

April 2006

Skilled Trades Survey

Perceptions among BC Youth



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MARKET RESEARCH



Optimum
PUBLIC RELATIONS



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Introduction



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➤ Introduction

- The Industry Training Authority (ITA) is the provincial government agency with responsibility for apprenticeships and industry training programs in BC. With the assistance of Optimum Public Relations ITA is developing marketing and communications strategies to help increase the size of the skilled trades workforce and meet the current and future needs of BC industry.
- In an effort to encourage BC youth to pursue trades, ITA wishes to better understand perceptions among youth and their career aspirations.
- A survey among BC youth has been conducted to assess current perceptions and attitudes. Future tracking of these benchmarks will provide a means of measuring progress of ITA's marketing efforts.



Research Objectives



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➤ Research Objectives

The research has been designed to measure the following:

- Current and future career plans among BC youth
- Motivations for and major influencers of career choices
- Likelihood of considering a career in skilled trades, including encouragement by others of such a consideration
- Perceptions of and attitudes toward the skilled trades
- Influential sources of information on the trades



Methodology



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➤ Methodology

- A **self-administered** survey was conducted with high school students across the province.
- The sampling plan included **representation from** schools in each of **five geographic regions**: Lower Mainland/Fraser Valley, Okanagan, Kootenays, the North and Vancouver Island. With the assistance of the School Districts offices a total of 11 secondary and middle schools were selected and participated in the survey.
- Students from Grades 8 through 12 filled out questionnaires in their homerooms between March 27 and April 13, 2006. A total of **739 students** completed surveys. Note, only a few were deemed unusable.
- The survey results were **weighted to match** the **province-wide population of students** in Grades 8-12 on the basis of region and grade.
- Though the sampling method was not random with measurable probabilities of selection, the margin of error on a simple random sample of 739 interviews provides a general guideline of sampling error: +/- 3.6 percentage points.



Executive Summary



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➤ Key Findings

- There is a considerable level of interest in high school trades programs.
 - Close to half of BC students surveyed express interest or are currently participating (44%).
- However, university degree programs are the most popular post-secondary choice.
 - Just under half (44%) plan to enroll in university within two years following high school,
 - and other college programs are slightly ahead of trades programs or apprenticeship (24% and 18%, respectively).
 - Females are more university/college-oriented than males.
 - Males are more likely than their female cohorts to choose trades.



➤ Key Findings, continued

- In terms of the reasons for making these choices, practical reasons slightly outweigh personal goals, but parental and social pressure appear to be relatively less of an influence.
 - 68% say Practical reasons (any mention of salary, lifestyle, job security, already have experience/worked in this area)
 - 64% say Personal goals (any mention of I always wanted to do this, personal satisfaction)
 - 38% say Social pressure (any mention of parents want me to, respect from others)

- Nevertheless, the individuals who most influence career choice are the students themselves and then parents.
 - 68% rank themselves as the most or second most influential
 - 61% rank their parents as the most or second greatest influence



➤ Key Findings, continued

- Although just under four-in-ten students in total (37%) appear likely to consider a career in the skilled trades, there is a significant gender skew.
 - Males are more than twice as likely to say they would consider a trades career (51% of male students vs. just 22% of female students).
 - Among those who currently plan to pursue a trades program or apprenticeship, 88% are male students.



➤ Key Findings, continued

- Encouragement to consider a career in the trades may be regarded as weak, since there is mixed opinion among students about how much they are being encouraged.
 - About one-third (35%) saying they are being encouraged.
 - While a similar proportion (32%) is neutral about whether they are being encouraged, slightly fewer (28%) saying they are not being encouraged.
 - Those currently in trades programs are being encouraged the most, not surprisingly. Next are those who do not have plans for post-secondary education.



➤ Key Findings, continued

- Perceptions of the skilled trades are strongest for the following (60-63% of students agree):
 - Self employment opportunities
 - Likelihood of finding a field of interest, due to the wide variety of fields
 - Well-paid jobs

- Other perceptions held by a large segment (43-48% agree with these statements):
 - Apprenticeship involves classroom and on-the-job training
 - Skilled trades are respected in society
 - Ability to live and work almost anywhere in BC or Canada and to travel and work internationally

- Negative perceptions are held by relatively few students (mostly under 25%).
 - Poor working conditions, dead-end jobs/no significant advancement, typically blue collar, more for males, for those who don't do well in school ... large proportions disagree with these statements.



➤ Recommendations

- The research points to some areas of opportunity for promoting the skilled trades among high school students. Consideration might be given to the following when planning strategies:
 - Target females. Find ways to excite teenaged girls about these career choices. Currently, males are being attracted to these professions, while females are much more university/college oriented.
 - Males seem to be attracted to the practical aspects of trades careers, while females appear to be more after personal satisfaction and “career” goals. Perhaps highlighting self-employment and the personal fulfillment of trades careers will be possible “hooks” for the girls.
 - Develop some messaging around the ideas that have neutral perceptions, such as the trades not being prestigious, trades being “typically blue collar”, providing long-term, secure jobs and the extent to which travel and choice of location is a benefit.



