

# LEARNING STYLES OF STUDENTS IN AND FROM CONFUCIAN CULTURES<sup>1</sup>

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This paper discusses unique characteristics of culture, education, learning styles, and cultural values specific to Confucian cultures, with an emphasis on China. Prescriptions that can facilitate success for non-Chinese lecturers in the tertiary classroom in China are provided.

## **Introduction**

This chapter is intended to provide useful knowledge to educators from non-Asian cultures when they are teaching in North and East Asian countries, particularly China. Confucian-heritage cultures are Greater China, Japan, Korea, Singapore, Vietnam, and more or less in Overseas Chinese in Southeast Asia.

If one has never experienced living in another culture, he or she is unaware of the profound differences existing that affect every facet of life. Habits become dysfunctional, and you learn you must think about practically everything you do. If you speak the local language as an additional one, this can be exhausting. These issues relate to the lecturer and the student in cross-cultural teaching situations. As a foreign teacher in China, lecturers will find many Chinese students are well travelled; others may have spent little or no time outside the city in which they were born. Students and teachers bring with them the beliefs and expectations about schooling they have formed from their own life experiences. They also bring their language and their beliefs about education based on their native culture. This will, of course, lead to problems when the teacher and students are generally unfamiliar with the culture of the other, and are unaware of the cultural accommodations they must make.

This paper will include a brief discussion of Confucianism, a discussion of East Asian learning styles, review of some theories of measuring cultures, and some prescriptions concerning practice.

Confucianism has had a major influence on Chinese life for two thousand years, so an understanding of the influence of Confucianism is essential for successful teaching in East

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<sup>1</sup> The author expresses his appreciation to the following individuals for their contribution to the development of this chapter: Scott Droege, Gordon Ford College of Business, Western Kentucky University, USA; Elisabeth Montgomery, PhD candidate, Fielding Graduate Institute, USA; Alice Macpherson, Kwantlen University College, Canada. A much shorter version of the paper is expected to be published as an invited book chapter in Alon, Ilan and John R. McIntyre, Eds. (2005), working title: *Business and Management Education in China: Transition, Pedagogy, Training and Collaboration*, ME Sharpe, (Forthcoming).

Asia. Confucian cultures will be discussed, with the majority of the information dealing with China.

## Confucianism

The most important figure in North Asian civilization is unquestionably Confucius (Little and Reed, 1989). The Confucian philosophy of life has had strong influence for more than two thousand years on the cultures of China, Vietnam, Korea, and Japan.

The resilience of the Confucian way of life in China can be seen in the results of “The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution”, a movement launched in 1966 to remould Chinese society and return to Communist ideals. It resulted in disaster, quickly degenerating into a power struggle between Mao Zedong, Chairman of the Communist Party, and his rivals. For many it resulted in a loss of tradition, a loss of their career, loss of hope and loss of trust. Many people lost their lives. A tenet of the revolution was elimination of the “Four Olds”,

- Old ideas
- Old culture
- Old customs
- Old habits

Confucianism was an overarching way of life underpinning the rejected Four Olds. Despite the campaign by the government to minimize the hold of the Confucian philosophy of life on Chinese, the influence remains.

Confucianism was adopted as China's state religion during the Han Dynasty (250 B.C. – 0, Christian/Gregorian calendar, used hereafter). During the Tang Dynasty (618-906), the Confucian Classics became the basis for the great civil service examinations that provided magistrates and bureaucrats (the "Mandarins") for the Chinese government.

Confucianism became the state ideology of Korea during the *Choson* Dynasty in Korea in 1392. The Korean Choson dynasty's King Sejong the Great (r. 1418-1450), was noted for his mastery of Confucian learning; King Sejo (r. 1455-1468) attempted to abolish Confucian influence on government; and Songjong (r.1469-1494) reinstated it, and Confucian indoctrination was again the order of the day. The influence is still considerable.

Confucianism was introduced into Japan via Korea in the year 285. In 1600, the Tokugawa clan succeeded in establishing its supremacy in Japan following over two centuries of civil wars between powerful clans. During this period of the Tokugawa Shogunate Confucianism was adopted as a state ideology. Confucianism was also become an integral part of the warrior or *bushido* culture

Confucianism was introduced into Vietnam in the first century, during the Chinese domination. However, it was after Vietnam achieved independence from China that Chinese influence and Confucianism became important. As a political philosophy favourable to the monarchy, Confucianism was promoted and supported by the government. Vietnam was considered a Confucian state until the mid nineteenth century. In Vietnam official support of the Confucian system of philosophy lost prominence in more recent history, but its practice is still common among government bureaucrats and leaders.

The mythology that determines the reputation of Confucius today is, of course, largely the product of his long history of influence in China. The writings that are ascribed to him or his influence have set parameters that have been the dominant philosophical, social, and political force in the evolution of Chinese civilization.

“Confucius” is a Romanization of Kong Fu Zi (Master Kong Fu); he was a scholar, teacher, and occasional government official, born in 551 B.C., during the Spring and Autumn Period. It is generally accepted that Confucius and Lao Zi (Li Er), founder of Taoism (Daoism), both worked for the government in Luoyang during the Spring and Autumn Period, and were said to have met and had a discussion of their philosophies there.

The foundation of his philosophy was that Man was essentially good. Confucius had a simple moral and political philosophy: to love others; to honour one's parents; to do what is right instead of what is to one's exclusive advantage; to practice "reciprocity," i.e., "don't do to others what you would not want yourself"; to rule by moral example instead of by force and violence. Confucius thought that a ruler who had to resort to force had already failed as a ruler, "Your job is to govern, not to kill." (*Analects* XII: 19, all quotations are from Yu, 1999). This was not a principle universally adhered to by Chinese rulers, however, it was the ideal of benevolent rule. Obviously, these humane principles are paternalistic and statist, with no incorporation of individual liberty. Nevertheless, the Confucian ideal avoids the worst of modern paternalism with the principle of government by example and by "Not Doing", putting Confucianism closer to Taoism than to modern practices of authoritarian control. Confucius thought that government by laws and punishments could keep people in line, but government by example of virtue and good manners would enable the people to control themselves (*Analects* II: 3). "The way the wind blows, that's the way the grass bends" (*Analects* XII: 19). Self-control is the basis of the industrious virtues that have made the Chinese people economically successful whenever they have been allowed to prosper, whether in California, Malaysia, or China.

Sometimes noted for denigrating engaging in commerce, Confucius himself stated, "Wealth and high station are what men desire" (*Analects*, IV: 5), however, later Confucians turned warnings against succumbing to the *temptation* of profit into a *condemnation* of profit, which meant that their influence was often turned against the development of Chinese industry and commerce. Thus, neo-Confucians themselves were perfectly happy to seek "wealth and high station," while stifling the ability of other Chinese to produce wealth. Over time, this became a debilitating influence in Chinese history. A more detailed discussion of Confucius and commerce is available in Lu (2003).

Confucius' writings have played a significant role in the life of the common man as well as the educated and intellectual in Chinese civilization. Emphasizing a preference for government by Man, or virtue, rather than by law, Confucius posed a major weakness of the rule of law:

"Lead the people by laws and regulate them by penalties and the people will try to keep out of jail but will have no sense of shame. Lead the people by virtue and restrain them by the rules of decorum, and the people will have a sense of shame and moreover, will become good."

This early statement of this dilemma and the recurring debate between Confucian and Legalist factions throughout Chinese history have created a deep cultural awareness of the complexities and subtleties of rule by virtue and by law.

The influence of Confucianism may be waning, as Egri and Ralston (2004), in a study of Chinese managers in three age cohorts of “less than 41 years”, “41–51 years”, and “older than 51 years”, reported younger managers to be higher in individualism values, lower in collectivism values, and lower in the values of Confucianism, with the differences significant a  $p < 0.05$  or better.

Of interest in this paper is Confucius’ emphasis upon respect for education. Confucius emphasized by example and in his teaching the importance of education and self-cultivation in the service of the community and to achieve good government. His teachings have contributed to the development of a tradition of a ruthlessly competitive education process as a preparation for the holding of high office and as qualification to enter the bureaucracy. This kind of bureaucracy has governed China and continuously recorded this experience over several thousand years, in a manner unknown in the rest of the world. However, this respect for education is linked with a tradition of unquestioning obedience to superiors, teachers, parents, and a reverence for antiquity.

### **Spiritual Pollution and Education**

The frequent Chinese campaigns against spiritual pollution often draw criticism from Western observers, yet the concern is one which appears to run throughout the North Asian communities. For several decades Japanese diplomats and businessmen have expressed their concerns about the implications for Japan of the apparent weakening of the spirit of young Japanese through increasing "Westernization" and "Americanization". In South Korea, the same concerns seem to break out at regular intervals into open conflict between government forces and students who are claiming liberties and rights common in the West but still not readily acknowledged in that country. See Little and Reed (1989). So far, Western business education has been spared from being painted by this brush.

