Cross-Cultural "Soft Skills" and the Global Engineer: Corporate Best Practices and Trainer Methodologies

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Abstract
At the 9th Annual Colloquium on International Engineering in November of 2006, the consensus between corporate and academic presenters/attendees was that global engineering students need not only to develop foreign language proficiency, but must just as importantly develop cross-cultural, adaptive "soft skills" which will assist them in working collaboratively in their co-ops, internships and expatriate assignments. While university engineering programs often focus on "hard" technical skills, it is becoming increasingly evident that in order to compete in a global environment, international engineering students must become competent in both foreign language and culture. By examining the "best practices" of international companies and the programs developed by cross-cultural trainers, university programs can begin to better develop criteria and standards for their programs, thereby insuring their students have the best possible training as global engineers.

Recommended Citation