

Cross-cultural comparison: piloting an analytical framework

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Abstract

With the proliferation of international education initiatives, research into the transfer of pedagogy across cultures is essential to ensure that quality education is delivered in a culturally accessible form. One of the factors impeding such research is the lack of widely accepted theoretical frameworks (Dimmock & Walker, 2005). This paper examines the development and effectiveness of a cross cultural framework that was used to compare a Business program at a Canadian College with its branch campus in Qatar (Prowse & Goddard, 2010). Findings are compared to results in the literature to gauge the robustness of the framework. The framework developed in the study was found to be a helpful means of allowing a comparison of pedagogy across two cultures.

Introduction

As a result of expanding globalization and a desire to compete in the world economy, international students are seeking education from Western universities and colleges at an ever increasing rate. In the past 60 years, the number of students studying abroad increased from approximately 130,000 to over 3.4 million in 2009 (Shields, 2013). Moreover, the number of branch campuses – where students study in their own country at a foreign institution that has its main campus in another country – has increased from 16 in 1995 to approximately 200 in 2014 (Farrugia & Lane, 2013; Global Higher Education, 2014).

It cannot, however, automatically be assumed that curricula and teaching methods developed in one country will be relevant to students from other cultures whose societies may have different constructs (Bajunid, 1996; Hallinger & Walker, 2011). Research into cross-cultural pedagogy is essential to ensure that the needs of students are being met, and that quality education is delivered in a culturally accessible form. To date, there have been few published studies on the implications of delivering foreign-based curricula to indigenous populations (Aydarova, 2013; Fang, 2012; Leask, 2013).

One of the main factors impeding cross cultural education research is the lack of widely accepted theoretical frameworks for describing the role of particular cultures in learning and teaching (Dimmock & Walker, 2005). This paper explores the effectiveness of such a cross-cultural framework, which was used to gather and analyze data for a case study comparing pedagogy in a Business program offered by a Canadian college with its branch campus counterpart in Qatar (Prowse & Goddard, 2010). In this paper I will consider firstly how effective the framework was in helping to gather data that could be attributed to cultural differences, and secondly how robust the framework appears to be, as gauged by comparing the results to findings in the literature.

Background context

Education models that include a cultural component have been slow to develop because – until recently – it was assumed that educational practices could be easily transferred across cultures (Crabtree & Sapp, 2004). There has been little research into the adaption of Western curriculum on offshore campuses delivering education to non-Western students (Aydarova, 2013; Fang, 2012; Wee Pin Goh, 2009). The existing literature looks primarily at the Asian context and often involves Australian educational

providers (e.g. Boddycott & Walker, 2000; Cheng, 1998; Doherty, 2004; Leask, 2004; Pyvis & Chapman, 2005). These two factors limit the scope of the research to date.

Development of the cultural dimensions framework

For this study, a framework was developed that draws on the Learning and Teaching quadrant of Dimmock & Walker's (2005) model; Hofstede's (1980, 1986, 2001, 2011) more general Cultural Dimensions framework; Hofstede et al.'s (2010) framework adaptations; and Hall's (2003) work on time perception. Details of the study and results can be found elsewhere (e.g.: Prowse, 2007; Prowse & Goddard, 2010).

One of the most comprehensive studies employing a quantitative cultural framework was that of Hofstede (1980). Based on over 100,000 survey responses from IBM employees in a range of countries, Hofstede identified four (later six) cultural dimensions, which he suggested represent core values in any national culture. Hofstede (1980) ranked 40 nations in terms of these four dimensions, while his later work (e.g.: Hofstede, 2001; Hofstede, 2011; Hofstede et al, 2010) expanded on the ideas of his earlier foundational work. While no single study since completely confirms Hofstede's analysis of a given culture, studies that seek to replicate Hofstede's findings have gathered evidence confirming the dimensions. However, findings across studies vary, confirming different dimensions in different cases (e.g.: Chinese Culture Connection, 1987; Helmreich & Merritt, 1998). Despite criticisms (e.g. Cheng, 2000; McSweeney, 2002), the volume of related literature suggests that the human values represented by Hofstede's dimensions are worth investigation and comparison across cultures. Hofstede (1986) later applied his findings on cultural traits to the field of education.

Dimmock & Walker (2005) propose a model for Educational Leadership that borrows strongly from Hofstede's (1980, 2001) and Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner's (1997) frameworks. The model consists of four quadrants, one of which focuses on Learning and Teaching (including Teaching Methods and Approaches, Learning Outcomes, Guidance and Counselling, Teacher and Student Relations, Teacher and Home relations, and the Nature of Knowledge). This quadrant is examined along six cultural dimensions: Power Distance, Individualism/ Collectivism, Uncertainty Avoidance, Consideration/ Aggression, Generative/ Replicative, and Limited/ Holistic Relationships.

The cultural dimensions framework developed for this project draws largely from Dimmock & Walker's (2005) model, which was designed to look at the influence of culture on education from a more neutral perspective by considering values that are not solely based in Western culture. The dimensions are thought to be universal and so can be identified in all cultures; not favoring a specific cultural view is important to ensure that researchers' innate cultural bias is minimized so more accurate assessments are made. Like the Dimmock & Walker model, the present model includes Hofstede's (1980) original four dimensions of Power Distance (High/Low), Collectivism/Individualism, Uncertainty Avoidance (Strong/Weak), and Masculine/Feminine (renamed Aggression/Consideration by Dimmock & Walker). Dimmock & Walker's category of Generative vs. Replicative was also included here. Hofstede and Bond's (Hofstede, 2001) later dimension of Time Orientation was added and is defined according to Hall's (2003) interpretation which evolves it away from Hofstede (2001, 2011) and Bond's (2002) more limited Confucian/Chinese definition to the wider categories of Monochronic/Polychronic time perceptions (Hall, 2003). The categories and definitions of the cultural dimensions model are shown in Table 1.

Minkov's category of Indulgence vs Restraint that was recently added to Hofstede's dimensions (Hofstede et al, 2010; Minkov & Hofstede, 2011) has not been included. This dimension, which measures happiness as gauged by self-indulgence, freedom of speech, importance of leisure and other factors, has not been used in the field of education as the other dimensions have been, and it is not clear how these

factors would affect pedagogy. Dimmock & Walker’s (2005) final category of Limited/Holistic relationships was also not included; this category compares the application within personal relationships of set rules as opposed to personal considerations. The concepts of Limited/Holistic relationships were considered under the Power Distance and Individualism/ Collectivism dimensions.

