

The Myths & Facts about Cooperative Education

Excerpts from a Co-op student's article...



Bryan Barker, Co-op Student, Markville Secondary School, writes...

Many people don't consider Co-op because of some "surface myths" regarding the course. In this article, I will show you some of these myths and I will debunk them as best as I can.

➤ **Myth # 1: It is not a university course, and I want to go to university.**

People always tend to believe this course isn't valuable or "will not look good" on a university application. Although the course selection guide gives it a weird course code initially, it later becomes a course linked to another course. I decided to participate in a teaching placement in Co-op. I chose to relate my Co-op program to grade eleven university English (ENG3U) and, as a result, my course code (which shows up on your university application) became ENG3UC (C for Co-op).

➤ **Myth # 2: I'm too busy to take Co-op. Besides, it won't help me for university.**

Co-op is absolutely relevant to your university life. I was applying to many different universities, and the first thing that is asked of you is to list your "experiences that are relevant to the course you want to take in university". I applied to a pro-

gram in teaching known as "concurrent education". They specifically asked me to list three experiences related to education and teaching students. Just imagine the looks on the admission council's faces when they saw I spent half of each day for an entire semester at a teaching placement!

➤ **Myth # 3: This "experience" concept only works for some courses in university.**

Not really. Some universities ask you to list experiences and how you learned from them in general. These profiles are very crucial, as they often make or break your acceptance!

➤ **Myth # 4: It is not possible for me to job shadow something that interests me, like job shadowing a lawyer, pharmacist, or lab technician.**

You would be surprised at how many placements there are in Co-op. Never doubt the abilities of Co-op, for if you want to try a job, Co-op has the contacts to get you started in a career of your choice!

➤ **Myth # 5: So, I earn the credit. Of what use will it be for a future job?**

Through Co-op, you have many opportunities to construct a portfolio. Students also get to write reflections and get evaluations from their employers. In addition, some students have been known to get summer jobs easily from their Co-op employers because the employers have seen their abilities beyond the résumé.

➤ **Myth # 6: What if I don't like where I am working? What if I don't like the career after all? Won't it just become a waste of a course?**

First off, if you don't like where you are working, the Co-op teacher will attempt to trouble-shoot the situation. There is never a dead-end in Co-op, there is always a solution. If you don't like the career, then you didn't lose that much. Finding out now is better than later, after you have spent time and money on post-secondary education or other training, just to find yourself at a dead-end! Besides, that rarely happens, especially if you researched your career choice beforehand with a Co-op teacher.

➤ **Myth # 7: What if I want to go to college or the workplace after high school?**

For college-bound students, it gives you a chance to research more about what courses you need to take in college to successfully get the job you want. For the workplace-bound students, it catalyzes your ability to enter the workplace, and makes you more presentable to the career world that lies after grade twelve.

So there you have it - seven big myths concerning Cooperative Education. My experiences in Co-op have been very educational...but not the typical "educational" that you would expect to see in a classroom. If I had the chance to redo my grade eleven year, I would not change a thing!

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2008/2009 Outstanding Co-op Students

Cooperative Education/OYAP Recognitions

Congratulations!

Alexander Mackenzie HS

Erica Hakien
Laura Haliburton
Ashley Queiser
Laura Wong

Aurora HS

Kyra Holmes
Kelsey Kaminski

Bayview SS

Ryan Cameron
Bryce Manion
Paulina Papadimitriou
Sayan Shanmugathan
Natasha Tan
Lukas Yip

Bur Oak SS

Narmatha Benedict
Vishva Shah
Sujina Uthayakumar

Dr. G. W. Williams SS

Iana Mologuina
Hailey Pacitto
Julia Vassileveva
Marc Zorzit

Dr. John M. Denison SS

Grace Herron
Jayme Hollidge
Gemerdine Maravilla
Will McCabe
Justin Segal
Angela Slessor

Emily Carr SS

Paolo Criminisi
Amir Soltani
Mario Tessaro

Huron Heights SS

Heidi Buys
Dylan Curtis
Julie Hunt
Robert Loomans
Melanie Pretorius
Chase Ross
Katie Schilbach

King City SS

Kathryn D'Anna
Kyle Edwards
Jillian Linton
Sam McKendry
Ally Phillips
Mitch Robson
Astrid Ross
Sasha Wain-Fellowes
Daniel Young

Maple HS

Coco Ang
Vivian Chung
Chantal Donoso
Sarah Khalil
Maria Khan
Kelvin Liew
Ron Nguyen
Ananth Ragupathy
Monique Roopanram
Alicia Smellie
Alia Syed
Noor Tunnoor
Keith Wood

