COMMMGT 9330Y: Project Management

Krithika Nathan  
*Western University*, knathan@uwo.ca

Lisa Nha Thai Marie Do  
*Western University*, ndo4@uwo.ca

Emma Vickers  
*Western University*, evicker6@uwo.ca

Mahtab Naserifar  
mnaserif@uwo.ca

Follow this and additional works at: [https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/se-ccel](https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/se-ccel)

Citation of this paper:
[https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/se-ccel/22](https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/se-ccel/22)
Effective Experiential Learning Tour Plan
for Middlesex County

Krithika Nathan
Emma Vickers
Lisa Do
Mahtab Naserifar

Western University, Canada
# Table of Contents

- Introduction ........................................................................................................................................... 3
- Event Format ........................................................................................................................................... 4
- Target Audience ..................................................................................................................................... 4
- Location .................................................................................................................................................. 5
- Timing ..................................................................................................................................................... 6
- Employer Analysis ................................................................................................................................. 7
- Tour Logistics ......................................................................................................................................... 11
- References .............................................................................................................................................. 12
Introduction

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide a project plan for the implementation of an effective engaged learning experience for high school students, focused on job opportunities in a variety of industries across Middlesex County.

Background

The Middlesex Workforce Development Partnership (MWDP) is a working collective of employment-focused stakeholder organizations serving the workforce of Middlesex County. These organizations have developed a strategic work plan for 2018-2020 in order to carry out a number of initiatives to bolster the workforce in Middlesex County. In 2018, the MWDP hosted its first workshop-style Youth Forum for high school students, involving over 100 students from both the Catholic and Public-School Boards. While successful, the event was not as interactive and motivational as intended. Thus, the MWDP wishes to revamp the project and investigate an alternative model for the 2020 Reverse Job Fair.

Sources of Information

The recommendations detailed in this report are primarily based on the evaluation of the Educators’ Experiential Learning Bus Tour Forum hosted by the MWDP. This includes information from feedback surveys, as well as additional sources from credible websites.

Scope

This report will describe the logistics of the event, including:

- Event Format
- Target Audience
- Employer Analysis
- Location
- Timing
- Tour Logistics

*Note - specific employers will not be suggested (as requested).*
Event format

After analyzing the feedback received from the reverse job fair, (we recommend that?) the format for the 2020 Youth Forum should be an experiential learning bus tour. Unlike a traditional workshop-style forum, students will get the opportunity to visit different employers from different industry sectors within Middlesex County.

Many of the educators who attended the bus tour found the interactive and experiential learning component to be refreshing and believe that their students would be highly interested in this style of event. Thus, we believe that an experiential learning bus tour is the best way to showcase the diversity of Middlesex County’s employment opportunities to high school students in an effective and engaging manner.

Target Audience

The case of high school students is very unique, given that they are on a fast track towards their career path and are responsible for exploring different opportunities to make impactful decisions. Based on the curriculum of the 4 high school grades and the timeline of course selection for students, we have found grade 10 students to benefit the most from the proposed tour. This is due to the mandatory courses offered in this grade, and the fact that students can incorporate what they learn from the tour into their decisions for course selection in the later years.

Since the tour is focused on career development and familiarity with the workplace, it can mesh well with courses of similar concepts in high school; these courses include the Career Studies, GLC2O, and Discovering the Workplace, GLD2O, both offered to grade 10 students.

The components of the reverse job fair are designed to familiarize the participants with diverse sectors within Middlesex County. With respect to the timeline of high school courses and the significance of fulfilling prerequisites in the earlier years, the students can take advantage of gaining insight into local employment opportunities to select courses that are related to the career path of their choice.

Depending on the number of grade 10 students enrolled in each of the schools included in this report, the tour will be able to accommodate up to 70 students from each school, the capacity of one school bus. Due to the timing of the tour, in the case that Career Studies is offered in both school semesters, only those taking the course in the first semester will be ideal candidates.
Location

Schools

Two School attending the Experiential Learning Tour:

- Strathroy District Collegian Institute (SDCI)
- Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School

HCC and SDCI are part of a shared community complex, partnered with both the Thames Valley District School Board and the London District Catholic School Board, and the Municipality of Strathroy-Caradoc (HCC, 2019). HCC and building partner SDCI have a positive and creative relationship that is appreciated in the local community.

Having both HCC and SDCI participate in the experiential learning tour allows for both the London Catholic and Thames valley District School Boards to collectively participate in the educational experience, conveniently from the same location. This will provide feedback from two different classes and students from slightly different educational backgrounds.

