

workplace is having a negative impact on job opportunities for unskilled workers who, while they accounted for 22.9 percent of the new jobs created by computers, were the targets of 60 percent of the job types eliminated. It has also been established that regions benefiting from pools of highly qualified workers are more attractive to potential high-tech investors. A document prepared by the Conference Board of Canada for Technopolis '97, an Ottawa conference held in September 1997 focussing on how to encourage local high-tech growth, states that a skilled work force is one of the major factors influencing the location of new high technology companies, more so than low taxes and fiscal incentives such as government grants.

By ensuring that the skills they provide to learners are always up to date, the education and training sector can assist the labour force in becoming effective users of new technologies, can participate in retraining workers displaced by technological change, and can also help them adjust to new technologies. The sector can thus play an important role in contributing to economic growth by providing Canadian industry with the skills it needs to be competitive on the global market.

4.1.5 Lifelong Learning

As skills requirements follow the pace of technological change, lifelong learning becomes a necessity. In today's economy, skills requirements are higher, and jobs are more complex. Workers are expected to be flexible and their skills wide-ranging and up to date. The 1992 OECD study mentioned above states : "A dynamic economy requires lifelong education and retraining. Learning is increasingly becoming a lifelong occupation as the nature of demand for skills changes ever more frequently."

Many Canadians are in need of retraining, as most new jobs created in Canada are short-term. Of the jobs begun between 1991 and 1994, 64 percent lasted less than 12 months. This is particularly troubling for middle-aged workers since, between 1991 and 1994, only 31 percent of new jobs obtained by Canadians between the ages of 45 and 54 lasted more than a year. The proportion decreased to 21 percent for people in the 55-64 age range. This suggests that older displaced workers may well be left with skills not in demand and few employment prospects.

Canadians of all ages need training in order to find new jobs. Many people who are juggling work and family responsibilities require learning opportunities in a learning environment that has the flexibility to let them learn at their own pace, on their own