Global cultures and English Language learning

Adrienne Harris
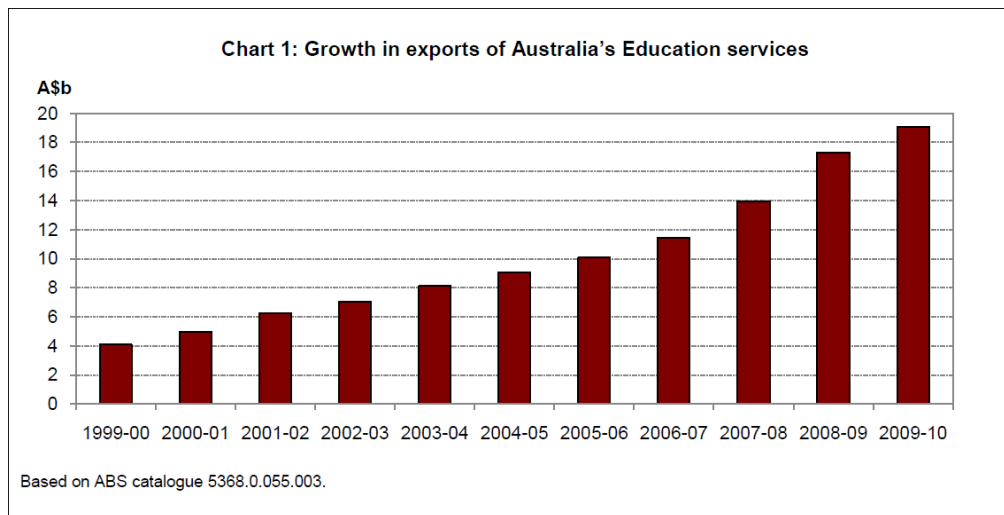
Contents

- Background
- Educational challenges
- Culture
- Student responses
- Hofstede's cultural dimensions
- Cultural challenges
- Adaptation

Globalization and education

- Globalisation has lead to exponential growth in educational services

Chart 1: Growth in exports of Australia's Education services

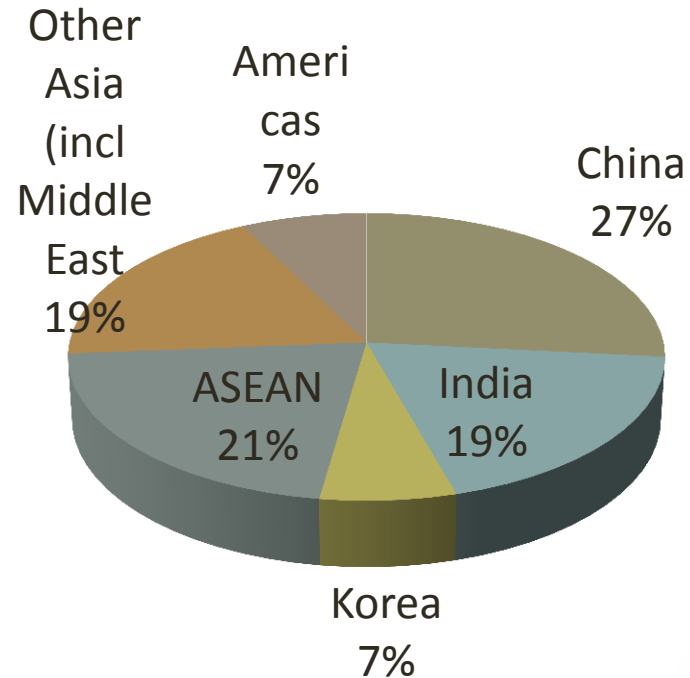Based on ABS catalogue 5368.0.055.003.

Wong (2004)   ABS (2011)

Globalization and education

- 3% of total world exports is in education

- In 2000 there were 1.8 million students and in 2025 that will increase to 7.2 million

  (Wong 2004)   (ABS 2011)

International students in Australia 2009-10

Other Asia (incl Middle East 19%

Ameri cas 7%

China 27%

ASEAN 21%

India 19%

Korea 7%

Educational challenges

- Cross-cultural challenges arise from Internationalisation because education systems are deeply embedded in a local cultural context.

- How do educators deal with the variety of learning style preferences in a culturally diverse classroom?

- ***How do cultural approaches influence learning?***

- ***How do students view themselves and their learning process in different cultural contexts?***

How to define culture?

- Kroebober and Kluckhohn (1985) found 164 definitions of culture in literature.

- From a social perspective culture can be seen as a system of values, attitudes and beliefs that are shared by a society.

- Hofstede (1991) defines culture as the collective programming of the mind that differentiates the members of one group of people from another.

- In simple terms it is what people in a culture see as normal.

Normal is not always the same.

