Competency Development of Global Professionals: 
Adaptation of Content Delivery and Interactivity 
Based on Cross-Cultural Learning Styles

Zachary J. Gredlics and Soma Chakrabarti*
Engineering and Interdisciplinary Professional Education
The University of Kansas
Continuing Education Division
Edwards Campus, 12600 Quivira Road
Overland Park, KS 66213, USA

E-mails and Phone Numbers:
Gredlics: gredlics@ku.edu; +1 913 897 8766
Chakrabarti: schakrab@ku.edu; +1 913 897 8755

* Corresponding Author

Abstract

International partnerships and corporate globalization have forced continuing educators to face new realities: competency development of a workforce with varied learning styles and communication practices that are deeply embedded in cultural orientations of the participating learners. Today's continuing educators must adapt to fit these challenges posed by differences in learning styles, often augmented by virtual communication environments, to meet the mutual goals of students, employers and instructors.

In this paper, we examine how cultural orientations regarding communication, hierarchy, individualism, time and environment influence learning, and how such knowledge can help create approaches that work across cultures. Case studies on six world regions – China, India, North America, South America, Middle East and Western Europe – with different cultural learning styles will be used as examples of how content and delivery can be adapted depending on the cultural landscape and communication styles, thus facilitating seamless learning and required competency development for professional engineers.

1. Introduction

When Thomas Friedman wrote "The World is Flat" in 2005, many of us -- continuing engineering educators and administrators -- wondered how the flat world will affect professional education within and outside the United States. In the coming years, we had seen an increasingly "globalized world" in business and education. While universities all over the world have experienced an influx of foreign students from completely different cultures, the businesses developed partnerships that spanned several continents and maintained by virtual communication. The Boeing Company developed its 787 Dreamliner aircraft by building strong
partnerships with organizations in five foreign countries. Black & Veatch Corporation, a global organization that is headquartered in the Greater Kansas City area, has 10,000 employees in 110 offices located in 100 countries. As continuing engineering educators, we often question amongst ourselves whether the faculty and administrators need to adjust their teaching, communication and operation to meet the needs of the global workforce. Through our long and extensive history of working with professional engineers throughout the United States and around the world, we have experienced the vast and, at times, unexpected differences in the ways students learn, act and interact during professional development training. In this paper, our goal is to explain what we have seen, how we have adapted, and the deep interest that we have gained in these cultural learning differences. We will describe and explain specific examples of differences that we have encountered around the world. Our experiences can be used as an introduction to the cultural learning differences seen around the world, and how they can be accounted for in engineering professional development and continuing education.

2. Key Observations in a Global Classroom of Professional Engineers

The University of Kansas Continuing Education Division provides post-graduate non-credit professional development and lifelong learning opportunities to working professionals, including engineers, educators, attorneys, law enforcement professionals, firefighters, doctors, and health and public safety officials. Its customer base includes 105 Kansas counties, 50 U.S. states, and 56 foreign countries. Among the continuing professional development programs, the Center for Engineering and Interdisciplinary Professional Education (CEIPE, http://ceipe.ku.edu) unit, comprised of aerospace and other engineering and interdisciplinary short courses and conferences, is the most internationally recognized unit. It is known for its unique and advanced engineering short courses, live online engineering technology certificates and customized engineering management certificate program. CEIPE is completely self-supported, and the generated net revenue is generously shared with the School of Engineering and its various departments at the University. CEIPE receives a strong international presence in its public courses; foreign participation is 36-40% and, to date, students from 56 countries have attended its public courses. CEIPE conducts about 50-55 in-house courses every year. At least 40% of these in-house classes are held abroad. Although the programs of CEIPE have served the professional engineering community for nearly 40 years and has been successful and financially sustainable, it is very important for CEIPE to maintain the quality and strive for excellence to support a complete eco-system of learners, educators and administrators. Since its inception as the Aerospace Short Course Program in 1977, CEIPE has worked around the world to train engineers and engineering professionals. More recently, international partners include those in China, India, North America, Latin/South America, the Middle East and Western Europe, as well as others. In its effort to provide the best professional education programs around the world, CEIPE must understand and accommodate the various learning cultures that we encounter. By advising our instructors on what to expect when they teach abroad, courses and content delivery can be enhanced to fit each learning culture’s expectations and needs.

