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Secondary students in the Toronto District School Board have an opportunity to earn credits while gaining valuable on the job experience through Co-operative Education programs. Adolescents are generally interested in exploring a career for the purposes of making decisions regarding further education or training. Some students use Co-op as a transition from school directly to the workplace.

The program begins with a session of pre-employment readiness in class. Students practice filling out job applications, prepare resumes, and learn about the employers' expectations. Students are then sent for job interviews at their prospective placements and are usually accepted. The placement schedule varies according to individual school timetables. A teacher monitors the students at regular intervals and an individualized learning plan is set up which equates the tasks performed by the student to curriculum expectations. Student progress is assessed and evaluated by the teacher with input from the placement supervisor.

Students are not paid for the experience but companies are asked to provide a transportation allowance. During the placement, students have Workplace Safety and Insurance Board coverage paid for by the Ministry of Education.

In addition to their youthful enthusiasm and eagerness to learn, the students who have participated in the CISCO program bring a sound knowledge base and hands on technical skills in the areas of designing, installing and maintaining networks.

The combination of CISCO training and Co-operative Education benefits both the students and the information technology industry. We are creating the future together! The Toronto District School Board looks forward to working with interested businesses on this initiative.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jackie Drew".

Jackie Drew
District-wide Co-ordinator
Co-operative and Career Education