

Soft Skills through Engineering Cooperative Education Settings at Ohio University

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Abstract

Research on soft skill development in engineering education has been largely limited to program development and teaching methods in the engineering curricula based on the cooperative education program feedback. Advocates of cooperative education have continually emphasized the value that cooperative education offers to students. Despite the vast research conducted in the importance of soft skills development and the mentoring in cooperative education, no studies exist to provide a method which assesses mentorship in cooperative education. This study will examine the role of mentorship in the development of engineering soft skills through cooperative education experiences and how to improve cooperative education experiences by creating an assessment tool for mentorship during cooperative education. In addition, this study will present a method to assess the perceptions of engineering and science professionals who graduated over the past 10 years (2003-2012) from the Russ College of Engineering and Technology, regarding their cooperative or internship experiences. This research will explore the relationship of these experiences and participant's career development and thus identify significant factors affecting their mentorship experience throughout the program.