We have seen the high in-class interactivity of the Indian students and the low in-class interactivity of the Middle Eastern students; the direct communication of the North American
students, and the indirect communication of the Chinese students. In a class full of engineers which had participation from four European countries – France, Germany, Spain and United Kingdom – which were not too far from each other and collaborate on various projects, the differences in interactivity became a barrier for the instructor to deliver his lectures. During the delivery of a seven-week training series to a group of 32 Chinese engineers, the instructors struggled to spark interactivity during classes. In all these cases, understanding the cultural orientation of the participants was the key to overcoming the hurdles and thus facilitate a fruitful learning process.

When it comes to learning styles, schools tend to be biased to uniformity as opposed to diversity. Often, the world is seen as one place, with one type of learner and one type of learning style. This is largely because of the fact that “sameness” is easier to accommodate than difference. It is critically important for continuing education programs to provide professional development to engineers working around the world, and these programs must break away from this pattern of uniformity and sameness to provide training and education to a specific culture based on the way that they will best absorb it.

In the era of globalization and a worldwide need for professional development, this paper attempts to explain how cultures vary, sometimes drastically, around the world. It is critical for those from all cultures to understand how they themselves learn, how others learn, and how they can fit the needs of learners around the world rather than expecting them to follow an unusual and uncomfortable culture. By understanding how teaching and classroom styles and environments can be altered to fit the specific needs of a learning culture, professional development leaders can provide the best education possible, and be viewed as a truly global leader in continuing education.

3. Cultural Learning Styles

Although much has been discussed about the global competencies of future engineers and a study on the international faculty development to build the right attributes of tomorrow’s global engineers clearly showed that cultural competency would have the most importance, studies on cultural learning styles or learning styles that are influenced by cultural orientation are generally concentrated on either only a country or on e-learning or non-engineering majors. Some studies have, however, shown how the knowledge of cultural competency enhances pedagogical success. Joy and Kolb examined the role that culture plays in the way individuals learn. Their study used the framework of Global Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness (GLOBE), which we used, too, to understand the lack or abundance of interactivity in our professional education events. Joy and Kolb used groups from various cultures to experiment with the learning styles, and concluded that the culture as measured by the country clusters, described in GLOBE, is a predominant factor in the development of different learning styles in students from different parts of the world. McCarty examined how a globalized classroom can survive with Japanese learning styles and Smith and Ayers offered specific distance learning pedagogical strategies that accommodate the unique needs of Hispanic/Latino learners in a community college setting. In a groundbreaking article, Barmeyer compared the learning
styles of students from France, Germany and Quebec and the resultant impact on cross-cultural training.

4. Global Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness (GLOBE) Study

Similar to that which has been stated by Joy and Kolb, we use the Global Leadership and Organizational Effectiveness (GLOBE) Study to understand a new learning culture as we travel all over the world or bring participants to the United States. This study, completed in 2004, is a comprehensive look at many cultures around the world, explaining how they work, how they interact, and what they expect in personal and professional environments.

The GLOBE study is a synopsis of 62 societies and cultures around the world, compiling information about how cultural values are related to organizational practices, leadership styles, the economic competitiveness of societies, and the human condition of its members. This study can also be used to analyze how cultures learn. There are several factors that go into the GLOBE study data sets, and professional education developers and instructors entering an unknown learning culture can get an understanding of the key factors that could be vital in understanding the mindset of an internationalized classroom. The difference in behavior in a classroom, and the way the international participants learn, are dependent on these cultural indicators or factors. If the educators know how each culture perceives these factors, they will accordingly plan for specific interactivity, as described below.

- **Power Distance**: Is power distributed equally? Is power respected? If so, are they keeping distance from me?
- **Uncertainty Avoidance**: Are there extents to which a society, organization, or group rely on social norms, rules, and procedures to alleviate unpredictability of future events? If so, how can I change my interaction with the class?
- **Humane Orientation**: Do they collectively encourage and reward individuals for being fair, altruistic, generous, caring, and kind to others? So, now what do I do?
- **Collectivism I (Institutional)**: Is there a degree to which organizational and societal institutional practices encourage and reward collective distribution of resources and collective action? Do I encourage project activities?
- **Collectivism II (In-Group)**: Is there a degree to which individuals express pride, loyalty, and cohesiveness in their organizations or families. I must honor this and be careful not to comment on this.
- **Assertiveness**: Is there a degree to which individuals are assertive, confrontational, and aggressive in their relationships with others in this culture? If so, what can I expect from the class?
- **Gender Egalitarianism**: This is the degree to which a collective minimizes gender inequality. If it is not present, do I impart or plan for a different group activity?
- **Future Orientation**: Is there an extent to which individuals engage in future-oriented behaviors such as delaying gratification, planning, and investing in the future. If so, I must honor that.
• **Performance Orientation**: Is there a degree to which a collective encourages and rewards group members for performance improvement and excellence? Should I then plan for such activity inside or outside the class?

