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**Abstract**

This paper presents the outcomes of a study carried out in 2001?2002 with nine postgraduate students from China, enrolled on taught master's programmes in a UK university business school. The aims of the research were to explore the development of the students' orientations to learning during their year of study in the UK, and to explore how the researcher's interactions with the study group contributed to her professional reflections and influenced her academic practice. The main conclusions of the project were that participants' underlying approaches to learning did not change substantially over the year, owing to the culturally implicit nature of UK academic conventions and that they experienced high levels of emotional isolation and loneliness, which affected their academic confidence. (HRK / Abstract übernommen)