

Finding more about the dream job

Co-operative education works for high school students

As a child, Heather Jordan of Fredericton had a great time imitating television newscasters with a tape recorder. Now, she's decided to make it a career.

The 17-year-old is one of hundreds of students who spend a semester in the co-operative education program offered at most New Brunswick high schools. Jordan used the program to find out more about the journalism profession. She spent three months working at a daily newspaper, a radio station and two TV stations. She came out of the program with fewer illusions, but delighted with the experience.

"I no longer see journalism as a glamorous profession," she said, adding she is enthusiastic to start a career in that field.

The high school co-operative education program is a means to provide guidance for young people in Grade 12 who are about to start post-secondary education or join the labor force. By taking the course, they earn two credits and acquire practical experience in a profession they are considering. This year, five classes of students from Fredericton High School are exploring careers in architecture, engineering, mechanics, policing and firefighting. Their instructor is Watne Beers, one of the founders of the co-operative education program in New Brunswick.

For three months, Jordan divided her time between school (afternoons) and four media organizations in Fredericton that



Cameraman Pat Richard and reporter Kate Letterick of ATV News show Grade 12 student Heather Jordan (right) how to shoot great news footage.

agreed to take her for periods ranging from one week to one month. She recorded commercials and wrote news copy at CIHI radio, and also conducted research and interviews, prepared a feature and watched experienced journalists in action.

She was introduced to the world of television by Kate Letterick, a legislative reporter with the ATV network. For three weeks, Jordan attended news

conferences and the daily activities at the legislature, accompanied by Letterick. She also did interviews and took part in a scrum (an improvised news conference) with Premier McKenna. In the process, she learned reporters need patience.

Letterick and the other reporters and technicians who work in the press gallery were not long adopting Jordan. They praise their protégé, and the program.

"It really gives students a chance to get hands-on experience. I think it's important to see for yourself before choosing a profession and deciding what you want to do," Letterick said. "Heather's a very good student. She's not afraid to ask questions and she wants to learn everything. She took the program very seriously."

Although the primary goal for students is to observe profes-

sionals in the workplace, they also acquire on-the-job experience. At CBC News in Fredericton, Jordan prepared her first television feature on the co-operative education program. She recalls her first morning in the newsroom.

"They gave me a pen, a note pad, a newspaper clipping and told me to make some calls," she explained. She was asked to call people involved in the smoking issue to prepare for a call-in program.

Jordan also spent a month getting acquainted with the hectic pace to meet deadlines at *The Daily Gleaner* newspaper and becoming familiar with the work of desk editors — people responsible for adding headlines, photo captions and editing copy supplied by reporters.

She confesses she lost some illusions about the print media. "It's very stressful work," she said. "I don't think I could do it."

Her experience convinced her to enroll in the broadcast journalism program offered at the Woodstock community college. After the two-year course, she plans to study at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute in Toronto.

"There will always be a need for reporters," she says with confidence. Remember her name. In a few years, Heather Jordan will probably be telling us about the latest world news.

For further information about signing up contact your school guidance counsellor.

A chance to snoop

Job shadowing gives inside view of what happens on the job

Seventeen-year-old Michelle had been considering a career in marine biology for quite some time. She researched the occupation, found out what the educational requirements were and discussed her plans with her parents and school guidance counsellor. Still, she wondered what it would be like, working day after day in this occupation.

Someone suggested she spend a day on the job to get a taste of it: that's when she discovered job shadowing.

Job shadowing is a career exploration activity which provides young people with access to first-hand career information from experienced individuals. These

"role models" come from a wide range of careers and are willing to help you experience their work day.

Job shadowing allows you to spend a day, one-on-one, with a role model in your chosen field. You will learn, first-hand, information important in planning your career.

The job shadower will question and observe a skilled worker in action however, he/she does not work. The job shadower should ask these questions:

- ▲ What do you like/dislike about the work setting?
- ▲ What is satisfying/dissatisfying about this work?
- ▲ What kind of lifestyle is associated with this occupation?

(overtime, evenings, weekends, travel, part-time, full-time, etc.)

- ▲ Is the salary sufficient to support your desired lifestyle?
- ▲ What are the chances for future advancement?
- ▲ What kind of training/experience does a worker need to be successful?
- ▲ What are the physical requirements of the job?
- ▲ What are the physical characteristics needed to do the job?
- ▲ Will you be working with people, machines or both?

MANY BENEFITS

Job shadowing has many benefits. The most obvious is to gain a better understanding of the skills, duties, aptitudes and edu-

cational background needed for the career you've chosen to explore. You will also be exposed to the world of work and the conditions under which work is carried out. You can ask questions and receive realistic answers — answers you may not get elsewhere.

Job shadowing helps you develop links with the work world and make important contacts. It may even open doors for future jobs.

After a shadow day, you will be in a position to make well-informed career decisions. Many *shadowers* report the experience helped them decide on a particular career and often motivated them to continue their educa-

tion. Some participants, while shadowing one career, discovered it was wrong for them and that they were actually better suited to another.

MADE DECISION

Remember Michelle? After her day with a biologist in a marine research lab, she has made her career decision. She has enrolled in university for a career in marine biology.

Job shadowing has proven to be a valuable experience for thousands of young people, like Michelle, across Canada. To find out more about job shadowing programs in your area, contact your local guidance counsellor.