



Career Education Newsletter

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The Working World Isn't What It Used To Be

By Stephanie Abba from www.schoolfinder.com

It's not your parents' working world out there. The working world is transforming. Very few people work at the same job for their whole career and retire with a nice gold watch and a cushy pension. That's what used to happen - remember *The Wonder Years*? But people who are leaving school today will most likely have many different jobs, probably in many different fields. Some jobs will be short-term, some longer-term. The lifetime jobs that your grandparents (or maybe even your parents) had are, in most cases, long gone. Many people today work contract to contract, or even project to project.

And educational standards and expectations have changed too. Take my father for instance. He's been with the same company since the 1970s, and has moved quite nicely up the corporate ladder. But he didn't have a university degree when he started there, and now it's rare that someone applies to work in his

department without some form of education.

How can you prepare yourself for the sometimes, uncertain job market that you'll have to face when you leave school? How can your education help prepare you to be an employable person with marketable skills?

I contacted Deborah MacNamara, a career counsellor at Kwantlen University College in British Columbia, to ask her how careers and work are transformed when work is structured around individual projects rather than a full-time regular work-week.

Stephanie: How is the job market different these days than it has been in the past?

Deborah: It is pretty much agreed upon that we are in the midst of another Industrial Revolution and the structure of work is transforming as we move into a knowledge-based economy. Instead of selling our labour to make things on an assembly line, more and more people in the North American labour market are selling their skills and knowledge. It is not enough to just have knowledge; we must be able to use the knowledge we have and apply it to problems in order to create solutions and new knowledge. For example, the Palm Pilot is a product that required an application of existing knowledge involving computers, electronics, and time management practices.

Work is increasingly being scheduled around **problem solving**. Organizations continue to offer full-time employment to people who have the key knowledge to the overall functioning of the organization, but many organizations are experimenting with new forms of work arrangements, including part-time, seasonal, contract and consulting. Workers are called in on an as-needed basis to provide their knowledge and skills when there is demand for their work.

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Because work is no longer structured according to the rhythms of the assembly line, there is more flexibility for people in their work and in the type of work arrangement they may have with a company. In the Canadian labour market, only 49 per cent of the working population actually have full-time regular employment; the remaining 51 per cent work have part-time, seasonal or contractual work arrangements.

Many of our expectations regarding work as well as many social and economic institutions (unemployment insurance, maternity leave, etc.) are centred on the idea of full-time employment, but full-time work is no longer the dominant reality for many people in the labour market. Given that work is transforming and that we may be selling our knowledge on a part-time, temporary or contractual basis, there is a need to understand how these changes in work arrangements affect our lives, our expectations and our approach to our work and our careers.

Stephanie: What skills do students need to learn to stay 'in the loop'?

Deborah: Given the transition to a knowledge-based economy, we need to be able to not only have knowledge but to be able to apply that knowledge and create new solutions and ideas. One key idea is that everyone needs to be a lifelong learner. If you want to stay current, you have to keep learning. This learning doesn't have to be only formal educational activities, but includes part-time non-credit courses, reading books relating to the field, and learning from others. If you think about the Internet and all of the jobs that are related to it, you'll see that many of the people in that field in the beginning had little formal training and were mostly self-taught.

Other skills sets that are important in today's labour market are entrepreneurial skills, problem-solving skills and interpersonal skills including teamwork, leadership and communication. This last set is critical, as most work opportunities are found through connections with other people, and these are often people you don't know very well. It is important to be able to network, to present yourself in a positive manner and to communicate effectively.

Stephanie: What are the questions that students ask you the most frequently?

Deborah:

Students usually want to know what the labour market is like and if they will have jobs when they finish their post secondary educational program. No one can predict the future, but being aware of key labour market trends can help ease the uncertainty of work possibilities. I personally adhere to Nuala Beck's approach; she is a Toronto-based economist who advocates that people should study things they like and then find ways to apply that knowledge in the labour market. For example, if you like writing, you might consider becoming a technical writer.

Students often ask me what type of jobs they can get with a bachelor of arts degree. I usually tell students that these degrees are general and broad and are designed to help them become good critical thinkers, develop their writing and communication skills and provide them with knowledge in a particular area.

However, education is only 50 per cent of the deal. Employers also want to see what experience you have; students need to try to get practical experience in the areas they are interested in through volunteer work in the workplace. These work experiences can help students better decide what kind of work they want to do in the future and will also provide them with the real work experience that employers are looking for.

The reality is that people need to learn to manage their careers. They need to ask themselves what skills will make them employable and how their skills will fill needs in the labour market. I think that in the next 20 years we will see a change in how people approach their careers; I think that those who take a proactive approach will be increasingly successful in the labour market.

Living Life To The Fullest

First I was dying to finish high school and start college. And then I was dying to finish college and start working. And then I was dying to marry and have children. And then I was dying for my children to grow old enough so I could return to work. And then I was dying to retire. And now, I am dying.....and suddenly realize I forgot to live.

