

Does The Long Term Oriented Cultural Dimension in University Have an Impact on a Culture of Student Indulgence?

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1. Introduction

EFL teachers who come to Japan and have careers face many tasks, such as motivating students, keeping students in line with class work, and tests. These difficulties are a baseline, and are shared by a majority of teachers in English teaching above and beyond just creating a curriculum, rubric and sometimes their own materials, to face the challenge of giving students the education they need and what their department wants students to have a firm grasp on before leaving with their diplomas. Of course, this isn't limited to just English teachers. Teachers who educate at the university level in all forms of academia face the problems of students who would much rather be out having a good time, shirking their responsibilities for later on, when they have also created curriculum that would best be learned piece by piece in gradual amounts that allow for understanding and retention .

The International Resource Sciences Department has a similar situation as do other university departments. The difference, and what makes it more compelling is that the department is attempting to use a content and language integrated learning (CLIL) system for the four year degree of students in both the *rieki* (sciences) and *bunkei* (humanities) sections of the department.

CLIL is best described as the combination of learning language and content simultaneously. It was created as a term for different forms of using language as the medium of instruction. It has been successfully used in global business and perceived as an effective approach.

The basis of CLIL is that the classroom subjects are taught in the L2, for example teaching Japanese students subjects like mathematics, geology and engineering all in English. This integrates the language into the broader curriculum and motivates students to learn the language more naturally because the language is seen in real-life situations. In use of CLIL fluency is more important than accuracy as learners use English to communicate for the varied purposes of their studies. The use of CLIL has many advantages such as creating more internationalized learners, improving overall language competence and preparing for future studies such as a doctorate or a working life where the L2 is needed. (Darn, 2006)

The students of the International Resource Sciences Department have a special situation in which they take all of their classes primarily in English. From the beginning of Intensive English for Academic Purposes, through their major courses with anthropologists, linguists, and geologists to name a few, in some major form or another, English language is the vehicle for instruction. The objective is to build their English ability parallel to their content courses, and to make students more versatile when searching for jobs in their fields. The International Resource Sciences Department's goal is to propel students into global citizens who speak a common language, so that they can do resource related business with other countries for the benefit of the companies they work for, whether those are Japanese or not.

This system sounds exceptionally rewarding. Students are accepted in and must learn English in various ways beyond two years of intensive courses with English instructors, take their main courses in primarily the L2, or as much English as can be taught, to culminate in a research trip in a foreign country, to do research, and return and report on their experience in English.

2. Teaching in Cultural Dimensions

Culturally speaking, this new department and its way of using CLIL with resource science/management classes, as new as it would seem, still continues a trend of forward thinking, or long term orientation that Japanese culture is known for. The Hofstede Dimensions Scale explains that Japan as a country is high in long term orientation.

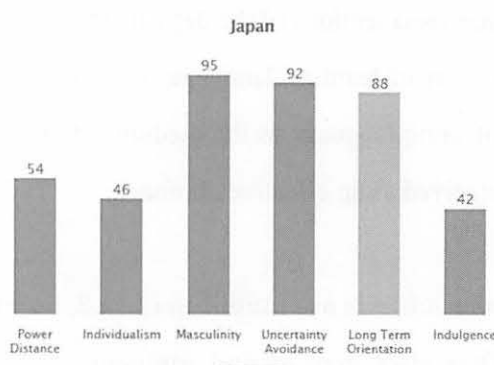


Figure 1. Hofstede Insights Country Comparison: Japan, Long term Orientation n.d.

from <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/japan/>

Japan, being at 88 in the dimension of long term orientation indicates that it is one of the highest in the world. As a culture, Japanese tend to be thinking toward the future and how best to serve not the immediate needs of people, but the security and future needs of all people.

In corporate Japan, you see long term orientation in the constantly high rate of investment in R&D even in economically difficult times, higher own capital rate, priority to steady growth of market share rather than to a quarterly profit, and so on. They all serve the durability of the companies. The idea behind it is that the companies are not here to make money every quarter for the share-holders, but to serve the stake holders and society at large for many generations to come. (Hofstede Insights Country Comparison: Japan, n.d.)