The categories of the framework above were selected for inclusion based on the original research in identifying specific cultural traits and in their subsequent use by other researchers. In this paper, the validity of the framework was tested by comparing the findings from this study to predictions of behavior indicated by Hofstede’s dimensions and to comparisons with findings of other researchers.

Table 1: Cultural Dimensions Framework developed for this study.

Monochronic <-----> Polychronic
The degree to which a society values task completion, punctuality and keeping strict schedules (Monochronic) as opposed to the pre-eminence of relationships over time obligations (Polychronic). (Crabtree & Sapp, 2004; Hall, 2003; Lanteigne, 2004).
High Power Distance <-----> Low Power Distance
The degree to which less powerful people in society accept inequalities (Hofstede, 1986, 2011), versus the extent to which power is shared in a society (Dimmock & Walker, 2005).
Individualism <-----> Collectivism
The extent that a person functions as an individual in pursuit of his/her own goals, as opposed to an orientation to the goals of a larger group (Dimmock & Walker, 2005; Hofstede, 1986, 2011).
Strong Uncertainty Avoidance <-----> Weak Uncertainty Avoidance
The degree to which people in a society are made uncomfortable by unfamiliar or unclear situations (Hofstede, 1986, 2011) (Strong Uncertainty Avoidance) and the degree to which societal groups feel they have the ability to change their circumstances while others cope by holding onto traditions (Weak Uncertainty Avoidance). (Dimmock & Walker, 2005).
Generative <-----> Replicative
The extent to which a societal culture values and is predisposed to generate innovations (Generative), or to adopt changes from other sources (Replicative) (Dimmock & Walker, 2005).
Aggression <-----> Consideration
The extent to which members of a society desire success, competitiveness and respect for the strong (Aggression) as opposed to nurturing and support (Consideration) (Dimmock & Walker, 2005; Hofstede, 1986, 2011 – referred to by Hofstede as Masculine/Feminine).

Application of the framework

The framework described above was developed for use in a case study (Prowse & Goddard, 2010) to examine perceptions and pedagogical adaptations by instructors at two campuses of the same Canadian college, one in Doha, Qatar and the other in St. John’s Newfoundland, Canada. The research examined whether pedagogical change was occurring, influenced by the *instructors’ perceptions* of the students’ culture.

The cultural dimensions framework was developed to facilitate gathering and analyzing data. This process is outlined in Table 2. Qualitative and quantitative data were collected during site visits through interviews with the teacher participants, observations of the participants’ classes, and post observation

interviews; these were complemented by an ongoing on-line dialogue with the participants. As the data was being gathered, the underlying impetus of the students' behaviors was discussed by the researcher with the participants. The participants' feedback was used to help define the categories of framework and then the cultural behaviors were coded based on each section as defined in the literature and according to the participants' perceptions of how the factors influence behavior.

Table 2: Methods.

Development of a cultural dimensions framework based on Dimmock & Walker (2005), Hofstede (1980, 1986, 2001, 2011) Hofstede et al (2010), and Hall (2003).
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<p>Creating open ended interview questions based on the framework, in order to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • explore cultural traits observed by participants with participants; • elicit feedback on pedagogical adaptations the teacher was consciously making. <p>Twenty-one questions were designed based on cultural traits indicated in the published research. For example:</p> <p>High vs Low Power Distance - <i>Do your students expect the teacher to guide them through the course or do they prefer to learn independently?</i> Based on, "In large power distance societies, students expect teacher to outline paths to follow" and "Teacher-centered education is premium." (Hofstede, 1986, p. 313.).</p> <p>Collectivism/Individualism - <i>Do your students often initiate debate and academic discussion with each other or do they rely on the teacher to initiate discussions?</i> Based on, "In collectivist societies, individual students will only speak up in class when called upon by the teacher." (Hofstede, 1986, p. 312).</p> <p>(See Appendix B for questions and sources in research that gave rise to each question).</p>
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<p>Semi-structured interview with each participant, based on interview questions (approx one hour each). Interviews were taped, transcribed and sent to participants for checking. During the course of the interviews the participants were asked what cultural factors might be the root cause of behaviors they observed and based on this feedback the criteria for coding behaviors under each section of the framework was set. Overlap between Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance was noted.</p>
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<p>Classroom observations – (Average of 8 hours per instructor participant. Each group of students was observed 1-4 times with an overall average of twice). Detailed notes were taken and an Observation Check List based on predicted cultural traits was used to ensure consistency. Quantifiable observed points also included: student absenteeism, tardiness, correction given, methodology used, student interruptions, inter-student socialization, etc. Through class observations the categories of Motivation and Language Proficiency were indicated as mediating factors in teaching and learning.</p>
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<p>Follow up interview after each teaching session observed and final interview with each participant to discuss observations, observation notes, and to elicit more information on adaptations being made and the participants' perceptions of the effects of culture on learning. In this phase of the research motivation and language proficiency were confirmed to be important factors in the teachers'</p>

adaptations and these categories were added to the framework for coding behaviors.
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Participant checking of data gathered. Each participant was provided their information in writing through researcher's notes of observations and interview transcriptions for approval, clarification, and correction. Feedback was provided in writing and orally. Teachers confirmed which cultural traits they believed fostered the students' behavior they perceived.
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Continued reflection and discussion for four months via email and site specific blogs
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Cultural Dimensions Framework used to code all data into sections of the framework based on the participants' and researcher's attribution of the behaviors. Two additional dimensions added at this time – Motivation and Language Proficiency (in language of instruction).
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Sites analyzed separately and then compared and contrasted using the adapted framework.

In the study described in Prowse & Goddard (2010), all participants were involved in the Business program. In Doha 596 students were enrolled, most taking the three year Business certificate program. Of these approximately 76 students were observed on two occasions, in classes that had an average enrollment of 11 students. In St. John's there were 459 students in the program and approximately 148 students were observed in classes that averaged 17 students. In Doha 80% of the students were Qatari nationals, with the majority of non-Qataris coming from other Arab nations. In St. John's international students made up only 5% of the program registrants. On both campuses, approximately 90% of the students in this vocational program were between 23 – 26 years of age. The teachers at both sites, with one exception, were born and raised in Canada. In Qatar, the instructors were hired based on their subject-specific professional experience and had limited prior teaching experience (average 3.5 years); whereas in St. John's all held degrees in vocational training and had extensive teaching experience (average 19 years). More information about the participants, classes observed, and class sizes can be found in Appendix A. Of the ten teachers who participated in the study and were observed, none had spent time on the other campus. In addition to these ten primary participants, one student and two retired teachers, all of whom had studied or taught at both sites, volunteered to be interviewed. Detailed information on the study can be found in Prowse (2007) and Prowse & Goddard (2010).

