

JUMP START

.....A CAREER



CO-OP NEWS

Spring 2011

YRDSB Students “Reaching Ahead” through School to College Work Initiatives

By Linda Alati & Vicky Essebag, Curriculum Consultants

Ontario secondary schools and colleges are working together towards Student Success. Dual Credit courses enrich student learning as they engage students in post-secondary education and provide for a smooth transition to college. Students can apply for and attend a Dual Credit course while still at secondary school. Success in these courses provides students with both a college and a secondary school credit. All tuition, books and transportation are subsidized by the School to College Work Initiative.

Who is eligible for Dual Credits?

Candidates for Dual Credit are Grade 11 & 12 students who:

- are looking to go beyond the secondary school experience while still in secondary school;
- are enrolled in an SHSM program;
- have the potential to graduate but may be at risk of not graduating;
- are interested in experiencing life as college students (whether they may be college, university or apprenticeship bound); or
- need credits to graduate.

The YRDSB has been developing partnerships with Centennial, Fleming, George Brown, Georgian, Humber, and Seneca Colleges, so as to increase the number of Dual Credit programs (including Accelerated OYAP) for September of 2011. Dual Credit courses are becoming increasingly more accessible to YRDSB students. This year, YRDSB is offering a total of 13 courses. Next year there will be a total of 21.



Discover Tourism students in class at Seneca College

Transitions

By Linda Alati & Vicky Essebag, Curriculum Consultants

Elementary School Students participate in “Promoting Skilled Trades & Technologies” (PSTT): This semester Curriculum is facilitating a number of workshops for elementary teachers in support of the “Promoting Skilled Trades and Technologies” (PSTT) curriculum. These are units that support students in understanding their learning strengths and interests while engaging in hands-on activities directly linked to various skilled trades and technologies.

Select schools will be participating in a culminating activity involving 800 elementary students. These students will have an opportunity to extend their PSTT learning by attending a college for a full day and engaging in hands-on workshops with a skilled trades and technology focus. These workshops are facilitated by trained college instructors, in state of the art facilities. Students have found these experiences to be very captivating, as they serve to broaden their awareness of potential post-secondary options and careers.

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STUDENT VOICES



Administrative Assistant

**Ameena Raja, Co-op Student,
Stouffville District Secondary School
writes...**



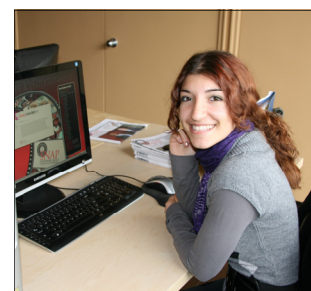
I recently completed my Co-op placement at **Family Services York Region (FSYR)** at their Markham office as an administrative assistant. As a Co-op student, my role at this workplace was to help the administrative and client intake staff with various tasks such as: archiving files, recording data into different software programs, creating documents, and helping out the counsellors and anyone around the office with their specific duties. While at my placement, I learned valuable employability skills and lessons such as: confidentiality, how important working both as part of a team and independently is, organization, networking, punctuality, responsibility, and so much more. I also learned how I could achieve my career goal of becoming a social worker, the different types of social work out there, and received some helpful and important advice from my supervisors and from other counsellors in the office.

I had an amazing experience working at FSYR with their extremely warm and friendly staff. I made long-lasting friendships and left a great impression on my supervisors - one of them was enthusiastic to write me a reference letter for admission into the social work program at Ryerson University. I was also invited to many cool charity events on behalf of support groups and organizations that my co-workers were involved in, and received many volunteer opportunities. I was offered a summer job as a receptionist at FSYR that I am very excited to begin. Overall, my Co-op experience at FSYR opened many doors for me, provided me with valuable experience, and helped me realize my potential. I definitely encourage other Co-op students to make the best out of their placement and have fun just like I did.



