

CAREER LINKS



Career Development
Center

Conversations about Career Success...with Faculty



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What was your college major?

MS Degree in Technical Education from Pittsburg State University

BS Degree in Social Behavioral Sciences from University of Mary

AA Degree in General Studies, Bismarck State College

Did this major lead you to your current career?

No. Several of my life experiences led me toward the welding field. I read an ad in the Grand Forks newspaper that offered adult education in welding. I took the class three times because it was so much fun, and the instructor let us make things out of metal. A co-worker told me about the technical school that he went to and said I should be certified. Later, I decided that if I wanted to teach welding that I would need to go back to school. So I enrolled in the Moorhead Minnesota Vocational Technical Training Center and worked evenings in machine shops, ornamental iron shops and as an assembler in a shop that made band saws.

What are the characteristics that your most successful students possess?

Show up on time. Stay the entire time in class. Ask good welding related questions. Never give up and practice, practice, practice!

Name three things a student should know when exploring this career.

Welding looks easy, and for a very few it is. But most of us have to work hard to be good at it. Nothing feels better than to drive around town and show your family and friends what you had a part in building, knowing

that most things you have done will be around a lot longer than you will. It helps to be good in math. A welder does not need to be a math wizard, but should be able to do basic math such as adding, subtracting, dividing and multiplying. Knowledge of fractions is very helpful and knowing the metric system is becoming more and more relevant to our trade. Welding can be a very dangerous trade. It is hot most of the time and dirty all of the time, but rewarding always. Most companies will perform drug testing on their employees for obvious safety reasons.

What skills will a student learn when pursuing this career?

Welding safety in many areas. The use and care of tools and equipment. A lot of terms and definitions used in the welding trade. What can and cannot be done with a welder. A great respect for equipment and dangers that are common to the trade. The proper use and care of personal protective gear. Reading blue print and welding symbols. Basic metallurgy. Machine tool processes, the use of turning lathes, milling machines and surface grinders. How to work together with fellow co-workers or as an individual. How to weld the correct way.

For a student needing part-time employment while in college, what types of jobs provide the best experiential learning opportunities?

Any welding related job would be best of course, but any automotive related job, parts department or any job that introduces the importance of being on time and taking responsibility. All of these experiences will make the transition into the welding trade much smoother.

If a college student is unable to find related work experience in this career field, how do you suggest he/she prepare for the workplace?

The welding field, as with all trades, is about to break wide open. The American Welding Society (AWS) has been saying for several years that we have a shortage of welders and other trade related jobs. The average age of a welder and other trade employees is 56 years old. Our bridges, pipelines and buildings are ready to be replaced nationwide. Ships and rail cars need to be replaced and new ones built. College students should be taking a variety of classes as is possible. Multi-trade people will be more valuable to an employer than a person that has only one skill. I usually suggest to my welding students that they know some Heating, Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC), as well as automotive related skills to enhance their employability.

Is there a selection process for entering this program?

There is no selection process; however, students who declare Metal Fabrication as their career choice and have completed or are taking a MFAB course may pre-register. Therefore, our classes fill up fast. I recommend that students who want to take a MFAB welding or machine tool class should enroll as soon as possible.