5. **Further Generalization**

To further generalize what one may expect when approaching a new learning culture, these societies are grouped into 10 different cultural “clusters”, encompassing several similar cultures around the world – Anglo, Latin Europe, Nordic Europe, Germanic Europe, Eastern Europe, Latin America, Sub-Saharan Africa, Middle East, Southern Asia and Confucian Asia.

For this paper, we have chosen to study several regions based on the experience we have within the CEIPE program.

- **China** – CEIPE has valued experience with several countries in the People’s Republic of China, including Taikoo (Xiamen) Aircraft Engineering Company, Ltd (TAECO), The Commercial Aircraft Company of China, Ltd. (COMAC), and the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC). This has included teaching students in China, as well as bringing groups of students to the United States.

- **India** – CEIPE has taught students both in India, as well as Indian students at public short courses in the United States. Companies represented include the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), Air India, Air Works India Engineering Pvt Ltd, and GE Aviation India.

- **North America** – As a United States-based university, our largest participant base continues to come from both the United States and Canada. Studying one’s own learning culture is the first step to understanding how other cultures learn.

- **South America/Latin America** – With growing aviation markets and the third largest aircraft manufacturer in the world, CEIPE has a long history of working in South America and Latin America. Customers include Embraer, Rockwell Collins do Brazil, Civil Aviation Authority of Colombia, and the Armed Forces of the Argentine Republic.

- **Middle East and North Africa** – CEIPE has a growing footprint in this part of the world, receiving public course students from the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, and Turkey. The Turkish aerospace community is one of our most frequent partners for in-house training.

- **Western Europe** – With a history almost as long as our program, CEIPE’s partnership with Western Europe includes all sectors – Anglo Europe, Latin Europe, Nordic Europe and Germanic Europe. This includes major companies such as Airbus, Saab, Pilatus, and the European Aviation Safety Authority (EASA).

While it is important to note that variations can occur within regions, countries and cultures, guidelines can be used to provide the best possible education to students based on their cultural learning styles.
5.1 China

Understanding communication differences is the single greatest key to understanding the Chinese learning culture. China has five key aspects of communication that should be considered when addressing and teaching\textsuperscript{16}:

- **Implicit Communication** (\textit{hanxu}) – Chinese communication is contained, reserved, implicit and indirect.
- **Listening-Centered Communication** (\textit{tinghua}) – Stresses listening over speaking, where not everyone is entitled to speak.
- **Polite Communication** (\textit{keqi}) – Stresses polite, courteous, modest, humble, and well-mannered communication.
- **Insider-Communication** (\textit{zijiren}) – Chinese tend to become involved in communication with those they know (insiders) versus outsiders.
- **Face-Directed Communication** (\textit{mianzi}) – Face involves the respect of the in-group for the person with good moral reputation as well as his/her lineage.

While Chinese culture stresses listening over speaking (\textit{tinghua}), it is our experience at CEIPE that students do usually open up as the training progresses. This is a result of familiarity with the instructor and comfort in their surroundings.

This is incredibly important because most western instructors and professional education developers are used to large amounts of interaction, including question and answer sessions. In China, however, the learning culture centers around listening to the subject matter expert and respecting his or her knowledge, rather than questioning it (\textit{tinghua}). Over time, often after several days of instruction and familiarity with the instructor and classmates, the students do begin to express opinions and ask questions (\textit{zijiren}), but in a very courteous and respectful way (\textit{keqi}).

Hierarchy is also critically important to consider when teaching to the Chinese learning culture. To save face, many less-experienced and lower-ranked engineers and professionals will withhold questions that they may view as “easy” or not worthwhile of classroom time. This can result in lengthy one-on-one question and answer sessions for instructors after class and during breaks. CEIPE advises our instructors that they should extend their lecture sessions as they should not expect the number of questions that they are used to in other learning cultures, or else they will end too early.