➤ Recommendations, continued

- Draw students' interests through the types of channels that they say are most influential:
 - Job and career fairs
 - The internet ... blogs, chat rooms, cool web-sites with fun and compelling information, photos, personality profiles, etc.
 - In-school programs
 - In-school speakers

- Whether students are currently academic-oriented or not, their perceptions and attitudes towards the skilled trades are vital to future career changes and encouragement of peers, family.

- Other research for consideration to find ways to influence general social values on the trades include focus groups with students to get inside their heads on career issues, communications materials testing, understanding parents' and general public's attitudes.



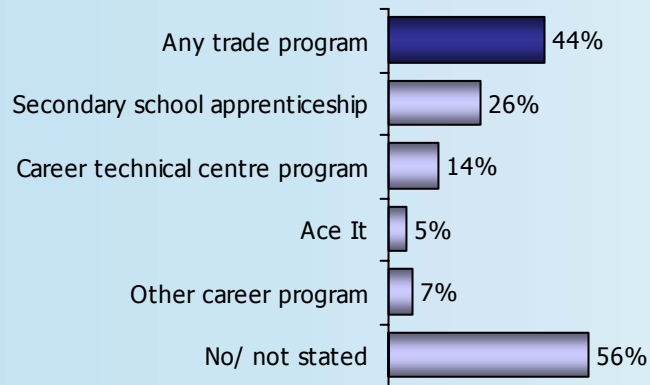
Detailed Findings



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➤ Interest in High School Trade Programs



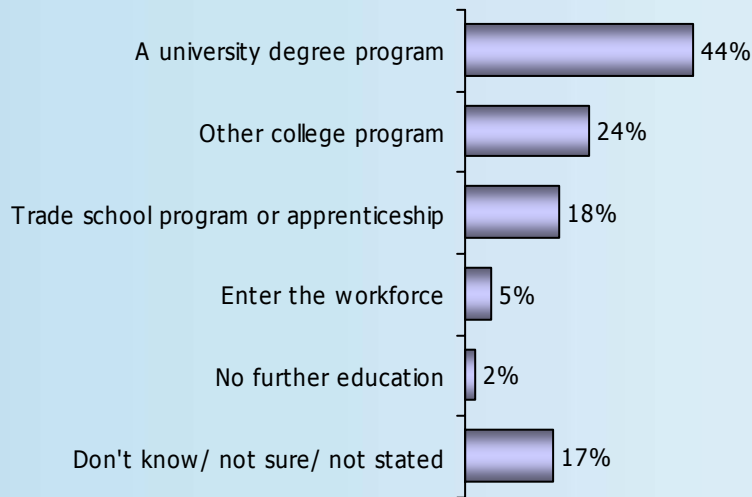
Base: Total (n=739)

Have you participated in, or would you be interested in, any of the following high school trades programs

- Close to half of students surveyed (44%) express some interest in or currently participate in high school trades programs.
- Greatest interest is in the apprenticeship program, followed by the career technical centre program.
- Grade 9s and male students appear to be more interested and/or involved in these programs.



➤ Plan to Undertake 2 Years After Completing High School



Base: Total (n=739)

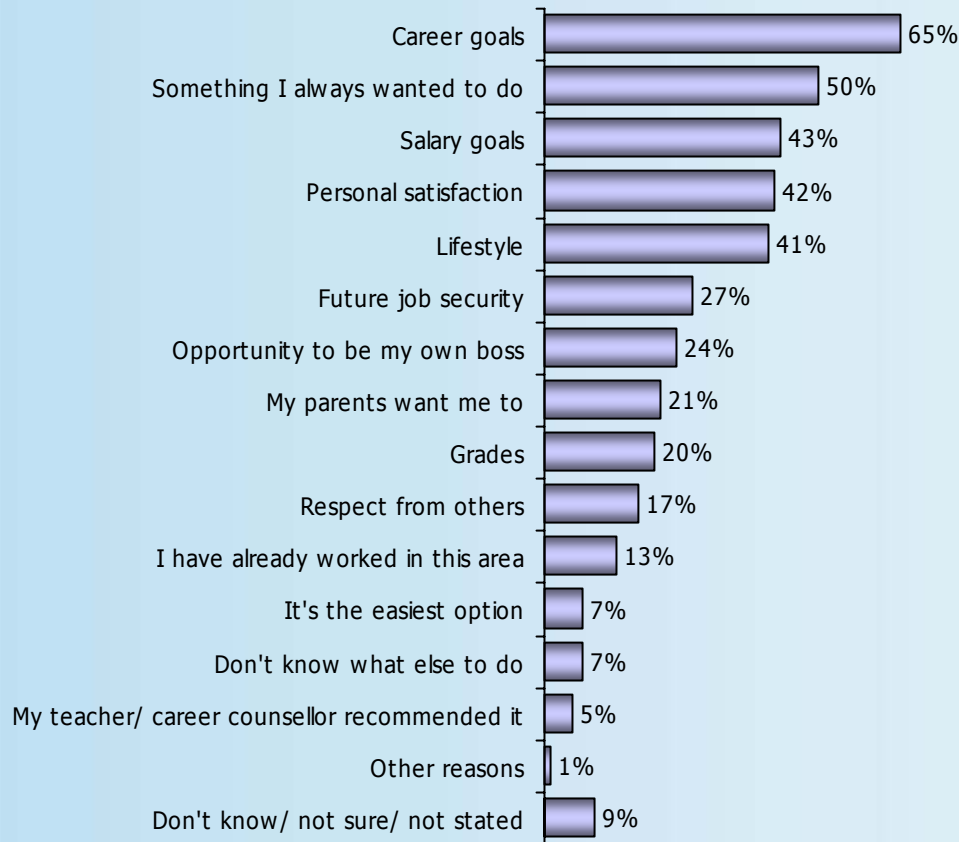
Q.1) In the two years after you finish high school, do you plan on undertaking...

