



The Canadian Academy of  
Travel & Tourism:

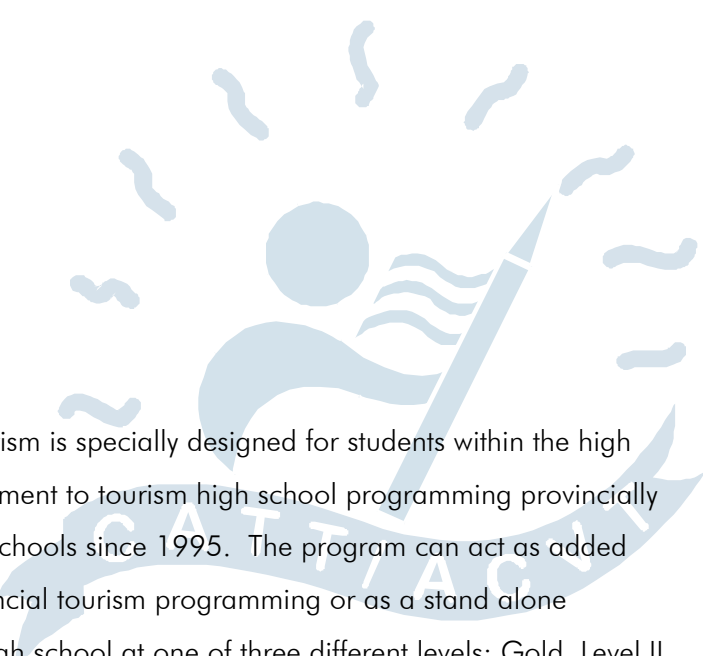
a focus on

**Loyalist Vocational &  
Collegiate Institute**

Kingston, Ontario



## CATT Background



The Canadian Academy of Travel & Tourism is specially designed for students within the high school system as an introduction and/or enrichment to tourism high school programming provincially and territorially. It has operated in Canadian schools since 1995. The program can act as added value or enrichment to existing local and provincial tourism programming or as a stand alone course/credit. CATT can be introduced in a high school at one of three different levels: Gold, Level II and Level I.

CATT aims to promote the national importance of tourism among young people, to highlight the career opportunities in tourism and to develop skills through national standardized learning outcomes associated with curriculum learning activity sets for educators to use academically and experientially in their high schools.

Its mission is to introduce and promote careers in the tourism industry while students pursue their high school studies. Students enrolled in the program follow regular high school curriculum with a “specialization” in tourism. Academy students demonstrate learning outcomes referenced to the National Occupational Standards for Transferable Skills established by the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council, the Employability Skills 2000+ assembled by the Conference Board of Canada and Human Resource and Social Development Essential Skills.

## Canadian Academy of Travel & Tourism: A Case Study

The following is an in-depth look at the Academy Gold-level program independently run within a secondary school setting. With a commitment to tourism studies and exploring careers in the industry, each Academy program is a unique operation, flavoured by the culture and the spirit of the surrounding community.

### *The School and the Community*

On the eastern edge of Lake Ontario, with historical and cultural attractions galore, Kingston, Ontario, is a tourism hotspot. Visitors and locals alike explore the city's mix of urban charm and natural beauty—a day out could include visiting award-winning Fort Henry, strolling along the picturesque waterfront, browsing unique shops, and taking a trolley tour of the top sights. Evenings offer fine dining or casual fare, lively entertainment, and even a haunted walk around the city's spookiest establishments. With tourism playing a key role in the local economy, options abound for students to experience and learn about one of the fastest growing sectors in Canada.

The city's Loyalist Collegiate and Vocational Institute (LCVI) has a strong history of providing its students with hands-on learning experiences. For two decades, it has offered students a variety of specialist programs, including those geared to tourism careers. The hospitality and tourism program at LCVI is well established, having achieved the Specialist High Skills Major designation, a government sanctioned program which allows students to focus their high school learning on a specific economic sector. As many as 12 sections or classes run each school year in the LCVI hospitality and tourism program. With such a high number of students interested in the tourism sector, teacher Doug James felt the Canadian Academy of Travel and Tourism (CATT) program would be a perfect enhancement to what the school was already offering.

The national CATT program allows students to learn a host of academic and career skills while pursuing their high school diploma. Participants gain a head start on post-secondary tourism studies and are prepared to take advantage of the vast number of tourism employment and business possibilities that exist—whether at their doorstep or across the world. The Academy also forges links between the education system and local businesses, building stronger, more connected communities and creating a new generation of skilled and experienced employees.

CATT is coordinated on a national level by the Canadian Tourism Human Resource Council (CTHRC), which assists schools by supplying curricula and opportunities for networking with other educators and tourism employers. At the provincial and territorial level, tourism human resource organizations, such as the Ontario Tourism Education Corporation (OTEC) in Ontario, provide hands-on training and certification programs, advice, and support to CATT coordinators and students.

There are three levels at which a school can participate in CATT: the introductory Level I, the knowledge-building Level II, and the skill-building Gold Level. These three levels provide increasing degrees of classroom learning and hands-on experience, with the three-year Gold program offering high school students the ultimate foundation for a career in tourism.

Students who wish to achieve their Gold certificate must complete a number of requirements to ensure they are amply prepared for either post-secondary education or the world of work. Among these, they must obtain their high school diploma, attend a tourism career workshop, complete a customer service oriented program, accumulate 240 hours of workplace experience, and participate in an exit interview. They also create a portfolio which documents their achievements and experiences related to tourism. The student's portfolio acts as an excellent supplement to their resume or post-secondary application.