"Normal day, let me be aware of the treasure you are. Let me learn from you, love you, bless you before you depart. Let me not pass you by in quest of some rare and perfect tomorrow."
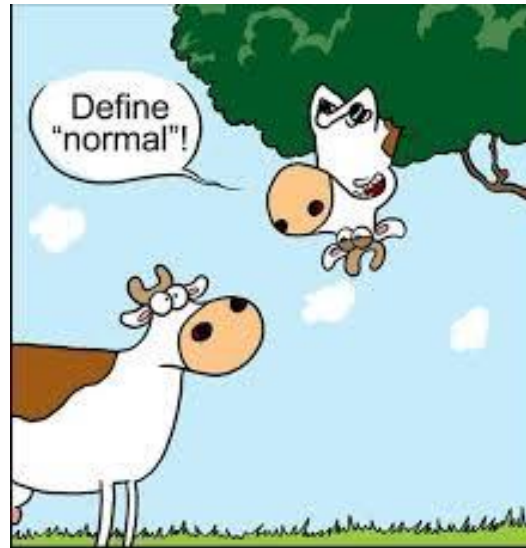
~Mary Jean Iron

I tried to be normal once.
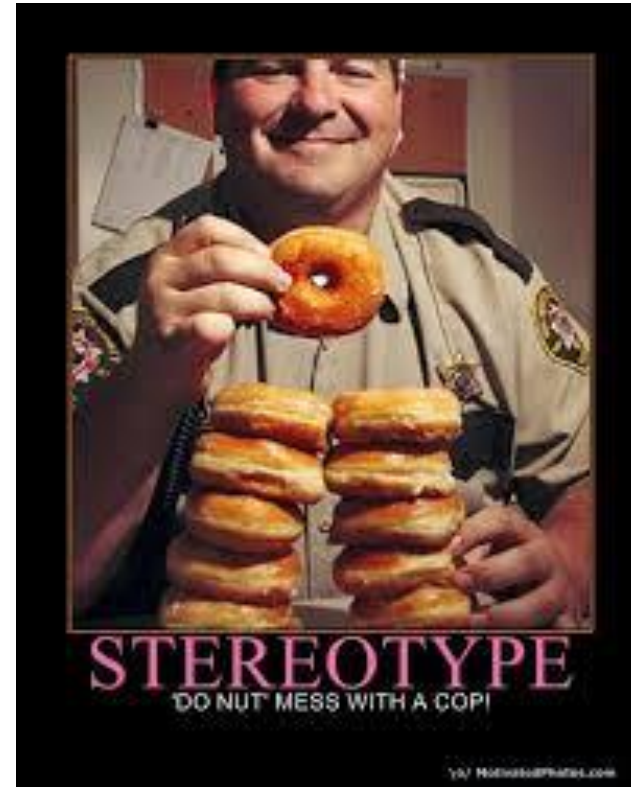
Worst two minutes of my life.

- unknown

CULTURE × RACE × EXPERIENCE × GENDER × DNA × EDUCATION × AGE × INCOME × STATUS = 6,836,502,318 TYPES OF NORMAL

Define "normal"!

- Any framework that includes cultural dimensions is a stereotype.

- Use care when comprehending dialectics which affect cross-cultural interactions.

STEREOTYPE
'DO NUT MESS WITH A COP!

Cultural values and education

- Hofstede (1991) found a link between cultural values and education systems including communication, knowledge transfer, interpersonal relationships and perception of roles.

- He suggested that societies are defined and vary across six cultural dimensions.
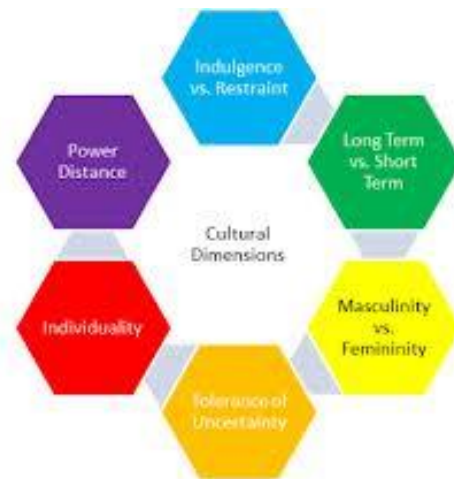
Collectivist orientation - Eastern

- Value system emphasizes conservatism, harmony and hierarchy. Holistic orientation. Cultural characteristics enable two sets of behaviours central to social learning.

