

LABOUR MARKET RESEARCH EXERCISES

INTRODUCTION

The Four County Labour Market Planning Board developed these exercises to introduce students to the value of labour market research when planning for their future careers. A career is a combination of a lot of different things and it is important for students to start exploring different aspects of what they want to be and what types of jobs they might be interested in the future. Career decisions are not absolute and career paths usually aren't linear; things change along the way and students will want to set themselves up to make the most of different opportunities as they change, learn and have more experiences.

The following exercises provide students the opportunity to explore their local labour market. Which will help them understand things like: key industries; types of jobs; job trends; changes in job demand. Discover if there is a local job market that they are not aware of (i.e. employers who are hiring or who expect to hire people with certain skills in the next few years.) These things are important to understand, particularly if students plan to live and work in the local community after secondary or tertiary education. This workbook is accompanied by an introductory video that helps to demonstrate the value of labour market research and how to use the tools effectively. You will find the video here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tLvKRAHaYV4>.

EXERCISE 1

Ask your students to find a local job posting on www.connect2jobs.ca

- Select “browse jobs” under either “Job Postings” or “Job Map” from the home screen
- Students can be asked to browse available local postings and find one of interest; you could encourage them to search for a job in an area of interest, or to choose one in their geographical region (municipality) to learn more about available local jobs.

With the job posting they have selected, ask students to answer the following questions:

- What are the skills required for this job?
- Does the job posting list any credentials, educational requirements or years of experience that are required for this job?
- Does this job posting list any soft skills (soft skills are skills like: motivation, dependability, resourcefulness, being a team player, willingness to learn; these are skills that are important in every job, yet are not related to credentials or educational experience)?
- Do you know what the starting salary is for this job? Is it based on experience?
- Do you know who you would contact to apply for the job? Who you would contact if you have questions?
- Is any essential information missing from this job?

With the job posting they have selected, ask students to learn more about this occupation by consulting the Ontario Job Futures site: <https://www.iaccess.gov.on.ca/labourmarket/search.xhtml>

This site gives information about 500 jobs, and identifies key skills, opportunities and trends/projections for this occupation in Ontario.

CONVERSATIONAL GOALS

Are students able to identify key information from local job postings?

1. Can they discuss aspects of job postings that are included (or missing) based on what employers post online?
2. Can they discuss why this information might be important to have before applying for a job (example: minimum level of education required would be an important consideration so a job seeker knows if they are qualified to apply for that position).
3. How would you feel applying for this job, if you don't have all the information you would like to have before applying?

EXERCISE 2

Divide students into small groups.

Ask each group to search for an available job posting in a different sector: Agriculture, Construction, Healthcare, Retail Trade, Manufacturing, Utilities.

Once students have found a local job posting in this sector, ask them to respond to the following questions:

- What are three important things you know about this job, based on the job posting?
 - Possible considerations include:
 - Working conditions (inside/outside, shiftwork, part-time/full-time, etc.)
 - Required education (High School, Apprenticeship, College, University)
 - Required experience (None, less than 2 years, 2-5 years, more than 5 years)
 - Certifications or technical skills required (computer proficiency, experience with certain equipment/machinery, etc.)
 - Soft skills required (dependability, communication skills, resourcefulness, etc.)
 - Starting salary or salary range
- What are three important things that you don't know about this job, based on the job postings?
 - Possible considerations are the same as listed above.

CONVERSATIONAL GOALS

Not all job postings list all important information. Why or why not?

1. Can you think of reasons for which a company might choose to include or exclude certain information in a job posting?
2. How would you feel applying for this job, if you don't have all the information you would like to have before applying?

EXERCISE 2 (VARIATION A)

Divide students into small groups.

Ask each group to search for an available job posting in a different sector: Agriculture, Construction, Healthcare, Retail Trade, Manufacturing, Utilities, etc.

Proceed as above by asking students to identify three things they know and three things they don't know about the job, based on the information listed in the job posting.

CONVERSATIONAL GOALS

Are there differences between job postings in different sectors in our region?

