I worked in a design engineering group in the product engineering center of GE Aviation (also known within GE as the PEC). This group designs and analyzes the parts being made for the engines and makes sure that they will operate well. They also initiate tests for the parts, and put in the paperwork needed to get the ball rolling in manufacturing. Within this group, I worked on a new single-engine aircraft, as well as upkeep of an old engine line. This major project subdivided into various activities such as part design, dimension checking, and design change submission.

Training for the work was provided in many forms, including orientation, reading, quizzes and mentoring. On the first day, we have an overhead orientation that introduced us to GE as a whole and some of the social programs and groups offered at GE. Then, when we got to our individual groups, we were assigned mentors and others to introduce us to the various tasks we would be completing. I was assigned both a mentor and a coworker to work closely with. I also approached many people in my group with questions regularly. The team I worked with was very helpful and good to work with.

**Assessment of Learning and Development**

My work activity directly applied my education to real-life applications. I did calculations and analysis pertaining to the life and strength of airfoils, as well as to the flow of air through the engine. The position allowed me to work on design, communication, and administrative tasks, developing my professional understanding overall. It also utilized my knowledge of communication. The engineering profession needs developed language skills for communicating ideas and facts properly. Being able to convey ideas without pushing an opinion helps keep people focused on the matter at hand rather than speaking on an unnecessary tangent because your wording upset them. I learned about presenting my work to other engineers, focusing on making progress as a team in the company.

As for personal development, this position gave me the ability to initiate, find projects for myself, and work well in communicating my ideas. I worked face-to-face and over the phone with coworkers every day. My role in the conversations varied from being the one driving the conversation and seeking all the information to being the one responding and providing answers. Through this range of communication, I stretched my capabilities for professional interaction.

If I got the chance to start over again, I would work more on my balance of casual and focused conversation when talking with my coworkers. Facilitating casual conversation to form relationships is important and needs to be woven in before and after the professional task is
addressed. Sometimes, talking with people at work about casual topics feels awkward and difficult to do. At the same time, it is necessary for both networking and enjoying work. When I started my work here at GE, I was under the impression that one never or rarely had casual conversation at work. The more I listened to people and interacted in the office, the more I discovered how necessary easy-going conversation is. If I came in with a different attitude about casual conversation, I could have gotten off on a better foot with talking and meeting people.

C. Life Out-side of Co-op
When searching for housing, do NOT get housing in Lynn. I made that mistake at first and moved away within a month after hearing 2 different shootings on my street. For longer term apartments, I highly recommend CC Realtor’s property at 400 Revere Beach Blvd, or other apartments along Revere Beach for any amount of time. Check in ahead of time, looking for sublets from College Students in Boston. Consider the daily commute to and from work, as well as transportation to activities you want to do outside of work. The MBTA train and bus system is fantastic. It will take you to and from Boston, and reached out to suburbs an hour away from Boston. Just note how much time it takes.
I personally got involved in Swing dancing at MIT, going to Poetry Slams at Emerson and the Catana, going to church, volunteering, and visiting friends at the various colleges in the area. There are also blues dances, bars, theaters and pretty much any other form of entertainment and social life you can think of.

GE also offered some fun activities for relaxation and networking. There were weekly sessions of flag football and soccer during the warm months. Every day, a group of employees gathered for ping-pong during lunch. Also, there were plenty of opportunities through the GE Volunteers Committee and other groups to volunteer with people like Habitat for Humanity and the salvation army, as well as tutoring at local schools. GE offered a large number of social groups to connect with other workers and relax.

D. Evaluation
An Up-side to working at GE: my job at GE gave me the option of “flex time”, meaning I could come in and leave at whatever time worked best for me, as long as I worked my 8 hours a day and 40 hours a week. This allowed me to have more flexibility in my schedule outside of work because I could have free afternoons by coming in at 6am and leaving at 2pm, or be able to have late nights and come in late the next day.