- Despite considerable interest in trades programs, most high school students plan to enroll in a university degree or college program.
- Though a majority of both genders expect to pursue higher education, females are more university/college-oriented. Males are much more likely than females to plan for a trade.

	Females (318) %	Males (342) %
2 years after high school		
University degree program	52 ▲	37
Other college program	32 ▲	17
Trade school program or apprenticeship	4	28 ▲
Workforce	2	7 ▲
No further education	<1	3
Don't know/not stated	16	17



► Reasons for Planning Choice



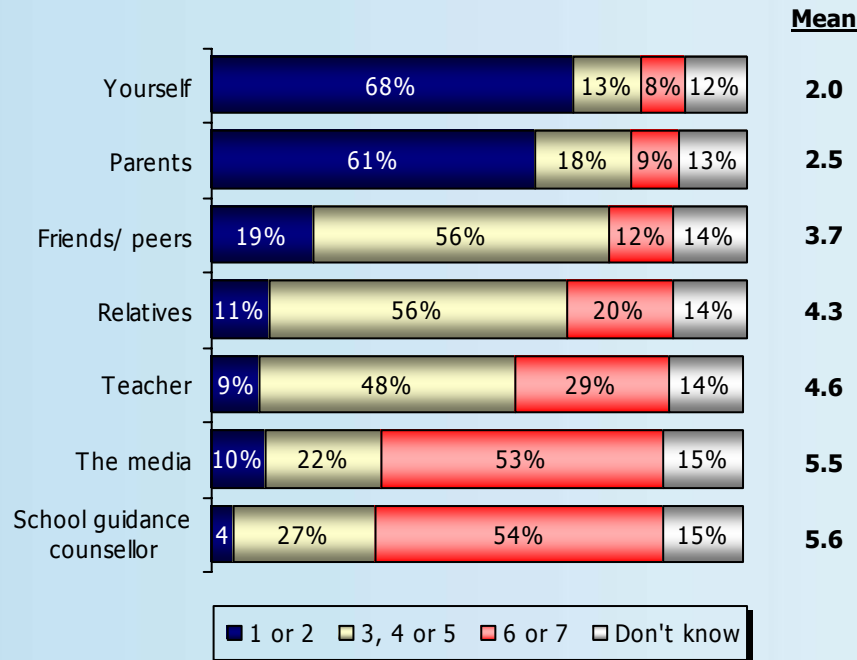
Base: Total (n=739)

Q.2) What are your reasons for planning on this choice?

- From an aided list, career goals is the most common reason chosen. However, personal goals (*something I always wanted to do*) and personal satisfaction are also key factors in post-secondary planning (64% give any personal reason).
- Practical considerations, such as salary goals and lifestyle, are prominent among a sizable group of students, as well as job security and prior experience (69% mention any of these reasons).
- University-oriented students are more apt to cite personal satisfaction, parental pressure or societal respect than the trades-oriented.
- But opportunity to be own boss and prior experience are chosen more by trades-oriented students.



► People Who May Influence Career Choice



Scale: 1 = most influential
7 = least influential

Base: Total (n=739)

Q.3) A number of different people may influence your choice of job or career path. Read through the list below and let us know how influential each of the following are in helping you make decisions about your future career.

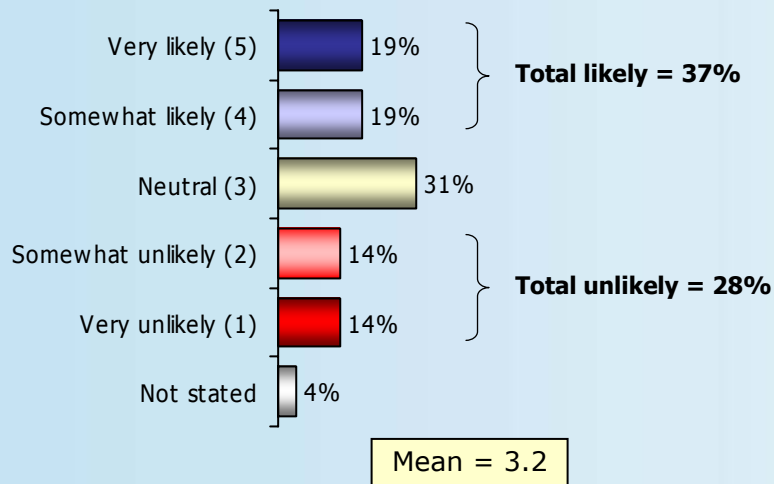
- On a scale of 1 to 7, where one is the most influential, students report that

- they themselves and
- then their parents

have the greatest impact on making decisions about a future career.



