



Individualized Education Plans: Helping Students Achieve Success

Reference Framework for the Establishment of
Individualized Education Plans



Goal of the presentation

To present the MEQ's orientations regarding individualized education plans

- ✦ taking into consideration the situation regarding the use of individualized education plans in elementary and secondary schools in Québec
- ✦ taking into consideration the challenges that the individualized education plan represents in the new context



Contents of the presentation

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Highlights of the research

- ✎ Individualized education plans are seen primarily as a means for joint action, individual monitoring of students and problem solving.
- ✎ They are more integrated and systematic in specialized schools and special education classes than in regular classes.
- ✎ 90 per cent of students with handicaps have individualized education plans.
- ✎ 60 per cent of at-risk students have individualized education plans.
- ✎ Individualized education plans seem to be harder to establish at the secondary level.



Highlights of the research

- ✦ Fewer than one third of the students concerned are involved in establishing their individualized education plans.
- ✦ Parents of students with handicaps are more often asked to participate in the development of their child's individualized education plan than parents of at-risk students.
- ✦ 90 per cent of respondents stated that before a meeting is held with parents to establish an individualized education plan, a meeting of school staff is held.
- ✦ 40 per cent of school principals surveyed stated that they delegate some or all of the activities connected with individualized education plans.

Highlights of the research

- ✦ The main strengths of the individualized education plan are in:
 - ✦ facilitating cooperation among players
 - ✦ promoting collaboration with parents
 - ✦ better identifying the needs of the student
- ✦ The main difficulties encountered are related to:
 - ✦ time management
 - ✦ the use of the individualized education plan as an aid in teaching
 - ✦ the student's participation

Main references

- ✦ *Education Act (sections 96.14 and 235)*
- ✦ *Basic school regulation for preschool, elementary and secondary education*
- ✦ *Adapting Our Schools to the Needs of All Students: Policy on Special Education*
- ✦ *Québec Education Program*
- ✦ *Other references:*
 - ✦ *Act to secure the handicapped in the exercise of their rights*
 - ✦ *Act respecting access to documents held by public bodies and the protection of personal information*
 - ✦ *MSSS-MEQ agreement for the complementarity of services*



Orientations

- ✦ Seeing success in a differentiated way
- ✦ Placing students at the centre of their own success
- ✦ Adopting a systemic view of the student's situation
- ✦ Focusing on the student's strengths and the school's resources
- ✦ Strengthening school-family-community cooperation



Seeing success in a differentiated way

Seeing success in a differentiated way involves shifting from *academic success* to *educational success* in terms of knowledge, social development and qualifications, and accepting that success has different meanings for different students:

- ✦ The outcomes targeted must be the same for all students.
- ✦ Adaptations must be made for students with particular needs.
- ✦ Realistic objectives must be defined, based on the student's abilities, while allowing the student to reach as high a level of competency as possible.

In this context, the individualized education plan becomes a key tool that helps the student with a handicap, a social maladjustment or a learning disability to achieve success.



Placing students at the centre of their own success

- ✿ Encourage students to become involved in their individualized education plans, depending on their characteristics and situation.
- ✿ Trigger the student's commitment by ensuring that his or her education plan is meaningful to him or her:

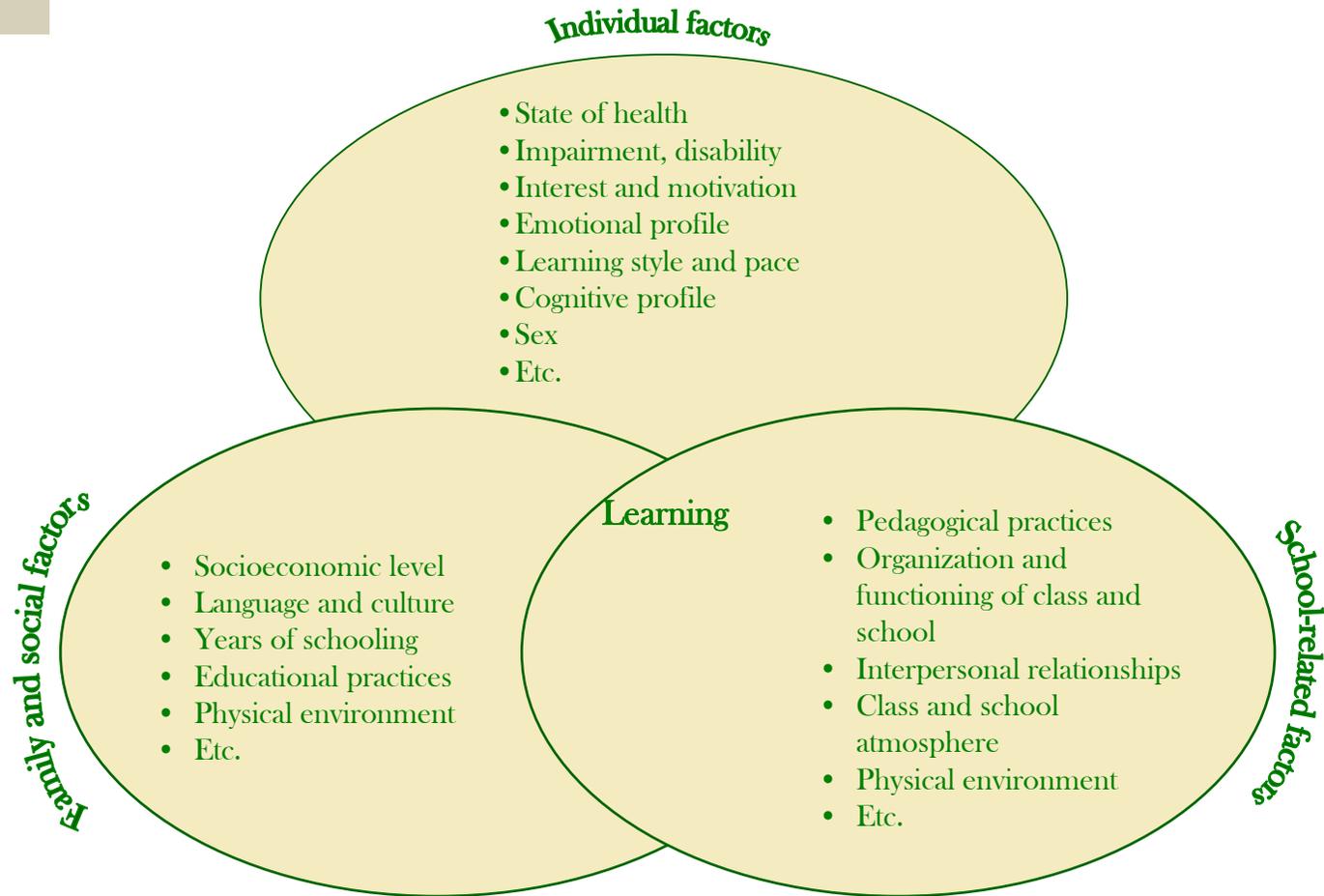
power and influence - benefits - chances of success



Adopting a systemic view of the student's situation

- ✦ Viewing difficulties systemically forces us to abandon the notion that difficulties are caused by a single isolated factor.
- ✦ Adopting a systemic view of a student's situation means taking into consideration various environmental factors in order to make the necessary adaptations to *reduce or eliminate obstacles to the development of the student's competencies*.

Factors that may influence learning





Focusing on the student's strengths and the school's resources

- ✦ Recognizing students' strengths is essential in order to keep them motivated and involved in the individualized education plan.
- ✦ Building on the student's strengths and successes is easier than constantly trying to correct mistakes and disabilities.
- ✦ Focusing on the student's strengths and the school's resources can be a springboard to mobilize people and help find solutions.



Strengthening school-family-community cooperation

- ✦ Give parents and students an active role to play.
- ✦ Facilitate the coordination of actions for students who have a service plan or receive services from organizations other than the school.
- ✦ “To collaborate: to work in combination with.” Joint action is possible when all the concerns of the various players are taken into consideration and decisions are based on consensus.



