



# CAPTURING THE STUDENT VOICE



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**"CAPTURING THE STUDENT VOICE"**  
*is an electronic journal that includes success stories written by students from across Ontario, who participate in Experiential Learning programs such as Cooperative Education, OYAP, SHSM, etc., in their high school. These stories describe their placement experience, the tasks they had to complete, challenges overcome and the benefits they derived. Thank you for taking the time to read these inspiring stories and maybe even share yours!*

## MY CO-OP PLACEMENT AS DRYWALL FINISHER WITH HORIZON DRYWALL INC.

*By: Peter Versluis, Grade 12 Co-op/OYAP Student, St. Mary Catholic SS, Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic DSB  
 June 2021*

As I write this (June 23rd, 2021) tomorrow will be my last day at my placement with *Horizon Drywall Inc.* It's hard to believe how quickly time has gone and how much I have learned in such a short time. I've acquired new skills and so much about myself, such as what I can accomplish when I put effort into it and when I have the right mindset.



I was able to develop skills as a *Drywall Finisher*, but I also developed organizational skills. I am better with multi-tasking and communication. I have discovered that I am able to work alone and as a team. I do need to strengthen my management skills and perhaps a class will help me develop those. This placement also helped me be more social and I developed great relationships with new people.

COVID-19 has impacted all our lives in many ways. I am happy to say that *Horizon Drywall Inc.* did everything possible to ensure the safety of their employees by following all COVID-19 protocols. It was tough wearing eyeglasses, a safety shield, a mask, constantly sanitizing and being COVID screened; however, that helped me realize how important safety is in all aspects of life.

### What I Learned during my Co-op Placement...

Safety 1<sup>st</sup> – I was shown where the first aid station was and who was first aid certified on the jobsite. I learned how to use equipment and tools properly and safely. *Cont. >*

*The purpose of learning is growth, and our minds, unlike our bodies, can continue growing as we continue to live.*  
 ~ Mortimer Adler

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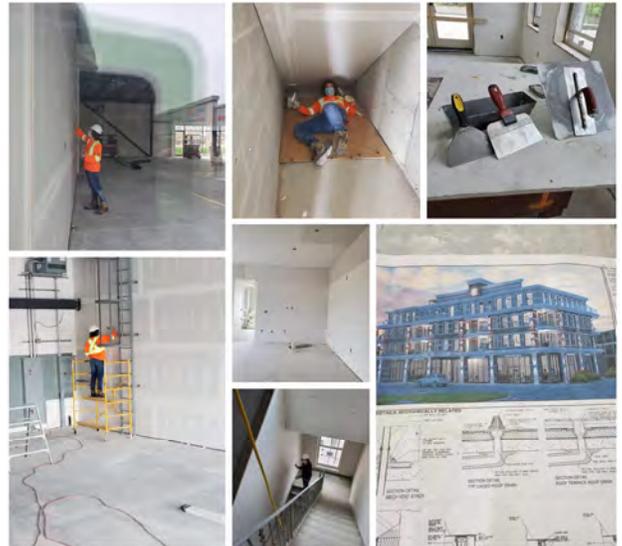
## MY CO-OP PLACEMENT AS DRYWALL FINISHER WITH HORIZON DRYWALL INC. CONTINUED...

I was shown how to apply the right amount of compound mud and which size puddy knife to use for each task. I started by covering screw holes and I soon earned that this was very time consuming and tedious work.

Then I was shown how to cover joints where the drywall sheets join; with a thin layer of mud, then you start at the center of the joint and use a puddy knife to gently push the tape into the compound mud along the seam. After these steps I was shown how to properly sand (even less messy if you don't go overboard with compound mud). After sanding you go back over your work with compound mud to do a final skim, sand, and touch ups. Always clean up your work area, never leave your mess for the next crew coming onto the job site!

### Other Things I Learned at my Co-op Placement...

I discovered in the first week of my Co-op placement just how hard this skilled trade job really is. It is very physical and requires a lot of repetitive work. I was exhausted after the first week and I was almost ready to quit. But, I didn't quit, I pushed into the 2nd week, my wrists and forearms were sore, but I was less tired. By week 3, I became more comfortable and continued learning many things.



