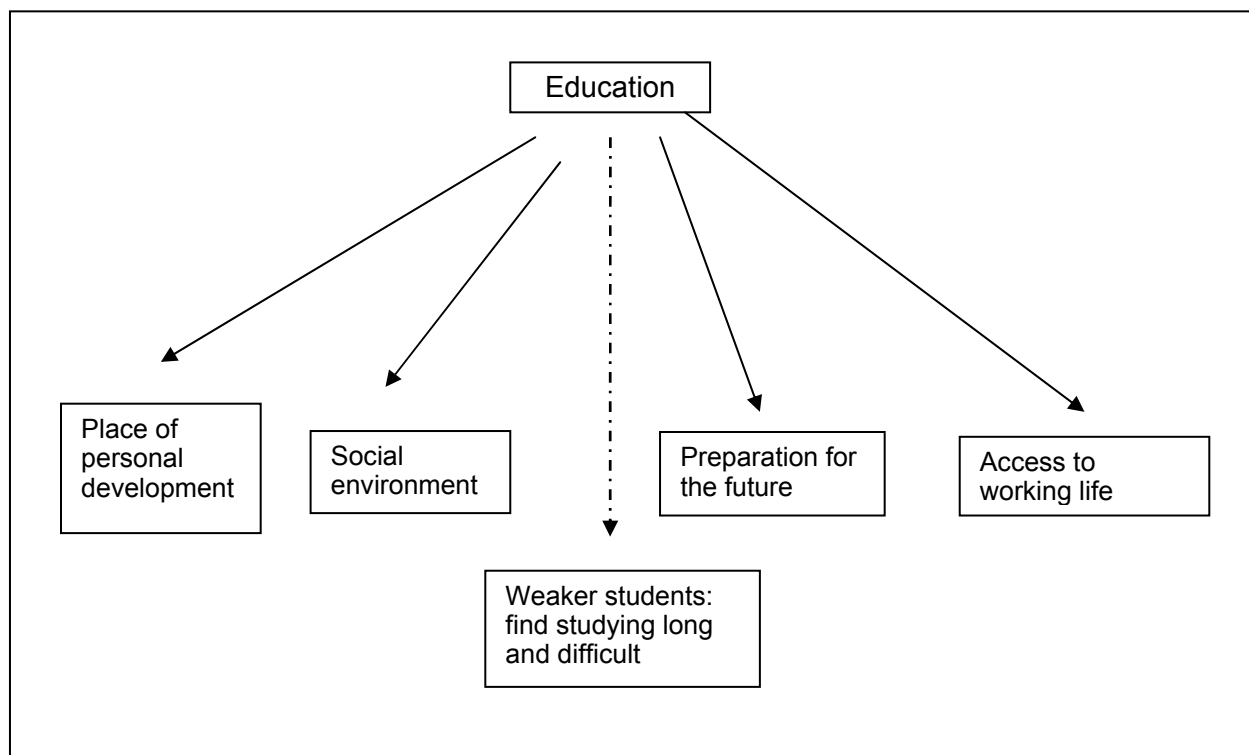
School teaches children to slavishly obey and to remain silent, to repeat what they are taught, to believe the books and the teacher's word. Thus, although it denies it, it trains docile citizens for fascist regimes and servitude, disciplined soldiers who will die for causes that are not their own.

This means that anyone who refuses to sit down for hours, balks at the obligation to listen, to do what is required, to cite but a few examples, is certain to fail. Conversely, students who follow instructions, do their homework, are docile, and so on, will succeed. If success in school is based on good marks, students are entitled to question the requirements of personal and vocational success, especially since our support-oriented model addresses all three types of plans.

According to a study by Rivière (2002), academic success¹ moves from a place of personal development and an environment that fosters social life to a place of learning and an environment that offers financial, family and social support. The following figure illustrates the results of the study at the college level. We think that, with caution, these results can be extended to adult education and vocational training students.

1. Success is made up of subjective elements that the student considers important: having good friends, playing a musical instrument or attending class, as well as more objective elements such as getting good marks.

Figure 10
Academic Success (Rivière, 2002)



Many adult education students come straight from the youth sector, have failed and are concerned about their vocational success.¹ Might school be, for some, a necessary evil without an alternative? Rivière (2002) observed that the students who are most successful in their careers more often than not know what their goals are. Without making the plan the sole condition for academic success and pressuring students who do not have one, it is important to support students in the development of their career plan. Simple questions such as “What do you want?” and “How will you go about it?” are sometimes difficult to answer. Support providers must be aware of such difficulties. They must be discussed and, if necessary, the student must be referred to a guidance counsellor. But, according to students, success involves other elements as well. It has many dimensions: financial, social and vocational.

