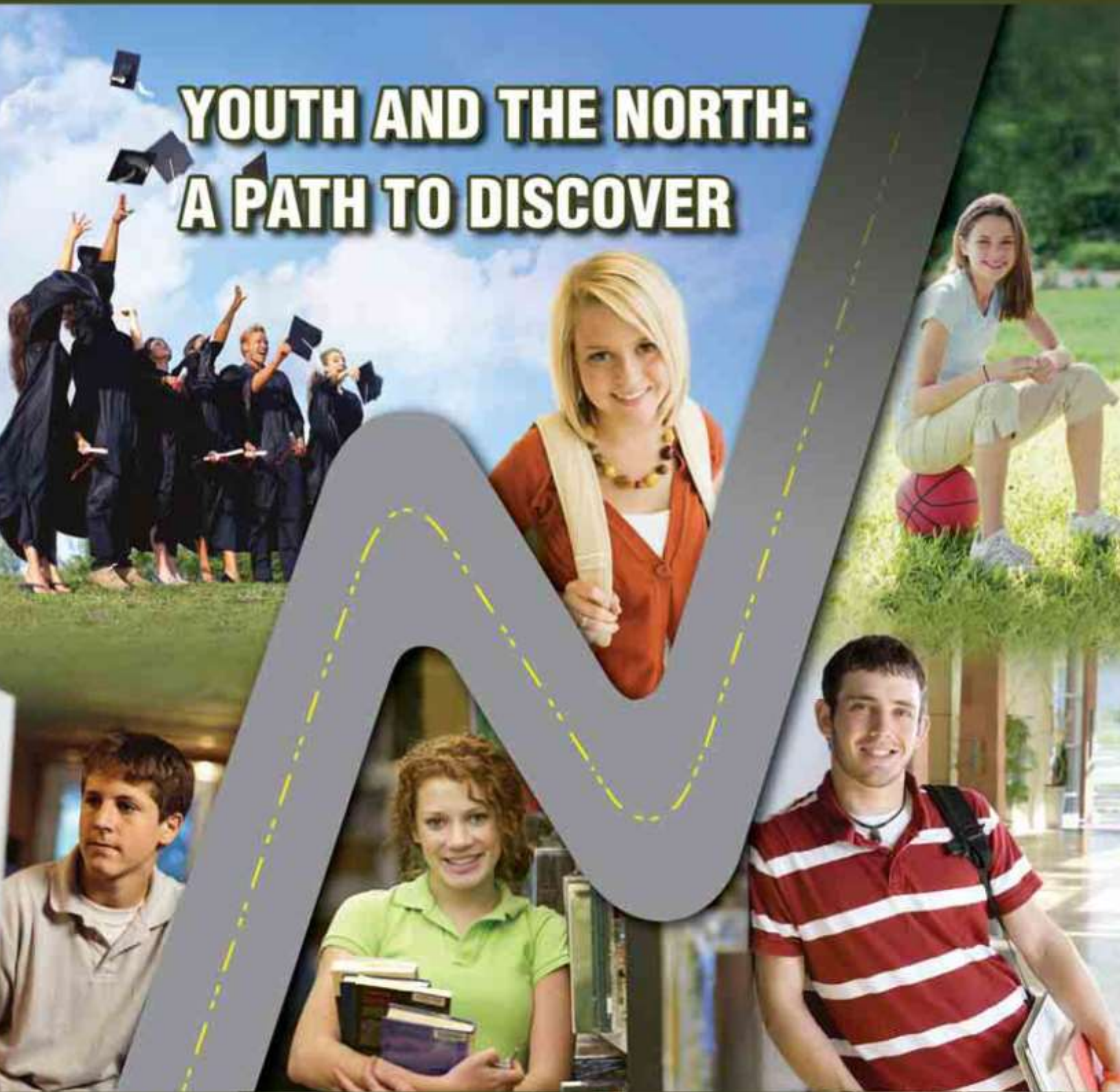


YOUTH AND THE NORTH: A PATH TO DISCOVER



REPORT - YEAR 4
2008



**YOUTH AND THE NORTH :
A PATH TO DISCOVER**

REPORT – YEAR FOUR

**Simon Laflamme
Pierre Bouchard**



FAR NORTHEAST TRAINING BOARD

2008

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Far Northeast Training Board (FNETB) would like to thank the participating schools :

Cochrane High School
Englehart High School
Hearst High School
Hornepayne High School
Iroquois Falls Secondary School
Kapusking District High School
Kirkland Lake Collegiate and Vocational Institute
O’Gorman High School
Roland Michener Secondary School
Smooth Rock Falls Secondary School
Temiskaming District Secondary School
École catholique George-Vanier
École secondaire catholique Cité des Jeunes
École secondaire catholique de Hearst
École secondaire catholique Jean-Vanier
École secondaire catholique Sainte-Marie
École secondaire Thériault

Special thanks to the research team, Pierre Bouchard of Université de Hearst and Simon Laflamme of Laurentian University as well to Émilie Thibert-Leduc and Sophie Tremblay for their exceptional work during their first year with the team as research assistants.

Table of Contents

Summary	5
1. Introduction	6
2. Reminders	7
3. Activities and their Assessment	8
3.1. From Grade 9 to Grade 12 – An overview	8
3.1.1. Reading	8
3.1.2. Restaurants and Shopping	8
3.1.3. Cultural Outings	8
3.1.4. The Purchasing of Cultural Products	9
3.1.5. Media Related Activities	9
3.1.6. Sports Activities	9
3.2. The Influence of Sex	10
3.2.1. Reading Activities	10
3.2.2. Cultural Outings	10
3.2.3. The Purchasing of Cultural Products	10
3.2.4. Media Related Activities	10
4. The Representations	10
4.1. From Grade 9 to Grade 12 – An overview	11
4.1.1. Education	11
4.1.2. The Cultures	11
4.1.3. Politics	11
4.1.4. The Community	11
4.1.5. Personal Relationships	12
4.1.6. Love and Family	12
4.2. The Influence of Sex on the Representations with Regard to Education	12
4.3. The Influence on the Mother Tongue on the Representations with Regard to the Cultures	12
5. Internet Use	12
6. Academic Achievement	13
7. Linguistic Skills	14
7.1. Self-Evaluation on a Likert Scale	14
7.2. Self-Evaluation in Comparison to Other Individuals	15
7.2.1. French	15
7.2.2. English	15
7.3. Influence of the Family	16
8. The Language of Communication	16
9. Health	17

10. The Aspirations	18
10.1. Educational Aspirations	19
10.1.1. Educational Level	19
10.1.2. Field of Study	19
10.1.3. The Educational Institution	20
10.2. Professional Aspirations	20
10.2.1. The Professional Level	20
10.2.2. The Professional Sector	21
10.2.3. The Income	21
10.3. Academic Achievement and Aspirations	22
11. The Place of Residence	22
12. Conclusion	23

This project is possible thanks to the financial support of the Ministry of Training Colleges and Universities and Université de Hearst.

