



Because the Ways of Pursuing University Studies Have Changed...

Brief by the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation
McGill University
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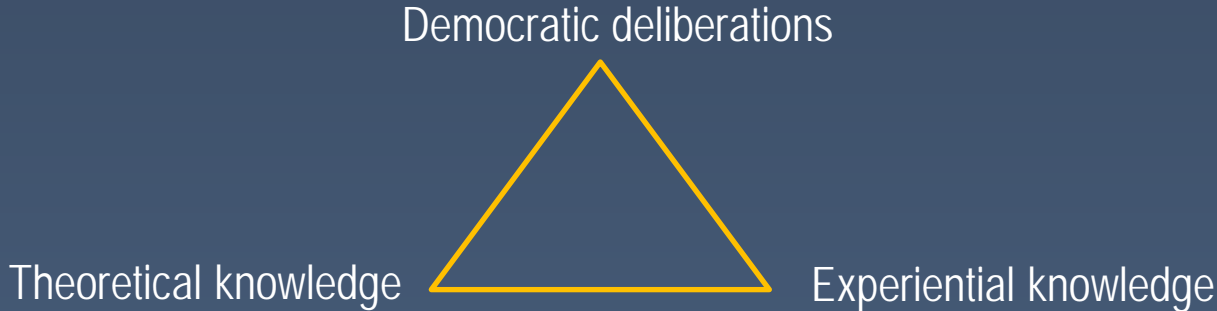


PRESENTATION OUTLINE

- 1. The Conseil supérieur de l'éducation**
- 2. Theme of the Brief and the notion of a non-traditional relationship to studies**
- 3. Groundwork for the Brief**
- 4. The Conseil's key findings and recommendations**
 - 4.1 Working While Studying
 - 4.2 Student Parents
 - 4.3 Part-time Studies
 - 4.4 Returning to Studies
 - 4.5 Four General Approaches

1. THE CONSEIL SUPÉRIEUR DE L'ÉDUCATION

- Created in 1964
- Its mission : To advise the Québec Government on education
- Its work : Briefs on topical issues and recommendations



- Its organization :



1. THE CONSEIL SUPÉRIEUR DE L'ÉDUCATION

Briefs by the Conseil on University Education and Research

- The mission of universities (1995)
- Funding universities (1996)
- The link between studies and research-creation (1998)
- Successful conditions for university studies (2000)
- Partnerships (2002)
- Faculty renewal (2003)
- The internationalization of higher education (2005)
- Successes and challenges of Québec universities (2008)
- Graduate and post-doctoral studies(2010)
- Quality assurance in university studies (2012)
- **New realities of university students (2013)**
- Distance learning (upcoming)

2. THEME OF THE BRIEF

- The Concern : Today's students are different
 - balancing studies/work/family, atypical paths
- The Objective : Rethink university in light of the changes transforming the student population
- The Notion : A non-traditional relationship with studies →

THE NOTION: A NON-TRADITIONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH STUDIES

- The student's *relationship with studies* is non-traditional, not the student:
 - Non-exclusive commitment to studies
 - Atypical university paths

4 Illustrative Examples



1. Working while studying
2. Student parents
3. Part-time studies
4. Returning to studies

- **What's new? These have become much more common**

“Yesterday's Nontraditional Student is
Today's Traditional Student”
(CLASP, 2011)

73%

3. GROUNDWORK FOR THE BRIEF

Objectives

1. Provide an overview of the new student realities studied
2. Identify awareness and practices on the part of universities and the Government
3. Highlight issues and concerns

Method

- Literature review and expert opinions
- Data collection, processing and analysis
- Collection and analysis of institutional documents
- Analysis of governmental frameworks
- Review of opinions expressed at the Summit on Higher Education

4. THE CONSEIL'S KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Working While Studying

4.2 Student Parents

4.3 Part-time Studies

4.4 Returning to Studies

4.5 Four General Approaches

4.1 WORKING WHILE STUDYING : THE CONSEIL'S KEY FINDINGS

- Approximately 70% of all Québec university students :
an upward trend
 - Significant differences by level (undergraduate or graduate)
or field of study
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- A necessity *and* a lifestyle
- A *student working* or a *worker studying* ?