For some students interviewed by Rivière (2002), personal success encompasses the other types of plans. It involves the affective network, good understanding and mutual assistance. Could this value be promoted in support services? Success also involves self-confidence which, in turn, is based on the recognition of one’s personal characteristics and achievements (being and doing). Many of the students interviewed felt a sense of self-worth and pride because they were involved in extracurricular activities. Indeed, personal success involves the affective

1. According to Rivière (2002), vocational success is related to the achievement of a personal plan based on personal goals.

network, personal identity, and the joy of living and physical well-being. We will end this section with an element that, in our opinion, has a direct impact on success and that is consistent with one of the aims of support, i.e. self-concept.

According to Rivière (2002), male students have a more negative self-concept than female students, who have better self-esteem. According to Rogers (1969), self-concept is an organized configuration of self-perceptions and the resulting attitudes and behaviours. It is what we think of ourselves. We know that there is a connection between the representations people have of themselves, their goals and their motivation. Rivière (2002) has observed that, regardless of gender, there is a typology of social representations of academic, vocational and personal success and that there is a correlation between type and success. In this sense, our model fosters the achievement of levels 4 and 5 (table 15).

Table 15
Rivière's Typology of Success

Typical social representations Level		Academic success	Vocational success	Personal success	Gender
5	Harmonization	Recreational activities	Social contribution	Commitment	Humanism
4	Actualization	Accomplishment	Growth	Self-satisfaction	Equity
3	Use	Career above all	Social status	Friendliness	Complementarity
2	Resignation	Work permit	Comprehensive insurance	Comfort	Confrontation
1	Repulsion	Not my choice	Undesirable	Relaxing	Determinism

The aim of support is to help students make their project their own, knowing that the different types of plans are closely linked. It is not to convince students to buy a model and tell them what they should do. Rather, it is to accept them and accompany them in their creation of their own model of success with and within the society in which they live. Doesn't everyone have his or her own requirements with respect to success and happiness? By trying too hard to define success, we can create needs that start with us. Perhaps success and happiness for some means a regular job, a few friends and nothing more. The aim of support is also to help students find their own definition of success and how to achieve it. It is not the destination, but the journey, that counts.

Factors that influence academic success among young adults

We end this section with a research study conducted by the Ministère de l'Éducation in 2004, which identified the factors that can influence academic success and the social and vocational integration of young adults between the ages of 16 and 24. The model promotes an ecosystemic approach that takes the different variables into account at both the preventive and curative levels. Support providers can verify where the student stands with respect to these factors.

Table 16
Factors That Can Influence Academic Success Among Young Adults

➤ Factors related to family life: ○ family situation ○ help with parental responsibilities ○ family's commitment and support	➤ Factors related to social and work life: ○ social and assistance networks ○ living conditions ○ occupation ○ sources and level of income ○ career plan ○ beliefs and values with respect to the world of work
➤ Personal and academic factors: ○ goals and learning plans ○ perception of academic competencies ○ social skills and learning strategies ○ mastery of the competency "Reads and writes" ○ social behaviours (dependency, delinquency) ○ perception of learning services offered ○ beliefs with respect to education	➤ Factors related to the community: ○ resources and services in the community ○ community members' perception of education and learning services ○ perception of the community's role in academic success ○ recognition of the learning offered ○ referral and support of young adults by the community ○ cooperation between organizations ○ young people's vocational integration abilities
➤ Factors related to the educational environment: ○ resources in the school board and centres ○ logistical support ○ organization of learning ○ staff training ○ staff members' beliefs and attitudes with respect to young adults ○ recognition of learning ○ teaching and upgrading services ○ individualized paths ○ teaching approaches ○ teaching and learning strategies ○ evaluation approaches	➤ Factors related to the educational environment: ○ relationship between teachers and the young adult ○ respect for each student's learning pace and abilities ○ number of young people in the class ○ meaningful and recognized learning ○ pedagogical support services ○ extracurricular activities ○ continuity of services ○ collaboration between the school board, the centres and the community

We now move on to the second part of this section, i.e. Kohlberg's and Loevinger's moral development and ego development.

Development of Adults and Young Adults



Support aims to help students become aware of themselves and understand the meaning of what they are doing. For the purposes of this research project, we will use the theories of Kohlberg and Loevinger concerning moral development and ego development. If support is provided as we propose, the studentt can “move ahead” a stage (see above).