- Based on the teachings of Confucianism

   (Chang et.al 2010)

Individualist orientation-Western

- Characterized by individualist cultural orientation and value systems of autonomy, equality and individual detachment from groups. Based on the teachings of Aristotle.
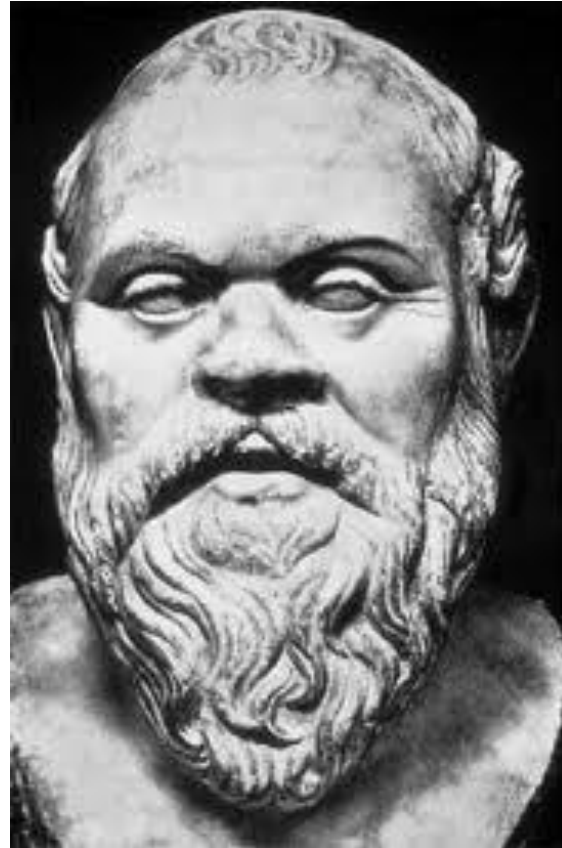
Cultural influences on learning

- Students were asked to reflect on-
- Teaching methods
- Teachers' expectations of students
- Classroom interaction
- Classroom set up and size
- Source of knowledge
- Strengths and challenges
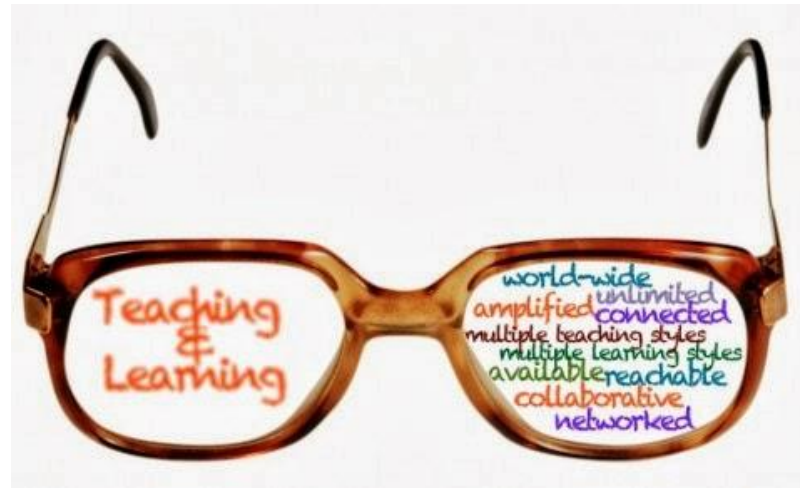
Data collection

- GEAP class – written reflection
- PEP class, Journal
- 18 university 1st year students in business communications

- University students were also asked to fill in a table and link their responses to Hofstede's cultural dimensions

Limitations

- Not all students responded to all questions
- Not all students understood the questions
- Speaking with them provided better clarification of ideas
- Cultural norms

Teaching methods in China

Teaching methods in China

- "Write on blackboard, listen to the teachers and take notes" III

- "Talking to class with PPT" I

- "Teacher asks questions only. Cramming method of teaching" I

- "Everyday students need to do many homeworks" I

- "Teacher gives the information in class"

- "Teacher centred- passive"

- "Explain the key content in the textbook"

- "Gives information directly, no doubt, no question, just remember"

- "Teachers initiate all communication in class"

- "less communication in class"

Teaching methods in Australia

- "Interact with teachers and questions can be asked anytime in class" I

- "Lecture some interaction"

- "Tutorial more interaction"

- "Freestyle teachers and students can have more interactive experience"

- "Teacher gives the way to get information"

- "Student centred active"

- "Study on one's own a lot of assessments and books to read"

- "Relate ideas to real situations use own ideas and media"

- "More equal"

- "Start from the questions, discuss and doubt the information"

- "Lecture, tutorial workshop"

Japan
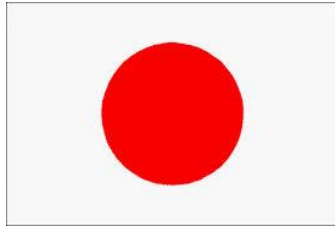
- "Lectures usually teach approximately 200 students without involving anyone... Students rarely ask questions but they might talk to lectures after classes or make an appointment."

- "It is extremely tough for people to enrol.... Lecturers expect independent learning, students no longer need to study hard..... As a result 15 min after class begin, most people start touching their mobile phones, sleeping and talking to each other"

The ways that teachers give information

- "Information given directly, no need to think about knowledge"
- "Teachers always spoon feed students. Students are expected to memorise what teachers have taught them during classes"

- "Teachers act as a guide and teach students how to learn"
- "However teachers in Australia are more likely to inspire students to study independently and critically"

The ways that teachers give information

- "Teachers are tutors, their job is to guide the students toward the most effective way of learning. The information exchanged makes the process of learning very dynamic."

