

## Program Content

---

Competency development in the Work Skills program is based on training content that can be broken down into four major types of resources to be mobilized:

- a learning process
- strategies
- attitudes and behaviours that foster job retention
- documents and other resources

The learning process for each practicum is divided into three phases: preparation, performance and integration. The actions required of students are grouped together by phase. This approach is essentially intended to show how activities are conducted in a work-study approach.

The strategies are also grouped together by phase. They were selected on the basis of their relevance to each phase, but can also be used in other phases as needed.

The attitudes and behaviours that foster job retention are presented in the table entitled “Appropriate Attitudes and Behaviours.” This is not an exhaustive list; rather, it contains behaviours and attitudes that meet employers’ needs and improve employability.

The section below entitled Documents and Other Resources contains an introduction to the *Directory of Semiskilled Trades*, an essential resource in this program, and the *Guide to Organizing Practicums in the Workplace*, which is useful in planning practicums.

## Learning Process

The learning process in the Work Skills program is divided into three phases: preparation for the practicum, performance in the practicum and integration. It is a dynamic, iterative and flexible process that can be adapted to students' needs and the available resources. The teacher and practicum supervisor in

the workplace must support students throughout the learning process, which will be applied as often as necessary during the two-year program.

### Preparation

Preparation is a determining factor in the students' choice of practicum. During this phase, students must apply all of their knowledge, as well as their personal and occupational profile, which they established in the Preparation for the Job Market program, to choose a practicum based on their interests and aptitudes, particularly those acquired or developed in the Introduction to the World of Work program. This phase also provides them

with access to the information they need to make an informed choice. It enables them to focus on their training needs, envision different ways of meeting them, increase their motivation and alleviate their fears about undertaking a practicum.

#### The students must:

- take advantage of their work-related and volunteering experience
- define their interests
- recognize their aptitudes and potential
- validate their perceptions by consulting people they trust
- identify the important elements to consider (e.g. employment sector, nature of tasks, distance and transportation options, specific requirements)
- identify the knowledge they need to perform the tasks
- envision expected attitudes and behaviours
- anticipate the resources they can use
- determine their first and second choice of practicum
- review the preparation phase

## Performance

At this phase, students focus on the development of the targeted specific competencies, as well as on the adoption of attitudes and behaviours expected in the workplace where they will be doing their practicum. They

use the necessary knowledge, methods and techniques to perform their tasks and conform to the related legal and regulatory provisions.

### The students must:

- become familiar with the work context and organization, the culture of the work environment, appropriate behaviours, etc.
- make sure they understand the tasks to be performed: ask questions, pay attention to instructions and reformulate them as needed
- become familiar with the supervisory structure, communication methods, facilities and work tools
- follow instructions, respect deadlines and do their best
- during the practicum, check with their supervisor or work colleagues that they are meeting requirements and expectations, and make any necessary adjustments
- review the performance phase

## Integration

This phase gives students an opportunity to reflect on all their practicum activities and take a critical look at the quality of their adaptation and training in the workplace. This reflection will enable them to discover their strengths and learning, and to identify any necessary improvements and determine strategies for making them. They may also examine how much

the practicum enabled them to validate their perception of the employment sector they chose and whether they are still interested in it. They will then be able to plan the next step in their training.

### The students must:

- evaluate the quality of their adaptation and performance in the workplace
- take a critical look at different work methods and uses of resources
- take stock of their discoveries and determine how they enrich their personal and occupational profile
- consider their attitudes and behaviours, evaluate their consequences and make any necessary adjustments
- consider the effectiveness of the strategies used to overcome difficulties, especially in unforeseen circumstances
- consider different ways of improving their performance
- anticipate applying their competencies in other contexts
- reflect on the integration phase

These strategies are useful resources that enable students to improve their learning approach and performance during the practicum. Students with learning difficulties will most likely need a variety of strategies to take charge of their performance. They must learn to recognize the need to use strategies in order to succeed, to evaluate the effectiveness of the ones they use and to develop new ones as needed. The following table contains strategies associated with each of the phases in the process. Some may be used in other phases as well.