### **Cultural Differences in Discourse**

Taylor (1990, chapter III) points out that in addition to learning style differences between cultural groups, variations also exist in the rules for general discourse in oral communication. Teachers and students will naturally follow the assumptions and rules from their respective cultures. Discourse rules govern such aspects of communication as:

- Opening or closing conversations;
- Taking turns during conversations;
- Interrupting;
- Using silence as a communicative device;
- Knowing appropriate topics of conversation;
- Interjecting humour at appropriate times;
- Using nonverbal behaviour;
- Expressing laughter as a communicative device;
- Knowing the appropriate amount of speech to be used by participants;
- Sequencing of elements during discourse.

A careful review of the literature concerning these aspects of communication by a lecturer will lead to the conclusion that practically everything one does in a classroom can lead to cross-cultural misunderstandings.

## **Nonverbal Communication**

Any analysis of interpersonal communication in the classroom is incomplete without considering non-verbal aspects of communication. Understanding of a communication derives from the interaction of the verbal and non-verbal activities with each other and with the context in which they occur. E.T. Hall was one of the first researchers to consider and publish in cross-cultural non-verbal communication. His major works,

- *The Silent Language*, Hall's (1959) seminal study in which he argues that culture is communication and demonstrates the pervasive influence of the "silent language."
- *The Hidden Dimension*, Hall (1966), provides a penetrating analysis of how the use of space differs from culture to culture and the impact it has on human relations
- *Beyond Culture*, Hall (1976) examines the manner in which culture binds humans to deeply ingrained attitudes and behaviours that may be destructive if not surmounted.
- *The Dance of Life*, Hall (1983), reveals the ways in which individuals in a culture are tied together by invisible threads of rhythm and yet isolated from each other by hidden walls of time.
- Hall (1985), *Hidden Differences: Studies in International Communication*.
- Hall and Hall (1987), *Hidden differences: Doing business with the Japanese*.
- Hall and Hall (1990), *Understanding cultural differences: Germans, French, and Americans*

Upshur (1979) found cultural differences in non-verbal communications can reduce or enhance the effects of oral, verbal communication. Upshur discussed a hypothetical test of two non-native speakers of English, whose task was to court an American teenager. One was successful; but the other failed. There was no measurable difference in the candidates' language proficiency; however, the successful suitor encouraged and allowed the girl to talk with smiles and sincere looks. Carroll (1968) argued that the actual manifestation of language performance was affected by a large number of non-linguistic variables. The examination of the non-verbal features of communicative competence can lead to ways to avoid "the danger that non-linguistic variables in performance will mask the manifestations of competence" (Carroll, 1968, p.50).

Minimum communicative competence includes the meaning of a smile, eye contact, conversational distance, and actual touching. Some issues in non-verbal behaviour such as time, space, and context in Asian cultures:

- Conversational distance is extremely close, from a "western" perspective, but touching, particularly across genders, is risky.
- Silence is respected and not interrupted.
- Conversationalists do not usually engage in direct eye contact.
- Greet with a slight nod and a bow; many countries use the "Namaste" gesture of palms and fingers together in front of the face, pointing upward, with a bow.
- In China people greeting guests might applaud; this should be returned by applauding the greeters.

- In China, it is proper for hosts to refuse a gift many times before it is accepted. Do not give up.
- In China, the guest of honour sits at the head of the table, with his/her back to the door, and the special guest sits to the left of the host.
- In China, the senior member of a group at a meeting should enter the room first, followed by others in order of rank.

The powerful and respected lecturer can get away with a lot, but culturally different non-verbal language can be distracting to the students. Practically no serious research has been carried out to codify non-verbal communication in ASEAN and North Asian cultures.

### **East Asian Learning Styles**

Reid (1997) and Peacock (2001) carried out studies indicating that lecturer-student mismatches in teaching and learning styles cause learning failure, frustration and demotivation.

Significant study of learning styles across cultures began in the 1980s in the USA, driven by teachers of English to speakers of other languages. If you are not familiar with “learning styles”, a useful textbook is Reid (1998), and “Learning styles and pedagogy in post-16 learning: A systematic and critical review” is available for download at no charge. This report critically reviews the literature on learning styles and examines in detail thirteen of the most influential models. The report concludes that results of assessment are a function of which instrument is chosen. The implications for teaching and learning in tertiary education are serious and should be of concern to learners, teachers and trainers, managers, and researchers in education, the website is: <http://www.lsa.org.uk/files/PDF/1543.pdf>

As noted above, Egri and Ralston (1999) have demonstrated significant generational differences in individualism, collectivism, and the influence of Confucianism. However, the long influence of a stable cultural milieu in East Asia, with major international interactions being between neighbouring countries, has led to a unique cultural cluster in East Asia, which has in turn led to a particular learning style on the part of students from the area. In theory, there exist as many learning styles as there are learners, but national groups have proven to demonstrate similarities. Various theorists have defined several schemes of classifying learning styles.

Montgomery (2004) comments that she used the Canfield learning styles inventory ([www.tecweb.org/styles/canfield1.html](http://www.tecweb.org/styles/canfield1.html)) when teaching Economics in English in China. The inventory was developed for K-12 and then turned into a college level curriculum tool in the USA. “It is such a foreign way to look at learning (in China) that it generates a great deal of discussion about cultural differences.”

Rao (2001) and Clenton (1999) have provided excellent discussions of the many student learning styles observed in East Asia. Teaching in most East Asian countries is traditionally dominated by a teacher-centred, book-centred method and an emphasis on rote memory (Liu & Littlewood, 1997). These traditional teaching approaches have resulted in a number of common learning styles.

***Introverted learning.*** For this style, knowledge is something to be transmitted by the teacher rather than discovered by the learners; the students receive learning from the teacher rather

than interpret it. Harshbarger et al. (1986) reported Japanese and Korean students are often quiet, shy and reticent in classrooms. They dislike public touch and overt expressions of opinions or displays of emotions, indicating a reserve that is the hallmark of the Western definition of introverts. Chinese students likewise name "listening to teacher" as their most frequent activity in senior school classes (Liu & Littlewood, 1997). All these claims are supported by Sato (1982); she compared the participation of Asian students in classroom interaction with that of non-Asian students. Sato found that the Asians took significantly fewer speaking turns than did their non-Asian classmates (36.5% as opposed to 63.5%). Asian students are reluctant to "stand out" by expressing their views or raising questions, particularly if this might be perceived as expressing public disagreement (Song, 1995).

**Closure-oriented style.** Closure-oriented students dislike ambiguity, uncertainty, or fuzziness; to avoid these, they will sometimes jump to hasty conclusions from incomplete information. Sue and Kirk (1972) found Asian students to be autonomous, more dependent on authority figures, and more obedient and conforming to rules and deadlines. Harshbarger et al. (1986) noted that Korean students insist that the teacher be the authority and are disturbed if this does not happen. Japanese students often want rapid and constant correction from the teacher and do not feel comfortable with multiple correct answers.

**Analytic and field-independent.** Analytic learners are sequential, orderly and organized, and focus on details and tend to formulate plans. If you are "field independent," you will be able to focus on the relevant details and not be distracted by unnecessary details. Field dependence means being "holistically oriented", going from the big picture to the detail. Generally, field independent learners are better at spatial tasks, math, and science. Individuals with an analytical learning style tend to focus on sequential details rather than the overall structure. People with a relational (global) learning style tend to relate all of the information to the overall structure and focus on the interactions involved. Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) state that the Chinese, along with the Japanese, are often detail-and precision-oriented, showing some features of the analytic and field-independent styles. They have no trouble picking out significant detail from a welter of background items and prefer learning strategies that involve dissecting and logically analyzing the given material, searching for contrasts, and finding cause-effect relationship.

**Visual learning style.** Reid (1987) found Korean, Chinese and Japanese students to be visual learners, with Korean students ranking the strongest. They like to read and obtain a great deal of visual stimulation. For them, lectures, conversations, and oral directions without any visual backup can be very confusing and anxiety-producing. This visual learning style stems from a traditional classroom teaching in East Asia, where most teachers emphasize learning through reading and tend to put a great deal of information on the blackboard. The perceptual channels are strongly visual (text and blackboard), with most auditory input closely tied to the written

**Concrete-sequential.** Students favouring this learning style are likely to follow the teacher's guidelines to the letter, to be focused on the present, and demand full information rather than drawing their own conclusions. They prefer learning materials and techniques that involve combinations of sound, movement, sight, and touch that can be applied in a concrete, sequential, linear manner. Oxford and Burry-Stock (1995) found that Chinese and Japanese are concrete-sequential learners, and use a variety of strategies such as memorization, planning, analysis, sequenced repetition, detailed outlines and lists, structured review and a

search for perfection. Many Korean students also prefer situations where they have rules to follow (Harshbarger et al, 1986), indicating a concrete-sequential style.

***Thinking-oriented and reflective styles.*** These styles are closely related to visual, concrete-sequential, analytic and field-independent. Nelson (1995) found Asian students to be more overtly thinking-oriented than feeling-oriented. They typically base judgment on logic and analysis (rather than on feelings of others), the emotional climate, and interpersonal values. Compared with American students, Japanese students, like most Asians, show greater reflection (Condon, 1984), as shown by the concern for precision and for not taking risks in conversation (Oxford et al, 1992). Typical is "the Japanese student who wants time to arrive at the correct answer and is uncomfortable when making a guess" (Nelson, 1995, p.16). Chinese students have also been identified to possess this type of thinking orientation by Anderson (1993).

