

The new Option 2 is designed specifically to motivate students to consider the option of entrepreneurship while they focus on their primary concern during training, i.e. ensuring that their career choice is appropriate and that their professionalization will enable them to act with skill and commitment, thereby opening the door to career opportunities and options such as self-employment, intrapreneurship and, the ultimate option, that of starting a business.

DÉFI
de l'entrepreneuriat
jeunesse

Éducation,
Loisir et Sport
Québec

Entrepreneurial Values

Entrepreneurial Values

For Vocational
and
Technical Training





Entrepreneurial Values

**For Vocational
and
Technical Training**

Project leader

Giuliana Tessier
Direction de la formation
continue et du soutien
Ministère de l'Éducation, du
Loisir et du Sport

Text

Denis Pelletier
Guidance counsellor
Titular Professor,
Université Laval (1966-1996)
Founding president of Septembre
éditeur

Coordination

Francine Chatigny

Page layout

Service d'infographie
Denis Gendron

English version

Direction de la production
en langue anglaise
Secteur des services à la
communauté anglophone
Ministère de l'Éducation, du
Loisir et du Sport



PREFACE

This document was created at the request of the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport with financial support obtained under the Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge, which is coordinated by the Secrétariat à la jeunesse of the Ministère du Conseil Exécutif. It was written to accompany the reform of the Introduction to Entrepreneurship Measure, Option 2: "Introduction to Entrepreneurship: 15-hour Course for Students in Vocational and Technical Training."

"The 15-hour Introduction to Entrepreneurship course is designed to broaden the future prospects of students by demonstrating that starting a business is an option for some people and can be done within a relatively short period of time. This course should be considered a complement to a career planning process rather than an entrepreneurship training activity."¹ Accordingly, we hope that students enrolled in vocational and technical programs of study will consider the entrepreneurship option during their training, as they justify their career choice and ensure they are prepared to practise their future occupation with skill and commitment.

This document is many things: an introduction to the world of entrepreneurship as it relates to career choices, a prerequisite for the reflective practice all students must engage in during their training, a user-friendly guide for those unfamiliar with entrepreneurship, and an adaptable tool that can be easily integrated into professional development and entrepreneurship activities. We invite you to discover its full potential, become immersed in entrepreneurial culture and develop, along with your students, a taste for entrepreneurship.

1. Québec, Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, *Administration Guide 2006-2007: The Introduction to Entrepreneurship Measure*, October 2006, p. 13.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

3	Preface
5	Foreword
	Chapter 1
7	A New Orientation: Enrichment
	Chapter 2
11	Career Planning Module
	Challenge
	Objectives
	Basis of Activities
12	Outline
12	<i>Descriptions of the Trade</i>
12	<i>Variations of the Trade</i>
18	<i>Career Value</i>
25	<i>Facing the Future</i>
	Chapter 3
29	Professionalization Module
	Challenge
	Objectives
30	Basis of Activities
30	Outline
30	<i>The Personal Component</i>
32	<i>Changes in Work</i>
35	<i>Reflective Practice</i>
36	<i>Key Competencies</i>
41	Employability: Evaluating Your Personal Component
60	Professionalization and Entrepreneurship
	Chapter 4
61	Entering the Work Force Module
	Challenge
	Objectives
	Basis of Activities
62	Outline
62	<i>Innovative Businesses</i>
64	<i>Intrapreneurship</i>
69	<i>Entrepreneurship</i>
75	<i>Mentoring and Other Resources</i>
	Chapter 5
79	A New Orientation: Enrichment (cont.)
85	Conclusion

FOREWORD

Option 2 of the Introduction to Entrepreneurship Measure is essentially aimed at students in vocational and technical training.

Until now, it has been offered in the form of a fifteen-hour course outside the regular program of study. As highlighted in the Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge three-year action plan,^{*} the option's full potential has yet to be exploited.

The way the option is organized seems paradoxical. As early as 1999, a report noted that since the measure is optional, there must be a wide consensus for an institution to offer it. In a school board, the general administration must agree, the head of vocational training must agree and allocate resources, the head of each training centre must create a favourable environment and the teachers must be interested in the activity. If just one of these conditions is not met, the fate of the activity is in jeopardy.

The same report also noted that, because of its optional nature, even at the college level the measure resembles an extracurricular activity. If the fifteen-hour introduction to entrepreneurship course is not part of the school calendar, the students see it as requiring extra effort.

Since it is outside the regular program, the measure cannot exist on its own, like an accredited course, nor can it truly be seen as a service for students' personal benefit. Under these circumstances, it is challenging for school boards and colleges to create a stimulating framework for the measure that will encourage the participation of students in vocational and technical training.^{**}

And yet, it is the ideal time for students to consider the entrepreneurship option. These youth and adults are acquiring specialized expertise and gaining workplace experience from their practicums. This situation enables them, better than anyone, to appreciate the prospect of working for themselves or developing a new business over the medium term.

In short, the new version of Option 2 must be easily integrated into the school calendar, while appealing to students by acknowledging their current situation, namely, that of learning a trade.

^{*} *Défi de l'entrepreneuriat Jeunesse, Plan d'action triennal 2004-2005-2006*, page 16.

^{**} *Les quinze heures de sensibilisation à l'entrepreneuriat : Stop ou encore*, report by Denis Lebel, Direction générale de la formation professionnelle et technique, May 1999.

A New Orientation: Enrichment



While the preceding version* of Option 2 was used to introduce entrepreneurship from the perspective of its required operations, e.g. doing market research, writing a business plan, accessing sources of financing and applying basic management principles, the new Option 2 will offer less detail but be more in line with the circumstances of vocational and technical training.

Although the new Option 2 is more than a general introduction, it does not presume that students are naturally interested in and motivated by operations-related elements. Furthermore, it makes no assumptions about the teacher's ability to show spontaneous enthusiasm about entrepreneurship.

The new Option 2 is designed specifically to motivate students to consider the option of entrepreneurship while they focus on their primary concern during training, i.e. ensuring that their career choice is appropriate and that their professionalization will enable them to act with skill and commitment, thereby opening the door to career opportunities

* *Sensibilisation à l'entrepreneurship*, Ministère de l'Éducation, Direction générale de la formation professionnelle et technique and the Fondation de l'Entrepreneurship, 1995 (ISBN2-921681-66-8).

and options such as self-employment, intrapreneurship and, the ultimate option, that of starting a business.

By making the entrepreneurship option part of the training, career planning and finding employment process, we have laid the groundwork for a successful Option 2. This Option is composed of three modules, one for each major challenge facing students in vocational and technical training:

- A) Career Planning Module
- B) Professionalization Module
- C) Entering the Work Force Module

Each module relates to entrepreneurship. For example, the career planning module looks at an initial career choice and then illustrates job opportunities that can be practised in various locations, numerous regions, in a range of variations and under different titles such as supervisor, self-employed worker and entrepreneur.

Professionalization involves reflecting on one's practices, problems, and methods, which then leads to the idea of developing key competencies that encourage increased independence and responsibility. This gives students an idea of their professional development and progress along their career path. The entrepreneurial option is a culmination of this exercise.

As for entering the work force, this module makes observations and notes about the various organizational cultures. Some function according to J.W. Taylor's principles of work division, while other, more innovative, businesses look for employees who are capable

of handling the unexpected, solving problems and working in a team. Since selecting an occupation also means choosing a type of work organization, it is only natural that students consider the benefits of participating in intrapreneurship or creating their own organizational culture.

In short, the three modules in Option 2 address the challenges inherent in vocational and technical training and introduce a significant link with entrepreneurship. Taken in order (ABC), these modules make up a logical, complete sequence. Each module can also be used independently, since it addresses a specific issue and ends with an entrepreneurial vision.

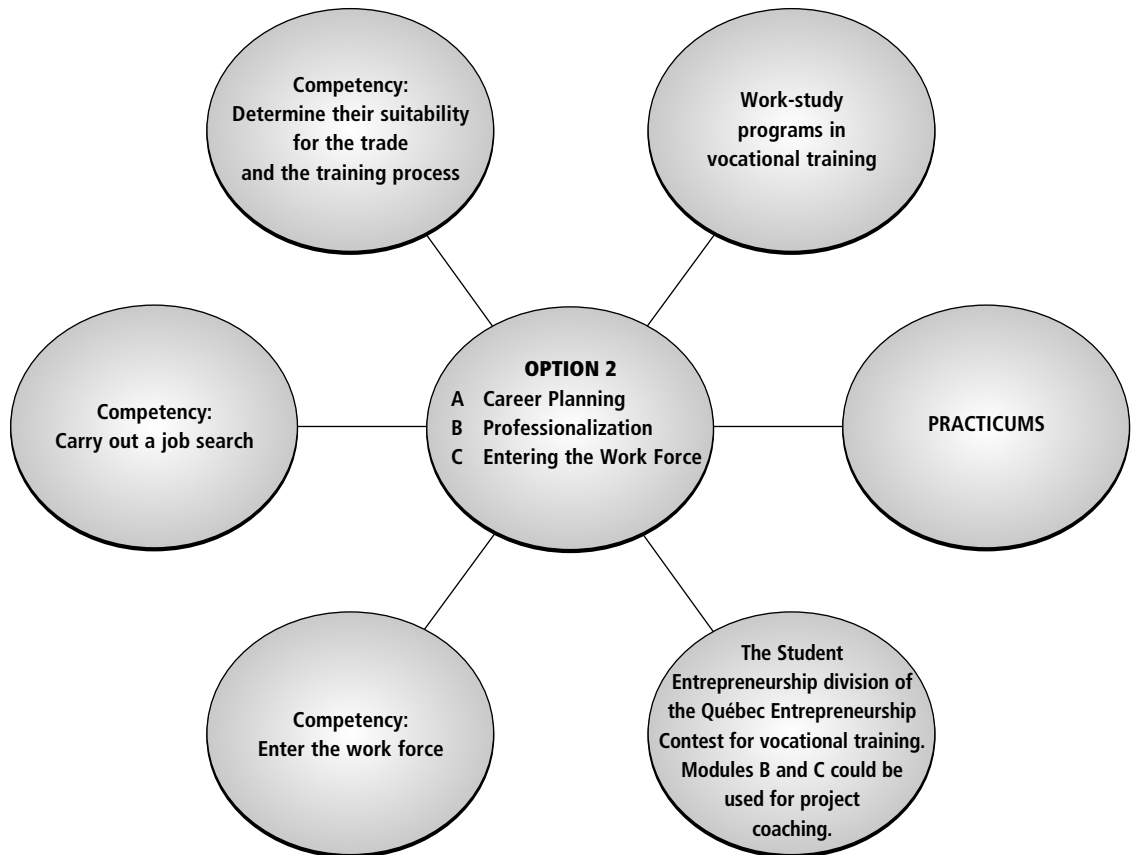
This document suggests simple, succinct, sufficient content for each module. It also recommends a basic, student-friendly way of organizing and conducting the activities. Other activities may be added, if the class shows an interest and the instructor is willing.

Readers will have understood that this document is addressed to the course instructors. If necessary, a student booklet may be created by compiling the activities contained herein.

However, the most important point to keep in mind is the following:

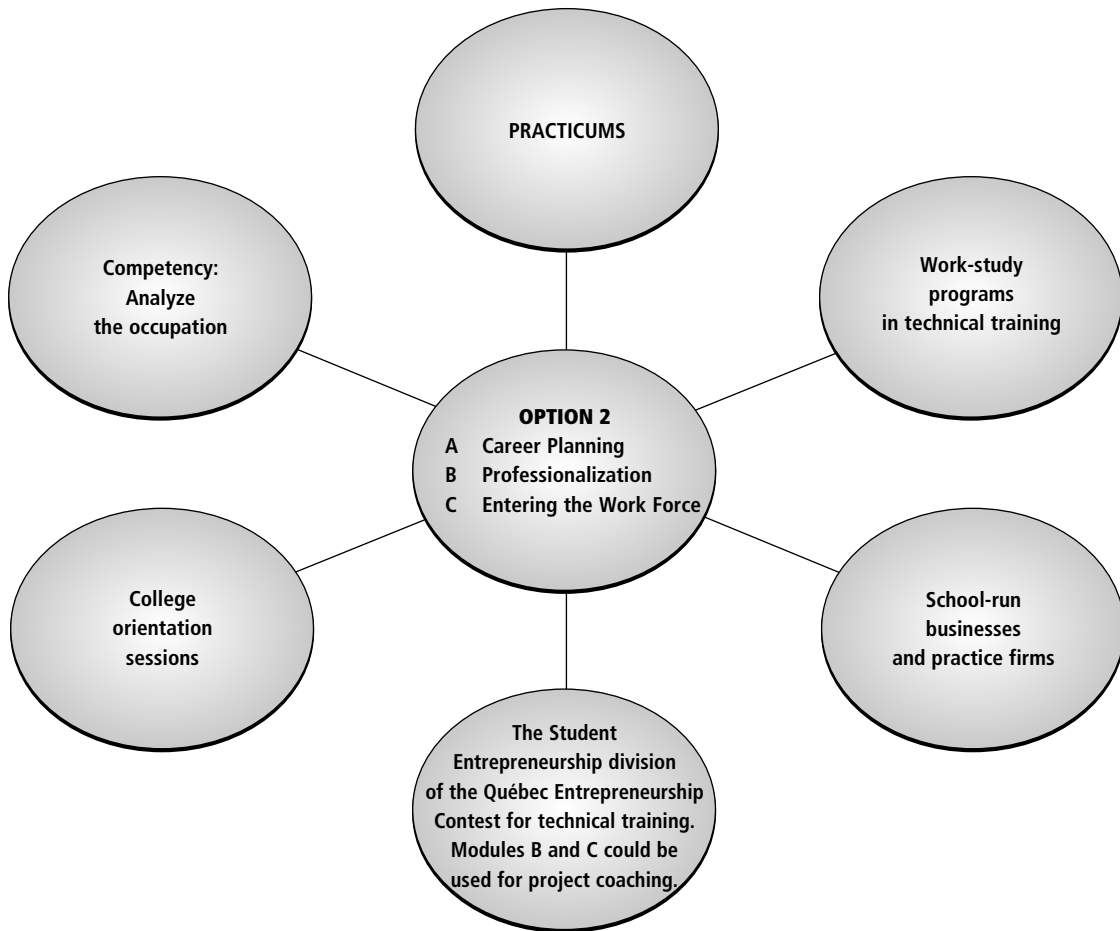
Since Option 2 is an optional measure, it must be seen as supplementary content to enrich existing practices, already established courses, and even future courses. In this way, the measure in no way compromises the educational process or the use of resources.

The following diagram illustrates the existing practices and courses in **vocational training** that could make use of the enrichment activities in Option 2.*



* See Chapter 5 for an explanation and justification of the links between Option 2 and the various elements in the attached diagram.

The following diagram illustrates the existing practices and courses in **technical training** that could make use of the enrichment activities in Option 2.*



* See Chapter 5 for an explanation and justification of the links between Option 2 and the various elements in the attached diagram.

Career Planning Module

Challenge

Sometimes, students have not selected their own training program or have selected it for the wrong reasons or the program does not match what they had in mind when registering.

This module provides:

- an opportunity to examine the trade and the types of potential workplaces
- an exercise to prove that the career choice is based on true interests, appropriate competencies and clear, internalized motives

Objectives

Meeting this challenge should result in the students:

- having more confidence in the validity of their career choice

- being more committed to successfully completing their training
- better understanding the career options offered by their chosen occupation, including self-employment and starting a business
- or, having rethought their choice and having requested assistance from resource people, particularly if the module is taken during the first trimester of training

Basis of Activities

The general idea of the module is to have the students investigate and observe their chosen occupation, so that they can adjust and add to their impression of it.