I had the opportunity to work with my dad as he is a *Drywall Taper*. He has been doing this job for over 25 years. I gained a lot of respect for my dad and quickly understood why he was tired and sore when he would get home from work. I now understand how hard this job is physically and mentally. My dad and I are close, and this made our bond even stronger. I really enjoyed being taught an in-demand trade by him. It was an experience I will never forget.

I learned patience - this process takes time, rushing it only makes the work sloppy and you spend more time fixing things because you didn't allow the mud to dry or allow each of the stages the proper time needed.

Being clean - I learned that compound mud in lesser amounts hardens quickly on tools. I soon learned that it was best to keep everything clean and to always have a bucket of water and sponge beside me for quick wipe-offs.

### In closing ... THANK YOU...

- ⇒ I am so grateful for the opportunity I had with *Horizon Drywall Inc.*
- ⇒ I will never forget the lessons taught, the skills learned or the people I've met.
- ⇒ I will never forget the discomfort and tiredness I felt when I first started this Co-op placement!
- ⇒ I can admit that I am not ready to be an adult just yet!
- ⇒ Thank you to *Doug Ibbotson* for allowing me to be placed with your company for Co-op, and to my dad for being patient with me and helping me develop skills as a *Drywall Finisher*.
- ⇒ Thank you to *Ms. Castura* for your patience and guidance.

One learns by doing a thing; for though you think you know it, you have no certainty until you try.  
- Sophocles

## POLICE PARTNERSHIP PROVES REWARDING FOR CO-OP STUDENT

*By: Tori Price (former St. John Henry Newman CSS Co-op student), Hamilton-Wentworth CDSB  
October 2018*

My name is *Tori Price*, and I was told that a Co-op placement could have many benefits by exposing me to various, potential careers. But I never thought that it would ever have such an impact on my life!

As a 17-year-old student navigating high school while trying to figure out what to do after high school, Cooperative Education came into my life. *Mrs. Owens*, my Cooperative Education teacher, told me that, “taking Co-op would allow me to explore different career opportunities, gain valuable skills, and obtain practical work experience” and it was all true!

As competitive of a position that I was applying for, I was grateful enough to be selected as one of the 2018 Co-op students with the *Hamilton Police Service* in the *Professional Development Division-Training Department*. From this experience, I was able to work hand in hand with several law enforcement professionals, to learn about law enforcement in Ontario, to gain beneficial connections, and to become exposed to the many opportunities there are in the field of law enforcement. Three of my mentors were: *Sgt. Tyrrell*, *Sgt. Tadeson* and *Staff Sgt. Spencer*, who supported me the entire way through my Co-op placement and continue to guide me to this day with my future endeavors.

This Co-op experience influenced my future career and I am currently working. Due to the experience from my high school Co-op placement, I was able to receive a summer position that same year with the *Hamilton Police Service*, as well as other opportunities I have been graciously granted which would not have been possible if I had not taken the Co-op course.

I am currently a *Municipal Law Enforcement Officer* with the *City of Hamilton* and if it wasn't for my Co-op placement, I would not be where I am today. I gained so many important life-long skills from my Co-op experience and it showed me the path I wanted to take after high school.

Having the opportunity of participating in the Co-op course at *St. John Henry Catholic Newman SS* has impacted my life tremendously. I now have a clear understanding that anything can be accomplished with dedication, perseverance, and a constant eagerness to learn.



*“The object of education is to prepare the young to educate themselves throughout their lives.”  
~ Robert M. Hutchins*

## MY VIRTUAL CO-OP PLACEMENTS

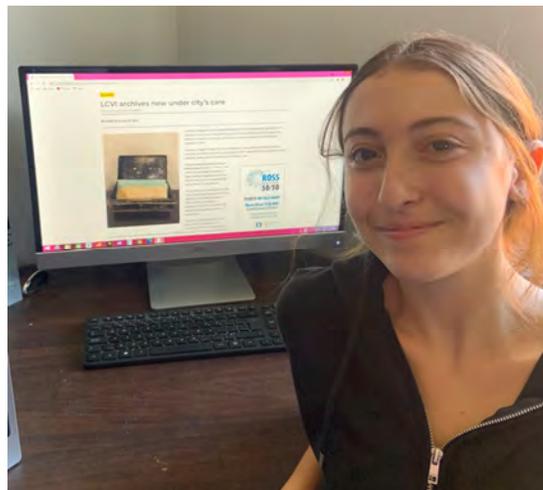
By: Keely Ross, Lindsay Collegiate and Vocational Institute, Trillium Lakelands DSB  
August 2021

My name is Keely Ross and I attend Lindsay Collegiate and Vocational Institute. I just finished Grade 11 with a two-credit Co-op class that helped me explore two things I'm quite interested in.

