



The Metriks project student research team

Photo credit: Metriks Education

### For healthcare professionals, physiotherapists and insurance providers, the task of evaluating injured workers can be downright painful.

Functional capacity evaluations are used to determine if an injured employee (injured on or off the job) is physically ready to resume work. Used by employers and insurers, the current methods can take days to complete and be costly to the Healthcare system.

Kevin Cairns, President of Metriks Education, wanted to create a more time-efficient method that would result in cost savings and was equally thorough.

### VALIDATING A NEW APPROACH

Getting injured workers back on the job has to be handled delicately and with sensitivity, but it also has to be done efficiently, explained Kevin. "It's a complex issue – you're dealing with fatigue, you're dealing with musculoskeletal injuries... all kinds of issues." Kevin believed his faster evaluation would be welcomed by current and future customers, but it needed validation.

"Whenever you do something like this there's always questions about quality," he said.

Though respected in his field, Kevin needed a reputable third party to show this shorter method worked. In collaboration with First Line Kinesiologists Inc., he partnered with Sheridan College through the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario) Applied Research and Commercialization (ARC) Initiative.

The ARC initiative matches small- to medium-sized companies with Sheridan faculty and students to conduct applied research, development and innovation activities that help companies become more productive, competitive and ultimately create jobs. (Funding of up to \$100,000 is matched by 50% in cash or in-kind contribution by the participating company.)

Under the guidance of Dr. Mardy Frazer, Professor, four students from Sheridan's Faculty of Applied Health and Community Studies were selected for this project.

Kevin's evaluation was divided into four sections — lifting; reaching and dexterity; mobility; and grip and pinch strength. Each student was given a section to assess, though all four became familiar with the testing materials and equipment for the entire evaluation.

**“Working with Sheridan and FedDev gave us the “stamp of approval” we needed to confidently approach new customers and markets.”**

**- Kevin Cairns, President, Metriks Education**

Conducting functional assessments on healthy College participants, the results varied slightly. But the overall results concluded that several days of testing were not needed – Kevin's shorter evaluation would generate results just as accurate.

“Now we can say ‘Here's the research that shows why this less expensive model is as good as a more expensive model,’” stressed Kevin.

## **STRENGTHENING STUDENT SKILLS**

For Sheridan student Christine McLaughlin, the project strengthened her skills in areas such as analytical thinking, report writing and public speaking. “I conducted a lot of research on a variety functional capacity evaluations, work-related musculoskeletal disorders, as well injuries and occupational hazards,” she said. “By conducting the research myself, I gained a lot of experience in a field that many new graduates don't have the chance to get.”

## **STAMP OF APPROVAL**

With Sheridan's solid research and data in tow, Kevin praised the students for increasing his chances of expanding his customer base in Canada, U.S., and Asia.

“The students always did what we wanted them to do – they always met their deadlines,” said Kevin. “And I was impressed with their overall level of confidence. I could tell from the research and the questions they were asking, they were really in tune with what was going on.”



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Can Sheridan help you solve a problem? Contact us today to get started:  
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