The generalizations made above about learning styles in East Asia do not apply to every representative of all East Asian countries; many individual exceptions of course exist. Nevertheless, these descriptions do have a basis in research. Worthley (1987, in Rao, 2001) noted that while diversity within any culture is the norm, research shows that individuals within a culture tend to have a common pattern of learning and perception when members of their culture are compared to members of another culture.

Comparison of East Asian learning styles with those of students from other cultures will indicate differences, and understanding and accommodating the differences should be a goal of a dedicated teacher. There is no clear evidence that any one style is generally better than another for efficient and effective learning, and cannot alter how we prefer to learn. Accommodation is the responsibility of the lecturer.

### **Matching Teaching Styles with Learning Styles**

An imperfect tool, but providing instant feedback, is available on the Internet, being only in English and providing a limited set of styles. The learning styles diagnostic developed in the USA by Barbara A. Solomon and Richard M. Felder at North Carolina State University in Raleigh, North Carolina, USA, is available online at <http://www.engr.ncsu.edu/learningstyles/ilsweb.html>

From this tool you can get some idea about your own learning styles, which will affect your teaching, as can your students' styles. Ideally, you need the assessment of the various styles of your students prior to developing course materials. The general recommendation for solving the problem of lack of knowledge concerning styles is to design the course to use techniques that support ALL learning styles. Which, given enough time and money, is a wonderful idea. If you don't have enough time and money, consider the following suggestions from a panel session at the March 1999 National Meetings of the American Association of Higher Education, paraphrased and organized by McKinney (2004). McKinney provides examples of how teacher's teaching style can be matched with students' learning style in East Asian settings. She obtained the ideas from literature review; responses to a questionnaire sent to selected overseas students in the USA from Japan, Korea and China in Australia; and her teaching experience in China:

### **Diversity in Design, Structure, and Strategies of the Course**



McKinney (2004) suggests some techniques for accommodating a variety of student learning styles in class:

- Have your students take surveys of their learning styles and adjust the class to who they are, or provide more options based on the diversity of styles;
- Use several diverse forms of assessment (oral exams, take-home exams, essay exams, portfolios, projects, group work, journals, group quizzes, performances, presentations, creative writing, poster sessions, etc.);
- Give students background knowledge tests (pretests) and adjust material or provide alternative learning sequences;
- Use multimedia, broadly defined: text, audio, video, overheads, computers, discussion, group work, lecture, poetry, music, art, touch to present material;
- Present verbal material in more than one way and use many examples;
- Make use of technology to vary modes of learning, and for asynchronous learning
- Recommend or require diverse out-of-class learning opportunities.

Identifiable learning styles exist for students in most East Asian societies. A native Western-educated and experienced lecturer engaged in teaching East Asian students is likely to confront a teaching-learning style conflict. Such style differences between students and teachers consistently and negatively affect student performance (Wallace and Oxford, 1992). Matching appropriate teaching approaches with students' learning styles can increase motivation and achievement (Brown, 1994).

### **Chinese School Class Organization**

Chinese students, in the past, and in many cases today, are grouped into classes with no concern for ability, and the grouping may remain relatively stable from lower grades through university level education. These class groups may take all their classes together and stay together throughout their educational career. A "Class Manager" is usually elected by the class or appointed by the university. The Class Manager is responsible for managing communications between the students, the departments, the instructors, and the school administration. He or she will take attendance in classes and report to the instructor, arrange and supervise study periods, plan class outings, and organize and supervise most class activities. There may be co-managers, a male and a female. There is no consistent relationship between being a class manager and academic achievement; other factors are influential. The class manager may change from time to time.

A long tradition in this environment is for the better students in the class to tutor and assist the weaker students in the class. This could include assisting the weaker students during examinations at the university.

In schools in Western cultures the intent of an examination is to measure the knowledge of the individual. In China you may be surprised to see that assisting classmates on examinations, what is called "cheating" in schools in Western cultures, may be ignored or tolerated in Chinese schools. Many consider it a duty for those with greater ability to assist those with less ability, even on exams. If the college group is based upon the middle school attended, this assistance may have been going on for ten or more years. If the lecturer wishes to impose Western standards in class, this should immediately be made clear to the students orally and in writing.

Montgomery (2004), a teacher fluent in Chinese and English, related experiences with the behaviour of freshman through senior level Chinese students in Economics classes taught in English. She coins the phrase “lateral learning” to describe in-class learning and for behaviour in in-class quizzes. When she would ask a question about the assigned reading and pause, waiting for a volunteer to answer, instead of one person raising their hand immediately, the students often talked about it first among neighbours in their row. There was a quick, informal agreement process in each row; then the best speaker among them would answer. If she called on people to answer directly they most often said they did not know and that she should ask someone else, usually identifying the best speaker.

In-class quizzes were difficult because in the "lateral learning" approach students would debate the quiz answers aloud despite rules against this. They were busy looking at each other's papers and didn't seem at all embarrassed about it if she told them that was not allowed. Finals and major mid-term tests were highly structured and closely monitored by the Chinese university staff and although some cheating occurred, not very much.

Montgomery (2004) comments,

I think for all of the emphasis on teachers as sacred cows in China, the English-language teachers need to be a lot more sensitive to the structural issues they are facing and adapt to them. I don't think the University I taught in had a clue about what I saw there – they are too embedded in the culture to rethink how to make the English-language classes more effective – “more effective” to me became allowing students the chance to talk more among themselves and self-correct. They learn this process early on.

I also observed these informal, lateral classroom structures in the local elementary school where my (Chinese-speaking) daughter attended school. They are extremely crowded conditions and only one or two teachers per 50+ kids. The desks can't be moved into groups so all kids face forward. But the learning is still "lateral" – by that I mean they check in with each other in the rows, usually five of them. The teacher walks up and down rows if she can or skirts the classroom when there is not enough room.

The thinking and correcting goes in a lateral fashion among those who find the answer first and pass it through the rows. This helps the teacher too. The students then ask each other questions. If they still don't get it students gather around the one who doesn't get it and help him/her until they do understand. The classrooms are quite noisy and chaotic at times. But they sure learn math don't they.

In the USA (for certain classes) we might put four desks together and have students work in these modules to come up with answers. In China, there is simply not enough classroom space.

Needless to say, after re-entry to the USA, students in my daughter's class were shocked when she would lean over both sides of her desk and ask what answers they got! They accused her (rightly so in our culture) of cheating. She felt totally left out of the learning process.

## **English Language Skills**

As far as what level of English skills the lecturer can expect, language education in Chinese schools is organized into separate “Speaking”, “Listening”, “Reading”, and “Writing” classes. The students attend a “Speaking” class where the instruction may be rote repetition of content read by the instructor. A “Listening” class consists of listening to a foreign language and transcribing it onto paper. A “Writing” class will consist of writing compositions in the foreign language. And a “Reading” class will consist of reading material in the foreign language and being tested by written examinations. In Writing and Reading classes, the students might never hear the language spoken. Much of the oral training is rote memorization. The student may be able to recognize “What university did you go to.” but not understand “What school did you attend.”

Practically no two-way oral conversation involving exchanging of ideas or information is taught. Those candidates who excel in oral conversation ability have usually supplemented their education by participation in “English Corners”, “Japanese Corners”, or frequent conversations with foreign teachers or friends.

One may occasionally find students who are able to “speak” English, but cannot understand the language. Obviously it is quite easy to recall and use words you know, but quite difficult to recognize and understand the vocabulary of another person. In interviews, you may find candidates who can read English material aloud with very good pronunciation, but have absolutely no comprehension of what they read.

For a description of the contemporary higher education administrative environment in China see Duan (2003).

### **Comparisons of Values**

Hofstede (1994) has pointed out,

“Values represent the deepest level of a culture. They are broad feelings, often unconscious and not open to discussion, about what is good and what is bad, clean or dirty, beautiful or ugly, rational or irrational, normal or abnormal, natural or paradoxical, decent or indecent. These feelings are present in the majority of the members of the culture, or at least in those persons who occupy pivotal positions.”

There is considerable support for the belief that the behaviour of people coming from a country will be shaped for the most part by the same values and norms as their compatriots (Hofstede, 1991; Smith and Bond, 1998). Also, it is important to point out that culture is not the only factor influencing human behaviour. General dimensions of culture can be established at a national or ethnic group level, but they may not necessarily be reflected in the behaviour of each individual from that culture. In other words, using data from one level of analysis (such as the culture level of analysis) at another level of analysis (the individual level) is inappropriate. This type of error is labelled an “ecological fallacy” by Hofstede (2003, 1991). Culture-level analysis always reflects “central tendencies...for the country” (Hofstede, 1991, p.253). It does not predict individual behaviour.