- " the way that teachers transmit the information to students is similar in my country…. They inspire us to think by ourselves, not given only the answers but allowing us to reflect about subjects that require our own opinion…stimulating critical thinking, preparing the students for academic life"

Strengths

- "Classes are shorter so its easier to understand."

- "I can gain information quickly as Chinese students are trained in memorising. I am able to remember a lot of vocabulary and read quickly to understand the contents."

- "I can put my concentration on something for a long time."

- "Having a serious attitude to life, as it is said in China, nothing is impossible to a willing mind. Having an open attitude and never giving up are two strengths from my culture. When I came to Australia I felt deeply frustrated. It takes me quite a long period of time to adapt to this teaching environment. Finally I realized the better prepared for classes, the more I would gain from group meetings and my peers."

Strengths

"We do not have group projects, but we like to ask classmates and have discussions about how to analyse maths, chemicals and physics problems."

"I always finish my homework on time. If student do not finish their homework on time, they would be punished, for example standing in corner or returning class after finish their homework."

Weaknesses

- "Lack of critical thinking, I do not know how to query information."

- "Hard to control free time. In China time is arranged by school or teachers and homework takes most of the day."

- "Students should improve their English speaking skills and critical thinking skills in order to adapt to the learning environment in Australia…. They must insist on thinking in English instead of our first language so that they can speak English fluently"

Interesting points

- "It is not necessary for many Chinese students to worry about plagiarism or accuracy or referencing in their homework or even their paper. Thus it is easy for them to graduate."

- "The quality of students is classified from one to another according to their marks."

- "If students fail in the college entry exam, they would feel disappointed or shame. Parents stop cars on roads near the English listening test. This example shows how important this exam is for Chinese students."

- "When they go into universities many of students are relax and learn almost nothing during the next four years study.."

Teachers' expectations of students

Brazil

"Inside the classroom, the students are expected to participate of the classes, asking and answering questions, also expressing freely their opinions"
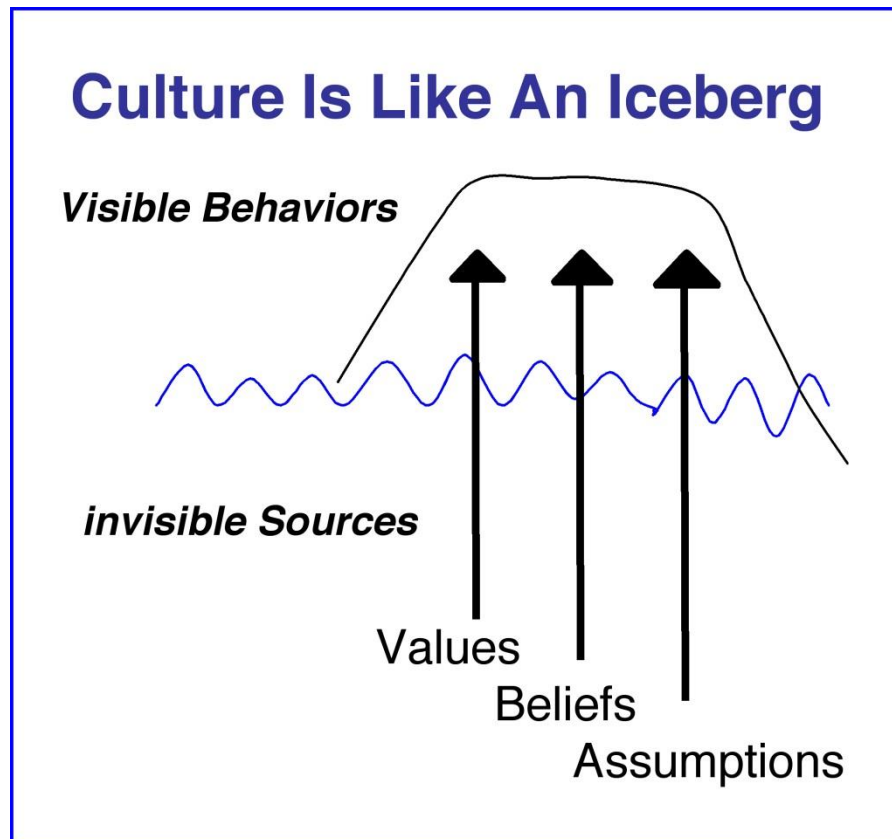

