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Conceptualising, evaluating and supporting the development of cosmopolitan values in internationalised higher education: A capabilities approach

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Conceptualising, evaluating and supporting the development of cosmopolitan values in internationalised higher education: A capabilities approach

Abstract

Internationalised higher education literature draws attention to the tension between the economic returns of recruiting overseas students and the personal, social and cultural possibilities offered. This paper advances the idea that fostering cosmopolitan values might be an educational focus for internationalisation. However, it appears that the creation of higher education learning environments which promote such values, offering opportunities for students to become more interculturally aware is yet to be achieved. Drawing on the 'capability approach' of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum, an 'intercultural capability set' was constructed as a means of operationalising cosmopolitan values within higher education. Analysis of data from 44 interviews with undergraduate home and international pharmacy students through the lens of capability enabled the identification of factors within the academic environment which act to promote or inhibit the development of intercultural relationships, learning and more cosmopolitan selves. Curriculum, pedagogy and assessment should be therefore examined for their potential to enhance opportunities for intercultural engagement and capability expansion, with participatory dialogue, including staff, students, university departments and stakeholders, about valued outcomes for a university education. It is argued that the capability approach provides a sound basis for operationalising and evaluating efforts to develop students with cosmopolitan values for the present and contributing as future members of society.

Practitioner Notes

1. Evaluating intercultural capabilities through a capability set can help in planning curriculum and pedagogy
2. Group work is an effective medium for promoting intercultural capabilities
3. Group work must be safe and structured to avoid negative outcomes
4. Pedagogy should enable students to learn about, as well as from, each other
5. Safe, inclusive spaces should be provided for students to explore different understandings

Keywords

Intercultural experience, capability approach, internationalisation of higher education, intercultural competence, cosmopolitanism

Introduction

Within current conditions of globalisation, in which there is division and conflict through national and cultural clashes, the increasingly internationalised nature of higher education is creating tensions between its economic and socio-cultural values (Altbach & Knight, 2007; Choudaha, 2019; De Wit, 2019; Deardorff et al., 2012; DfE & DIT, 2019; Knight & De Wit, 2018). The open market of higher education may unfortunately act to further widen the inequalities within education. It provides the opportunity for the wealthiest to further corner their share of the market, leaving the poorest and weakest to struggle, unable to compete within the global education arena and remaining dependent upon foreign providers for education - with the inherent risk of it being mainly profit-driven, inappropriate for local needs or of poor quality. A veneer of altruism appears to run through much of the rhetoric about student experience and global partnerships but, for many players in this field, the primary driver may be profit. The question remains as to whether the needs of the market are compatible with the vision of the university primarily as a place for the creation and dissemination of knowledge and development of personal and social values. In this view, it is essential to retain the public good function of universities, which provides the potential both of a transformative personal educational experience, in pursuit of a fulfilled life, and of creating just societies through its graduates as agents of social change.

Although the diverse higher education environment offers the potential for enhancing students' capacity to benefit from a more diverse student body and creates opportunities for fostering what has become known as 'intercultural competence', there are gaps between the rhetoric and ideals of internationalisation and the lived realities for both home and international students (Cotton et al., 2013; Fozdar & Volet, 2016; Koehne, 2006; Leask, 2010; Sovič, 2009). Most starkly, a lack of interaction between home and international students is noted which deprives home students of a more intercultural outlook and is a source of disappointment and frustration for many international students (Chapman & Pyvis, 2006; Gill, 2007; McKenzie & Baldassar, 2017). It does not follow that proximity of students in itself leads to collective activity and the development of intercultural relationships (Marginson & Sawir 2011).

I propose therefore that Kwame Anthony Appiah's (2006, 2008) idea of cosmopolitan values offers a richer conceptualisation of what kind of graduate might emerge from an internationalised higher education. This justice-based approach recognises the plurality of societies, cultures and identities, fostering understanding, respect and concern for others who are different from ourselves.

As a contribution to addressing the problem, the study presented here illustrates the value of taking a 'capability approach' both to evaluating the extent to which students develop interculturality during their studies and to planning higher education environments that might foster cosmopolitan values. The study is concerned with how pharmacy students interact with each other, socially as well as for academic and professional learning. It seeks to understand how they perceive themselves and their education in relation to others and how they affect the environment for each other. The study was conducted pre-Covid, therefore all classes were in person. Students' group work was in person, with online interaction likely to have been limited to possible document sharing according to out-of-class arrangements made by the group members.

The paper starts by expanding on the theoretical and conceptual framework employed to think about the development of intercultural values and capability in a study of 44 Pharmacy undergraduates. It explains the method for generating data and constructing a capability set for evaluating the extent to which the students appeared to function interculturality. The findings and discussion demonstrate how four capabilities - namely: *Social Relations and Participation; Respect, Dignity and*

Recognition; Mind and Imagination and Enquiry and Reflection - played out in the lives of the students and how analysis of the data through the lens of capability helped to clarify how the educational and social arrangements of the University supported or constrained intercultural capability.

Conceptualising and actualising intercultural values: the ‘capability approach’

‘Intercultural competence’, a term used widely in literature to describe the potential gains by students through internationalised curricula and interactions with culturally-different others, depends upon the acquisition of cultural knowledge, communicative and reflective skills and an attitude of curiosity, openness and flexibility (Alred et al., 2006; Bredella, 2003; Deardorff et al., 2012; Lasonen, 2005; Nussbaum, 1997; Otten, 2003). The capability set developed in this study offers a tool for identifying and establishing conditions which enable freedom for individuals to flourish interculturally - personally and socially, as well as educationally. Rather than define what needs to be ‘acquired’ in order to be interculturally competent, the identification of capabilities offers *all* students opportunity, choice and freedom to develop more intercultural, cosmopolitan selves through interactions with others.

