

Culture and Assessment

Integrity vs. Pragmatism ?

Michael Allan

mallan@isa.nl

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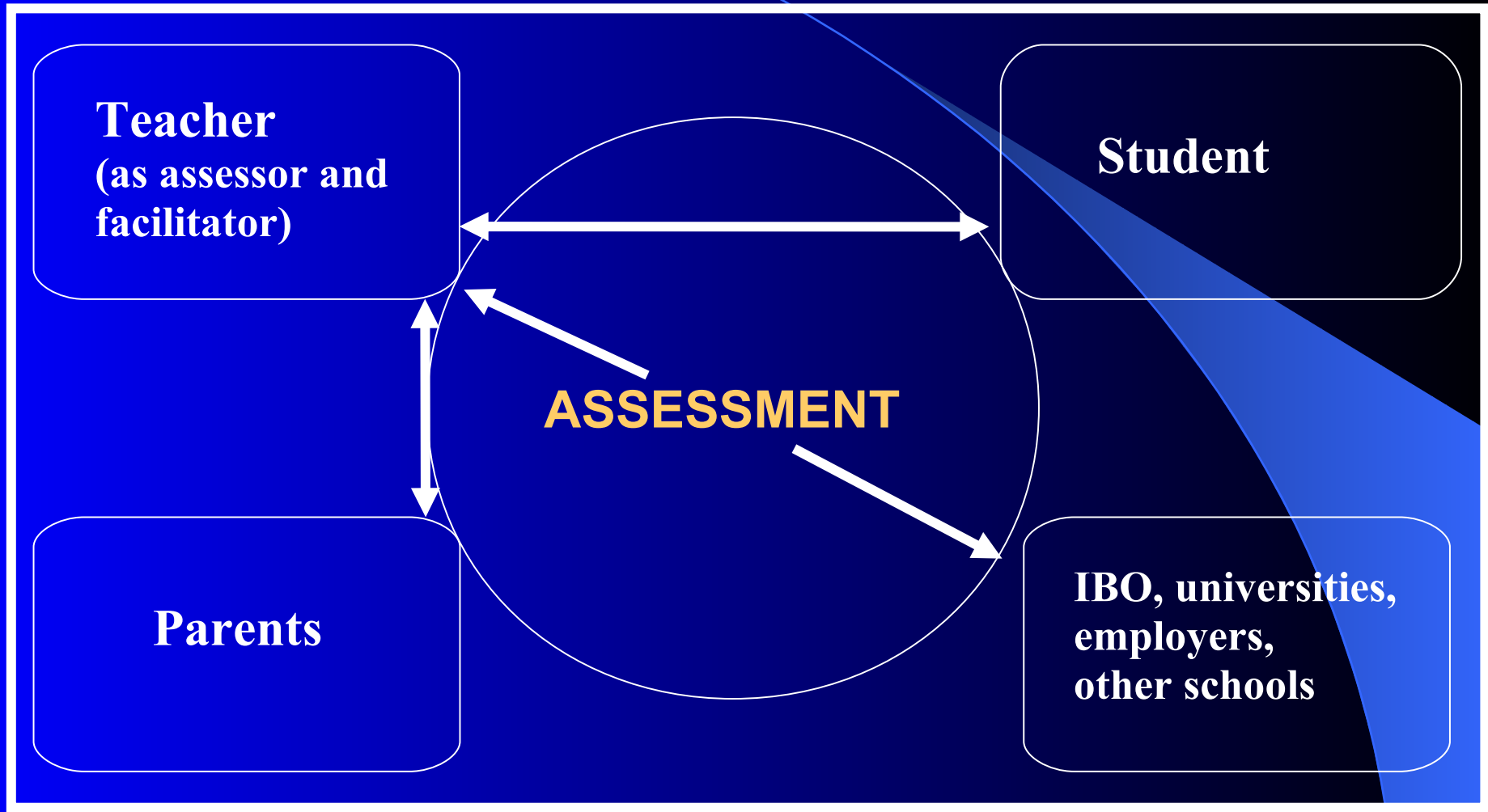
1. Integrity: *values*