- Author Unknown

TOP THREE WEB SITES

1. Renaissance Learning Kits

If you have not yet ordered your Information Kit and CD-ROM from Renaissance Learning, now is the time to do so. These are available at no cost and there are four to choose from, including Math and Literacy kits, along with two Reader kits. For more info, please visit:

<http://www.savings4teachers.com/renaissance.php>

2. Certificates4Teachers.com

The name says it all. If you are looking for printable certificates, awards or diplomas at no-cost, this is the place for you. It is already a very comprehensive site, and we will continue to add to the collection as more samples become available. To preview this site, please visit

<http://www.certificates4teachers.com>

3. TEAMS Distance Learning

TEAMS Distance Learning is a cost effective way to provide many new, as well as continuing, teachers with content mastery, skill, enhancement and instructional modeling in areas of the elementary and middle school curricula. To find classroom projects and many other useful resources go to:

<http://teams.lacoe.edu/>

Chain Reaction

You can easily adapt this game to many areas of the curriculum. The teacher write's a category on the board – jobs for example. Each student writes the letters A-Z on a sheet of paper. The students then have 5 minutes to create an alphabetical list of as many jobs as they can think of. Then the game begins. The 1st student must tell the name of a job. The second student must give the name of a job that begins with the last letter of the job given by the first person. The third must name a job that begins with the last letter of the second persons job and so on. One at a time students are eliminated.

It's Never Too Early

Often I have the opportunity to go around to schools within the Western Quebec School Board to talk to teachers and speak with groups of students about the importance of career education and personal development. When I ask secondary school students how many have thought about a career path, I'm always shocked at the response – about half of secondary school students say they have no career goals, nor any plans for exploring career options.

Students who do not get the opportunity to explore different career options throughout their school life enter post secondary education at a huge disadvantage, often applying for the wrong courses and later on dropping out. Because they lack this focus and direction which is so necessary for choosing the right educational path students may often find themselves in unfulfilling, unsatisfying careers.

To tackle this problem the Western Quebec School Board have implemented the Guidance Oriented Approach to Learning of which many schools, teachers and students are seeing the advantages.

Through GOAL students are given the opportunity to explore different career paths so that they become more aware of the opportunities available to them. Furthermore this is being introduced at the elementary level and in all subject areas. This makes learning in the classroom more relevant to students, helping them to understand and see the bigger picture.

For information and resources for GOAL please contact Kelly Butler at kbutler@wqsb.qc.ca or (819) 684 1770

Quotes for Teachers – Be Inspired for the New Year!

“In youth we learn; in age we understand” (Von Ebner-Eschenbach)

“The greater the obstacle, the more glory you will have overcoming it” (Moliere)

“It isn't the load that weighs us down it's the way we carry it” (Anon)

For Students:

Exam Stress

A little bit of stress can be good for you – it keeps your body alert and makes you work even harder! But when exams get to much, the stress can show in your body:

Exam stress can make you:

Feel tired, ache all over, cry and feel sad, have panic attacks, have broken sleep patterns, suffer from stomach upsets, have itchy skin rashes, you are more prone to colds and flu

How to beat it?

Make sure you get plenty of sleep, have little breaks when you are studying, keep some time for yourself, don't over do it, eat more fresh fruit, get some exercise

Your Career Path

Written By Joe Lund – President of DeVry Institute of Technology in Calgary.

If you haven't started thinking about your career path, here are some suggestions to help you get started:

Define your personality type

Knowing your personality type can help you match your natural interests and abilities to a career. For example, do you prefer to work with people or on your own? If you like helping people, a career in sales might be for you. However, if you like to work on your own, you might be better off in a career that allows for independent activities such as research or writing. Knowing yourself is the first step to understanding what type of career will be most fulfilling to you.

Evaluate your interests

Do you love to draw? Solve problems? Travel? Many different interests can be part of a successful career. If you can do what you love, your career will be much more fulfilling, and knowing your interests will help you evaluate potential career opportunities.

Investigate potential career fields

Ask family members or other people you know about their careers. If you have a field that interests you, ask your parents or teachers if they know someone in the field. A great way to understand what a career entails is to spend a day at work with someone in that field. You'll get a much better idea of what their job is like day-to-day. Even if your parents' specific careers do not interest you, ask if you can spend a day at their company. You can learn about other jobs within their company and may find something else that interests you.

Take advantage of resources and programs at your school

Attend career days at your school, or ask your counselor about different career paths and resources to find out about them. Your school may have programs that use critical thinking and analytical problem-solving exercises to help you develop goals and objectives and map out the education that will help get you there.

DeVry, for example, provides a resource that has helped students bridge the gap between education and careers for over 25 years through its high school career exploration called Future Tense. This program helps high school juniors and seniors pinpoint natural traits they have that relate directly to a certain profession, allowing students to identify careers that might fit their aptitudes and personalities.

