

Gap Years

A tool for Recruitment and Retention

Michelle Dittmer
Co-Founder
michelle@cangap.ca

Madelyn Steed
Co-Founder
madelyn@cangap.ca



**Canadian
Gap Year
Association**

What is the Canadian Gap Year Association?

Research | Education & Advocacy | Resources



What is a gap year?

- **CanGap Definition:** intentional time away from normal routine, for one to experience personal growth through reflection, volunteerism, travel and/or work with the express purpose of figuring out:
 - Who you are
 - Who you want to be
 - What steps to take get to where and who you want to be.



- Traditionally, gap years are taken after high school; however, we have noticed that a Canadian gap year is anytime between launching a post-secondary career through to post-graduation. It can be a full year, or a semester.
- Approximately 50% prior to entering post-secondary, 50% mid-post-secondary break



Profile of a gapper

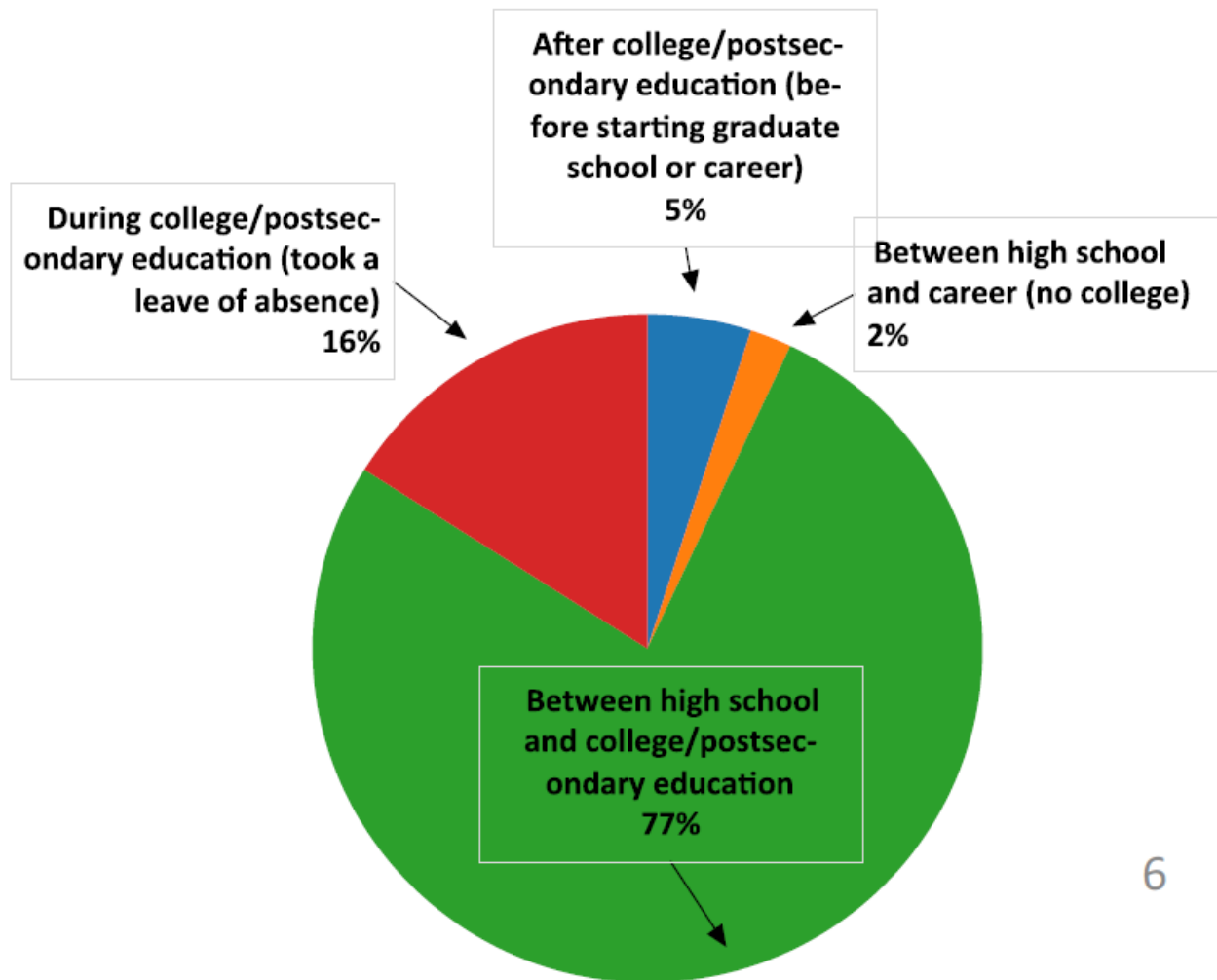
- **High achievers** – they are burnt out and need to care for their mental and physical well being before taking next steps
- **Explorers** – people who feel they need to understand more about the world before embarking on next steps and taking on debt
- **With Obstacles** – young people who are overcoming other obstacles (ex. loss of a family member, eating disorder, social anxiety, etc.)