2. Pragmatism: *cognition*

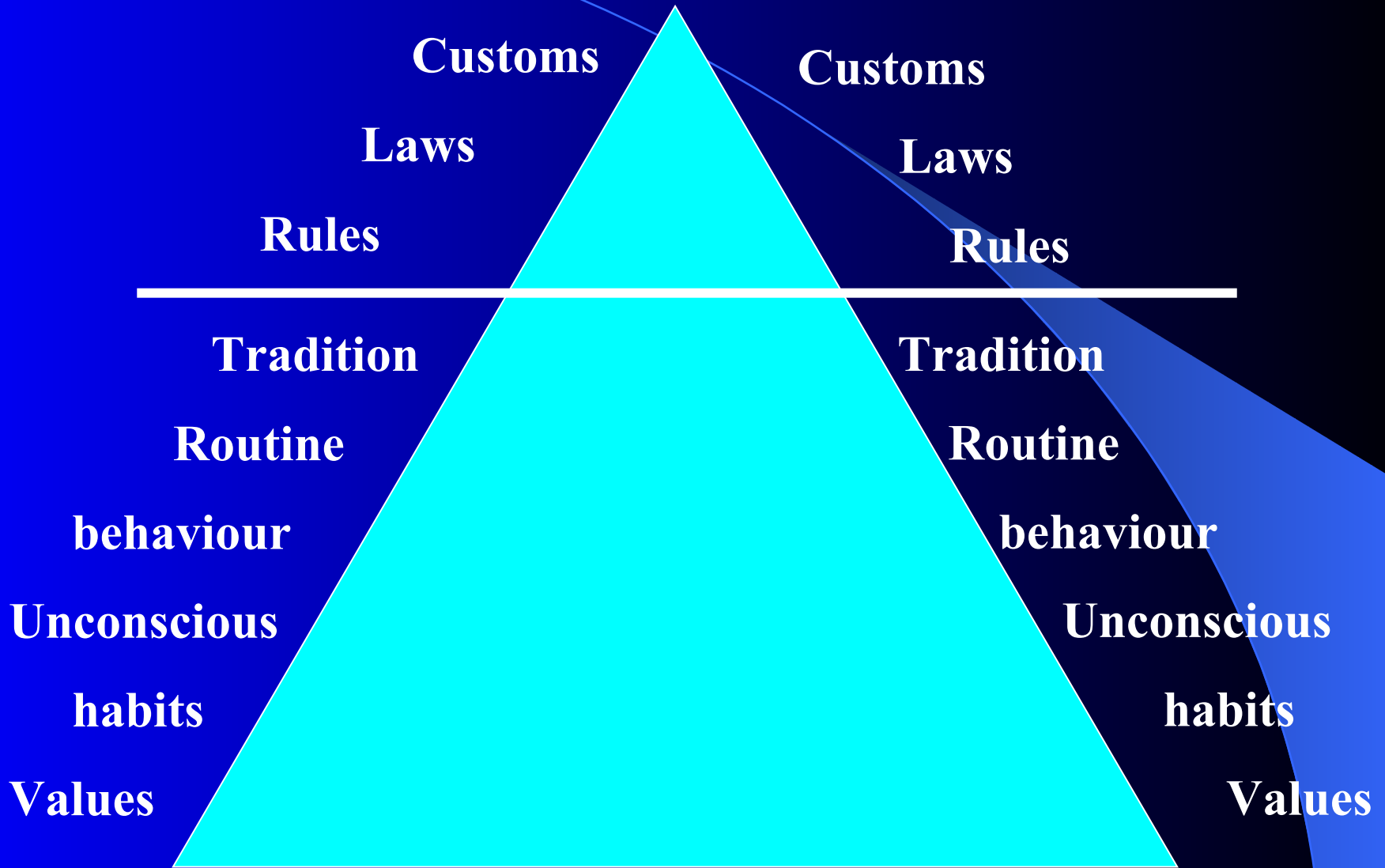
Why do we assess?

To Form and to Inform:

- **To motivate and focus students for the learning task**
- **To provide feedback to students to help them improve their knowledge and skills**
- **To provide information for teachers on the effectiveness of teaching and learning**
- **To provide feedback to parents on student progress**
- **To provide an evaluation, based on academic norms, for other schools, universities, and employers.**



WHAT IS CULTURE?



What is CULTURE?

‘culture refers to widely shared ideals, values, formation and use of categories, assumptions about life and goal-directed activities that become consciously or sub-consciously accepted as ‘right’ and ‘correct’ by people who identify themselves as members of a society’.

(Brislin 1990, p11)



Respect; solidarity; cooperation;
unity; peace; responsibility; love;
companionship

Assessment

- Ranking on standardised tests
- Negative marking to set answers
- Passing and failing the year
- Peer referenced marking
- Marking to external criteria

