

Invited I1:

Global Intercultural Collaboration:

New Educational Directions in Global Collaborations Between Cultures

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In response to the globalization of computing, education has been argued as "a primary means for both developed and developing countries to mount a response to offshoring so their work forces can compete globally for IT jobs" (Vardi, 2010), and further:

"Globalization presents engineering educators with new challenges as they face the need for graduates who can function comfortably in an increasingly distributed team context which crosses country and cultural boundaries" (Daniels et al., 2010).

Answering these calls, at Auckland University of Technology we have run workshops into global intercultural collaboration in both 2009 and 2010. In the first workshop reported in a special section of ACM Inroads the questions asked were:

"How do we educate for such goals as:

- Developing global collaborative capabilities in students
- Developing cross cultural understandings
- Demonstrating the challenges and complexities of working within global virtual software teams
- Developing joint programmes and other projects across cultural divides
 (Clear, Berglund & Hitchcock, 2010)

The initial workshop on Global Intercultural Collaboration then, explored interdisciplinary dimensions of globalisation, collaboration and culture from 27 - 28 January, 2009, at Auckland University of Technology.

Extending that work this section presents two papers that emerged as a result of the second workshop on *Global Intercultural Collaboration 2010 - Future Challenges and Opportunities* held at Auckland University of Technology on the 4-5 February 2010. The workshop explored new directions in global collaborations between cultures, taking advantage of the presence in New Zealand of international Computer Science Education Researchers with extensive experience in Global Virtual Collaboration, and the participation of collaborators from partner institutions and programmes in the Asian region. The workshop aimed to continue and further an interdisciplinary conversation on the topic of culture in the context of global collaboration. Speakers from Australasian institutions and from languages and social sciences disciplines at AUT took part. The two papers presented here address educational initiatives aimed at building cross-cultural awareness in students.

The first article entitled "Reasoning about the Value of Cultural Awareness in International Collaboration" describes an action research intervention in an Open Ended Group Project Course between Uppsala University in Sweden and Rose Hulman Institute of Technology in Indiana. Cultural awareness seminars were introduced into the course initially for the Swedish students then for both groups. The paper draws some lessons for smaller countries such as New Zealand and Sweden and reflects on the success of the initiative and some planned future steps in the course.

The second article "Team Health, an assessment approach to engage first year students in cross-cultural and cross-discipline teams towards more effective team-working" focuses on strategies for developing cultural awareness that lead to better team outcomes. This paper set in an Australian University context poses the research question: "whether localised university settings can provide similar globalised intercultural experiences for computing students?"

A case study is presented of an introductory course in web design with three diverse disciplines (Communication Studies, Information Technology and Multimedia) and large student numbers, working in cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural team projects. Key attributes for cross cultural teamwork are identified and the positive impact of guided reflections is outlined, suggesting that the local can indeed be global.

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