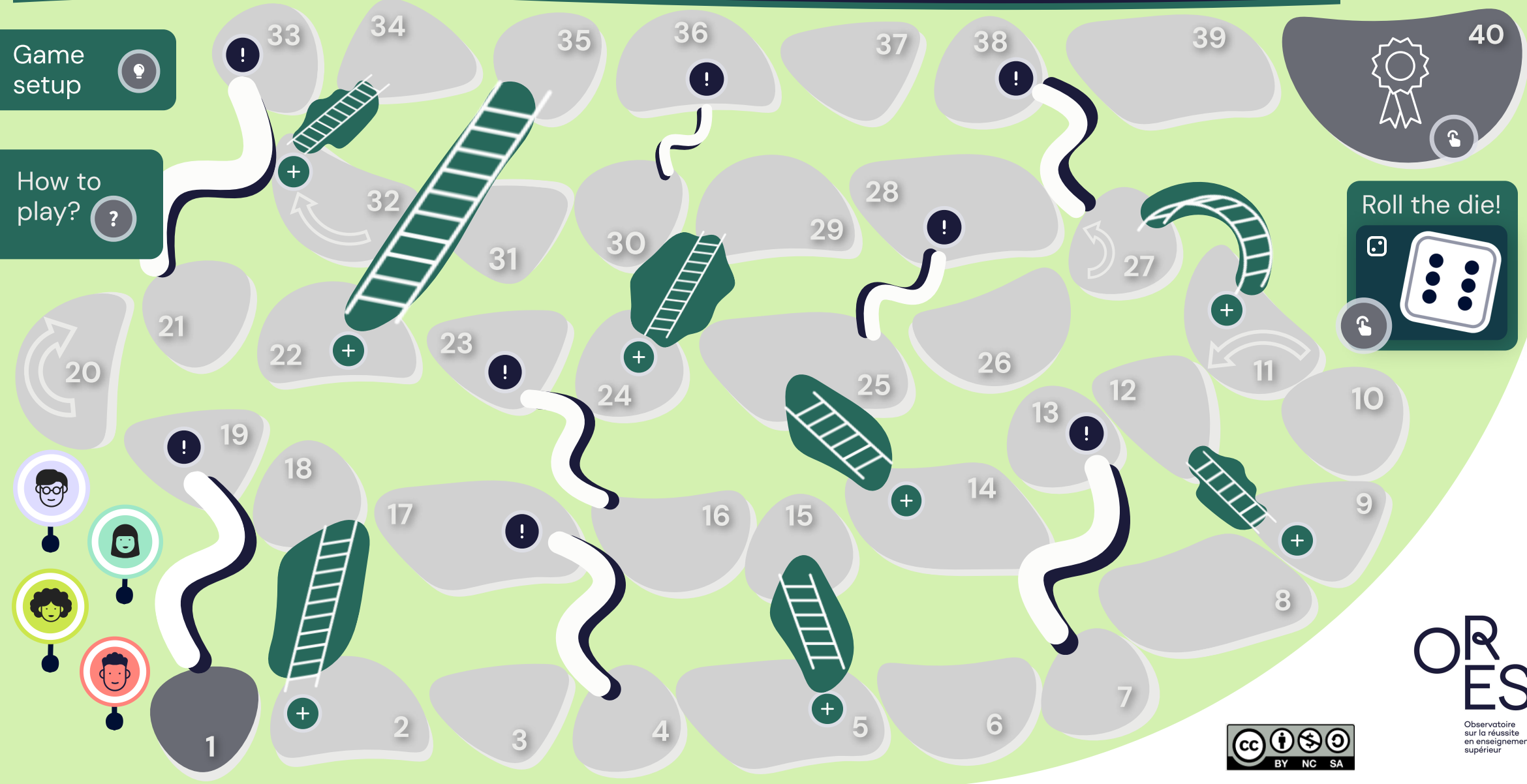


The Ups and Downs of Returning to Studies in Adulthood



Oops! This Wasn't Expected!



Your employer informs you that they **won't be able to free up time** for you to attend your training. This could make things more complicated!

The lack of employer support for returning to school is a commonly reported obstacle for employed adults.

(ICÉA, 2019; Mercier et al., 2021; OCDE, 2019, p. 30)



Painful Memories



Before enrolling in this course, you showed solid motivation. Now, halfway through, you're hesitating to continue because the challenges you're facing are reminding you of **past failures** in your previous educational journey.