➤ Likelihood of Career in Skilled Trade



Base: Total (n=739)

Q.4) How likely are you to consider a career in the skilled trades? 5-point SCALE: 5= very likely; 3= neutral; 1= not at all likely

- In total, students are more inclined to consider a career in skilled trades than not (37% "likely" vs. 28% "unlikely").
- In addition, a sizable proportion is undecided (31% "neutral").

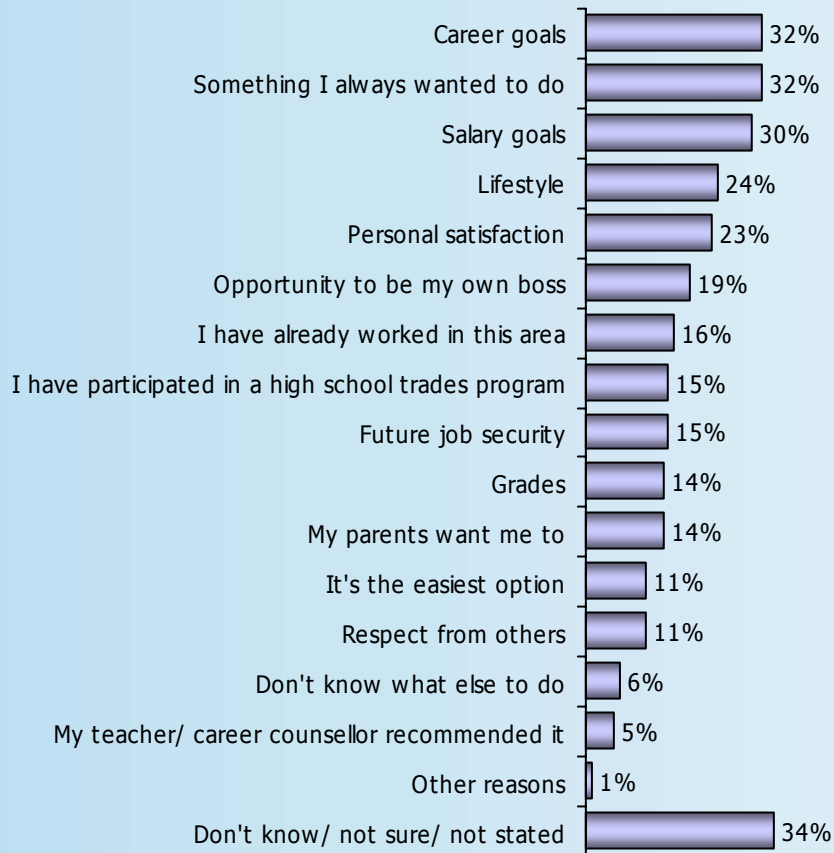


➤ Gender Differences in Considering the Trades

- Of significance, however, is the fact that over half of male students (51%) are likely to consider it, compared to only 22% of females.
- While nearly four-in-ten females (38%) lean toward rejecting these careers, about as many (36% of males) are neutral, suggesting possible receptivity to compelling information.
- Furthermore, among those who currently plan to pursue a trades program or apprenticeship within 2 years of high school graduation, the vast majority are males (88% of those who state their gender).



► Reasons for Considering Career in Skilled Trades



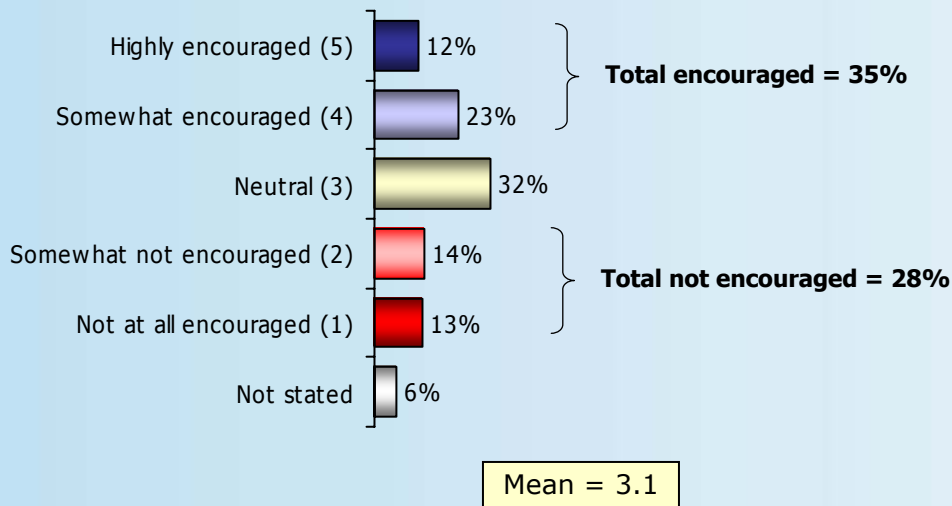
- Reasons for considering a career in the skilled trades tend to be ranked similarly to reasons for the career training currently being planned.
- However, note that “future job security” is not a common reason given. Perhaps more information about the skills shortage in the long-term is needed.

