

English and communication skills for the global engineer



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English and Communication Skills for the Global Engineer Central Idea:

Engineering graduates require an ever-increasing range of skills to maintain relevance with the global environment of the new millennium.

Communication skills are an vital component of this, recognized by academia and industry alike. English language skills are also important given its widespread status across the globe as a lingua franca. Indeed, multilingual skills are considered a salient element in the make-up of the new global engineer.

English for specific purposes focuses the learner's attention on the particular terminology and communication skills required in the international professional field. Communication skills development is discussed in the paper, with examples given of different methods of teaching and assessment. The impacts on communication skills development include various elements, including gender equality. A lack of sufficient communication skills serves only to undermine the image of the engineer, but this can be tackled by engaging features of emotional intelligence (EQ) in the education of engineers.

EQ offers various components that can improve communication skills and emphasize a more experiential approach to learning. Lingua franca A lingua franca is any language widely used beyond the population of its native speakers. The de facto status of lingua franca is usually " awarded" by the masses to the language of the most influential nation(s) of the time. Any given language normally becomes a lingua franca primarily by being used for international commerce, but can be accepted in other cultural exchanges, especially diplomacy.

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Occasionally the term "lingua franca" is applied to a fully established formal language; thus formerly it was said that French was the lingua franca of diplomacy. The term "lingua franca" was originally used by Arabs to name all Romance languages, and especially Italian (Arabs used to name Franks all peoples in Western Europe). Then, it meant a language with a Romance lexicon (most of words derived from Italian and Spanish) and a very simple grammar, that till the end of XIX century was used by mariners in the Mediterranean Sea, particularly in Middle East and Northern Africa.

Different Aspects of a Global Engineer What is "THE GLOBAL ENGINEER"
Globalization directly influences industry's needs; a global engineer must be able to easily cross national and cultural boundaries. This in turn directly affects engineering education. A common code for communication is required. Those education institutions, which meet the language requirements for the new global engineer, will be ready to face the new millennium. H. P. Jensen states that employers want: ...a number of new competencies, with an emphasis on an increased ability to communicate... and good foreign language skills [2].

This is reinforced in N. Grunwald's study of competencies required by the engineer of tomorrow, which includes hard skills like good foreign language skills. He goes further to claim that cross-disciplinary language skills are not sufficiently taught [3]. This indicates a lack of a direct fit between graduate skills and those required by industry. Engineers can relate the same theories of mathematics, of mechanics and technology, but the modern engineer must also be able to communicate effectively in a shared tongue.