

North America's Building Trades Unions



**CBTU Organizers Conference
Halifax, Nova Scotia
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**From Middle Schools to Millennials:
Recruiting Young People
into Building Trades
Registered Apprenticeship**

(What does research tell us?)

We all know the problem

- We need young people today in the construction industry and they are unemployable!
- ***“The children now love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority; they show disrespect for elders and love chatter in place of exercise.”***
- Does this sound familiar?

Or do we?

- The author of this quote?
- Socrates (4,200 years ago!)
- This is what our parents said about us
- Young people today are NOT the children of the Depression and WW II
- We taught them to think and act for themselves

Socrates was condemned to death for corrupting the youth of Athens

- But Socrates didn't corrupt young people – he empowered them
- He empowered them to think for themselves, to question what they were told, and not to be intimidated by authority
- Sound familiar?

The Real Challenge Today?

- Barriers to apprenticeship/lack of knowledge



Encouraging Canadian Youth to Enter the Skilled Trades

By Jeff Hines, Department Head of Technological Studies at Emily Carr Secondary School

This paper shares the findings of a survey with high school students that explored their attitudes towards careers in the skilled trades. The results highlight some of the challenges to encouraging youth to consider apprenticeship training as a postsecondary option. Student responses to the survey did not directly align with existing peer reviewed research and government census data findings, which suggests that additional research on this topic would be worthwhile.

Jeff Hines – Emily Carr Secondary School

- Greater knowledge of apprenticeship than expected, but still low
- Do apprentices get paid?
 - ✓ 42% males, 56% females unsure
- Can apprentices get college credit?
 - ✓ 46% males, 62% females unsure
- Biggest barrier? Parents →

Many student comments attest to the pressure to seek a university degree and pursue a professional career that does not fall into the range of skilled trades.

Jeff Hines – Emily Carr Secondary School

- Opportunities?
- 1/4th of respondents offered neutral responses – may be open to messaging about the trades
- Students did not consider gender a barrier

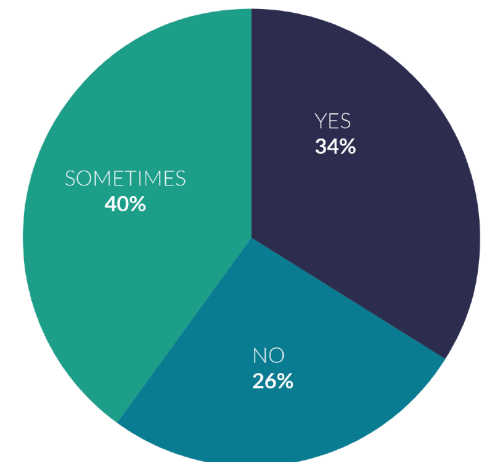
Another study – 200 millennials in Chicago

- Three misconceptions
 - ✓ Apprenticeships don't exist today
 - ✓ Apprenticeships don't pay
 - ✓ Apprenticeship means no college degree



Figure 2

Do people who participate in registered apprenticeship programs receive payment while participating?



NABTU Research – 7 Focus Groups in 2018

PROJECT SUMMARY

In support of NABTU's efforts to increase exposure to the building trades, MOSAIC and DC WIC held a series of focus groups in April of 2018 involving various student populations represented at the college, high school, and middle school levels. Through the focus groups, MOSAIC gathered information to help the NABTU DOL team gain insights into how to market apprenticeship and training programs to young adults and students.

NABTU Research – 7 Focus Groups in 2018

LIST OF OUTCOMES

1. To understand how students at a middle school, high school, and post-secondary school communicate to each other and how they would like to be communicated to.
2. To understand how these varying age groups use social media platforms.
3. To gain insights into how students search for job opportunities inside and outside of a school setting.
4. To learn about the general perception of the building trades and jobs in the construction industry.
5. To provide leaders in the construction industry with research, insights, and recommendations to attract students and young adults in the construction trades.

NABTU Research – 7 Focus Groups in 2018

PARTICIPANT GROUPS

FOCUS GROUP 1: FRIENDSHIP TECH PREPARATORY MIDDLE SCHOOL

- 9 total participants (3 male, 6 female)
- Average age: 13-15 years old

FOCUS GROUP 2: BLOW PIERCE MIDDLE SCHOOL

- 6 total participants (4 male, 2 female)
- Average age: 11-15 years old

NABTU Research – 7 Focus Groups in 2018

PARTICIPANT GROUPS

FOCUS GROUP 3: FRIENDSHIP TECH PREPARATORY HIGH SCHOOL

- 6 total participants (2 male, 4 female)
- Average age: 15-18 years old

FOCUS GROUP 4: WASHINGTON METRO (PHELPS HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS)

- 14 total participants (100% male)
- Average age: 17-18 years old

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PARTICIPANT GROUPS

FOCUS GROUP 5: UDC COMMUNITY COLLEGE (CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM)

- 8 total participants (7 male, 1 female)
- Average age: 18-24 years old

FOCUS GROUP 6: UDC WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT (HVAC FOCUS)