There are several limitations to a small case study. The degree to which findings can be extended to other Arab or North American regions is not known. In Newfoundland, all the instructors had degrees in Vocational Education and extensive teaching experience, whereas most of the teachers in Qatar had only worked in Doha for a short time and had limited prior teaching experience. To mitigate this limitation, additional participants were interviewed who had taught on both campuses and had extensive teaching experience; their perceptions helped to put in context those of the less experienced Doha teachers. At the time of the study, foreign teachers could only remain in Qatar for three years. It is possible that if instructors had longer service, more extensive pedagogical adaptations might have been found. Finally, as a Western researcher, analysis of observed phenomena and the piloting, evaluating, and adaptation of the framework was from a Western point of view; although, bias could be reduced by comparing findings to previous research in the literature.

The framework's fit with teacher perceptions and observation

The usefulness of the framework to help identify the pedagogical adaptations being made is discussed in this section. At the end of each section, strategies the teachers employed in response to their perception of the students' culture are listed. Reference to previous research that shows similar strategies being employed (if any) is given in brackets. It is important to note that the interpretations come mainly through the participants' own cultural lenses. While this may not accurately reflect the students' perspective or an objective assessment, the teachers' understanding is the basis that influenced pedagogical adaptations.

The discussion examines data in each dimension of the framework and breaks each into salient categories. The categories are derived from the literature - mainly from traits Hofstede (1986) predicted would occur in educational settings. Other categories included were discussed in the research (e.g.: Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Lantaigne, 2004; Robertson et al., 2000; Watkins, 2000) in addition to traits as described by the participants that influenced their pedagogy.

Time Orientation

Qataris are said to have a *Polychronic* view of time, in which punctuality and task completion are subordinate to relationships (Lantaigne, 2004). In this section students' tardiness, absenteeism, and late submission of homework were considered as salient factors. In addition to teachers' perceptions, the two cultures were compared by counting late students and tracking absenteeism during class observations, together with the teachers' reports of late submission of homework.

At the Doha site, among a total of 148 students registered in the observed classes, 32 incidents of student tardiness were observed. This was a 21.6% incidence of tardiness for those who were registered in the courses observed; if those who were absent are excluded, this translates into a 30.5% rate of tardiness among those who actually attended. Absenteeism was calculated at 18.4%. In St. John's, 22.4% (57 of the 289 students registered in the 16 classes observed) were observed to be late while 12% were absent. These factors were noted during class observations and based on head count. Despite the significant rates of tardiness and absenteeism at both sites, the perception of the instructors was markedly different. In Doha, instructors stated that absenteeism and lateness were serious problems and strategies were employed to curtail them; one instructor related:

I tell the students it is important to come to class on time and attend, as this will affect their exam marks, but students don't seem to see the correlation.

Strategies employed to decrease levels of tardiness included deducting marks for lateness and absenteeism, and not allowing late students into class. In St. John's, on the other hand, all but one instructor stated that absenteeism and tardiness were not issues.

Similarly, instructors in Doha found that late or non-submission of homework was a serious problem, e.g.:

Reading and homework must be done in class, as students won't do homework. This creates a problem getting through the class material. (interview)

In St. John's the teachers stated that most students were punctual with assignments; "Usually there is a reason for students handing in work late, such as sickness or personal problems", said one instructor. At both sites, the instructors went over pre-assigned readings in detail during class, so it did not seem necessary for students to prepare in advance.

The perceptions of the instructors on the two campuses matched predictions of time orientation indicated in the literature (Hall, 2003; Lanteigne, 2004); however, students in both cultures showed significant levels of actual tardiness and absenteeism. This was not predicted in the literature in the North American context (e.g.: Hofstede 1986; Lanteigne, 2004). This section of the framework was useful in gaining understanding of the teachers' perceptions of their students' time orientation and also in assessing the actual circumstances at each site. Although the circumstances were somewhat similar, the teachers' perceptions were widely divergent. This highlights that researcher observations are essential in site assessments and participant perceptions need to be confirmed. The categorization of cultural traits in this dimension were altered from Hofstede's (2001) characteristics to those of Hall (2003).

Little is discussed about time orientation adaptation strategies in the literature. Most comparative studies in an education setting have been conducted in Asia. While Time Orientation in Asian differs from those in the West, the emphasis on hard work is similar between cultures (Cheng, 1998) and issues such as attendance, tardiness and late submission of homework do not arise as issues. It is noteworthy that time perception was seen as significant in Crabtree and Sapp's (2004) study as Brazilians have comparable emphasis on personal relationships over punctuality as Arabs (Crabtree & Sapp, 2004; Lanteigne, 2004). In that study, the American researchers talk extensively about the breakdown in communication that the divergent views of time caused. Their solution was for the instructor to adapt by complying with the local culture. This is the opposite of the Doha instructors' expectations.

High/ Low Power Distance

According to Hofstede (1986), a classroom in an Arab setting with high Power Distance might include students expecting teacher-centered classes, obedience to the teacher, and students with lower status deferring to higher ranked students. Canadians, with predicted low Power Distance, should display the opposite traits such as independent learning, interrupting the teacher, questioning, and expressing contrary points of view. In this dimension the salient points of the adapted framework explore students' need for guidance in class, as well as student/teacher and student/student relationships. Information in this dimension was gathered largely through teacher feedback and supplemented by observations. Findings were largely confirmed in the literature (e.g.: Hofstede, 1986; Mahrous & Ahmed, 2010) with the exception of the high dependence attributed to the Canadian students.

At both sites, the participants indicated that their students were highly dependent, and this was evident in the classroom instruction. On both campuses the instructors relied on a structured lecture format utilizing PowerPoint or overhead slides, as well as following the prescribed textbooks. Problems were done in class as a group on the board. On both campuses, few in-depth questions were asked, and the instructors favored yes/no, fact recall, or simple mathematical questions. The students in Doha were given more guidance than those in St. John's. For example, students in St. John's were told which chapters would be covered on an exam whereas the Doha students were given specific page numbers for review.