**The Far Northeast Training Board (FNETB) is funded by the
Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities.**

The opinions expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the
Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities of Ontario

Summary

This report presents the fourth year results of a 10 year longitudinal study, and we must keep in mind that since its beginning in 2005, this research has followed two cohorts: one made up of Grade 9 students and the other of Grade 12 students. Because after four years, the majority of students will have obtained their secondary school diploma, we thought it was important to examine this particular period of their lives, namely their high school years. This year's sample comprised 479 students in their fourth year of high school.

One of this report's objective was the analysis of the results obtained during the first year (2005) and the fourth year (2008), in order to verify if changes had occurred during that interval with respect to: 1) the activities practised by young people; 2) their assessment of those activities; 3) their representations with regard to the family, education, the community or politics; 4) their Internet use; 5) their academic achievement; 6) their language skills and language of communication; 7) their health, and 8) their training, profession and place of residence.

Between 2005 and 2008, there are few changes with regard to the activities, their assessment and the representations, even though certain phenomenons merit our attention. The same thing applies to academic and linguistic achievement and to health. Internet use increases with the educational level. As for educational, professional and residential aspirations, we notice important changes indicating that young people remain relatively unsure about their future.

All in all, during young people's high school years, we notice only slight changes in behaviour, representations, academic and linguistic achievements and health, whereas in regard to their life projects, it's completely different: we notice important variations.

1. Introduction

This research's primary purpose is to provide information to all persons committed to the development of Northeastern Ontario. To achieve this purpose, we opted for a longitudinal study allowing us to follow, over a ten year period, the evolution of young people who would answer some very fundamental questions. How do young people view their community? What are their plans? What type of activities do they practise? What do they do at school? How do they evaluate their level of health?... And especially, how do the answers to these questions evolve over time?

At the beginning of the research, we thought it important to track 2 cohorts. The first would be in Grade 9, at the very beginning of secondary school. This would let us examine how young people develop throughout these very important high school years, and also how this development affects their life in the future. The second would be in Grade 12, at the end of secondary school. We could then follow them either on their path to the labour market or in their decision making during these important years leading to their future life in society. We were mandated to study these two cohorts.

In this fourth year of the research, the students of the first cohort are in the process of completing their secondary school studies. It thus seems very appropriate to concentrate on this particular group, in order to properly understand the dynamics which exist between the student and the school, and how these dynamics tie in to different aspects of his life.

The analyses will concentrate on a sample of 479 individuals. Compared to 2005, this sample represents only half of the initial cohort. Over four years, we have managed to retain 50% of the students in the initial cohort. These analyses will look into the frequencies of the activities (§ 3¹), the representations which permeate the imagination (§ 4), Internet use (§ 5), academic achievement (§ 6), language skills (§ 7), language of communication (§ 8), health (§ 9) and finally, aspirations (§ 10).

¹ The symbol “§” indicates the section in the report.

2. Reminders

We have already produced three reports (2005, 2006 and 2007). These reports helped us confirm these important findings (see Table 1). We revisit a few of them.

Table 1 Main Findings of the First Three Years of the Study		
2005	2006	2007
Most of the problems are generalized; above all, the interventions must be “global” even if we must focus on a few particular groups.	A persistent homogeneity: the practice and the assessment of the activities as well as the students’ perception of their world vary very little according to the community, ethnicity, mother tongue and family origin.	A persistent homogeneity: the practice and the assessment of the activities as well as the students’ perception of their world vary very little according to the community, ethnicity, mother tongue and family origin.
Practically nobody is interested in cultural activities, but any effort to create interest in these activities should focus mainly on boys.	Persistent hesitation: usually, young people were indecisive on practically everything except love and family.	Persistent hesitation: usually, young people were indecisive on practically everything except love and family.
The environment somewhat favours an appreciation for outdoor activities and these activities impact on the appreciation of Northern Ontario.	Francophones believe more than the Anglophones in the importance of English in the world. They are more pessimistic than the Anglophones in regard to the future of the French culture.	Francophones believe more than the Anglophones in the importance of English in the world. They are more pessimistic than the Anglophones in regard to the future of the French culture.
A comparison of both cohorts seems to indicate that, the more youth progress in their post secondary education, the more they like their community.	Generally, in everything pertaining to education, art and culture, girls show a greater interest and are more active in these areas than the boys.	Generally, in everything pertaining to education, art and culture, girls show a greater interest and are more active in these areas than the boys.
Post secondary aspirations differ, based on the size of the community; we observe a somewhat greater desire to pursue higher levels of education in the more urban communities.	Intensification of critical views towards university studies; young people believe that university studies are too theoretical.	Intensification of critical views towards university studies; young people believe that university studies are too theoretical.
Fields of study differ, based on sex; young males and young females are not attracted to the same fields of study.	After secondary school, young people become more inclined to view cultural diversity as an asset for a person or a country.	
Close to one third of the youth surveyed favor Northern Ontario postsecondary Institutions.	A more favorable opinion for rural communities emerges.	
Among those who indicated in which community they expect to work upon completion of their studies, close to one third identified a Northern Ontario community.	After their secondary school studies, young people reduce the frequency of their cultural and recreational activities.	
The perception of youths concerning their annual revenue five years upon completion of their studies is three times higher than the actual average revenue for the professions they aspire to.	At a particular moment in time, young people can easily make five or ten year projections, but these projections can change over time.	
This overall analysis reveals that we are dealing with a population with great similarities; very few issues are unique to one community or to one specific type of community; what is easily understood is that the Northern Ontario depopulation phenomenon is not unique to specific communities; youth do not leave their community specifically, they leave the region.	Young people’s love for their community depends on their social involvement, the availability of cultural products, the quality of their relationships with others - especially their mother -, cultural environment and cultural activities. This love of the community is also more obvious for the Francophones than for the Anglophones.	
Francophones are more pessimistic than Anglophones with reference to francophone issues.	Francophones are more pessimistic than Anglophones with reference to francophone issues.	