Kohlberg's moral development

Kohlberg's theory concerns moral development and the way in which people solve moral dilemmas and explain things. It is therefore useless to try to convince them of a moral situation that is too far from their own experience. They may anticipate the stage following their own but cannot be expected to foresee further stages. The process is more intent on fostering transition to another stage, using questions and reflection. The following is a learning situation presented by Kohlberg to explain the different stages.

Heinz's dilemma

Mrs. Heinz, a European, suffers from an incurable form of cancer. There is, however, a medication that doctors believe might save her life. It is a type of radium that a pharmacist in the town where her husband lives has recently discovered. The medication is very expensive to make, and the pharmacist set the selling at ten times what it cost him. He pays \$400 for the radium and sells each dose for \$4000. Heinz asks everyone he knows to lend him money, but he manages to raise only \$2000, or half the price. He explains to the pharmacist that his wife is dying and that he needs to either buy the medication at a lower price or pay later. The pharmacist systematically answers each of his requests saying, “No, I discovered the medication and I want to earn a bit of money with it.” So Heinz, now desperate, decides to break into the store to steal the medication.

The subject interviewed has to explain whether, in his or her opinion, Heinz should or should not steal the medication. He or she also has to say whether stealing the medication is right or wrong and why. To answer these questions, the subject has to choose which of the following six statements best describes his or her thoughts on the matter:

- 1) *He should not steal the medication; he will surely get caught and end up in prison.*
- 2) *He should steal the medication. If his wife survives, she will be even nicer to him. He will be a happier man.*

- 3) *He should help his wife because it's a nice thing to do. His wife and friends will think more highly of him because he helped her.*
- 4) *He should obey the law, even if it causes personal suffering. The law is the law.*
- 5) *He should steal the medication because the pharmacist is being unfair by preventing him from treating his wife. He does not have to obey an unfair law.*
- 6) *His wife's life is more important than the pharmacist's property rights. He should steal the medication.*

Each of these statements corresponds to a stage of moral development (Kohlberg, 1969).

Level 1: preconventional morality (4 to 10 years)

Stage 1: Obedience and punishment orientation => Obedience to rules in order to avoid punishment. The child determines what is bad based on actions for which he or she is punished. Obedience itself is perceived as a value, but the child obeys because he or she wishes to avoid punishment and because the adult is more powerful.

Stage 2: Self-interest orientation => Conformism in order to obtain a reward. The child obeys rules that are in his or her own interest. That which results in pleasant consequences is necessarily good. What is good is also fair. The child obeys in order to obtain favours, gratification: there is an exchange.

Level 2: conventional morality (10 to 18 years)

Stage 3: Good boy/good girl attitude => Conformism in order to receive approval. The family or small group to which the person belongs become important. Moral actions are those that correspond to others' expectations or that make it possible to avoid disapproval. Being good is itself important and the child values trust, loyalty, respect, gratitude and the preservation of relationships.

Stage 4: Authority orientation => Respect for the law and social rules with the approval and censure of authority and a feeling of guilt if one has not "done one's duty." There is a transition from family and group concerns toward a broader social group. Good is doing one's duty and avoiding the reprobation of authority. Laws must be respected except in extreme cases. It is good to help society.

Level 3: postconventional morality (18 and over)

Stage 5: Social contract orientation => Actions guided by recognized principles for the common good, principles involving respect for peers and therefore self-respect. Action must tend toward "the greatest good for the greatest number of people," toward the respect of collective rules. The

adolescent or adult knows that there are different points of view and that values are relative. Laws and rules must be respected in order to preserve social order, but they can be changed. However, certain absolute values such as the importance of human life and individual freedom must be defended at all cost.

Stage 6: Universal ethical principles => Actions are guided by ethical principles selected by the individual (based on the values of justice, dignity and equality); the individual feels a sense of personal commitment to these principles. The adult uses freely chosen ethical principles to determine what is good. Since laws are usually based on these principles, they must be obeyed. But when a contradiction arises between the law and the person's conscience, conscience wins. At this stage, the ethical principles are part of a clear system of values and principles, integrated, considered and observed.

According to Kohlberg, all children start at stage 1 (obedience and punishment orientation) and achieve stage 4 (authority orientation) toward the age of 13. Only 10% of the adults who participated in the project achieved that highest stage of moral development, i.e. stage 6: universal ethical principles.

Loevinger's ego development

The following is an explanation of ego development, presented by Limoges and Paul (1990) and based on Loevinger's theory. A description of the different stages follows.

