

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Career Pathways Exploration Through Virtual Reality

Kemptville, ON (Monday, November 25, 2019) – The [Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario](#) is taking career exploration to a new level in its Grade 10 Careers classes. This year, students have the opportunity to use CareerLabs VR, a virtual reality program, to explore what it would be like to work in a variety of skilled trades.

Students can choose from virtual reality experiences for HVAC, electrical, heavy equipment operation, robotics, mining, or welding. In each application, students are immersed in a virtual worksite, performing tasks that would be expected in that sector. For example, in the HVAC program, users are prompted on how to fix a broken fan, troubleshoot defective compressors, and fix broken wires. In the electrician program, users are challenged to test voltage levels in outlets and replace broken wires.

The excavator program has proven to be especially popular with students and staff alike. The simulation is extremely life-like. In this application, the user drives and excavator to a worksite, where they must then pick up rocks with the bucket and dump the rocks in an awaiting truck to be hauled away.

Liz McCormick, Experiential Learning Consultant for CDSBEO, says that using virtual reality is a safe and accessible way for students to explore skilled trades career pathways.

“As educators, one of our duties is to provide opportunities for students to discover what careers are out there and what careers would be right for them. Virtual reality simulations of job sites are a fun and engaging way to explore opportunities.”

Natalie Cameron, Superintendent of School Effectiveness, is enthusiastic about the new venture.

“Our board continues to ensure that all students reach their full potential by offering and supporting all types of learning opportunities. By focusing in on career pathways through virtual technology, we are providing our students with the opportunity to better understand and explore their talents, their interests and their passions within a very realistic setting. We are preparing our students for the 21st century by using 21st century technology.”

“For the last 15 years, the CDSBEO has been active in the promotion of skilled trades and apprenticeships through the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship with excellent results. This new technology will allow us to reach a broader audience and attract new students to the apprenticeship pathway,” noted Dan Lortie, CDSBEO Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Coordinator.

“It is amazing that students have this opportunity to explore, learn, and discover a variety of career options through the immersive power of virtual reality,” explained Board Chair Todd Lalonde. “This virtual reality (VR) system puts students in the driver’s seat to see, hear, and experience the job itself, without ever leaving the classroom and we are extremely excited to have partnered with CareerLabs VR to offer this learning experience.”

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The Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario operates 39 elementary and 10 secondary schools across eight counties. The CDSBEO offers excellence in Catholic education through provincial-leading programs to approximately 13,000 students.

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Photo: A student from St. Joseph's Catholic Secondary School in Cornwall uses virtual reality technology to explore career pathways.

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