Production Assistant

**Tina Hatzioannidis, Co-op Student,
Sir William Mulock Secondary School
writes...**



As we flip through magazines, books and newspapers, we don't really think about the design or natural flow of the content that we see. However, at **SNAP Newspaper Group Inc.**, that's what it's all about! During this Cooperative Education placement, we focused on the design aspect as well as the actual function of the page itself. As a designer, I have now learned the *art* of putting together a layout, as well as tossing it all together to create a masterpiece of a newspaper. I was able to help out with a variety of different aspects, varying in content, ideas, themes and even simple purposes. I've learned and acquired skills from the many different programs and software that the industry uses, the printing process and the art of color correction. I was even able to expand further on my portfolio for school. It just gives one that extra experience and confidence in working with many different and unique people. Not only do I know more about the company and business, but now I know more about myself.

This is my second semester with the Cooperative Education program and throughout the entire time that I have been here I've mastered many things: as a student, a learner, a colleague, and an artist. But most importantly, I feel that I've mastered working hard, accepting new experiences and gaining as much knowledge, involvement and understanding for the future. This has been one of the greatest experiences of my life! It is my dream to have my own magazine company, and I know that when I do, I have these experiences to thank and I have the most amazing and understanding Co-op teacher to dedicate it all to. I cannot thank you enough!

STUDENT VOICES

Real Estate



By Peter Kong, Co-op Student,
Westmount Collegiate Institute

Completing the Co-op program at a Real Estate office was the most phenomenal experience I have ever had in my life. The office I worked in, **Transglobal Realty Corp**, consists of experienced and caring agents and administrators.

As an Administrative Assistant, I was given the chance to really learn how a business runs. It woke me up to the pressures, excitement and complexities of the working world. Instead of spending my days in a classroom learning about the real world, I was spending my days in an office experiencing it.

My supervisor, Abe Wang, the broker of record, provided me with some interesting duties including finding information on the MLS system, an internet database of properties for sale. I was also very fortunate to be taken to a realtors' seminar a few days after I joined the team. With Abe, I went to the houses listed for sale and made notes, filmed the interior, and even measured the lengths and the widths of the walls. The special device used to measure walls grabbed my interest right away. The ultra-sonic laser is capable of measuring the distance between two walls with no mistake. I was responsible for updating the MLS with all the data I collected. I was also able to experience a government audit. Through the inspection, I was able to relate the work experiences back to my accounting classes at Westmont C.I. as I dealt with the company's cheques, bills, and statements.

At Transglobal Realty Corp, I learned that Real Estate is more than just making money. It's a job that gives someone the unique opportunity to help another find a new place to live, to call their own, to raise a family - what a privilege. Being able to observe a real business was an invaluable experience. This opportunity helped me to be more organized, manage time wisely and become a problem solver. I now plan on pursuing a career in Real Estate and this decision would not have been possible without Westmont C.I.'s Cooperative Education program.



Interior Design

By Deborah Pearl, Co-op Student,
Thornhill Secondary School

I completed my Co-op placement at **Artful Solutions**. Artful Solutions' target market is professional designers who come in by appointment on behalf of their clients. My placement incorporates the creative and mechanical aspects of design through interior design and custom framing. My daily responsibilities included the process of constructing frames, assisting in operating machines to cut glass, mat boards for images, and being a part of the process in planning floor plans for a client.

I was interested in being a designer but was not aware of all the steps required to finish the job. Aside from designing, I was surprised that information on prices and number management was just as important. After all, if you cannot fit the furniture in the space provided, then you will not meet your client's objective!

My placement has provided me with valuable practical experiences which I can apply to other situations and career choices. I learned new techniques, business dynamics and interpersonal skills in a workplace which has allowed me to be more confident.

By taking public transit, I became more independent. Not only did I have to rely on myself to properly learn the bus routes, but I had to depend on myself to arrive to Co-op on time, and back to school in time for my next class.

Overall, my experience at Artful Solutions is one I will never forget.



Physiotherapy

By Katie Huynh, Co-op Student, Maple High School

I have learned many things from my Co-op placement, but the single biggest thing that I have learned is the importance of having interpersonal skills. In almost anything that you do and no matter what career you may pursue, having great interpersonal skills will definitely make a difference in the way things happen in your life. We all interact with people on a day to day basis and the way that one communicates with others will impact their success when working with others.

At **York Active Rehab** the physiotherapists and kinesiologists demonstrate many interpersonal skills, and through working with them I have discovered how significant these skills really are. I have learned that it is important to present yourself as a professional, positive and mature individual. Moreover, the patients need to feel and trust that you are qualified and trained in the treatment that you provide. Physiotherapists also need to educate and explain to patients why they are assigning certain exercises and really motivate them to work hard in order to reach their highest level of physical ability.