Base: Total (n=739)

Q.5) What are your reasons for considering a career in the skilled trades?



➤ Encouragement to Consider a Job in Skilled Trades



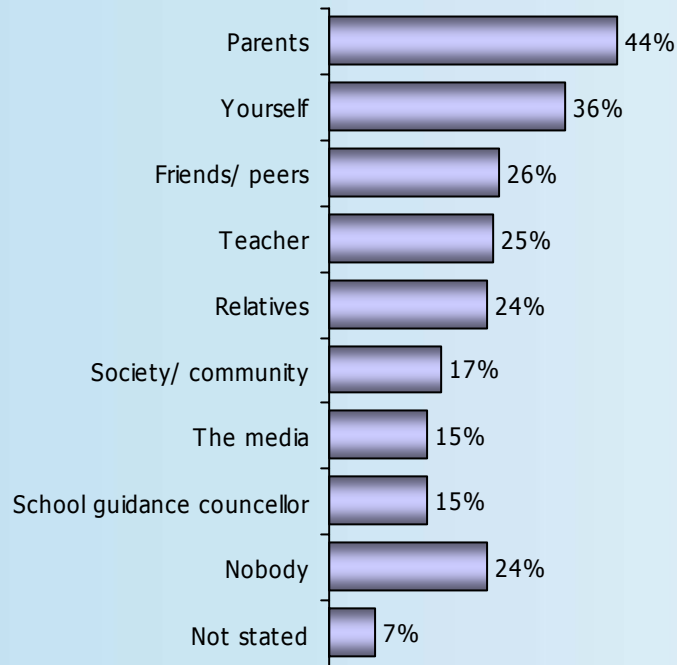
Base: Total (n=739)

Q.6) How much encouragement are you being given to consider a job in the skilled trades as a career? 5-point scale: 5= highly encouraged; 3= neutral; 1 = not at all encouraged.

- Encouragement to consider a career in the skilled trades is mixed. About one-third say they are being encouraged with this level rising to over two-thirds among those now in or planning to pursue trades programs after graduation.
- As well, those who plan to enter the workforce or have no plan to enroll in further education also tend to be encouraged to consider skilled trades. (43% say they are being encouraged).
- About three-in-ten others say they are receiving some encouragement (27-29%)



