



Cultural Foundations of Learning: East and West

By Jin Li

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Western and East Asian people hold fundamentally different beliefs about learning that influence how they approach child rearing and education. Reviewing decades of research, Dr. Jin Li presents an important conceptual distinction between the Western mind model and the East Asian virtue model of learning. The former aims to cultivate the mind to understand the world, whereas the latter prioritizes the self to be perfected morally and socially. Tracing the cultural origins of the two large intellectual traditions, Li details how each model manifests itself in the psychology of the learning process, learning affect, regard of one's learning peers, expression of what one knows, and parents' guiding efforts. Despite today's accelerated cultural exchange, these learning models do not diminish but endure.

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Cultural Foundations of Learning: East and West By Jin Li Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #644503 in Books
- Published on: 2012-03-26
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.98" h x .83" w x 5.98" l, 1.14 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 400 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

"Li (Brown Univ.) compares learning processes and goals of an East Asian learning model with a Western learning model.... provides an interesting comparative analysis of Socratic and Confucian tutors at home during the first years of life.... Recommended..."

--D.L. Stoloff, Eastern Connecticut State University, Choice

"...Li's book is worth reading because it provides a perspective rarely found in tomes on East-West differences."

--Dr. Jean Lau Chin, Derner Institute for Advanced Psychological Studies at Adelphi University
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"...Masterful.... Li's volume is an extraordinary accomplishment. It is an erudite, well documented, clearly argued and original articulation of Western and Eastern approaches to learning. Li treats her topic seriously, providing the depth of analysis necessary to dispel the simple stereotypes that have long plagued East-West cultural comparisons..."

--Michael F. Mascolo, Department of Psychology, Merrimack College, Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology

About the Author

Dr Jin Li is tenured Associate Professor of Education and Human Development at Brown University. Her research examines different cultural learning models and how such culturally based models shape children's learning beliefs and achievement. She collaborates with researchers from Taiwan, Hong Kong, the UK, Germany, Israel and the United States. Dr Li has published in leading journals such as American Psychologist, the Journal of Educational Psychology, Child Development, Developmental Psychology, Ethos and Cognition and Emotion, among others.

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