

# Preparing for life after high school

by Stella Shepard

Youth Career Decisions

**M**orell Regional High School students are playing a reality game in the classroom that's preparing them for life after high school. School Counsellor **John D. Farrell** introduced his class of grade 9 students to the **Be Real Game**.

"The emphasis of the game is on life learning," says John D. "Each student is given a job profile. They research the job to determine how many years of study is required. The students also create a budget based on their earnings."

By researching careers, students may discover jobs they were never aware of. While the game helps students to match their interests with jobs, the process can also prepare students to select their high school courses with a goal in mind.

"Students learn about real-life problems they might encounter on the job such as the impact of company downsizing," says John D. "They actually receive lay-offs and need to make decisions such as going on to further education or training or searching for another job."

## Planning for job satisfaction

The Be Real Game is designed to reveal many issues, such as staying in a job you don't like. Students learn if they plan ahead and make the most of their school years, they may avoid this problem.

## Change is constant

"We talk about adults who have gone back to school or have changed careers," says John D. "The class discusses the reasons why adults decide to go back to school. We also discuss the importance of having a grade 12 education and the reality of life without a high school education."

"In the game, I use stories about real people from Island communities. *The Employment Journey* is used as a resource for stories about people and their careers."

"We also talk about the consequences of wrong choices when making such decisions as choosing post-secondary education. Not all students will go to university but they can all have rewarding and challenging careers. We also try to support students when it comes to the pressures they can feel from



Grade 9 student Priscilla Curran and School Counsellor John D. Farrell explain the Be Real Game. "We see this game as a starting point that will get students thinking realistically about what to do after high school," says John D.

others when making choices. I put a lot of emphasis on choosing careers that match their interests. Everything can't be about money."

## The High Five issues discussed through the Be Real Game:

- **Change is constant:** The world of work is always changing. Very rarely do people stay at the same job for their entire working lives anymore, so it's important to know how to adapt.
- **Learning is ongoing:** Graduating from high school, college or university is not the end of learning. People must continue to recognize and take advantage of their opportunities to learn.
- **Focus on the journey:** Traveling through life is like traveling down a road. Having a destination provides direction, but we still must take one step at a time. We must pay attention to all the steps, including the pitfalls, sidetracks, opportunities and possibilities for new destinations.
- **Follow your heart:** People's dreams can lead to an understanding of what they really want. These desires are prime motivators in shaping a rewarding career. Dreams can be difficult to attain, but no one should be afraid to pursue them.

- **Access your allies:** The journey of life is not taken alone. Friends, family, teachers, and neighbours can be helpful when it comes to deciding what steps to take on life's path.

## Student enjoys Be Real Game

**Priscilla Curran** is a grade 9 student who enjoys the Be Real Game. It has taught her life skills and has introduced her to some interesting careers. It's also helped her learn about career choices that she hadn't considered.

"I learned about different jobs and careers, how to write a résumé and budget my money," says Priscilla. "We were given a list of different jobs. I picked Veterinary Assistant. I learned about the education I would need, the money I would be earning, and the work involved. I realized it's not a job that I would like to do because I don't like to see animals suffer."

"There were a lot of interesting jobs and occupations that I learned about. I've decided I want to become a scientist or a perhaps a teacher. I learned how many years of university I would need, the cost involved, and if I could afford it on my budget. It was a good reality game about real life and not made-up stuff."



For more information about the **Be Real Game**, contact **John D. Farrell** at 961-7345 or visit [www.realgame.com](http://www.realgame.com) and click on **Canada**.