Adults generally exhibit a high level of motivation and 'demonstrate a strong career choice and vocational reflection' when they begin a new course. However, several factors can undermine the success of a return-to-school project, including a person's **psychological characteristics and their previous educational experience.**

(Marzarte-Fricot, 2019; Richard, 2023; Solar et al., 2016)



A Little Extra!

By doing some research, you have found a **self-training module** on the “student profession” offered by your institution. These short online modules will surely help you improve your organization and develop some very useful skills!

With a view to making educational pathways, training terms and conditions, and learning activities more flexible, institutions may prioritize a variety of training formats: credited or non-credited programs and courses, self-training, free attendance or non-degree studies, open educational resources, MOOCs, etc.

(Paquelin & Chantal, 2019, p. 8)



Bad Timing!

A series of intensive in-person classes are scheduled on Saturdays. Usually, you use the weekend to drive the children to their extracurricular activities and catch up on some work. You'll need to find a solution this time!



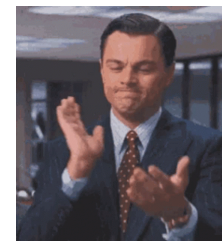
The development of educational programs must meet the educational needs of adults while considering the **challenges of balancing family and professional responsibilities.**

(ORES, 2024)



You Did It!

(Despite the Challenges!)



It is worth repeating that, according to the Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, the educational success of adults must be considered "according to the learner's conception of their own success — whether they see it as an academic pathway and whether they wish to complete it or not." Graduation, for instance, is not always part of the goals an adult learner sets when returning to study.

(CSE, 2016b, p. 47)

"[Lifelong learning] implies that an individual's life course can no longer be divided into a period of preparation followed by a period of action, rather that learning extends across the whole lifespan in different life phases."

(UIL, 2022, p. 17)



To consult the dossier



To consult the full references

To cite this : Observatoire sur la réussite en enseignement supérieur. (2024). *The Ups and Downs of Returning to Studies in Adulthood*. URL





Some Interesting Options!

By looking at the list of courses, many are offered **remotely, either in synchronous or asynchronous mode**. This is a great advantage for those of you with time constraints and the ability to organize your schedule independently.

Distance learning is an important accessibility factor for adults, who often have significant time constraints to manage.

(ACDEAULF, 2012, p. 19; AGEEFEP, 2021, p. 73)



Good news!



It's starting off well: The study program you're interested in is offered at a **study centre near your home!**

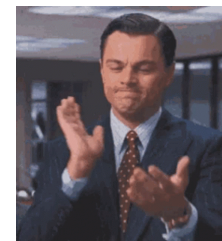
To offer more flexibility and promote accessibility, as well as to ensure work-family-study balance, institutions can prioritize the geographical proximity of training locations.

(Paquelin & Chantal, 2019)



Vous avez réussi votre retour aux études!

(malgré les obstacles!)



Rappelons que, selon le Conseil supérieur de l'éducation, la réussite éducative des adultes doit être envisagée « en fonction de la conception que la personne apprenante a de sa propre réussite – qu'elle fasse appel à un parcours scolaire et à sa complétion ou non ». La diplomation, par exemple, ne fait pas toujours partie des objectifs qu'une personne apprenante se donne en retournant aux études.

(CSE, 2016b, p. 47)

« [L'apprentissage tout au long de la vie] repose sur l'idée que le parcours de vie d'un individu ne peut plus être divisé en une période de préparation suivie d'une période d'action, mais que l'apprentissage s'étend sur toute la durée de la vie dans ses différentes phases. »

(UIL, 2022, p. 17)



Pour lire notre dossier complet



Pour consulter les références

Pour citer cette ressource : Observatoire sur la réussite en enseignement supérieur. (2024). *Les hauts et les bas d'un retour aux études à l'âge adulte*. URL



Technology, not so Simple After All!



As the course begins, you realize that **mastering certain digital tools is essential** to navigating the course platform and completing exercises easily. You'll need to catch up!

A recent study identifies the lack of technological knowledge as a significant barrier for adults with a high school or college-level education who are considering returning to school.

(Bellare et al., 2023)



Not Always Easy!

Your **difficulties in English** are catching up to you. You'll need more time than expected to review your assignments as the end of the term approaches...