China

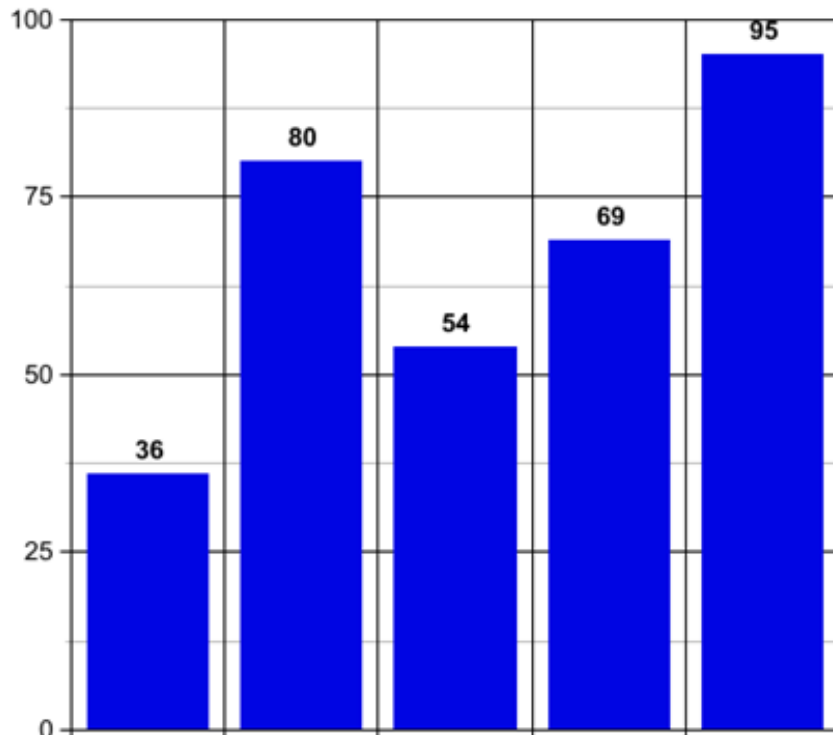- Memorize and recite information
- Complete homework
- Work hard

Two types of memorization with understanding and mechanical memorization.

Marton, Alba and Kun (1996, cited in Wong, p.156)