- 6 total participants (100% male)
- Average age: 24+ years old

NABTU Research – 7 Focus Groups in 2018

PARTICIPANT GROUPS

FOCUS GROUP 7: YOUTH BUILD CHARTER SCHOOL

- 4 total participants (2 male, 2 female)
- Ages: 16, 18, 20, 25

NABTU Research – 7 Focus Groups in 2018

SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES

COMMUNICATION

- Many participants prefer to communicate face-to-face or over the phone when communicating about jobs/ careers
- When communicating with peers or family, most prefer to do so through social media (Instagram, Snapchat, or Facebook)
- Some high school students expressed they would like to receive a text message regarding a job opportunity, but only following an in-person interaction
- Participants would prefer to see advertisements online or through social media, but not if they are interrupting their daily activities

NABTU Research – 7 Focus Groups in 2018

SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES

SOCIAL MEDIA/ MOBILE APPS

- Across all age groups, Instagram and Snapchat was the favorite
 - Facebook mostly used to stay in touch with family or join groups (hobbies, school groups, etc.)
 - Some mentioned Twitter and YouTube, but they are not the primary channels used in either age group
- Overall, participants use these platforms for the social aspect
- Participants in the high school group stated they would use social media as a news source or a way of receiving announcements
- Some students at the high school and college level stated they use job finding apps such as *Snag a Jobs*

NABTU Research – 7 Focus Groups in 2018

SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES

JOB INFORMATION

- Students at the high school and college level stated that **email** is the preferred method of communication
- Job platforms such as Monster.com, Jobcase.com, and Snag a Jobs are also popular with these age groups
- Digital communication should be coupled with face-to-face interactions and additional resources (flyers, brochures, etc.)
- Middle school students, though still in early stages of seeking job information, mostly search for information online

NABTU Research – 7 Focus Groups in 2018

SUMMARY OF OUTCOMES

PERCEPTION OF CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

- Most participants at all levels were not familiar with opportunities in the construction industry, or only knew about them on a higher level
- When asked about apprenticeships many were not familiar with the concept
 - *"I think it's something I saw in a movie once."*
- Those familiar (DCPS Internship or Workforce Development) expressed opinions that it's a lifetime career, and a good trade to get into
- These groups' understanding and perception of apprenticeships varied drastically
 - *"It's learning how to do a job and getting paid while you are learning."*

Recommendations

- **Middle School** – Get in front of middle schoolers – grades 6 – 8 – talk about **career opportunities**
- Emphasize technology – they are familiar with it
- Don't neglect face-to-face communications
- Target mobile apps and develop social media campaign
- Students did not consider gender a barrier

Recommendations

- **High School** – Talk directly to them too – and teach the CTE teachers and guidance counselors about RA
- Emphasize technology – they are familiar with it
- Talk about career pathways (college credits, no debt)
- Be explicit – apprenticeship pays, with benefits
- The Minnesota Model – align CTE with RA
- Students did not consider gender a barrier

construct tomorrow

Staff members from Minnesota's Department of Labor and Industry, apprenticeship coordinators, prime and sub-contractors and local educators host events to introduce high school students to opportunities in the construction industry.

[Construct Tomorrow Fair](#)



Value on Display.
EVERY DAY.

Minnesota Trades Academy

The MN Trades Academy aspires to provide educational and hands-on experiences for high school youth to learn about construction as a career choice.

The MN Trades Academy offers a 9-week paid summer internship designed to enhance young peoples' access to apprenticeship training and construction. Interns receive hands-on experiences at 16 different union training centers directly from industry experts. The Academy is funded by a grant from the MN Department of Employment and Economic Development.



Recommendations

- **Millennials** – If you can't beat them (labor law generally prohibits this), join 'em
- Emphasize work – life balance
- Point to pay and benefits – apprenticeship pays!
- Highlight college credit without student debt
- Emphasize safety
- Talk about building, community and meaning

Recommendations

- **Overall** – use Apprenticeship Readiness Programs
- Develop (and emphasize) college connections: college credit with no student debt
- Apprenticeship Pays!
- Use **near peers** to communicate with young people
- Develop an effective online strategy (including Snapchat, Instagram)

Recommendations

- Last – treat young people as people (with respect)
- Is it time to end hazing? Professionalism!
- <https://www.breslin.biz/abuse-apprentices-stops-now/>

Finally, unions can help by standing up for apprentices and giving them the camaraderie they were first offered. The best part of being in the trades isn't the money; it's the people and the work and the pride that comes with doing something that you feel is important. Sharing that with others and seeing it play out every day, with everyone having each other's backs, is what it's all about. Every union in North America might consider an annual "Mentor of the Year" award for the journeyman who is tops in development of apprentice talent. Make it visible. Talk about it at the hall. Put it in the newsletters. Bring the brotherhood (and sisterhood) back to union affiliation.

- Use mentor model rather than drill sergeant model
- <http://buildtogether.ca/mentorship/>

Questions?