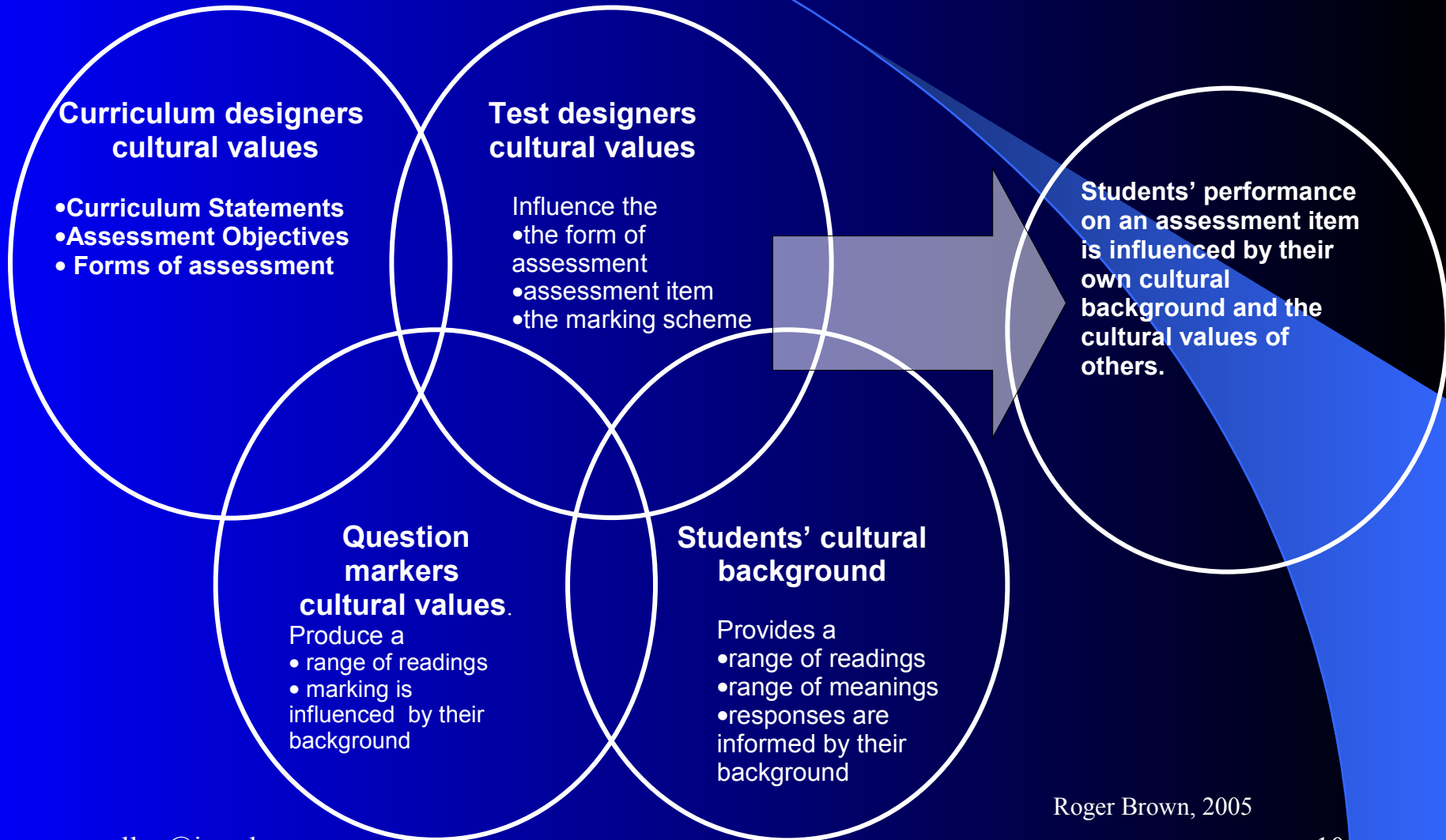
Assessment-driven Learning

"You teach a child to read, and he or her will be able to pass a literacy test."—

George W. Bush,

Townsend, Tenn., Feb. 21, 2001

The influences on student performance



Roger Brown, 2005

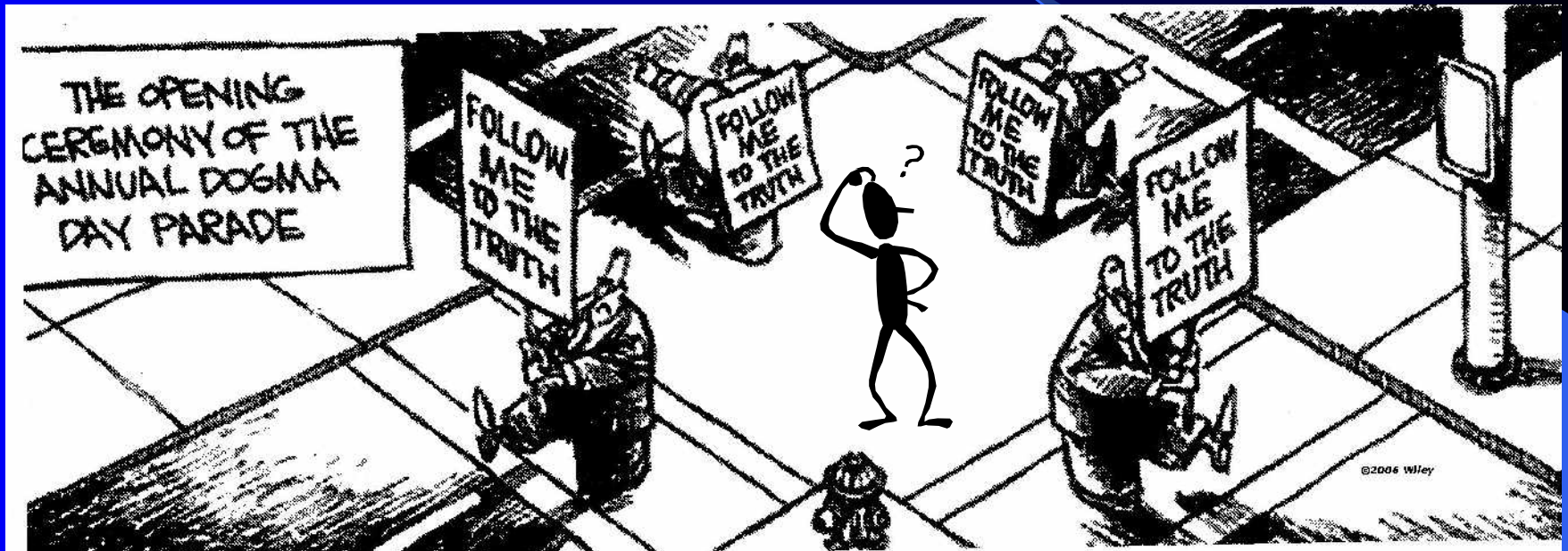
1. Integrity

is being true to our values

(which vary from culture to culture)



evaluate



Discourse

- **This context, the way in which we communicate and the implicit social values involved can be collectively defined as discourse.**
- **Discourse thus embodies meaning and social relationships and itself serves to empower its users and marginalise others from the debate by determining the frame of reference within which their standpoint may be judged.**

"[*Culture is an*] historically transmitted pattern of meanings embodied in symbolic form by means of which (*people*) men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and attitudes toward life".