Basic writing skills are crucial, especially when communication relies almost exclusively on writing (e.g., asynchronous online courses). In the province of Québec, one in five adults aged 25 to 64 with a university degree still falls within the lower levels of literacy.

(Hango, 2014)



Success is Something to be Discussed

Even though some sessions are offered remotely, your instructor always ensures there are opportunities for **interactions** between you and your fellow students. Additionally, she provides **personalized feedback** after each exercise, which really helps keep your motivation up!

Many teaching practices can foster educational success for adults in a distance learning context. These include encouraging peer interactions, engaging with the instructor, interacting with the course content and providing regular feedback.

(Béché & Schneider, 2019; Diep et al., 2019; Gurtner & Zahnd, 2003; Lin & Sun, 2022; Loock et al., 2022; Nguyen, 2022; Petit et al., 2015)



It's Almost like Having Two Jobs!

As time goes by, fatigue continues to build up. **The stress and workload of your job** affects your concentration and the quality time you can dedicate to studying and completing learning activities.



For working individuals, the workload is often double: limited efforts and energy must be devoted to both a paid job and demanding studies. This is a common obstacle reported by adults in continuing education.

(ICÉA, 2019b; Mercier et al., 2021; OCDE, 2019, p. 30)

Game setup

Put yourself in the shoes of an adult returning to studies! Try to reach the final step by discovering the obstacles and the helping hands that will mark the journey toward successfully completing your educational project.



This game was designed based on the section '*Returning to Studies in Adulthood: Success Factors*' from the thematic dossier Continuing Education in Colleges and Universities: Pathways to Student Success of the Observatoire sur la réussite en enseignement supérieur (ORES).

To cite this :

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To Avoid Interfering with Work

Starting in the first semester, one of the courses is **offered in the evening**. Great, it will be easier to balance with work!



With a view to making learning pathways, training terms and conditions, and learning activities more flexible, institutions provide evening and weekend classes.

(Paquelin & Chantal, 2019, p. 8)



It Changes Everything!

It's now possible to enroll in this study program on a **part-time basis**. This will certainly make it easier to balance work, family and studies.

With a view to making educational pathways more flexible, offering a part-time option is a factor that fosters access to higher education for adult learners.

(Paquelin & Chantal, 2019)





Helping Each Other Out!



A classmate informs you that it's possible to schedule **an appointment with a counselor** to set up a schedule that better suits your needs. That's a great service to know about!



Adults pursuing a training program may need more extensive support. While student services are often designed for young people in initial education, they can provide valuable assistance when adapted to the realities of adult learners.

(ORES, 2024)

How to play?

1. **Choose a game piece** from the four displayed in the bottom left corner.
2. **Roll the die** by clicking on it and move forward by the corresponding number of spaces.
3. If you land on a space at the **bottom of a ladder**, click on the  to discover what **helping hand** will assist you. Then, move your piece to the space at the top of the ladder.
4. If you land on a space at the **top of a ladder**, click on the  to discover what **obstacle** will slow you down. Then, move your piece to the space at the bottom of the ladder.
5. The game ends **when a piece reaches space 40**. The return-to-studies project is now completed and successful!

Enjoy the game!





It Wasn't in the Budget!



Since financial aid is **harder to obtain when studying part-time** as an adult, tuition fees are a blow to the budget!

The cost of education can indeed be prohibitive, and access to traditional financial aid is often limited.

(CCAFE, 2015; CSE, 2013b, 2022a; ICÉA, 2019; Mercier et al., 2021; OCDE, 2019, p. 30)

Time Doesn't Grow on Trees!

The past few weeks have been busy, with assignments, in-person classes and your family responsibilities. **You are feeling drained.** Unfortunately, on top of that, the deadlines are approaching, and you expect the last weeks of the course to be intense.



The challenge of balancing parenting and studying affects a large proportion of adults enrolled in higher education programs, particularly women, first-generation students and immigrants, the latter group representing one in two parent-students.

(Bonin, 2021, p. 3; Ministère de la Famille, 2019, p. 12)



A Resource that Makes a Difference



During an in-class exam, your institution offers **childcare services** for parents enrolled in the course. What a relief!

To promote student success in continuing education, institutions can develop, or upgrade services tailored to adult learners (e.g., childcare services). About one in three parent-students does not have access to childcare services.

(Ministère de la Famille, 2019, pp. 12–16)