

## **STUDENTS' ORIENTATIONS TO LEARNING**

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This paper reports work carried out during the pilot phase of an international study on 'Students' Orientations to Learning', undertaken by Britain, Japan, India, Malaysia and Sri Lanka. The major objective of the research at this stage is to examine the question: 'What motivates students to learn?'. In many different countries, for the same or different reasons there is a strong emphasis on assessment/examinations, and this seems to be a primary motivation for learning. But preliminary work in this and other countries suggests that there are other orientations to learning. At the stage of phase I of the pilot study in-depth interviews were carried out with a sample of Grade 11 and 12, (N=17) students from three schools in Colombo. This study suggests a strong social class bias in students' orientation to learning. Most of the sample find the assessment orientation of great importance but variations in its strength and the presence/absence of other orientations is very much a product of one's home and school backgrounds.