3. Activities and their Assessment

In the 2005 report, we had noticed that the frequency of most activities tended to be relatively low. Are these activities practised with the same frequencies whether the students are in Grade 9 or in Grade 12? To determine the frequency of an activity, students had to select for each statement, a value from 1 to 6, “1” being the equivalent to “Never” and “6”, to “Very Often”. This type of questions allows the setting of averages between 1 and 6. The closer to “1” the average, the less the students practise the activity; the closer the average to “6”, the more the students practise it.

Two findings stand out:

- 1) The frequencies remain low for Grade 12 students;
- 2) The dominant picture is one of similarity: the averages for most of the activities are the same from 2005 to 2008.

3.1. From Grade 9 to Grade 12 – An Overview

3.1.1. Reading

As for reading activities, the only disparity in averages is the one relating to newspapers. There is a slight increase from 3.13 to 3.33. We find no variations in regard to periodicals, magazines, literary works or visits to the library. However, we must note a slight gain in the assessment of reading. The assessment is measured on a scale of “1”, indicating “Not at all”, and “6”, “A lot”. In effect, the averages are higher in regard to newspaper reading (from 2.78 in Grade 9 to 3.15 in Grade 12), for literary works (from 3.20 to 3.54) and for visits to the library (from 2.46 to 2.87). It must be noted that in practice, there is little change, but there is an increase in the assessment of the activities related to reading.

3.1.2. Restaurants and Shopping

Shopping is a relatively popular activity but no more so at the end of secondary school than at the beginning: the averages are steady from 4.34 to 4.24. The assessment numbers are also much the same. As for restaurants, especially when the outing is related to a gathering of friends, the activity is more frequent for Grade 12 students than for Grade 9 students. Moreover, this is a well loved event.

3.1.3. Cultural Outings

Grade 9 students do not take to cultural activities anymore than Grade 12 students do. Six of the nine activities for which we have data retain equivalent averages from 2005 to 2008: students do not attend the theatre more often, do not visit art galleries more often, do not attend more festivals or cultural events, and do not go to dance shows or popular or classical music concerts more often. As for

the other three activities, we found inferable differences (reductions) between the two moments of the study. Young people attend the circus, the cinema and sporting events a little bit less. These numbers correspond more often to those in reference to the assessment. However, we must note a slight increase in interest in regard to visits to art galleries (the average increasing from 1.94 to 2.44). The same applies to participation in festivals and cultural events (the average going from 2.85 to 3.19), and to participation in classical music concerts (the average moving from 1.82 to 2.19). Despite these increases, the interest in these activities remains very low.

3.1.4. The Purchasing of Cultural Products

Young people, whether at the beginning or at the end of their secondary school, do not purchase more recorded music or more books. They buy a few more works of art, but the increase in this quite exceptional endeavour is practically nonexistent. In 2005, the average is 1.48, and in 2008, it is 1.63. From 2005 to 2008, statistics in regard to these activities indicate a reduction of interest in the purchasing of recorded music (the averages being 4.04 and 3.71), and an increase of interest in the purchasing of books (2.91 and 3.21) and of works of art (1.85 and 2.08).

3.1.5. Media Related Activities

At home, young people listen to a lot of music, but no more so in Grade 9 than in Grade 12. In both Grade 9 and Grade 12, they look at a lot of video recordings. They listen to the radio a little bit less and the averages are comparable from 2005 to 2008. They watch a little less television in Grade 12 (4.52) than in Grade 9 (4.81). In Grade 12 (3.55) they use a computer to play games much less than they did in Grade 9 (4.40). The assessment in regard to listening to music at home, listening to the radio and looking at video recordings corresponds to the frequency of these activities. The same thing applies in regard to their interest in television, although the average reduction is not inferable in the case of the assessment of the activity. The interest in video games drops from 2005 to 2008, but in a lesser ratio than the activity per se.

3.1.6. Sports Activities

From Grade 9 to Grade 12, students practise less summer and winter outdoor activities such as fishing, hunting, snowmobiling, and ATV riding, but go to fitness centers a bit more often. The assessment statistics for these activities match the numbers associated with the practice of these same activities.

3.2. Influence of Sex

Previous reports indicated that girls devoted more time to cultural activities than boys. We think it is important to check if, from Grade 9 to Grade 12, girls and boys mature in the same manner.

3.2.1. Reading Activities

As regards the reading of newspapers, periodicals and magazines, there is no difference between boys and girls. As for literary works, we cannot say the same thing. From 2005 to 2008, the average remains the same for girls. Over this same period, the average for boys increases slightly. However, the girls' average still remains higher than the boys'. From Grade 9 to Grade 12, the girls go to the library a bit more often, the boys a bit less.

3.2.2. Cultural Outings

Sex influences cultural outings only in the case of circuses and sporting events. In both cases, the reduction of the average is more pronounced for the girls than for the boys.

3.2.3. The Purchasing of Cultural Products

Sex has no influence on the purchasing of cultural products.

3.2.4. Media Related Activities

From Grade 9 to Grade 12, both boys and girls have relatively the same attitude towards exposure to television and the listening of music at home. During this same period, the girls' interest in radio and video recordings increases while the boys' interest decreases; both boys and girls are less attracted to video games, but the trend is more pronounced in the case of the girls.

4. Representations

In previous reports, we noted that young people's opinions on education, cultures, politics, the community and personal relationships were not very well defined. The only exception to this trend related to statements regarding love and family. Have these observations withstood the test of time? These representations were measured according to a six level scale with "1" equalling "Strongly disagree", and "6", "Strongly agree".

4.1. From Grade 9 to Grade 12 – An Overview

4.1.1. Education

Between Grade 9 and Grade 12, the opinions relating to university and collegiate studies change a little. Young people become more critical of university studies and more accepting of collegiate studies. On the whole, young people think that collegiate studies are better suited to employment than university studies ($\bar{x}_9^e = 3.01$ and $\bar{x}_{12}^e = 3.54$) and that university studies are too theoretical (the average going up from 2.88 to 3.37). They also don't believe that university studies offer better employment opportunities than collegiate studies (the average dropping nearly one point from 3.75 to 2.77). By the same token, young people tend to think that collegiate studies are not too practical ($\bar{x}_9^e = 2.70$ and $\bar{x}_{12}^e = 2.14$).