Cateora and Graham (2004) express the opinion that Edward T. Hall is the seminal thinker in cross-cultural analysis, based on his experience in the U.S. Foreign Service, first applying

anthropological theories to the study of business settings and commerce. His classic article in 1960, “The Silent Language in Overseas Business,” is still inspiring researchers in the discipline of management across cultures (Hall, 1960b). Hall (1959, 1960a) makes the fundamental point that we are not aware of the power of culture, because it tends to influence thinking below our level of consciousness through what he then termed “silent languages.” Hall specified five such silent languages – those of time, space, things, friendships, and agreements. In subsequent work he extended his ideas about culture and time and distinguished between monochronic (i.e., one thing at a time, time is money, etc.) and polychronic (i.e., multitasking, “doesn’t have to be done today”, mañana, attitudes, etc.) cultures (Hall, 1983).

Another important contribution was Hall’s (1976) delineation of still another important dimension of cultural difference, the varying salience of social context in communication. In so-called “low-context” cultures information provided in communication dominates attention; while in “high-context” cultures relationships (e.g., hierarchy, friendship, etc.) between people are more important.

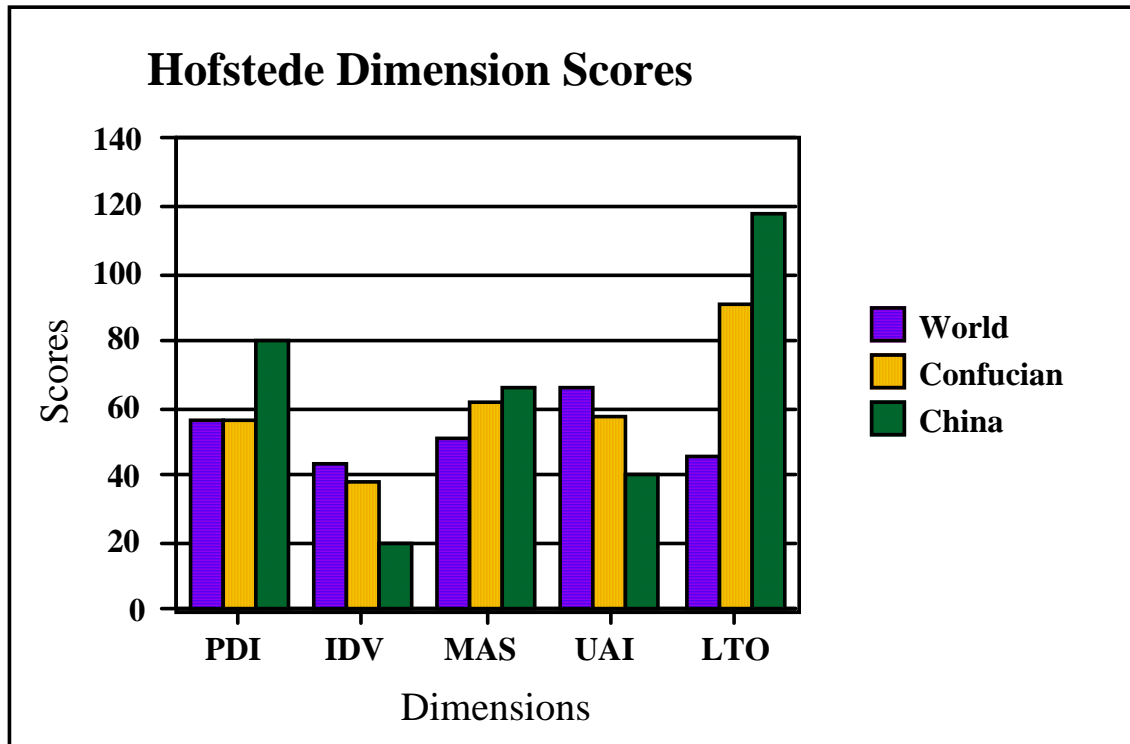
Building on Hall’s ideas, Hofstede (2003) defines culture as the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another. Further, culture is composed of visible manifestations (such as symbols, heroes, and rituals) and invisible values; and values are at the core of all its components.

Cateora and Graham (2004, p. 151) synthesize Hall’s observations, Hofstede’s empirical results, and findings from a variety of other studies regarding commerce and culture in defining an overarching dimension of cultural difference. That is, they label cultures along a continuum as relationship-oriented versus information-oriented. “For example, American culture is low-context, individualistic, low power distance, and obviously linguistically close to English. Bribery is less common and Americans are monochronic time oriented, linguistically direct, foreground focused, and they achieve efficiency through competition. Alternatively, Chinese culture is high-context, collectivistic, high power distance, linguistically distant from English, bribery is more common, polychronic (in part), linguistically indirect, and background focused. Chinese culture achieves efficiency through reduction in costs of transactions through well-established relationships and networks based upon mutual obligation. Thus, Cateora and Graham classify America as an information-oriented culture and China as a relationship-oriented culture.

The ITIM Culture and Management Consultants website ([www.itim.org](http://www.itim.org)) provides the currently available dimension scores and discussions of their meanings and relationships. On their website <http://www.geert-hofstede.com/>, one can select the China link, to [http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede\\_china.shtml](http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede_china.shtml)

Looking at Chart 1, we see that even among Confucian Asian cultures China is somewhat unique.

Chart 1.



Confucian: China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Vietnam, Japan, and South Korea

#### **Hofstede: “A summary of my ideas about national culture differences”**

The following discussion is based upon Hofstede (2004a); he summarizes his value constructs. These summaries are combined below with The Geert Hofstede™ analyses for China ([http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede\\_china.shtml](http://www.geert-hofstede.com/hofstede_china.shtml)).

China's significantly higher Power Distance (PDI) ranking of 80, compared to the other Far East Asian countries' and the world average of 55, is indicative of a high level of inequality of power within the society. Power distance is the extent to which the less powerful members of organizations and institutions (like the family) accept and expect that power is distributed unequally. This represents inequality (more versus less), but defined from below, not from above. The society's level of inequality is endorsed by the followers as much as by the leaders. Power and inequality, of course, are extremely fundamental facts of any society and anyone with international experience will be aware that all societies are unequal, but some are more unequal than others.

China's very low Individualism (IDV) ranking, at 15, reflects close and committed member groups, be that a family, extended family, or extended relationships. Loyalty in a collectivist culture is paramount. The society fosters strong relationships where everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group. Individualism on the one side versus its opposite, collectivism is the degree to which individuals are integrated into groups. On the individualist side we find societies in which the ties between individuals are loose; everyone is expected to look after him/herself and his/her immediate family. On the collectivist side, we find societies in which people from birth onwards are integrated into strong, cohesive in-

groups, often extended families (with uncles, aunts and grandparents) that continue protecting them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty.

China has relatively low uncertainty avoidance. Uncertainty avoidance deals with a society's tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity. It indicates to what extent a culture programs its members to feel either uncomfortable or comfortable in unstructured situations. Unstructured situations are novel, unknown, surprising, and different from usual. Uncertainty avoiding cultures try to minimize the possibility of such situations by strict laws and rules, safety and security measures, and on the philosophical and religious level by a belief in absolute Truth: "there can only be one Truth and we have it". Uncertainty accepting cultures tend to be more tolerant of opinions different from those they are used to; they try to have as few rules as possible, and on the philosophical and religious level they are relativist and allow many currents to flow side by side.

Long-term Orientation (LTO), China's highest-ranking factor (114), indicates a society's time perspective and an attitude of persevering; that is, overcoming obstacles with time and patience, if not with will and strength. The long-term versus short-term orientation dimension was derived in a study of students in 23 countries around the world, using a questionnaire designed by Chinese scholars. Values associated with Long Term Orientation are thrift and perseverance; respect for tradition, fulfilling social obligations, and protecting one's face. Both the positively and the negatively rated values of this dimension are found in the teachings of Confucius; however, the dimension also applies to countries without a Confucian heritage.

Concerning values and education, Hofstede (2002) has conveniently provided us with charts, see Table 1, defining a few critical descriptions of the expectations of members of cultures having higher and lower scores on the original four value dimensions for various social milieu.

