



Intercultural Agility for Advisors

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What is Intercultural Agility – and Why Do I Need It?

- ▶ Intercultural agility is the ability to communicate and behave EFFECTIVELY and APPROPRIATELY with people from other cultures
- ▶ As an advisor, you encounter people with cultural backgrounds that are different from yours on a daily basis.
 - ▶ Understanding cultural differences – and how to navigate them – will make you more effective in your work and help you understand the people around you.
 - ▶ Appreciating culture means appreciating where your students come from – and how best to help them meet their goals!

What is Culture?

And Why Do Cultures Differ?

- ▶ Culture: “a learned set of shared interpretations about beliefs, values, norms, and social practices, which affect the behaviors of a relatively large group of people” (Lustig and Koester 2013, 25).
- ▶ Culture provides a tailored response to a unique set of conditions – geography, ecology, biology, history, etc.
- ▶ Culture provides a common frame of references so that people in close proximity to one another more easily understand and coordinate actions, relationships, and responses to outside forces.

The Iceberg Model

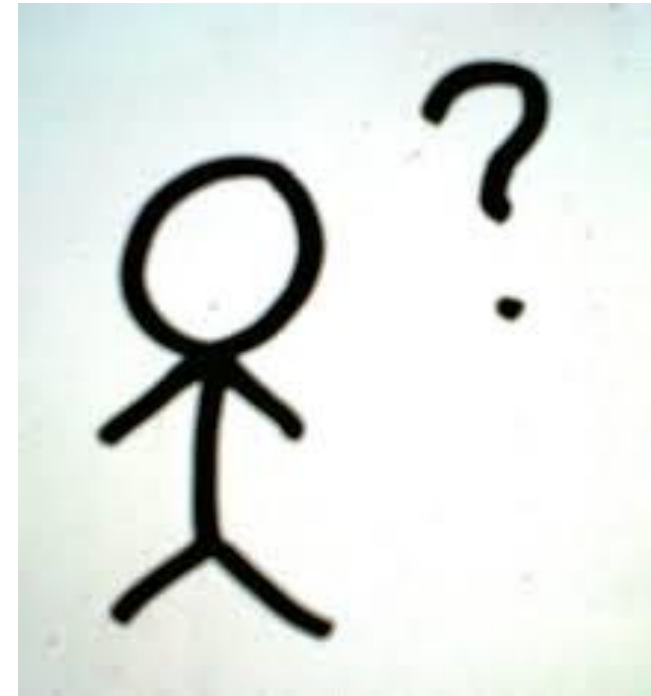
Culture as an Iceberg

Many cultural differences are obvious, while others are rooted deeply within.



But First ...Know Thyself

- ▶ What identities are important to you?
 - ▶ Racial
 - ▶ Ethnic
 - ▶ Regional
 - ▶ Gender
 - ▶ Sexuality
 - ▶ Religion, etc.
- ▶ What values do you live by?
 - ▶ Generosity
 - ▶ Respect
 - ▶ Bravery
 - ▶ Individualism, etc.
- ▶ Which identities or values might be challenged in your environment?



Using Cultural Dimensions for Intercultural Competence

- ▶ Cultural dimensions provide generalizations about “national character” and how to compare culture to culture
- ▶ Americans culture is identified as egalitarian, individualistic, competitive, risk tolerant, monochromic, indulgent, direct, and universalist.
 - ▶ How does this compare to YOUR identity?
- ▶ Once you know what YOUR cultural profile is, you can predict where conflict or confusion may arise
 - ▶ Prepare yourself, and think about how best to diffuse these situations

Egalitarian vs Hierarchical

Disagree Strongly - 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 - Agree Strongly

- ▶ I generally prefer a formal, structured advising environment.
- ▶ I like for my supervisor to tell me what to work on in what order.
- ▶ I think people should acknowledge rank based on age and position.
- ▶ I like to have a clear definition of my role as during group work.
- ▶ I prefer to have my work checked by my supervisor often.

Time Orientation

Disagree Strongly - 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 - Agree Strongly

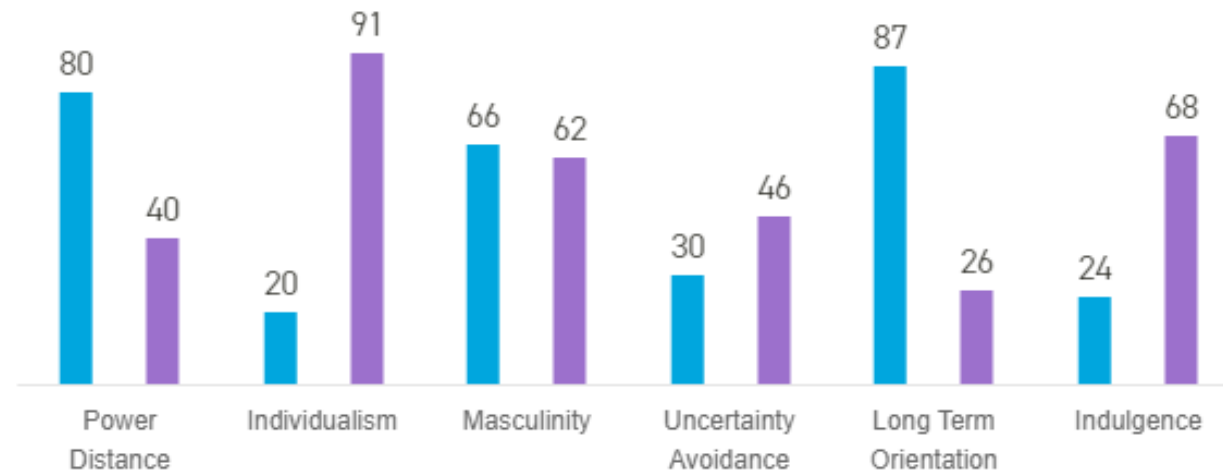
- ▶ I think that being on time is a sign of respect and competence.
- ▶ I believe you should meet a deadline, no matter what.
- ▶ Advising sessions should be short and to the point.
- ▶ If someone is taking too long, it is ok to interrupt them.
- ▶ Time is completely under my control.
- ▶ Time management is an important skill.

Compare Country Profiles

<https://www.hofstede-insights.com/product/compare-countries/>

China ×

United States ×



READ MORE ABOUT CHOSEN COUNTRIES

Tips for Being Interculturally Savvy

▶ Do Not

- ▶ Assume you know a person's cultural identity – remember how much is “beneath the surface”
- ▶ Base assumptions on negative stereotypes
- ▶ Consider cultural difference a barrier
- ▶ Expect to be unaffected by encounters with cultural difference
- ▶ Lose control of your emotions
- ▶ Isolate yourself away from groups you don't understand
- ▶ Assume “your way” is the “right way”
- ▶ Let cultural differences negatively impact your work

▶ Do

- ▶ Ask questions about a student's background and listen to their stories
- ▶ Use generalizations to make informed predictions and strategies
- ▶ Students from diverse backgrounds have a rich skill
- ▶ Predict what might affect you most
- ▶ Be aware of yourself + practice coping strategies
- ▶ Find a cultural mentor and ask questions!
- ▶ Try things a different way – people do it for a reason!
- ▶ Enjoy the learning experience and aim to improve your cultural agility

Critical Incidents and Questions