

Comparing academic cultures

Student 1: *Especially in seminars the students' attitude is very different from Japanese students. They speak...they often speak up in seminars and discuss (with) each other, so often. In Japan we don't talk a lot in seminars. We try to keep quiet.*

Tutor 1: *And I know certainly when I was teaching Japanese students, you know, it took me a while to get used to this...that they...they wouldn't interact as much as other students I taught and, you know, I had to think of strategies to make them feel comfortable, to speak out. I was teaching English so I did need them to speak. But I think sometimes people could assume that these students just haven't got anything to say...they haven't understood the topic. But it's just a cultural thing that, you know, you don't really speak out on your own, you sort of confer in a group first, you know, so that's something that, you know, would be...needs to be taken into account with students from other countries I think.*

Tutor 2: *But we do know that many Chinese students also don't do writing. They also are not able or they're not taught, or not trained, or not practised, at drawing on a wide variety of sources. So the issues that arise in terms of writing are the same for all of those groups. If you're not experienced in writing then the writing challenge is a difficult one and you need maybe a lot more instruction.*

Student 2: *I think in China the teachers...they told you what you need to do and they will probably give you many details about you should do, but in UK now the teacher...he will give you a point you should do...(you should to do)...and you have to research by yourself and control the time and the study...you have to control by yourself.*

Tutor 3: *When students are approaching an assessment task, something new that they've never done before in a new situation and perhaps in a new language in a new context with new rules it's very scary, and so even though they know they should do it differently, plagiarism is a classic example, they know they should paraphrase, they know they should write things in their own words. When it comes to it, that moment of doing it, it's so powerful the familiar that they're almost drawn on a piece of elastic and are pulled back to what they've known and what they've done for years and actually letting go of that familiar, letting go of the things that have always worked, letting go of the strategies that have served you really well for years and years is a very hard task and students can't do it like that, they can't do it in one go, they need many opportunities to try it out and to learn that nothing bad happens doing it in the new way.*

Student 2: *I know the Western people...they like...the writing should be very logical, step by step. Firstly and secondly, it should be very close...very clearly about the meaning but in China there...the writing...it's also should also be very clear and logical but the structure is different. The structure...it's not very step by step.*