

Young Aboriginals looking at career choices have exciting options to explore.

There are three reasons why.

BC will have over one million job openings in the next 10 years.

Many of those jobs will be in the natural resource sectors.

Many of those resources are in, or near First Nations territories.

That does not mean that career pathways for First Nations youth are restricted to what they might call “old school” jobs.

The resource sector today is technology-driven. It thrives on a team environment. It needs public approval. That public approval depends in a major way on the degree to which companies provide opportunity to First Nations in a culturally sensitive manner.

But the time is moving quickly if First Nations communities want their young people to get the most out of those resource career opportunities. There is already a shortage of workers in BC to fill high-paying resource jobs. Compounding this, about 400,000 workers will retire in the next decade.

Much of the burden will fall upon parents to understand the range of job opportunities and have answers when asked for advice by their children. There is a lot for parents and guidance counselors to learn when it comes to understanding the big world of today’s job market. How big is it? According to Human Resources Canada, there are over 500 different job categories in the marketplace and within these categories there are over 30,000 different types of jobs. Definitely not your grandfather’s job market.

As it is generally known that career preferences (or the lack of them) start to firm up around age 18, early action is important. First Nations students need a solid foundation in skills as well as the aptitudes required for success in today’s workplace. And they need personal skills in areas such as communication and leadership if the workplace of tomorrow is substantially different or if they decide to make career changes. Today, with projections that the average young person will have 9 different jobs in a lifetime, preparation for change is a survival skill.

Youth is a priceless resource. Ensuring that it is used to its best advantage is a community responsibility.

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