4.1.2. The Cultures

Ten statements let us examine opinions and feelings on a variety of ethno-cultural topics. They are statements such as “In Ontario, French is on the way out” or “With globalization, human beings are becoming more and more alike”. For seven of these statements there are no variations over time. We note a more open attitude towards statements such as “Cultural diversity is an asset for a country” and “Cultural diversity is an asset for the world”; from 2005 to 2008, the averages go up from 0.51% and 0.45% respectively. We also notice that young people tend to believe less in the statement “Practically all cinematic productions in the world are in English”.

4.1.3. Politics

Even with an increase in 2008, political interest remains very low, as was the case in 2005.

4.1.4. The Community

Our research focuses a lot on the link between young people and their community. Our past analyses signalled a relative indifference on the part of young people towards their community. From 2005 to 2008, this indifference endures. We base this assertion on the statistical results of seven of ten statements where, over time, the averages remain equal. However, we must report increases in those averages for the statements “My community offers enough recreational activities”, “My community offers enough employment opportunities”, and a reduction in the average of the statement “I love big cities”.

4.1.5. Personal Relationships

Young people tend to feel in harmony with their social environment: friends, classmates, teachers and the people of the community. This remains true from Grade 9 to Grade 12. Their relationship with their teachers even improves the average going from 3.95% to 4.49%.

4.1.6. Love and Family

As was the case in 2005, their concept of love and family is still positive, although there are adjustments over time: the mean differences are inferable for 8 of the 15 statements. Young people are less convinced they will marry, slightly more convinced that their love life will be stable, that it is better to be permanently employed before having a child and that it is too easy to divorce. They are less likely to deny that it is better to be permanently employed before living together, that it is better to be married before having children and that one day, destiny will have them meet the man or woman of their dreams.

4.2. The Influence of Sex on the Representations with Regards to Education

The sex of the students has no bearing on the opinions expressed with regard to education. The girls seem to evolve differently than the boys in only one instance, and it relates to the statement saying that collegiate studies are too practical: the discrepancy is more obvious with Grade 12 girls than with the boys.

4.3. The Influence of the Mother Tongue on the Representations with Regards to the Cultures

We might have thought the changes of opinion regarding French and English could have been tied to the students' mother tongue, but the analyses do not support this hypothesis. The averages in Grade 9 and Grade 12 often seem different according to the mother tongue. However, given the size of the sample, the differences between the individuals within each linguistic group are too great for us to ascribe these differences to the spoken language. The mother tongue plays a role only in regard to the statement claiming that, in Ontario, French is on the way out. Grade 9 and Grade 12 Francophones disagree with this affirmation more than the Anglophones and bilingual students do. This indicates that Francophones are less pessimistic in 2008 than they were in 2005. As for the other two linguistic groups, their perception of the French language's survival in Ontario is somewhat more gloomy.

5. Internet Use

The Internet has become an integral part of young people's lives. For most of them, being socially active means, in some way, using the Internet. To study this process, at the time of the first data collection, we proposed 29 ways in which young people could use the Internet, and we repeated the same exercise 4 years later. Each of the statements was associated to a 6 level Likert scale on which the

student indicated the frequency of their Internet use; “1” equalled “Never” and “6” equalled “Very often”. It then became possible to determine to what end students used the Internet and if this use varied from the beginning to the end of their secondary school studies. Electronic mails, Internet chat, Internet surfing and downloading of music were the most frequently practised activities. It becomes highly evident that the Internet is a means of communication.

Many of the Internet uses are negligible: dating sites, banking operations, radio, newspapers, pornographic sites, stock market and finances. From 2005 to 2008, the averages are equivalent for five activities: chatting, dating sites, emailing with friends, telephoning and sports information. They are different in all other cases. This difference translates into a usage reduction in regard to discussion groups, the search for new friends and electronic games, but it corresponds to an increase in media usage in the other 21 cases. In four of these cases, the average increases by more than one point: 1) the sending and 2) the reception of messages within the framework of their studies, 3) meteorology and 4) Internet use within the framework of courses. In at least four cases, the increase is close to one point: 1) Internet use as a research tool much like an encyclopedia, 2) health information research, 3) purchasing of products and 4) banking operations. We see that students increasingly make use of the Internet to communicate and do research for their studies.

6. Academic Achievement

Each year, we have asked students to disclose their academic achievement by revealing their overall average as well as their average in each field of study: English, French, social studies, natural sciences, mathematics and the arts. From the beginning to the end of secondary school, when considering the sample as a whole, we see no notable differences in the results obtained by the students in their different fields of study. To the question “What is normally your overall scholastic average?” the estimations were 75.03 for 2005 and 76.40 for 2008. When looking at the individual fields of study, the results are the same; but these differences, on an average of 100, never go beyond two points. However, with regard to social studies, the variation between these two moments is inferable.

This quasi-non-variation, from Grade 9 to Grade 12, as indicated by the tests on comparison of averages, hides individual differences. The association measures warrant a nuanced reading of the situation. Indeed, if we calculate the 2005 and 2008 correlation between the results obtained by the students, either overall or by individual subjects, we find only positive correlations. This indicates that the better the performance in Grade 9, the better it is in Grade 12, but we must also note that the values of these correlations never exceed 0.62 and they generally hover around 0.45. This means that the Grade 9 results do not necessarily guarantee the Grade 12 results.

It can also be noted that the professional status of the family has little bearing on scholastic performance. The correlations between the professional and educational status of the parents and the overall scholastic average of the student are always lower than 0.20 in both 2005 and 2008.

7. Linguistic Skills

The way in which people evaluate their linguistic skills is a good indication of the way they view themselves in their community, and by examining this evaluation at two different moments in their schooling process, we discover the effect the school and their social environment have on the students.

7.1. Self-Evaluation on a Likert Scale

To determine linguistic skills according to comprehension, reading, speaking and writing, we asked young people to evaluate, on a six level scale with “1” equalling “Poor” and the value “6” “Excellent”, their mastery of the English language, the French language or a language other than these two.

The knowledge of a language other than French or English is negligible. Nothing significant to report.

Looking at the sample without taking into account the mother tongue, we note that the averages are relatively high. In English, whatever aspect of the language is being evaluated, the averages are always above 5; in French, they dip below 4 only for writing. These numbers indicate that English is more familiar than French for most of the population, but also that the knowledge of French is widespread.

