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Ph.D. in Sociology, University of Michigan
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Over his career Leonard has conducted a number of research projects related to innovation and the management of technology. His dissertation was a comparative study of technological innovation in the U.S. and Japanese steel industries. This led to NSF studies of engineering careers in the U.S. and Japan, studies of cultural differences in defining "a good engineer," and most recently studies of globally distributed engineering projects. In these studies he has worked with engineering faculty and social scientists in the U.S., China, Germany, Mexico, India, and other countries. Lynn was on the social and decision sciences faculty of Carnegie Mellon University from 1979-1987, and then a Professor of Management Policy and Department Chair in the management school at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland, OH. He is the author or co-author of three books on technology policy and management, and of several dozen articles in Science, IEEE Transactions on Engineering Management, Research Policy, Journal of Engineering and Technology Management, Issues in Science and Technology, Change, and several other publications.

Engineering and Engineering Skills:

What is really needed for global competitiveness

The off-shoring of science and technology jobs from the U.S. and the fast-paced rise of China, India and other emerging economies have led many policy-makers and pundits to express concerns about the future competitiveness of the United States. Critics argue that to restore U.S. technological competitiveness, we must improve K-12 science and math education, increase the number of engineers graduating each year, and bring more foreign scientists and engineers to the U.S. (and make it more likely that they will stay here). More generally, best-selling writer Thomas Friedman argues that in a world characterized by faster international flows of technology and money the next generation of Americans will have to learn to work harder than their rivals in India and China. While having no objections to better educating future generations, or even making them work harder, Leonard and his principle co-author, Hal Salzman, argue that many of the concerns expressed are over-blown and misguided, with the result that many of the proposals being made are misdirected. We argue that instead of the U.S. trying to outpace all other countries in narrow metrics of technological strength, the U.S. should seek "cooperative advantage" in the global economy by training larger numbers of U.S. science and technology people able to engage with colleagues in other countries.