By finding out more about the trade, students broaden their horizons in two ways:

- the trade is practised in a greater variety of workplaces than they had thought and therefore offers more job opportunities

- the trade calls on a wide variety of skills and qualities so it does not require practitioners to adopt a single professional identity; many profiles, many types are possible

Finally, activities should encourage students to think about their chances of successfully completing their training and their probable level of satisfaction with building a career or business in the field.

Outline

- **Descriptions of the Trade**
- **Variations of the Trade**
- **Career Value**
- **Facing the Future**

Descriptions of the Trade

In this section, the teacher will have the students share their impressions of the trade. Firstly, the students will be asked to take stock of the trade by doing one of the following: writing a short text that defines and describes their impression of the trade, verbally recounting a specific experience or anecdote, or drawing a picture that depicts the basics of the trade. The students will then compile their respective impressions.

◆ **ACTIVITY** *Descriptions of the Trade*

In this activity, the students brainstorm what they know about the trade, subjectively and in their own words. This is important because these images helped them select the trade and decide to get training in it. It is up to the teacher involved in their vocational and technical training to assess these impressions. If the teacher thinks it is relevant, he or she can involve the students in more formal research on the chosen occupation. As a group, the class could put together a detailed description of the occupation by

consulting the definitions provided on the following Web sites:

VTT (<<http://inforoutefpt.org/>>)

You're Heading for Success

(<<http://www.toutpoureuussir.com/en/>>)

the Repères site

(<<http://reperes.grics.qc.ca/>>)

the Labour Market Information Online site

(<http://imt.emploiquebec.net/mtg/inter/non-cache/contenu/asp/mtg941_accueil_angl_01.asp>) (<www.monemploi.com>)

In addition to the definitions found, this research could include a list of the required competencies, personal profiles of the workers needed, an overview of the working conditions and employment prospects, as well as a list of potential employers for training purposes.

This exercise is a useful group effort that can help encourage a sense of belonging and a shared culture among those in the chosen field.

Variations of the Trade

◆ **ACTIVITY** *Survey on the Variations of the Trade*

A single group of students registered for the same course could conduct a survey to discover the variations of the trade. If this is the case, it is important to form several research teams and then distribute the subjects of the survey among them so they can research the various occupations related to the students' training. After all, the training program, with all its required courses and competencies, does prepare students to exercise several related occupations that are just as important to know and consider. Furthermore, these various related occupations, whether the program is vocational or technical, are practised in a wide variety of workplaces. These workplaces have characteristic environments, each with its own requirements

that must be understood. Therefore, the teams will be assigned to ensure the best possible coverage of the related occupations and workplaces.

In the end, the information may be compiled and shared using a variety of methods: poster exhibit, video report, or a group

dossier composed of photos and text that could be used by the next class.

Compiling the information could be seen as an event and a promotional project to highlight the trade to students in other programs and even a wider public.

Here are some examples of trade variations taken from the publication *Guide Choisir Secondaire – Collégial*, published by Septembre éditeur.

S
E
C
O
N
D
A
I
R
E

5030 ÉBÉNISTERIE

5530 Cabinet Making

DEP 1 650 HEURES CUISEP 455-414

Compétences à acquérir

- Concevoir et fabriquer des gabarits et des meubles en bois, des meubles comportant des pièces sculptées, des meubles en panneaux dérivés du bois, des boiseries ornementales et des escaliers.
- Installer les articles fabriqués.
- Réaliser des frisages et des marqueteries, sculpter des motifs, réparer et restaurer des meubles.
- Effectuer le travail de finition.
- Gérer son entreprise.

Éléments du programme

- Meubles en bois massif I et II
- Machines-outils fixes et portatives
- Lancement et gestion d'une PME
- Planification de la fabrication
- Meubles en panneaux dérivés du bois
- Boiseries ornementales
- Dessin d'ameublement
- Escaliers
- Stage en milieu de travail

Préalable : 1 (voir p. 20)

N° région (N° étab. dans région) (voir p. 481)
01 (3b, 4b), **02** (2d), **03** (5c), **04** (2b), **05** (2a),
06 (8f, 9c, 11f), **07** (2b), **12** (2d), **14** (1a),
16 (9a), **17** (5).

Professions reliées

C.N.P.

7272 Ébéniste
7272 Ébéniste industriel
7271 Menuisier d'atelier de construction
7271 Menuisier d'atelier de bois ouvré
9494 Restaurateur de meubles
7272 Modeleur sur bois
2252 Dessinateur-modéliste de meubles
7272 Modeleur

Endroits de travail

- Ateliers d'ébénisterie
- Entreprises de fabrication de moulures
- Ateliers de menuiserie
- Fabricants de meubles
- Ateliers de restauration de meubles
- À son compte

Salaire

Le salaire hebdomadaire moyen est de 499 \$ (mars 2005).

Remarque

La profession d'ébéniste est admissible au programme de certification interprovincial *Sceau rouge* suite à un examen auprès d'Emploi-Québec.

	STATISTIQUES D'EMPLOI		
	2003	2004	2005
Nb de personnes diplômées	369	401	452
% en emploi	76,9 %	73,8 %	70,1 %
% à temps plein	92,2 %	93,2 %	94,6 %
% lié à la formation	65,7 %	76,6 %	68,2 %

90

BOIS ET MATÉRIAUX CONNEXES

5298 MÉCANIQUE AUTOMOBILE

5798 Automobile Mechanics

DEP 1 800 HEURES

CUISEP 455-441

Compétences à acquérir

- Effectuer l'entretien général d'une automobile.
- Réparer les moteurs à combustion interne, les systèmes de refroidissement, de chauffage, de climatisation, de charge et de démarrage.
- Réparer des accessoires électromécaniques, les organes de transmission, les freins conventionnels et antiblocage, les accessoires de sécurité, les systèmes d'antipollution et d'injection électronique, la suspension et la direction.

Éléments du programme

- Circuits électriques et électroniques de base
- Système de base commandé par ordinateur
- Réparation – suspension, direction et freins
- Réparation – boîte de vitesses
- Réparation du système d'allumage
- Réparation des organes de transmission
- Diagnostic de l'état des systèmes intégrés du groupe motopropulseur
- Moteurs à combustion interne
- Intégration au milieu de travail

Préalable : 1 (voir p. 20)**N° région** (N° étab. dans région) (voir p. 481)

01 (2c, 3b), **02** (2a, 4b), **03** (1, 4a, 5a, 6a, 6b),
04 (2b), **05** (2a, 3b), **06** (7d, 8b, 9a, 10c, 11h,
 15), **07** (2a, 4b, 5a, 6c), **08** (1a), **09** (1a),
11 (5a), **12** (1b, 2a, 3c, 4d), **13** (2a), **14** (2b),
15 (2a, 3c), **16** (5a, 7a, 8b, 11b, 14b), **17** (3a,
 4c).

Professions reliées

C.N.P.

- 7321 Mécanicien d'automobiles
- 7321 Mécanicien de freins de véhicules automobiles
- 7321 Mécanicien de transmissions
- 7321 Réparateur-installateur de systèmes d'échappement
- 7321 Spécialiste en mise au point de véhicules automobiles
- 7321 Conseiller technique (automobile)

Endroits de travail

- Garages
- Concessionnaires d'automobiles
- Compagnies de transport
- Fabricants d'automobiles
- Ateliers spécialisés
- À son compte

Salaire

Le salaire hebdomadaire moyen est de 491 \$ (mars 2005).

Remarque

Détenir un permis de conduire approprié.

STATISTIQUES D'EMPLOI

	2003	2004	2005
Nb de personnes diplômées	624	663	818
% en emploi	84,2 %	83,4 %	83,3 %
% à temps plein	96,6 %	96,0 %	96,8 %
% lié à la formation	86,2 %	87,4 %	83,2 %

150

ENTRETIEN D'ÉQUIPEMENT MOTORISÉ



180.A0 SOINS INFIRMIERS

DEC 2 805 HEURES

CUISEP 353-330

Compétence à acquérir

- Exercer la profession d'infirmière ou d'infirmier comme elle est définie dans la Loi sur les infirmières et les infirmiers :

Article 36 : Constitue l'exercice de la profession d'infirmière ou d'infirmier tout acte qui a pour objet d'identifier les besoins de santé des personnes, de contribuer aux méthodes de diagnostic, de prodiguer et contrôler les soins infirmiers que requièrent la promotion de la santé, la prévention de la maladie, le traitement et la réadaptation ainsi que le fait de prodiguer des soins selon une ordonnance médicale.

Article 37 : L'infirmière et l'infirmier peuvent, dans l'exercice de leur profession, renseigner la population sur les problèmes d'ordre sanitaire.

Éléments du programme

- Corps humain et son fonctionnement
- Réactions et comportements d'une personne
- Conception de la discipline infirmière
- Méthodes d'évaluation et méthodes de soin
- Communication aidante avec la personne et ses proches
- Réalités sociales et cultures liées à la santé
- Situation clinique
- Désordres immunologiques et infections aux mécanismes physiologiques et métaboliques
- Pharmacothérapie et situation clinique
- Éthique et valeurs de la profession
- Interventions en chirurgie, en périnatalité, en chirurgie, en santé mentale
- Intervention auprès d'adultes et de personnes âgées en perte d'autonomie
- Mesures d'urgence

Admission : 20 ou 20, 30 (voir p. 249)

Contingenté dans certains cégeps.

N° région (N° étab. dans région) (voir p. 481)

01 (5, 6, 7, 8), **02** (5, 6, 7, 8), **03** (11, 13, 14, 18), **04** (4, 6), **05** (8), **06** (18, 19, 20, 26, 27, 37, 42, 45), **07** (7, 10), **08** (6, 8), **09** (6, 7),

10 (4), **11** (6), **12** (5, 6, 7, 8), **13** (4), **14** (3), **15** (7, 8), **16** (19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25), **17** (6, 7).

Professions reliées

C.N.P.

- 3152 Infirmier
- 3152 Infirmier psychiatrique
- 3152 Infirmier en santé du travail
- 3152 Infirmier scolaire
- 3152 Infirmier privé
- 3152 Infirmier de clinique
- 3233 Infirmier en chirurgie
- 3152 Infirmier de service téléphonique

Endroits de travail

- Hôpitaux
- Centres d'accueil et d'hébergement
- Centres locaux de services communautaires (CLSC)
- Écoles
- Cliniques médicales
- Agences privées de soins à domicile
- Usines
- Organismes internationaux (ONU, UNESCO, Croix-Rouge, etc.)
- Forces armées canadiennes
- Pharmacies
- Compagnies d'assurances
- Info Santé

Salaire

Le salaire hebdomadaire moyen est de 658 \$ (mars 2005).

Remarques

- Être membre de l'Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec pour exercer la profession.
- Consulter la liste des établissements offrant un DEC/BAC (p. 477).

STATISTIQUES D'EMPLOI

	2003	2004	2005
Nb de personnes diplômées	1 662	2 325	2 198
% en emploi	78,1 %	79,5 %	64,6 %
% à temps plein	80,9 %	81,7 %	83,4 %
% lié à la formation	97,7 %	97,7 %	97,6 %

TECHNIQUES BIOLOGIQUES



410.A0 TECHNIQUES DE LA LOGISTIQUE DU TRANSPORT

DEC 2 445 HEURES

CUISEP 125-000

Compétences à acquérir

- Déterminer, négocier, préparer et organiser les déplacements (nationaux et internationaux) de marchandises et de personnes et rechercher le meilleur rapport qualité-prix.
- Effectuer des tâches de supervision, de gestion d'inventaire, d'entreposage et de vente de services de transport.
- Réaliser les diverses étapes du processus de logistique.

Éléments du programme

- Choix des moyens de transport
- Droit du transport
- Services logistiques
- Paiements internationaux
- Réception et expédition des marchandises
- Économie mondiale
- Transport de personnes
- Transport national et international des marchandises
- Stratégie de gestion des stocks et des approvisionnements
- Supervision du personnel
- Marketing

Admission : 11 (voir p. 249)

N° région (N° étab. dans région) (voir p. 481)

01 (11), **03** (18), **04** (4), **06** (18, 32), **12** (6), **15** (9), **17** (6).

Professions reliées

C.N.P.

- 1215 Technicien en logistique du transport
- 6411 Agent commercial
- 1476 Coordonnateur du transport de voyageurs par autobus

- 1452 Coordonnateur en transport de marchandises
- 1236 Conseiller en transport de marchandises
- 1471 Commis à la réception et à l'expédition
- 7222 Inspecteur de la circulation par autobus
- 1236 Courtier en douane

Endroits de travail

- Entreprises manufacturières
- Maisons de courtage en douane
- Compagnies de transport urbain et interurbain
- Entrepôts
- Sociétés de transit
- Centres de distribution
- Compagnies de transport ferroviaire, maritime, aérien et routier
- Entreprises d'exportation-importation
- Compagnies de courtage en transport
- Douanes

Salaire

Le salaire hebdomadaire moyen est de 558 \$ (mars 2005).

Remarques

- Le bilinguisme, la mobilité géographique ainsi que la connaissance de l'informatique sont nécessaires pour exercer la profession.
- La maîtrise d'une troisième langue peut être un atout.

STATISTIQUES D'EMPLOI

	2003	2004	2005
Nb de personnes diplômées	80	56	59
% en emploi	88,5 %	79,5 %	80,0 %
% à temps plein	100 %	100 %	96,9 %
% lié à la formation	87,0 %	87,1 %	80,6 %

382

TECHNIQUES DE L'ADMINISTRATION

Note: These examples clearly indicate the variety of fields that the program provides access to. This opens up a number of job prospects and involves many different personal profiles.

In short, the Survey on the Variations of the Trade activity is used to find out “everything that one can do with a diploma,” so the students realize how many choices are available. This also enables the students to consider various career paths. If this activity is unworkable, because too many adult students do not have time to do this type of research, then the class may have to analyze documentation prepared by the teacher or consult reference works made available to them.

At this point in the module, it is worthwhile to ask the students to revisit their initial impression of the trade when they chose the program. As a class, they could put together a summary of what they have learned. Has learning about the variations of the trade made them reconsider their training, the skills and competencies they would like to acquire, the practicums they could take and the workplaces they would like to work in?

◆ **ALTERNATE ACTIVITY**
Having a career

The teacher could use the box below, “Having a career,” to stimulate a group discussion and have the students take notes.

Having a career with vocational and technical training

Planning one’s career means first and foremost taking control over your work life. Therefore, selecting a trade and a field to work in also involves gaining some control.

This control means holding on to the option of effecting change and protecting yourself as much as possible from outside forces that could disrupt your work life. In this respect, having choices, transferring your skills and acquiring new ones are all ways to maintain control; this is actually how one plans and advances in a career.

In addition to the likelihood of being able to find and keep a job, secondary-level vocational training offers young people the following career prospects:

- All vocational training choices that include links to other levels of education (e.g. nursing assistant) provide opportunities for career advancement
- All occupational choices that are associated with a professional association or corporation offer the benefits of continuing education and skills upgrading
- All trades that are in demand in practically every region of Québec (e.g. security system installer, dental assistant, automobile mechanic) offer job mobility and opportunities for travel and advancement
- All trades that can be practised in more than one work environment facilitate lateral mobility: over the course of their careers, sales representatives and retail workers can sell a wide variety of products and services; chefs can exercise their art in restaurants, inns, hotels, community centres, institutions, for an outfitter, on a cruise ship or even prepare vacuum-packed meals

In short, a trade offers a value-added element of career control when it:

- offers an opportunity to start a business
- leads to teaching, supervision or being a trainer in the workplace
- leads to technical sales: for example, construction workers can become materials suppliers, stock keepers, or hardware sales consultants
- can be applied to a foreign clientele or international cooperation program (e.g. farm machinery mechanic, residential and commercial drafting, etc.)
- prepares workers with experience for other jobs (management and shift supervisor)
- can develop into tasks involving inspection, quality control and safety standards
- can be transferred into consulting or assessment services
- promotes a healthy work-family balance and can even be done from home: jeweller, photographer, florist, hairdresser, cabinetmaker, graphic designer, etc.