Overall, my Co-op experience has made me realize that if I do become a doctor, physiotherapist or any career in healthcare, I need to improve my interpersonal skills. I recognize that I need to be a little more open and expressive. Perhaps by reaching out to people would not only help me to communicate better with the patients at York Active Rehab, but with anyone that I work with.



STUDENT VOICES



Name: Zuheb Khetani, Co-op Student
School: Middlefield Collegiate Institute
Placement: Honeywell Engineering (Production)

Brief company description:

Honeywell is Canada's leading Controls Company and offers technology that enhances comfort, protects the environment, saves energy, and improves productivity. This certain branch of Honeywell (35 Dynamic Drive) employs over 400 people and is a Honeywell Centre of Excellence for valves that are exported all around the world. Honeywell deals with home appliances such as: thermostats, energy-saving heating controls, security alarm systems and automation systems.

Description of my responsibilities:

- change set up reduction log sheets on every press in the metals department;
- insert collected data onto a Microsoft Excel Spreadsheet;
- research a certain topic using various sources (people, books, internet) before actually implementing a plan;
- assist supervisors and operators with their tasks, and discuss plans with operators and factory workers; and
- use proper PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) such as safety boots, safety glasses, hearing protection.

What I have learned:

- **Problem solving skills** - when plans didn't seem to work out and therefore different solutions had to be thought of.
- **Communication skills** - as thoughts and ideas needed to be discussed with the operators in order to proceed further.
- **Planning and Organizing skills** - before starting a certain project, a solid idea map needed to be established which outlines the different possible ways a plan could be carried out.
- **Independence** - as my supervisor wasn't always there, this helped me form a sense of independence which was definitely something I didn't possess before working as a Co-op student at Honeywell.

My favourite experiences at work:

- Meeting new people (operators, team leads, engineers, etc.) and learning about their jobs, daily activities, education, etc.
- Rich Performance Task - as it was a very interactive activity which was challenging yet beneficial.
- Investigating parts information via various sources such as: standard work documents, operators, team leads, supervisors.

How Co-op has helped me:

- Co-op has given me the opportunity to 'test drive a potential career' which I may choose to pursue sometime in the future.
- Co-op has provided me with an actual workplace environment to apply and practice my essential skills (Task Planning & Organizing, Document Use, Measurement & Calculation, etc.).
- Co-op has enhanced my résumé, cover letter and document use skills, when applying for jobs in the future.

Advice to future Co-op students:

- To research about many different careers you may be interested in, and then pick the one that interests you the most.
- To keep up and be on top of all your work as slacking off can heavily affect your mark.
- Always communicate with your teachers and supervisors as it will make the placement much more interesting and fun.
- Always be enthusiastic, interested, and always open for knowledge as this is a very rare opportunity - make use of it!



Reflections by Co-op Students...on their Teaching Experiences



Brittany Bishop, Co-op Student, Newmarket High School

Placement: Bogart Public School

My Co-op placement was at **Bogart Public School** with a grade 2 teacher. I have learned how to deal with behavioral issues, helped children with their reading, taught a math lesson, supervised an autistic six year old girl, marked math and literacy pages, and performed/ran a morning message and share & tell, etc.

Five ways in which I have changed, grown, and/or matured as a result of my Co-op experience are:

1. being able to ask the teacher about things;
2. being up to the challenge and willing to do whatever the teacher needs;
3. growing really attached to the kids in my classroom and every day excited to see what happens next;
4. realizing that teaching could really be a potential future for me; and
5. my single most valuable learning experience through my placement was dealing with behavioral problems in the classroom. The students have shown me that not everybody is the same; you have to be patient and figure out the best ways of teaching them.

A task or major project:

I watched a little autistic girl in the playground and I didn't know what to do in order for her to listen to me. I discussed it with the teachers and they all helped me in different ways: by supporting me, getting others to also watch her with me, and teaching me a couple of ways to communicate with her. It was great that I was able to overcome the problem and I learned that I needed to be a bit more patient.