Preparation Strategies	Performance Strategies	Integration Strategies
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Learning about the different employment sectors:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• talking to workers, parents, school staff, friends, classmates, etc.</li> <li>• consulting different resources: the <i>Directory of Semiskilled Trades</i>, <i>Inforoute de la formation professionnelle</i>, <i>Emploi-Québec</i>, <i>REPÈRES</i>, etc.</li> <li>• determining the employment sectors that correspond to their interests, aptitudes and training plan</li> </ul> </li> <li>– Identifying possible practicum positions:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consulting the bank of practicum positions provided by the teacher</li> <li>• consulting directories in local employment centres, <i>Carrefours jeunesse-emploi</i>, chambers of commerce, etc.</li> <li>• locating potential practicum positions in their surroundings</li> </ul> </li> <li>– Consulting a complementary educational services staff member, in particular, a guidance counsellor</li> <li>– Envisioning ways of managing stress</li> <li>– Making contact with different workplaces in order to make an informed choice</li> <li>– Applying for a practicum position</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Observing the characteristics of the workplace</li> <li>– Modelling themselves on good workers</li> <li>– Listening and being open to instructions and explanations</li> <li>– Verifying how to perform the required tasks</li> <li>– Breaking down the task into steps if necessary</li> <li>– Repeating certain tasks to facilitate the acquisition of automatic responses</li> <li>– Bearing the expected outcomes in mind</li> <li>– Accepting that they will not understand everything and asking questions as needed</li> <li>– Taking every opportunity to learn</li> <li>– Paying attention to the terminology associated with the employment sector and using it appropriately</li> <li>– Reformulating the supervisor’s instructions to make sure they understand</li> <li>– Using a problem-solving process as needed</li> <li>– Finding ways of remembering the applicable health and safety rules (e.g. taking notes, paying attention to pictographs)</li> <li>– Consulting their workplace or school supervisor when faced with a problem</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Basing their reflections on facts rather than impressions</li> <li>– Discussing their experiences in the workplace with classmates:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• support received</li> <li>• working climate</li> <li>• availability of resources</li> <li>• requirements</li> <li>• positive and negative aspects</li> <li>• stressful situations</li> <li>• leisure-school-work balance</li> </ul> </li> <li>– Discussing different aspects of their competency development with their practicum supervisors at school and in the workplace               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• practical aspects of their integration into the workplace</li> <li>• adaptation to the new environment</li> <li>• achievements</li> <li>• attitudes and behaviours</li> <li>• difficulties encountered</li> <li>• means used to improve their performance</li> <li>• more complex tasks to come</li> </ul> </li> <li>– Asking classmates and supervisors for suggestions on how to make improvements</li> </ul>

## Attitudes and Behaviours That Foster Job Retention

Various sources provide information about attitudes and behaviours that foster successful integration into the work force. Teachers can refer to the following table when developing learning and evaluation situations. In addition, several of the documents listed in the bibliography contain information on this topic, for example, *Essential Skills*, by Human Resources

and Social Development Canada (HRSDC), and *Building Essential Skills in the Workplace*, by the Conference Board of Canada. These documents can be consulted on-line (see Webography).

### Appropriate Attitudes and Behaviours

- Sense of responsibility
- Respect for life and the environment
- Self-discipline (e.g. observance of schedules, politeness, courtesy, honesty, appropriate attire)
- Autonomy
- Team spirit and mutual assistance
- Reliability
- Thoroughness
- Constancy
- Attentiveness and open-mindedness
- Curiosity
- Sense of initiative (within occupational limits)
- Self-control
- Desire to learn and improve their skills
- Desire to establish harmonious interpersonal relationships

## Documents and Other Resources

### *Directory of Semiskilled Trades*

The *Directory of Semiskilled Trades* is an essential tool for school staff and students. In particular, it is used to establish the student's workplace training plan, since it contains information about the specific competencies associated with the different semiskilled trades. All of the trades are presented according to the same structure: the title of the trade, its field of application, other job titles and specific competencies, accompanied by performance criteria and a list of tasks. Optional competencies and tasks are indicated by an asterisk. An excerpt of the Directory is presented in the appendix.

The Directory makes it possible to arrange the segment of the students' training plan that will be carried out in the workplace and to structure the practicum accordingly. With the teacher's help, students can consult the Directory and make connections between their interests, abilities and the specific competencies they could develop.

### *Guide to Organizing Practicums in the Workplace*

The *Guide to Organizing Practicums in the Workplace* is based on the orientations of the Work Skills and Preparation for a Semiskilled Trade programs. It focuses on school organization, partnerships to be established with the different workplaces and student guidance. It is intended to facilitate the establishment of relationships between partners by specifying the roles of each of them. It also includes appendices for schools and companies, which are useful for planning practicums.

### Other resources

Other tools are useful or even essential in supporting competency development: information and communications technologies, documents on trades and occupations (e.g. brochures, books), a list of companies, checklists, procedural guides, sample work schedules, directions, etc.