Career Value

It is now clear that a trade with variations offers greater professional mobility than one would have normally assumed. We have also seen that most or at least a great number of programs encourage self-employment.

◆ ACTIVITY *Self-employment*

The following lists and tables of statistics (one for vocational, the other for technical) illustrate the specialties most often involved in self-employment and entrepreneurship, according to March 2005 follow-up studies of graduates.*

List of secondary programs that can lead to self-employment

Program Name	Program Number
Manual Felling and Skidding	5290
Aquaculture	5094
Home Care and Family Social Assistance	5545**
Jewellery Making	5085
Masonry-Bricklaying	5803**
Automotive Body Repair and Repainting	5717**
Hairdressing	5745**
Accounting	5731**
Heavy Logging Equipment Operation	5273
Clothing Manufacturing (Tailoring)	5219
Custom Clothing Manufacturing and Alterations	5239
Shoemaking and Repair	5145

* To access the most recent such survey, visit <www.inforoutefpt.org/home.htm> and click on the tab entitled “VTT in the Ministère de l’Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport, Statistics and Surveys.”

** These courses are available in English.

Program Name	Program Number
Interior Decorating and Display	5505**
Cabinetmaking	5530
Construction Electricity	1930**
RV Maintenance and Repair	5714**
Electrolysis	5568**
Furniture Finishing	5642**
Floral Services	5173
Ornamental Horticulture	1588**
Installation and Repair of Telecommunications Equipment	5766**
Starting a Business	5764**
Automobile Mechanics	5798**
Industrial Sewing Machine Mechanics	5209
Light-Duty Vehicle Mechanics	5154
Dry Cleaning and Clothing Maintenance	5082
Professional Fishing	5257
Commercial and Residential Painting	5616**
Photography	5292
Plastering	5786**
Roof Covering Installation	5032
Flexible Pavement Installation	5115
Interior Systems Installations	5118
Preparing and Finishing Concrete	5617**
Desktop Publishing	5721**
Landscaping Operations	5571**
Decorative Upholstering	5080
Home Electrical Appliance Repair	5024
Electronic Audio / Video Equipment Repair	5771**
Firearms Repair	1489
VCR and Camcorder Repair	5583**
Masonry Restoration	5215
Secretarial Studies	5712**
Computing Support	5729**
Horticultural Specialties	5043
Silviculture	5289
Sale of Fishery Products	5104
Jewellery Sales and Service	1017

** These courses are available in English.

List of college programs that can lead to self-employment

Program Name	Number
Acupuncture	112.A0
Hearing Aid Technology	160.B0
Fashion Design	571.A0
Interior Design	570.03
Animation	574.A0
Aircraft Maintenance	280.03
Business Management	410.D0
Graphic Design	570.A0
Ornamental Horticulture: Landscaping and Marketing	153.CA
Office System Technology, Micropublishing and Hypermedia	412.AB
Media Communication Techniques, Journalism	589.BC
Denturology	110.B0
Computer Science Technology, Administrative Data Processing	420.AA
Applied Arts and Crafts, Ceramics	573.AA
Applied Arts and Crafts, Textile Construction	573.AB
Applied Arts and Crafts, Cabinetmaking and Millwork	573.AC
Applied Arts and Crafts, Textile Printing	573.AD
Applied Arts and Crafts, Jewellery	573.AE
Applied Arts and Crafts, Violin Making	573.AF
Applied Arts and Crafts, Leatherwork	573.AG
Applied Arts and Crafts, Sculpture	573.AH
Applied Arts and Crafts, Glass Arts	573.AJ
Dental Technology	110.A0
Multimedia Integration	582.A1
Optical Dispensing	160.A0
Adventure Tourism	414.B0
Professional Music and Song Techniques, Composition and Arrangement	551.AA
Professional Music and Song Techniques, Performance	551.AB

Percentage of secondary vocational training graduates who are employed and those who are self-employed, by program, for all of Québec, as at March 31, 2005.

Prog. No.	Program name	Graduates who answered the survey	Graduates who are employed	Graduates who are self-employed	Self-employed with at least one employee
		No.	% of total	% of total	% of self-employed
5264	Starting a Business	2,064	73.0	51.1	25.0
5780	Networked Office Equipment*	15	20.0	50.0	0.0
5568	Electrolysis*	20	58.3	42.9	33.3
5163	Construction Management	76	89.3	38.0	47.4
5659	Contemporary Cuisine*	13	75.0	33.3	0.0
5168	Beef Production	27	59.1	30.8	0.0
5080	Decorative Upholstery	37	71.4	30.0	0.0
5764	Starting a Business*	342	32.4	28.4	21.1
5210	Horticultural Production	76	47.2	28.0	28.6
5079	Arboriculture-Pruning	53	73.7	25.0	42.9
5717	Automotive Body Repair and Repainting*	15	66.7	25.0	0.0
5793	Food and Beverage Services*	6	80.0	25.0	100.0
5024	Home Electrical Appliance Repair	24	77.8	21.4	0.0
5245	Hairdressing	911	81.8	20.8	5.5
5721	Desktop Publishing*	63	68.2	20.0	16.7
5071	Landscaping Operations	112	59.5	18.0	22.2

* Program was given in English

Percentage of graduates with a diploma of college studies (DCS) who are employed and those who are self-employed, by program, for all of Québec, as at March 31, 2005.

Prog. No.	Program name	Graduates who answered the survey	Graduates who are employed	Graduates who are self-employed	Self-employed with at least one employee
		Number	% of total	% of total	% of self-employed
573.AB	Applied Arts and Crafts, Textile Construction	6	25.0	100.0	0.0
112.A0	Acupuncture	22	88.2	80.0	8.3
413.01	Administration and Cooperation	16	15.4	50.0	0.0
551.A0	Professional Music and Song Techniques	67	27.1	46.2	16.7
561.AB	Professional Theatre–Production: Stage Techniques and Management	14	75.0	44.4	25.0
561.AA	Professional Theatre–Production: Sets and Costumes	20	87.5	42.9	16.7
153.BB	Horticultural and Environmental Technology: Ornamental Crops	13	54.5	33.3	50.0
561.C0	Professional Theatre: Acting	52	73.5	32.0	12.5
110.B0	Denturology	17	92.9	30.8	0.0
153.CC	Ornamental Horticulture: Marketing of Horticultural Products and Services	6	66.7	25.0	0.0
420.AB	Computer Science Technology: Industrial Data Processing	19	47.1	25.0	0.0
573.AC	Applied Arts and Crafts: Cabinetmaking and Millwork	32	69.6	25.0	0.0
152.AA	Farm Management and Technology: Livestock Production	130	79.3	20.5	26.7
280.AA	Aircraft Piloting: Planes	19	71.4	20.0	0.0
551.AB	Professional Music and Song Techniques: Performance	10	50.0	20.0	0.0
561.BB	Dance–Performance: Modern Dance	13	45.5	20.0	0.0

Essentially, the *Self-employment* activity consists of having the students consider the option of being an employer rather than a salaried employee; the basic idea is to imagine the possibilities and enjoy role-playing.

Some types of arts and crafts training programs lend themselves very well to the idea

of self-employment, while for other types of occupations, the connection is less obvious. Basically, it's about encouraging students in vocational and technical training to think about being entrepreneurs or, at the very least, self-employed or freelance workers, which offers greater freedom.

◆ **ACTIVITY**
Imagining myself as an entrepreneur ...

To imagine yourself as an entrepreneur, you have to play the role, which is an easily imagined way of being and doing when illustrated using the gardening metaphor.* While each type of gardener suggests specific trades and occupations, the descriptions basically illustrate how each one takes action and responds to the work at hand. This simple, yet evocative, metaphor was formulated by Pauline Brassard, a human resources consultant.

The following descriptions characterize each RIASEC** personality type and the type of work they find satisfying.

TYPES OF GARDENERS

Realistic

Realistic gardeners like to remove clods, work the soil, transport the soil, lay paths, plant, seed and hoe. They like practical tasks and working with their hands.

Investigative

Investigative gardeners carefully select their plants to suit the soil conditions. They make sure that the soil is enriched and free of insects, and they carefully determine the amount of sun and shade needed. They select certain plants to avoid having to use insecticides and are careful to choose plants most suited to the climate. They enjoy the challenge of trying to grow a plant that is difficult or demanding in terms of care or climate.

Artistic

Artistic gardeners select a space to embellish the yard. They carefully arrange the plants to create a beautiful space, paying special attention to the colours. They even like to dress up vegetable gardens by adding climbing flowers on a lattice and are constantly on the lookout for anything that can render the space more beautiful.

* Original idea from Pauline Brassard, human resources professional.

** RIASEC: this abbreviation stands for the six personality types defined by John Holland in his work, *Making Vocational Choices: A Theory of Vocational Personalities and Work Environments*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J., Prentice Hall.

Social

Social gardeners opt to make community gardens. This enables them to talk with others and exchange gardening tips as well as give and receive help. They enjoy being with other people so they can chat while working the soil.

Enterprising

Enterprising gardeners are interested in getting to know the suppliers and are careful to buy all their supplies at the right place, for the best price. They tell their friends, families and coworkers all about their gardening activities and even consider selling the fruits of their labour.

Conventional

Conventional gardeners label each type of plant with a wooden stake. They make straight, evenly spaced rows and keep up with the weeding. Everything is meticulously organized: the gardening tools are well maintained and properly stored. They harvest the vegetables at just the right time, when they are neither too big nor too small. They also have fertilizer and insecticide on hand, just in case.

All trades and training programs can be given a touch of entrepreneurship and it is this potential that students are invited to explore. Moreover, it really doesn't matter which attitude (artistic, experimental) they try first.

◆ ACTIVITY ***Imagining myself as an entrepreneur with the training I have***

Images spontaneously spring to mind: the type of business I could run, the type of employer I'd be, or the type of people I'd like to work with. I imagine how I could use my training to create my own job or my own company; the things I like about being an entrepreneur; the things encouraging me to start a business; the things preventing me from doing so; what I have to learn and experience in order to start a business: these are all issues that will help to plan and determine an entrepreneurial style. "How I imagine myself as an entrepreneur" becomes the title of a text to write for oneself and perhaps share with others, a text that could even be part of a group dossier if all participants agree.

This projection could be used later to reflect on one's entrepreneurial plans or take advantage of opportunities or meetings that may arise. In short, laying the groundwork enables such a process to occur. By selecting a trade and a program of study, students begin a training plan and embark on a motivating, inspiring career path.

Variations

How does one imagine oneself as an entrepreneur when the chosen training program does not seem to lend itself to entrepreneurship? In such cases, students must invent a way, imagine a life path or specific circumstances that could lead to such an outcome. This activity consists in making up a story to support the idea of starting a business, perhaps in partnership with someone else, following an "original" business idea with potential "commercial" value. The students have to come up with their own context that will enable them to play with the hypothesis.

One variation: if the training program in question does not seem to lend itself, nothing prevents the student from highlighting a social, political, cultural, community or

humanitarian cause. Students can ask themselves: “For what reason, for what value, for what cause am I ready to commit myself to a mobilizing process?” The imagined commitment must require initiative and leadership. Here again, students could make up a story.

Another variation: identify with an individual known for his or her entrepreneurship and power as a mobilizing force. Then introduce this character to the other students by describing his or her accomplishments and the efforts he or she made in order to succeed.

Facing the Future

This is the inherent problem: is the students’ future trade a source of concern? Are the students hampered by doubts as to their ability to successfully complete the training program and justify their career choice? The best way to increase their self-confidence is to have the students evaluate their likelihood of success in the training program and chosen career.

◆ ACTIVITY *My training program and career choice*

Have the students answer a survey* that examines their opinions and feelings about the training program.

Please answer each question on a scale of 0 to 10 as it relates to your current training program and career choice

Autonomy

To what extent do you feel that you are taking this training program of your own free will, with no pressure from someone else?

| 10 _____ 0 |
I'm doing it for myself _____ I'm doing it for someone else

Time invested

Do you feel you are spending the right amount of time on this training program?

| 10 _____ 0 |
I'm spending the right amount of time _____ I'm spending too little or too much time

Importance

How important is this training program to you?

| 10 _____ 0 |
Very important _____ Not at all important

* This survey was adapted from a questionnaire designed and written by Léandre Bouffard and published in the *Revue québécoise de Psychologie*, Vol. 21, No. 2, 2000, pages 182-184.

Responsibility

To what extent do you feel responsible for making progress in the training program?

| 10 _____ 0 |
Entirely responsible _____ Not at all responsible

Suitability

To what extent do your training program and career choice reflect your personal values?

| 10 _____ 0 |
They are completely in line with my values _____ They conflict with my values

Commitment

How involved are you in this program?

| 10 _____ 0 |
I'm fully involved and active _____ I tend to be disinterested

Challenge

How challenging do you find this program?

| 10 _____ 0 |
It's a stimulating challenge _____ It's somewhat boring

Identity

To what extent does the program reflect who you are as well as your personality, style and abilities?

| 10 _____ 0 |
It's very typical of me _____ It feels almost alien to me

Capability

To what extent do you feel capable of successfully completing this program?

| 10 _____ 0 |
Totally capable _____ Incapable

Current standing

How well have you performed in the program, thus far?

| 10 _____ 0 |
Very well _____ Not very well at all

Perceptions of others

What do close friends and family seem to think about the program?

| 10 _____ 0 |
They think it's very important _____ They don't think it's important

Support

How much support do you feel you receive for this program: emotional (encouragement), financial (money), practical (active assistance)?

10		0
Other people are very supportive of the program		I receive no support

Difficulty

To what extent do you feel able to handle the problems that could compromise your success in the program?

10		0
I'm totally capable		I feel very incapable

Control

How much control do you feel you have over this program?

10		0
I'm fully in control		I have no control

Performance

How do you think you will do in the course?

10		0
I'll pass with flying colours		I'll fail the course

Self-employment

Do you look forward to working for yourself some day?

10		0
I like the idea a lot		I'm indifferent to the idea

Confidence

Does your training make you feel confident about working in your chosen occupation or business?

10		0
The training is good preparation for my work		There's no obvious connection between the training and my future job

The teacher will have understood that this survey in fact indicates the students' degree of confidence in their chosen training and career. The questionnaire can be very effective if the teacher is available to assist individuals, as needed, and if resource people are also made available.

Since this course examines entrepreneurship, the last two statements were added to the original survey. This activity concludes the Career Planning module.

Professionalization Module

Challenge

When students are committed to the training process and get involved, they find that the theoretical and practical aspects come together during the practicums or work-study programs. Then they realize that they themselves are driving the learning process.

In reality, qualifications are not enough. Although a diploma may seem to be a prerequisite for employment, the personal component—who the candidate is as a person—is in fact the deciding factor. This corresponds to profound changes in the work world that have created an additional requirement: not only must they know *what* to do, workers must also know *how* to do it.

Objectives

In short, the goal of the Professionalization module is to explain the rules of the game in the new economy and illustrate the importance of learning to reflect on one's work experiences and professional practices.

Finally, it is important to emphasize that learning how to reflect on one's experience is what provides professional knowledge and what are commonly called key competencies. These competencies strongly resemble entrepreneurial qualities, or at least the intrapreneurial skills required by organizations.

As part of changes in the organization of work, “workers are being reintegrated into work.” Working means taking responsibility, being independent, taking initiative, understanding

*oneself, getting involved, etc. It is now hard to imagine how technical skills or knowledge, as advanced as they may be, can be mobilized if there is work but “no worker,” in other words, if this personal component is missing.**

Grégoire Evéquo, p. 69

Basis of Activities

The general idea is to introduce students to the third component of employability, i.e. how to meet the personality requirements expressed by employers. To understand this personal component, students must take advantage of practicums and work-study programs, as such workplace situations offer opportunities to act independently, solve unexpected problems and work with others to achieve common goals.