➤ Who Is Encouraging Consideration of Career in Trades

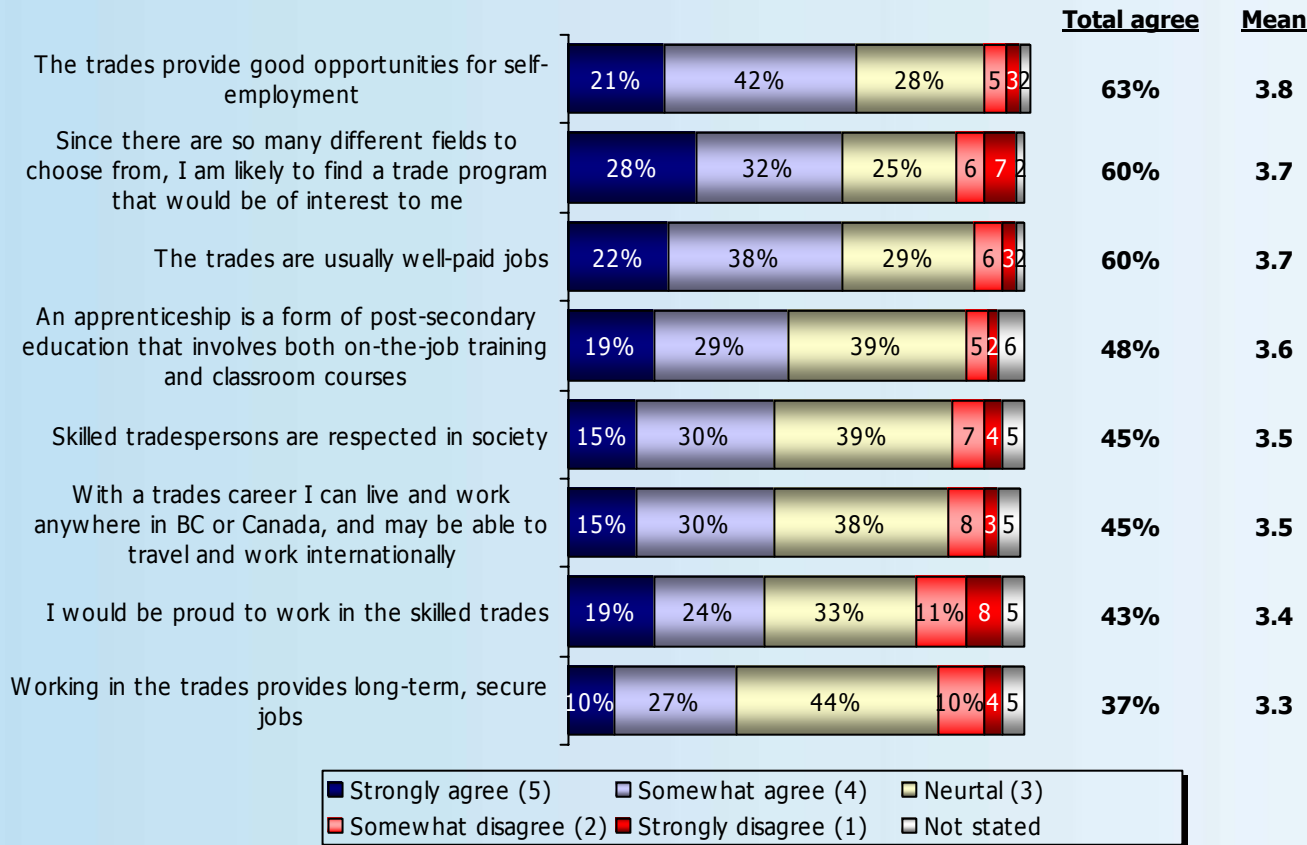


Base: Total (n=739)

Q.7) Who, if anyone, is encouraging you to consider a career in the trades?

- Parents and the students themselves are the primary individuals promoting the idea of a career in trades.
- Friends, teachers and relatives are the next most likely supporters of a career in trades.

➤ Agreement with Statements



Base: Total (n=739)

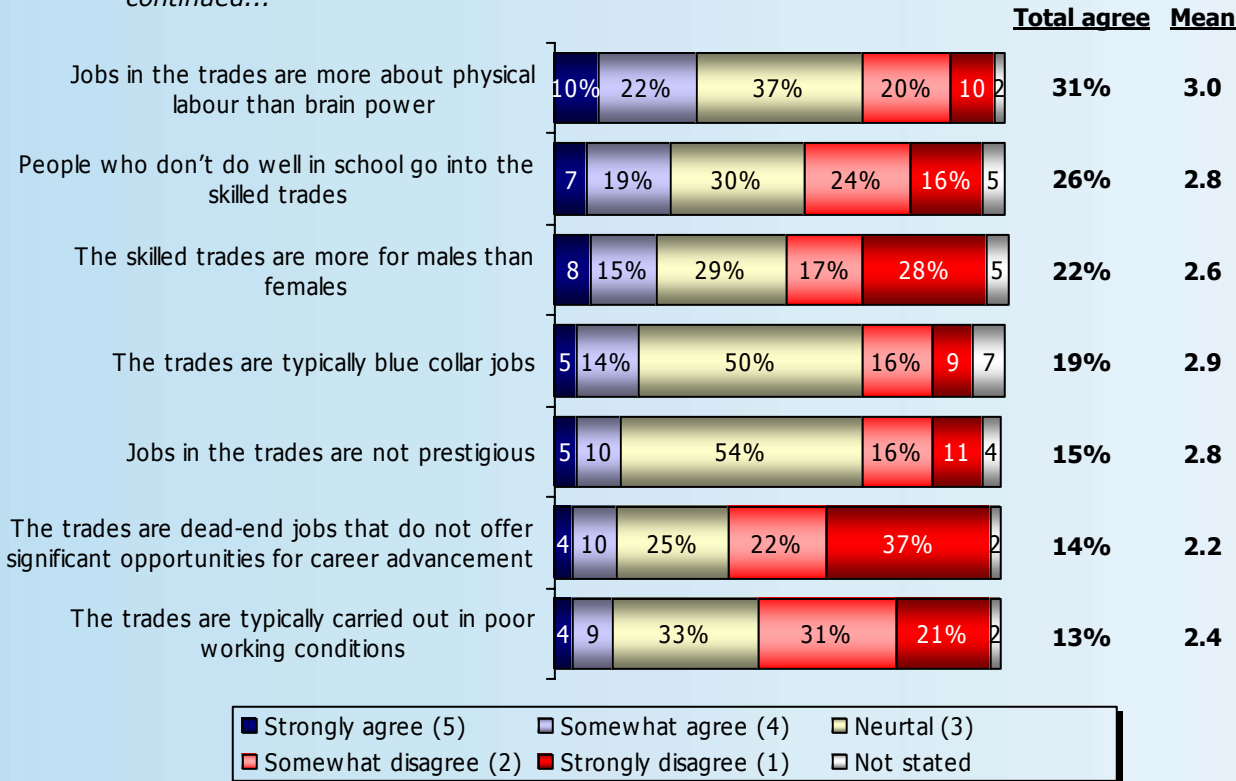
Q.8) Based on what you know about jobs in the skilled trades, please let us know whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. 5-point SCALE: 5= strongly agree; 3= neutral; 1= strongly disagree

- The **strongest perceptions** about skilled trades are:
 - Self-employment opportunities
 - Likely to find a field of interest due to wide variety
 - Well-paid jobs
- Other quite widely-held perceptions are:
 - That apprenticeship involves classroom & on-the-job training
 - Societal respect
 - Can live & work almost anywhere
 - Pride in work

continued...

➤ Agreement with Statements

continued...