Tour Locations

The industry visits will be within a 25km radius around HCC and SDCI. This can be seen in the figure below.
The industries on tour will be located in the Strathroy Caradoc, Adelaide Metcalfe, North Middlesex or Middlesex center, within a 25 km / 30 min radius of SDCI/HCC. By remaining in a 25 km radius of the school and the 3 tour locations will be less than 30 minutes apart from each other. This will ensure students remain attentive between tour transitions and do not get bored. It is also more likely that students will be aware of the possible tour locations, as we would be traveling within the same region they possibly live in. In addition, the industries remain in a relevant and meaningful area for students.

Examples of possible tour areas can be seen in the figures below. Reiterating the point that effective tour locations will remain in a 25 km or 30-minute radius around the school.

Timing

There were issues with timing during the 2018 Youth Forum, as it was hosted during the spring semester. Unfortunately, this was a busy time for both students and teachers as the focus was to prepare for the end of the school year. Thus, (we believe) the 2020 Youth Forum should be hosted in the fall semester, specifically during the beginning of October. This will be a good way to engage students at the beginning of the year and provide them ample opportunity/time to reflect on the event as they continue through their school courses. In addition, the fall season is one of the best times of the year for agritourism industries, providing students a great opportunity to experience the agritourism sector at its peak. The weather is also relatively mild during this time of the year, thus there is less risk of the event being canceled due to weather complications.
Employer Analysis

Middlesex County is strategically located in Southwestern Ontario and is home to many important sectors that bring enormous amount of revenue to Ontario. As a result, there is increased scope for diverse job opportunities in Middlesex County. Our goal was to research into these sectors, in order to evaluate which of these important industries should be showcased during the experiential learning tour, in order to spark interests in high school students who we hope will one day actively pursue careers in these respective sectors. Based on our research, there are four main industries in Middlesex County that should be explored during the tour, including:

1. Agri-Business
2. Manufacturing & Assembly
3. Small Business & Entrepreneurship
4. Tourism

1. Agri-Business

Middlesex County is home to leading cutting edge and eco-friendly agri-business facilities in Canada. Ontario generates 9 billion dollars’ worth of revenue each year with Middlesex County contributing to 552 million dollars’ worth of goods each year.¹ Agri-business comprises more than 25% of Middlesex County’s business endeavours.¹ Having situated in one of the most fertile lands in Canada, this region comprises of almost 2,352 farms and 10% of the County’s workforce is employed in this sector.¹

This indicates that there are enormous job opportunities for high school students if they pursue employment in agricultural and related industries. Agri-business is not only limited to working in a farm but requires wide range of talented individuals to collectively create sustainable and innovative technological processes that can assist in creating affordable goods while also minimizing the carbon footprint from this industry.

Through the experiential learning tour, we hope to expose students to a wide variety of career options. Farming science is an essential aspect of the agri-business that plays a major role in providing pest resistance crops, innovating sophisticated machinery and utilizing genetic engineering to produce variety of beneficial crops.²

Similarly, London is very-well known for its food processing sector that specializes in health and fermented food, including Cannabis.³ Many of these processes are performed in large scales and thus requires a larger workforce to successfully supplement the large production of goods. Not only is the agri-business limited to career opportunities in food sciences and food processing but there are ample occasions to find a suitable career in marketing and finance jobs in Middlesex County.
Multiple institutions including academic, government and industrial partners are committed to the research and development of the agri-business in Middlesex County. This includes Brescia University, Western University and Fanshawe College among others, who are conducting a wide range of research into local food nutrition, benefits of probiotics and even research into wastewater resulting from agri-businesses. Therefore, interdisciplinary investment in agri-business is very high and the scope for increased labour market continues to increase for Middlesex County.

We want to show high school students that the agri-business is interesting and that there is scope for diversity when in pursuit of jobs after high school. Since we have chosen SDCI as our sample high school, the map below shows farms and agricultural areas that are nearby the high school. We believe that it is preferable to choose destinations around this area for the trip.

For instance, Gabriel Farms is only 9 minutes away from the high school SDCI. Around the farms, there are many other sectors, and we think we could combine these multiple businesses into one stop. We believe that a one stop destination where students are exposed to multiple industries can satisfy their diverse interests.