Geertz (1973, p. 89)

Knowing and knowledge: Five Culture Questions

1. How do I see the world?
2. How do I use time and space?
3. Who am I?
4. What do I do?
5. How do I relate to other people?

Dr. Richard Field University of Alberta

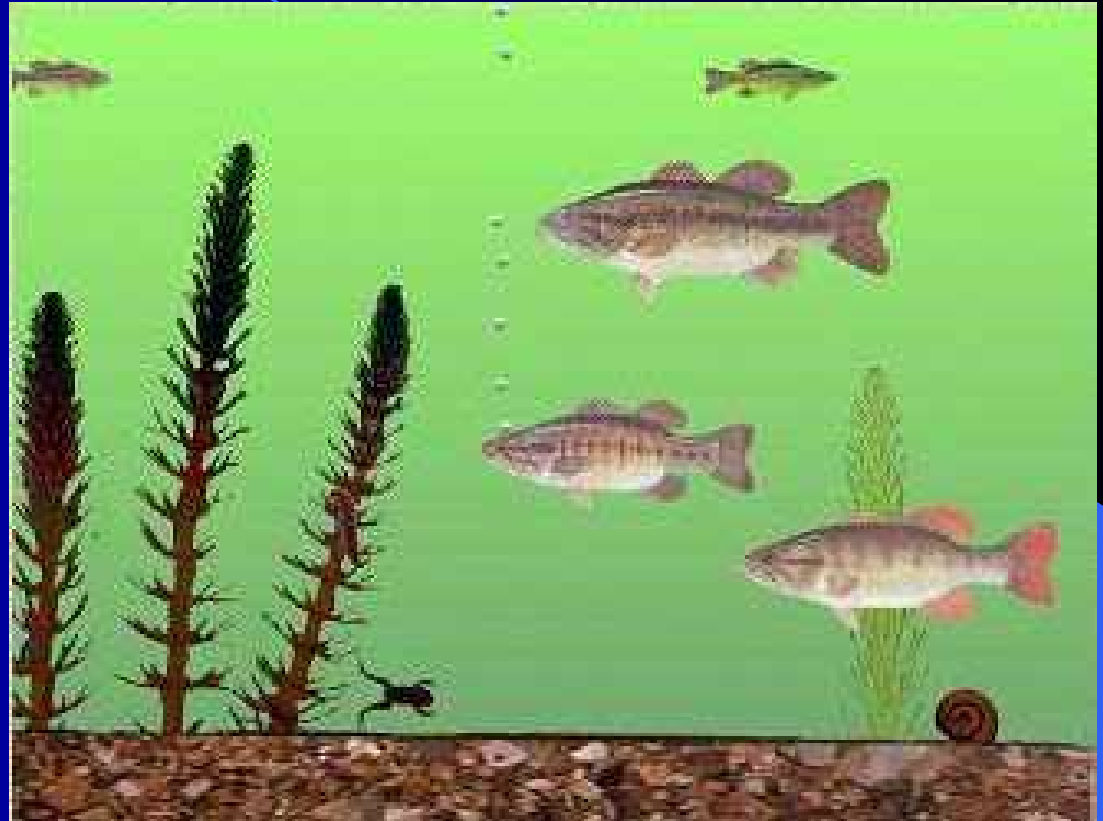
<http://www.bus.ualberta.ca/rfield/>

1. How do I see the world?

Is the relationship to the environment one of dominance, submission, harmony, or finding an appropriate niche?

Culture and Attention : The Self-Report Task

The Michigan Fish Test



The **North Americans** basically referred to the attributes of the target fish, whereas **the Japanese** referred to the background and contextual information as well as the target fish attributes.