The GLOBE study can also be used to understand the Chinese learning culture, where China falls in to the Confucian Asia cluster. Not surprisingly, these cultures rank low in assertiveness, explaining the lack of interaction and questions, and high in power distance, explaining the great respect for instructors as subject matter experts. Just as high as power distance, the Confucian Asia culture, and China in particular, ranks high in in-group collectivism – students respect and take pride in what they do and who they work for and with, and value education as a tool to not only make themselves, but also their company and country, a better, stronger place.

Perhaps most importantly within the GLOBE study is Confucian Asia and China’s high score in performance orientation, which is often directly linked to a high valuation of training and
development, as well as the expectation of direct and explicit communication from an instructor. In this regard, China is a professional developers dream, but providing anything less than world-class training and expert instructors is unacceptable and likely to result in decreased chances for repeat business.

5.2 India

![Bar chart showing differences in cultural learning styles between Indian and North American (primarily from USA) students]

Figure 1. Differences in cultural learning styles between Indian and North American (primarily from USA) students

As a result of the common opinion that the Indian education system is unable to prepare students for the corporate world, post-baccalaureate training and professional development are critical parts of Indian workforce development. India shares many similarities with western cultures, but also presents some significant variances. This is a result of nearly 200 years of British rule or dominance, followed by vast differences in cultural norms.

The GLOBE study summarizes that Southern Asia, which is mostly made up of India, ranks in the middle of all clusters in performance orientation, assertiveness, power distance and uncertainty avoidance. However, India ranks very highly in in-group collectivism (and, thusly, has lower autonomy), as well as future orientation.

As a result of the power distance and uncertainty avoidance rankings, classrooms in India must be led by an instructor who is a recognized subject matter expert, and that classroom should have a firm structure and rules, set up by the instructor. Indian learning culture also requires a high level of interactivity between instructor and students, as the instructor must always be willing and able to spend large amounts of time answering questions. Unlike in China, these
questions will often be asked during class, in front of others, rather than during breaks or after
class, and must be factored in to the timeline of the training. However, there are often so many
questions that they cannot be contained within the class time itself, and the instructor may be
asked upon during breaks and after class has ended.

Online learning is increasingly popular in India, as the business culture tends to be very cost
conscious. To succeed in the Indian e-learning market, courses must be synchronous, supported
by videoconferences and chat sessions, allowing the instructor-led culture to purvey. In India,
instructors are there to be questioned and debated, and without a strong connection to that
instructor, it will be difficult to obtain and retain the Indian community. Figure 1, created on
the basis of data set available in Chokar[11], shows the differences in cultural learning styles
between Indian and North American (primarily from USA) students.

5.3 North America
In the United States and Canada, learning styles put an emphasis on experience, concepts,
oberving, and experimenting. Students, especially those in professional development
programs, tend to be more direct and assertive with their questions, experiences and
interactions than in other parts of the world[17]. As compared to China, where instructors are
recommended to add lecture time to offset a general lack of in-class interaction, and India,
where instructors are recommended to factor in additional question and answer time, the United
States and Canada fall in between – expect questions before, during and after class, as well as
breaks.

The GLOBE study offers additional insight in to how the North American culture learns,
including them in the Anglo cluster. The culture is highly team-oriented and below average in
autonomy, meaning group work tends to take preference over individual work. Power distance
rankings are average, translating to a respect for instructors and subject matter experts without
a fear of questioning them or their teachings. Expect plenty of interaction when teaching in the
United States and Canada, but perhaps not as much as India.

Performance orientation scores in North America are among the highest in the world, meaning
training and development are seen as important, and direct communication from all parties is
expected. Students will actively debate instructors and share stories of their own, while also
expecting the same in return from instructors.

5.4 South America/Latin America
The Latin America section of GLOBE includes such South American nations as Argentina,
Brazil and Colombia, amongst others. This culture does, perhaps surprisingly, share many
similarities with the North American learning cultures, despite their very different roots.

Latin America is average in the fields of assertiveness, but high in power distance and in-group
collectivism. Because of this, the Latin America learning culture requires instructors that are
ture subject matter experts and can handle a large amount of questions. As a result of
demanding true experts as instructors, students greatly respect their instructors.
Where Latin America ranks low is performance orientation. This does not mean that the learning culture does not appreciate training and development; it simply means that other cultures may find the need for such education to be higher. An equally low score in future orientation suggests that training may be more directly linked to immediate needs, such as an impending project, rather than general knowledge expansion. As such, it is key for instructors and professional developers to understand their clients specific need (a new product, new way of doing business, etc.) and link the training directly to this, even more so than in other learning cultures.

