



Mind Wide Open

British Columbia Student and Graduate Profile



Riverside Secondary School, located in Port Coquitlam, British Columbia, was one of the first schools to open a Cisco Networking Academy in Canada. Riverside Secondary can also claim a couple of other firsts – it was the first to offer Cisco classes as part of its night school, and one of the first to pilot the Information and Communications Technology Council’s Focus on IT (FIT) program, a curriculum designed to prepare students for a “world that runs on computers.” Together, the Cisco Networking Academy and FIT programs put Riverside Secondary School on the cutting edge of providing a progressive and sophisticated learning environment for its students.

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- Ryan Clark



Students **Ryan Clark** and **Neil Truncik** can attest to this fact. Both students enrolled in the Cisco Networking Academy and took classes on such subjects as networking, routing and switching. Ryan, who enrolled in the program in 1998, says, “I’ve always had a passion for computers and IT, so this was a natural fit for me.” Neil, who started the program in

grade 10 in 2002, has similar sentiments. He says, “The Cisco Networking Academy sounded really interesting and because I had always been good at things like technology and science, it seemed like the right step for me to advance in my learning.”

Dennis Joel, an instructor at the Cisco Networking Academy, taught both students. He says, “I’m really proud of both Ryan and Neil. They are both awesome. Neil earned his CCNA in grade 11 and was a top student, and Ryan is working as an infrastructure manager for a major company where he is responsible for a multimillion dollar budget. I think that speaks very highly for what the Cisco Networking Academy can bring about for its students.”

The major company to which Dennis refers is the **Trader Corporation**, the Canadian leader in print and online vertical media with approximately 200 publications and 20 Websites. In his position there, Ryan is responsible for project architecture design, the development of IT strategy, and managing a team that ensures that the entire network for the company stays up and running.

He says, “The Cisco Networking Academy gave me exposure to networking gear so that I was able to work directly with the equipment. This knowledge made me ‘job-ready’ by the time I graduated. Now my big focus is making sure Trader Corporation can be as successful as it possibly can through the use of technology.”

Neil became so engrossed in the Networking Academy program that he completed three semesters in his first year and was able to achieve his CCNA before the course was officially over. He says, “Because the courses are online, students have the ability to work ahead if they prefer and really excel. You can be very self-directed and take charge of how fast and how much you learn.”

Neil became so involved and passionate about networking that he now works for **Cisco** as a network lab administrator, a job which he assists in partner training and manages the demo lab in the company’s Vancouver office. Neil hopes to one day become a Cisco systems engineer, saying, “The Academy program kick-started my career and I’ve since worked my way up to the Cisco CCNP level. I look forward to making continued career advancements.”