Despite stating a desire for students to become independent learners, classroom methodology focused on the lower order structures such as those described in Bloom's taxonomy (Krathwohl et al., 1973; Rupani & Bhutto, 2011). Class activities did not promote higher level skills such as analysis, synthesis, or evaluation. Pedagogic methods that include non-interactive lectures, memorization, solving problems on the board, and using fact/recall question are said to focus students on surface learning rather than promoting deeper understanding (Rupani & Bhutto, 2011).

While not widely used, it is noteworthy that some of the participants endeavored to introduce class activities that would promote higher level processing skills and increase learner independence. On both campuses, some volunteers stated they tried to introduce activities such as class presentations, group projects, and workplace focused projects. In one case, an Office Administration teacher in Doha had her class design the recreation brochure for a local hotel. The hotel had agreed to use the work of the student who designed the best brochure. These types of activities were not employed often according to the participants as they were time consuming. The Doha participants were observed to use activities to promote independence more often than the St. John's teachers.

Participants indicated that The Qatari students were more hesitant to speak out in class. This may have been related to the greater Power Distance expected in their culture. Some researchers (e.g., Klein et al., 2003; Watkins, 2000) found that students in high Power Distance countries often did not speak out in class because they felt it challenged the instructor's authority.

Hesitance to speak out may be related to factors other than Power Distance such as a consequence of the Qataris working with concepts that were not familiar in their culture. In the literature, Foster and Stapleton (2012) found that Chinese students resented the use of Western references to which they could not relate and so could not join the class discussion. In Qatar, only one instructor, who was born in Egypt, regularly used in-depth local examples, and in his classes the students were more outspoken. The Doha students also seemed more willing to speak out when discussing familiar activities or when answering simple questions.

The relationship between students and teachers was observed to be clearly delineated by culture. Students in Qatar were observed to be more formal with their teachers than were students in Newfoundland. As one teacher stated, "...age lends more authority and credibility to the teacher." In contrast, the students in Newfoundland interrupted the teachers and joked with them regularly. In classes where the instructors displayed lower Power Distance there were more disruptions, but also a greater level of student discussion. This was also seen in Doha in the classes instructed by the teacher raised in Egypt who displayed less formality with his students than the other volunteers.

The instructors stated that inter-student relationships were of prime concern in Qatar, while of secondary importance in Canada. This information was gleaned through both teacher interviews and classroom observations. In Doha, gender and nationality were the prime criteria when forming groups. Several teachers mentioned that non-Qatari nationals often felt pressured to help Qataris. One volunteer stated that many non-Qataris complained to their teachers that they felt forced to let Qatari students copy their exams. In St. John's, the students seemed to defer to the higher achieving class members who were, for the most part, helpful to those who asked for assistance. Moreover, the teachers in St. John's were not concerned about differences in gender or status among the students; rather, some consideration was made to ensure that new, shy, or academically less inclined students were included.

Many of the strategies the participants employed to encourage learning can be tied to the Power Distance dimension of the framework and were also found in the literature on cross cultural pedagogy. The strategies were both observed and discussed in the interview process. Strategies in this dimension that were common to both campuses are listed here and followed by citations of studies employing similar strategies. They included 1) using structured lecture format (Dimmock, 1998; Watkins, 2000); 2) going over texts and problems in class; 3) expressing a desire to move students from dependent to independent learners; 4) holding office hours to provide additional guidance (Robertson et al., 2000); 5) checking comprehension (Robertson et al., 2000); 6) beginning the term with highly structured activities, and then slowly progressing towards independent learning; 7) using a variety of question forms such as

fact/recall or open ended (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Robertson et al., 2000); 8) asking students to explain concepts (Cheng, 1998; Dimmock, 1998); 9) calling on quiet students individually (Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Watkins, 2000); 10) using guiding questions; 11) using student presentations to promote independent learning (De Vita, 2001), and 12) using local examples (Mahrous & Ahmed, 2010).

Strategies employed by the participants to improve the students' learning in Doha included 1) giving detailed information such as going through each step of how to do a class presentation (Dimmock, 1998; Pyvis & Chapman, 2005; Robertson et al., 2000), 2) using repetition (Dimmock, 1998; Watkins, 2000), 3) monitoring students closely and exerting control over the class (Doherty, 2004), 4) attempting to lower Power Distance in an effort to promote discussion, 5) segregating males and females/ Qataris and non-Qataris, and 6) refraining from discussing personal lives (Leask, 2004; Pyvis & Chapman, 2005).

Strategies used mainly in St. John's included 1) handing out copies of lecture notes, 2) introducing complex problems for discussion, 3) accommodating students' learning expectations, 4) refraining from disciplining boisterous students, 5) including new students in groups, and 6) speaking about personal lives (Leask, 2004; Pyvis & Chapman, 2005).

Individualism/Collectivism

According to Hofstede (2001), Canada is rated as an individualist society and Qatar is considered collectivist (Lanteigne, 2004). In the classroom, those from a collectivist society may strongly value tradition and acquire education as a form of prestige. Individuals will not speak out unless called upon, or while working in small groups (Hofstede, 1986). Several factors relating to Individualism/Collectivism were examined in this dimension of the framework, including 1) the relationship between students, 2) group-work, 3) ethnic homogeneity, 4) students willingness to initiate debate, and 5) the in-class discussion of personal issues. While some behaviors could be observed, most of the data is based on the instructors' perceptions.

In Doha, the students were proactive in helping their classmates, which was expected in a collectivist culture. They often translated for their friends and provided answers. "I've come to accept students speaking to each other in class, as I realize they are usually clarifying information about the lesson," one instructor said. In comparison, the St. John's students mainly worked independently and relied on the instructor to help with difficulties. In each class there also seemed to be students that classmates would turn to privately if they needed help. On both campuses cheating was identified as a problem, but only in Doha were formal processes in place, such as set seating plans, to deter it.

The Doha instructors felt that students enjoyed group-work, which is expected in collectivist cultures. Conversely, in St. John's the majority of teachers felt the students preferred to work independently. Despite this, very little group-work was employed in Doha, as the teachers felt it was difficult to monitor, and time consuming. One teacher reported, "(In groups) The social loafers don't understand what is going on, and use it as an opportunity to do nothing". In St. John's, group-work was employed more frequently, as the instructors felt that it was a necessary skill. "We need to do a lot of group-work because the social skills you need for today's workplace are far different than 25 years ago," one teacher said.