Profile of a gapper

- **Career Seeker** – those who don't know what career they want to get into and seek more time to explore options
- **Financial Need** – young people who need to earn some money prior to their next financial commitment.
- **Plan B** – people who did not get into a program of interest and are taking some time to come up with a new plan or strengthen their application for future years





Relevant responses to why they took a gap year:

- 92% to gain experiences, personal growth
- 81% wanted a break from academic track
- 52% wanted to explore academic pursuits
- 44% wanted to explore careers
- 7% not admitted to college



Why are gap years gaining traction in Canada?

External Factors

- The “Malia Effect”
- Support from Ivy League US Universities (Harvard/Stanford)
- Stronger understanding of the value of experiential learning
- Changes in the pattern of post-secondary-to-job pathways
- Focus on Skill Development



How do Gappers perform?



What will they gain?

- AGA (2015) found:
 - Students return to post-secondary and demonstrate a higher GPA than peers that did not take a gap year
 - More engaged on the campus and achieve meaningful leadership opportunities
- Our gappers report:
 - More independence, more confidence, greater maturity
 - Stronger inter-cultural understanding
 - Stronger connection to the value of further study in a specific field
 - More clarity
 - More “in control” of their personal lives and mental and physical health



What will they gain? Continued.

- AGA:

JOBS

88% believe the gap year experience increased their employability.



SKILLS

84% say their gap year helped them acquire skills to be successful in their career.



CAREER

60% Say their gap year helped define their current career path.