Culture and Attention: Interpreting emotional expressions



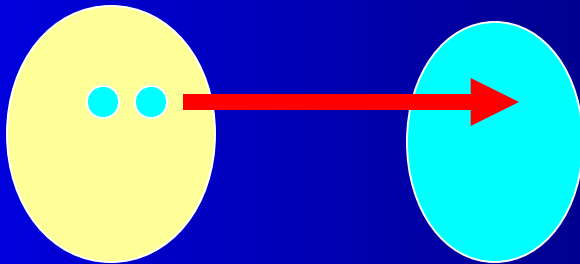
Westerners' Attention



East Asians' Attention

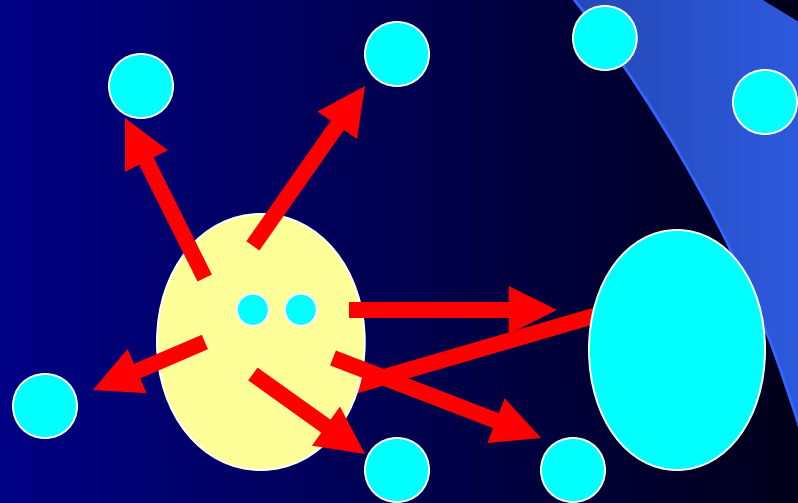
Westerners' attention

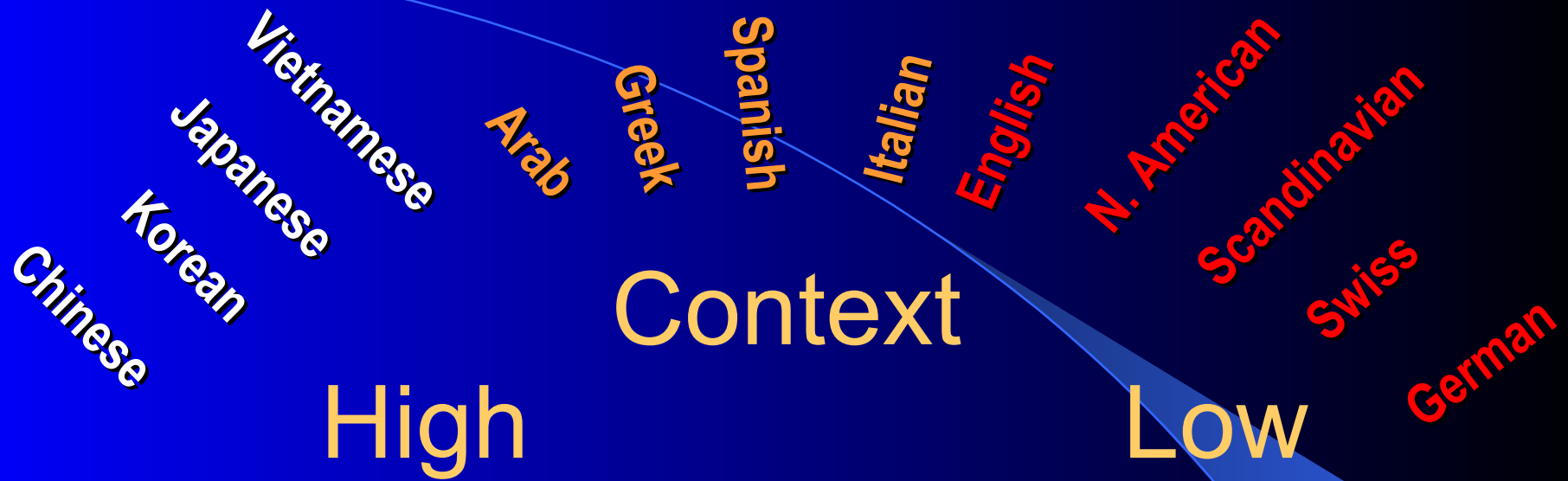
Worldview: Things exist by themselves and can be defined by their attributes (context independent, object-oriented).



East Asians' Attention

Worldview: Things are inter-related. Various factors are involved in an event (context dependent, context-sensitive).





- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Relational and contextual ● Communication associative ● Find meaning in text ● Context more important than content | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Logical and linear ● Communication specific ● Extract information from text ● Context-free setting → transferable skills |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

Communicative strategies

Associative

- Topic-associated
- Less detail – more presumed shared knowledge
- Context orientation
- Sequential shifts – using pitch and tempo indicators
- Multi-themed

Linear

- Topic-centered
- Presume little shared knowledge
- Require precise detail
- Linear, single topic
- Single perspective
- Thematic focus or temporal orientation

Environment

- **The world is a big zoo or botanical garden**
- **Preserving the environment is like global gardening**

2. How do I use time and space?

The nature of reality, time, and space.
Questions are what is real and what is not,
what is a fact, how truth is ultimately to be
determined, and whether truth is revealed or
discovered.

3. Who am I?

The nature of human nature. What does it mean to be human, and what attributes are considered intrinsic or ultimate? Is human nature good, evil, or neutral? Are human beings perfectible or not?

4. What do I do?

What is the right thing for human beings to do, on the basis of the above assumptions about reality, the environment, and human nature? Should one be active, passive, self-developmental or fatalistic? What is work and what is play?

5. How do I relate to other people?

The nature of human relationships. What is considered to be the right way for people to relate to each other, to distribute power and love? Is life cooperative or competitive; individualistic, collaborative, or communal? Is it based on traditional lineal authority, law, or charisma?