Base: Total (n=739)

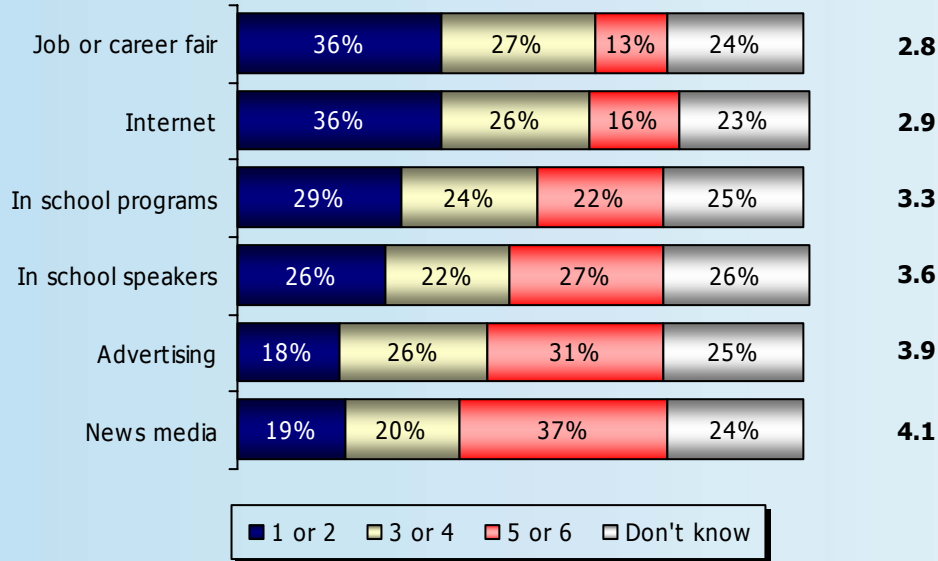
Q.8) Based on what you know about jobs in the skilled trades, please let us know whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

- Negative perceptions tend to be held by few; a **majority disagree** that trades are:
 - Dead-end jobs with no significant advancement (59% disagree)
 - Have poor working conditions (52% disagree)
- Also, many disagree that trades are:
 - More for males (45% disagree)
 - For those who don't do well in school (40% disagree)
- Neutral opinion peaks on these statements:
 - Not prestigious jobs (54%)
 - Typical blue collar (50%)



➤ Likely to Turn to for Information on Trades

Average



Scale: 1 = most influential
6 = least influential

Base: Total (n=739)

Q.9) If you were looking for information on the trades, which of the following would you be most likely to turn to?

- The most influential sources of information on the trades are:

- Job or career fairs
- Internet

followed by ...

- In-school programs and in-school speakers



Demographics

	Total (739) %
Gender	
Female	42
Male	48
Age	
13 years	11
14 years	18
15 years	21
16 years	19
17 years	22
18 years	8
19 years	1
20 years	<1
Not stated	<1
Average	15.5
Grade	
8	18
9	19
10	20
11	21
12	21
Not stated	1

- The survey sample was weighted to match the student population statistics on the basis of grade level and region.
- The survey respondents were skewed slightly male and well distributed by age with most falling in the 14-17 year old range.



➤ Demographics

	Total (739) %
School District	
20	4
23	13
33	21
44	39
57	8
62	17
Region	
Lower Mainland (including Fraser Valley, Sunshine Coast)	59
Vancouver Island (including Gulf Islands)	17
Okanagan	13
North	8
Kootenays	4



Appendices

- Questionnaire
- Student Population Statistics



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Skilled Trades Survey

March 2006

Please do not write your name anywhere on this sheet.

Please complete the following:

Age: _____

Grade: _____

Name of School: _____

School District: _____

City: _____

Gender: Female / Male

Have you participated in, or would you be interested in, any of the following high school trades programs (*check any that apply*):

- ACE IT
- Secondary School Apprenticeship (SSA)
- Career Technical Centre program
- Other career program (please specify) _____

1. In the two years after you finish high school, do you plan on undertaking...(*check one*)

- A trade school program or apprenticeship
- Other college program
- A University degree program
- No further education
- Enter the workforce
- Don't know/not sure

2. What are your reasons for planning on this choice? *You can check more than one.*

- Career goals
- Salary goals
- Grades
- Something I have always wanted to do
- My parents want me to
- My teacher/career counselor recommended it
- I have already worked in this area
- It's the easiest option
- Lifestyle

- Respect from others
- Opportunity to be my own boss
- Future job security
- Personal satisfaction
- Don't know what else to do
- Don't know/not sure
- Other (please specify): _____

3. A number of different people may influence your choice of job or career path. Read through the list below and let us know how influential each of the following are in helping you make decisions about your future career. **Rank the options below in order from 1 – 8 with 1 being the most influential to 8 being the least influential.**

- Parents
- Teacher
- Friends/peers
- Relatives
- School guidance counselor
- The media
- Yourself

The next six questions have to do with trade occupations. Trades are very diverse and cover areas like construction (carpenter, plumber, electrician etc.), cooking (cook, baker), auto repair (auto service technician, heavy duty mechanic), horticulture, aerospace, hairstyling, welding, roofing and many others.

