

Culture and Approaches to Learning and Teaching

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Abstract

The focus of the current study is on *approaches* to learning and teaching rather than a study of learning styles and the impact of a particular style on how students perform. Arguably learning styles and the impact of a particular style on how a student performs has been a topic of discussion for years particularly in language learning; less attention has been given to how approaches to learning are influenced by cultural attitudes, beliefs and structures and the subsequent influence of these approaches on how students cope in education. The current piece of research was undertaken as an initial exploratory work to examine the question of whether or not learning approaches developed in early learning experiences and evolving from a particular cultural view impact on and prepare students for subsequent learning. Cultures differ in how they perceive knowledge and learning and in the expectations they have from the outcomes of learning. Background information is provided on approaches to learning within the cultural context and a tried and tested instrument used to measure learners' approaches delivered through an online survey. Results are presented, discussed and the appropriateness of these approaches to the current university learning environment is considered.

Keywords: cultural approaches, individualism, collectivism, power distance, uncertainty