4.1 WORKING WHILE STUDYING : THE CONSEIL'S KEY FINDINGS

- Negative Impact : more on duration of studies and dropping out than on academic outcomes
 - Positive Impact : an asset when entering the labour market
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- Supported by the Government (e.g. Québec's Student Placement Program) and universities (internships, teaching and research assistantships)...
 - ...but with conditions attached (e.g. cap on working hours)

4.1 WORKING WHILE STUDYING : THE CONSEIL'S RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Working must not be a condition to pursue studies
 - **student financial assistance**
2. Respect the student's choice to work
 - **assistance for students in mapping out their own path**
(informed choices)
 - **support from employers**
3. Promote work related to the field of study
 - **internships, assistantships, Work/Study Program, etc.**

4.2 STUDENT PARENTS : THE CONSEIL'S KEY FINDINGS

- 25% of new students in the UQ network are parents
 - A trend likely to grow :
increased demand for higher levels of education and lifelong learning
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- Balancing studies and family weighs particularly heavy on women
 - Increased risks of interrupting or prolonging studies
 - No appreciable impact on academic outcomes
(children = possible source of motivation)

4.2 STUDENT PARENTS : THE CONSEIL'S KEY FINDINGS

- An emerging awareness within the university community, yet initiatives are modest, measures inconsistent and not well-known

Two Examples

- Authorization to grant leaves of absence or interrupting studies to fulfill parental responsibility is left to individual discretion
 - Policies on parental leave or part-time studies applicable to student parents vary by scholarship program and are not well known
- Pressing need for child care services
 - Government support based on the linear “study/work/family” model

4.2 STUDENT PARENTS : THE CONSEIL'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Collective Response to Balancing Studies and Family : A Government Responsibility First and Foremost

1. Financially support all student parents during the first months of their child's life
2. Agree on transparent and standard policies on leaves of absence, temporary interruptions and part-time studies
3. Increase the number of spaces in child care services (on or near campuses), allocate a number of these spaces for children of student parents, offer drop-in services

4.3 PART-TIME STUDIES : THE CONSEIL'S KEY FINDINGS

- Part-time enrolment accounts for approximately 80% of students in short programs; 33% of students in Master's programs
- Most part-time students are women

- Lower graduation rates compared to full-time studies
- For some, the key to access and perseverance

- Full-time enrolment mandatory in some programs
- Part-time students excluded from some benefits (scholarships, Deferred Payment Plan)
- Funding pressures on institutions

4.3 PART-TIME STUDIES : THE CONSEIL'S RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Supporting students financially to enable them to enrol full time
2. Waiving, where possible, mandatory full-time enrolment (for part of or entire programs)
3. Revising student financial assistance programs to allow alternating full-time/part-time enrolment without penalty
4. Adequately funding institutions in the admission and support of part-time students

4.4 RETURNING TO STUDIES : THE CONSEIL'S KEY FINDINGS

- No specific data, yet student age a useful indicator :

Bachelor Programs	20% older than 25
Masters Programs	36% older than 30
Doctoral Programs	24% older than 35
Non-Degree Programs	Between 50% to 80% older than the age typically associated with a given program

- Young and mature students studying side-by-side
- The vast majority are women
- More family/work responsibility
- Better academic outcomes in some cases

4.4 RETURNING TO STUDIES : THE CONSEIL'S KEY FINDINGS

- Significant efforts by universities to offer and deliver programs yet regulations often less stringent
- Challenges of recognizing prior learning and competencies
e.g. benchmarks, consistency
- Student financial assistance restrictions
e.g. past income at time of enrolment
- Lifelong Learning Plan (LLP) remains not widely known

4.4 RETURNING TO STUDIES : THE CONSEIL'S RECOMMENDATIONS

Individuals with atypical paths must be able to :

- Access quality studies
 - Benefit from support
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1. **Revise eligibility to student financial assistance programs and publicize the LLP**
2. **Agree on benchmarks** in studies levels to :
 - Optimize recognition of prior learning and competencies
 - Ensure quality non-degree programs
 - Establish guidelines for granting degrees through cumulative diplomas
3. **Include locations and methods** in program evaluations

4.5 FOUR GENERAL APPROACHES

1. Update the profile of the Québec university student

- Continued research on student populations
- Recognize and specify the role universities play in lifelong learning
- Revise governmental frameworks on education, family and work

2. Promote greater cohesiveness in the pursuit of multiple societal goals

- Mobilize around cross-societal issues (work-studies, family-studies)

3. Ensure equity between students

- Support measures to access studies and encourage perseverance
- Recognition of achievement (scholarships)

4. Engage stakeholders in a clear and fair division of responsibilities

- Students, universities, Government, employers

IN CONCLUSION...

- The brief “Parce que les façons de réaliser un projet d’étude universitaire ont changé...” and its supplemental document is available on the Conseil’s website at : www.cse.gouv.qc.ca (CSE, June 2013)
- Overview of the Québec university system on the eve of change : Conseil national des universités (CNU), framework legislation, funding regulations, student financial assistance
- Q&A