

# Harnessing learning style preferences of Asian students to develop engaged learning: observations from a cross-cultural study.

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There is a growing body of literature exploring Asian students' learning preferences as well as learning and teaching approaches which embrace these preferences to develop more engaged learners. This paper examines the development of Asian students' learning preferences in a new academic context of study at a UK university and the role of the educational environment in helping them become more engaged learners.

*Research objectives:* The paper is based on the study which aimed to investigate Asian students' learning approaches when faced with new educational demands across contexts and time. It also aimed to measure how the students' deep learning approach can be enhanced via learning and teaching geared to develop engaged learners.

*Methodology:* To address these questions, the study employed a qualitative data collection method. Students were requested to complete learning logs for six months: three months in China and three months in the UK. The analysis of the logs helped develop a set of generalisations about how students react to the new academic environment.

*Findings:* The students at the UK university display a reduction of a surface approach and an adoption of deeper approach to studies. It is evident that the students develop new learning skills and are becoming more understanding of engaged and independent learning. It is argued that learning and teaching which fosters group and individual work, extrinsic motivation, student-centered learning and deep assessment methods builds on the existing students' learning preferences and can stimulate the development of engaged and independent learning.

Keywords: learning style preferences, Asian students, engaged learners, learning and teaching approach