5.5 Middle East and North Africa (MENA)
The Middle East is an intriguing culture to study in regards to professional development and continuing education. With a low GLOBE score in the future orientation category, it can often be difficult to promote the importance of continuing education to the countries included in this cluster. However, students in this cluster who do understand the importance of professional development can be ideal learners. Much like in Latin America, the low future orientation scores suggest training and development is used to solve immediate problems and offer immediate solutions and gratification rather than gaining general knowledge. Instructors and professional developers should understand their client’s unique need for the training, and provide instruction that fulfills this specific need.

One reason why students in the Middle East who do understand the importance of professional development and continuing education are so ideal is because of the culture’s very high score in power distance, and a deep respect for instructors who are subject matter experts. In this regard, the Middle East cluster has an almost identical score with the Confucian Asia cluster, and instructors should approach the learning culture similarly in how they control the classroom. The students will often withhold questions until after class or during breaks, meaning more content should be incorporated in to classroom time.

5.6 Western Europe
Western Europe is comprised of many learning cultures that rank quite differently within the GLOBE study. England and Ireland are included in the Anglo cluster; Italy, Spain and France, Portugal, Israel and Switzerland (French Speaking) are included in the Latin Europe cluster; Scandinavian countries are included in the Nordic Europe cluster; Germany, Netherlands, Austria and Switzerland (German Speaking) are included in the Germanic Europe cluster. For ease, these clusters will be broken down below for a better understanding of how to approach each learning culture.

CEIPE has a continued partnership with a company in Europe that is largely comprised or British, German, French and Spanish employees. This serves as a case study to understand how the various cultures within Europe can vary so drastically, and how difficult it can be to work with many cultures in the same classroom.

Anglo/Anglo European
As a result of the Anglo cluster including both the British Isles as well as the United States and Canada (in addition to Australia and New Zealand), much of the same learning characteristics
that apply in the previous North America section would apply to teaching in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

- High Team-Oriented ranking – Group work is preferred over individual work. In-class exercises often result in the best learning outcomes.
- Average Power Distance ranking – Instructors are seen as subject matter experts, but students feel open and comfortable questioning and debating.
- High Performance Orientation ranking – Training and development are highly valued.
- Average Future Orientation ranking – Training is used for both specific, impending projects as well as general knowledge expansion. Instructors should be prepared for both.
- Question and Answer Sessions are important, and classroom time should be devoted to such.

**Latin Europe**

- High Power Distance ranking – Instructors will be respected as subject matter experts as long as they present themselves as such and have a firm control on the classroom environment, with set rules and expectations.
- Low Uncertainty Avoidance ranking – Only moderately resistant to change, resulting in a learning culture with a desire and willingness to change how they work.
- Average Future Orientation ranking – Training is used for both specific, impending projects as well as general knowledge expansion. Instructors should be prepared for both.

**Nordic Europe**

Nordic Europe shows some vast differences to Latin Europe, clearly showing how one cannot assume that all of Europe, and even all of Western Europe, learns the same.

- Low Power Distance ranking – Learning resources and information are widely available and distributed, and many learners may believe they can gain a better understanding on their own, without the need of an instructor.
  - From the start of any course, instructors and staff need to prove that the expense and time of the training is worthwhile.
- High Future Orientation ranking – Training is often used for general knowledge expansion, meaning instructors should be familiar with their audience ahead of time. Training based on a specific project may not be as common as other parts of the world.

**Germanic Europe**

- High Performance Orientation ranking – Training and development are respected and seen as important, which can create a learning culture that is ideally suited for the instructor.
- High level of assertiveness – Students will have questions, and will actively debate their instructors if they disagree. The learning culture demands a true subject matter expert who is not afraid to be questioned, and can stand behind their knowledge and support it with real-world experience.
  - May be difficult to approach with online or distance learning, especially asynchronous.
o Synchronous teaching must be used with Germanic European cultures, and even then, it should be expected that the learning culture will not emphatically support online professional development without high levels of interaction with instructors.

6. The Validity of GLOBE Study and How We Use It

Following are our key observations and how our experiences fare with the GLOBE study:

• GLOBE states that, in Confucian Asia (China), the assertiveness of the culture is low. Indeed, CEIPE has seen that students are quiet, reserved, and often times appear shy to those who are not familiar with the culture. Participation and interaction, especially for the first few days, should not be forced.