**Table 1. Hofstede's (2002) descriptions of expected behaviours as a function of cultural value scores and environment.**

<b>Small Power Distance Societies</b>	<b>Large Power Distance Societies</b>
<b>In the family:</b>	
1. Children encouraged to have a will of their own 2. Parents treated as equals	1. Children educated towards obedience to parents 2. Parents treated as superiors
<b>At school:</b>	
1. Student-cantered education (student initiative) 2. Learning represents impersonal "truth"	1. Teacher-cantered education (order) 2. Learning represents personal "wisdom" from teacher (expert, guru)
<b>At work place:</b>	
1. Hierarchy means an inequality of roles, established for convenience 2. Subordinates expect to be consulted 3. Ideal boss is resourceful democrat	1. Hierarchy means existential inequality 2. Subordinates expect to be told what to do 3. Ideal boss is benevolent autocrat (good father)
<b>Collectivist Societies</b>	<b>Individualist Societies</b>
<b>In the family:</b>	

Education towards “we” consciousness Opinions pre-determined by group Obligations to family or in-group: - Harmony - Respect - Shame	Education towards “I” consciousness Private, personal opinions expected Obligations to self: - Self-interest - Self actualization - Guilt
<b>At school:</b>	
Formal learning is for the young only Learn how to do	Education can be lifelong Learn how to learn
<b>At work place:</b>	
Value standards different for in-group and out-groups: particularism Other people are seen as members of their group Relationship prevails over task Moral model of employer-employee relationship	Same value standards apply to all: universalism Other people seen as potential resources Task prevails over relationship Calculative model of employer-employee relationship
<b>Feminine Societies</b>	<b>Masculine Societies</b>
<b>In the family:</b>	
1. Stress on relationships 2. Solidarity 3. Resolution of conflicts by compromise and negotiation	1. Stress on achievement 2. Competition 3. Resolution of conflicts by fighting them out
<b>At school:</b>	
1. Average student is norm 2. System rewards student’s social adaptation 3. Student’s failure at school is relatively minor accident	1. Best students are norm 2. System rewards student’s academic performance 3. Student’s failure at school is disaster, may lead to suicide
<b>At work place:</b>	
1. Assertiveness ridiculed 2. Undersell yourself 3. Stress on life quality 4. Intuition	1. Assertiveness appreciated 2. Oversell yourself 3. Stress on careers 4. Decisiveness
<b>Weak Uncertainty Avoidance Societies</b>	<b>Strong Uncertainty Avoidance Societies</b>
<b>In the family:</b>	
1. What is different is ridiculous or curious 2. Ease, indolence, low stress 3. Aggression and emotions not shown	1. What is different is dangerous 2. Higher anxiety and stress 3. Showing of aggression and emotions accepted
<b>At school:</b>	
1. Students comfortable with: 2. Unstructured learning situations 3. Vague objectives 4. Broad assignments	1. Students comfortable with: 2. Structured learning situations 3. Precise objectives 4. Detailed assignments

5. No time tables 6. Teachers may say “I don’t know”	5. Strict time tables 6. Teachers should have all the answers
<b>At work place:</b>	
1. Dislike of rules, written or unwritten 2. Less formalization and standardization	1. Emotional need for rules, written or unwritten 2. More formalization and standardization

In Hofstede (2002), the five dimensions of national cultures were related to expectations of behaviour.

1. Expectations of Inequality can lead to reticence of students to interact with lecturer:
  - Less interaction: Large Power Distance
  - More interaction: Small Power Distance
2. Reaction to the unfamiliar can influence openness to new ideas and new ways of doing things:
  - Fight: Strong Uncertainty Avoidance
  - Tolerate: Weak Uncertainty Avoidance
3. Relation with in-group can affect the perception of the lecturer as and insider or outsider, and determine attitudes toward assisting other students:
  - Loose relationship: Individualism
  - Tight relationship: Collectivism
4. Emotional gender roles might affect attitudes toward male and female lecturers and fellow students:
  - Different: Masculinity
  - Same: Femininity
5. Need gratification:
  - Later: Long Term Orientation
  - Now: Short Term Orientation

Chinese practices that arise out of their national cultural value of high Power Distance are as follows:

- Inequalities are expected, accepted, and desired
- Less powerful subordinates should be dependent on the powerful superiors who must protect them and take care of their careers and welfare
- Parents, teachers, bosses, must all be obeyed (and not questioned).
- Age brings seniority in the firm or organization
- The ideal boss is a benevolent autocrat, parent
- Privileges for managers are expected and popular
- Subordinates expect to be told what to do

Lecturers experienced in working in low Power Distance cultures, and who expect students to engage in considerable amounts of interaction and give-and-take in the classroom, will need to carefully plan and nurture development of the interaction. Using the traits of “expecting to



be told what to do” and “obeying and not questioning superiors” the lecturer can lead the class to develop student-teacher oral interaction, perhaps even to the point of questioning the validity of the opinions expressed by the lecturer.

### Placing Yourself in Context

After becoming familiar with the definitions of Hofstede’s value dimensions one can fairly accurately place oneself on the continua. Differences in the values of your society and the expected values of students from a Chinese culture can provide guidelines for explaining your approach to teaching vs. their approach to learning. It can also help you design instruction.

Some average cross-national expectations have been derived by Sundqvist, Lauri, and Puumalainen (2001), depicted in Table 2.

**Table 2. Hierarchical Cluster Analysis of Hofstede Dimension Scores with Averages From Sundqvist, Lauri, and Puumalainen (2001)**

Mean Scores:	Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4	Cluster 5
<b>Uncertainty Avoidance</b>	81.83 (H)	53.71 (M)	78.60 (H)	<b>25.67 (L)</b>	42.80 (M)
<b>Individualism</b>	52.92 (M)	73.86 (H)	22.20 (L)	<b>20.00 (L)</b>	71.40 (H)
<b>Masculinity</b>	58.33 (M)	64.71 (M)	42.20 (M)	<b>51.67 (M)</b>	13.80 (L)
<b>Power Distance</b>	62.50 (H)	28.14 (L)	69.65 (H)	<b>74.00 (H)</b>	30.20 (L)
<b>Countries:</b>	Argentina Belgium Brazil France Germany Greece Italy Japan Poland Spain Turkey UAE	Australia Austria Ireland Israel Switzerland UK USA	Chile Colombia Costa Rica Ecuador El Salvador Estonia Iran Korea Latvia Lithuania Pakistan Panama Peru Portugal Romania Slovenia Taiwan Thailand Venezuela	<b>China Hong Kong Singapore</b>	Denmark Finland Netherlands Norway Sweden

The estimation failed to converge in the cluster analysis for the following countries: Canada, Czech, East Africa, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Jamaica, Kazakhstan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Philippines, Russia, Slovakia, South Africa, Uruguay.

For readers more accustomed to using Fons Trompenaars schema of cultural dimensions, correlations with Hofstede's are presented in Appendix A.

### **Shalom Schwartz' Cultural Values System**

The work of Shalom Schwartz considers relations of cultural value emphases to national differences in the importance of values or goals. Schwartz' (1992, 1994a, 1994b) basic contention is that the types of goals whose pursuit is encouraged and rewarded, rather than discouraged and sanctioned, depend in part on the prevailing cultural value emphases in a society. Moreover, other things being equal, the goals chosen by teachers to motivate students will be more effective if they are compatible with prevailing cultural emphases. No one type of goal setting is likely to be the most effective across all cultures.

Correlations between these measures and Hofstede's indicate that although these new measures may have some advantages, Hofstede's data is more dependable than many had thought.<sup>2</sup>

Ralston's China and Vietnam studies (Ralston et al., 1993, 1996, 1997, 1999a, 1999b, Egri and Ralston, 2004) employing the Schwartz Value Survey to assess managerial values are by far the most thorough and significant work in the study of differences between values of managers in East Asia and other national cultures. Results from studies yielding comparisons across several years between Chinese managers and US and Hong Kong Managers can be seen in Appendix B. Major differences between US managers and Chinese managers are:

**US Managers Higher Scores:** Compared to Chinese managers, the US managers had significantly higher scores for,

**Hedonism:** The motivational goal of this type is pleasure or sensuous gratification for oneself. This value type is derived from needs for intense emotional excitement and the pleasure associated with satisfying them.

**Stimulation:** The motivational goal of people with Stimulation values is excitement, novelty, and challenge in life. This value type is derived from the need for variety and Stimulation in order to maintain an optimal level of activation. Thrill seeking can be the result of strong Stimulation needs.

**Self-Direction:** The motivational goal of this value type is independent thought and action (for example, choosing, creating, exploring). Self-direction comes from the need for control and mastery along with the need for autonomy and independence.

**Chinese Managers Higher Scores:** Compared to US managers, the Chinese managers had significantly higher scores for,

**Tradition:** The motivational goal of people with Tradition values is respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that one's culture or religion imposes on the

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<sup>2</sup> Schwartz and Ros (1995) discuss cultural level value differences between US, East Asian, and European teachers and students. The relationships in the article are rather complex, and their analysis is beyond the scope of this chapter. The findings concerning relative values across the three regions do not differ from those discussed here.

individual. A Traditional mode of behaviour becomes a symbol of the group's solidarity and an expression of its unique worth and, hopefully, its survival.

**Conformity:** The motivational goal of this type is restraint of action, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms. It is derived from the requirement that individuals inhibit inclinations that might be socially disruptive.

**Security:** The motivational goal of this type is safety, harmony, and stability of society or relationships, and of self.

These findings are consistent with the bulk of the literature, and underscore the rather dramatic differences between US and Chinese managers' values. All groups yielded very high scores on:

**Achievement:** The primary goal of this type is personal success through demonstrated competence. Competence is based on what is valued by the system or organization in which the individual is located.

These differences are consistent with Hofstede's characterizations presented and discussed above.

Let us not forget that motivation, while highly valuable, cannot substitute for intelligence or past preparation. Ability will be distributed across the students, and cultural traits, while often helpful, do not guarantee academic success.