2. Pragmatism

Cognitive processes are pragmatic

(and vary from culture to culture)

Cognition

Lev Vygotsky

The role of culture/social interaction

- Sociocultural environment ALL IMPORTANT for cognitive development
- Different contexts create different forms of development
- Cognitive processes (language, thought, reasoning) develop THROUGH social interaction
- Language (signs) is a tool of cultures used in social interaction
- Cognitive development is a product of CULTURE

“An intelligence is the ability to solve problems, or to create products, that are valued *within one or more cultures*”

(Gardner, 1993 p.x)

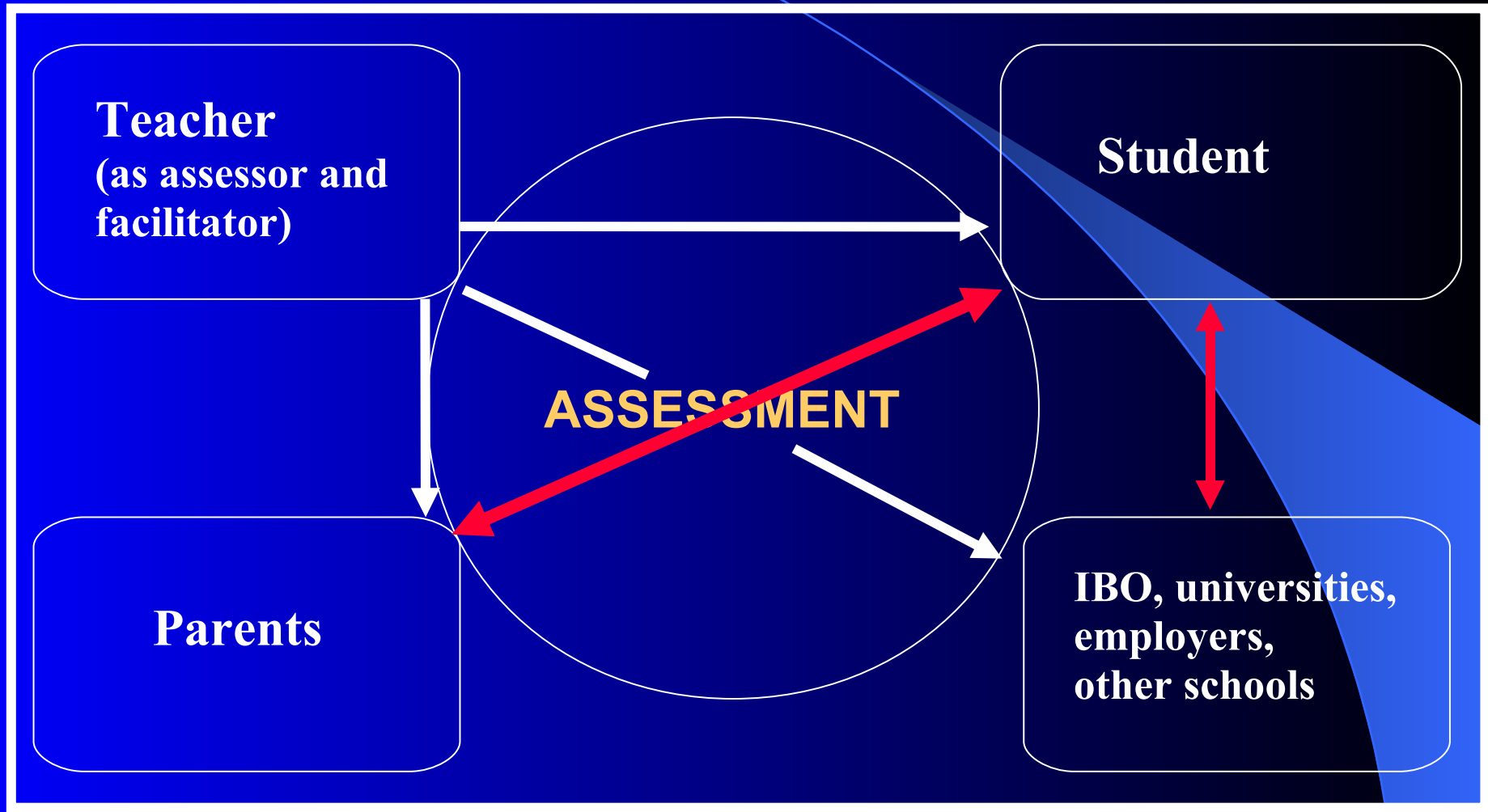
Ask the students.....YouTube

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Pm7FN0NgCEo>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SRN6uNVzSeI>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJfrKY7n5kI>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tx5kYdbpIwg>



Individualism

- Self-reliance, independence
- Competitiveness and individual reward
- Student-centred learning, teacher-student interaction
- Creativity and participation

1. USA

2. Australia

3. UK

4. Canada
mallan@isa.nl

Collectivism

- Obedience, duty
- Loyalty, commitment, group goals
- Teacher directed learning, listening and imitating
- Factual recall

48 Pakistan

48 Indonesia

49 Colombia

50. Venezuela

Power Distance

Large

- Teacher directed
- Students do not question or criticise
- Students do not speak in class

