TEACHING INTERPERSONAL SKILLS: THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL RISK ANALYSIS

In addition to the traditional learning outcomes for technical disciplinary knowledge, the CDIO-syllabus also specifies personal and interpersonal learning outcomes. The argument for teaching interpersonal skills rests upon the team-based working environment that is typical for engineers, where knowledge and skills in teamwork, leadership, and communications are highly required. Thus, the practice of interpersonal skills needs to be implemented in engineering teaching, not only in terms of learning objectives, but realised in practical teaching activities and as an integrated part of the examination. This study aims at presenting and reviewing a practical approach to teaching of interpersonal skills, referred to as the Social Risk Analysis, which has been applied and integrated into the curriculum of two engineering courses. The Social Risk Analysis encourages and imposes a critical review of the social interaction in a small group of students and thus facilitates communication and teamwork operation. Students find the Social Risk Analysis being easy to apprehend and meaningful in engineering teaching, and most significantly, they perceive that the Social Risk Analysis facilitates the work performance. The study found it possible to successfully implement the Social Risk Analysis into the course curriculum of the two engineering courses. The implementation required, however, refinement of the pedagogical approach by integrating the Social Risk Analysis into the learning objectives, teaching activities and assessment of the course, and further, redesign of the engineering work assignments in order to impel cooperation, communication and participation of the students in a team. The establishment of an engineering context provides an important basis for the teaching of interpersonal skill using the Social Risk Analysis.