Markham District HS

Melissa Braschel
Richard Brock
Jeremy Clarke
Steven Dzingala
Monica Yim

Markville SS

Sarah Wright
Jasmine Wu
Jennifer Wu

Middlefield CI

Meera Chandrabalan
Victoria Koo
Sinthuja Nadarajah
Athena Patterson
Chadell Phillip
Kyle Thompson

Milliken Mills HS

Edwin Leong
Kenett Ng
Gargi Patel
Nick Pitter
Amber Sethi
Vicky Yang
Cally Ye

Newmarket HS

Franz Averion
Crystal Fry
Natalie Howes

Pierre Elliott Trudeau HS

Mera Bouorm
Lily Chan
Jackey Cheng
Kevin Chia
Dorothy Chu
Karimkhan Damani
Matthew Herbert
Christina Lin
Erica Tham

Richmond Green SS

Daniel Benin
Adrienne Chau
Leyla Farjallah
Winson Li
Ron Mil
Alyssa Mollo
Luiza Vikhnovic

Richmond Hill HS

Joshua Genser

Sir William Mulock SS

Abbas Alibhai
Fraser Elford
Sam Galloro
Mikayla Smith
Alana Wilson

Stephen Lewis SS

Aria Bassiri
Michael Brassel
Radha Modhera

Stouffville District SS

Jessica Every
Karen Tew
Phil Wood

Sutton District HS

David MacInnis
Chris Wolscht

Thornhill SS

Joash Dy
Angie Hwang
Mariam Merabishvili
Pauline Praseuth

Thornlea SS

Ludia Bae
Jovan Milosevic

Unionville HS

Braedy Alcorn
Lin Lan
Valerie Stroukova
Dakota Wares-Tani

Woodbridge College

Kathy Darkoa
Sarah Marziliano
Armina Tihak



STUDENT VOICES

Sir William Mulock Secondary School students write about their Co-op placements at Southlake Regional Health Centre...

Complex Medical Rehabilitation



Mikayla Smith writes...

My Cooperative Education experience was amazing and I truly mean that! My placement was in the **Complex Medical Rehabilitation program at Southlake**. CMR provides specialized care, generally to elderly patients in order to improve their level of independence before they return home.

My routine was to set up the activity lounge for exercise class, then proceed to the conference room where I met up with Physical and Occupational Therapists, discussing the newly admitted patients'

history and action plans. I would then shadow a PTA/OTA and get patients ready for their daily exercise class. Following that, I would observe the exercise class, assist patients when needed and later had the opportunity to lead independently. I really enjoyed the staff at CMR - their warm welcome and encouraging spirits made my experience so much more enjoyable. They did their very best to educate me - allowing me to complete suitable tasks and freely ask questions to better understand their role.

Cooperative Education was a fabulous work experience that allowed me to understand all aspects of the hospital. Some advice I would give to a Cooperative Education student would be to complete any task given with a positive attitude even if it does not interest you. If you have a positive mindset, any experience can be a good one as you gain knowledge and skills in the area. Overall, my Cooperative Education placement exceeded my expectations, truly opened my eyes to the world of healthcare and gave me the experience of a lifetime. I have made the decision that nursing is the occupation for me!

Cancer Care

Fraser Elford writes...

For my Co-op placement I had the opportunity to be placed in the **Cancer Clinic at Southlake**. My position was basically to comfort the patients while they were receiving chemotherapy and other treatments. This gave me a great chance to work on my social skills and on my serving skills. This was truly a remarkable experience because I got to be so close to people who are experiencing very serious illnesses. At times it was hard to imagine how they could deal with things and still smile and be so encouraging and funny. I built many awesome relationships and heard many amazing stories that I will never forget.

My responsibilities were flexible. I did paperwork, shadowed nurses, observed procedures, sat in on rounds and other meetings, and visited other areas of the hospital i.e. Minor Operating Room, Shoulder Clinic, Paediatrics, and the ICU.

Some of the best times I had at Co-op were talking to the nurses and patients. Every one of them was extremely hospitable and very encouraging. The nurses emphasized the importance of education and taught me some tricks of the trade. The patients taught me that there's no hope in giving up, and that there's value in simple conversations and every relationship.

What I have taken away from this Co-op experience is priceless. I have learned the importance of nurses, doctors, volunteers, and patients. To all future students: understand that Co-op is your opportunity to make it what you want, and that your success is built on how you come to the job - happy about another day, or sad that you have to go back in. I will always recommend taking a Co-op course to everyone.



Cooking up Career Opportunities with Co-op!