Reflecting on their behaviour in these work environments will reveal appropriate, effective ways of responding to specific situations. This will highlight key competencies, which can then be used in similar situations, thereby launching professionalization.

The goal is for students to learn reflective practice so they can identify personal experiences for inclusion in their résumé and examples of behaviour to highlight during a job interview. Professionalization thus enriches students' employability by introducing the possibility that reflective practice will lead some students to aim for starting their own business.

* Evéquo, Grégoire. *Les compétences clés, Pour accroître l'efficacité et l'employabilité de chacun*, Éditions Liaisons, Paris, 2004.

Outline

- **The Personal Component**
- **Changes in Work**
- **Reflective Practice**
- **Key Competencies**

The Personal Component

◆ **ACTIVITY** *The Personal Component*

In this activity, students will analyze job postings related to their vocational or technical training program. These postings can be found in newspapers, on Web sites or the bulletin boards of associations and sector-based committees, or in the ads sent directly to their training centre. Students must realize that, in addition to a diploma and work experience, job postings sometimes mention personality requirements. These can include personal characteristics, preferences, behaviours, aptitudes and sometimes even ethical and moral traits.

Have the students go through these job offers and then draw up a list of the employability qualities that emerge. A diploma and technical skills are not enough. The third factor of employability is the personal component.

What will the students involved learn from all this? Is this an example of an arbitrary situation? Are recruiting businesses abusing their power? Are these qualities really important to the hiring process? What is their true significance? Is there a way to measure these qualities in concrete terms? Is there a way to verify whether an individual meets these personal requirements or is capable of developing them? In short, employability raises certain issues and with them an interest in finding answers.

◆ ALTERNATE ACTIVITY

The table below summarizes the findings of a joint survey on the personal component conducted by the Association de la recherche industrielle du Québec (ADRIQ) and Septembre éditeur.* The data below could be used to introduce students to the personal component, instead of the activity suggested above.

There were 106 businesses from various sectors who participated in the survey.

Breakdown by sector		Breakdown by sector	
43%	Manufacturing	17%	ICT
11%	Biotechnology	19%	Cross-sector
8%	Natural resources		

When asked, “As an innovative company, what qualities do you seek in your employees?” the responding recruiters mentioned the following:

Mentioned spontaneously

- creativity
- ability to work in a team
- communication and people skills
- dynamism, energy
- adaptability (openness to change)
- initiative
- competency
- ethics
- independence
- sense of responsibility

Selected from among the survey choices

- ability to work in a team 79%
- problem-solving ability, including resourcefulness 76%
- independence 71%
- initiative 67%
- adaptability 61%
- communication skills 60%
- sense of responsibility 58%
- desire to learn 53%
- people skills 49%
- flexibility and versatility 42%

The responses to “How important are these key competencies when you are selecting candidates?”

85%	very important	15%	relatively important
0%	somewhat important	0%	not at all important

* ADRIQ. “Compétences clés pour travailler dans les entreprises innovantes,” in *Guide de l'emploi GE*, Septembre éditeur, Québec, 2006/2007, pages 37-39.

In a survey of this type, it is rare to receive such definitive answers and decisive percentages, but it is a testimony to the importance of key competencies. Now the question is, why? What has been happening in the work world lately to create such unanimity?

Students enrolled in vocational and technical training programs have to understand and accept the notion that they could be hired for and maintained in a job, thanks to their key competencies. They must also realize that even if they do not see the rationale for such competencies or cannot recognize such competencies in themselves, they must nonetheless learn how to acquire them.

Changes in Work

To understand the new employability requirements involving the personal characteristics of students and workers, a researcher and professor of sociology from the Université de Marne-La-Vallée in France has defined the new organization of work and highlighted the key competencies that it requires. For Philippe Zarifian,* changes in work can be summed up in three key concepts: events, service and communication.

Events

Work is no longer focused solely on repetitive operations. For a variety of reasons, it has become a matter of handling the unexpected, of adapting a response to an unforeseen problem that has interrupted the productive flow of work. In short, a trucker is no longer simply a person who drives a

truck. A trucker is someone who basically deals with the unforeseen and handles an event-driven workplace. As a result, in addition to routines and technical skills, the work involves the personal component. Companies need people who know how to take the initiative, assume responsibility, and make decisions in response to events. This requires employees capable of improvising and, above all, becoming self-sufficient. Independence is the keyword here, along with its attendant qualities. However, all these attributes take on concrete, functional characteristics in the context of handling events: adapting to change, getting involved in the situation, taking action, demonstrating self-control and reflecting on one's performance.

Service

Another change in the organization of work is customer service. Today, even a product is considered a service rendered to recipients, depending on exactly how the customers will be able to use it, in accordance with their needs. Global competition is such that a company's viability depends on providing tailor-made solutions and constantly adjusting its products to meet the needs expressed. In addition, employees are expected to respond to requests, closely follow new trends and help decide which services to render, thereby mobilizing the creativity of technicians when it comes to necessary innovations. For this to happen, workers must develop methods for understanding customers, learn to interpret and understand their requests and then make them operational. This also illustrates the importance of having employees share their perceptions of the needs to be met. Such a context requires that solutions be developed and fully adapted to the uniqueness of the service to be rendered. In conclusion, employees require skills to process information and provide feedback on customer requests.

* Zarifian, P., *Le travail et l'événement*, L'Harmattan, 1995.

Zarifian, P., *Travail et communication*, P.U.F., 1996.

Zarifian, P., *Le modèle de la compétence*, Éditions Liaisons, 2001.

(<http://latts.cnrs.fr/site/p_lattsperso.php?Id=382>)

Communication

The next change concerns solitary work, which is now practically nonexistent. In today's world, working means communicating, so teamwork, networking, project-based management, partnerships, and achievement of common goals are at the forefront. Why? Because complex events exceed an individ-

ual's ability to react and adapting to this demand requires strong communication skills. Company productivity is now based on the quality of employee interactions and the level of agreement reached in the pursuit of common goals. Since management is no longer hierarchical, responsibilities are redistributed among staff members.

Work Changes in Québec

These changes show that work is no longer the repetitive production of objects, on the basis of prescribed operations, but is instead a "collective undertaking." A study conducted by the Association des manufacturiers et exportateurs du Québec* clearly illustrates these changes. To summarize, the Association identified the following future needs: a mixture of creative problem solving, technical know-how, business skills and aptitudes for interacting with colleagues and customers.

"Manufacturers also recognize that union-employer relations must involve more cooperation. Even highly skilled workers will be unable to meet the demands of the global marketplace if employer-employee relations continue to be based on the concept of routine assembly line processes where hierarchical decisions between management and workers are founded on the repetitiveness of tasks. Manufacturing workers from all levels must play a bigger role in the decision-making process, which requires that organizations adopt a more transparent approach when rationalizing responsibilities, competencies and compensation." (2005, page 11)

"By reviewing their business models, Québec's manufacturers are refocusing their activities on niches with great potential, markets that are less attractive to foreign competitors because of volume, more specialized innovative products and services, reducing the lead time between product design and marketing, the large-scale production of custom products delivered on time and, lastly, on improving the management of employee knowledge and expertise." (2005, page 9)

◆ MAIN ACTIVITY Events – Service – Communication

During this activity, students will essentially refer to a work experience and workplace. They are asked to recount their practicum or experience with a company as part of a work-study program. If circumstances per-

mit, students should share their work experiences with the class/group and discuss them in terms of the "events-service-communication" approach.

- Begin by describing the company's work environment (this is more interesting if there are photos): physical features, facilities, and resources of any kind.

* Association des manufacturiers et exportateurs du Québec, *Pénuries de main-d'œuvre et valorisation des métiers spécialisés : enquête, constats et recommandations élaborés à parti du projet Portes ouvertes des manufacturiers*, 2005, (<http://www.cme-mec.ca/pdf/05-11-25-Version_final_Color.pdf>)

- Describe the workstation used and the main tasks performed.
- Talk about the period of adjustment, the adaptations made and what was needed to meet the challenge: knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviours and, most important, information sources, including people willing to answer questions.
- Describe a work-related situation that presented an unexpected problem. Explain how it was handled, and to what extent you had to take the initiative and assume responsibility.
- Describe a work-related situation that involved customer service. What did the customer need? What concerns or requirements did this raise? Given the practicum context and the company, were you told about the customer's problem and asked to help? Do you think it's important to act in concert with customer service?
- Describe the practicum from a communications standpoint. List the instances when communication was used to clarify what had to be done: e.g. agree on the sequence of operations, coordinate your actions with those of another, share information, discuss a problem, reach an agreement with people from another department, understand instructions given during a meeting, share opinions and viewpoints, settle a misunderstanding, and act in accordance with the company's code of ethics and corporate culture.

To sum it up, this activity involves identifying the context and activities of the three new key concepts of work—events, service and communication.

Two important remarks

1. Encourage the students to identify personal examples of the following in their work experiences:
 - a) initiative, independence and responsibility when faced with an unexpected or event-driven situation
 - b) interest in the production of a service
 - c) processing information and communicating with people at the company

The students could use these examples to demonstrate their employability in the context of participatory management, which would be a definite plus when writing their résumé and undergoing a job interview.

2. Use the experiences shared in this exercise to create a directory of practical examples for the vocational or technical program you work in as a teacher, practicum supervisor or coordinator of training and professionalization. This first-hand material is ideal for developing exercises and simulations to teach key competencies.

◆ ALTERNATE ACTIVITIES

- You could organize company visits or ask employers and employees to visit the classroom to discuss the three key work concepts.
- A similar and complementary approach would be to consult the publication *Entrepreneurs in the Classroom!*, available on the following Web site: www.inforoutefpt.org/entrepreneuriat.

Reflective Practice

According to Guy Le Boterf,* there is a difference between possessing competencies and acting competently. Although competencies include personal resources such as an individual's knowledge, skills, qualities, experiences and know-how, they are not necessarily mobilized and integrated to deal with a given work situation. For this to happen, workers must know how to respond appropriately. This means they must be professionals and capable of dealing with the unexpected and the complexity of the work-related situations encountered. This ability to act effectively enables them to produce a novel response tailored to the existing context. Indeed, the ability to act effectively is the ultimate goal of professionalization.

For this reason, vocational and technical training must not be limited to the study of theory. It must involve real work situations as well. That is why it is important for students to experience professional practices in simulated situations like those offered by practice firms, the more realistic experiences of school-run businesses and, finally, the institutional models of practicums and work-study programs.

The distinction between possessing competencies and acting competently demonstrates that any work involving supervision and coaching must aim for much more than the mastery of technical competencies, which is a necessary, but insufficient, step in professionalization. Instead, this process requires a second level of learning, namely, reflection on one's professional practices. This means getting some distance and observing one's performance to better appreciate what one can do in a similar situation and what must be done to achieve greater effectiveness and efficiency.

Consequently, reflective practice helps workers achieve a qualitative leap in expertise. They become experts in their fields and drive their professional development. They begin a process of self-determination that fulfills their need to succeed and enhances their feeling of personal effectiveness. All the elements or ingredients that make up entrepreneurial culture are in place, but this time they are geared specifically towards vocational and technical training.**

Professionalization involves the ability to respond to prescribed situations, as well as the ability to go beyond what is required.

Knowing not just what to do, but how to do it***

- The ability to make choices
- The ability to take initiative
- The ability to arbitrate
- The ability to take risks
- The ability to react to the unexpected
- The ability to settle disagreements
- The ability to take responsibility
- The ability to innovate

Reflective practice seems to help students take charge of their professional development and expertise. However, just because we experience something does not necessarily mean we can identify it. We may know how to do something, yet not be consciously aware of how to proceed. By formalizing this knowledge, we can model it for others, discuss the trade, improve methods, go beyond the routine and take on something more complex and produce again.

Reflective practice essentially means reflecting on one's experience. It means writing down the problems encountered and formalizing the methods for dealing with various work-related situations.

* Le Boterf, Guy. *Ingénierie et évaluation des compétences*, Éditions d'Organisation, Paris, 4th edition, 2005.

** *Introduction to Entrepreneurial Culture*, MELS, 2005.

*** Le Boterf, 2005.

For information purposes, the following is a list of the types of questions used to teach students to reflect on their experience (extract from Le Boterf, 2005, page 475).

Typical questions for analyzing professional practices (suggestions)

1. What was your intention? What did you want to do? What types of results were you trying to achieve? What was your goal? What problem were you trying to solve? What was your plan of action?
2. What results did you achieve? What did you end up with? Did the results correspond with your objectives? How would you explain the differences?
3. What did you set out to do? What decisions did you make? What means did you use? What steps were involved? How did the activity unfold? What did you do to address the professional requirements of the situation?
4. What were you hoping to do that you were unable to do or get started? Why were you unsuccessful?
5. How could you have made more progress? If you were to do it again, what would you do differently? What lessons did you learn from this experience that you will apply in the future? What could you have done to better address the professional requirements of the situation?
6. Regarding your experience, how could you improve the effectiveness of the situation and related professional requirements?*

Note: These questions are meant to be adapted for the specifics of each “professional situation.”

* Added by the writer to make it easier to understand.

◆ ACTIVITY *Discussing the trade*

Students enrolled in vocational and technical training programs should be able to familiarize themselves with these questions,** and adapt them to suit their purposes. These questions should be an integral part of the dialogue between supervisors and trainees and the class discussion about the trade when the students share their workplace experiences and impressions, along with the problems they encountered and the attitudes and behaviours they exhibited on such occasions. This discussion also includes the lessons learned and ideas the group can use to develop a model for action.

(See *Introduction to Entrepreneurial Culture*, MELs, 2005; some suggestions for pedagogical support, page 43, project stage 6: Evaluation.)

Key Competencies

For the past decade, an increasingly popular, yet poorly defined requirement has been the “personal component.” It refers, of course, to qualities and attitudes attributable to one’s personality, but it also touches on the idea of competency because it encompasses professional practices and behaviours.

Work-related situations—the new reality—now require people to mobilize certain competencies related to event handling, group work and service production. These are

** These typical questions can also be used in the Student Entrepreneurship division of the Québec Entrepreneurship Contest, to enable students to reflect on the project experience, its intentions, its completion and the conditions needed to improve its effectiveness.

what work psychologist Grégoire Evéquo^{*} has designated “key competencies,” or the abilities needed for adapting to the changes in work. This advance is significant because it creates a contextualized, workable definition of the personal component as a factor of employability.

Furthermore, Evéquo^{*} puts forth the hypothesis that key competencies are invisible, that those who use them are unaware of doing so and that reflective practice can be used to identify them. Recognizing one’s key competencies enriches one’s self-image by elevating what “merely seems to be an adaptation to a new environment” to the rank of a competency that is just as important as expertise. People not only rise in self-esteem, they can also, on the basis of this recognition, highlight this competency in their résumé and during a job interview.

The following activities facilitate the recognition of key competencies for the purposes of enhancing one’s employability. Therefore, they can help students in vocational and technical training who are entering the work force gain an edge in the short and medium term.

◆ **ACTIVITY** ***We are looking for you***

“It’s quite difficult to find good employees who possess all these competencies, and when we do find them, we have to pay them well to be able to retain them.” (An employer)

- Introduce the activity by reviewing or having the students review the material covered earlier, which dealt with the personal component, changes in work and reflective practice.

In fact, all these elements are interconnected: the working world is looking for candidates with more than technical expertise. A major shift has occurred: working is not simply a matter of performing prescribed operations; it also means handling the unexpected, producing a service and communicating. This means employers are seeking workers with what are called key competencies, not just technical competencies.