Cultural dimensions

Culture Is Like An Iceberg

Visible Behaviors

invisible Sources

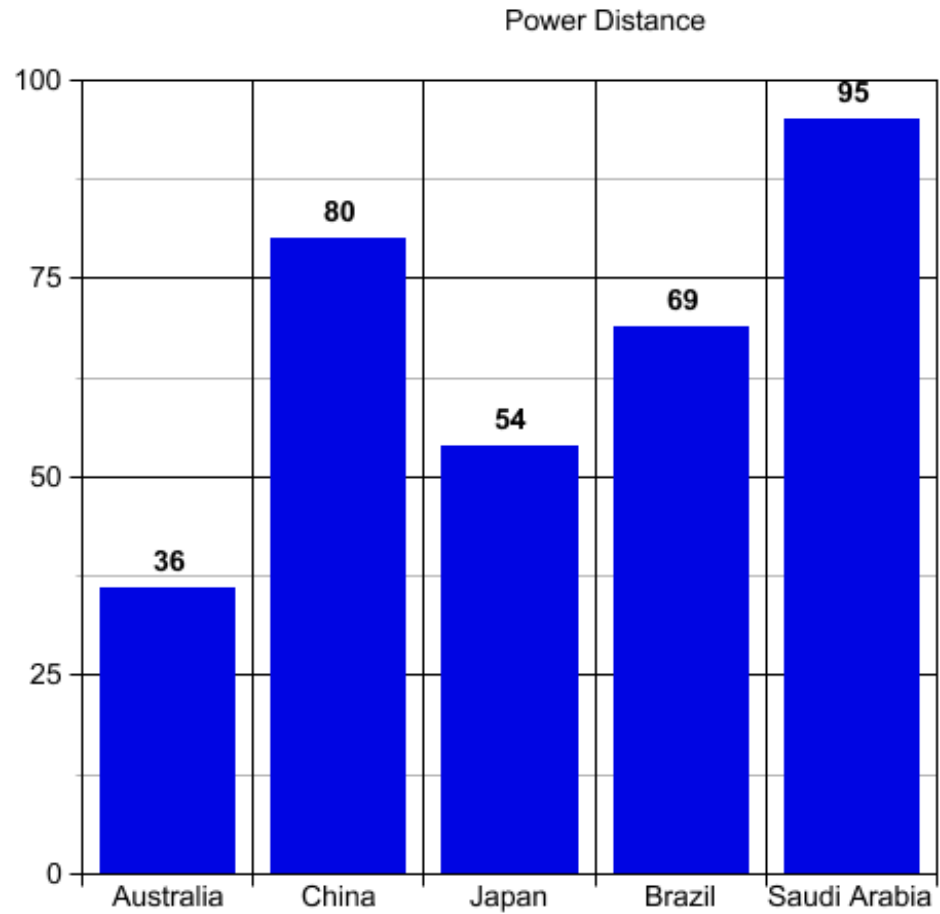Values
Beliefs
Assumptions

Power Distance

Brazil, Australia, China, Saudi Arabia, Japan

In a teaching context it is not about the power teachers have, but instead, the distance this power implies.
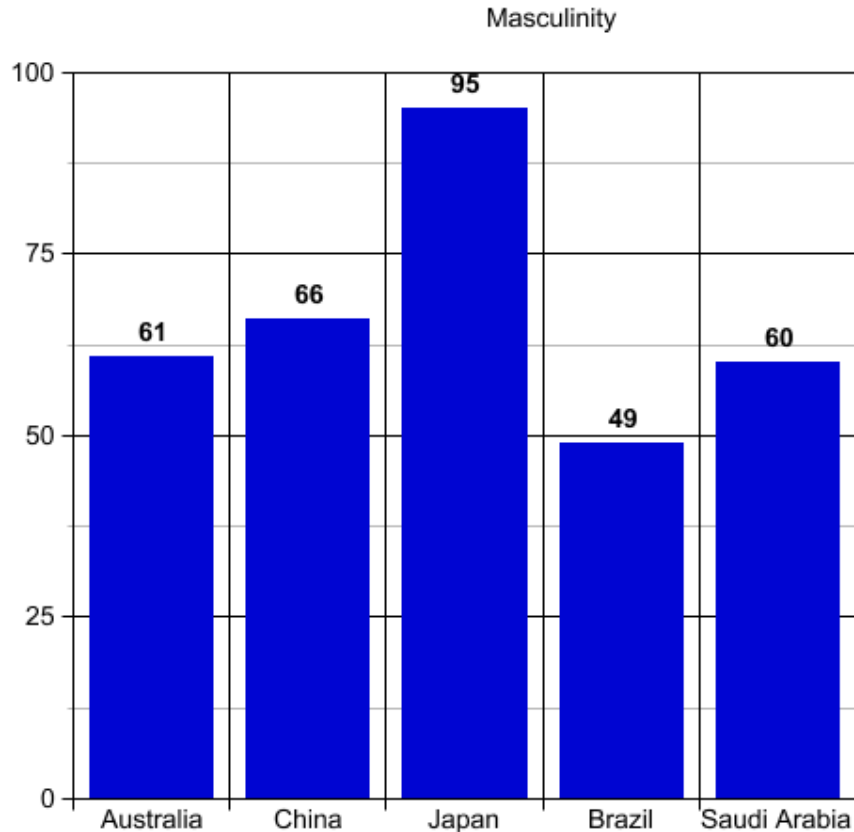
(Hofstede cited in Manidutty and Anuradha 2007)

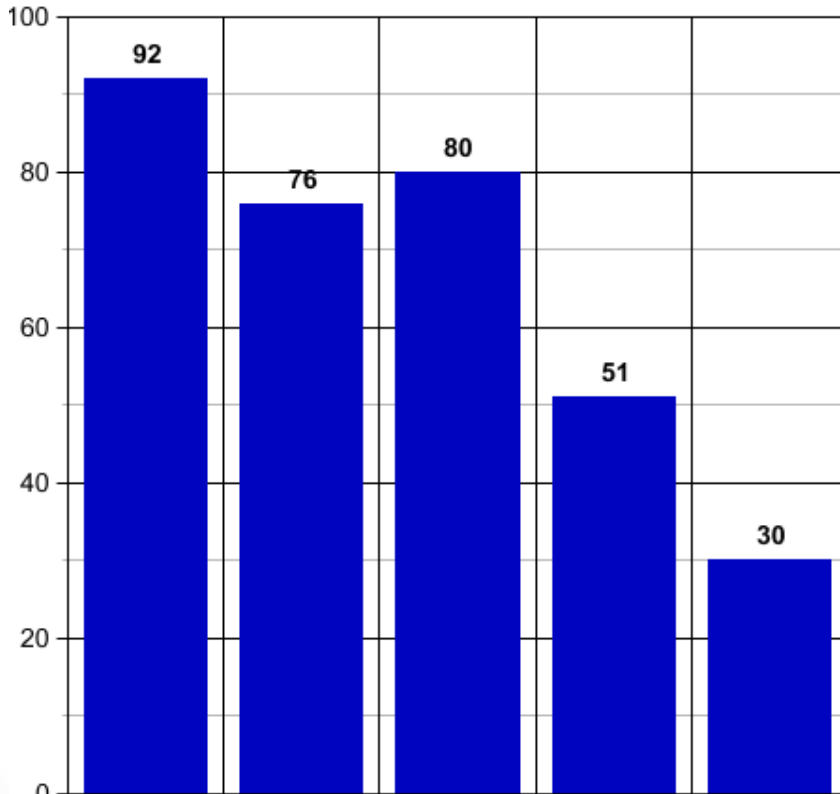(The Hofstede Centre, n.d.)