From Grade 9 to Grade 12, notwithstanding the mother tongue, we find variations in English and in French, except for writing skills in English and comprehension in French. Students think their writing, reading and speaking skills in English have improved ever so slightly. In French, they think their writing, reading and speaking skills have decreased slightly. Sex has an influence only for reading in English, and we note that girls believe a bit more than the boys that they improve. The mother tongue has an influence on reading in English: the Francophones think they improved more than the Anglophones and the Bilinguals. The mother tongue also has an influence on writing in French: the Francophones think they become better with schooling, while the Anglophones and the Bilinguals think they become worse. We could point out that, if we distinguished linguistic skills according to the mother tongue only, we would quickly discover that Francophones are much better in English than Anglophones are in French.

7.2. Self-Evaluation in Comparison to Other Individuals

In order to better understand the way students feel with regard to languages, we added another measure to the Likert scale. We asked the young people to compare their language skills to different categories of individuals: parents, classmates, radio announcers, teachers and everybody. They had to indicate if their linguistic skills were poorer, equal or better than the reference individuals. We asked ourselves if these valuations had changed from Grade 9 to Grade 12, and if so, what role had the mother tongue played.

7.2.1. French

A first series of analyses was undertaken to determine the status of oral French. With regard to students whose mother tongue is French, equivalency prevails, except when the comparison is made with their teachers; the distribution then remains relatively similar between the lower, equivalent and higher levels. Equivalency is also less evident when the comparison refers to the radio announcers; more individuals classify themselves in the lower category. The equivalency category remains at its highest level when it refers to parents, classmates and everybody. From Grade 9 to Grade 12, we detect an inferable improvement in self-evaluation only in regard to a comparison with classmates.

Students whose mother tongue is English are much more critical of their competency in French. From 2005 to 2008, we see progress in competency in relation to the parents – as evidenced for the whole sample – but in the comparison to the radio announcers, the move is less evident.

Young people who claim both French and English as their mother tongue sit at the midpoint between the Anglophones and the Francophones. Educational instruction favours competency self-evaluation when the comparison relates to parents, classmates and teachers, but it's a very inconclusive trend.

7.2.2. English

A second series of analyses was done to determine the status of oral English. There is less discrepancy between the Anglophones and the Francophones when the Francophones evaluate their competency in English than vice versa. The inferior category contains more Francophones when they evaluate their competency in English than when they do so for French, but the numbers connected to the equivalence category show little difference with the Anglophones. The reference to their teachers forces young Francophones to be more critical of their mastery of English. A comparative analysis carried out by these students, in relation to different criteria, shows only random improvement from Grade 9 to Grade 12, except in the category “Everybody”. The same thing applies to the Anglophones: if they thought they were equivalent to a certain speaker in 2005, they thought the same thing in 2008. As for

the Bilinguals, their competency self-evaluation shows improvement in relation to four categories of individuals. There is no improvement only in reference to radio announcers.

7.3. Influence of the Family

It is fairly common to state that the children's language skills are largely determined by the family's economic status. We are given to understand that, the more educated the parents and the higher their professional status, the greater the children's language skills will be. Consequently, we would expect that children from more educated and cultured families would improve more than children from less educated and cultured families. To verify this hypothesis, we tested the covariance incidence of the professional level of the mother and father, as well as their educational level against the difference in averages between 2005 and 2008 for the different linguistic skills that we studied earlier: understanding, reading, speaking and writing in English, in French and in a language other than French or English. When examining only the statements relating to the French and English language skills, the covariance comes into play in only three of the 32 tests administered. These 3 relate to the influence of the mother's profession on written English, the mother's level of instruction on the comprehension of English and the father's level of instruction on written French. The squared correlations are all lower than 10%. We must then conclude that the influence of the family's economic status is only marginal. In the case of a language other than French or English, 16 tests are administered. The covariance comes into play non randomly in 6 cases: the mother's level of instruction in relation to reading, writing and speaking skills, and the father's level of instruction in relation to comprehension, reading and speaking skills. The explained variances are lower than 20%. We know that the mastery of a language other than French or English is rare. We can thus consider that relatively well educated parents manage to keep alive a foreign language in their home, despite the pressures of a French and English environment. But even in this case, it must be noted that the socioeconomic status of the family has little influence on the manner in which young people evaluate their linguistic skills. Language, in a mass communication society, is much more an environmental by-product than a family feature.

8. The Language of Communication

Life in a community is necessarily, but not exclusively, communication between its inhabitants. In mostly unilingual societies, time has little effect on the language of those societies. In a society where languages compete against one another, we can observe a certain shift of the minority languages to the majority languages. This type of change testifies to a certain discontent or even conflict which can threaten the good relations between the different linguistic segments of a population. We asked ourselves if, from 2005 to 2008, such a shift was detectable. Normally, these changes (this shift) take place over a longer period of time, but we thought it appropriate to check if, over this highly important period of adolescence, we could detect signs of such a shift. We used several statements such as "My parents speak to each other in French" or "With my friends, I speak English". Each of these statements is linked to a six level scale with "Never" being the lower value and "Always" being the higher value.

We compared the answers to these questions in 2005 and 2008 and we also took into consideration the mother tongue of the student. In the case of Francophones, we can observe a shift towards English, in that, their communication in French has a higher value in regard to their relationship to their parents than to their friends. In the case of Anglophones, the numbers are much more constant from one communication group to the other. The numbers for the Bilinguals remain midway between the Francophones and the Anglophones. However, as for change over time, the only thing noticeable is stability. Out of 63 tests, only three indicate changes over time: for Francophones, the frequency average of their communication with English friends increases from 3.08 to 3.50; for Anglophones, it increases from 5.55 to 5.84; for Bilinguals, the average of their communication in English in the workplace increases from 4.67 to 5.15. We can thus conclude to a general stability, but with certain signs indicating a slight linguistic shift of French to English.

9. Health

Based on the data collected in 2005, we published a paper on health issues in the *Revue du Nouvel-Ontario* titled “L’auto-estimation de la santé chez les jeunes du Nord-Est de l’Ontario. Note empirique”. (Translation: Self-Evaluation of Health by the Youth of Northeastern Ontario, Empirical Note). Here are the main points of the paper’s conclusion. It must be noted that the data comes from two sets of questions. In the first set, the student was asked to compare, with other young people of his age, his physical and emotional health. In the second set, the student had to evaluate how often he was prey to certain feelings which could indicate a health problem. The first set of questions was linked to a 6 level scale which went from “Poor” to “Excellent”, and the second set to a 6 level scale going from “Never” to “Very Often”.