- Mention the fact that, for this activity, the students will review all their past practicums and work experiences to pinpoint the behaviours exhibited, approaches used, and the attitudes and reactions related to key competencies. By identifying the occasions when they acted appropriately, they will unearth examples they can mention during a job interview.

The activity (done, if possible, as a group) consists in finding as many key competencies as possible by associating them with actual examples, i.e. identifiable experiences when they were demonstrated. Note that doing this exercise as a class helps the students recognize key competencies in their own experience.

- Explain how the activity works. For each key concept (events, service, communication), students will find a list of the corresponding competencies. Each one is accompanied by indicators that help clarify the competency in question:
 1. First, hold an open discussion on the students’ understanding of a given competency.
 2. Then, find an example of this competency in action, write it down and prepare to share it when asked to do so.

^{*} Op. cit., 2004. He is a lecturer at the University of Geneva and chairs the Association suisse de reconnaissance et validation des acquis.

In this activity, it is up to the teacher to decide how to proceed, depending on the time available and the participants' level of interest. Go over the descriptions of the competencies and systematically ask each participant for a relevant work experience or else target a single key concept. The students could also work in teams, with each one assigned a different goal.

In any event, the ultimate goal is for students to correctly identify the key compe-

tencies they exhibited during a given work-related situation when there was a problem to solve, a team project, an unexpected request to fulfill, a responsibility that surpassed the usual job routines, or when meeting with people from the company or outside.

This exercise will therefore provide students with firsthand examples to back up the personal component of their employability.

Changes in Work and Corresponding Key Competencies

Table by Denis Pelletier*

3 KEY SITUATIONS	6 KEY COMPETENCIES	13 ABILITIES	54 INDICATORS
<div style="text-align: center; font-size: 48px; font-weight: bold;">1</div> <p>Event handling</p>	Take action	Take the initiative	Do the unexpected
			Make spontaneous suggestions
			Demonstrate foresight
			Personalize your work technique
		Deal with the unexpected	React appropriately to a particular event
			Do something even if aspects of the situation remain unknown
	Be accountable	Show self-discipline	Develop a spontaneous solution that could solve the problem
			Get organized by setting work priorities, pacing your activities and meeting your deadlines
			Control your behaviour, stress and emotions; be familiar with your reactions and those of others; adjust your behaviour according to the situation
		Learn by doing	Take responsibility for your actions and respect the constraints associated with a commitment
			Recognize how you operate, your influence at work and accept your share of responsibility for the results achieved
			Learn from your mistakes and find ways to fix them or draw lessons from your successes and find ways to improve
		Take responsibility for your professional development	

* Using the reference system from Grégoire Evéquo's work (2004), Denis Pelletier selected and organized the key competencies to clearly show how they correspond to the three work changes cited by Zarifian: events – service – communication. The same reference system provided most of the 54 indicators.

3 KEY SITUATIONS	6 KEY COMPETENCIES	13 ABILITIES	54 INDICATORS
<div style="text-align: center; font-size: 48px; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 20px;">2</div> Service production	Adapt to your environment	Integrate into your milieu	Take an interest in the various sectors of the company
			Make yourself known to people in the company by making contacts
			Talk with your supervisor
			Identify people who can help you
			Learn to live with those you find less compatible
		Represent your workplace	Take into account the ethics of a job well done
	When dealing with customer requests, consider the factors of hospitality, respect, openness and sometimes confidentiality		
	Whenever possible, supply a response that indicates you understand the request and are committed to following up		
	Solve problems	Analyze a situation	Work to gain a clear understanding of the situation
			Closely examine the situation to see which information is useful or missing
			Highlight the elements of the problem or situation
			Determine what is hindering your efforts to overcome the constraints
		Show creativity	Imagine elements that are not part of the stated problem
Imagine that you are a user to discover what he or she is looking for, even though the user him/herself does not know			
Provide spontaneous suggestions for optimal, innovative solutions			

3 KEY SITUATIONS	6 KEY COMPETENCIES	13 ABILITIES	54 INDICATORS
<div style="text-align: center; font-size: 48px; font-weight: bold; margin-bottom: 10px;">3</div> Commu- nication	Share information	Become informed	Find information yourself by consulting various sources
			Take notes on your activities
			Ask questions about the work to be done and how the company operates
			Ask people to repeat explanations and instructions, as needed
		Inform others	Decide which elements should be communicated to others
			Know who to send the information to
			Determine the best time to send information using various means of communication
		Explain	Share your ideas as you develop them
			Use appropriate examples to clearly illustrate things that can appear obscure
	Break down ideas, situations or processes into different parts		
	Recapitulate and summarize facts in order to present them to someone else		
	Give someone instructions about something		
	Work in a team	Define a project	Set clear goals and priorities
			Determine the various steps to be accomplished in a pre-determined order
			Coordinate the various tasks/activities
			As best you can, anticipate the various possible difficulties and unforeseen events
			Build an organized plan/program while still allowing for the possibilities in the preceding sentence
			Observe the necessary obligations and requirements
Cooperate		Act within the group to achieve the common goal	
		Listen to and consider the opinions of others	
		Respect the competencies and ideas of others	
		Approach things with an open mind	
		Assert yourself, give your opinion and confront the opinions of others, if need be	
		Adopt an egalitarian position and don't try to get the upper hand	
		Take action so the group can accomplish something	

Employability: Evaluating Your Personal Component

1 Event handling

According to P. Zarifian: Summary Chart

Origin	- The production system	- Request from the workplace
Objective	- Solve a problem	- Think of ways to deal with a complex environment
Handle the event	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Partially anticipate- Be vigilant- Decode warning signs- Be proactive and relevant- Decide quickly, with pertinence- Afterwards, reflect on your actions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Remain vigilant for any possible modifications or requests from the work environment- Get things moving- Discover and test new solutions

In addition to the prescribed operation, an event could include an element that requires you to react and cope with the situation. An unforeseen event may be a result of the workplace situation itself or an outside request that demands a response.

Improvising a response to an unexpected situation mobilizes two key competencies: **take action** and **be accountable**.

Key Competency: Take action

Taking action means putting time and energy into performing activities and reaching goals. Occasionally, or even often, a work situation requires that we go beyond the call of duty and act differently because of new circumstances. In the midst of taking action, we have to make the best choices and decisions we can. In any event, we apply our intelligence and motivation to the situation to get involved in the work and put our best foot forward. In other words, this competency consists in reacting effectively to work situations by using our internal and external resources to the best of our abilities.

Have you ever taken action in a work-related situation and experienced this type of involvement?

Giving one hundred per cent

Recount the situation and describe what you did.

The competency of taking action includes the ability to **take the initiative**.

This means doing something before and without someone having to ask or remind you to do it, simply because you feel it is useful and necessary. Some examples:

- a) Do the unexpected
- b) Make spontaneous suggestions
- c) Demonstrate foresight
- d) Personalize your work technique

Keywords – Initiative

Use keywords to list occasions when you took the initiative, such as the examples in a, b, c, and d, or other examples. Recount instances when you had to take action on your own, doing something as best you could.

Taking action at work also includes the ability to **deal with the unexpected**. This means reacting appropriately to deal with an unexpected situation. Some examples:

- a) React appropriately to a particular event
- b) Do something even if aspects of the situation remain unknown
- c) Develop a spontaneous solution that could solve the problem

Example*: One time when my boss wasn't in, I contacted a supplier who had delivered unsatisfactory materials. He came and picked up the delivery and then sent replacement materials. I did this because I was sure he had made a mistake and I saved time by not waiting for my boss.

Recount your own example of an unexpected event or unusual request and explain how you dealt with it: the knowledge used, the skills you put into practice and the sources of information available.

Your evaluation: Which example above, a, b or c, best describes how you dealt with the unexpected? _____

Key Competency: Be Accountable

People who are able to discipline themselves and critically assess their professional actions are also able to take on bigger responsibilities and more complex situations.

Being accountable includes the ability to **show self-discipline**, in other words, set oneself rules of behaviour and respect them. Some examples:

- a) Get organized by setting work priorities, pacing your activities and meeting your deadlines
- b) Control your behaviour, stress and emotions; be familiar with your reactions and those of others; adjust your behaviour according to the situation
- c) Take responsibility for your actions and respect the constraints associated with a commitment

Have you ever taken on a commitment that required discipline and perseverance, putting your sense of duty to the test? What was your game plan? How did you get through it? What strategies did you use? Could you name a major project that you had to see through to the end?

* Taken from Evéquo, op. cit. 2004.

Recount the event by discussing one of the following three aspects: a) the methodology and approach; b) the need to control the stress and emotion caused by a work-related situation; or c) what would have happened if you had dropped out, given your commitment to the others and the feeling of solidarity. What happened in the end or why was it important to see the situation through?

My commitment – A description of the circumstances

Being accountable also includes the ability to **learn by doing**, or experiential learning. Taking action helps uncover solutions, produce reactions, make use of knowledge and at the same time reveal what should be done in a given situation. In short, after we act, after we improvise, we can go back and reflect on what happened and uncover a professional practice.

Some examples:

- a) Recognize how you operate, how you act professionally speaking and accept your share of responsibility for the results achieved
- b) Learn from your mistakes and find ways to remedy them or draw lessons from your successes and find ways to improve
- c) Take responsibility for your professional development

Can I recognize what I have learned from my work experiences? Can I demonstrate that my work experiences have made me more competent and that I have obviously improved the way I work and perform various activities?

Recount a work experience that you reflected on afterwards and learned something from. What can you say about yourself as a “learner”?

2 Service Production

According to P. Zarifian, Summary Chart

Target and be familiar with the customer's activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Look for information– Communicate in an authentic manner– Respect the customer
Interpret and understand the needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Make information meaningful– Understand the problem to be solved– Organize an appropriate solution
Produce solutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Work with others– Create original solutions
Render the service	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Produce changes– Cooperate

A product is also a service aimed at a user. It must still be received and appreciated. This consideration of users is found in any work-related situation: receptionist, computer technician, teacher, insurance agent, artist, journalist, etc. This is how interactions develop between suppliers and recipients. The work of today essentially consists of this game of understanding and responding to needs. It requires an awareness of market needs and a constant concern for innovation. This context provides the backdrop for two key competencies: adapt to your environment and solve problems.

Key Competency: Adapt to your environment

To acquire a sense of service, one must be aware of one's role, one's position in the company and the company's role in society. Only then can one act appropriately in one's workplace and with the people who do business with this milieu.

Adapting to your environment includes the ability to integrate into your milieu. This means finding your place as an individual within an institution.

Some examples:

- a) Take an interest in the various sectors of the company
- b) Make yourself known in the company by making contacts
- c) Talk with your supervisor
- d) Identify people who can help you
- e) Learn to live with those you find less compatible

What do you think of your adaptation to a new work environment? How did you behave? What do you think is the best way to integrate into a new company? Describe how you felt and what you intend to do the next time.

Adapting to your environment also includes the ability to properly represent your workplace, knowing that each employee contributes to the public image of the company.

Some examples:

- a) Take into account the ethics of a job well done
- b) When dealing with customer requests, consider the factors of hospitality, respect, openness and sometimes confidentiality
- c) Whenever possible, supply a response that indicates you understand the request and are committed to following up
- d) Be aware of your potential impact on customers in terms of language used, nonverbal communication and the image projected

Customer service* is either a direct concern (you are in sales, marketing or communications) or an indirect concern of yours (you are occasionally asked for technical expertise or if you would be available to carry out a particular task)

1. Describe the typical customer you are already familiar with or will have to know.
2. Describe the ideal way of interacting with customers in the context of your specialization.

* Note: It is important that people looking for work have an organized idea of what they can offer an employer, in terms of customer service.

Key Competency: Solve problems

One of today's major work changes is to maintain a dynamic, organic, ongoing link between a company and those who use its products or services. In other words, nothing is taken for granted and decisions cannot be made without first considering the recipients. Everything can be called into question if the competition offers something better or the user experiences a change in needs, values or priorities. In short, the work of today must produce change and innovation. Under these circumstances, it is understandable that a key competency like problem solving would be of strategic importance, especially from an entrepreneurial viewpoint. Solving problems in an entrepreneurial context means finding possible improvements or producing effective solutions in response to a recognized dissatisfaction or new need. Since the market is king, requests from a particular environment validate or invalidate what a company does.

Solving problems calls on the ability to **analyze a situation**, which means approaching a situation as a whole to determine what is not working and what aspects should be considered to reach a specific goal.

Some examples:

- a) Work to gain a clear understanding of the situation
- b) Closely examine the situation to see which information is useful or missing
- c) Highlight the elements of the problem or situation
- d) Determine what is hindering your efforts to overcome the constraints

The question is, are you aware of the problems found in your work environment? Do you know what is not working properly, what is missing, what could be improved? If so, you are the ideal employee. The problem could be production-related, meaning an operation, procedure or method should be improved. Or it could also come from the user, who fails to appreciate everything the company has to offer.

Looking at your work experiences, especially those within your specialization, can you name an aspect that could be improved and that could possibly become a business opportunity?

Note: This question could be answered individually or as a group.

Solving problems (from an entrepreneurial viewpoint) also includes the ability to **show creativity**, in other words, think outside the box.

Some examples:

- a) Imagine elements that are not part of the stated problem
- b) Imagine that you are a user to discover what he or she is looking for, even though the user him/herself does not know
- c) Provide spontaneous suggestions for optimal, innovative solutions

Are you capable of presenting the most recent trends in your chosen field? Can you name the latest technologies? The most recent customer needs?

Make a list of future keywords.

3

Communication

According to P. Zarifian, Summary Chart

Understand each other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Find out the opinions of others - Take a stand - Listen - Manage conflicts
Agree on common goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Negotiate - Argue - Anticipate - Act together
Inform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Transmit information

Together, event handling and customer service create the need to work with others. Both lead to complexity and require the sharing of information and mobilized, coordinated staff. Whether the issue is adaptation or innovation, participants must agree on the goals and priorities. Company productivity primarily depends on the quality of employee interactions.

Communication calls into action two key competencies: **share information** and **work in a team**.

Key Competency: Share information

It seems that the first requirement of trainees starting a practicum or employees in a new job is to look for and locate the information they need. And as these individuals adapt to their surroundings, they also learn to share information with the right people so the work organization can function properly.

This context illustrates the material aspect of communication: receiving information, understanding it in a specific context and knowing how to use it.

- Sharing information includes the ability to **become informed**. This means efficiently seeking data in various information sources.

Some examples:

- a) Find information by consulting various sources
- b) Take notes on your activities
- c) Ask questions about the work to be done and how the company operates
- d) Ask people to repeat explanations and instructions, as needed

Some testimonials:

“You have to be interested, motivated and hardworking. You have to take notes and ask questions.”

“I manage to find missing information on my own. I call the right people.”

“Speak up if you are unsure, even if you think it will seem like a dumb question.”

Do these sentences remind you of when you first needed information? What specific questions did you ask back then?

Q.1 _____

Q.2 _____

Q.3 _____

How would you assess your knowledge of this workplace today? Try to say something about the company in question. What do you know about its products, customers, management style and goals? Specify the type of information you are now familiar with: occupational health and safety, regulations, procedures, equipment, what to do if you are late or absent, who you should report to, what decisions you can make about your work, risks that you should not take, etc.

- Sharing information also includes the ability to **inform others**, in other words, send information you have to all the interested parties.

Some examples:

- a) Decide which elements should be communicated to others
- b) Know who to send the information to
- c) Determine the best time to send information using various means of communication

How would you rate your ability to inform others, that is, accurately and efficiently transmit information? Do you have any anecdotes on this subject? Or, if you prefer, you can test your ability with the following exercise:

Mr. Harris telephones to cancel his appointment with Mr. Green, the boss. He apologizes and explains that he can't make it because he has a fever. However, Mr. Green is not at the office and you have to send him the message as quickly as possible, because the appointment was scheduled for the next day.