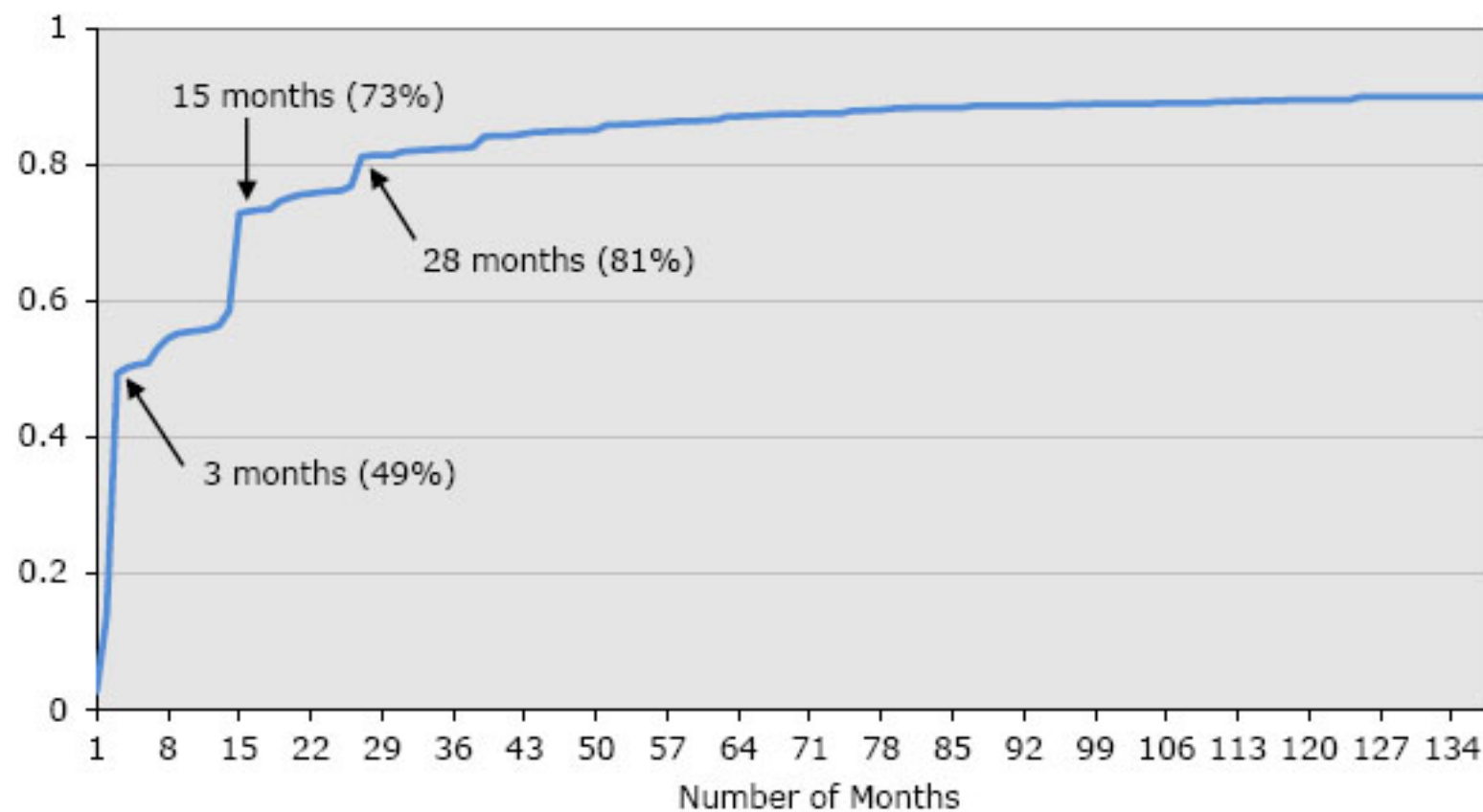


Canadian Studies...

-
- We are working on securing funding and academic supports.
- Canadian Council of Learning:
 - Gappers were 8% more likely to be employed than their non-gapping peers
- One study out of University of Calgary found that people who didn't take a gap year didn't see value in them but those who did, raved about them.
- StatsCan... Compelling, but out of date (20 years old)



Proportion starting PSE by month



- <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/81-004-x/2011004/article/11594-eng.htm>



	Median number of months between high school graduation and start of first postsecondary education program
	number
Gender	
Male	8
Female	3
Aboriginal status	
Non-Aboriginal	4
Aboriginal	15
Mother tongue	
English	14
French	3
Neither English nor French	3
Province of high school graduation	
Atlantic provinces	3
Quebec	3
Ontario	15
Western provinces	13
Community type	
Rural	8
Population centre	3
Source: Statistics Canada. Youth in Transition Survey . Cohort B. Cycle 5.	

[illegible]

Optimizing the Gap Year Pathway for your Institution



Discussion Questions

- What are you doing?
- What could you be doing?
- How will this benefit your institution?
- How can CanGap better support you?