Power Distance

Masculinity

Masculinity

- High score- driven by competition, success and achievement.
- Low score-main values are quality of life and caring for others.
- It's about people's motivation wanting to be the best or liking what you do.
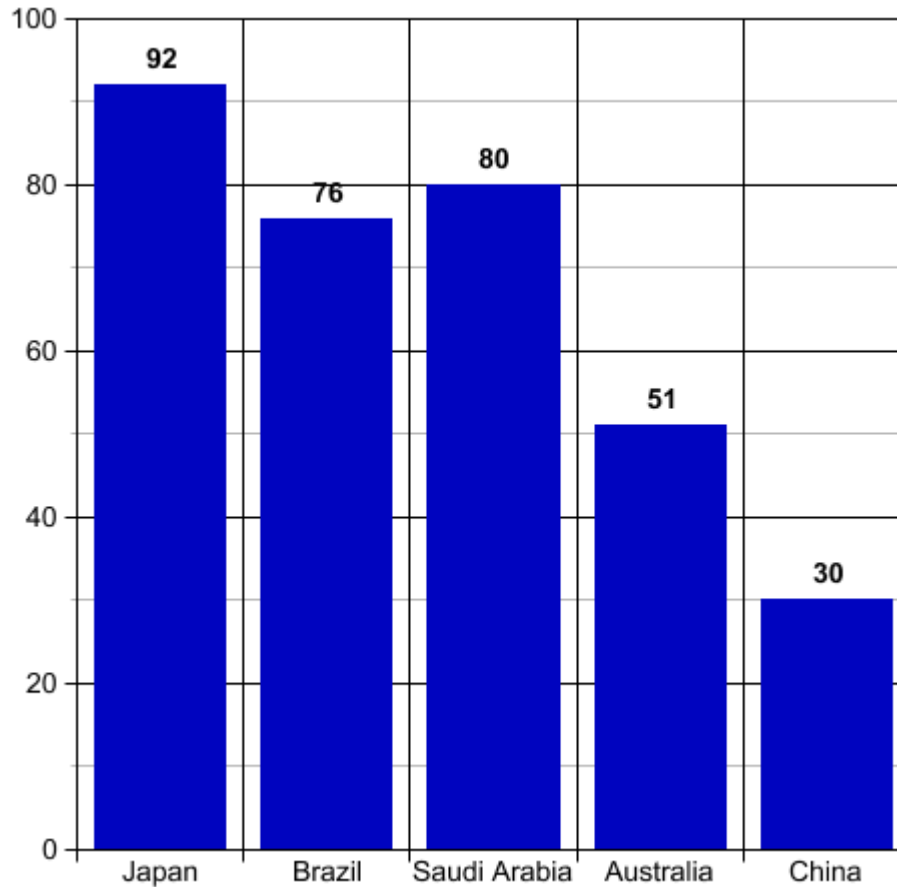
(The Hofstede Centre, n.d.)

Uncertainty avoidance

Brazil, Australia, China, Japan, Saudi Arabia

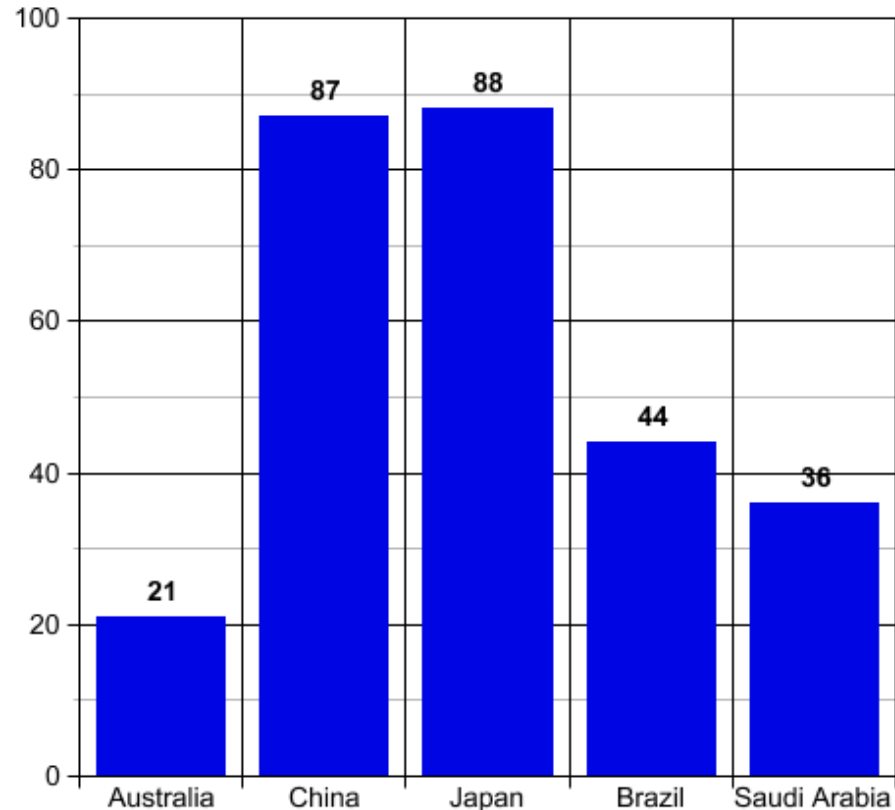- The culture's tolerance for ambiguity, unstructured situations and unplanned events

(The Hofstede Centre, n.d.)