By Iana Mologuina, Co-op/OYAP Student,
Dr. G. W. Williams Secondary School

I cannot express how fortunate I am to have participated in Co-op during my high school career. Through this course, I earned tremendous experience and knowledge essential to becoming a chef. If it wasn't for Co-op, the owners of **Chinook**, a fine-dining restaurant in Aurora, wouldn't have looked twice at my résumé. By letting me work for free, I showed them that I actually do have skills (I also showed myself that I am able to work in a kitchen, and really enjoy it!). This is exactly why even after my Co-op course, I am still working at Chinook, now for money and climbing up the career ladder. I started by doing simple prep-work in the back kitchen, and am now officially on the line, cooking with the rest of the crew. I have even climbed up from garde-manger, to the sauté station, and now onto the grill. This is an incredible job reference that makes me stand out apart from other job seekers, since I was given a chance with no experience. It has also helped me get accepted into George Brown College, the best chef school in Ontario, as well as helped me get a scholarship for the year. **Only good things come out of Co-op. It's a great stepping stone on the way to success!**



STUDENT VOICES

Culinary Arts...

Sheraton Parkway Hotel North

Victoria Koo, Co-op/OYAP Student, Middlefield C. I.



Company description:

The first Sheraton Hotel was opened in 1937 by Ernest Henderson and Robert Moore. Sheraton's objectives are to leave an everlasting impression of warm and welcoming experiences on clients.

My responsibilities:

In the kitchen of the Sheraton Parkway Hotel, my main duties are to assist the chefs and cooks. In the 'garde-manger'

kitchen, I can create a variety of platters and different types of salads and sandwiches. In the 'pastry area', I can plate a variety of desserts and decorate cakes or dessert slabs. The 'production area' of the kitchen requires a lot of preparation for the week. This can include cutting many different vegetables, vacuum packing produce to be used in the future, and plating for V.I.P or banquet events. The 'line' deals with cooking the orders from the Crave restaurant. These orders can include: bailetti pasta, general tao chicken, butter chicken, burgers & fries etc.

What I have learned:

I have learned how to make a variety of salads, how to roast vegetables, plate desserts, make and garnish fruit and cheese platters, cut vegetables in different ways (dice, julienne, chop etc.), vacuum pack chicken, make whole fruit platters, deep fry, grill vegetables and more. I have also learned to ask more questions, to be responsible for my actions, and to put forth a positive attitude in the workplace and in school.

My favourite experiences:

My favourite experiences at work include: learning how to create dishes for V.I.P events; learning how to cook dishes in the line quickly; plating desserts; decorating cakes; and thinly slicing mushrooms the traditional way.

How Co-op has helped me:

Co-op has helped me to put my foot in the door of the Hospitality and Tourism Industry. This course has given me a chance to get a good perspective of the work environment I might be working in, in the future.

Advice to future Co-op students:

Be open minded about performing new tasks and be open to learning new things from people who know the job/career inside out. Also, have fun at your placement!



Teaching Assistant...

Blue Willow Public School

Sarah Marziliano, Co-op Student, Woodbridge College

Cooperative Education has enabled me to gain firsthand experience in the field I hope to pursue a career in one day.

My Co-op placement was at **Blue Willow Public School** where I had the privilege of working with a kindergarten class, a grade 6 Special Education class - where I worked with an autistic child, and a grade 8 class. All of these experiences have enabled me to gain knowledge of the different grades as well as the different kinds of teaching methods.

I was given the opportunity to teach ten lessons to the grade 8's as well as prepare three assignments for them. At first when I started teaching in front of the class I was extremely nervous. My palms were sweating, and I was almost considering using that 'Kleenex in the pocket method' that was taught to us during pre-placement. However, as the weeks went by I was much more confident and I realized I was able to deliver a more effective and meaningful lesson. It is so rewarding to see students actually being interested in what you are teaching, and knowing that you are having an impact on their lives in a positive way.

My experience with the kindergartens has not only been fun but has been extremely educational. I am so fortunate to have had Mrs. Chugh as one of my supervisors, as she is an excellent role model to me and I try to mirror how she interacts and delivers lessons to the students. Working one-on-one with the kindergartens has taught me so much about patience, as well as learning ways to communicate with students.

Before coming into this program I was extremely shy, however, this experience has led me to gain confidence in myself to know that if I put my mind to something I can accomplish it. This program has unveiled many skills that I never knew I had. It is really a life altering experience and it will teach you so much about yourself and what you can accomplish in life. This program is by far the best experience that has ever happened to me and has reassured me that the teaching field is for me.



TEACHER REFLECTIONS

Ethan Milberg, Co-op Department Head, Bur Oak Secondary School, writes...