For one of my Co-op placements, I was working with the manager of the *Corporate Records and Archival Services* at City of Kawartha Lakes, Angela Fornelli. My job was to create an inventory of my school's archives to give to the city. It was such an exciting experience because I find history fascinating. I learned so much about the history of the school and the city that I live in.

For my other Co-op placement I was able to experience what my dream job could be like, and I loved it! I was working with Nancy Payne who is a freelance journalist. My job was to write news articles. I wrote about the archives from Lindsay Collegiate and Vocational Institute being sent to the City of Kawartha Lakes for better safekeeping and storage. The article (*LCVI archives now under city's care*) was even published in one of Lindsay's magazines, *The Lindsay Advocate*.

This Co-op placement helped me learn what information will catch a reader's attention, which is important for news articles. The placement has also prepared me for future news articles that I may write. My Co-op placement was an opportunity that I will be forever grateful for and I had an amazing time working with both Angela and Nancy.



*"The whole purpose of education is to turn mirrors into windows."  
~ Sydney J. Harris*

## MY CO-OP PLACEMENT AT TRENT VALLEY LODGE

By: Mia Caldwell, Trenton High School, Hastings and Prince Edward DSB  
June 2021

My Co-op placement had a challenging start with an ever-changing schedule of in-class versus on-line learning in April 2021 because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

*"This Co-op experience will benefit me as I apply to a medical program at a college."*

Placement within a vulnerable healthcare sector had its own criteria as well. While waiting for all health prerequisites, I completed some on-line courses through provincial professional websites to better educate myself on protocols and caring for our seniors.

There was no hesitation on my supervisor's part, introducing me to the job responsibilities and shadowing staff. I am proud of my first day when I was taught how to properly take and record vital signs, assisted with meals and transported residents throughout the facility. My supervisors were very welcoming, and I know they were appreciative of the extra help. The pandemic has made the work environment "riskier" and the new safety protocols have made even the simplest tasks very time consuming.



There were many other additional challenges never experienced by the staff at *Trent Valley Lodge* before. The lonely residents just want you to stay and spend more time with them when you have others who you must be with. Family visits are few and far between due to the revolving closures and lockdowns. I felt compelled to help ease their loneliness by chatting a little longer or sitting to colour together.

Co-op has introduced me to real-life situations much sooner than expected. I never would have been able to experience this in a high school classroom. I have truly appreciated these opportunities and I will be stronger for it!

*"Co-op has introduced me to real-life situations much sooner than expected."*

My Co-op experience at *Trent Valley Lodge* has taught me many procedures and important tasks. I know for certain that I want to pursue a career in the medical field. I believe I possess the compassion to succeed. I have secured a summer job at my placement where I can continue to learn more job skills. This Co-op experience will benefit me as I apply to a medical program at a college. I am grateful I was able to learn under such great leadership!

*"Wisdom.... comes not from age, but from education and learning."  
~ Anton Chekhov*

## A BLAST AT BEEMER (BMW DURHAM, AJAX)

By: Brooke Warner, All Saints Catholic SS, Durham Catholic DSB  
May 2021

My name is *Brooke Warner*, and I was a Grade 12 Co-op student at *All Saints Catholic Secondary School* in Whitby, Ontario. I was also in the *Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program* as an *Automotive Service Technician* and my OYAP placement was at *BMW Durham*.

Throughout my Co-op/OYAP experience I was given tasks to complete under supervision to complete my competency book to write my *Certificate of Qualification* at the end of my apprenticeship. Throughout my *Level One Automotive Service* experience, I learned so much from everyone that I worked with in the service department. The technicians at *BMW Durham* took the time to show me what I needed to know and they trusted me to complete the jobs with confidence.