We wanted to verify if young people’s self-evaluation of either physical or mental health varied according to sex, language, ethnicity or the type of community, and we especially wanted to find out if there were any interaction effects between these various factors. We were also hoping to find out how opinions, attitudes and an interest in activities influence self-evaluation.

The analyses revealed that sex did have an effect, indicating that girls are slightly more critical than boys in regard to their physical health. However, they did not reveal that any factor, in itself, had an influence on emotional health. It must be noted that in these two cases, the averages are lower than four, and consequently, for the group as a whole, the average is nowhere near the ideal of 6. The analyses then showed that despair, loneliness, discouragement, anger, boredom and annoyance are part of young people’s lives. The averages hover around three; if these feelings never affected young people, the averages would be at one; if they were overly affected by them, the averages would be at six. Taken by itself, no factor distinguishes these averages. However, taken in pairs, they show that despair distinguishes the girls from the boys only for Francophones and Anglophones; with First Nation youths and other ethnic youths, the girls despair no more than the boys. This result is difficult to interpret because it is counter intuitive at least with regard to native influence. We can certainly not rely on

traditional culture to explain it, because traditionally in many of these cultures, women are more often considered inferior and thus more vulnerable. It seems that on this point, postmodernism plays a greater role in eliminating differences between the sexes for First Nation people and other ethnic groups than it does for Canadian Francophones and Anglophones. There may be, deep within these populations, some form of solidarity which prevents despair from affecting one sex more than the other. This result must be linked to another interaction effect which shows that First Nation girls do not feel discouraged as often as girls of other ethnic groups.

Finally, the analyses pointed out that what we do and what we think affects our physical and psychological health. Practising activities unrelated to school or work, having a love of sports activities, having the feeling of being like others, of belonging and having a positive vision of education, these are all factors which play positively on the way we view our own health. Good relations with others also play an important role, as does the perceived social status of the group one belongs to. All these results remind us that being healthy is not only a matter of not being sick; it's living and being active in a social environment, working on oneself, doing things, having relationships and having a social status.

Now, the question becomes whether these health indicators testify or not to change during these four years of secondary school. On the whole, the answer is negative, but it must be qualified. When comparing themselves to people their own age, their judgment in 2005 and 2008 remains the same in regard to emotional and physical health. In both cases, the averages are slightly above four, which is only two points removed from an excellent score. Among the six statements in which young people are asked to comment on their psychological state of mind for the three months preceding the data collection, we find only two differences which cannot be attributed to chance: one relates to the despair brought on by the future, and the other to discouragement. In both cases, the averages indicate an improvement. It must also be noted that the averages relating to the six statements qualifying physical health never rise above the value of 3.27 or fall below 2.67, indicating that the problem, while not acute, is definitely a part high school students' lives.

10. The Aspirations

Young people's aspirations represent an important indicator of their future. Of course, all that happens in life is not the exclusive result of a projection, although projections do affect the future because they correspond to actions taken in the present. Furthermore, they indicate how young people foresee their future and perceive the present. If we want to understand young people's mobility or migration patterns, we need this important information, especially if we want to act on these migration patterns according to regional and community principles. In prior reports, we tackled the aspirations theme. We observed the scope of young people's dreams: a diversity of valued employments, and paradoxically, high concentrations; discrimination according to sex, which directs boys towards the trades and girls towards higher studies; an interest as well as a lack of interest in the North; and Anglophones more critical than Francophones of their place of residence. The questions, to which we

must now find answers, are among the most important of the project we have been involved in during the last four years: how do young people foresee their future?, and more precisely, how do these perspectives change from Grade 9 to Grade 12?

Our results only compare 2005 to 2008. Our analyses only take into account the beginning and the end of this study. By concentrating on these two particular moments of young people's secondary school studies, we can understand what has happened from start to finish, but we then leave out what happened in between. Prior reports did, however, show that a lot happens each year.

10.1. Educational Aspirations

In order not to become a high school dropout, a student must be able to hold on to his or her projections and adapt his or her projects to different circumstances. The student must adapt to what he or she discovers about himself or herself over the years: new interests, new abilities or new possibilities opening up to him or her.

10.1.1. Educational Level

By looking at the Grade 9 and the Grade 12 results, we discover that the aspirations, in regard to the level of education students aspire to, differ in an inferable way². Out of 385 students, the levels³ are identical for 202; 124 students revised their aspirations downwards and 59 upwards.

10.1.2. Field of Study

The ten major fields of study according to Statistics Canada⁴ are: "Fine and Applied Arts"; "Commerce, Management and Administration"; "Teaching, Recreation and Counselling"; "Engineering and Applied Sciences"; "Literature, Human Sciences and Related Disciplines"; "Mathematics, Computer Sciences and Physical Sciences"; "Health Professions and Related Technologies"; "Agricultural and Biological Sciences and Nutritional Services"; "Social Sciences and Related Disciplines" and "Trade and Technology of Applied Sciences".

² Zwilcoxon = - 4.78; p < 0.001

³ The students had to choose between 5 educational levels: "A Few Years of High School"; "High School Diploma"; "College Diploma"; "University Diploma (Bachelor's Degree, (B.A., B.Sc., B.Ed...))" and "Postgraduate University Diploma (Master's Degree, Doctorate)".

⁴ The ten major fields of study according to Statistics Canada are: "Fine and Applied Arts"; "Commerce, Management and Administration"; "Teaching, Recreation and Counseling"; "Engineering and Applied Sciences"; "Literature, Human Sciences and Related Disciplines"; "Mathematics, Computer Sciences and Physical Sciences"; "Health Professions and Related Technologies"; "Agricultural and Biological Sciences and Nutritional Services"; "Social Sciences and Related Disciplines" and "Trade and Technology of Applied Sciences".

Twenty-five students provide no answers; twelve clearly state they do not know to which field of study they will commit; for 15 of them, the answer is indeterminable; for various reasons, 51 students do not have to answer the question; three students give strange answers.

