

CONTRASTING VALUES

INDIVIDUALISTIC

People from individualistic cultures are more likely to have an independent view of themselves: they see themselves as separate from others, define themselves based on their personal traits, and see their characteristics as relatively stable and unchanging. Based on Hofstede’s scale, the USA, Canada, and most Western European countries have the highest ratings of individualism. These types of values can become so deeply embedded in culture that they become almost invisible to the dominant group, as it is the perceived “norm.” In many ways, these value sets can become almost hard-wired to those raised within the value set, and they can become an implicit mode of operation.

Domain	Description	Example
Independent	Freedom, self-sufficiency, and control over one’s life	<i>I tend to do my own thing, and others in my family do the same.</i>
Goals	Striving for one’s own goals, desires, and achievements	<i>I take great pride in accomplishing what no one else can accomplish.</i>
Compete	Personal competition and winning	<i>It is important to me that I perform better than others on a task.</i>
Unique	Focus on one’s unique, idiosyncratic qualities	<i>I am unique—different from others in many respects.</i>
Private	Thoughts and actions private from others	<i>I like my privacy.</i>
Self-knowledge	Knowing oneself; having a strong identity	<i>I know my weaknesses and strengths.</i>
Direct communication	Clearly articulating one’s wants and needs	<i>I always state my opinions very clearly.</i>

REFLECTION

Compare and contrast individualist and collectivist values.

What are some examples that have led you to this decision?

Is your personal culture and ways of operating more closely aligned with a collectivist or individualist culture?

How have the domains of your dominant cultural value manifested in your practice as an educator? (Consider the projects you assign, the way that you grade, the way that you provide feedback, and the students that you relate with better.)

COLLECTIVIST

People from collectivist cultures are more likely to have an interdependent view of themselves: they see themselves as connected to others, define themselves in terms of relationships with others, and see their characteristics as more likely to change across different contexts. Collectivist cultures are often represented by Eastern philosophies such as those in Japan, China, and Korea; however, indigenous people groups, as well as Central and South Americans also are primarily collectivist cultures.

Domain	Description	Example
Related	Considering close others an integral part of the self	<i>To understand who I am, you must see me with members of my group.</i>
Belong	Wanting to belong to and enjoy being part of groups	<i>To me, pleasure is spending time with others.</i>
Duty	The duties and sacrifices being a group member entails	<i>I would help, within my means, if a relative were in financial difficulty.</i>
Harmony	Concern for group harmony and that groups get along	<i>I make an effort to avoid disagreements with my group members.</i>
Advice	Turning to close others for decision help	<i>Before making a decision, I always consult with others.</i>
Context	Self changes according to context or situation	<i>How I behave depends on who I am with, where I am, or both.</i>
Hierarchy	Focus on hierarchy and status issues	<i>I have respect for the authority figures with whom I interact.</i>
Group	A preference for group work	<i>I would rather do a group paper or lab than do one alone.</i>

APPLICATION

Describe an activity in your class (project and its grading method) that exhibits more individualistic characteristics (dominant Western values).

How would these changes and the resulting activity create a more equitable learning environment for your students?

How can you adjust this activity to incorporate (more) collectivist values?