Narmatha Benedict epitomizes what Co-op is about. She is extremely bright, thoughtful and mature beyond her years and provided her placement wonderful support in several endeavors. A talented singer, Narmi worked in the Music Department at **Mount Joy Public School** providing assistance in the classroom and through several performance activities including Music Monday. Narmi's professionalism and charm is infectious and visits to Mount Joy were filled with several positive compliments from a number of teachers. As a new program, we at Bur Oak Secondary School are very proud of Narmatha and pleased with the manner she has served as a role model for members of our community.



Narmatha writes...



I personally believe that I bring a positive attitude to my workplace. The fact that I love music also adds to that and shows me how important doing what you love is. I'm always ready to sing, or help out other students in the best way I can so that they too can feel what I feel through music.

Gail Gotter, Co-op Teacher, King City Secondary School, writes...

It gives me great pleasure to write this recommendation for **Sasha Wain-Fellowes**. Sasha participated in the Cooperative Education program at King City Secondary School and had a placement at the **Kingbridge Conference Centre** as an assistant maintenance person.

Sasha's duties included assisting with the operation and maintenance of plumbing, heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems. He was initially very nervous about being involved in such a large conference centre but soon overcame his fear to become a valuable working member of the staff.

Sasha was complimented by his employer as always being ready and eager to approach each new task. His genuine commitment to take on and complete work to meet deadlines made him an invaluable employee.

I know that his ability to work as a contributing team member will help him in all his future endeavours.



Accelerated Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP)

Accelerated OYAP programs combine instruction in high school and at the college/training institute. It is offered in semester two and is open to students in their graduating year. For further details, contact the Co-op or Guidance Department.

“Electrical”

By Justin Segal, Dr. John M. Denison S.S.

I completed my Co-op placement at Tech 3 as well as completing the dual credit **Accelerated OYAP Electrical Program at Humber College**. I always thought being an electrician was just wiring lights and switches, but it turned out to be a lot more than that. It is definitely a physical job when you are required to carry 4 inch conduit to the 3rd floor of a building many times over. I also had the opportunity to operate scissor lifts and genie booms and work at heights which I found very enjoyable. Working on the parking lot lights was definitely my favourite job; there is just something about working at heights that I find so interesting and thrilling. As soon as I was told to put on my safety harness I knew it was going to be a great day!



Co-op has definitely given me an understanding of what I want to do next. I plan to work with an electrical company and possibly go to school until I can get a job with Toronto Hydro or Hydro One. I am going to become a lineman for a major electrical utility and I just can't wait to get started!

“Automotive”

By Kyle Thompson, Middlefield C.I.

I chose to take this course for dual credits because I have always been interested in working as an Automotive Service Technician. When my grade 11 Career's teacher introduced the **Accelerated OYAP Automotive Program at Centennial College**, I was certain it was the path I wanted to take.



This program was a great way to get me going in the right direction. One challenge was getting into the habit of going to class on time and doing my homework regularly; doing so benefits me for when I get a real job.

The dual credit Accelerated OYAP experience gives you a head start and it puts you in a win-win situation because you can finish high school while you start an apprenticeship in the field you wish to follow. The courses gave me in-class theory and hands-on practical lessons on how to diagnose, service and repair motor vehicles. I am one step ahead to becoming a licensed automotive service technician.

“Early Childhood Education”

Alyssa Morgado, Maple High School

Alyssa Morgado was enrolled in the dual credit **Accelerated OYAP ECE (Early Childhood Education) Program at Seneca College King Campus**.



Alyssa worked at Discovery Public School and Upper Canada Child Care. Alyssa graduated secondary school in June and decided to change her career direction and is now enrolled in a business program at Seneca College Finch Campus.

“Culinary Arts”

Gabriel Cisneros, Maple High School

Gabriel Cisneros was a dual credit **Accelerated OYAP** student, who worked at the Crown Plaza Hotel while concurrently attending **Humber College** every Friday in the **Culinary Arts Program**. Gabriel earned 3 college level credits and his level 1 apprenticeship training in the Culinary Arts program while also earning his final 7 credits towards his high school diploma. Gabriel graduated from high school in June and is now pursuing a career in the Culinary Arts.



International Cooperative Education Program (ICE) to Ecuador

International Co-op (ICE) develops skills & perspectives needed for 21st century global realities...as part of ICE, students reside with host families and experience a Cooperative Education work placement during 3 months of living near Quito, Ecuador. Here is how the experience helped some 2009 ICE students prepare for their future:



Winhya practising to be a doctor

Winhya Varatheswaran, Milliken Mills High School Nurse's Assistant, Community Health Clinic

After spending three months in Ecuador, I have drastically improved my Spanish from not being able to understand anything and speaking very little, to understanding almost everything and speaking a lot.