The down-side to working in my job: The worst feature of this job was the fact that I sat at a desk all day every day for my work. I would prefer a job where I got to be up and about more, giving me better health and more variation in my activity.

E. Additional Info.
Pay attention to what your job offers include, exactly what you will be doing. Making a solid decision about where you want to work and what job you want to take there can make the difference between browsing the internet out of boredom and being active every day in a job that keeps you thinking.
A. Co-op Work Assignment

My role was supporting the Passport20 design team in Inlets and Exhaust Systems on certain composite hardware pieces. Passport20 is a new commercial engine program where much of the hardware that I tracked needed new designs issued. I executed funding releases to initiate orders on parts and followed up on those orders to track how much money was needed, which supplier was chosen, and how long it would take to produce the part. I helped track over 40 different pieces of hardware, helped design and maintain the hardware tracking spreadsheet that was reviewed weekly by the design team, and led weekly meetings between design, sourcing, and suppliers. During these meetings, I helped facilitate communication between all parties by taking notes and sending out the most important minutes and action items. This helped me set the agenda for the six different meetings that I led and helped those involved remember what actions needed to be taken in the following days. There was an orientation provided on the first day that briefed new co-ops on safety, history of the plant, and how to set up our accounts.

I had an assigned mentor that took me around to different parts of the plant and with whom I conversed with regularly. He is a contractor that works on tracking shipments of small commercial engines and often took me to the shop floor where the engines were assembled. This was a great experience. During the beginning of my assignment, when my manager and I were working on the same hardware, I popped into my manager’s office very often to ask questions or to give updates of part statuses. He is the one that brought me up to speed on the Passport20 program and gave me an idea of its scope and complexity. He kept on getting more and more work and was switched off of my hardware to take over some different parts, and travelled a lot. Our interactions were decreased during the second half of my co-op, but he always supported me when I reached out for help. With less oversight, I felt the weight of my responsibilities increase. Even though he was no longer on copy for the majority of emails that I sent and therefore didn’t see directly that I was doing my job, I knew what was expected of me and the fear of disappointing someone who performed at such a high level was one of my motivators. I wish I could have gone to more places on the plant, though. But I am glad and thankful that my manager gave me a good assignment and trusted me to do a good job on it. He was out of the office pretty often but set an example when he was in and just from observing his methods, I have learned a lot.

B. Assessment of Learning and Development

Although I wasn’t on the design team, I got to interact with the design engineers on a daily basis and pick up on different applications of what I’ve learned in class. I’d hear them talk about how more stress analysis had to be done on a new design for a bracket, and I sat in on two detailed design reviews. Both were packed with technical details and my education and
One of the worst features of the job was being remote from all of my team members and feeling isolated. I did all that I could to develop a close working connection with my team, but you can only get to know so much about a person through short calls and emails that are always related to work. It’s much harder to broach personal topics over the phone and even harder over IM because you can’t gauge feelings and reactions easily, and that made me more cautious because I didn’t want to offend a co-worker. And in between conference calls, emails, and irregular bouts of instant messaging, there was a shortage of people to talk to in person on my floor. Two of the guys who sat near me retired two months into my co-op, leaving their cubicles empty. I enjoyed interacting with them while they were here—one of them would always walk by to tell me when the free fruit had arrived and the other once drove out to buy me a sandwich when the cafeteria was closed. I often thought, with some anxiety, that if I were on site with the design engineers I worked with, I would have been able to pick their brains and tag along to their meetings and get up some side projects.

Even with these challenges, my co-op experience has been worth it and I have improved greatly when it comes to talking over the phone and leaving voicemails. I’ve learned how to word emails so that they are concise but not curt, when to “reply all,” and I have cold-called dozens of people with increasingly less apprehension each time. And even though I did not get taken out to lunch every week by my team, I now have the advantage of knowing a significant amount of people in two GE Aviation plants, one of them being headquarters. I hope that I will be placed in Cincinnati for my next co-op and get to meet my team members in person.