2. Manufacturing & Assembly

Another sector that is increasing predominant in Middlesex County is the manufacturing & assembly industry that has a long history of providing highly skilled and productive workforce. Nearly 7000 workers from the Middlesex County labour force are employed in the manufacturing sector accounting for 16% of the Middlesex County workforce.⁴
Given that the automotive industry brings in multi-billion-dollar revenue to Canada, a lot of resources have been invested in this sector by industries and government alike. Similar to agribusiness, there are multiple partnerships with many academic and research institutions including Fanshawe College and Western University who provide highly-skilled and trained employees ready to work in this sector.

The manufacturing business is however, not only limited to automotive industries. Food-products manufacturers, pharmaceuticals, steel industries, equipment suppliers are even alcohol breweries are found in Middlesex County. This demonstrates that even in the manufacturing & assembly sector, Middlesex County is diverse, and this translates to the increased variety of jobs available for high school students.

Similar to the map above, the map below shows many of the manufacturing industries found near SDCI. Through this map we can take a look at many of the differing sectors that can be made available for the tour including automotive, pharmaceutical and brewery industries.

These facilities are within 10 minutes of the school and are located near the agricultural areas we saw earlier. Thus, we can make one stop here and look at all the different sectors available. We hope that by doing this, we limit the lack of interest and boredom some students may experience during the excursion. As the famous saying goes, “not all fingers are the same”, meaning not all the students have the same interests as their peers.
3. Small Business & Entrepreneurship

Small businesses and entrepreneurs have been the cornerstone of Middlesex County for a very long time. Although many operations are conducted by fewer than 10 employees with many businesses being family-run, it is safe to say that a diverse array of career options await students who want to work in small business settings.

London-Middlesex County region is considered a hub for new start-ups, where the lower land costs and utilities attract investors to settle in this region. Whether you want to start your own local food farm or invest in a water well drilling company like McLeod Water Wells, Middlesex County has the potential to cultivate the growth of these local businesses.

We believe that showcasing students to small businesses in Middlesex County during the experiential learning tour will be beneficial in garnering their interests in the Middlesex County’s labour market. Additionally, many of these small businesses provide increased opportunities for co-op education and jobs especially for high school students who are unsure of which career to pursue.

4. Tourism

Middlesex County is an all-year tourist destination that is popular among residents in London and near-by cities. Many individuals trying to escape the busy-city life by seeking rural towns and other areas in Middlesex County, provide for attractive business ventures including golf course fields, horseback riding, sports and other recreation events.

Nature loving individuals can embark on hiking trips in conservation areas and go fishing among many other activities. In order for these activities to be available all year round in Middlesex County, a highly specialized and productive labour force is required. If the tourism sector peaks interests to a pool of high school students, then we believe that one of the destinations should allow for students to experience the tourism aspect of Middlesex County.

Industry Based Suggestion

Through our research we were able to understand the importance of four different sectors that contribute to the success of Middlesex County. We believe that a business from each of the four sectors should be kept in mind when deciding on the tour destinations.

The overall consensus from our team is to prioritize showcasing businesses that fall under agri-business and manufacturing & assembly sectors since a large number of the Middlesex County workforce is employed in these sectors. Additionally, each of the separate sectors have increased diversity in the types of jobs and career fields. The trip planner can even consider choosing one business that shows both manufacturing and agri-business side all together.
Overall, we suggest:

(1) Finding tour locations that apply to different industries if possible. For instance, a farm supply store that sells equipment (a variety of farm supply), because this also falls under small business & entrepreneur alongside agri-business.

(2) As mentioned earlier another option could also combine multiple industries in one stop. For example, the maps earlier showed how multiple industries were within minutes from each other and thus from making one stop, students should be able to look at multiple other industries at the same time.

We believe both these suggestions will decrease boredom, and increase diversity, ensuring that more students can take away from each of these steps.

Tour Logistics

Expected Tour Timeline

- 8:30 Presentation in School auditorium; providing overview of the day
- 9:00 Student load bus and Drive to Location 1
- 9:30 - 10:30 Location 1
- 10:30 Drive to Location 2
- 11:00 - 11:30 Location 2
- 11:30 - 12:00 Lunch break at Location 2
- 12:00 Drive to Location 3
- 12:45 - 1:30 Location 3
- 2:30 Arrive Back at School

The sample tour timeline takes into account duration of the 3 tours, travel time between tour locations and lunch. The timeline ensures students arrive back to school at normal school dismissal (2:30).

Transportation

For the duration of the tour students will be driven on a School Bus. A bus will be sent to each of the schools, with up to 70 students on each bus. The bus will leave the school at 9:00 am and arrive back at 2:30 pm.
References