In Qatar, the instructors perceived that there was less discussion and debate in class because of the cultural homogeneity of the students. This was not seen as an impediment to discussion in St. John's. In fact, the student body in Doha was more diverse than in St. John's. In the Doha program, 20% of the students were non-Qatari nationals, while in Newfoundland less than 5% were not from that province. The hesitance of the Doha students to speak out may be attributed to collectivist behavior traits.

However, it may also be indicative of the students having less experience from which to draw due to their unfamiliarity with Western topics. Two occasions were observed in which students stated that the Business practices being taught – direct marketing and debt collection – were not practiced in Qatar. In St. John's, the students seldom contradicted each other, but generated examples from their personal experiences and the media. As students gained more familiarity with the course material, discussion took place at a more in-depth level, a Newfoundland teacher said.

The Doha students rarely spoke about their personal lives with the instructors. This is consistent with the expectations of a collectivist culture, where family and work are not blended. The teachers were reluctant to ask the students personal questions, as they were unsure of the social taboos. In contrast, the students in St. John's often spoke about their personal situations, especially when explaining absenteeism or late assignments. This was consistent with the expectations of an individualistic society where actions are rationalized.

When examining this dimension of the framework, Qatari students behaved in a collectivist fashion and the Canadians independently; however, there are other considerations that may have influenced the observed behaviors. In Doha, the primacy of English as the language of instruction was observed to be a handicap for many students. Bodycott and Walker (2000), and Robertson et al., (2000) found that international students often felt insecure over their second language abilities. The Qatari students also may have felt more comfortable receiving help from their peers. In Hong Kong, students reported a lack of trust in the foreign teachers, and often felt the teachers were proselytizing Western values (Bodycott & Walker, 2000). The Egyptian born instructor in Doha stressed that the students were often resentful that the class material rarely reflected non-Western practices. Researchers (e.g.: Hoare, 2012; Leask, 2006) found that international students had a strong preference for local case studies and were often frustrated and alienated by Western curricula, as they felt their prior experience was not valued nor were the expectations understandable in their societal context.

Since the teachers reported substantial cultural differences in Individualism/Collectivism, it is not surprising that adaptation strategies varied widely. Many of the adaptations were similar to those found by researchers in Asian cultures that are also said to be collectivist in nature. Adaptations in Qatar are listed and followed by any corroborating research references in brackets. They included 1) allowing groups of students to negotiate assignments and translate (Bodycott & Walker, 2000); 2) employing set seating plans to discourage cheating; 3) requesting that stronger students allow others to answer, and allowing more time for answering (Robertson et al., 2000); 4) having students work on the same task at the same time; 5) asking individuals to speak out (Bodycott & Walker, 2000); 6) being mindful not to embarrass students who are not prepared for class; 7) using local examples (Mahrous & Ahmed, 2010); 8) acknowledging conflicting feelings towards group-work; and 9) using a progress chart to show achievement.

In St. John's the strategies for this dimension of the framework included 1) allowing the students to work independently, 2) holding tutorials for weaker students, 3) establishing a process in group-work situations to deal with social loafers, 4) relating school work to the work world, 5) using local examples, 6) asking individuals if they need further explanation, and 7) calling on specific individuals to answer questions (Bodycott & Walker, 2000).

Group-work was not used extensively in either location. This aversion to group-work is worth noting, as many researchers (e.g., Bodycott & Walker, 2000; Chapman & Pyvis, 2005; De Vita, 2001; Doherty, 2004; Foster & Stapleton, 2012; Robertson et al., 2000; Watkins, 2000) strongly advocate the use of group-work in collectivist cultures. Moreover, Mahrous and Ahmed (2010) found that group-work was highly ranked as a pedagogical tool among Middle Eastern and American business students. In Doha, when

group work was employed, it was used to motivate the students and facilitate the participation of students with weaker English skills; whereas, in St. John's, group-work was used to prepare students for the workforce.

Uncertainty Avoidance

According to Hofstede (2001) people in the Arab world tend to have a high propensity for Uncertainty Avoidance that could be manifested by students desiring highly structured learning situations with precise objectives as well as the statistically related variables of strong displays of emotion and avoidance of taboo topics (Hofstede, 1986). The need for structure, the use of taboo subjects, and the acceptability of showing emotions are examined through this dimension of the framework. Data for this section of the framework came from teacher interviews and class observations.

In regard to the need for structure, the traits demonstrated by the students appeared to be identical to those in the Power Distance dimension. All participants felt that their students required structure and guidance. In St. John's, the teachers felt that as the students gained more knowledge, they became more independent. "First year students want to know how to get the answer. Third years realize there can be more than one answer," one instructor said. At both sites the instructors stated that independent learning was an important skill to acquire. Tactics to increase learner independence were similar and some of these were confirmed in the literature. Strategies used on both campuses – sites where research indicated similar strategies were used are given in brackets – included 1) starting the semester teaching highly structured classes, and then moving to more student-centered lessons (Robertson et al., 2000), 2) expecting the level of independence from the students to increase as they progressed through the program, 3) encouraging students to ask and analyze their own questions, 4) letting students know it was okay to make mistakes, and 5) using class presentations and case studies to increase independence (De Vita, 2001).

As predicted in the literature, taboo subjects were seldom raised in Doha, while in St. John's it was common to introduce examples such as marijuana or alcohol usage to capture the students' attention. All but one of the Doha instructors stated that it was not a problem introducing controversial topics, but in fact such topics were never observed to be used. The instructor who was raised in Egypt stated that examples needed to be monitored, because if the students were offended, their focus would not be on learning.

In Doha, the instructors commented that, happy emotions were common, while negative emotions were rare but sometimes demonstrated in response to a poor grade. In St. John's, the instructors stated that the demonstration of negative emotion was not acceptable; nevertheless, there were several incidences related. "If students do poorly, males become more withdrawn. With females, who are high achievers, they often get upset, as they have put in the hours," one St. John's teacher reflected.

