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## E-mentors give students the straight goods on careers

With free, safe and personalized access to 3,000 professionals in 80 fields, Academos E-MENTORING enables students to make informed career choices.

In 2011-2012 alone, Academos e-mentors responded to the career-related questions of some 17,500 students in 250 Québec high schools. The service is available to students in Secondary III and up. Once registered, they can continue to use it through to the age of 30.

### It's easy to get started

If you would like to register your students, contact **Antoine Alavo** at 514-332-3006 ext. 6269 or email [asmauffette-alavo@academos.qc.ca](mailto:asmauffette-alavo@academos.qc.ca). Either he or another agent will come to your class, explain the service and get your students started with their first message, within one regular class period.

Exchanges between students and mentors take place by email within Academos' secure and closely-monitored Web site. "Students like the email format and they get practical advice they might not get elsewhere," says **Antoine Alavo**, who coordinates service for the English-language

sector. "E-mentors tell students about the reality of their field—both the good and the bad. They debunk stereotypes and can help young people discover some lesser-known careers."



Mentors share one-on-one practical insights that students aren't likely to find elsewhere.

A recent review of mentor profiles on the public portion of the Web site revealed such diverse occupations as 3D animator, firefighter, speech therapist, criminologist, investigative and forensic accountant, quality assurance analyst and translator, to name a few.

“Academos is a great pathway for learning that helps students connect with professionals who can tell them what a job is really like.”

- Victoria Greer, Special-Education Technician, Riverside School Board

To access an e-mentor, students must be registered as part of a group led by a teacher (or sometimes a guidance counsellor). Each student's initial inquiry goes to the group leader to be vetted for tone and content. After that, students can email their chosen mentor directly, but teachers can always monitor who students are contacting and the frequency of their exchanges.

### How student safety is ensured

- Students and mentors are assigned a private email box within the Academos Web site and messages are exchanged via a closed server.
- Mentors are recruited through recognized professional organizations and are background-checked before being accepted; they also receive training.
- To protect identities, both students and mentors use an alias to communicate.
- Academos staff monitors message exchanges daily.
- All emails pass through a filter that eliminates any message containing personal coordinates or harmful content.
- Students can only access the system once they are registered by a teacher or other school group leader.



## Dawson's GOAL-friendly lesson plans link learning to marketable skills

Every day, teachers work hard to cover the curriculum even as students ask "Why am I learning this? What can it do for me?"

But just watch those same questions evaporate the moment students comprehend how math, English or biology can set them on a career path that they are passionate about.

Thanks to collaboration between Dawson College's Council of Career Programs and the CaReer Education and Transitions to Employment subcommittee of the Directors of English Education Network

(DEEN-CREATE), teachers have a new set of tools to show students how high-school learning can be the foundation for a number of interesting and lesser-known careers.

As of now, 16 of Dawson's 21 technical/career programs have produced resource-friendly, vetted lesson plans for use by high-school teachers. Even more will be available in the coming year. **Steve Scallion**, GOAL consultant for Sir Wilfred Laurier School Board, worked with Dawson to adapt all 16 for use in a Personal Orientation Project (POP) classroom.

Each lesson plan relates to a three-year technical program and contains activities that introduce students to possible careers in that field. A science class might tap into *Laboratory Technology—Analytical Chemistry*, while a math class could try out *Accounting Management Technology* or an English class *Professional Theatre*.

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### Free workshop at Dawson

To coincide with next year's QPAT convention, Dawson College will hold a "Career Showcase" workshop on November 21, 2013, during which teachers can try out the lesson plans. If you'd like to receive an invitation, go to:

[www.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/careershowcase](http://www.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/careershowcase)