### **Expectations of "Western" Lecturers**

Another difference in East Asian and Western students is the collection of environmental actors that transmit values. Astill, Feather, and Keeves (2002) from a study of 12<sup>th</sup> year Australian high school students showed that sex of student, language background, the religious involvement of the student, parental social position and the values held by parents and peer groups had much greater effects upon the students' values than the schools and their teachers. From this study it is evident that to be maximally effective, teachers of culturally distant and diverse students must consider differences between the lecturer's values and those of the students. Contrasting this finding with the Confucian philosophy and East Asian classroom practices noted above, the expectations of Confucian culture students and "Western" lecturers can be at odds.

### **Changing Values**

Recent research indicates that values, once thought to be relatively constant, change in response to environmental contingencies (Egri and Ralston, 2004, Olivas-Lujan, Harzing and McCoy, 2004, and Selmer and Littrell, 2004). Concerning values of tertiary students, Kumar and Thibodeaux (1997) compared the value systems of USA-resident Anglo-American, newly arrived Far Eastern students, and Far Eastern students who had spent a considerable amount of time in the USA. Subjects for this study were students, the majority of whom were enrolled in business management programs at two universities in the USA. Two hundred and thirty one (231) subjects were from the Anglo-American cultural cluster (the majority was from the United States), of which 145 were males and 86 were females. Two hundred and

two (202) subjects were from Far Eastern countries: Taiwan, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Hong Kong, and Indonesia. Of these students 113 were male and 89 were female. Using the *Study of Values*, developed by Allport, Vernon, and Lindzey (1970), six total scores of basic evaluative attitudes were collected. The six scales and results are described in Table xx. In the first analysis, Anglo-Americans were compared to all Far Eastern students, then with Long Resident Far Eastern and New Far Eastern. The results are in Table 3.

**TABLE 3 Multiple group comparison, evaluative attitudes: New Far Eastern, old Far Eastern and Anglo-American students**

Sample Groups	1. Anglo-American	2. Long Resident Far Eastern	3. New Far Eastern	F Value	Differences	All Far Eastern	F Value Anglo – Far Eastern
<i>Theoretical.</i> Theoretical persons are characterized by a dominant interest in empirical, critical, rational and intellectual approach. They show a strong cognitive attitude, one that looks for identities and differences, and seeks to observe and to reason:							
	<b>39.19</b> (4.26)	<b>39.38</b> (3.98)	<b>36.95</b> (2.19)	16.61*	1–3, 2–3	37.90 (3.23)	12.31**
<i>Economic.</i> The economic persons are characteristically interested in what is useful and practical. They want education to be practical and regard unapplied knowledge as waste. The economic attitude confirms closely to the prevailing stereotype of average American businesspersons:							
	<b>46.06</b> (3.07)	<b>46.37</b> (3.10)	<b>43.83</b> (2.65)	27.01*	1–3, 2–3	44.82 (3.08)	17.56**
<i>Aesthetic.</i> The aesthetic persons see highest value in form and harmony. They judge each experience from the standpoint of grace, symmetry or fitness. They need not be creative, but are interested in artistic episodes of life:							
	<b>39.37</b> (4.00)	<b>39.15</b> (3.59)	<b>39.15</b> (2.03)	00.22*	No difference	39.15 (2.74)	00.43**
<i>Social.</i> The social persons are kind, sympathetic, and unselfish. They have love for people that is expressed in altruism and philanthropy:							
	<b>37.07</b> (2.80)	<b>37.18</b> (4.28)	<b>39.95</b> (4.37)	27.69*	1–3, 2–3	38.87 (4.53)	25.16**
<i>Political.</i> The political persons are interested primarily in power. Above all, they wish for influence and renown. Competition and struggle plays an important part in their lives:							
	<b>42.24</b> (2.92)	<b>40.91</b> (5.34)	<b>38.52</b> (4.16)	37.63*	1–2, 1–3, 2–3	39.46 (4.79)	54.42**
<i>Religious.</i> The religious persons are concerned with the unity of all experiences. They have mystical inclinations and seek to transcend life through self-denial, and seek to unite themselves with higher reality:							
	<b>35.99</b> (2.49)	<b>36.34</b> (2.91)	<b>39.04</b> (4.61)	35.80*	1–3, 2–3	38.00 (4.23)	36.63**

Standard deviations are in parentheses; \* significant at  $p = 0.05$  level; \*\* Significant at  $< 0.001$  level. Anglo-American students ( $n = 231$ ), old Far Eastern students ( $n = 79$ ), newly arrived Far Eastern Students ( $n = 123$ ).

Cultural milieu and education appear to be among the factors through which social influences operate to shape an individual's value patterns. Old Far Eastern students were found to have higher scores on the Theoretical component of value than newly arrived Far Eastern students. This change is reflective of increased interest in empirical, critical and rational approach to various issues, perhaps as a result of Western higher education. Changes in the economic, social and religious components, together, appear to underscore the importance of cultural milieu in value development. Sustained exposure to the American business environment (both in and outside of the classroom) appears to have modified the economic outlook of Far Eastern students, who now put greater emphasis on usefulness and practicality. In a way the economic value dimension of these students had changed to confirm more closely to the stereotype of average American business people (Allport et al., 1970).

Ralston et al. (1999b) in a study of the work values of Vietnamese managers found managers in Hanoi to have higher Individualistic values than managers in Ho Chi Min City. In conjunction with previous findings on China (Ralston et al., 1993; Ralston et al., 1996), he suggests that initially it is easier to adopt new individualistic values than it is to forsake long-held Confucian-based values. Moving toward a market economy from an historical communistic economy and Confucian cultural philosophy results in a cross-verging set of values that incorporate both old and new creating a unique form of Confucian market-economic principles.

Egri and Ralston (2004), using the Schwartz Value Survey, found considerable intergenerational value differences between both US and Chinese managers. The younger Chinese generations since the establishment of Communist China were significantly more open to change and self-enhancing but less conservative and self-transcendent than the Republican Era generation.

Findings of these studies suggest that frequent and sustained cross-cultural contacts are likely to result in changes in the value patterns of individuals. More specifically, the value patterns of individuals who have spent considerable time studying and living in a new cultural environment are modified in such ways as to include some of the values preferred and desired in the new social environment.

The results of the studies could relate to the behaviour of a foreign lecturer in China, who, after long residence, can find him- or herself changing to accommodate the local culture.

### **A Prescription**

Frequently lecturers from tertiary institutions do not have formal education in methods of teaching. Under the best of circumstances, with intelligent students and lecturers dedicated to teaching and learning, this lack is not an issue in performance in the classroom. However, with a lecturer and students from two or more different cultural backgrounds, one or the other operating in a second language, good teaching technique can go a long way in making life easier for everyone.

Teaching tertiary education requires instilling in students and appreciation of the balance between learning and performance. The lecturer's objective is to impart learning; students have been motivated by parents, teachers, admissions offices, and employers to earn high performance ratings, sometimes at the expense of thorough knowledge of a content area. The burden usually falls on the teacher to ensure that measures of performance encourage learning.

Reading of academic journals presenting educator-oriented articles, particularly the *Journal of Teaching in International Business* (all business is international, even the part-time lawn-mowing service), and conversations with students as to what they want to learn.

Chalmers and Fuller (1996) and the *Teaching and Educational Development Institute* of Australia, [www.tedi.uq.edu.au](http://www.tedi.uq.edu.au) indicate that for maximum student learning and retention, approximately only 50 percent of the material presented in any lecture should be new. The rest of class time should be devoted to material or activities designed to reinforce the material in students' minds. Chalmers and Fuller specify processes to follow:

- 1. Provide a preview of information prior to an explanation:* Research suggests that this can be done effectively in one of three ways: An overview, designed to familiarize students with what is to be learned, can both facilitate student achievement and create positive student perception of a lecturer's presentations. Specifically an overview should be short and precise, providing a statement of the overall idea to be presented, the importance of the information to be learned, and a statement that outlines the structure of the content to be presented. A second preview is a *set induction*, which consists of two parts. Prior to the presentation, students are given a commonly known referent in the form of an analogy. During the presentation, new information is constantly referred back to the introductory analogy. This procedure allows students to link unfamiliar material with a concept they already understand. Research suggests this approach encourages student involvement, creates a positive student perception of the lecture, and increases student achievement with regard to both short term and long term retention. The third preview strategy is the *advance organizer*, which is an introductory statement at a higher level of abstraction than the detailed, related information in the presentation. The advance organizer, therefore, provides an appropriate conceptual framework, depending upon the age and level of the students, for understanding the material to follow. Also, the organizer should provide a link between students' previous understanding and the material to follow, giving concrete examples wherever possible.
- 2. Organize information within a step-by-step lesson sequence:* When exposed to too much material at one time, student learning is reduced. It is important that the presentation begins with information that is simple, concrete, familiar and explicit, then progresses to information that is increasingly complex, abstract, unfamiliar, not explicit, and long.
- 3. Assess student learning when information is being given:* The instructor should actively and frequently determine if student understand the material that has been presented. Specific strategies to engage students could include discussion questions, written responses (summaries, analytical lists, "what didn't you understand?" in-class journals), formative (un-graded) quizzes, written problems,

etc. Whatever the technique, the goal is systematically and explicitly to see if students understand what was being presented.

