

Learning To Work In Teams In Engineering Education

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ABSTRACT

The practice of working in teams is becoming more prevalent in all types of organizations. Nowadays, businesses are looking for employees who can work effectively in teams. Interdepartmental teams are formed to engage workers in collaborative efforts to resolve problems, integrate new programs and/or processes, and engage in long-range planning. Interdisciplinary, cross-functional teams are formed to bring together all stakeholders in an organization to improve communication, increase involvement, improve quality and efficiency, and increase productivity. Nevertheless, institutions of higher learning are being criticized for not preparing graduates with the necessary team-related skills. This paper highlighted a framework for learning to work in teams especially in engineering education at Universiti Teknologi Malaysia. A survey was conducted to determine the preference of students' study styles and their attitudes toward group work. Similar study was conducted among the lecturers and the results from both studies indicate that the effectiveness of group work not only for learning the course contents but also for acquiring the soft skills required in team work. As there are no specific courses in "team work" in the curriculum, one of the authors have included cooperative learning in his teaching in order to facilitate the acquisition of this skill. This paper also highlights the feedbacks and students attitudes toward the new learning environment.

Keywords: Cooperative learning, active learning, generic skills