1. Do job postings in some sectors tend to include certain information (for example, salary information or skills required), while others do not? Why might this be the case? Example: Larger employers often include more detail in job postings. Are some sectors in our region represented by more large employers than others?

EXERCISE 2 (VARIATION B)

Divide students into small groups.

Ask each group to search for an available job posting in the same sector.

CONVERSATIONAL GOALS

What differences do you see in job postings within the same sector?

1. Can you identify the job that requires the most post-secondary training?
2. Can you identify the job that requires the most experience?
3. Can you identify the job that has the highest salary? Does it require more training or more experience?
4. Can you identify an entry-level position?
5. Are you surprised at any of the job postings in this sector? Example: Sales jobs in Agriculture, or project management job in Healthcare.
 - Does this help you to understand the versatility of certain training/careers? Skills are flexible throughout many different types of occupations.

EXERCISE 3

Ask your students to go to the career explorer tool on the connect2jobs site:

<https://www.connect2jobs.ca/career-explorer/>

Jobs in blue are “in demand” jobs in our region. This means we see a high number of postings for this particular occupation and/or employers find these positions hard-to-fill.

Select one “in demand” job:

- Which jobs does this job point to (directional arrows away from “in demand” job) as possible career progressions? Choose one of these related occupations and research the following:
 - Identify three things in common between the in-demand job and the related job you have selected. These could be: educational skills, soft skills, related experience, or other factors you are able to identify by reading the occupational descriptions.
- See if you can find an example of each of these two jobs on the job board (<https://www.connect2jobs.ca/jobs/>) by searching using the “keyword” feature (top of left-hand column).
 - Can you identify any similarities between job postings for these two related occupations? These could be: same employer posting for both types of jobs, or same location.
 - Can you identify any differences between job postings for these two related occupations? These could be: differences in salary, differences in required experience or educational level.

CONVERSATIONAL GOALS

Can students identify transferrable skills and “career laddering” opportunities between related occupations?

Example:

A Personal Support Worker could lead to a Registered Practical Nurse could lead to a Registered Nurse could lead to a role in Health Care Management. It is important for students to recognize overlap of both skills and training so that they can understand skill transfer and expanded career opportunities throughout one career. The Career Explorer tool can help identify related occupations, and give students an opportunity to think about how different occupations are connected and which skills might be useful in multiple occupations across various industries.

EXERCISE 4

LABOUR MARKET SUPPLY AND DEMAND

This exercise is designed to help students recognize that skills, education, geography, interest, etc. are all important components of whether or not available job postings can be filled by available job seekers. Simply having enough people available to work does not necessarily mean that available job vacancies can be filled.

[Note: Numbers can be adjusted to suit your classroom numbers. The only criteria for this exercise is that the number of hypothetically available jobs be equivalent to the number of hypothetical job seekers]

Select three students to be “employers.” Each student can identify a pretend company they wish to own/ manage. For each company, there are vacancies and the employers need to hire. The first company has one vacancy, the second company has two vacancies, and the third company has five vacancies. Three employers have a total of six job vacancies.

Identify six students who are “job seekers.” These six students are looking for work.

There are three employers who need to hire a total of six people. There are six people looking for work. This should be a perfect match between labour supply (people looking for work) and labour demand (available positions that need to be filled). What doesn't it work that way? What is the problem?

CONVERSATIONAL GOALS

Simply having the same number of job seekers as open positions does not necessarily allow us to find everyone a job, and ensure that every employer can fill their vacant positions. Why?

- Job seekers may not be interested in the jobs that are available
- Job seekers may not have the skills required for available jobs
- Job seekers may not live in the same geographical region (within commuting distance) of available jobs
- Job seekers may not have the educational background or credentials for available jobs

By engaging students in a conversation around labour supply and labour demand, they can begin to understand the challenges of “matching” available jobs with people who are looking for work. There are many considerations that are important when trying to match employers' vacancies with job seekers.

Through this introductory conversation, students can begin to understand why researching skills, education, labour market demand, etc. are important considerations when looking at future careers.

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