A department and students with a main goal of fashioning resource science leaders that would in essence travel with their respective companies around the world in search of, and management of natural resources for industries such as manufacture, and power supply is very much long term oriented. This is a department hoping to create a continuous supply of resources to Japan, by instructing learners through CLIL, to produce students with valuable English-speaking assets, working in the resource field for future Japanese to benefit from.

As good as this may sound however, there are questions to be answered: Are the students following along the way they should? Are they embracing the holistic curriculum and understanding what it means to study for a future in the resource sciences?

Japan could be described as a delayed gratification culture. University students, for example, share the same adolescent experiences of growing up with heavy workloads in grade school through high school, in order to continue to entrance exam time for university acceptance. It is well known that once students enter university they have, in essence, made it to a time where they no longer have to work as hard as they did through childhood, and can have a greater amount of freedom and mobility to grow as social beings.

In Japan, the university years are often regarded as a four-year-long vacation between the grind of high school and a working career. Japanese students compare their university days with living at a country club. There are few tests or term papers. For many young people it is the first time in their lives they have time and the freedom to date and party. Japanese college students do not study much because almost everyone graduates, and because the GPAs do not matter in employment recruitment. It is difficult to enter competitive universities, but once enrolled, the vast majority of students graduate. (Hays, 2008)

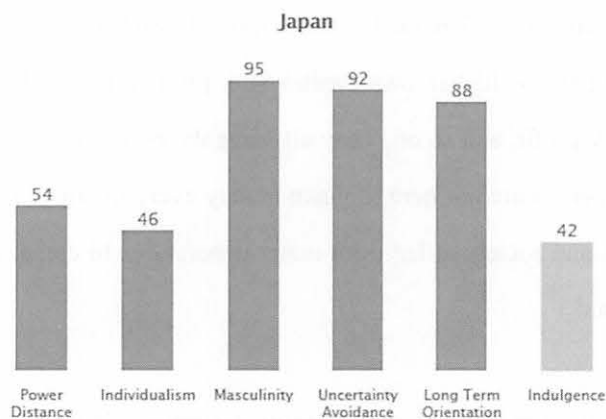


Figure 2. Hofstede Insights Country Comparison: Japan, Indulgence n.d.,
from <https://www.hofstede-insights.com/country-comparison/japan/>

Realistically, university is a time of decompression for students. They feel like they have worked hard and suffered through immense struggles for the pay-off of university life, where they can now experiment and try out new experiences. This delayed gratification by students follows concretely with another of Hofstede's dimensions, that of indulgence vs restraint.

One challenge that confronts humanity, now and in the past, is the degree to which small children are socialized. Without socialization we do not become "human". This dimension is defined as the extent to which people try to control their desires and impulses, based on the way they were raised.

Relatively weak control is called "Indulgence" and relatively strong control is called "Restraint".

Cultures can, therefore, be described as Indulgent or restrained. Japan, with a low score of 42, is shown to have a culture of Restraint. Societies with a low score in this dimension have a tendency to cynicism and pessimism. Also, in contrast to Indulgent societies, restrained societies do not put much emphasis on leisure time and control the gratification of their desires. People with this orientation have the perception that their actions are restrained by social norms and feel that indulging themselves is somewhat wrong. (Hofstede Insights Country Comparison: Japan, n.d.)

Japanese children are conditioned early on that university is a time of decompression. They are taught this by their families, friends, multimedia, and culture at large. The heavy workload until university is a form of restraint. The social norms of Japanese society clearly reinforce this as well as the idea that university life is a time of indulgence before a much longer period of adulthood restraint, also socially and culturally accepted as the norm. University, in effect is an end game of gratification for years of hard work.

In the Resource Sciences Department, where the principal goal is long term oriented, and attempting to shape students into leaders for the betterment of Japan into the future, how willing are students to internalize the rhetoric they are given? When faced with the loss or partial loss of indulgence that students have felt they worked for since childhood, do they accept the situation and continue in restraint for long term benefit or try to get what they believe to be rightfully theirs? To find out, a survey was administered to students of the International Resource Sciences department.