How my job skills have improved:

My communication is better and my initiative has grown. I have learned that patience is very important to be able to adapt in a teaching environment, as kids have different needs and personalities. My interpersonal skills have improved by relating to my students and inspiring them to participate.

Possible future career choices:

My focus is on becoming a teacher. I never thought that I would want to be a teacher when I was little. Even now I still don't know exactly what I want to be, but that's okay. I think that as long as you have some idea, something that involves what you are passionate about, you will end up where you want to be because it will eventually fall into place. I may want to work with children, but maybe not as a teacher.

My general feeling/impression of the Co-op program:

It's an awesome experience and definitely makes you think a lot about what you want to do/be. In the end, it's great to see what you have accomplished in your résumé, cover letter and portfolio.



**Teresa Malfara, Co-op Student,
Emily Carr Secondary School**

**Placement:
St. Andrew Catholic Elementary
School**

I can say that Co-op is definitely an experience that you should not pass up. In addition to doing something you love every day, you also get the experience you may need for the work-force.

Some of the things I will take away with me are all the skills that I developed and improved in, for example organization, time management and communication skills. Also, I feel that the more tasks you complete the more you learn about yourself. I am glad that throughout my high school career I got to experience Co-op and I will never forget all of the valuable things I learned in this course.

**Claudia Notte, Co-op Student,
Emily Carr Secondary School**

**Placement:
St. Padre Pio Catholic Elementary
School**



I enjoyed the Co-op experience, both in grade 11 and 12, and am excited to use the skills I have gained and improved on in the future. I have a better idea of how to teach and a feel of the classroom environment. I am thankful to this program as it aided me for my future and was a fun and excellent learning experience.

I hope that in the future, when I become a teacher, I will be able to have a Co-op student so I can help him/her in the great experience that my supervisors and teacher have aided me in having.

Dual Credit Accelerated Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP)

Accelerated OYAP programs combine the Co-op experience with instruction at the college/training institute.

They are offered in semester two and open to students in their graduating year.

www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/oyap <http://www.oyap.com>

OYAP...Opportunities Beyond Belief

By Jesse McLaughlin, Co-op Student, Keswick High School

This article was written by Keswick High School Co-op student, Jesse McLaughlin. For his Co-op placement, he worked as a student public relations representative, and wrote about another Keswick High School Co-op student, Zack Walling. Jesse interviewed Zack about his Co-op/OYAP placement experience as a Plumber's Assistant.

Within high schools throughout Ontario, regular Cooperative Education programs offer many different opportunities for students to explore the career path that they may one day decide to pursue. It is truly an amazing program and has proven to be extremely successful. But, not many students are aware of the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program (OYAP), a school-to-work program that gives students the opportunity to become registered apprentices, and work towards becoming a certified journeyman in a skilled trade while completing high school Co-op.

I got the chance to catch up with Zack Walling, a grade 12 student from Keswick High School, who first started in the Co-op program last year, and has since taken his career path to a new level by joining the OYAP program. This is what he had to say about his experiences so far.

How did you find out about the OYAP program?

"I found out about the program through Mr. Myers, my Co-op teacher from school."

What made you want to start in this program?

"It gave me apprenticeship opportunities, basic training for plumbing, and it's mostly paid for by the government."

Where is your placement?

"I work for Bob's Plumbing Service, based out of Aurora, Ontario."

How many hours do you work on average per day?

"I work between 8 and 10 hours a day."

What are some of the responsibilities you have when you're at work?

"I'm an assistant to the boss. I do installations, clean fittings, operate high-powered machinery, and other various things around the jobsite."

What pre-requisites are required to become a fully licensed plumber?

"To become a fully licensed plumber, I need 9000 total hours to get my plumbing license. Those hours are split up into three, eight week sessions in trade school."

What is your favourite thing about the Co-op program?

"It's hands-on. I'm learning more and more everyday."

Has Co-op helped you realize what career path you are going to take after high school?

"Yes, definitely. I hope to one day take over my dad's business."

Is there anything you would recommend to any students starting in the Co-op program?

"Pursue a career in something you enjoy doing, and make sure it's something that you could see yourself doing everyday for the rest of your life."