Through ICE I gained an understanding of what the job of a doctor would be like. While I was working in the medical clinic, I learned how to do stitches, clean wounds, administer vaccinations, perform examinations and all the basics of being a medical doctor. I now know for sure that I want to be a doctor.

Kylea Shropshire, Dr. John M. Denison Secondary School Nurse's Assistant, Community Health Clinic

I have learned that people are really the same. Humans have their differences but in essence, we are equal. We all think we know what is right. We all love, bleed, hurt, and laugh the same way. It doesn't matter if geography divides us; we all have the same basic needs and goals.

I am in control and I am powerful. What a huge learning for me. I know I am capable of what I want to be and whatever it is that I want to accomplish. I have never felt so ready to take on the world as I am now. Feeling empowered is incredible! Believing in oneself is what moves mountains and brings forth constitutions.



Kylea (2nd from left) with nurse & doctor colleagues



Lauren leading an English class

Lauren Ott, Sacred Heart Catholic H.S. & Thornlea S.S. High School Lead and Assistant ESL Teacher

Through ICE I've learned to create my own learning experiences. While living in Ecuador I was never a student sitting at a desk completing written exams. The country was my classroom, and day-to-day experiences were my tests...now that I've returned to Canada I find myself asking, "What can I take away from this situation?"

I think that this program has prepared me for life. I am now always questioning the world in which I live. "Where did this product come from?", "Who made this?", "Were they paid fairly?", "Is this product environmentally friendly?". Based on what I've learned this past year with ICE and through my ICE assignments and classes, I think the next step for me is to teach others how to be conscious global citizens.

How will you craft your future? www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/ice

A Placement Supervisor's Letter of Recommendation

It is a true pleasure for me to write this letter of recommendation for **Jackey Cheng** [Pierre Elliott Trudeau High School], who worked in our busy dental office as our Co-op student from February 2009 until June 2009. At our office, Jackey was able to observe and participate in many areas of our dental practice. He assisted our staff in general duties during restorative dental care, sterilization, and radiography. He also worked in our in-house dental laboratory and at the front desk.

Jackey is a conscientious and insightful thinker with an eye for detail and a devotion to intellectual curiosity. He has an outstanding ability to draw on his knowledge from theory to develop thoughtful questions and opinions on a variety of issues pertaining to the procedures at hand. For instance, after perusing through my texts on the temporomandibular joint, Jackey quickly made connections with patients who were affected by disorders in this joint. His inquisitive nature and love of learning provided insight for both patients and for me as a supervisor.

Jackey is not only an excellent student, but he is also a great team player and very pleasant to have around staff and patients. His warmth of personality, confidence and sense of humour has indeed helped minimize the stress and fatigue caused by performing complicated dental procedures. As I got to know Jackey over the year, I became only more impressed by the broad range of his interests and abilities - he was recognized as a Canadian National Biology Scholar and aspires to become a dentist in the future.

In closing, Jackey is a very bright and intelligent person who has great academic potential. I know Jackey would be an asset to any school or organization and would recommend him with the utmost confidence. We wish Jackey all the best in his future endeavours and know he will be successful in any path he may choose.

Dr. Ian Erwood BSc., DDS - Unionville Gate Family Dentists



The Community-Based Education Team:

Gale Harild, *Administrator, Community-Based Education*

Salim Jamal, *Community-Based Education Consultant / OYAP Coordinator*

Steve Poste, *School-Work Transition / Technological Consultant*

Linda Alati, *Pathways / Alt. Ed. Consultant*

Kim Taylor Reed, *Curriculum Consultant-Guidance*

David Peacock, *International Cooperative Education Teacher / Coordinator*

Brenda Pembleton, Fiona Willison, Shawna Blencowe:
Administrative Assistants

Editors: Gale Harild / Brenda Pembleton / Fiona Willison

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WEBSITES:

Community-Based Education

www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/community.based.education

Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP)

www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/oyap www.oyap.com

International Cooperative Education Program (ICE)

www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/ice

This issue of Jump Start/Co-op News is posted to the following websites:

YRDSB/Schools/Community Based Education/Cooperative Education/Newsletter-Jump Start a Career:

<http://www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/pdfs/w/cbe/JumpstartNews.pdf>

YRDSB/Schools/Programs/Guidance Services/High School/ Cooperative Education:

<http://www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/pdfs/w/cbe/JumpstartNews.pdf>

YRDSB Board Wide Web (bww):

<https://bww.yrdsb.ca/C9/CBE/default.aspx>