3. The Survey

The survey was conducted with 127 students. Students came from both the *bunkei* (Humanities) department and from the *rikei* (Sciences) department. In total, the majority were male at 75% and female at 25%

The survey asked agree/disagree questions ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree about life for the students. These five questions provided statements that were introduced as a way for students to self-reflect on their childhood briefly, and on their current life as college students. Final questions were attempting to get students to think about their future occupation and the role university life played in that future.

Statement 1: You worked very hard from childhood through high school in order to get to college.

Agree or disagree?

あなたは幼少時から高校、大学に進学するために一生懸命頑張った。同意する、又は 同意しない												
	強く反対		反対		やや反対		やや賛成		賛成		強く賛成	
1	5.51%	7	7.09%	9	17.32%	22	36.22%	46	29.13%	37	4.72%	6

For the students in this statement, 70% agree to strongly agree that they worked hard and only 30% disagreed.

Statement 2: After university, I will do any job as long as the money is good. Agree or disagree?

卒業後は給料が良ければどんな仕事でもする 同意する、又は 同意しない												
	強く反対		反対		やや反対		やや賛成		賛成		強く賛成	
1	7.87%	10	25.20%	32	31.50%	40	23.62%	30	9.45%	12	2.36%	3

The survey here suggests that students felt as if they disagreed more with the statement at 64% with

only 35% agreeing that money is a determining factor of a career.

Statement 3: My university degree will probably not be related to my career after university.

Agree or disagree?

自分の学部は将来の職種とは違う系統になるとおもう。同意する 又は 同意しない												
	強く反対		反対		やや反対		やや賛成		賛成		強く賛成	
1	4.72%	6	22.05%	28	29.92%	38	27.56%	35	11.81%	15	3.94%	5

43% of students here agree to some respect while 56% disagree and believe the degree will be related.

Statement 4: University is mainly for learning about life as a working adult. Agree or disagree?

大学生生活は主に(今後の)社会人生活を知るための期間である。同意する、又は 同意しない												
	強く反対		反対		やや反対		やや賛成		賛成		強く賛成	
1	2.36%	3	3.94%	5	11.81%	15	37.01%	47	36.22%	46	8.66%	11

A majority at 81 % believe that university is for learning about life with 18% believing that university is for some other purpose.

Statement 5: University does not prepare me for real life. Agree or disagree?

大学は社会に出るための準備期間になっていない 同意する、同意しない												
	強く反対		反対		やや反対		やや賛成		賛成		強く賛成	
1	5.51%	7	18.90%	24	20.47%	26	26.77%	34	18.90%	24	9.45%	12

55% of students believe that university is not preparation for the real world outside and 45% believe it does prepare for the real world.

4. Results

Not surprising, in statement 1, students felt that they worked hard from grade school through high school to get into university. Now that they are in university and established as students, are the

majority following along with the curriculum and working toward a long term orientated future, or are they in the mind set of indulgence and university is their four-year country club?

In statements two and three, the survey attempted to establish that the degree itself was not important, as much as getting through university. To say a person would do any job as long as the money is good, would indicate that any career for a good salary regardless of the university degree field is what is most important. It seemed surprising that a majority disagreed with both statements.

One way to explain this is the current economic situation in Japan as a sellers' market in all industries. Where in the past it was difficult to find employment in Japan, it is now much easier to find a job.