1. Malaysia

4. Phillipines

5. Mexico

7. Saudi Arabia

mallan@isa.nl

Small

- Student-centred, more equal teacher-student relationship
- Criticism and disagreement acceptable
- Higher participation

44. UK

48. Sweden

52. Israel

50. New Zealand

Masculinity

- Competitive
- Failure unacceptable
- Teacher admired as expert

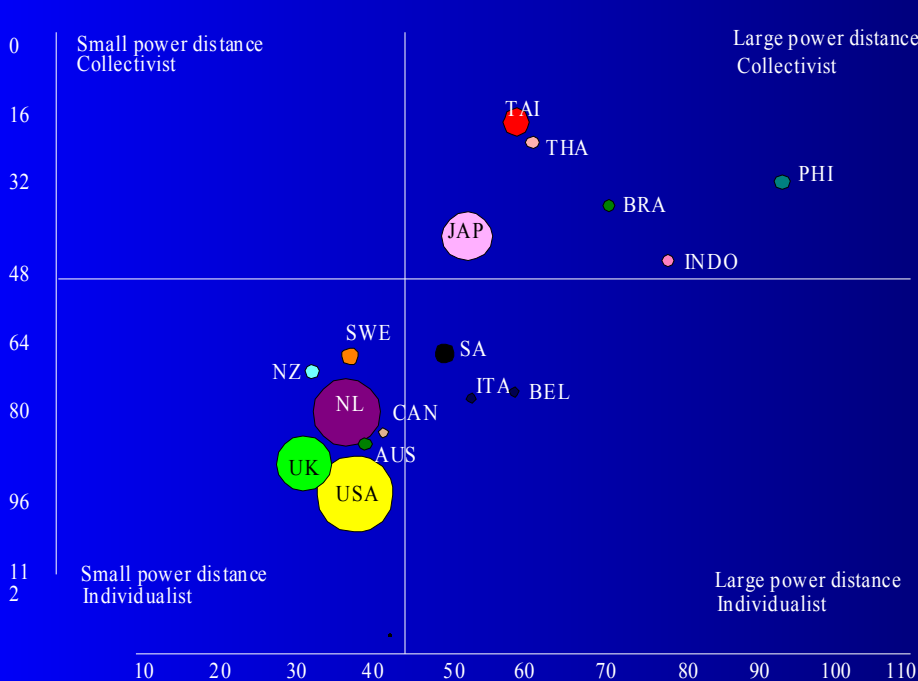
1. Japan
2. Austria
6. Mexico
9. UK

Femininity

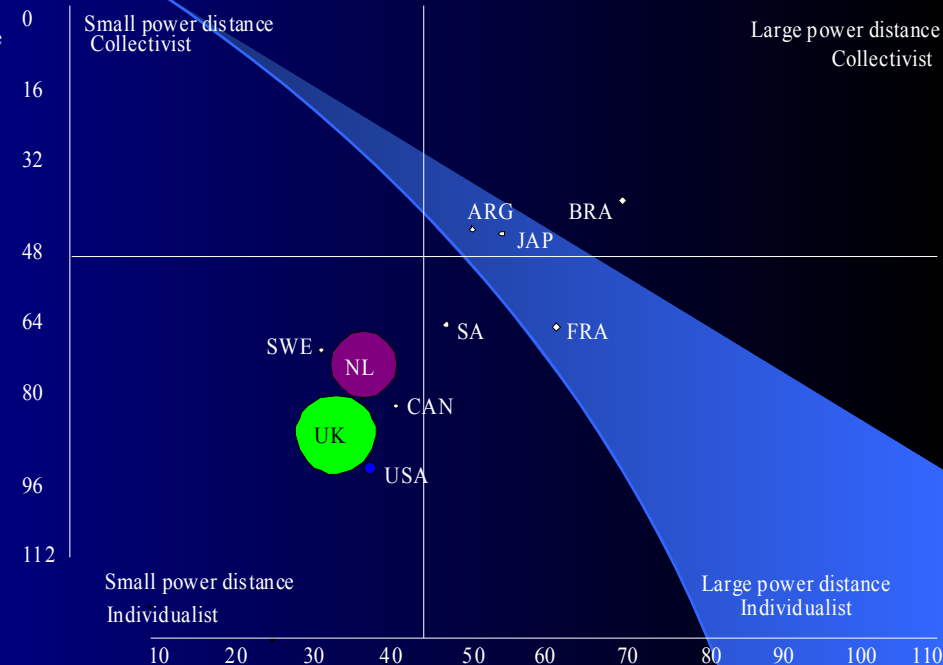
- Average is norm
- Conspicuous success avoided, failure acceptable
- Friendliness in teachers a virtue