## **School Staff and CATT Curriculum**

When contemplating the addition of the CATT program at LCVI, Mr. James felt the CATT certificate offered a unique way of recognizing the enhanced curriculum of the school's already established tourism program. Students participating in community events, catering activities, or culinary competitions would be recognized for their skills and dedication, and could receive the CATT certificate as part of the graduation ceremony. The goals of the Academy so closely mirrored those of the school that joining the Gold program seemed like a natural step.

Mr. James twinned the promotion of the CATT program with the Limestone District School Board's Focus Programs, which provide specialized curriculum opportunities. The Focus Programs were established in 1990 with the notion that students could be more successful in community-minded courses that concentrated on an area of genuine student interest. As part of the program, LCVI hosts the Cooks Internship, which began in 1991 and gives students the opportunity to take part in many activities directly related to becoming a culinary professional. Participants benefit from an industry-grade classroom/kitchen in which they learn culinary skills as they prepare food that is sold in the school cafeteria and used in the daycare.

Adding to their knowledge base, students involved in the CATT and culinary programs obtain industry training and certifications. Areas of industry training available include food safety, First Aid/CPR, safe knife handling skills, Service Excellence, and WHMIS training. Some of the certifications are delivered by community partners, including OTEC. These certificates are added to the students' portfolios and enhance their future employability by providing proof of their accomplishments and industry credentials.

## **Community Involvement and Partnerships**

To further classroom learning and provide real-world experience, local industry partners offer work placements and job opportunities for the students. Students gain from the knowledge shared by foodservice professionals in hotels, restaurants, and institutional kitchens. An additional benefit is the ability to credit this experience toward the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP). LCVI is one of the original schools to introduce OYAP, and its students can complete the Cook Level One Apprenticeship while in the program. This opportunity is part of a dual credit activity in which LCVI and St. Lawrence College have aligned hospitality and tourism curricula to ensure all required skills are being met. As part of the year-long program, students spend two weeks in February at the college with their instructors to focus on developing and mastering all relevant skills. Upon the successful completion of the program, St. Lawrence College grants students credit for the Level One classroom training portion of the Cook's Apprenticeship. Students then have two years to become a registered apprentice with the Ontario Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and apply their Level One.

For any student interested in a career in the culinary arts, this is a perfect opportunity to gain a head start on their formal training in the profession.

CATT also partners with other programs and departments within LCVI, boosting its profile and ensuring a wide range of students have the opportunity to learn about tourism careers. Students in the Leadership course, which runs under a Physical and Health Education credit, are involved in the Academy through their responsibility in planning events and activities that happen throughout the school year. These include the athletic banquet, in-school Chili Fest competition, Road Race, elementary tournaments, and blood donor clinics. The Technological Education/Guidance and Physical and Health Education departments have also played a key role by encouraging students to complete certifications that lead to the CATT certificate.

Activities in the community add depth to LCVI's CATT experience. Recently, culinary students started the semester by preparing for the Kingston Chili Fest Competition. For a preliminary cook-off round, the students in the culinary program and those in the leadership class organized an in-school chili competition. The students of LCVI were offered a chance to taste six different varieties of chili and cast a vote for their favourite. The winning recipe created by the Cooks Internship students was a Chipotle Chicken Chili. The LCVI favourite was featured at the Kingston Chili Fest competition where it won first place overall in the ethnic category. This was a fantastic accomplishment for the students, who were competing for the title against 30 local restaurants and businesses.

The culinary students at LCVI also participate in the Loyalist College Junior Iron Chef Competition. This activity is organized annually by senior culinary students from Loyalist College in nearby Belleville. The LCVI teams have been competing in this activity for some time now, achieving two first-place and two second-place wins. The competition involves teams of four, who create a three-course dinner using scallops and pork loin. The time limit for the completion of the meals is two hours and the students are judged on their culinary skills and knowledge, teamwork, and organizational skills, as well as meal taste and presentation.

To continue their learning beyond the classroom, students have had the opportunity to participate in various field trips. First, students went to a local teppanyaki restaurant, where they had a superb lunch prepared by a Japanese chef at their table. The outing was part of the menu planning unit of the program, and helped introduce students to table d'hôte menu planning.

Travelling to Ontario's capital for the second trip, students went to Toronto's Royal Winter Fair to experience the agricultural and cooking show. This was a fantastic opportunity for the students to learn more about where the products used in food preparation come from. The Royal Winter Fair offered marketing board displays, hundreds of recipe ideas, and the chance to make a true connection between the food and beverage industry and the agricultural sector. While in Toronto, students also explored other aspects of tourism, visiting Kensington Market and participating in a walking tour and scavenger hunt from College Street to the Drake Hotel on Queen Street. The students needed to visit ten locations, finding ethnic shops and observing modern art.

## **Professional Development and Continuing the Program**

While the CATT program clearly provides hands-on learning opportunities for students, it presents professional development opportunities for educators as well. Teachers in the Academy receive training through organizations such as OTEC and have the chance to share and learn from each other through online forums and at annual meetings. Mr. James feels that as a teacher in the program, he has had excellent professional learning opportunities. He believes the CATT teacher conferences are among the most rewarding experiences that can be offered to any educator. At the conferences, teachers have a chance to attend workshops focused

on human resource needs and led by tourism professionals. These workshops give teachers relevant messages and exciting insights to bring back to the classroom.

The CATT program has been extremely successful at LCVI. Students are well aware of the certification and scholarship opportunities available to them through the Academy. Those who have been involved in the culinary program benefit from course exemptions at the college level, particularly in *Culinary Management* and *Chef* training. All participants have had a richer experience in high school as a result of the program, and their enthusiasm encourages younger students to consider tourism and culinary education for themselves. With this eagerness and such strong support from community businesses and post-secondary institutions, the longevity and vibrancy of the CATT program at this Academy school is assured.