Japan currently has a sellers' market for labor. The situation has changed greatly in recent years. The share of non-regular employees has topped 40%, and average incomes have been trending down; meanwhile the low birthrate has led to a severe shortage of workers. This is a serious problem for businesses. And even the administration of Prime Minister Abe Shinzō, which has a conservative image, is working at promoting the dynamic engagement of all citizens, such as by bringing more women into the workforce, and relaxing restraints on admission of non-Japanese workers in the aim of increasing the labor supply. In the present sellers' market, students who are highly rated by companies have been receiving multiple job offers. This is a headache for corporate personnel departments. Superior students who have received a *naitei* from one company have no compunctions about backing out if they subsequently get an offer from a company higher on their list. As they put it, "Companies choose among students, so it's only natural for students to choose among companies"—a self-assured assessment that was rarely heard in the past. (Uehara, 2016)

Students are coming to realize that they have a good chance of finding jobs that they would like, not just for the money or for survival, but really have a chance at something they feel comfortable with, or really would enjoy doing. Students now, are not feeling that they are forced to take the first job they are offered.

In statements four and five, four being the most clearly defined by students of all the questions on the survey, students believe university is about learning career life before entering the work force. Statement five had a slight majority who did not believe university prepared them for social/societal life after university. The intention of these statements was to indicate that life at college is preparatory to working life outside of university. While statement five was meant to root out the indulgence dimension of students, they still indicated that what they are studying at university is important.

If students believe they are working for a long term-oriented goal of getting a career that fits their degree, the question then is, are they following through? Are students going out and getting jobs in resource management or sciences? According to a resource sciences department memo, the current graduating students are doing just that.

Table 1. Job hunting results of Resource Sciences Department 2017-2018

資源政策コース就職内定企業 一覧(2018年1月末現在)					
業界	整理番号	性別	就職内定先・進学先	業種	東京証券市場上場
資源、資源系 商社、電力・ ガス	1	男	東北電力株式会社	電力	東証一部
	2	男	東北電力株式会社	電力	東証一部
	3	男	古河機械金属株式会社	非鉄金属・産業機械	東証一部、日経225
	4	男	日鉄鉱業株式会社	鉱業	東証一部
	5	女	三井金属鉱業株式会社	非鉄金属	東証一部
	6	男	神鋼商事株式会社	商社、神戸製鋼所直系	東証一部
	7	男	アストモスエネルギー株式会社	LPガス商社	出光興産、三菱商事系列
	8	男	岩谷産業株式会社	ガス専門商社	東証一部
	9	男	日本軽金属HD 日軽金アクト株式会社	アルミニウム原材料及	東証一部
	10	男	豊通マテリアル株式会社	豊田通商グループの金属系専門商社	豊田通商として東証一部

This is an excerpt from the Resource Sciences and Policy Department memo detailing students who have received job offers from companies as of the first of 2018. The yellow column indicates what company they will work for. The blue indicates what type of resource and green is to indicate if they are listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange. If a company is listed on the exchange it is most likely a large company, in turn meaning a good job by most standards.

According to this portion of the larger memo, there are ten students who have received job offers from various resource companies such as gas, electric power and manufacture and sale of aluminum resources. All are listed on the Tokyo Stock Exchange as either a subsidiary or as their main company.

5. Conclusion

The main goal of this survey and research was to explore if a department using English CLIL courses with a curriculum in resources sciences is able to continue the long term orientation of

students, in opposition to the idea of student indulgence which they feel they had worked for throughout childhood.

Teachers want to know that what they strive to accomplish in a classroom has a payoff in the sense that students will actually go into a field that they studied for. EFL teachers must study new material and become proficient in subjects often alien to their own understanding. In the past it was well known that graduating students would take almost any job if the money was good. The economy was not in a place where young adults entering the work force had a choice in the matter.

To be completely fair-minded to the situation, universities do hold some responsibility for what careers students do get navigated into, in the form of job fairs and university connections.

Universities provide their students with information about job openings, hold career seminars, and operate career centers where students can receive individual guidance about finding a job. Through these activities the universities seek to achieve a rapid transformation of their students from “children” who lack essential social know-how into functional “grown-ups.” In that sense, this is a form of education. (Uehara, 2016)

Ultimately though, if it is currently a seller’s market in Japan, then why would so many students in a resource sciences department choose to accept a career specifically in resource sciences, unless they feel as if they have worked for the long term benefit of a degree that helps them attain that job at the expense of losing some or all of the indulgence they felt they worked for throughout childhood.

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