4. *Signal transitions between information:* Transitions allow students to switch attention between topics, maintain focus and reduce confusion. The key is to make the transition explicit, then to relate the previous information to the new information.
5. *Use multiple examples to illustrate information points:* Well-chosen examples illustrate and clarify the conceptual material being presented by making the abstract concrete and understandable. Multiple examples lead to increased student learning and retention of material. Obtain student feedback to see if the examples are understood.
6. *Stress important points during explanations:* Lecturers need to draw students' attention to the material that is most crucial in the presentation being given. It is particularly important to stress anticipated difficult points, using detailed, redundant explanations for difficult concepts. Other techniques include 1) writing and underlining key concepts on the blackboard; 2) enumerating points; and 3) using voice inflection or pausing after a point; or employing verbal signals such as "It is important to remember".
7. *Provide for brief pauses at appropriate times during the lecture:* As a result of rapid teacher-talk students often are not given adequate time to process information. This has two consequences: 1) students have trouble taking good notes and 2) they often cannot make sense of what is being said. Research suggests that the amount of notes a student takes correlates positively with achievement. Yet, while teachers talk at a rate of 120-240 words per minute, many students are only capable of taking notes at a rate of 20 words per minute. In addition, one study (Ruhl et al. 1987) demonstrated that pausing periodically for as much as two minutes so that students could compare notes, led to a significant increase (both statistically and educationally) in both short-term and long-term recall.
8. *Eliminate additional unexplained content nonessential to current explanation:* Research shows that presenting less is more effective.
9. *Review information frequently:* Periodically during a presentation, but particularly at the end of difficult material, lecturers need to review and summarize the main points. These reviews, carefully presented, demonstrably increase student learning.

Carefully designing classroom processes and procedures will facilitate learning in cross-cultural, multi-lingual situations by providing a more structured environment for both lecturer and students.

### **E-Learning in China**

Electronic distance learning has been implemented in China via broadcast TV-based education since the 1980's (personal communication, Mrs. Ning Zhang, 1996). The author

personally observed the development of distance learning based on Internet technologies the 1990's. The China Education and Research Network<sup>3</sup> places great emphasis on electronic learning. E-Learning includes learning systems that include radio, video and IT, and forms part of the solution for growing demands for education and shortages of teachers in China.

Friesner and Hart (2004) point out a useful site, [www.marketingteacher.cn](http://www.marketingteacher.cn), a free e-learning website based upon a case study (interestingly, the website has a link to cheathouse.com, selling essays and papers). The English site, Marketingteacher.com was created in 2000, and said to be dedicated to educating marketing learners, teachers and professionals

Tang (2000) presented an overview of recent Internet development in China. The Chinese government has been committed to developing information technology research and development since the late 1980's and demonstrated this by implementing its "High Tech Research and Development Program", launching the four Golden Projects in the 1990's: The Golden Bridge provided the information technology infrastructure, the Golden Duty aimed to connect financial and taxation organizations, the Golden Card's goal was to allow the acceptance of credit/debit cards in stores and at ATM's, and the Golden Trade was designed to assist Chinese businesses to trade in Chinese *hanzi* characters in global markets. It remains difficult to determine how successful the Golden Projects have been. For example, it is still very difficult to arrange credit card transactions in Renminbi (RMB) over the Internet, something that Western e-commerce systems take for granted.

Hofstede (1996) discussed the *Confucian dynamism* (LTO) dimension, pointing out Confucianism as a Chinese trait includes a strong bias toward obedience, the importance of rank and hierarchies and the need for smooth social relations. Friesner and Hart (2004) postulate that the Chinese e-learner may feel that they are subservient to the teacher as producer of the content, and this could prove problematic when no physical tutor exists. There could also be an indication that if problems exist the learner may not or cannot contact the teacher/website for assistance. They could accept second-rate materials or simply not revisit a website. From the findings of Song (1995), discussed above, Asian students are reluctant to "stand out" by expressing their views or raising questions, particularly if this might be perceived as expressing public disagreement.

A negative finding from Smith and Whiteley (2000) is that students with a holistic learning style received higher exam marks than students with an analytic learning style (a typical East Asian style) on material delivered via the web. No differences were found on lecture-based material. Hedberg and Brown (2002) note that in Chinese grammar is context specific. A reader builds up a picture of the meaning of the characters as the text is being read. Hence graphics and pop-ups can distract the reader and confuse the context of the communication. Thoughtlessly designed webpages with content that are intended to grab attention can confuse the non-Western reader (not to exclude the Western reader).

Even if your site is not blocked, international copyright of material on the Internet remains a huge grey area. This means that website content could be copied or reproduced without permission.

## **Government Filtering**

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.edu.cn/HomePage/english/education/disedu/index.shtml>



Filtering and blocking of websites by the Peoples Republic of China (PRC) government is a problem for Western websites. The government censors websites by blocking access by users in China, and still maintains an active interest in preventing users from viewing certain web content. It has managed to configure overlapping nationwide systems to effectively block such content, and the blocking systems are becoming more refined (Zittrain and Edelman 2003). Blocked sites tend to fall into categories including democracy, health, news, government, religion, Taiwan, Tibet, entertainment, and education. Such sites as Massachusetts Institute of Technology, the Learning Channel, and 700 or so sites listed in Yahoo's education directories are blocked (Zittrain and Edelman 2003). The Chinese government does not cooperate on the issue of filtering, and this makes it difficult to accurately assess the extent of the problem. Until a dialogue is opened, Western-based online education producers should be wary of producing online materials for the PRC, only to find that the site has been filtered and that no right of appeal exists.

### **Conclusions**

Many tertiary educators already have considerable experience dealing with culturally diverse groups of students, due to the explosive growth of export education in developed and developing countries. Nonetheless, the situation is changed when the educator is asked to perform in a country with a high cultural distance from the home country. Careful planning and execution of classroom education is of particular importance, and should include:

- As thorough a study as possible of the history, sociology, psychology, anthropology, legal systems, and business practices of the culture in which the educator will work to develop an awareness of differences
- A thorough understanding of the culture and value *differences* between the educator's home country and the country in which the education will be delivered; a presentation and discussion of these differences at the beginning of the course is helpful to everyone
- Specific knowledge of the variety of learning styles that may be common to students in the cultural environment in which the educator is working
- Thoughtful design and delivery of classroom instruction that takes multiple learning styles into consideration
- Focus on the delivery rate of speech, with frequent feedback checks from students
- Adjustment of expectations as to what can be taught and read in the time schedule of the course, compared to the educator's home country
- From personal experience teaching in China, the author has found performance on assessments in English to be improved when reading material to be studied is available in both English and Chinese; quite a number of publishers provide both English and Chinese translations of popular textbooks; the University of Western Ontario, for example, produces some case studies in multiple languages

- When designing content for delivery in China, Chinese branding and images need to be considered when constructing case studies or using examples. The People's Daily newspaper website <http://english.peopledaily.com.cn/> publishes articles on Chinese brands, and the annual top-ranked brands report. Publication of case studies of Chinese businesses is growing, with many available from the University of Hong Kong, the University of Western Ontario Ivey Business School, Harvard Business School, and the European Case Clearing House at Cranfield University in the UK.

We use averages, generalizations, summaries and such to create categories that we can comprehend and remember. However, individual behaviour is in response to a unique set of genetic, learning, and contingency factors. The competent educator is one who can quickly and effectively adapt to changing information.

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## Appendix A

### Definitions of the Hofstede Dimensions (itim.com)

**Power Distance Index (PDI)** focuses on the degree of equality, or inequality, between people in the country's society. A High Power Distance ranking indicates that inequalities of power and wealth have been allowed to grow within the society. These societies are more likely to follow a caste system that does not allow significant upward mobility of its citizens. A Low Power Distance ranking indicates the society de-emphasizes the differences between citizen's power and wealth. In these societies equality and opportunity for everyone is stressed.

**Individualism (IDV)** focuses on the degree the society reinforces individual or collective achievement and interpersonal relationships. A High Individualism ranking indicates that individuality and individual rights are paramount within the society. Individuals in these societies may tend to form a larger number of looser relationships. A Low Individualism ranking typifies societies of a more collectivist nature with close ties between individuals. These cultures reinforce extended families and collectives where everyone takes responsibility for fellow members of their group.

**Masculinity (MAS)** focuses on the degree the society reinforces, or does not reinforce, the traditional masculine work role model of male achievement, control, and power. A High Masculinity ranking indicates the country experiences a high degree of gender differentiation. In these cultures, males dominate a significant portion of the society and power structure, with females being controlled by male domination. A Low Masculinity ranking indicates the country has a low level of differentiation and discrimination between genders. In these cultures, females are treated equally to males in all aspects of the society.

**Uncertainty Avoidance Index (UAI)** focuses on the level of tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity within the society - i.e. unstructured situations. A High Uncertainty Avoidance ranking indicates the country has a low tolerance for uncertainty and ambiguity. This creates a rule-oriented society that institutes laws, rules, regulations, and controls in order to reduce the amount of uncertainty. A Low Uncertainty Avoidance ranking indicates the country has less concern about ambiguity and uncertainty and has more tolerance for a variety of opinions. This is reflected in a society that is less rule-oriented, more readily accepts change, and takes more and greater risks.

