

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE
VOCATIONAL AND CULTURAL EDUCATION OF ADULTS

SUBMITTED TO

LA COMMISSION D'ETUDE SUR LA FORMATION DES ADULTES

PREPARED BY

THE QUEBEC ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
(ENGLISH LANGUAGE)

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This report has been prepared in response to a request for information relating to the vocational training and cultural education of adults.

Order in Council No. 129-80, issued January 23, 1980 established a Commission having a mandate to inquire mainly into matters relating to:

- (a) Vocational Training at the high school, college and university levels.
- (b) Professional up-grading and development, from the stand-point of Continuing Education, of workers in the various institutional networks, in industry, in the professional corporations, in unions, etc.
- (c) the sharing of inter-departmental and inter-institutional responsibility in matters concerning the financial support and teaching services offered to the work force;
- (d) the cultural (non-vocational) education of adults, both in and outside educational institutions;
- (e) the education of adults and the promotion of public well-being.

Whereas, a major portion of the Commission's mandate refers to vocational educational and training related to the manpower requirements of commerce and industry;

Whereas, the Quebec Advisory Committee on Vocational Education (English language), is a Committee representing secondary schools and colleges presently offering vocational education programs;

Whereas, the school commission and colleges on this Committee represent a major investment in both human and physical resources;

Whereas, the majority of existing vocational training programs are presently administered by and given by teachers in school commissions and colleges;

It is the Advisory Committee's opinion that the following explanations and recommendations to la Commission d'Etudes sur la Formation des Adultes should be seriously considered in order to alleviate the intolerable conditions presently faced by people requiring vocational education.

DEFINITION OF CLIENTELE:

Existing regulations and educational structures rely heavily on the definition of their student clientele. Two major categories presently exist:

Regular Day: Students from age six to sixteen years, for whom school attendance is compulsory. This category includes students older than sixteen years who attend regular, full-time programs, scheduled during the day.

Adult: Persons twenty-one years or older, and out of school for one year. (Secondary school definition).

OR:

Persons eighteen years or older and out of school for one year. (C.E.G.E.P. definition).

The separation of student clientele in the categories of regular and adult limits access to programs for both categories of students.

Example 1: A nineteen year old client may wish to take a typewriting course to improve skills as a computer terminal operator. Having been out of school for one year, this client may not take the course at a high school (not yet adult). However, the client may take the part-time course at a C.E.G.E.P., but must pay tuition fees in excess of \$75.00. Although the client complies to the definition of an adult at the C.E.G.E.P. level, the Typewriting I course offered at C.E.G.E.P. is not eligible for Canada Manpower part-time funding because a decision has been made by the Répondant Régionale, and that the course will only be funded at secondary school level.

Recommendation 1: That the definition of the student clientele should be any person, male or female, who has manifested a desire to enroll in a course of study for which they have the necessary educational pre-requisites, regardless of the client's age.

ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURES:

Existing administrative structures in the area of vocational education involves a multitude of governmental departments and agencies, whose tasks range from financing a program, through to determining which courses and programs should receive priority. The bureaucratic maze is further complicated by federal/provincial policies regarding the jurisdiction of educational matters at the provincial level. As a result of administrative uncertainty as to roles and responsibility of each different department or agency, it is the student client who ultimately is effected the most.

Example 2: Many Secondary School vocational programmes are closing due to lack of regular day clientele, while many adults are refused entry into such programmes. Informaion about programmes is not readily available. Many potential students are unable to receive correct information on programmes and registration procedures.

Recommendation 2: That the various ministries presently involved establish an overall policy concerning vocational education. The elimination of duplicated services, and needless bureaucratic processes must be considered. The creation of information centers where adults seeking information may receive advice on available programmes to meet their needs.

Example 3: Since the implementation of the Parent Commission recommendations there has been great emphasis placed on increasing cultural and general education levels of all Quebecois. This has had the effect of swaying large numbers of students into a belief that job skill training is a second class educational activity and that anyone in a vocational programme is not very intelligent. Pressure from parents, peers and in many cases professional educators persuade many students that vocational education is not an option to be considered.

Recommendation 3: That emphasis be placed on the acquisition of vocational skills as the primary role of public education. These skills should include general education such as reading, writing and arithmetic to a level whereby all citizens may function effectively in society. Awareness programmes for all educators should be offered to increase awareness of vocational activities.

Example 4: Existing vocational facilities are not usually used in summer months. This is equivalent to 25% to 33% of the calendar year. Some facilities are not used in the evening and only partially used in the day. Budgets based on a narrowly defined, dwindling daytime student population are not adequate to meet the rapidly increasing operating costs of vocational facilities. Budget problems are further compounded by decisions made to support general and cultural education activities in school boards, commissions and colleges. This is largely due to the low esteem of vocational education held by some administrators having a purely academic back ground.

Recommendation 4: That some school facilities should be used 12 months a year. Many industries have a vacation period in July or August, a time when junior employees wishing to upgrade their skills could take advantage of training programmes in Quebec schools. Allocation of budgets should be revised to reflect the cost of operating vocational programmes for both regular day and adult students.

JOB PREPARATION IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Many secondary school graduates have been leaving and are still leaving school without 'marketable skills.' Relance studies have indicated the relatively low percentage of secondary school graduates who go on to CEGEP and university. Most of the 'general' secondary school graduates have great difficulty finding employment because they lack job-entry skills. Furthermore, in a time of poor employment opportunities, there is considerable unemployment among this, the 18-21 age group. There is a need to provide job-entry skills for graduating and the recently graduated secondary school students. The Ministère de l'éducation has responded with the creation of Secondary VI work preparation programmes in several vocational areas.

In addition to the need to provide for the younger people of working age, there is also a need to provide training and/or retraining for adult women who decide to return to work after several years out of the job market. Many of these women are pushing their way into the Secondary VI programmes in the secondary schools primarily in Business Education, cosmetology and Nursing Assistants' programmes. It is possible that were other Secondary VI areas opened up, adult men seeking retraining, might apply also.

PROBLEM

Present budgetary regulations for secondary schools provide funding for students up to the age of 21 only. People beyond that age are considered adults and funding for this group is provided through CEGEPs

and Continuing Education services. Continuing Education Services, however, are often precluded from offering full-time job preparation courses for adults who need retraining. Recent high school graduates are restricted from entering Continuing Education courses as a result of new legislation defining the classes of people who may apply for training. While the CEGEPs are certainly more accessible to those requiring retraining, there are no English-language CEGEPs in many of the suburban areas around Montréal, other Québec cities and towns, and when available they are often too far away for many would-be students, especially those with family commitments.

There have been suggestions from many people both from within and without school systems that Continuing Education and day-time services of the different School Boards pool their resources and offer what have been termed 'Secondary VI' programmes jointly. The day-time services have the space, facilities, materials and, in some cases, teachers. Continuing Education has funding for adults but does not have access to the necessary facilities, especially during the day, and may not offer courses to young people until they have been out of school for at least two years. Where appropriate, liaison could be established also with the CEGEPs in each area, the CEGEP providing the more sequentially advanced programmes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That School Boards and their attached Adult Education divisions be permitted to operate jointly Secondary VI job training programmes.
2. That School Boards, their attached Adult Education divisions, and neighbouring CEGEPs cooperate in the offering, to the population of their respective areas, appropriately sequential programmes, the introductory courses being available in School Board areas and the more advanced programmes at the CEGEPs.
3. That new budgetary regulations, to permit the joint offering of job preparation programmes by School Boards/Adult Education Services/CEGEPs, be instituted by the appropriate government ministries.