Write a note to your boss, Mr. Green, explaining the situation.*

* Example: Good morning. Mr. Harris is ill and unable to make your 4:00 p.m. appointment tomorrow. He sends his apologies.

- Sharing information also includes the ability to **explain**.

Some examples:

- a) Share your ideas as you develop them
- b) Use appropriate examples to clearly illustrate things that can appear obscure
- c) Break down ideas, situations or processes into different parts
- d) Recapitulate and summarize facts in order to present them to someone else
- e) Give someone instructions about something

Think of an occasion when you had to explain something to someone. Everyone is a teacher, of sorts. Do you tend to use style a, b, c, d, or e? Describe how you like to explain things.

Key Competency: Work in a team

The key situation **Communication** also mobilizes the key competency **work in a team**, which means contribute to the functioning of a work group. “Simply supplying information does not mean that you have actually communicated, agreed on something, tried to reach a mutual understanding and begun to work together towards a common goal.”*

* Philippe Zarifian, 2001, p. 63.

Working in a team involves the ability to **define a project**.

Some examples:

- a) Set clear goals and priorities
- b) Determine the various steps to be accomplished in a predetermined order
- c) Coordinate the various tasks/activities
- d) As best you can, anticipate the various possible difficulties and unforeseen events
- e) Build an organized plan/program while still allowing for the possibilities in the preceding sentence (d)
- f) Observe the necessary obligations and requirements

Have you ever worked on a group project, for school or work? Outline the type of group project that you participated in.

How do you feel about the project? Are you the type of person who automatically draws up an action plan? In your own words, explain how to organize a project. This is a precious asset for employability, becoming self-employed and starting your own business.

Working in a team also involves the ability to **cooperate** and work towards a common goal.

Some examples:

- a) Act within the group to achieve the common goal
- b) Listen to and consider the opinions of others
- c) Respect the competencies and ideas of others
- d) Approach things with an open mind
- e) Assert yourself, give your opinion and confront the opinions of others, if need be
- f) Adopt an egalitarian position and don't try to get the upper hand
- g) Take action so the group can accomplish something

Recount a cooperative experience that you had, either in a workplace or as part of your program of study. Here are a few questions to jog your memory. What did people appreciate about working in a group with you? How did you stand out and make yourself useful?

Professionalization and Entrepreneurship

Upon closer look, something becomes obvious: changes in work mean that all workers are now involved, to some degree or another, not only in the company, but also in the spirit of working together.

In fact, our analysis of key competencies has replicated the characteristics of the typical entrepreneurial profile. In other words, examining these competencies in the context of professionalization and employability is truly ideal for illustrating each student's potential for self-employment or starting a business.

Also, instead of promoting entrepreneurship, it would appear more educational and pertinent to show how it is implicit in today's professional practices. In other words, entrepreneurial values enrich the professionalization of students and new graduates in vocational and technical training.

Entering the Work Force Module

Challenge

People do not simply choose a trade and training program; they also choose a workplace in which to exercise their acquired competencies. For students who are finishing their vocational or technical training, this is a highly relevant issue. How do they intend to fulfill themselves at work? Which work organization is most likely to encourage their professional development? They are certainly not obliged to be employees, but if they wish to, they can opt for a freedom of movement that is called “intrapreneurial.” They can also become self-employed or prepare to become entrepreneurs and create their own work organizations. Since the challenge of finding a workplace involves looking ahead, it demands that one consider the entrepreneurial option.

Objectives

By the end of the entering the work force module, students should have the following:

- an understanding of both traditional and new corporate cultures, especially as they relate to current changes in work
- a definition of their intrapreneurial and entrepreneurial profile
- knowledge about what it takes to become an entrepreneur and the training and resources available, including coaching from a mentor

Basis of Activities

The main idea of this module is to make students realize that there are more and more innovative businesses characterized by work organizations that promote learning, profes-

sionalization and mobilization. In short, over the course of this module, students will discover various ways in which they can get involved in work. Above all, they will discover that they have been prepared to be more than just employees, that they can manage work-related situations within an organization and that, furthermore, if they feel the need, they can take the calculated risk of starting their own business.

Outline

- **Innovative Businesses**
- **Intrapreneurship**
- **Entrepreneurship**
- **Mentoring and Other Resources**

Innovative Businesses

There are essentially two types of corporate cultures, between which lie various intermediate types of work organizations.

The first is based on a Taylorian view of production. According to this simple, effective concept, an assembly line of operations transforms raw material and manufactures objects—a procedure that demands specific, repetitive actions. This is the prescribed work. Individuals are hired and trained specifically to replicate an essentially machinelike mode of operation that rules out initiative, problem solving and decision making.

This Taylorian conception of work probably helped devalue vocational training, even though most trades and techniques bear no resemblance to this simplistic interpretation of competencies.

As described earlier, current changes in work help illustrate why an innovation-driven corporate culture has developed over the last twenty years. While big industry made a name for itself with mass production and

fewer employees, the new work organization operates in a flexible manner by constantly adjusting to the market and customers, with the help of involved workers who make use of their key competencies.

Instead of giving employees prescribed work, companies now encourage them to respond appropriately at work, which means handling situations that are often uncertain, unusual and complex. In this respect, the practices of innovative businesses are diametrically opposed to the Taylorian view of work.*

The culture of innovation encourages professionalization and collective responsibility among the practitioners of a trade. In innovative businesses, workers consider themselves experts, and each one makes an individual contribution to the whole. Orders stem from production methods that require improvement or from various customers who are grappling with changing needs and problems that must be addressed by innovation. Moreover, productivity is now an outgrowth of a business' collective ability to handle change and mobilize workers.

◆ **ACTIVITY** *Winning Initiatives*

A joint survey of 106 innovative businesses conducted by the Association de la recherche industrielle du Québec (ADRIQ) and Septembre éditeur has highlighted examples of winning initiatives.

* In fact, traditional industries are trying to adapt to this new definition of work. For more information, see the report issued by Canadian manufacturers (2005).

Could you provide an example of a situation in which an employee’s key competencies helped encourage innovation in your company?

1. A technician’s initiative helped him find an original technical solution in a field in which he had no expertise. His idea is going to lead to a patent.
2. An employee suggested we enter a new market outside our range that we had never considered before.
3. During the development stage of a product, the employee in charge of assembly used resourcefulness and a sense of observation to improve the assembly method.
4. In my case, for example, I had to create my job from start to finish, putting together the specialized software needed and finding the right tools to properly meet the company’s needs.
5. In response to a need articulated by a potential customer, we perfected a high-end material using specialized techniques and thereby created a new company.
6. A junior industrial designer employed by our company came up with a number of good ideas, even for projects he was not directly involved in, because I discussed all of our projects with him anyway (sharing).
7. Many of our products have developed as a result of our employees’ people skills and scientific intuition on visits to customers’ companies.
8. By taking advantage of a new business opportunity and quickly taking action, we successfully put together and realized four promising projects.
9. An employee improved a business process involving various disciplines.
10. Juggling various customer needs helped fulfill contracts.
11. When a problem arises, employees have to ask themselves: “Is there anything I can do?”
12. Expertise and listening to needs helped us develop a new service for our customers.
13. A self-taught individual changed the design of our moulds, giving us an exceptional competitive edge. There are many other examples of this type of initiative.
14. I can think of a specific case when implementing technology went from disaster to success, thanks to an employee’s people skills.
15. Sharing personal knowledge during the development of an application by a colleague.
16. Teamwork: many of our projects involve more than 10 employees with different expertise. These people must ensure that everyone’s contributions help achieve the desired result.
17. Thanks to her resourcefulness and independence, an employee developed work methods that helped the company improve its inventory management.
18. Our process requires a special gas. At a Montréal trade show, two people found an interesting material that helped solve the problem.
19. Fully 75% of the solutions for our organizational problems come from staff other than managers.

20. We manufacture 32 ft.-long tubes that have to be sanded along their entire length, which is very time-consuming. In this regard, employees have modified a vertical drill press to sand the tubes horizontally.
21. The most innovative employees are often those who feel committed to the company's "cause." They know how to see things through and implement good ideas.
22. Through the cooperation and leadership of our people, we have successfully reduced the costs of our conference calls by using a free voice over IP service.
23. A "perfectionist" employee completely transformed the ergonomics of our software, a "curious" employee knew about some freeware that helped us out of a jam and a "keen" employee introduced us to the Internet.
24. An enterprising employee developed a sophisticated method of measure with the help of a customer. This initiative enabled the company to meet the needs of other customers using low-cost equipment.
25. Following an analysis by a regular employee, we changed a production process. As a result, both productivity and quality increased.
26. An employee's ability to find business opportunities has enabled us to win major contracts.
27. A customer once mentioned that the reason he likes working with us is that our employees are easy to reach when he needs a solution.
28. An employee developed a research project to meet the needs of a customer.
29. Creativity, knowledge and inventiveness; in 10 months, under our new senior engineer, the company made more progress than it had in the preceding three years.

Instructions

- Ask the students (either individually or as a group) to read over the list of exemplary initiatives.
- Use any methods you like to explore the list and highlight the role and involvement of the workers concerned. What does the list illustrate about innovation? It is a hands-on affair. Not a theoretical exercise, but a brainstorming of original ideas. It occurs when everyone takes action, makes observations, and is alert during every situation encountered.
- The training supervisor could also ask the students to present the examples that are the most relevant to them and explain why.
- Are there any similar workplaces in their chosen field? Would they like to work in such an environment? Are there any disadvantages? Maybe such a workplace

would be too demanding for some students, requiring constant learning and a concern for professionalism, for example.

- To what extent have changes in work and innovative businesses changed the students' impressions and opinions of their vocational and technical training?

Intrapreneurship

Intrapreneurship designates an approach to work wherein employees are invited to behave like entrepreneurs. In such cases, the company is an organization that delegates, assigns responsibilities, exposes the complexity of problems, shares information, and discusses development goals and issues.

Intrapreneurial companies validate the spirit of entrepreneurship within their organiza-

tions by reducing hierarchical levels to a minimum and employing a proximity management style where individuals are put into

groups and independent shops are organized to handle specific projects and mandates.*

◆ **ACTIVITY** ***Intrapreneurial Profile***

Capsule

New management principles

By Suzanne Dansereau, *Les Affaires*, August 12, 2006

These days, successful businesses do not need to be very big or number one in their field. They do, however, have to be specialized and responsive. Their obsession cannot be cutting costs, but innovation. Shareholders are not in charge, customers are. It takes a courageous CEO and committed employees. The following story profiles a Québec company that understood the need for these types of changes, and has thrived as a result.

Perfecta Plywood takes the initiative

It was the late 1990s and early 2000s. The furniture industry was going global. China and India were emerging players. François Dugas, at that time Vice-President of International Sales for Perfecta Plywood, got wind of the new trend and announced a major change in direction. The small business from Saint-Hyacinthe, a specialist in the manufacture of laminated wood panels made from rare wood veneer, pulled out of the retail market and purchased equipment to manufacture highly specialized, sometimes nonstandard, products for the high-end furniture market.

“New architectural trends require bigger than standard sizes,” explains Mr. Dugas, who has since been named CEO. “I was ahead of the pack.”

Perfecta decided to focus on North America. Six years later, when more and more wood manufacturing plants were closing their doors, Perfecta was growing, more specifically through acquisitions.

“My goal is to be big enough to fight the competition, but responsive enough to move fast,” says Mr. Dugas.

One of the most recent moves in the company’s transformation was to do away with the company’s headquarters last March. It was a difficult but courageous decision. “The company’s management level was too centralized,” explains Mr. Dugas. “The chief executive had too many responsibilities that he didn’t share properly with employees. Everything landed on his desk. The position was divided up so that each department (logistics, purchasing, administration and sales) became both supplier and client of another department.” Today, the hundred or so employees feel responsible and fully involved in management, affirms Mr. Dugas. “I am not responsible for my employees’ happiness, but I am in charge of an environment that can enable them to be happy.”

* Two references to consult on this subject:

Le Nagard, G., Vega, M.-P and C. Talbot. *Quand l'esprit d'entreprise vient aux salariés*, Entreprises et Carrières, No. 756, Éditions Liaisons, Paris, 2005.

Meneche, A., *Le Capital Compétences*, <<http://www.boutique.afnor.fr>>

Instructions

- Familiarize students with the concept of intrapreneurship by having them read the article “New management principles.”
- In light of what the article shows about innovation and the new corporate culture based on collective responsibility and expertise, ask the students why they personally would like to be able to work in an intrapreneurial way. Have them justify

their answers and, if necessary, consult the table on key competencies (see preceding chapter, pages 38 to 40).

- Once the students have examined their aptitude for working in a culture that promotes innovation and professionalization, they could be asked, for purely informational and educational purposes, to fill in the following questionnaire: 10 keys to an exceptional career.*

Self-evaluation				
10 keys to an exceptional career				
The various elements composing each key attribute are listed below. Think about the attitudes and behaviours you generally adopt at work. Evaluate yourself as objectively as possible to clearly establish your strengths and the points that need improvement.				
Scale:				
Excellent: 4	Very good: 3	Good: 2	Needs improvement: 1	
Positive attitude				
I show my interest	4	3	2	1
I am in a good mood	4	3	2	1
I am open to comments and suggestions	4	3	2	1
I accept my limitations	4	3	2	1
I remain positive, despite a negative response	4	3	2	1
I recognize my strengths and my accomplishments	4	3	2	1
Independence				
I learn on my own	4	3	2	1
I am resourceful	4	3	2	1
I have a network of contacts and associates	4	3	2	1
I find solutions	4	3	2	1
Good judgment				
I can trust my instincts	4	3	2	1
I make well-informed, justifiable decisions	4	3	2	1
I ask myself how my actions and behaviours will affect the company and my colleagues	4	3	2	1
I clearly define my priorities and what requires immediate attention	4	3	2	1
I do not hesitate when specific demands are made	4	3	2	1

* This self-evaluation form was designed by Dyane Lessard, training coordinator at the practice firm, Expotech Québec.

Adaptability				
I am flexible and available	4	3	2	1
I demonstrate an open mind when the unexpected occurs	4	3	2	1
I react quickly, when necessary	4	3	2	1
I do not panic during urgent or special situations	4	3	2	1
Teamwork				
I share information	4	3	2	1
I recognize my colleagues' strengths and use them, as needed	4	3	2	1
I respect the opinions and limitations of others	4	3	2	1
I establish win-win relations with others	4	3	2	1
Communication				
I listen to others	4	3	2	1
I clearly transmit my ideas verbally and in writing	4	3	2	1
I know how to assert myself without stepping on others	4	3	2	1
I employ commonly used terms	4	3	2	1
I speak clearly and succinctly	4	3	2	1
Commitment				
I work for my employer as if I were working for myself	4	3	2	1
I think about the company's profitability	4	3	2	1
I am available to work late, if need be	4	3	2	1
Reliability				
I never miss appointments	4	3	2	1
I am on time and call if I am running late	4	3	2	1
I respect deadlines and am realistic about them	4	3	2	1
I am honest and upright	4	3	2	1
Initiative				
I have good marketing instincts	4	3	2	1
I suggest and dare to do things	4	3	2	1
I am proactive	4	3	2	1
I help my colleagues	4	3	2	1
I take action as quickly as possible	4	3	2	1
I am flexible and available	4	3	2	1
I show my versatility	4	3	2	1

Organization				
I am disciplined	4	3	2	1
I plan my tasks, scheduling enough time for each	4	3	2	1
I manage my priorities	4	3	2	1
I respect the allotted time	4	3	2	1
I always make provisions for the unexpected in my day	4	3	2	1
I file my things and documents as I receive them, always according to the same system	4	3	2	1
I write down important information	4	3	2	1
I follow up my customers and my actions	4	3	2	1
I always set goals for myself	4	3	2	1

Review of my self-evaluation

According to the self-evaluation that I just completed, what are my strengths, in other words, which elements did I rank excellent or very good?

