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Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society

Title

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Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5d59h20d>

Journal

Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, 33(33)

ISSN

1069-7977

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Publication Date

2011

Peer reviewed

Do Culture Related Factors Influence Students' Critical Thinking Use?

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Abstract: This study examined whether culture related factors influence university students' critical thinking use. The participants were 363 students from Kyoto and Okinawa in Japan, and Auckland in New Zealand. They completed a questionnaire assessing critical thinking use, study self-efficacy, adherence to authority, regulatory mode (assessment/locomotion), and self-construal (independence/ interdependence). Critical thinking was found to correlate with self-efficacy, locomotion, and independence. The Auckland group scored higher than both Japanese groups in these factors. In contrast, the Okinawa group scored higher than the other two groups in adherence to authority and interdependence. Compared to either or both Japanese groups, the Auckland students also scored higher in the following critical thinking measures: objectivity in writing, logical thinking, and reliance on evidence. A hypothesis is proposed that self-construal is linked to regulatory mode and self-efficacy, and these in turn are linked to critical thinking use. The result of structural equation modeling supports this hypothesis.