Zack is the perfect example of a successful student in the OYAP program. He has made full use of the program to create a career path for his future. It has taken lots of hard work, and a lot of dedication, but Zack would tell you himself that it is completely worth it. If you are a student in Ontario who is taking part in the Cooperative Education program at your school, and are interested in the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program, visit www.oyap.com for complete details and how to apply for the program. There's a world of opportunities out there, you just need to look for them!



Zack Walling, Co-op/OYAP Student, Keswick High School



International Co-op Education Program (ICE) to Ecuador

Forging my future and defining who I am...

By Mary Bridger, ICE Ecuador Alumni, 2003-2004

As I sit and reflect upon the past 6+ years since my time spent in ICE during 2003-04, I have a wide array of experiences to draw upon; a university degree in World Religions and Gender Studies, 2 years in China as an English teacher and State Orphanage consultant, and my current position with UNESCO Iraq as a Gender and HIV consultant in the Education department. With this diversity of experiences mixed in with travel within North America, Russia, Europe, Asia, the Middle East and Africa, I only hope it is not too apt to start this reflection with a reference to the chaos theory.

Within said theory there is recognition of the 'butterfly effect', meaning that every detail or action, no matter how minute, can change the greater picture and reality itself. Even the flutter of a butterfly's wings can change the atmosphere enough to create massive meteorological change. If I haven't lost you already, I promise I'll bring it back to Ecuador and the ICE program.

It is not that I believe ICE was an insignificant or minute aspect of my life, but instead that I see my time with the program made up of smaller moments and minor details that have continued to impact my choices, views and the person I have become six years later. While the program as a whole certainly opened up doors for me such as acceptance into my first choice university and a career-boosting working proficiency of Spanish, it was the aforementioned small picture that has changed me the most. Nearly every aspect of my current life can be traced back to something I experienced during those three months from March to May 2004, spent in the small, rural, happy village of Iguinaro, Ecuador.

Some connections are clear; happy memories with my Ecuadorian mentor and English teaching supervisor led to my own time spent as a teacher within a Chinese ESL school, or how my Ecuadorian adventures with culinary delights such as fried cockroaches or roasted guinea pigs which would open my taste buds to experiences such as Hong Kong snake, Chinese duck's blood or Egyptian pigeon.

However, some influences were far more subtle and personal. Sunny afternoons spent with the village women who gave me a deeper understanding of the global woman and my eventual degree in Women's Studies. The hours I passed holding the hand of an elderly woman in a retirement home which taught me the significance of both compassion and patience. And, the daily new experiences both weird and wonderful, that left me with a critical sense of appreciation for both my own privileged Western life, and for the lessons that developing worlds can teach us.

It was small moments such as these which have resounded in the years that have followed, and that I am both confident and hopeful, will continue to for years to come. They were mere butterfly wing flutters during my time there, but they have come to define who I am and who I want to be.



Mary (left) with Ecuadorian teachers preparing to dance in a festival



Mary in Wadi Rum, Jordan 2010



To empower your future, visit www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/ice - Ecuador



¡Pura Vida! Pure Life!

My Costa Rica Summer Co-op Experience

By Becky Zelikson, Summer Co-op Student, Costa Rica 2010

The decision to sign up for this program was not simple for me. I had many worries about maintaining my vegetarian lifestyle in a stranger's home, finding the money to pay for the trip, as well as many other concerns. However, once I set my mind to it, everything else followed suit quite easily. In hindsight, I can truly say that it has been an eye opening and life changing experience. I learned that determination and good intentions will always overcome any obstacles, be it cultural differences or physical endeavours.

My time with my host family inspired me to try and create a more relaxed and healthy lifestyle for my family back in Canada and appreciate my relatives a lot more. On top of that, the few precious days on the Matapalo sea-turtle reservation project have shown me that big dreams like "saving the turtles" really come down to individual effort and that even I, with my limited time and experience, can make a difference. In general, I believe that those three weeks contributed to my self-confidence, social skills, as well as leadership, and gave me the opportunity to meet people that I still miss and consider true life-long friends.



Becky building a turtle nest in order to transplant & protect rescued turtle eggs



Becky building a bamboo staircase on a rainforest trail

Why not add ¡Pura Vida! to your Summer 2012

www.yrdsb.edu.on.ca/ice - Costa Rica

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