Which **points need improvement**? What is the best way for me to improve them?

Entrepreneurship

Apparently, spending time with entrepreneurs can predispose someone to become one, simply because it seems natural to assume responsibilities and take the initiative. For people unfamiliar with this culture, it would be enlightening and beneficial to occasionally meet with entrepreneurs and ask them about their career path and their desire to start a business. A lot of people would then see entrepreneurship as the culmination of an ongoing series of initiatives and a gradual taking over of one's means of action and resources.

◆ MAIN ACTIVITY *Sollertia*

The basic focus of this activity is to introduce students to an example of a growing desire to become an entrepreneur and the subsequent sequence of events. It is a way to recognize the natural and familiar aspect of such a beginning. In short, one does not become an entrepreneur overnight, with an immediate need to foresee all the difficulties and complexity of such an undertaking. On the contrary, it happens step by step, as illustrated in the story of Sollertia.

The unique path of a one-of-a-kind company Sollertia multiplies its competencies

By Claude Turcotte

Le Devoir, June 17, 2006, Économie section, p. C1 and C5

Claude Le Bel is the founder and president of Sollertia, an amazing company that relies on a wide variety of skills, including those of designers, engineers, architects, marquee riggers and even climbers, who maintain and clean the canvas coverings. And the path taken by this entrepreneur is just as unique as the company he runs.

Although Mr. Le Bel describes himself as self-taught, everything began for him at school, in Secondary III. However, his academic career did stop after high school, with the exception of a concentration in construction electricity, which was, according to him, the beginning of his entrepreneurial training. He also mentions that he was part of the “lucky, crazy gang that worked with the Cirque du Soleil in its infancy.” He notes that he was the first technician hired by the circus, which was “like a business school” for him, though not the only one. When he was in Secondary III, he screened films during lunch hour at school. The following year, he was put in charge of the auditorium. He then gave 14 student friends technical training so they could be part of technical crews in seven comprehensive high schools.

Later, one of those friends, Guy Saint-Amour, who had become technical director of Complexe Desjardins, gave him a job to mark the building's fifth anniversary. Named technical director of Cirque du Soleil in 1984, this same friend then hired him to take charge of the circus' 40-metre diameter, 12-metre high big top. Afraid it would fall down some night during a storm, he was constantly on the alert, analyzing all the weaknesses of the unsteady structure. He now admits that, at the time, “We really had no idea what we were doing.” In fact, the young troupe was in the process of discovering an incredible universe that simply kept growing as it went along. Claude Le Bel took part in five North American tours with Cirque du Soleil between 1984 and 1991, in addition to fulfilling various special mandates as a consultant or employee, sometimes stepping in as a last-minute replacement, which kept him working all the time.

Thanks to his experience, he discovered his talent for accurately assessing problems and putting together teams capable of solving them. He calls this the “gift of finding the right people for a team of problem solvers.” However, he still had trouble identifying his true calling. The son of a carpenter, he “wavered between show business and construction.” For five years, he looked for ideas, working in film and television, for example, as a set builder and lighting technician. “I wanted to find a challenge that I could build on, instead of always starting from the beginning as a consultant,” he explains. To make people stop calling on Claude Le Bel personally, he had to build a team and start a business, which he did in January 1990, “without really knowing what would happen next, simply because I had to do something,” he confesses.

However, people kept hiring him as a consultant, like the *Légendes fantastiques* project in Drummondville, for example. Nine months later, his business still hadn’t gotten off the ground. Nevertheless, he hired one person and asked him to set up five workstations. The company’s first contract was the *École de cirque* end-of-year show, but it took Le Bel two more years to define the company’s mission. The transition was extremely difficult. He had two employees and worked nights in construction to support his family. He lost money; a customer went bankrupt. Fed up, he told his employees he was going out of business. Their response: “No, no. Go home and get some sleep, we’ll keep going.”

And they were right, because the company started getting contracts for events and, more importantly, there was a boom in soft architecture, thanks to the Commission scolaire de Montréal (CSDM) new training program for marquee riggers. In fact, Montréal is still the only place in the world to offer a school-based training program in this field. Mr. Le Bel offered to design a scale model of a marquee for the CSDM that worked exactly like an actual big top, which would significantly reduce the damage when a student made a mistake. Today, Mr. Le Bel and his company, Sollertia, contribute 270 hours of instruction to this 900-hour course, which leads to a diploma of vocational studies (DVS) and is aimed primarily at students undergoing social reintegration. Each year, the program awards 14 diplomas, with over 80% of graduates finding work in the entertainment and commercial sectors.

In 2006, Sollertia remains a small business with annual sales of approximately \$1 million. It has 13 employees, including the president, and four divisions. The first and oldest is event planning, which provides consulting services to projects in the fields of assembly, electricity, sound, etc. For example, the facilities set up on Crescent Street during the Grand Prix Formula 1 festivities are created by Sollertia.

Four years ago, Le Bel founded the research and development division, which recently launched a technological device that uses atmospheric steam to clean and degrease marquee canvases. The device, manufactured by a Laval company, uses ecological soaps and rinse agents. Until now, the fabric had to be taken down, transported to a factory, washed and then brushed with a rotating tool that caused a lot of wear and tear, explains Mr. Le Bel, who predicts a rosy future for his technology. He has also created a U.S. subsidiary and is in the process of training 25 American employees in Delaware. The first requirement for these employees is that they be climbers. The maintenance service that these washers will be part of is the third division of Sollertia, who is currently negotiating a contract with the *Cirque du Soleil* for its North American facilities.

Finally, soft architecture is playing an increasingly bigger role within the company. Sollertia is targeting the market of custom-made projects for both temporary and permanent installations. This division has seven employees who design marquees from top to bottom and from bottom to top, in other words, the canvas and the entire attendant infrastructure, be it wood, steel or aluminum. “Whatever the project, we go out and find the expertise we need,” assures Mr. Le Bel.

In his opinion, the market for the awnings and outdoor installations often used by restaurants or for parties and weddings is saturated, and therefore of no interest to him. Sollertia’s creations, notably the terrace of Bourbon Street, a club in Saint-Sauveur, have earned a number of awards. The steel structure has a 35-foot diameter and reaches a maximum height of 26 feet. The soft structure, made of white canvas, is in the shape of a spiral. When awarding its prize, the Institute of Design Montréal noted that the structure energized the space of the terrace and enlivened the area while protecting customers and employees from the elements. In fact, the design of such a piece must take everything into account, including strong winds. Sollertia also has residential customers, but very high-end. The company is currently working on a residential project in Val-Morin, involving Sollertia’s house designer, Nathalie Lortie, and Mr. Le Bel, as well as engineers from Lyon and a canvas supplier from Bordeaux, France. In short, every little detail is meticulously studied, checked and manufactured.

Mr. Le Bel notes that the company’s earnings rose 60% last year and that they are expected to grow 70% this year. In this regard, for fiscal reasons, he recently formed a holding company to oversee his four divisions and the U.S. subsidiary, which is expected to generate profits that will then be repatriated to Sollertia headquarters on St. Hubert Street in Montréal. Last year, maintenance and architecture generated 60% and 30% of earnings, respectively. Their relative contributions should remain constant this year. As for the future, Mr. Le Bel is still thinking about what he should do with his new cleaning technology, which he expects will generate a lot of demand. Should he sell franchises or not? In any event, he has no desire to adopt the Wal-Mart model and put pressure on the entire world.

Now 41 years old, with five children, he no longer puts in 80+ hours of work each week. He delegates and tends not to work more than 35 to 40 hours a week. “If someone decides to throw a party for me in 20 or 40 years, I’d like them to say that I was a boss with a humane management style. I have no ambition to make billions of dollars or be known around the world,” he concludes.

Instructions

1. Suggest that students read the article “The unique path of a one-of-a-kind company,” either alone or as a group. Describing a path of innovation or rather a succession of exemplary opportunities, the article can be analyzed from a number of different angles.
2. Analyze the article using the most suitable method for the group. Suggestions for a discussion of the text: What happened to Claude Le Bel when he was in high school? How did he end up becoming an entrepreneur after screening films? He learned to operate a projection room and, more importantly, trained others to do so (expertise and leadership).
3. Analyze the circumstances:
 - Importance of networking: Guy Saint-Amour gives him a first contract at Complexe Desjardins and a second one for the Cirque du Soleil.
 - Through these work experiences, he discovered his strengths, but still needed to find his calling. This illustrates how self-knowledge comes from taking action and reflecting on your experience.
 - Turning point: his employees refused to give up and then the contracts started to roll in. An excellent example of intrapreneurship!
 - The role of innovation: a scale model of a marquee for a vocational training program, a new technology for washing and degreasing canvases, the export of expertise to Delaware, custom-made, high-end projects. He avoids competition by using innovation and catering to an exclusive market niche.
 - And what about the vision, leadership and management style of entrepreneur Claude Le Bel?
 - What does the Sollertia story teach us about business creation? If it were a fable, what would its final sentence, proverb or conclusion be? These are

just some of the questions participants could be asked.

◆ SUPPLEMENTAL ACTIVITY

1. The class as a group or a few students could organize meetings with business-people to ask them about their story and career path, more specifically with regard to the vocational or technical training program in which the students are enrolled.
2. How does one start a business in concrete terms, in his or her chosen field: in agriculture, fashion, food and beverage services, beauty care, forestry, etc.? In this case, it is a matter of noting the specifics of the field in question (for example, one must accumulate five years of work experience in the construction industry before becoming a contractor).

◆ ENRICHMENT ACTIVITY *The entrepreneurial profile*

The question sometimes comes from the students themselves, becoming a logical part of the decision-making process: do I have what it takes to be an entrepreneur? A number of different questionnaires address this question, some of them available on-line, while others are available from resource persons.

For information purposes, here is a list of evaluation tools available to students.

Self-assessment questionnaire for entrepreneurial qualities (in French)

<<http://gpsao.educ.usherbrooke.ca/questionnaires.htm>>

This questionnaire is suitable for students in both vocational and technical training programs. Its internal consistency is very good, thanks to its references to the core constructs of the field; the only drawback is that although all scales are theoretically distinct, they tend to provide the same results. The test does, however, reveal whether or not the respondent shares many entrepreneurial

attitudes and values. It also plays an important pedagogical role by introducing a number of entrepreneurial traits: energy and commitment, motivation, results-oriented, initiative and creativity, self-competition and, finally, leadership. The questionnaire was written by Danielle L'Heureux, Marcelle Gingras and Pierrette Dupont, professors at Université de Sherbrooke.

Inventory of entrepreneurial characteristics, short version (in French)

<<http://www.entrepreneurship.qc.ca>>, on the “autres sources” tab, Questionnaire ISCE

The author of this questionnaire is Yvon Gasse, a professor at Université Laval and Director of the Centre for Entrepreneurship and SMEs. The inventory lists sixty-nine (69) statements grouped into ten dimensions: performance, power, independence, confidence, perseverance, stress, ability, innovation, cognitive behaviour and active behaviour. The statements are phrased in such a way that they all express a positive trait associated with entrepreneurial qualities. Despite the obvious fact that participants can control their results, the inventory is more useful and revealing for self-knowledge than as a means of selection. In addition, respondents can correct and compile the results themselves, which is certainly a plus in terms of class management.

Self-assessment of my entrepreneurial profile (in French)

<<http://www.inforoutefpt.org/entrepreneuriat/default.htm>> under Collégial : L'esprit d'entreprendre au collégial – De l'idée à l'action, go to Activité 4-Profil entrepreneurial

The questionnaire in this document includes forty-eight first-person statements such as “I have already launched and completed a project that I managed.” Respondents rate each statement to indicate how well it describes them: very much; more or less; depends on the situation; or not at all.

The statements fall under six major themes:

- Self-confidence and motivation
- Effort and sense of responsibility
- Initiative and resourcefulness
- Perseverance and determination
- Solidarity and team spirit
- The entrepreneurial experience

Respondents can compile and calculate their own results. Then they read the section on interpreting their scores for each theme.

This assessment tool is interesting because it is part of the Introduction to Entrepreneurship Measure and is accompanied by an operating guide. Essentially educational in character, it could become a very promising test if its metrological features were enhanced. In addition, the statements are easily understood and there are not too many of them.

The author of this tool is Lise Lecours, an educational consultant at Cégep de Saint-Hyacinthe and project leader for the Introduction to Entrepreneurship Measure.

Psychometric test, Performance Career*

Developed in 1999, the Performance Career test is designed to supply useful information for a variety of career-related services, including hiring, career management, academic orientation and career planning. The Performance Career test measures both personality traits and work interests. The test provides results in 35 different areas, which help explain the behaviour of the person taking the test and his or her approach to work.

Performance Career was the subject of a rigorous development process. The test's validity and reliability conform to the scientific

* For more information, contact the training centre or school's guidance department (orientation, career planning) services.

standards recognized by the Ordre des psychologues du Québec and the American Psychological Association. Accurately reflecting the specific context of Québec, the test's range of norms are adapted to different age groups and occupations. On average, it takes 40 to 45 minutes to complete the Performance Career test.

◆ ALTERNATE ACTIVITY *The Dog and the Wolf*

This fable illustrates the dilemma of having to choose between two different values: freedom and security.*

In some ways, the fable is a reflection of the entrepreneurial dilemma itself: starting a business involves resolving the conflict between freedom and security, and then moving forward. The fable reveals the difficult decision one must make, illustrating the impasse that occurs when one's options are poorly defined and we face contradictory values that are neither identified nor clear. "The Dog and the Wolf" tends to provoke a response and lead to introspection. We will come back to this reflection exercise to understand the fable's meaning and overcome the paradox. In short, starting a business, taking the initiative and offering oneself the greatest freedom of action means addressing the inevitable risk and price involved.

The Dog and the Wolf

A gaunt Wolf was almost dead with hunger when he happened to meet a House-dog who was passing by. "Ah, Cousin," said the Dog. "I knew how it would be; your irregular life will soon be the ruin of you. Why do you not work steadily as I do, and get your food regularly given to you?"

"I would have no objection," said the Wolf, "if I could only get a place."

"I will easily arrange that for you," said the Dog; "come with me to my master and you shall share my work."

So the Wolf and the Dog went towards the town together. On the way there the Wolf noticed that the hair on a certain part of the Dog's neck was very much worn away, so he asked him how that had come about.

"Oh, it is nothing," said the Dog. "That is only the place where the collar is put on at night to keep me chained up; it chafes a bit, but one soon gets used to it."

"Is that all?" said the Wolf. "Then good-bye to you, Master Dog."

*"BETTER STARVE FREE
THAN BE A FAT SLAVE."*

Instructions

- The instructor should read the fable out loud or ask for a volunteer from the class. The other students should follow along closely as the story is read, and think about what the fable means to them personally.
- Then ask the students to read the fable on their own. Reading it again will help them get all the details and better understand the text.

* Exercise taken from Daniel Bizier, *Une approche fabuleuse de l'orientation, Les Fables de La Fontaine pour choisir et décider*, Coll. Libre cours, Les Éditions Septembre, 1996. Rather than translate de La Fontaine, we have simply used Aesop's version, taken from Æsop. *Fables*, retold by Joseph Jacobs. Vol. XVII, Part 1. The Harvard Classics. New York: P.F. Collier & Son, 1909–14. <<http://www.bartleby.com/17/1>>

- Point out the fact that readers usually identify with one character or the other. Discuss what this choice says about their approach to training and professional development.
- Have the students discuss their experiences in small groups or as a class. Note the discussion points, the issues raised, the questions asked and any ideas about the future.