The students did not seem to conform to the expectations of Uncertainty Avoidance in relation to predictions made by Hofstede (2001). One would anticipate that Canadian students would feel comfortable in an unstructured learning environment, and yet the instructors all felt that the students preferred structured learning. Moreover, that the Qatari students required more structure in class does not necessarily indicate they were avoiding uncertain situations. The Doha students had intentionally placed themselves in a highly uncertain environment where foreigners directed their learning. Here, cultural expectations differed from their own; there were no traditional models of gender segregation, and they were subject to an alien language medium. It would be expected that Qataris, with predicted stronger Uncertainty Avoidance, would show emotion in class. It was not predicted that the St. John's instructors would provide examples of Canadian students showing negative emotions. A caveat is that

the St. John's teachers had much longer teaching experience, and most examples occurred many years previously.

Generative/Replicative

The Qatari public education system relies heavily on memorization and repetition (Mahrous & Ahmed, 2010; Morsi & Al-Kobaisi, 1984) so it was predicted that students would have strong Replicative traits. Conversely, based on the Canadian education system, students should be more Generative with the ability to employ critical thinking skills such as combining information to extrapolate new ideas. The use of rote learning, the ability to draw on previous course work to solve problems, and critical thinking were examined within this dimension of the framework.

On both campuses the instructors indicated that students relied heavily on memorization until they gained a critical body of understanding from which to draw. One Doha volunteer stated, "Students often repeat from pages in the text on exams, but the important ideas are not clearly understood." To move the students away from surface learning, she would emphasize the application of the material to the work world to try to promote deeper understanding. In St. John's, the volunteers stated that some students were able to apply new knowledge but most could not. One instructor said, "In my opinion, students' critical thinking skills are weak, perhaps due to an over emphasis on content knowledge, as opposed to reasoning skills."

The instructors may have perceived Doha students to have more Replicative traits merely because they have less familiarity with Western topics, or because Western ideas are more difficult to transfer to the Qatari societal context. It might be anticipated that the Qatari students would take longer to develop a deeper understanding of the Western material. As the Qatari students had little appreciation of the work world, the teachers often took the students on fieldtrips, or invited guest speakers to the classroom to reinforce the class material and promote a deeper understanding of the pedagogical goals. The instructors in St. John's reminded the students when they should already know material, and altered questions so that the students could not rely on memorization. Many of the strategies employed to facilitate learning in relationship to this dimension of the framework were similar on both campuses and some were also found in the literature. References to research where the strategies were similar are given in brackets. Strategies used in both locations included 1) having students consider why they are learning specific information/skills; 2) introducing activities that require combining several skills; and 3) assigning students presentations, discussion or group-work (De Vita, 2001). In Qatar, repetition was often used (Dimmock, 1998; Watkins, 2000), and detailed reminders were given concerning tests and assignments.

Aggression/Consideration

In a society with Aggressive traits, students openly compete, and failure is seen as a severe blow. In a considerate society, students help each other and failure is relatively unimportant (Hofstede, 1986). Hofstede (2001) rates both Canada and the Arab region as being similarly moderate in Aggression. Many traits could be observed which confirmed the instructors' reports of the students' behavior. Student competitiveness, willingness to help each other, and concern for achievement were examined in this section of the framework.

In Doha, the instructors set up competitions to motivate the students. While the students focused on 'winning', no one was upset about 'losing', or was hesitant to reveal an unfavorable score. In contrast, competitions were not employed as a learning strategy in St. John's. When asked about this, one St. John's instructor responded, "It is my job to prepare the students for careers, and so the class should

proceed as in the workplace. The students are adults, and would not appreciate being treated like children.” This statement contradicts the comments made by a Canadian student, who had studied at both campuses, who related that he enjoyed the games and competition in Qatar.

In the other categories, students on both campuses helped each other freely; with a few notable exceptions in Canada, neither group was overly concerned with academic achievement.

Mediating factors

During the research, the Doha teachers reported that motivation and language proficiency both affected student success. While Motivation and Language Proficiency cannot be considered core cultural axes, such as those identified by Hofstede et al (2010) or Dimmock & Walker (2005), they are important factors as they have an impact on learning and teaching in cross-cultural situations.

Motivation

Student motivation was perhaps the most profound difference found to exist between the Canadian and Qatari campuses. According to the instructors, the Canadian students were motivated to complete their education in order to find gainful employment. In St. John’s, reports indicate that 24% of the students had student loans and accrued an average debt of \$26,000 for the three year Business program (Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, 2005). The teachers at St. John’s emphasized job opportunities when attempting to encourage the students. The Qatari students, in contrast, were provided with free tuition and a salary while studying and most had guaranteed jobs upon completion of the program. As enrollment in the college provided the students with both freedom and money, the instructors opined that most students were not in a hurry to graduate.

The teachers in St. John’s saw their work as helping the students to realize their employment goals. If focus was lagging, the instructors would remind the class how the course material related to the workplace. In contrast, the teachers in Doha agonized over strategies to motivate their students. As a result, the classes in Qatar were more active, and there was a greater focus on testing. The Canadian student, who had studied on both campuses, commented that the Doha classes were more fun as the teachers would often present material in the form of games such as Jeopardy.

In Qatar, the teachers were observed to use several strategies to motivate students – corroborating references in brackets - including 1) taking the students on field trips or inviting guest speakers to the College (Mahrous & Ahmed, 2010); 2) using local topics (Mahrous & Ahmed, 2010), 3) telling stories, 4) employing hands-on activities, 5) using games and competitions, 6) awarding prizes, 7) using praise, 8) threatening the students with the portent of upcoming exams, and 9) warning the students they could be reported to their sponsors for non performance. The result of these adaptations was that the classes in Qatar were often lively and fun, while those in St. John’s were more business-like.

Language proficiency

Language proficiency was found to be another factor that distinguished the two campuses and impacted how classes were taught. In St. John’s, the few international students had attained a specified level of English proficiency before entering the program. Instructors never mentioned language ability as a learning issue. In Doha, the students studied in a foreign language and proficiency standards were less rigid. Indeed, the Doha teachers all stated that a lack of English proficiency detracted from learning for some students. “I did have some students who were very low. It is amazing they were in class”, one participant said. Low English proficiency among students studying at transnational English language

medium institutions in Gulf Arab countries has been noted by several authors (e.g.: Mahrous & Ahmed, 2010; McBride, 2004).