Throughout my time as a *Level One OYAP Apprentice* at *BMW Durham* I had the chance to observe, assist, and complete many different types of vehicle repairs and diagnoses. The tasks that I completed at my placement included the following: oil changes, brake flushes, seasonal tire swaps, pre-delivery inspections, 55-point inspections, safety inspections / certifications, airbag replacements, resetting standard procedures through *BMW's* programming system, microfilter and air filter replacements, and brake jobs.

A personal challenge that I had to overcome at my placement was my height! I am not a tall person and working in a shop with tall men was a challenge that I knew I would need to find a way to overcome. My height challenge didn't last very long as the technicians I worked with saw that I was struggling a bit and helped me to be as independent as I could possibly be! I used a specific bay where the hoses were adjusted a bit lower so that I could reach the air lines myself. For the *BMW's* that were tall, the main technician I work with, *Stojche*, found me a booster to stand on, so that when I was working on the larger *BMW's* I would be able to work independently.

Also, because of my height challenge, I needed a torque wrench with a long handle because it has more leverage. So, *Stojche* bought a new torque wrench with an extended handle so that it would be more feasible for me to use.

The piece of advice that I have to offer to any student that is considering taking Co-op is to "take the course" as it is an amazing experience! Co-op gives you an opportunity to explore the world around you, meet new people and make connections which in turn builds networks, and expands your learning skills and knowledge. Also, never be afraid to ask for help or clarification from your supervisor; they want you to get the most out of your experience while at your Co-op placement!

## MY CO-OP PLACEMENT AT THE LINDSAY ADVOCATE

By: *Bethany Pollard, Lindsay CVI, Trillium Lakelands DSB*  
October 2021

I recently had the opportunity to have a Co-op placement at *The Lindsay Advocate* as part of my schooling. I hope to eventually go into media fundamentals in college so being able to practice things like journalism, design work and photography while seeing what a work environment could be like in this field was amazing.



One of the things that I was able to do while working at *The Lindsay Advocate* was to write various articles. My boss, *Roderick Benns*, would send me a story and I would get to write an article about it. I wrote an article on an interview I did with *The Lindsay Advocate Podcast* producer, *Denis Grignon*, and another one about my experiences as a high school student during COVID-19.

One other thing that I had the opportunity to do was some graphic design work. My boss asked me to design some advertisements for “made-up” companies. I would make a design or two and then send them to my boss, who would then give me feedback on how I could make them look better. He also advised me to add things like the “who, what, where, when and why” on my design.

Lastly, he has asked me to do some photography. When people in *The Lindsay Square* were decorating a Christmas tree, I went to take some photos to go along with a story he was writing about the event. The story and my pictures ended up on *The Lindsay Advocate* Facebook page.

The people I worked with during my Co-op were great and I think *Roderick* is a wonderful boss and co-worker.

Thanks to this Co-op placement, I have a better idea of what it might be like to work at a newspaper company.

## CRITERIA: CAPTURING THE STUDENT VOICE

**Do you have a student who would like to share their success at a placement? We are looking for stories in the following areas:**

- ⇒ Dual-Credit and Co-op
- ⇒ Successful OYAP / Co-op
- ⇒ Successful SHSM / Co-op
- ⇒ Successful Special Ed. Co-op (non-earning credits)
- ⇒ Successful Co-op

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### **Criteria:**

1. Submit student(s) story(ies) by May 31st (annually) via email to [OCEA@rogers.com](mailto:OCEA@rogers.com);
2. Ensure the article is no more than 350 words in length;
3. Teachers' are asked to edit student articles for grammar, spelling, sentence structure, etc.
4. Submit one picture of the student at their placement (high-resolution (300 dpi) jpg format)
5. Complete and submit the [Photo and Model Release Agreement Form](#).

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### CAPTURING THE STUDENT VOICE®

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### LA VOIX DES ÉLÈVES®

Un bulletin d'information pour les  
membres de l'Association de  
l'éducation coopérative de l'Ontario

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The Ontario Cooperative Education Association (OCEA) is a not-for-profit professional organization of Ontario Cooperative Education and Experiential Learning Professionals. It strives to provide the leadership and vision needed for optimal professional development of its members. The Association also develops and facilitates access to information, resources and other supports relevant to OCEA members and other Experiential Learning Professionals in the province of Ontario, while supporting excellence in the education of all students in Ontario.

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