

EDUC 310 Comparative International Education, Winter 2021

Independent Country Project Guidelines

For this final project (and in lieu of a traditional final exam), you'll be asked to apply what you've learned about Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory, Hofstede's Cultural Dimensions, the OECD's PISA exam, *The Smartest Kids in the World*, as well as any additional primary and secondary source material you choose (including a personal interview) to create a written document and a preliminary comparative analysis. Please read the guidelines below carefully and let us know if you have any questions.

1. Choose a Country to Examine

After exploring the education systems in Finland, South Korea, Poland, United States, China, India, Kuwait, Argentina, Nigeria, and Australia this quarter, identify a country of interest to you that is not on this list.

2. Research

- **Read:** Locate and read **at least two** research-based articles about your country's education system and at least one other supplemental material source (articles, podcasts, films, etc.). Read through the six Cultural Dimensions for this country as well as their latest PISA report from the OECD website. If your chosen country is not part of the OECD or has not taken the PISA or is not profiled on the Cultural Dimensions website, find a country that is geographically and demographically close enough to review. Our friendly UW Education Librarian, **Deborah Pierce**, can also assist you with locating information. Please don't hesitate to reach out to her here: <https://guides.lib.uw.edu/research/dpierce>
- **Interview:** Locate at least one person with experience as either an **educator** (teacher or administrator at the national, state, district or school level) or as a **student** (ideally K-12 but college is OK) from this country's school system. Conduct an interview with them using your own set of questions. I recommend using Teach For All networks and/or International Baccalaureate schools to find people who can share their experiences in English with you.
- **Compare:** Choose at least three features* (inputs and outputs) to compare between your country's education system and at least five of the countries we've examined this quarter. How do Cultural Dimensions, Ecological Systems theory, the readings, and/or your interview(s) explain or inform these outcomes? What questions does this raise for you as you compare?

**For example: PISA scores, national spending on education, [teacher status](#), % of students who graduate from high school or college, special education provisions, World Happiness Index, # of school hours/days, standards, curriculum, etc. There are a host of data from agriculture to trade that you can dig into here as well: <https://www.oecd.org/statistics/compare-your-country.htm>.*

3. Write Your Report

- **Provide an overview for your first two paragraph(s):**
 - 1) Why did you chose this particular country? Does it hold any significance in your life?
 - 2) What was the research process like for you? Explain how you located resources, secured the interview, and organized your time.
- **Promising Practices**

In 2-3 paragraphs, share at least two "promising practices" this country's education system has to share with the world (a promising practice is something that seems to be working well, whether it's a piece of legislation or an ecological systems approach or even a cultural dimension). Explain how you arrived at this conclusion (back up your claims)!

- **Issues to Address**

In the next 2-3 paragraphs, share at least two of the most important issues / problems this country needs to address to improve its education system. Again, explain how you reached this conclusion.

- **Comparative Table and Analysis**

Create a table that shows a side-by-side analysis of three educational features you compared with at least five of the countries we studied in class. You can choose to illustrate this in any way you'd like (numerically, stoplight colors, text, etc.). To accompany your table, please write 3-4 paragraphs that help explain the differences and similarities you've identified (through Cultural Dimensions, Ecological Systems, PISA scores, finance, population size, demographics, etc.) Please also share the questions that this all raises for you.

- **Bibliography**

Create a bibliography written in MLA format and attached at the end of your report. You should have at least two research-based articles and one other source (this is in addition to your interview).

- **Interview Questions**

Provide the name and title of the person(s) you interviewed for this project and the list of questions you asked in an Appendix. You do NOT need to include the responses to your questions (we are more interested in the sophistication of the questions you asked).

4. Provide a Peer Review

- You will exchange your semi-final project with your Conversation Partner and provide detailed feedback to them using the Peer Review & Feedback form. After reviewing your partner's feedback, take time to revise, edit and refresh your project before submitting your final for grading.