

# PCHS offers solution to your career fears

Students are frequently faced with questions about the future. I suppose all people similarly question the potential unknown, yet I believe students are most occupied with the matter.

Perhaps it is because of this focus that in conversation with others, students are faced with two unique and aggravating questions, usually followed in succession.

As a student myself, I have fallen victim to these conversations, numerous times.

The moment a student mentions the topic of education, the next question asked will most certainly be "What are you taking?" or "What's your major?"

This question is almost always followed by a perplexing yet inquisitive "Oh, and what do you plan on doing with that?"

It is at this point in the conversation when students cringe.

The reality is that it is not easy to be a student these days; especially if you are interested in the humanities.

That is not to say science or business students have it any easier, simply that within a factual, and nonsubjective area of study, a career in the according field is expected.

Regardless, for the inexperienced student, the world after graduation is scary.

Students are taught to define success in the common western terms of economics, and accordingly, to strive for that six-digit salary and luxury sports car.

Thus, to students, that annoying question thrown our way is like an existential slap to the face. What we are really being asked is "Who are you, and what is your economic justification for being?"

Of course students cannot possibly avoid this question. Instead, we are taught to tackle it head on, and upon doing so, are struck down by the Catch-22 of the working world.

There is probably nothing more frustrating for a student than investing huge amounts of time and effort, in combination with large sums of tuition money, to discover that potential employers are not interest-



**CHAD MILBRANDT**  
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ed in hiring because you have no actual experience.

This is the typical problem for all graduates who only have theory to offer an employer.

It is the old "Experience Catch-22," where you are not able to get a job without experience or the experience without a job.

I guess it's probably about that time in the article when we reach the "So what?" part of my argument.

You may be reading this, thinking "That's too bad, but life is not fair, and no one said it was supposed to be." In response, I would certainly agree. I have made these points in an attempt to offer a solution.

You see, co-op programs offer a remedy to these destructive trends. More specifically, the Port Colborne High School co-op program represents the ideal solution to all of my aforementioned problems.

A PCHS Co-op allows students to earn one credit for every 110 hours of co-op related work, typically equivalent to two credits per semester.

Students work at their placements in either the morning, or afternoon, for roughly three hours a day, five days a week, gaining experience that will prove to be invaluable to their future success.

The popular adage "Go to university, and you'll get a good job" is not true anymore, because today everyone has a university degree. Now, students must have more.

Co-ops represent that extra, and necessary step. Through the PCHS co-op, students not only get the opportunity to pad their résumé with

experience, but they also get to explore their potential career choice, before choosing a post secondary destination and spending thousands on tuition.

Clearly co-op is beneficial for students, but I would also like to argue that co-op placements represent assets for employers. Of course the obvious advantage being free labour and resulting increased productivity. Moreover, co-op students also embody excellent potential employees, that can be groomed and shaped to do any job efficiently and effectively.

Ideologically, I believe co-op employers perform a service to the community, and the larger society. Locally, co-op employers are responsible for fostering skills and knowledge of our future workforce, effectively shaping our community.

Co-op employers like Kevin Langerak of Oskam Steel or Carrie Tworyczuck of Style Majestic, characterize these ideals as they have both fostered students' skills growth.

Other examples include employers like: Shapes, Port Pontiac, RJ Gillespies, McNay Construction, Boggios, Northland Pointe, Market Café and Food Basics.

You see, by instilling values of work ethic, co-op employers work to destroy the false Western economic definition of success.

Success is not defined in fiscal terms, but in setting and achieving personal goals we set for ourselves. Co-op placements represent the truth that success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success.

Ultimately, if this article interested you at all, and you know of, or are yourself, a highschool student, I would encourage you to check out the co-op program at Port Colborne High School.

The future is scary, but manageable.

Co-op offers an advantage that will help you to succeed.

■ Chad Milbrandt is a member of The Tribune's Youth Editorial Board.