Situations in which individualized education plans should be established

- ✦ The student's complex situation is such that a more sustained and coordinated **effort** is required on the part of the student, teacher(s), parents, principal and, in some cases, other players inside or outside the school to find solutions to the difficulties encountered and thus enable the student to progress.



Situations in which individualized education plans should be established

- ✦ The student's situation calls for the introduction of specialized resources or for certain adjustments in addition to the actions normally taken by the teacher, in cooperation with the cycle team, to adjust his or her actions to the student's needs.



Situations in which individualized education plans should be established

- ✦ The student's situation requires **certain decisions** that will have an impact on the student's educational path, such as decisions concerning adjustments to evaluation methods, departures from the Basic School Regulation or special orientations regarding the student's educational path or placement.



Nature of the individualized education plan

An individualized education plan is a plan of activities coordinated jointly by the people involved. Its purpose is to help a student who, because of a handicap or difficulties, needs adapted intervention in order to progress optimally in developing the competencies required for success. An individualized education plan is part of a dynamic support process that takes place for the benefit and with the participation of the student. It is based on a systemic view of the student's situation, and is implemented using a solution-centred approach.



Nature and functions of the individualized education plan

FUNCTIONS

- ✦ Planning and coordination
- ✦ Communication
- ✦ Regulation
- ✦ Decision making
- ✦ Continuity and transition planning



Phases of the individualized education plan

- ✦ Data collection and analysis
- ✦ Planning of interventions
- ✦ Application of the interventions
- ✦ Review of the plan

These phases are interdependent and are part of a dynamic ongoing process to support the student.



Data collection and analysis

- ✎ Read through the student's prior records.
- ✎ Examine the student's recent work.
- ✎ Consult the student, parents, school staff and any other people concerned.
- ✎ Perform evaluations where necessary.
- ✎ Consider the effectiveness of the previous interventions.
- ✎ Examine and interpret all available information on the student's situation.



Planning of interventions

- ✦ Pool all information on the student's situation (strengths, abilities, difficulties, etc.).
- ✦ Reach a consensus on prioritizing the student's needs.
- ✦ Establish objectives.
- ✦ Determine means: strategies, resources, time frame.
- ✦ Record the information.



Application of the interventions

- ✿ Inform everyone concerned about the student's situation.
- ✿ Implement and monitor the various methods.
- ✿ Evaluate the student's progress on a continuous basis.
- ✿ Adjust the interventions to suit the student's situation and development.
- ✿ Maintain communications with the parents.



Review of the Plan

-  Review and evaluate the individualized education plan, maintaining or altering some or all of its elements in relation to the student's situation, in consultation with the student and his or her parents.



Roles and responsibilities of those involved in the process

Each partner participates in the preparation of the individualized education plan and contributes on different levels, in a complementary fashion, to the successful completion of the process.



Roles and responsibilities

The principal

- ✦ Sees that an individualized education plan is established.
- ✦ Encourages participation by the individuals concerned, particularly the parents and the student.
- ✦ Ensures that the parents are regularly informed.
- ✦ Ensures monitoring of the plan.



Roles and responsibilities

The teacher

Teachers' involvement in plan preparation is a true expression of professional responsibility. They should play a leading role, and their presence is of vital significance. They work actively to help the student achieve the objectives.



Preparing individualized education plans: Some conditions

- ✿ A clear policy guiding the organization of educational services for students with handicaps, social maladjustments or learning disabilities
- ✿ Recognized leadership by the school principal
- ✿ A climate respectful of individuals and their expertise
- ✿ Accessible support and guidance methods adapted to the needs



Preparing individualized education plans: Some conditions

- ✿ Efficient time management
- ✿ Renewal of methods
- ✿ High-quality tools based on the characteristics and needs of the school



An individualized education plan is not possible if:

- ✦ only one player prepares the individualized education plan in his or her office
- ✦ parents and students do not participate in the process
- ✦ the individualized education plan is set in stone and cannot be modified
- ✦ forms are filled out only for administrative purposes
- ✦ pedagogical planning for a group of students is considered to be a “group” individualized education plan