4. How likely are you to consider a career in the skilled trades? **Circle your answer below on the 5-point scale - 1 means not at all likely and 5 means very likely.**

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---------|---|-------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Not at all likely | | Neutral | | Very likely |

5. What are your reasons for considering a career in the skilled trades? *You can check more than one.*

- I have participated in a high school trades program
- Career goals
- Salary goals
- Grades
- Something I have always wanted to do
- My parents want me to
- My teacher/career counselor recommended it
- I have already worked in this area
- It's the easiest option
- Lifestyle
- Respect from others

- Opportunity to be my own boss
- Future job security
- Personal satisfaction
- Don't know what else to do
- Don't know/not sure
- Other (please specify): _____

6. How much encouragement are you being given to consider a job in the skilled trades as a career? **Circle** your answer on the scale below - 1 means not at all encouraged and 5 means highly encouraged.

- | | | | | |
|-----------------------|---|---------|---|-------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Not at all encouraged | | Neutral | | Highly encouraged |

7. Who, if anyone, is encouraging you to consider a career in the trades? *You can check more than one.*

- Parents
- Teacher
- Friends/peers
- Relatives
- School guidance counselor
- The media
- Yourself
- Society/community
- Nobody

8. Based on what you know about jobs in the skilled trades, please let us know whether you agree or disagree with each of the following statements. **Circle** your answer on the scale below - 1 means you strongly disagree and 5 means you strongly agree.

- The trades are dead-end jobs that do not offer significant opportunities for career advancement.

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---------|---|----------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly disagree | | Neutral | | Strongly agree |

- The trades are typically carried out in poor working conditions.

- | | | | | |
|-------------------|---|---------|---|----------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| Strongly disagree | | Neutral | | Strongly agree |

- Since there are so many different fields to choose from, I am likely to find a trade program that would be of interest to me.

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly disagree Neutral Strongly agree

- Jobs in the trades are not prestigious.

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly disagree Neutral Strongly agree

- Jobs in the trades are more about physical labour than brain power.

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly disagree Neutral Strongly agree

- The trades provide good opportunities for self-employment.

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly disagree Neutral Strongly agree

- The trades are usually well-paid jobs.

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly disagree Neutral Strongly agree

- Working in the trades provides long-term, secure jobs.

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly disagree Neutral Strongly agree

- With a trades career I can live and work anywhere in BC or Canada, and may be able to travel and work internationally.

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly disagree Neutral Strongly agree

- I would be proud to work in the skilled trades.

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly disagree Neutral Strongly agree

- The skilled trades are more for males than females.

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly disagree Neutral Strongly agree

- An apprenticeship is a form of post-secondary education that involves both on-the-job training and classroom courses.

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly disagree Neutral Strongly agree

- The trades are typically blue collar jobs.

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly disagree Neutral Strongly agree

- People who don't do well in school go into the skilled trades.

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly disagree Neutral Strongly agree

- Skilled tradespersons are respected in society.

1 2 3 4 5
Strongly disagree Neutral Strongly agree

9. If you were looking for information on the trades, which of the following would you be most likely to turn to? **Rank** the options below in order from 1 to 6 with 1 being the most influential to 6 being the least influential.

- ___ News media
- ___ Job or Career Fair
- ___ Advertising
- ___ Internet
- ___ In school speakers
- ___ In school programs
- Other (please specify): _____

For more information on the skilled trades and the types of career paths that the trades can offer you, visit the following websites:

Industry Training Authority

www.itabc.ca

www.skilledtrades.ca

Thank you for your time. Please return the completed survey to your teacher.

BC Schools Regional Distribution for Grades 8-12

Region	Including...	Total # students in Gr 8-12	Gr 8	Gr 9	Gr 10	Gr 11	Gr 12
Lower Mainland (incl. Fr. Valley)	LM, Fraser Valley, Sunshine Coast, Gulf Islands	152,893	27,942	28,052	31,106	32,967	32,826
Okanagan	Okanagan, Thompson-Nicola	33,135	6,013	6,319	6,656	7,006	7,141
Kootenays		10,414	1,883	2,029	2,063	2,087	2,352
North	Skeena, Peace River, Cariboo-Chilcotin	19,762	3,673	3,814	3,975	4,354	3,946
Vancouver Island		41,760	7,433	8,042	8,547	9,380	8,358
TOTAL		257,964	46,944	48,256	52,347	55,794	54,623

Lower Mainland (incl. Fr. Valley)	LM, Fraser Valley, Sunshine Coast, Gulf Islands	0.593	0.108	0.109	0.121	0.128	0.127
Okanagan	Okanagan, Thompson-Nicola	0.128	0.023	0.024	0.026	0.027	0.028
Kootenays		0.040	0.007	0.008	0.008	0.008	0.009
North	Skeena, Peace River, Cariboo-Chilcotin	0.077	0.014	0.015	0.015	0.017	0.015
Vancouver Island		0.162	0.029	0.031	0.033	0.036	0.032
TOTAL		1.000	0.182	0.187	0.203	0.216	0.212

Source: BC Ministry of Education