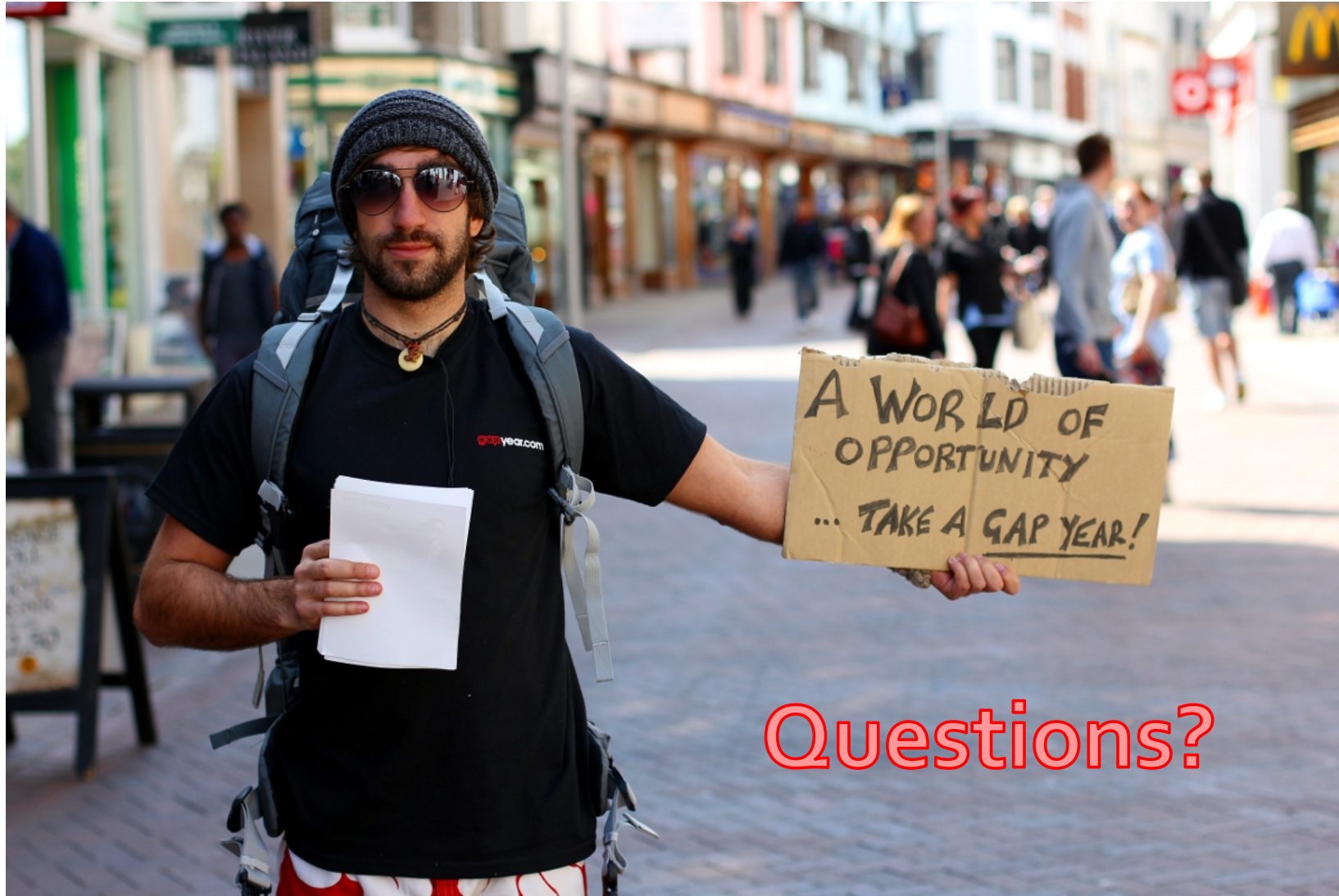
- Suggested topics:
 - Deferral policies
 - Delayed start for at-risk students
 - Gap Year Scholarships
 - Credits for experiential learning
 - Redirect program
 - Required/Suggested break from studies



How CanGap can help

- Membership Opportunities
- Developing a network
- Connecting Gap students with schools
- Promotion of scholarships
- Consulting on policy development
- Co-designing gap year/experiential semester learning programs
- Supporting researchers interested in this field of study
- Developing a “certified gap year” framework to ensure that the year is productive and developmental
- What else do you need from us?





Questions?



Connect with us:

Cangap.ca

michelle@cangap.ca

Madelyn@cangap.ca

647-821-7060



**Canadian
Gap Year
Association**