In the end, some people may wish to be both dog and wolf, perhaps starting as one and then becoming the other. However, this still reflects a desire to be an entrepreneur, though one needs a strategy for doing so successfully. This strategy involves finding out what has to be done to become an entrepreneur or prepare oneself for entrepreneurship. Ultimately, for many people, the desire for security wins out, a legitimate option that clarifies the type of career path they should follow.

Mentoring and Other Resources

The prospect of becoming an entrepreneur one day means finding out how to do so, which, in turn, leads to an indeterminate period of incubation and active preparation. During this time, one must develop a vision, or rather a plan for the future.

Louis Jacques Filion,* holder of the Rogers – J.A. Bombardier Chair of Entrepreneurship (at the HEC Montréal school of business), explains what is involved in this active preparation stage.

“In business, the visionary process is built on knowledge and one’s understanding of a sector of activity. In the case of entrepreneurs, they have to understand the sector’s overall evolution. To position their products on the

* Filion, L.J., *Pour une vision inspirante en milieu scolaire*, Presses Inter Universitaires, Cap-Rouge, 2005, p. 13.

market, they must be able to identify the leaders and be familiar with the competition’s pricing policies, configurations of the distribution networks and the promotional and advertising strategies for the various market segments targeted. They have to know who does what and be up to date on organizational architecture and both mega and short-term trends. Otherwise, entrepreneurs will be unable to detect business opportunities and use their unique approach to target a specific niche.”

“Although some of the entrepreneurs in our study did not make any major innovations, they did provide exemplary service to a very specific market. Their competitive prices, product quality or performance time gave them an advantage; this is what is called a competitive edge. Our research also showed that successful entrepreneurs are those who decide to move into the market gradually, using the “step-by-step” approach. They learn to carefully define and limit their activities, focus on a single goal, and target a single specific objective at a time and achieve it. Their initial choice of target as well as any subsequent adaptations are crucial. Entrepreneurs must follow a strategy and it becomes difficult, or even impossible, to realize their vision if they do not learn to focus their efforts on reaching realistic targets.”

In short, the main stages of the visionary process are to gain a good understanding of the sector, identify an unfulfilled need that represents a business opportunity and successfully target a niche using a unique approach.*

* L.J. Filion 2005, page 21.

Finally, the author makes another very pertinent observation: “The study of entrepreneurs who started their businesses when they were young reveals that it took them five to ten years to truly understand the sector well enough, even though most believed that they had understood it within one or two years.”*

◆ **ACTIVITY** **Active preparation**

Instructions

- Ask the students to brainstorm a list of what they believe are the necessary steps in becoming an entrepreneur and successfully starting a business. This open-ended activity should produce a long disorganized list of diverse responses.
- Refer to the excerpts from L.J. Filion’s work to review what is missing and what is needed, in other words, what one must discover and learn. Highlight the fact that entrepreneurs have to enjoy learning as they go, since their work requires them to constantly adjust their vision, consult sources of information, visit places they should be familiar with and create a network of contacts.

Information on the entrepreneurial way of life

Throughout the vocational and technical training process, students can participate in a variety of entrepreneurial activities to learn about and prepare for entrepreneurship.

Association of student entrepreneur clubs (ACEE)

As of 2005, there were 13 university clubs, 50 college clubs and 19 clubs in vocational

training centres. These clubs are organized to help students acquire tools for entering the business world.

How it works

“To start a student entrepreneur club, the Association begins by identifying a resource person, usually a teacher, who will help the students get the club off the ground and subsequently provide support. Once it is operational, the club must find students interested in entrepreneurship. It then organizes activities for them, like meetings with local entrepreneurs who discuss the life of an entrepreneur. We present as many business models as possible,” notes Micheline Locas,* “like co-ops, self-employment, the social economy, the manufacturing sector, commerce, etc.”

A second type of activity is to help the students enter the local business community. The club joins an association like the chamber of commerce so club members can take turns attending the activities organized by these associations of businesspeople. “This helps young people make contacts and start building their very own business network,” explains Mrs. Locas.

The third type of activity is to meet with people whose work involves helping businesses: financial institutions, business start-up and support organizations, venture capital firms, local development centres and other similar organizations.**

Obviously, it is important to know whether such a club exists at your vocational training centre or college. If there isn’t one, interested teachers are invited to contact the Association’s founder.

* L.J. Filion 2005, page 25.

* The association was founded in 1991 by Micheline Locas. She is the CEO and the organization is housed at Cégep de Drummondville.

** Froment Dominique, *Les Affaires*, July 23, 2005.

Québec Entrepreneurship Contest

The Québec Entrepreneurship Contest, which targets students in vocational and technical training, among others, also plays a major role in educating students about entrepreneurship. (See <www.inforoutefpt.org/entrepreneuriat> for more information.) One division rewards young entrepreneurs for their first successful efforts. In 2005, Synetik, a company based in the Lanaudière region, was awarded the Youth Entrepreneurship Challenge Grand Prize, which was accompanied by a cash prize of \$20,000. Synetik Design develops ergonomic equipment and accessories to reduce the risk of work accidents.

Other winners (2005):

- Coopérative de solidarité WiFi put together a wireless high-speed Internet network in Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Social Economy category.
- Qui lait cru! cheese maker, Commerce category.
- MHV Services d'hygiène industrielle de Montréal, Services category.
- Bedon Mignon, a small business that makes baby food, Agri-food category.
- Plastique Rotek, a manufacturer of plastic utility trailers, Business Operation / Processing / Production category.
- Metafoam Technologies, a small business in the Montérégie region that develops metallic foams using an innovative process, Technological and Technical Innovation category.

These few examples illustrate the wide variety of business opportunities that exist as well as the sometimes obvious link with vocational and technical training programs.

◆ ACTIVITY *Relevant courses*

Obviously, there is a gap between wanting to start a business and realizing such a project. However, this gap can be narrowed by taking formal courses on business creation and management. To this end, students should know about the strategic usefulness of the Starting a Business program, 5764.

This 330-hour AVS program targets the following competencies:

- Start a business and apply sales techniques
- Apply concepts in business administration
- Negotiate financing for a business
- Develop a business plan

Among other elements, the program looks at the business proposal, the composition of a work organization and what is involved in market analysis and customer service, including sales techniques.

The Starting a Business program is offered in French in every administrative region throughout the province, in no fewer than 75 institutions. (Visit <<http://www.inforoutefpt.org/home.htm>> to find out where it is being offered in English.)

Students should note that it is not necessarily a good idea to take this course immediately after finishing their vocational or technical training program. A more opportune time may be a few years later so that one gets the most out of the course. Once one has registered, one cannot take it again. To find out more, students interested in this training should consult the following Web site (in French):

<<http://inforoutefpt.org/lancement>>

There is also a short program on entrepreneurship: *Gérer efficacement ma nouvelle entreprise* (Effective Management Techniques for My New Business). This program consists of workshops given by experts in their field. Target clientele: new business entrepreneurs with only a few years' experience and budding entrepreneurs who have already developed a business plan. For students ages 18 to 35. For more information: contact the Services to business and industry office closest to you by visiting the <www.inforoutefpt.org/sae> site (in French) and clicking on "SAE par region."

◆ **ACTIVITY** **Mentoring**

The decision to be an entrepreneur brings with it an inescapable element of risk, the unknown and learning. As a result, people like to reduce the discomfort that this creates by turning to resource people, like mentors.

Less than half of all new businesses manage to last at least five years. However, among entrepreneurs who enjoy the support and supervision of a mentor, the success rate jumps to 80%! Obviously, mentors are an important resource, which in no way diminishes the work done by the actual entrepreneurs. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness. Instead, it is proof of one's intelligence and determination to reach goals.

To gauge the importance of having a mentor, students have only to think about what

they need to know about their sector of activity and target clientele before launching into concrete and costly efforts. Benefiting from a mentor's experience enables a mentee to avoid many mistakes. Furthermore, by offering access to their networks of contacts, mentors help students advance much more quickly.

In Québec, the ultimate source for information about mentoring is the Fondation de l'entrepreneurship. Students can search the Web site (<<http://www.entrepreneurship.qc.ca>>) to find a mentoring program in their region or contact the Fondation directly at 1 800 661-2160 or by e-mail at <mentoratdaffaires@entrepreneurship.qc.ca>

Comments and testimonials

"Mentors don't take the wheel, they sit in the passenger seat."

"They have nothing to sell and are not allowed to invest in their mentee's company."

"Their only compensation is the satisfaction of seeing their mentee acquire management skills."

"They guide us through the maze of business networks, give us references and, most importantly, believe in us and encourage us. When I leave a meeting with my mentor, my notebook is full and I am raring to go."

A New Orientation: Enrichment (cont.)



This chapter returns to the subject matter of Chapter 1, which discussed the idea of enrichment without actually demonstrating it.

The following text shows how the three modules of Option 2 enrich the already existing goals and approaches of vocational and technical training.

Work-study programs in vocational and technical training

The three modules are obviously in line with the goal of work-study programs: the internalization of competencies through their development and implementation.

The three modules support and can enrich the students' development process: draft a training plan, realize this plan, implement and reflect on the training and the activities

performed. These modules fit in nicely with the students' self-evaluation of their professional, personal and social behaviours at work and their adoption of regular, productive activities and the corporate culture.

The <www.inforoutefpt.org/ate> site includes a pedagogical guide to work-study programs, which lists the benefits to students of a workplace practicum (page 12):

- increased motivation for study
- improved self-esteem
- increased competency
- enhanced commitment to the training process
- recognition and appreciation of employability competencies

These benefits are found to be closely linked to entrepreneurial characteristics such as a commitment to work and self-confidence, a fact supported by the information in this document.

In short, the entrepreneurial aspect runs through practically all the activities performed by the students (page 32, *Guide pédagogique*):

- take an active role in the work-study training process
- take responsibility for their professional future
- be effective learners within the company
- demonstrate openness to others in learning situations
- make allowances for risk, ambiguity and complexity

- make every effort possible to reach their goals

While entrepreneurial values are most certainly in the service of vocational and technical training, they are in the service of work-study programs even more because the basic professional development issues of career planning, professionalization and entering the work force are all present and integrated into work practicums.

Each of these issues is also the subject of a specific vocational training course, i.e. The Trade and the Training Process, Job Search Techniques and Entering the Work Force.

The Trade and the Training Process Code: 961012 Duration: 30 hours

Competency: – Determine their suitability for the trade and the training process

Elements of the Competency: – Be familiar with the nature of the trade
– Understand the program of study
– Confirm their career choice

Participation Criteria:

- Phase 1: – Gather information on most of the topics to be covered
– Express their views on the trade, relating these views to the information they have gathered
- Phase 2: – Express their opinions on some of the requirements that they will have to meet in order to practise the trade
– Express their views on the training program
- Phase 3: – Write a report that sums up their preferences, attitudes and knowledge in the field as well as their personal qualities
– Explain why they choose to continue or withdraw from the training program

Comments

It is important to remember that the career planning module covers most of these stipulations, as well as the value of a career choice. The mobility provided, the variety of workplaces, the range of applications, the possibility of being a supervisor, self-employed or even starting one's own business all demonstrate that one can follow a career path towards greater responsibility and freedom of choice and movement.

Job Search Techniques Code: 755241 Duration: 15 hours

Competency: – Carry out a job search

- Elements of the Competency:
- Plan a job search
 - Write a résumé
 - Participate in a job interview

There are many ways to train students to carry out a job search. Have the students write a report on their personal qualities, how these qualities relate to the job sought and whether they comply with the requirements of this type of job. Another method is to highlight suitable behaviour during a job interview, relevant responses, and the need to express oneself clearly.

Comments

In terms of these objectives, the professionalization module is likely to make a major contribution by introducing the vocabulary needed to clearly explain the personal component and by putting together an initial list of students' key competencies. The original and enriching aspect of the module lies in the fact that students are looking for work-related situations and concrete examples that will help them give pertinent, persuasive answers to job interview questions.

Entering the Work Force Code: 960265 Duration: 75 hours

Competency: – Enter the work force

- Elements of the Competency:
- Be aware of their position in a company
 - Perform activities in the workplace
 - Learn about the different changes in perception that result from a practicum in the workplace

Learning Context:

- Phase 1:
- Taking steps to obtain a practicum position
 - Learning about the terms and conditions of the practicum
 - Learning about the structure of the company
 - Learning how their tasks and position fit into the structure of the company
- Phase 2:
- Observing and performing work-related activities
 - Observing the work environment
 - Performing or participating in various work-related tasks
 - Ensuring that the practicum supervisor is satisfied with the activities performed
 - Sharing their observations on the work environment and the tasks performed in the company
- Phase 3:
- Comparing their initial views with the reality of the workplace
 - Comparing their perception of the trade before and after the practicum
 - Evaluating how the experience will affect their career choice

Instructional Guidelines:

- Maintain close ties between the school and the establishment
- Make it possible for students to observe and perform work-related tasks
- Make sure that the trainees are supervised by a responsible employee of the company
- Ensure regular support and supervision of the students
- Intervene if difficulties or problems arise
- Encourage the students to engage in discussions and express themselves, especially when comparing their initial perceptions with their workplace experience

Participation Criteria:

- Phase 1: – Gather information on the practicum and the structure of the company
 – Describe the tasks planned for the trainee
- Phase 2: – Observe the company's instructions with regard to the activities authorized for trainees, work schedules and rules of professional ethics
 – Produce a report containing their observations on at least five aspects of the work environment and the tasks carried out during the practicum
- Phase 3: – Discuss their workplace experiences and indicate how it will affect their future career choice

Comments

Clearly, the objectives and approaches set forth in vocational training reflect a concern that students get experiential learning through an initial foray into the workplace and through reflection on their experience.

The professionalization module highlights reflective practice, which encourages students to reflect on their professional development and begin to recognize their competencies and expertise.

Therefore, the principle of doing more than just the prescribed work makes a significant contribution to enriching the vocational and technical training process, particularly, in this case, because it recognizes students' independence and their ability to handle work-related situations.

At the same time, the entering the work force module makes clear that innovative businesses recruit vocational and technical training graduates who exhibit professionalism and an entrepreneurial spirit.

College level

Competency: Analyze the occupation

In addition, it is important to mention the option of using the career planning module to enrich the college level course: Analyze the occupation.*

This course is offered under various names, notably “Becoming familiar with the occupation.”

Elements of the Competency:

- Describe the occupation and employment conditions
- Examine the tasks and activities of the occupation
- Examine the skills and behaviours required to practise the occupation
- Examine the legislation governing the practice of the occupation

Comments

A look at this competency proves the relevance of the career planning module and three of its components in particular: descriptions of the trade, variations of the trade and career value.

The same comment applies to the college orientation and integration session because it includes a career planning option: developing an academic and career plan as part of the orientation process, plus exploring a technical training program.

School-run businesses and practice firms

Finally, we would like to emphasize the possibility of using Option 2 as part of a stay in a practice firm where young people learn to run a simulated or virtual business. The professionalization module designed for practicums and work-study programs applies very well to this other context.**

* See <www.inforoutefpt.org> for information on the Achievement Context and Performance Criteria.

** Exportech Québec is a good example. To contact the company: <exportech2@cegep-fxg.qc.ca> (Dyane Lessard).

Also see <www.garneautravail.com>, a real, student-run company. For information: Stéphane Ross, coordinator of the school-run business, telephone (418) 688-8310, local 2578, or <sgross@cegep-fxg.qc.ca>

Conclusion



This exploration of how entrepreneurial values serve vocational and technical training led to a discovery: changes in work are all part of a new service economy and an increase in complexity, uncertainty, novelty and innovation. There will still be businesses where prescribed work predominates, but the true wave of the future is work that involves handling the unexpected and constantly adjusting to the market and communications. We know that this will have a significant impact on vocational training, gradually steering it towards the intrapreneurial and entrepreneurial culture.