Explore the internet

The Web is an incredibly useful tool in the career development process. There are dozens of informative career and college Web sites, such as www.monster.ca or DeVry's www.itsworking.org, that allow students to investigate the required education, training, average starting salary and employment outlook for hundreds of career fields.

While these suggestions will help you get started in finding a career that is right for you, one of the most important pieces of advice I have for you is this: Start early. With so many careers out there, it will most likely some take time to discover a career that interests you. That's okay - investing time now will help you avoid uncertainty later on, during your college career, and put you on the right path to discovering the perfect career for you.

Cooperative Learning in School

“Cooperation is a form of collaboration, it is “working together to accomplish shared goals” (Johnson and Johnson, 1989)

Cooperative based learning is becoming increasingly popular with teachers. There are also many benefits to using cooperative learning in the classroom, and it can easily be integrated into whatever subject you are teaching at any grade level. If you would like to incorporate more cooperative learning based activities here is a great website to go to where you can download FREE resources and lesson plans in subject areas including:

- English Literature Activities
- Citizenship Activities
- Foundation and Early Years Activities
- Geography Activities
- Literacy/Language Arts Activities
- Math’s Activities
- Science Activities

The website is:

<http://www.collaborativelearning.org/onlineworkshops.html>

Thank you to Teachers

I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the principals and teachers for your continued support in Guidance Oriented Approach to Learning. In the last two years I have had the opportunity to visit all the schools within the Western Quebec School Board talking to and learning from teachers and students, as well as being able to give workshops to students of all age groups. I have learned much and traveled far and this would not have been possible without the commitment and inspiration of the teachers and school staff. Thank you so much!

Kelly Butler - career education consultant

Noranda School Teachers

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the teachers at Noranda School for their constant encouragement, support, and participation in the Aim Higher project.

The high school teachers immediately proposed to incorporate Aim Higher into their lesson plans by helping students write their resumes and cover letters. Not only have teachers been accepting and supportive of students going out into the community to Job Shadow, but they have opened their classrooms to a number of guest speakers from our community who have volunteered to come in to discuss their careers with students.

The elementary teachers welcomed the Director from our local SPCA, an employee, and ‘Daisy’ in to speak to students about the importance of caring for their pets, the duties of the SPCA, and how to protect themselves if they were to be attacked by a dog. The grades 4, 5, and 6 teachers allowed me to bring in three Huskies (Local Junior-Major Hockey team) players to discuss the importance of teamwork, cooperation, and the acceptance of those who are different with the students.

The positive feedback from our community about Noranda School and the students has been overwhelming! This is a great start to the Aim Higher project, and I couldn’t have accomplished this much without the support and encouragement from the teachers!

From myself and the students at Noranda School, THANK YOU!!!!

Kathryn Austin (Community Animator)

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Lesson Plan – A Puzzling Proposition

Goal setting is a process where you attempt to visualize the end before you start a project. Many students do not take the time to think about where they are headed as a destination after High School. They are happy to start and simply continue the journey. This activity demonstrates the difficulties of not having a clear goal in mind when you begin and attempt to continue your activity without having a clear goal in mind.

Time Required: 25 minutes

Materials needed: Four different simple puzzles (20-40 pieces) each placed in a manila envelope along with a photocopy of the puzzle box cover.

Activity: Prior to starting the activity, the manila envelopes containing the puzzle pieces should be set up in four separate stations in the room and the photocopies of the box covers should be taken out of the envelopes and set up as follows:

- Envelope A – photocopy set on top of envelope.
- Envelope B – photocopy removed and not available to students.
- Envelope C – photocopy removed and set on envelope B.
- Envelope D – photocopy removed from station and pieces of the puzzle taken out and placed upside down (pieces must remain face down for the remainder of the activity)

This will produce the following set up:

- Envelope A – pieces used face up with the correct picture.
- Envelope B – pieces used face up with the wrong picture.
- Envelope C – pieces used face up without the picture.
- Envelope D – pieces used face down without the picture.

Ideas for Activity

- With this activity you can divide the class into groups of 4 or 5 and have the students allocated to a station.
- You can put the students into groups and each group can spend a certain amount of time at each station. Each group will get to try each puzzle set up. Announce that the goal of this activity is to complete all four puzzles in the next 15 minutes and that all members must be involved in assembling the puzzles. Every three minutes rotate the groups.

Discussion

1. Ask which group or which place they worked the hardest.
2. Which puzzle was completed first? Why was that?
3. Which puzzle was more difficult: puzzle B or C?
4. Which puzzle was the most difficult? Why
5. How important is it to have a clear picture of what the finished product will look like when working on your career plans.
6. How important is it that you check your progress and develop your plan.
7. How did a clear picture of the goal help the success of the project in the lessons.

Extension Activity

Complete the Lesson Plan – My Action Plan in the career education lesson plans or contact Kelly Butler for a student action plan booklet at kbutler@wqsb.qc.ca