

## Cooperative Education

Cooperative Education students participate in a structured program that connects school-based occupational instruction and related paid work-site experiences. These educational experiences provide a rigorous and relevant curriculum with an occupational specialty. Co-op students are guided by a formal, written training agreement that defines specific academic and workplace skills to be mastered. Students must be simultaneously enrolled in a course directly related to the job placement. The Work-Based Learning Coordinator is the school official responsible for supervision. An effective training plan for a co-op student will address the following three criteria: Attitudinal Indicators, General Work Skills, and Specific Duties and Tasks Performed on the Job. These three areas encompass very important foundational skills. However, without a fourth component, which addresses and evaluates the curriculum-specific, technical competencies taught in the classroom, the students are learning no more than students who simply get a part-time job on their own (outside of the school's Work-Based Learning Program). Therefore, a fourth component may be included which consists of Curriculum Activities Aligned to the Job. Below are four examples that define and/or explain these four criterions:

- Attitudinal Indicators address and evaluate the student's attitudes exhibited on the job. For example: "The student exhibits respect for authority in his/her interactions with supervisors." "The student is courteous and polite to all customers."
- General Work Skills address and evaluate the student's work ethics. For example: "The student's attendance at work is outstanding." "The student follows all company rules and regulations."
- Specific Duties and Tasks Performed on the Job address and evaluate the actual duties and tasks performed by the student on the job. For example: "The student always cleans the work station at the end of his/her shift."
- Curriculum Activities Aligned to the Job address and evaluate the curriculum unit(s) taught during a given grading period in light of the job. For example, the student is asked to document in his or her portfolio how knowledge recently obtained from a unit of study covered in class (perhaps an explanation of how to deal with a dissatisfied or angry customer) was applied in a practical way at the job site.

By including this fourth component (Curriculum Activities Aligned to the Job), the student is applying all the competencies learned in the classroom to his/her WBL site. Without this fourth component, the student is only performing his/her job duties/tasks (as assigned by the company) that may include only the core competencies and exclude the curriculum-specific, technical competencies.