50. Denmark
51. Netherlands
52. Norway
53. Sweden

School Culture on Hofstede's (1994) Dimensions

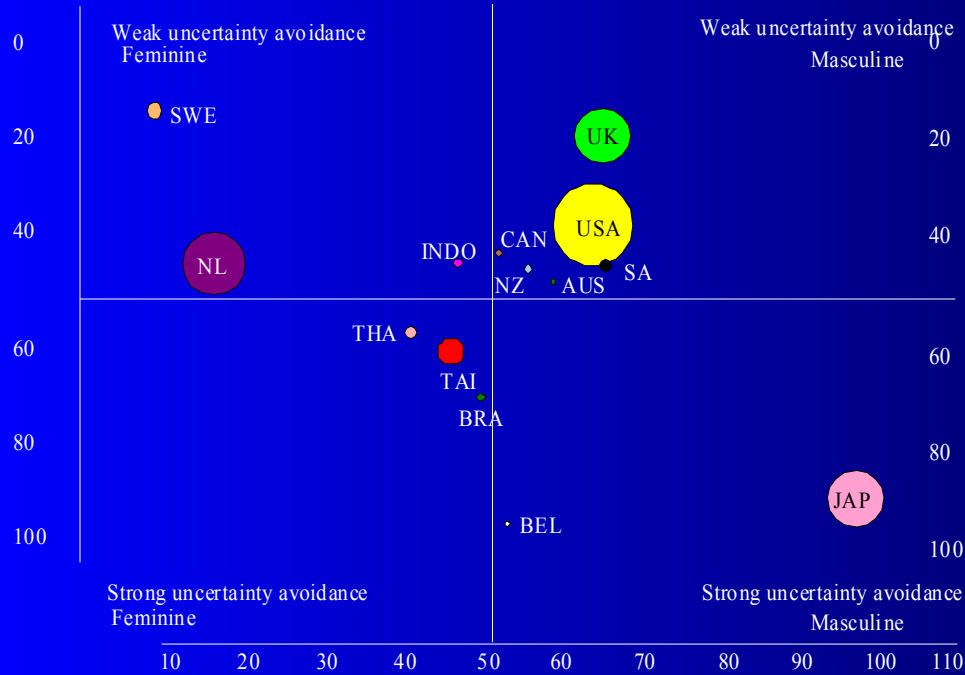


Student nationality groupings:
Power distance and collectivism/individualism
(Allan, 2000)

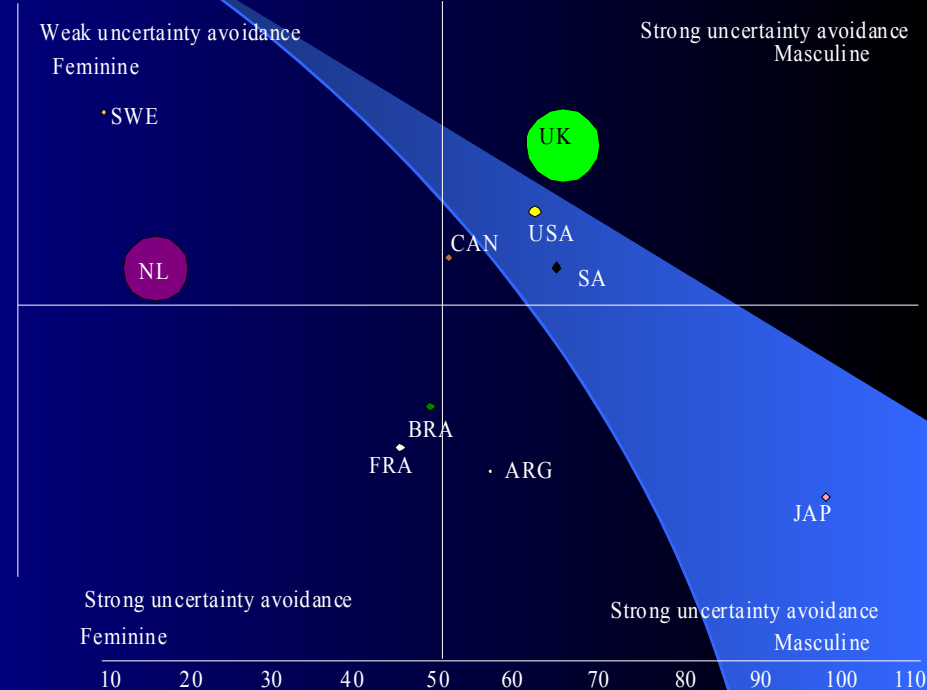


Teacher nationality groupings:
Power distance and collectivism/individualism
(Allan, 2000)

School Culture on Hofstede's (1994) Dimensions



Student nationality groupings:
Uncertainty avoidance; Masculinity/femininity
(Allan, 2000)



Teacher nationality groupings:
Uncertainty avoidance; Masculinity/femininity
(Allan, 2000)

Lesson style

- Student-centred, more equal teacher-student relationship
- High level of teacher-student interaction
- Criticism and disagreement acceptable
- Informal communication
- Student participation

Skills

- Emphasis on logical and linear thinking
- Creativity and participation
- Communication and presentation
- Extracting specific information from text

Learning

- Self-reliance, independence encouraged
- Flexibility - Open-ended assignments
- Learning in a context-free setting → transferable knowledge and skills

“When dominant monism is upheld in schools, this orientation is transmitted to ethnic children via the peer group, the school, the mass media and even their own family which may succumb to the cultural dominance of the majority group”
(Smolicz, 1981, p 2)

Integrity vs. Pragmatism?

We can't be fair to all the children all the time

We shouldn't be fair to some of the children all of the time

We can be fair to all of the children some of the time