Uncertainty Avoidance
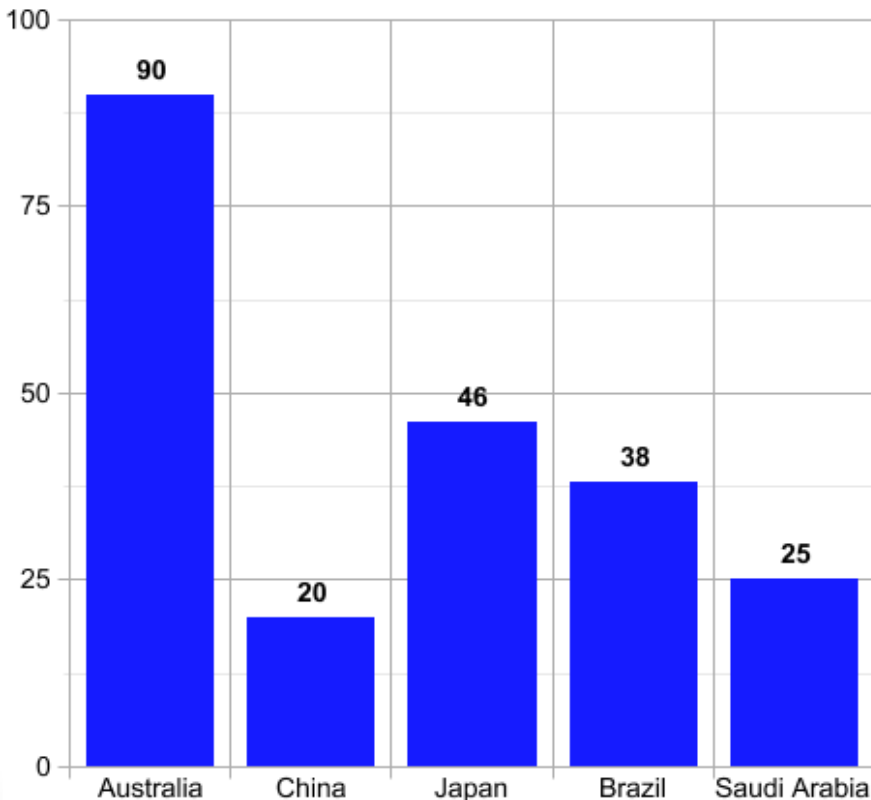
Pragmatism

Pragmatism

The extent to which a culture accepts delayed gratification for material, social and emotional needs. How society retains links with its past while dealing with future challenges.

(The Hofstede Centre, n.d.)

Individualism

Individulalism

- How personal needs and goals are prioritized vs the needs and goals of the group / clan/ organization.
- Cultural values connected to individualism and collectivism could be important factors in shaping the preferences of students learning style.

(Ramburth & McCormick 2001)

(The Hofstede Centre, n.d.)

Initial challenges for Asians

- Main issues are-
- Lack of English language proficiency
- Cultural barriers
- Loneliness
- Different learning and teaching styles

(Wong 2004)

- "the lecturers and tutors will not give you the exactly right answers. There is no right answer"
- Group work

(Wong 2004)

Adaptation

- "although it is not easy to adjust to a new environment, the priority is to make ourselves positively to take part in learning processes with courage and confidence. It is better to learn the local culture and talk with local people positively. The more you learn, the more you can adapt to a new environment."

- " In Australia, students own lots of time to discuss with classmates and share their opinions, which is delighted me"

- Preference for a more student centred style of learning.

Adaptation

- They are able to adapt to the new learning style in two to three months.

- Learning styles are not culturally based but contextual.

(Wong 2004)

- "Cultures are not static but change as functions of environmental change vs. stability"

(Muzychenko 2007pg.123)

International Education

- What can we do as educators to help students in the adaptation process given the internationalization of pedagogy?

Adaptation assistance

- Explicitly explain the differences in educational culture and methodology and the academic requirements.

- Create a supportive, positive environment in the classroom, where mistakes are viewed as positive.

- Show students how to use google and key words to find local clubs and community centres.

- Ensure students know about SA NT volunteering.

- Show students the TED talk 5 techniques to learn any language http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-WLHr1_EVtQ
  by Sid Efromovich

- Encourage social relationships and bonding activities to counter loneliness. Warmers are important.

- Emphasise the need to reference work.

- Highlight services that are available to help them with settlement.

- Provide extensive information on authentic materials like TED, ABC and BBC , online useful websites and listening activities like talks at the art gallery, or botanic gardens.

Things to avoid

- Using red pen to write Chinese student's names.

- Putting Japanese and Asian cultures in a situation where they could lose face.

- The number four is considered very unlucky for Chinese, Japanese and Koreans. It's a homophone for the word death.   When dividing into groups avoid the number 4.

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