**Long-Term Orientation (LTO)** focuses on the degree the society embraces, or does not embrace, long-term devotion to traditional, forward thinking values. High Long-Term Orientation ranking indicates the country prescribes to the values of long-term commitments and respect for tradition. This is thought to support a strong work ethic where long-term rewards are expected as a result of today's hard work. However, business may take longer to develop in this society, particularly for an "outsider". A Low Long-Term Orientation ranking indicates the country does not reinforce the



concept of long-term, traditional orientation. In this culture, change can occur more rapidly as long-term traditions and commitments do not become impediments to change.

## Appendix B

### Smotherman and Kooros (2001)

#### Comparing Hofstede's and Trompenaars' Dimensions

Carrying out a meta-analysis of data from the two studies:

Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's consequences: Comparing values, behaviors, institutions, and organizations across nations. Second edition.* Sage. Beverly Hills.

Trompenaars, F. (1993). *Riding the waves of culture: Understanding diversity in global business.* Irwin. New York.

Smotherman and Kooros calculated the Pearson correlation results between Hofstede's and Trompenaars' cultural dimension indices. Four out of five of Hofstede's cultural dimensions and five out of six of Trompenaars' dimensions found significant correlation at the 0.01 level with one or more of the dimensions defined by the other study. Observation and comparison of the qualitative characteristics of the correlated dimensions revealed distinct similarity of cultural characteristics and values.

- Hofstede's power distance dimension shows a significant negative correlation at the .01 level to Trompenaars' Universalist dimension, individualist dimension and specific dimension. Additionally, power distance maintains a significant correlation at the .05 level to Trompenaars' achievement dimension.
- Hofstede's uncertainty avoidance dimension reports a significant negative correlation at the 99% confidence interval with Trompenaars' achievement dimension.
- Hofstede's individualist dimension shows a significant positive correlation at the .01 level between and Trompenaars' Universalist dimension, individualist dimension, specific dimension, and achievement dimension.
- Hofstede's long-term orientation dimension finds significant negative correlation at the .01 level to Trompenaars' Specific dimension and Internalist dimension, while significant correlation at the .05 level exists with Trompenaars' Universalist dimension and achievement dimension.

Hofstede's masculinity dimension found no significant correlation to any of Trompenaars' dimensions.

Trompenaars' neutralist dimension found no significant correlation to any of Hofstede's dimensions.

Comparison of the qualitative characteristics of the neutralist dimension and the masculinity dimension reveals several similar cultural traits. Quantitatively, the neutralist dimension shows indices for just ten countries computed from only one survey question. This narrow response window could skew results. Further study is needed on these dimensions.

**Table 4. Pearson Correlation of Hofstede (2001 and Trompenaars (1993**

	Power Distance	Uncertainty Avoidance	Individualism/Collectivism	Masculinity/Feminism	Long Term Orientation
Universalist / Particularist	<b>-0.636</b>		<b>0.721</b>		<b>-0.528</b>
	<i>p=0.000</i>		<i>p=0.000</i>		<i>p=0.020</i>
Individualist / Collectivist	<b>-0.574</b>		<b>0.569</b>		
	<i>p=0.000</i>		<i>p=0.000</i>		
Specific / Diffuse	<b>-0.493</b>		<b>0.655</b>		<b>-0.619</b>
	<i>p=0.003</i>		<i>p=0.000</i>		<i>p=0.006</i>
Achievement / Ascription	<b>-0.367</b>	<b>-0.468</b>	<b>0.590</b>		<b>-0.566</b>
	<i>p=0.030</i>	<i>p=0.005</i>	<i>p=0.000</i>		<i>p=0.014</i>
Internalist / Externalist					<b>-0.628</b>
					<i>p=0.005</i>

## Appendix C

**Ralston's China Studies, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999, Comparing Managers on the Ten Universal Schwartz Value Survey [SVS] Motivational Subdimensions  
Higher Scores Indicate a Higher Value of the Motivational Subdimension  
Derived From a 9-point Likert Scale That Ranged from  
*Opposed to My Values* [-1] Through *Important* [3] to *Of Supreme Importance* [7].  
Specific Regional Data in China was Reported in 1996.**

<b>Value Name and Description</b>		<b>Mean</b>	<b>S.D.</b>
<b>Power:</b> The motivational goal of people with high power values is the attainment of social status and prestige, and the control or dominance over other people and resources.	U.S.-1997	2.79	1.1
	U.S.-1995	3.27	1.2
	Hong Kong-1995	3.48	1.6
	China-1997	2.73	1.1
	Guangzhou/Shanghai	3.58	1.2
	Beijing/Dalian	3.36	1.1
	Chengdu/Lanzhou	3.29	1.2
<b>Achievement:</b> The primary goal of this type is personal success through demonstrated competence. Competence is based on what is valued by the system or organization in which the individual is located.	U.S.-1997	4.79	0.8
	U.S.-1995	4.85	0.9
	Hong Kong-1995	4.34	1.0
	China-1997	4.36	1.0
	Guangzhou/Shanghai	4.71	1.0
	Beijing/Dalian	4.65	0.8
	Chengdu/Lanzhou	4.33	1.0
<b>Hedonism:</b> The motivational goal of this type is pleasure or sensuous gratification for oneself. This value type is derived from orgasmic needs and the pleasure associated with satisfying them.	U.S.-1997	4.52	1.2
	U.S.-1995	4.49	1.4
	Hong Kong-1995	3.51	1.1
	China-1997	2.90	1.4
	Guangzhou/Shanghai	3.63	1.4
	Beijing/Dalian	3.49	1.4
	Chengdu/Lanzhou	3.13	1.5
<b>Stimulation:</b> The motivational goal of people with Stimulation values is excitement, novelty, and challenge in life. This value type is derived from the need for variety and Stimulation in order to maintain an optimal level of activation. Thrill seeking can be the result of strong Stimulation needs.	U.S.-1997	4.05	1.2
	U.S.-1995	3.66	1.2
	Hong Kong-1995	2.54	1.5
	China-1997	3.35	1.2
	Guangzhou/Shanghai	3.84	1.2
	Beijing/Dalian	3.61	1.1
	Chengdu/Lanzhou	3.16	1.3

<b>Self-Direction:</b> The motivational goal of this value type is independent thought and action (for example, choosing, creating, exploring. Self-direction comes from the need for control and mastery along with the need for autonomy and independence.	U.S.-1997	4.92	0.7
	U.S.-1995	4.92	0.8
	Hong Kong-1995	4.49	0.9
	China-1997	3.81	0.9
	Guangzhou/Shangh	4.38	1.0
	Beijing/Dalian	4.31	0.9
	Chengdu/Lanzhou	4.04	1.0
<b>Universalism:</b> The motivational goal of Universalism is the understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection of the welfare of all people and nature.	U.S.-1997	4.06	0.9
	U.S.-1995	4.06	0.8
	Hong Kong-1995	3.90	0.9
	China-1997	4.03	0.9
	Guangzhou/Shangh	4.18	0.9
	Beijing/Dalian	3.74	0.8
	Chengdu/Lanzhou	3.74	0.9
<b>Benevolence:</b> The motivational goal of people with benevolent values is to preserve and enhance the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact. This is a concern for the welfare of others that is more narrowly defined than Universalism.	U.S.-1997	4.66	0.8
	U.S.-1995	4.58	0.7
	Hong Kong-1995	4.31	0.8
	China-1997	4.62	0.8
	Chengdu/Lanzhou	4.42	0.8
	Beijing/Dalian	4.30	0.8
	Guangzhou/Shangh	4.23	0.8
<b>Tradition:</b> The motivational goal of people with Tradition values is respect, commitment, and acceptance of the customs and ideas that one's culture or religion imposes on the individual. A Traditional mode of behaviour becomes a symbol of the group's solidarity and an expression of its unique worth and, hopefully, its survival.	U.S.-1997	2.44	0.9
	U.S.-1995	1.99	0.9
	Hong Kong-1995	3.07	1.1
	China-1997	2.90	1.0
	Chengdu/Lanzhou	2.64	1.0
	Guangzhou/Shangh	2.56	0.9
	Beijing/Dalian	4.18	0.9
<b>Conformity:</b> The motivational goal of this type is restraint of action, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms. It is derived from the requirement that individuals inhibit inclinations that might be socially disruptive.	U.S.-1997	3.89	1.0
	U.S.-1995	3.77	1.0
	Hong Kong-1995	4.34	1.0
	China-1997	4.21	1.0
	Chengdu/Lanzhou	4.13	1.0
	Beijing/Dalian	4.01	0.9
	Guangzhou/Shangh	3.82	1.0

<b>Security:</b> The motivational goal of this type is safety, harmony, and stability of society or relationships, and of self.	U.S.-1997	4.03	0.8
	U.S.-1995	3.95	0.9
	Hong Kong-1995	4.74	0.9
	China-1997	4.50	0.9
	Chengdu/Lanzhou	4.40	0.8
	Beijing/Dalian	4.31	0.9
	Guangzhou/Shangh	4.29	0.9