To help ameliorate language issues, the teachers in Doha used simple words or rephrased instructions. Most teachers checked with the students to ensure that they comprehended the lessons (Robertson et al., 2000). More time was given to students to answer questions to allow for translation (Mahrous & Ahmed, 2010; Robertson et al., 2000). The main strategy employed was to let students translate for each other (Bodycott & Walker, 2000) and for homework to be done in class time.

Conclusion

While one case study cannot be widely generalized, the cultural dimensions framework developed for this study seemed to be an effective tool in identifying aspects of cultural behavior that might otherwise have gone unnoticed. The initial framework adapted from the literature was further modified to add the mediating factors of Motivation and Language Proficiency, and salient factors within each dimensions were identified. The framework was used to help identify cultural behaviors that were influencing learning and teaching and provided the criteria for analysis and site comparisons. It is natural for researchers to focus on the aspects of culture most relevant to their own experience; however, this framework was developed to explore behaviors that differ across cultures. Thus, the bias brought to the study should be reduced. The framework enabled the identification of adaptations to pedagogy that were occurring in response to the teachers' perception of the students' culture. Many of the alterations corresponded to those found in the literature pertaining to other cultures.

In cultural dimensions where the teachers identified the two cultures as being similar, pedagogical strategies were similar. The participants' feedback indicated there were strong similarities in student behaviors that correlated to Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance and in these areas pedagogical adaptations were similar. More diverse strategies were employed in dimensions where the teachers' identification of cultural traits differed between campuses such as in Time Orientation, Individualism/Collectivism, and Motivation – even though observation did not necessarily support the teachers' perceptions. Proficiency in English was only a concern in Qatar, but constituted a major difference between the two research sites.

There are clearly some difficulties in applying the framework; for example, the categorization of cultural traits and identifying root causes of behavior may be problematic. As each dimension represents a set of associated ideas, definitions of each category and classification of data may vary depending on each researcher's interpretation. Some behaviors seemed to be the outcome of more than one influence, such as the need for structure and guidance in the case of Power Distance and Uncertainty Avoidance. Moreover, corroborating findings in this study with research to date was difficult as there have been few studies in the transfer of pedagogy between cultures (Aydarova, 2013; Fang, 2012; Leask, 2013; Wee Pin Goh, 2009). Despite these drawbacks, the framework was effective in helping to identify cultural traits.

While not constant within any one culture, motivation and language ability were found to be instrumental factors that affected the students' learning. As most branch campuses employ the language of the home institution which usually differs from the students' mother tongue, this may be a relevant consideration for future research. Motivation is a universal concept and plays a large part in student success even within a single culture (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). While motivation has an individual component, in cases where it can be linked more broadly to a group (i.e.: high unemployment rates, societal affluence), it can be related to societal culture.

The framework developed during the course of this research may prove useful in guiding future practice. By expanding the frameworks developed by Dimmock & Walker (2005), Hofstede et al (2010), and Hall (2003) to include additional situational factors, deeper understanding may be gained when conducting research in transnational educational settings. A revised framework to include the dimensions of Motivation and Language Proficiency and the specification of the salient factors examined was developed and is shown in Table 3. The framework is presented as a matrix, relating salient factors with cultural dimensions. The grid can be completed by researchers during the course of a study. The Table also shows where the differences predicted by the literature were confirmed and unpredicted similarities were found.

With increasing numbers of transnational institutions and students travelling internationally for higher education, research in cross-cultural pedagogy is essential. Educators must be aware of the differences in culture that effect learning to ensure student success. If successful adaptation strategies can be found, instructors can implement pedagogical changes that will ensure that curriculum is being delivered in a culturally accessible form that will enhance student learning. Not only will students be more successful but instructor effectiveness will improve; thereby reducing teacher stress and burnout.

The cultural dimensions framework used in this study has proved helpful in identifying cultural traits and providing a structure for analysis. Further study is still needed to explore the effects of culture on pedagogy and to devise systematic adaptation strategies that will contribute to successful learning environments. Exploring non-Western based branch campuses and engaging researchers from non-Western backgrounds would challenge the framework and test its robustness. Results from such studies may prove useful in establishing policies that ensure curricula and pedagogy facilitate student learning when the educational constructs of one culture are transferred to another.

Table 3: Revised cultural framework including salient factors examined.

Salient Factors	Cultural Dimension		Results of this survey (X= unpredicted similarities O = predicted differences)
	Monochronic	Polychronic	
Tardiness			X
Absenteeism			X
Late submission of homework			O
	Low Power Distance	High Power Distance	
Need for guidance			X
Student/teacher relationship (including question forms)			O
Student/student relationship			X
	Individualism	Collectivism	

Inter-student relations			X
Group-work			O
Homogeneity			O
Discussion of personal issues			O
	Weak Uncertainty Avoidance	Strong Uncertainty Avoidance	
Need for guidance			X
taboo subjects			O
Show emotions			X
	Generative	Replicative	
Rote Learning			X
Critical thinking			X
	Consideration	Aggression	
Competitiveness			X
Helps others			X
Seeks achievement			O
	Mediating factors		
	Low motivation	High motivation	O
	Weak proficiency in language of instruction	Strong proficiency in language of instruction	O

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Appendix A

Description of teacher participants

Doha Campus					St. John's Campus					
Country of birth	Canada			Egypt	Canada					
Prior teaching experience	1 year	5 years	6 years	3 years	20 years	8 years	27 years	17 years	27 years	16 years
Degrees	MBA BEd BA	MBA BA ESL cert.	MEd BEd	BSc MEd BSc	BVoc MEd BCom BEd	BVoc BCom Acc cert.	BVoc BA	BVoc BCom MEd	BVoc BCom	BVoc BCom
Age	35	33	48	58	45	48	52	43	57	51
Approx. Class size(s)	6 10	8	10 12	20 10	25	7 22	7	22	20	20 25
Courses observed	AC	MK	OA	MK	AC	AC	OA	HR	AD	MK

Accounting (AC), Marketing (MA), Advertising (AD), Human Resources (HR), and Office Administration (OA).

Appendix B

Interview Questions and Origins

Each of the six cultural dimensions, from the cultural dimensions framework, is listed below. Questions pertaining to each dimension are then listed. The questions are designed to elicit information from teachers about the students' cultural behaviors as pertaining to the classroom. The source, from which each question evolved, follows the question in bold.

