Long-Term On-the-Job Training Occupations

Not for those who fear commitment!

In a blur of motion the most talented modern dancers can thrill and excite their audiences with feats of power and grace. Through their use of movement they can convey every hope, every fear, indeed every emotion, through time and space. However, the amazing strength and skill that defines an elite dancer doesn't come without a cost. In fact, theirs is a world of callused feet and strained muscles, but also years of rigorous schooling and on-the-job training just to be able to perform. These years of hard work can be thought of as an investment, one whose dividends are paid in the higher productivity and greater skill of the dancer.

However, dancing is not the only occupation that requires significant long-term investments in skills and knowledge—that is, their stock of human capital. In fact, there are a plethora of occupations in Utah, including many that have been rated as 4- and 5-star jobs, which require long-term on-the-job training. While these jobs typically don't require a college degree, they do require the extensive development of specific skills above and beyond a high school education as a base and then continued refinement of those skills while working the job. For some occupations the employer pays for this initial base training, usually with some strings attached—like a time commitment to the firm, or the acceptance of a lower wage during training. In other cases, prospective workers have to pay for their own training.

So what are some examples of jobs that require a similar commitment to long-term technical training? As always, there are several ways to cut the data. However, perhaps the best way is to look at the occupations that are projected to add the most new jobs by 2014. By that measure, carpenters, electricians, and plumbers are the top three occupations. All of these require significant on-the-job training in the form of apprenticeships and technical education. Two additional occupations that will be adding a significant number of new jobs in the coming decade are police officers and firefighters. These occupations also require long-term training from the initial training at an academy to ongoing career development and refresher training.

Are these occupations that require long-term on-the-job training for you? Well, like all things in life, the answer to that question depends on who you are and what you see yourself doing. While these occupations tend to pay more than occupations requiring only short-term or medium-term training, they often pay less than occupations that require a bachelor's degree or higher. However, taking overtime and other bonuses into account, these occupations can still pay handsome wages. In the final analysis, your decision to pursue an occupation should be fueled by your passions and not just a simple calculus of dollars and cents.

It is also important to note that a good number of people who actually go into these jobs have more education, like a bachelor's degree, before starting down the path to this job. More education and training are important guarantees of future flexibility in the labor market—something that might be important when one considers the average length of a modern dancer's career. In an occupation that makes such strenuous demands on one's body, it is nice to know that you can transition to something after you can't dance anymore. For example, having a bachelor's degree might allow you to move into administration, marketing, or any number of other occupations where your previous experience and education would be tremendous assets.

For more occupational information: http://jobs.utah.gov/opencms/wi/pubs/trendlines/marapr08/longtermojt.xls

The top three occupations projected to add the most new jobs by 2014 are carpenters, electricians, and plumbers, all of which require significant on-the-job training, followed by police officers and firefighters.

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	Occupation	Stars	2004	2014	Numeric Change	Percent Change
Largest Job Growth	Carpenters	5	16,820	22,990	6,170	37%
	Electricians	5	6,230	8,190	1,960	31%
	Plumbers, Pipefitters, and Steamfitters	5	5,350	7,280	1,930	36%
	Cooks, Restaurant	2	5,550	7,350	1,800	32%
	Police and Sheriff's Patrol Officers	5	3,980	5,440	1,460	37%
	Welders, Cutters, Solderers, and Brazers	5	4,310	5,540	1,230	29%
	Fire Fighters	4	2,330	3,430	1,100	47%
	Machinists	5	3,690	4,720	1,030	28%
	Automotive Body and Related Repairers	5	2,610	3,600	990	38%
	Cabinetmakers and Bench Carpenters	3	2,780	3,710	930	33%
Fastest Growing	Dental Laboratory Technicians	4	630	950	320	51%
	Fire Fighters	4	2,330	3,430	1,100	47%
	Entertainers and Performers, Sports and Related Workers, All Other	NR	180	260	80	44%
	Audio and Video Equipment Technicians	5	1,140	1,640	500	44%
	Tile and Marble Setters	5	1,770	2,530	760	43%
	Claims Adjusters, Examiners, and Investigators	4	700	1,000	300	43%
	Motorboat Mechanics	3	210	300	90	43%
	Umpires, Referees, and Other Sports Officials	2	570	810	240	42%
	Athletes and Sports Competitors	2	360	510	150	42%
	Automotive Glass Installers and Repairers	4	150	210	60	40%

Source: Utah Department of Workforce Services