1. The ego is a process of assimilation that stimulates interaction with the environment.
2. It is a structure that fights for internal consistency, since it gives the human being meaning.
3. It is a holistic concept incompatible with the concept of dualism (e.g. body-soul).
4. The theory is substantially social: identity is not built alone.
5. The goal of the ego is to give meaning to life.
6. The ego is defined not by what it does, but by what it is. The structure tends to filter the environment, ignoring or deforming situations with which it is incompatible. The ego therefore tends toward stability; in other words, the more balanced the self is, the more difficult it is to move on to another stage.



It might be appropriate, for both Kohlberg's and Loevinger's theories, to propose moral dilemmas and situations involving cognitive dissonance in order to destabilize the subject and enable him or her to see things differently.

The first, or **infancy** stage, corresponds to the stage at which the baby still does not distinguish between the ego and the outside world. The second, or **impulsive**, stage is characterized by

the discovery of the word “no” and poor control of his or her impulses. Because of the child’s dependency, this stage is accompanied by a fear of reprisal. The parents are the providers and “good” means “good for me.”

The following, or **self-protective**, stage is characterized by the beginnings of impulse control as a result of the anticipation of reward and punishment. The main concern is to remain vigilant, in order to be able to avoid difficulties. It is being caught that defines an action as bad. An adult who has remained at this stage becomes opportunistic and manipulative in his or her relationships with others. The ideal life is the easy life, which requires no effort and involves great wealth. Good or bad luck is random. There is more or less of an internal determinism and, in this sense, the adult does not recognize his or her responsibility for events. If his or her sense of trust is sufficiently well developed, he or she may move on to the next stage.

The **conformist** stage is the one in which the individual identifies his or her own good with the common good, for example, that of his or her family and friends. He or she follows group rules because he or she has internalized them. He or she is so focused on the group that he or she cannot see differences between individuals. He or she is seeking conformity and asserting differences is frightening. He or she has a binary vision of the world: good-bad, I like-I don’t like, us-them. His or her understanding of the world is simplistic. People are what they should be, i.e. what is socially acceptable. Gender roles are stereotyped and usually conventional. Kindness, devotion and collaboration are held in high esteem compared with the competitive orientation of the previous stage. Emphasis is placed on external behaviour rather than internal emotions. The person is therefore interested in his or her appearance, reputation and material possessions.

The **self-aware** stage is without a doubt the most common in adults in our society. It is distinguished by increased self-awareness and the perception of the multiple facets of a situation. This awareness results in the development of self-criticism with respect to the ideal of the social ego established by standards and the inner self. The person understands that there can be several solutions and exceptions in different situations.

At the **conscientious** stage, the principle elements of awareness are present, such as long-term goals, self-chosen standards, qualified self-criticism and a sense of responsibility. Laws are internalized as are their spirit and meaning. They are no longer absolute. Hurting or harming someone is more serious than disobeying a law. The person at this stage perceives himself, or herself, as the source of his or her destiny and feels responsible for others, sometimes exaggeratedly so. He or she is more interested in personal achievement than social recognition. He or she qualifies his or her polarities and is more capable of describing himself or herself.

The **individualistic** stage is marked by increased individuality and recognition of the inevitability of emotional dependency or interdependency and of individual differences and the complexity of situations. The person is more accepting of himself or herself and others. He or she has a better understanding of differences in behaviour and is more tolerant of paradoxes and of the contradictions in himself and herself and in his or her surroundings.

At the **autonomous** stage, the person integrates what might appear contradictory for a better synthesis of events. He or she recognizes and confronts his or her internal conflicts and manages to transcend ambiguity. The autonomous person understands the need to make mistakes. He or she understands the limitations of the previous stages and develops a tolerance to these uncertainties. He or she skillfully welcomes his or her own internal reality, while remaining capable of accepting the other and his or her components. He or she expresses his or her feelings with clarity, poignancy and humour.

The **integrated** stage is the most difficult to describe because so few people have achieved it. It involves the consolidation of the identity and the integration of the previous stages.

Table 17
Identification of Stages
How to Recognize That a Person Has Begun a New Stage (Limoges, 1990)

STAGES	INDICATORS
Symbiotic	
Impulsive	The person differentiates between self and non-self.
Self-protective	He or she anticipates reward and punishment. He or she recognizes rules.
Conformist	He or she identifies his or her well-being with the well-being of the group (family-peers). Trust is a prerequisite.
Self-aware	He or she is aware that he or she does not entirely conform to the ideal proposed by the environment. Self-awareness is a prerequisite.
Conscientious	He or she internalizes his or her awareness.
Autonomous	He or she recognizes and addresses his or her internal problems and conflicts between need and duty. He or she has a global view of life.
Integrated	