• The study states that the culture of Southern Asia (India) is to prefer working in groups, and in fact we have seen that the students, even those who do not know each other before the training, assimilate very quickly and value opportunities to work together. Building in additional group exercises and interaction makes the students feel more comfortable and will likely result in a more highly valued learning experience.

• North America's high score in performance orientation explains our experience of needing direct communication between instructor and student. With engineering and technology, tasks and procedures often need to be specific and exact, and the instructor needs to be explicit about teaching this.

• Latin/South America's low uncertainty avoidance score explains CEIPE's experience in Brazil, where the classroom is an informal setting with less structure than many have experienced elsewhere, and instructors are respected but often treated as friends. Instructors should be prepared to connect on both a personal and professional basis with their students.

• The Middle East and North Africa's low future orientation score can be translated into a lack of flexibility by management and organizations, and hesitancy to change. However, when countered with the fact that it is a society that believes they should be more future oriented than they currently are, one can see why CEIPE's long relationship with partners in Turkey has, at times, been difficult. Organizations believe they need to plan for the future, but often cannot see past the immediate needs. Students want their training to prepare them for the future, while their organization wants their training to fit a current and immediate need.

• Western Europe creates many challenges due to the presence of several learning cultures. Through CEIPE's long history working with Germanic Europe, their high level of assertiveness has been visible through a large amount of in-class interaction, high levels of questioning and debating the instructor, and the respect of an instructor who has real-world experience rather than a purely academic background. Instructors currently working or recently having worked in the industry tend to be preferred over professors who have not worked outside of the university setting.

Understanding how to approach each culture is one of the best ways to establish long, meaningful relationships with both students and management. One must not only know what to
expect when approaching a new learning culture, but also be willing and able to make changes along the way to adapt to the specific group. By having an understanding of how a culture will likely learn and interact, it can also be easier to see when they do not fit that expected norm and adjust along the way. During a recent training program in Brazil, the learning culture was expected to be quite informal due to their very low uncertainty avoidance score; however, it was clear once amongst the group that many students had been educated, to some extent, in the United States or United Kingdom (both part of the Anglo cluster), or had worked in Western Europe (specifically the Germanic Europe cluster), and were comfortable with higher levels of formality when interacting with the instructor (whom they always referred to as "professor", rather than by name). This also meant that, while much of the course content was geared towards adapting new techniques that were sometimes radical and untested, the students seemed more questioning of this, and less willing to take the immediate risk, than their cultural norms would suggest.

7. Conclusions & Recommendations

Until quite recently, the professional education community taught in the same way to all people in all cultures, and many continue to do so. However, learning styles can vary widely, even over rather small geographic areas, and sometimes within the borders of a single country. As professional educators, we cannot continue to deliver quality products around the world without adapting our methods of teaching to meet the cultural expectations. The increasing popularity of online and distance learning classes has highlighted these differences even more, as some cultures embrace the experience, and others find it nearly impossible to comprehend.

It is important that staff, faculty and anyone else who works with students from a different culture have a good cultural quotient (CQ) and understanding of how cultures differ around the world. When partnerships with new or different learning cultures are established, those staff should be trained on the specific differences between their own culture and the culture they will be working with. This can be a very simple introduction, but enough to make them aware of these differences, and how they can work best with them. An understanding and appreciation of cultural differences around the world should be considered when hiring new instructors, faculty and staff so as to appropriately match the needs of our increasingly globalized world.

By understanding the learning cultures that we work with, CEIPE has been able to more specifically fit the needs of global learners. When working in China or with Chinese students, it is understood that more in-depth examples must be used, and lectures should be expanded to offset the lack of in-class questions. With German students, our instructors are advised to expect serious questioning of their teachings, and to back them up with real-world experience and examples. In Brazil, instructors should be aware of specific projects that the client or partner is currently working on, as most of the training is specifically targeted to projects rather than general knowledge gain.

There are tools available that allow an understanding of these cultural differences before approaching a new professional development opportunity. The GLOBE study is a wonderful
tool to assist, but it is not the only one. Speaking with cultural experts, expatriates from the culture in question, and various journals and databases online can help assure a seamless transition to a new culture, and delivery of a quality product to a varied audience worldwide.

REFERENCES