In this exercise, it is important for us to find out how things evolved from 2005 to 2008. Being aware that, especially in 2005, indecision was a common factor, we chose to study only the 236 students who had already considered a field of study in both 2005 and 2008. Only 35.6% of them have identical fields of study in 2005 and in 2008. Many more students changed their field of study rather than remain with the original. The more frequent changes occur in the fields of Fine and Applied Arts and the Trade and Technology of Applied Sciences. When calculating the percentages based on the 2005 projections, some of them, because of their variations, warrant our attention: 31.8% of young people who had opted for teaching now choose a health related field; 37.5% of those who had opted for Engineering and Applied Sciences now opt for Trade and Technology of Applied Sciences; 29.4% had opted for Literature and Human Sciences and now opt for the Health Professions and related Technologies; 26.8% of those who were thinking of the Agricultural and Biological Sciences are now going to Literature and Human Sciences. The other variations are not consistent with evident statistical trends.

10.1.3. The Educational Institution

The choice of an educational institution logically follows the choice of the field of study. By and large, the choice is split and varies from individual to individual. Only rarely does the institution chosen in 2005 remain the one chosen in 2008. Very few young people intend to pursue their studies outside of Ontario. Nearly half of the students prefer northern institutions, while the other half prefers institutions elsewhere in Ontario. Among the young people who prefer Northern Ontario institutions, 32.6% of them opt for institutions situated in the Far Northeast Training Board region.

10.2. Professional Aspirations

When contemplating their future, young people usually imagine themselves in a partially defined world, practising some type of work and building relationships. But that is not all, and young people know it. The future is not only limited to careers, but also includes family and friendships. Many young people may not know exactly which trade or profession they will embark upon. But rare are those who do not have at least an inkling of the type of work they would like to do. For the people in charge of community development, these professional aspirations are of the utmost importance, because they represent the future of the community.

10.2.1. The Professional Level

We have already established that the desired educational level varies greatly throughout the sample. The same thing applies for the professional level. We must bear in mind that the present

analyses only take into account those individuals who provided a clear-cut answer in both 2005 and 2008. Out of these 202 students, 65 (32.2%) see themselves doing the same level work in 2008 as they did in 2005; for 74 students (36.6%), the professions are at a lower level in 2008 than in 2005, and for the other 63 students (31.2%), they are at a higher level. This quasi-random distribution indicates that, on the whole, there is no difference between the two moments⁵.

10.2.2. The Professional Sector

The numbers referring to the professional sector mirror those corresponding to the professional level, as well as those relating to the educational perspectives. The variations are similar. From Grade 9 to Grade 12, out of the 303 students who always identified a profession, only 25.1% identified the same one in both instances. For 7.6% of them, the changes are not completely different. For example, some students change from engineering to mechanical design, from medicine to dental hygiene, from veterinary science to nutrition science, from optometry to medicine, from pharmaceutical technician to medical laboratory technician, from medical laboratory technician to medical assistant, from construction equipment operator to trucker. Besides, nearly everything is possible. There are no perceptible rules, which testifies to the incidental quality of the choices made by students all through their high school years: a student who wanted to become a public administrator now wants to become a carpenter; one who wanted to join the armed forces now wants to be a mechanical engineer; one who wanted to become a construction entrepreneur now wants to become a nurse or an insurance broker; one who wanted to become an accountant now wants to become a lawyer; one who wanted to become a cashier now wants to become a dental hygienist.

10.2.3. The Income

Every data collection has included the following question: “Five years after the completion of your studies, what will be your annual income?” Prior reports have all made clear that students’ expectations with regard to income were all quite fanciful. We can only hope that, as they progress through high school, students’ expectations will become more realistic so that when they start in their profession, they won’t be too disillusioned. In 2005, taking into account only those students who gave an answer either in Grade 9 or Grade 12, the average expected income was \$103,861.88; the standard deviation was huge at \$142,240.07. Not only was the expected income very high, but so were the differences between the individuals. In 2008, the income projections were at \$75,675.00; the standard deviation was at \$43,512.24. Not only has the average fallen, but the differences between individuals have also diminished. Although secondary school studies do not eliminate all illusions, they at least help in instilling a greater sense of reality with regard to income.

⁵ $t(201) = 0.87$; $p = 0.39$. A Wilcoxon test determines $z_{\text{Wilcoxon}} = -0.88$; $p = 0.38$

10.3. Academic Achievement and Aspirations

Having analyzed the educational and professional aspirations, we can now look into the influence of academic achievement on the level of these aspirations. We only need to check if there is a link between these levels and the students' averages. By associating the 2005 overall average to the 2005 and 2008 educational projections, we get the following correlations of 0.45 and 0.50 respectively. The same procedure, applied to the professional employment level desired in 2005 or 2008, yields correlations of 0.33 and 0.34. By linking the 2008 average to the 2005 and 2008 academic prospects, the correlations are then 0.48 and 0.45. Finally, by associating this average to the 2005 and 2008 professional projections, the values are 0.24 and 0.39. The correlations are always positive; the better the averages, the greater the aspirations. They are always lower than 51, which indicates that the academic achievement does not constitute the only determinant factor for aspirations. The academic prospects' correlations are slightly higher than those related to employment, which indicates that they depend more on the desired academic level than on the desired employment level. Neither the 2005 or 2008 averages play a more determinant role on aspirations. This is very clear with regard to the academic prospects, but not quite as much when we examine the 2008 average in its relation to the professional aspirations for 2005. This could be the result of a certain constancy in school work, and/or simultaneously, of variations in the school work over time.

11. The Place of Residence

In last year's report, we studied young people's projects in relation to their projected place of residence. We organized the information by categories in order to be able to determine whether they planned to live in Northern Ontario or somewhere else. Then, for the whole of the sample we compared the 2005 answers to those of 2007. The results we obtained then (see Table 2) are very similar to the ones we are getting now (see Table 3).

%	2005	to	2007
19.7	A Northern Ontario municipality	to	a municipality outside Northern Ontario
23.9	A municipality outside Northern Ontario	to	another municipality outside Northern Ontario
30.9	A Northern Ontario municipality	to	another municipality in Northern Ontario
25.5	A municipality outside Northern Ontario	to	a Northern Ontario Municipality

The projected place of residence differs in 60% of cases between 2005 and 2007.
Source: Simon Laflamme and Pierre Bouchard, *The Youth and the North: A Path to Discover*, Report –Year 3, 2007, page 9-10.

