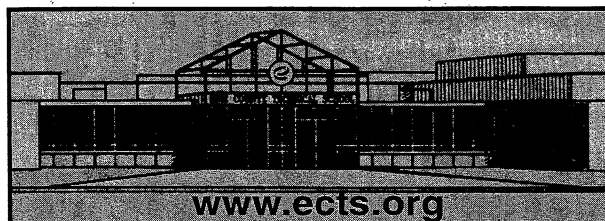




Erie County Technical School



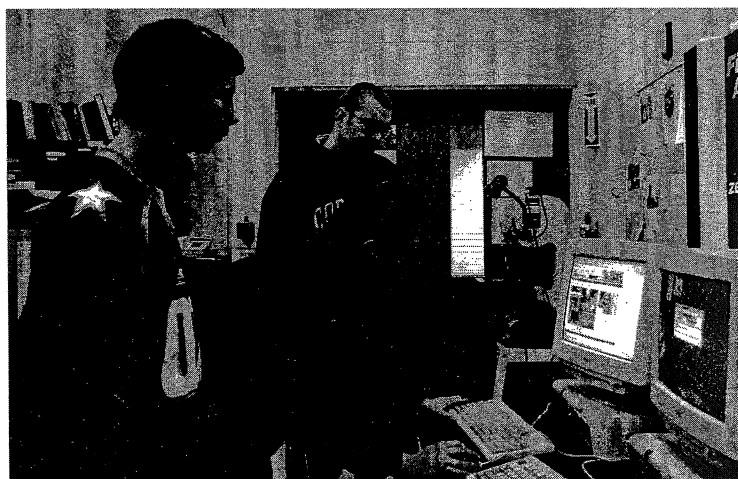
In a continuing effort to make its programs more relevant to today's business and industry standards, the Erie County Technical School is in the process of aligning the Plastics Technology course content to meet national standards. These standards include those outlined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the American National Standards Association (ANSI).

"As we work toward a competency based program, students will be given a list of learning packets that must be completed during each quarter. The learning packets will enable students to proceed at their own pace as long as they complete the required number of packets each quarter. Many of the learning guides incorporate hands-on activities as well as written assignments," explains Frank Paparelli, Plastics Technology instructor.

"With the addition of four computers to the plastics lab, students will now be able to view a series of

learning guides which will cover various aspects of plastics processing and manufacturing practices," continued Paparelli. "From basic technical information, safety and materials to equipment, resume writing and job interviewing skills, the students will be able to gain an insight into what an employer expects from a good employee."

Learning packets for the three-year program will incorporate plastics development in history, plastics versus other manufacturing materials, types of plastics, characteristics of plastics, how plastics are made, plastics in our local/national economy, methods of manufacturing plastic products, how a plastics plant



Plastics Technology students Josh Potthoff, a junior at Northwestern High School (left) and Jeremy English, a senior at General McLane, look on as Frank Paparelli browses the OSHA website on injection molding machine guarding.

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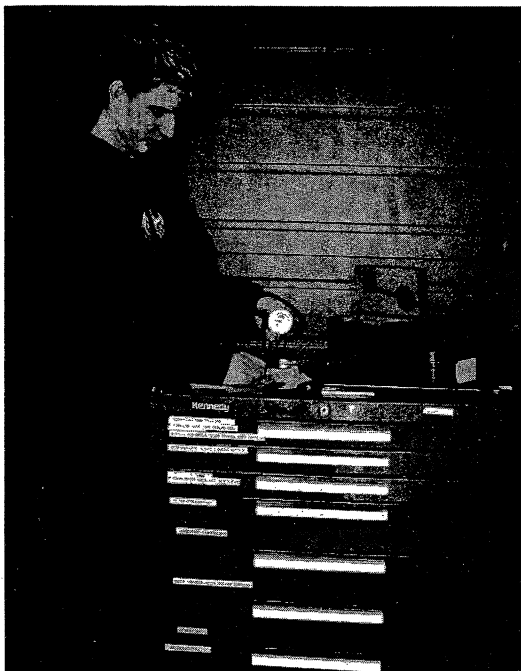


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operates and skills employers are looking for. Other learning packets will include the development and history of injection molding, the injection mold, auxiliary equipment, quality assurance, mold set-up, operation of an injection molding machine, processing, forklift training and workplace and life readiness.

"In addition to the obvious benefits of learning the technical information, students will learn how to use the Internet as a research tool, sharpen their reading and writing skills and they will learn how to create their own technical data banks."



Jerome Morehouse, a senior at Northwestern High School, is pictured using a dial indicator to check dimensions on a molded part.

Matt Crawl, a senior at Northwestern High School, examines the top clamping plate of a cold runner injection mold.



"The students will rotate between the computer work and the hands on training. Using this approach, students can set their own pace and have more interaction with the actual

learning process as opposed to the traditional form of training where the class is lead by the teacher through lectures and tests. The role of the instructor will shift to that of a resource person who is available to help students and answer questions. When the student feels comfortable about performing a specific skill, he or she can schedule a lab evaluation with the instructor. The student's performance will then be assessed using a checklist and a grade will be assigned," added Paparelli.

"Many career and technical schools are turning to this type of instruction. It will be a vast improvement over former training methods because the student not only learns the answers to problems, but also what questions to ask and where to search for answers. This in effect trains students to think independently. As the learning guides are implemented in the lab, we will adjust the content based upon student feedback. While we have just begun the transformation, I anticipate implementing this type of training next fall," concluded Paparelli.

If you know of a student who may be interested in the Plastics Technology lab, ECTS is currently accepting applications for the 2005/06 school year. Applications are available from home school guidance counselors and are also available by visiting our website at www.ects.org. Applications are due by April 1, 2005.

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