

## Essay: Why Are Internship Experiences Valuable?

My experiences interning at Autodesk and participating in the CO-OP program have both contributed significantly to my knowledge and understanding within my field of interest: Engineering. Over the past several weeks, I have led and coordinated with 20+ peers, given presentations to a group of industry professionals, conducted site visits for design projects, and most importantly networked with like-minded individuals holding or aspiring to hold positions of leadership.

Throughout my conversations, I have gained a more thorough and dependable perspective on future growth and opportunities in Engineering. Gaining the experience of others has allowed me to connect previously missing pieces to my understanding of the industry. I also now recognize how classroom material translates to on-the-job requirements and the overall motive or direction with learning such content. This application has also caused a net increase of appreciation towards academics.

Reflecting more on the work done, I am most grateful for the breadth of responsibilities I have covered during my internship. Taking up a multitude of roles ranging widely in difficulty level has tested my problem-solving skills and flexibility to work towards a solution with positive compromise when necessary. The framework of a community of professionals working together towards a common goal truly ingrains feelings of accountability to perform beyond expectations.

Today, I stand a more holistic thinker able to make more informed decisions on my overall career trajectory. As a first-time intern, I believe that participating in the cooperative education program has equipped me with a strong network of support and guidance navigating uncharted territory. Backed by such support, I was able to take more risk during my internship as I did not shy away from unconventional strategies to deliver results. Ultimately, this approach allows for better self-exploration into personal capabilities and interests.

As new opportunities often involve steep learning curves, the reflection process is ever more significant. A major goal of the cooperative education program revolves around personal reflection on activities carried out throughout the internship. The presence of open discussion forums, identification of learning objectives and post evaluations as well as supplementary learning material aid development of knowledge even outside the internship.

All in all, I would recommend the program for students interested in positioning themselves within a supportive learning environment throughout the course of their internship. I am sure that any individual with goals of maximizing future employability will find such a platform extremely beneficial.