



Scholarship Contest Winner

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Essay Topic: If you could create a new course to teach in high schools, what would it be and why would it be beneficial to students?

High school career education often focuses on preparing students for professions common amongst society, such as lawyers, doctors, teachers, or accountants. While these careers are important, they only represent a fraction of the immense range of opportunities available. Many students graduate without exposure to fields like truck driving, air traffic control, or court reporting—jobs that are financially rewarding but often overlooked. If I could create a new high school course to teach, I would propose a “Career Compass: Exploring Unconventional Paths” class. This class would introduce students to uncommon but highly rewarding jobs, and prepare them for a new place called the job market.

High school students rarely learn about careers beyond the standard options. Many of these careers do not require a four-year college degree yet still offer financial stability and job satisfaction. For example, an air traffic controller can earn upwards of six figures with only specialized training. A UPS driver can make \$150,000 a year, the same as some architects do, with years of schooling. By broadening students’ perspectives, this course would help them discover paths they may have never considered.

This course would be one of the most interactive courses students take. Students would learn far beyond the textbook, incorporating guest speakers, hands-on projects and activities, field trips, career preparation and regular assessments. Professionals such as paralegals or doulas, would share their firsthand experiences with the class, either in person or virtually. Students would take field trips to workplaces like forensic labs, courtrooms, manufacturing plants, or sport stadiums, to see these careers in action. Real-world projects would also be a key part of the curriculum. Students could complete tasks of various industries such as analyzing sport statistics, assisting a lawyer in preparing documents, or practicing emergency response techniques like a paramedic. These activities would give students a taste of different industries and allow them to picture themselves in these spaces.

Beyond career exploration, this course would also help students develop practical life skills that are not taught in traditional education. Topics like financial literacy, workplace etiquette, mock interviews, resume building, and job market trends would be incorporated to ensure students are well-prepared to enter the workforce. By providing students with a core understanding of the workplace, they will be set up for long term success.

This course would benefit students in a multitude of ways. First, it would help them discover careers that align with their interests and strengths. Second, it would highlight alternative education routes, such as apprenticeships, certifications, and trade programs, showing that college is not the only route to success. Third, it would equip students with essential workplace skills like networking, communication, problem solving, and adaptability—qualities that are valuable to any profession. Finally, it would be especially impactful for students who feel uncertain about their future, and are trying to find a path that they will enjoy.

High school should prepare students for the real world and all that it entails. A course like “Career Compass” would ensure students graduate feeling empowered, prepared, and excited about their futures. By exposing them to diverse opportunities, this class would emphasize taking control of their career journey with confidence and curiosity.

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