After each question/category I will then discuss with the participant how these traits affect the students' performance in the classroom (both positive and negatively) and ask them what strategies he/she employs (i.e., how the pedagogy is altered) to enhance or minimize the effect of the cultural behavior.

Time: Polychronic/monochronic

1) Do your students generally arrive in class on time or is tardiness common?

"Brazilian culture is polychronic, emphasizing relationships..." and students "often arrive late and regularly stayed long, seemingly without noticing the clock." (Crabtree & Sapp, 2004, pp. 114, 117).

2) Do your students usually complete assignments/homework on time or do they need to be monitored and encouraged?

(In North America) "Standards of achievement are rigorous with the expectation that all students must complete work on time and of sufficient quality..." (Crabtree & Sapp, 2004, p. 119.)

3) Do you feel the students generally need to see quick results for their work or are they more willing to put in the time to develop their skills.

In Confucian societies (societies that take a long range view), "Perseverance towards slow results (is admired)." and "(People are) willing to subordinate oneself for a purpose." (Hofstede, 1991, p. 173)

Collectivism vs. individualism

4) Do your students work more productively in groups or working individually?

In collective societies "Individuals will only speak up in small groups." (Hofstede, 1986, p. 312) "...unprompted they (students) often move the desks into small groups to work collectively rather than individually." (Crabtree & Sapp, 2004" p. 17.)

5) Do your students often initiate debate and academic discussion with each other or do they rely on the teacher to initiate discussions?

In collectivist societies, "Individual students will only speak up in class when called upon by the teacher." (Hofstede, 1986, p. 312)

6) In class, do your students make a conscious effort to help others who are having difficulties or do they work more independently?

In collectivist societies, "Formal harmony in learning situations should be maintained at all times." and "Neither the teacher nor any student should be made to lose face." (Hofstede, 1986, p. 312)

7) Do students often talk about personal life and family in class or do they stay focused on the class topic?

In collectivist societies, “Private lives are invaded by groups” (Hofstede, 1991, p. 73)

“The use of class time for social interactions is normative in Brazil.” (Crabtree & Sapp, 2004, p. 116)

8) Do students expect to be promoted regardless of achievement or are they expected to attain a specific level of competence?

In collectivist cultures, “teachers are expected to give preferential treatment to some students”. (Hofstede, 1986, p. 312)

High power vs. low power distance

9) Do your students expect the teacher to guide them through the course or do they prefer to learn independently?

In large power distance societies, “Students expect teacher to outline paths to follow” and “Teacher-centered education is premium.” (Hofstede, 1986, p. 313.)

10) Do students often initiate discussion and debate in class with the teacher or do they look to the teacher as the ultimate authority?

In high power distance societies, “Students expect teacher to initiate communication.” (Hofstede, 1986, p. 312)

11) Do the students act formally or informally with the teacher (e.g., stand when the teacher enters, uses formal address – Mr. Ms. Etc.)?

In high power distance relationships, “a teacher merits the respect of his/her students”& “Teacher centered education (is the norm).” (Hofstede, 1986, p. 312)

Brazilians saw the American instructor’s overlooking of formality as rudeness. (Crabtree & Sapp, 2004, p. 115.)

12) Do students with lower status (e.g., younger, poorer, lower level job, ethnic minority, etc.) defer to students with higher status as would be expected in high power distance societies?

“Inequalities among people are both expected and desired.” (Hofstede, 1991, p. 37)

Another further phenomenon was an obvious hierarchy among some student groups. To a certain extent, these informal configurations influenced student involvement, openness and contribution. (Bodycott & Walker, 2000)

13) Are the students’ parents involved in the learning process if a student is not succeeding?

In high power distance societies, “In teacher/student conflicts parents are expected to side with the teachers.” (Hofstede, 1986, p. 313.)

Strong vs. weak uncertainty avoidance

14) Do students work more productively in structured or unstructured learning situations? For example, do they prefer to listen to lectures from the teacher or to group problem solve?

In low uncertainty avoidance, “students feel comfortable in unstructured learning situation.” (Hofstede, 1986, p. 312)

“Students expect teacher to outline paths to follow.” (Hofstede, 1986, p. 31)

15) Is it common for students or teachers to show emotion in class (e.g., sadness, anger, frustration, happiness) or is it expected that emotions will be suppressed?

In low uncertainty avoidance, “Teachers and students are permitted to behave emotionally”. (Hofstede, 1986, p. 312)

Social emotional, and physical closeness are expected in student-teacher interactions in Brazil.” (Crabtree & Sapp, 2004, p. 116.)

16) Are students comfortable with topics that may be considered inappropriate or are they less responsive?

In high uncertainty avoidance cultures, “there is only one truth.” and “Religious, political and ideological fundamentalism and intolerance (are common)”. (Hofstede, 1991, p. 134)

“Students appeared extremely reluctant to question others’ opinions...” (Bodycott & Walker, 2000, p. 84)

17) Do students look for one right answer or are they comfortable with multiple options?

In high uncertainty avoidance cultures, “...people within a culture are made nervous by situations they perceive as unstructured...or unpredictable... they therefore try to avoid by maintaining... a belief in absolute truths.” (Hofstede, 1986, p. 308) and “...there is only one truth.” (Hofstede, 1991, p. 134)

Aggression vs. consideration

18) Are the students self-motivated or are they more easy-going?

In aggression societies, “students try to make themselves visible”, “Students’ failure in school is a severe blow to his/her self-image.” and “Students’ choose academic subjects in view of career opportunities.” (Hofstede, 1986, p. 312)

In aggression societies, “students’ failure in school is a severe blow to his/her self-image.” and “Students’ choose academic subjects in view of career opportunities” (Hofstede, 1986, p. 312)

19) Are the students highly competitive with each other or do they prefer to work together?

In Aggression societies, “the system rewards students’ academic performance.” (Hofstede, 1986, p. 312)

Generative vs. Replicative

20) Do the students use new ideas presented in class and adapt them to their own specific circumstance or are they more hesitant to accept new concepts?

“some cultures seem more predisposed toward innovation, to the gathering of new ideas and methods.” (Dimmock & Walker, 2000, p. 155.)

21) Are students able to memorize chunks of information, but perhaps use them incorrectly or in the wrong context as opposed to picking up new concepts and running with them?

“... other cultures seem more inclined to replicate or adopt ideas and approaches from elsewhere.”
(Dimmock & Walker, 2000, p. 155.)