Table 3
Projected Place of Residence Depending on
Whether the Same Student is in Grade 9 or Grade 12 (2005-2008)

%	2005	to	2008
13.9	A municipality in Northern Ontario	to	a municipality outside Northern Ontario
27.3	A municipality outside Northern Ontario	to	another municipality outside Northern Ontario
34.5	A Northern Ontario municipality	to	another municipality in Northern Ontario
24.4	A municipality outside Northern Ontario	to	a Northern Ontario Municipality

Last year ($30.9 + 25.5 = 56.4$), like this year ($34.5 + 24.4 = 58.9$), the analyses reveal that more than 55% of young people intend to set up residence in Northern Ontario. This year's analysis indicates that 34.5% of young people, in 2005, chose to live in the North and still do in 2008. Also, in 2005, 24.4% of them intended to live outside of Northern Ontario but in 2008 they prefer to live in the North. In 2007, 19.7% of students changed their choice of residency from the North to somewhere outside Northern Ontario; in 2008, this statistic drops slightly to 13.9%.

12. Conclusion

This report is the fourth in a longitudinal study whose objective is to follow the young people of Northeastern Ontario over a decade, in order to understand what kind of relationship they have with their environment. In light of this objective, we have observed a cohort of young people from the beginning to the end of their secondary school studies. Our intention was essentially to discover, through different analyses the evolution that occurs from Grade 9 to Grade 12.

1. Initially, the analyses enabled us to confirm that, the frequency of the activities practised by young people is normally low, and that it practically does not vary over time. This applies to both sports and cultural activities. This really means that the high school years do not bring about great changes in students' behaviours and attitudes. As regards culture, some averages do grow, but they are weak, and they are noticeable mainly in regard to the assessment rather than the activity itself.

2. The analyses then confirmed the main observations we had previously made in regard to the representations: a general lack of enthusiasm unless the questions referred to love and family. But, between Grade 9 and Grade 12, students do become more critical about university. If social workers wanted to increase the importance of collegiate studies and the trades over university studies, they can rest easy, because the message has been heard loud and clear.

Secondary school studies have little effect on young people's activities and their assessment of those activities. They also have little influence on the representations, whether it be in regard to political commitment, relationships with others, ethno-cultural questions or the community. Regarding the

community, there is a slight increase in appreciation for the availability of recreational services and employment. Paradoxically, we note a decrease of affection for the community. The relationship between students and teachers improves somewhat throughout the high school years. In going through all this information we have no choice but to question the role played by the school in students' lives. How do we explain this lack of enthusiasm and quasi indifference, so deeply rooted in students, that even four years of high school cannot temper them? Why can't Northeastern Ontario high schools create a greater appreciation for Northeastern Ontario? Of course, the school should not be the only object of criticism. How can a school, by itself, modify young people's behaviour when they have access to countless sources of information? How can a school not be a reflection of its environment? Because a school - an ideal place of learning - and its community have a dynamic relationship, can we not imagine or hope that this relationship would work towards building in young people, an appreciation for both of them, while the school would provide instruction?

3. The analyses also show that secondary school promotes the use of the Internet, mostly for information and communication purposes. The North is huge. More and more young people use the Internet. Wouldn't it be possible to set up an Internet network for young people where they could talk about the North and get information about the North, and where they could discuss openly and bluntly all the anti-North prejudices?

4. We then examined academic performance. We noticed that the groups' averages do not really vary over time. This, however, does not indicate a student will not change academically during his high school years. The correlations clearly show that the performance modifications are as frequent as the averages are constant. It's impossible not to read in all of this that, through the years, some students remain on the same level, while others improve and still others regress. This information reveals that young people do respond to contingencies and that they need social guidance.

5. Our analyses then examined linguistic skills. They showed no improvement from the beginning to the end of secondary school. They revealed that the majority of young people, when comparing themselves to others, thought their linguistic skills were equivalent to everybody in their community. These results have to be interpreted in two ways. The language we speak is that of our environment, and the speakers always think of themselves as being like the people they communicate with. However, we have to question this lack of improvement over time: after four years of high school, how can there not be some indication of progress between the two moments of the study?

6. The analyses also showed few variations in the use of the language of communication. They, however, through some events, indicated a certain Anglicization of the Francophones. This Anglicization must also be interpreted in two ways. When a minority Francophone becomes anglicized, he becomes someone else and he blends into the majority. This integration might not be a problem at all, merely because it is only the slow disappearance of one's otherness. However, it could bring about some conflicts. It could be that the environment is not conducive to the reproduction of the minority, making it

easier for that minority to leave such a menacing environment. Or it could simply be that the Francophone minority does not enjoy losing its identity to become part of the majority.

7. The analyses also focused on young people's health. In the absolute, the averages depict young people who are more healthy than sick, and with slightly troubled states of mind. Over time, these averages rarely change, and if they do, it's to indicate a lessening of the problem. These results seem important to us. We are dealing of course with adolescents, and adolescence is a difficult period in life. But it does not necessarily mean we must readily accept these troubled states. Psychological health is inevitably determined by relationships and the community. Not being well during adolescence can really make you wish you were somewhere else. Of course, adolescent angst is not limited to Northern Ontario, but, not all regions are equally touched by the psychological weakness of their adolescents.

8. Finally, we looked at aspirations. The essential point is the following: whatever the object of these aspirations - studies, profession or place of residence -, the variations, from Grade 9 to Grade 12, are clearly more numerous than the constants. Another important conclusion: if a good number of students see themselves living somewhere else than in Northern Ontario, there are a lot more who plan to live here. We should be happy that the scales are tipped in our favour, but we should also worry that more than 40% of students plan to live somewhere else than where they grew up. Numerous variations tell us that all plans are subject to some modifications over time and in all respects. Wanting to do something or live somewhere later on doesn't mean it will happen. Young people can change their mind if it suits them. If Northern Ontario needs a certain type of worker or entrepreneur, young people can fill those needs and become those workers, but the adults responsible for development in the North must sell young people on these possibilities. This has to be done not only in a professional perspective or by trying to identify the trades of tomorrow, because then, the North is only as good as the employment it provides. This is just about the worst scenario in regards to the development of a region. Yes, we have to anticipate the trades and professions of the future, but we must also open the doors for creators, developers, inventors, for those people who will work at making the North a place where the living is fine and pleasant.

Our results come from the studying students who are more than students. They are sons or daughters. They are citizens. They communicate not only with teachers, but also with parents, friends and people who provide services. They react to decisions taken in their community. They read, watch television and listen to music. By studying a student, we not only understand the school's influence, but we understand the dynamics between the student and the school as well as all the other dynamics which go into the making of a young person.