The ‘capability approach’, developed initially by Amartya Sen (1992, 1993, 1999, 2009) and progressed by Martha Nussbaum (2000, 2011), arises from a concern for justice and human relations and is founded on promoting the quality and value of individual lives by way of freedom and choice. Its fundamental concerns are with promoting well-being and agency and expanding opportunity and choice for individuals. A ‘capability’ is an opportunity, a potential or a freedom to do or be what one considers valuable. The actual exercising or expression of capability - termed ‘functioning’ - is affected by circumstance, including choices made by the individual and by others. The approach therefore focuses on options that people ought to have, and which they are also free not to exercise. Sen uses the term ‘capability set’ to describe the personal combination of functionings from which a person can choose.

For Sen (1992, 1999) and Nussbaum (1997, 2002), education is of intrinsic importance for well-being and for expanding individual freedom, enabling the development of other capabilities. It provides the basis for seeing alternative ways of being and doing and for promoting the agency necessary to function in a way that is valued. Others offer the capability approach as a means of conceptualising conditions which promote equality and justice within education (Walker, 2006, 2007; Vaughan et al., 2007; Unterhalter, 2007; Wilson-Strydom & Walker, 2015). Within higher education, the capability approach has been used to imagine and evaluate social and pedagogical arrangements within universities and to evaluate capabilities of university graduates (Flores-Crespo, 2007; Peppin-Vaughan & Walker, 2012; Walker, 2005, 2006; Walker & McLean, 2013). Finally, the area of professional higher education has been examined through the lens of capability (McLean & Walker, 2012; Walker & McLean, 2013; Walker, 2012; Walker et al., 2009), with this work intended to stimulate dialogue about the roles and responsibilities of universities, including helping graduates become oriented towards contributing to public good.

The capability approach can provide a framework for actualising and evaluating the extent to which students are, or can be helped to be, intercultural within educational settings. The study reported here involved formulating a provisional capability set for being intercultural and applying it to interview data to test and refine it. This is a case study of the application of the capability approach to evaluate intercultural capability in students within a School of Pharmacy. However, it illustrates the wider potential of the capability approach within the arena of internationalised higher education.

Generation of student data

The research was conducted in a UK School of Pharmacy that has an MPharm degree course with a university campus in Malaysia. Malaysia Campus students spend the first two years of their degree at university in Malaysia, studying equivalent modules to students at the ‘home’ campus, before joining the students at the UK institution for the final two years of their course (known as ‘2+2’). Just under half of the UK campus students were of white British heritage, about one-fifth were international students from a range of countries, and additionally a small number of international students were enrolled on the 2+2 course. Many students were therefore studying in their second, or possibly even third or fourth, language of English.

Students were recruited for interview by speaking to the class of either third or fourth years, describing the project and asking for volunteers. The aim was to recruit as widely as possible, including home, international and specifically 2+2 course Malaysia Campus students, in order to provide as full a picture as possible. Forty-four year 3 or 4 students were recruited from a total cohort of 340. Fourteen of the year 3 students agreed to interview again the following year. Table 1 shows the number and range of participants.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with students, which explored their views and experiences of the course, friendships and social lives and, specifically, intercultural interactions.

Ethical approval for the study was sought and granted by the relevant higher education institution.

Table 1

Number of Participants by Year and Group

Number of students by year	UK students	EU students (UK campus)	International students (UK campus)	Malaysia Campus students	Total number of students
Third year	10	0	4	13	27
Fourth year	5	1	2	9	17
Total number of first round students	15	1	6	22	44

The analytical process

The analytical process was to explore the relationship between theoretical intercultural capabilities and the experiences and perceptions of students. The first stage was to develop a theoretical set of functionings for interculturality, informed by capability theory and the empirical data. This drew

upon two main sets of theoretical resources: firstly, the work of Martha Nussbaum and others who have constructed higher education capability sets and, secondly, upon Kwame Anthony Appiah's (1998, 2006) conception of cosmopolitanism. Identification of the main themes arising from the interviews was facilitated by coding the data using NVivo software. The functionings which were identified were then grouped into overarching capabilities, which produced an initial intercultural capability set.

The process that generates a capability set is important. The method of selection of capabilities should be transparent and justified. Sen (2005, 2009) maintains that the choice of capabilities should not be purely derived from theory, should be open to public debate and not be regarded as final and fixed lists. Neither should any capabilities be given weighting over another. Nussbaum (2000) describes capabilities as necessarily "thick" and "vague", in other words not too narrowly derived or over-specific, and Walker reminds us that the capability approach in education is for "complexity and for multi-dimensionality, not single capabilities" (Walker, 2006, p129).

The process of constructing the capability set was iterative, moving between capability theory and capability set, the considerations above, and the empirical data. Once the initial capability set was constructed, the usefulness and validity of the set was tested against a sub-set of data which confirmed that, subject to some amendments, it provided a useful descriptive framework of capabilities for being intercultural. The final capability set is shown in Table 2.

Findings and Discussion

The student interview data was analysed for evidence of capability (or lack of capability) and functioning (or restricted functioning) in each of the four capabilities. The findings illustrate how a measure of students' functioning does not necessarily equate with their possession or lack of a capability. Application of the capability approach to the data importantly helped to indicate the extent to which students did and were able to function, rather than solely their possession of capability, and suggested some of the social and pedagogical arrangements which enabled or inhibited functioning.

Intercultural Capability 1: Social Relations and Participation

The capability of *Social Relation and Participation* involves a willingness and ability to interact with other people, akin to Martha Nussbaum's capability of "affiliation", which she considers as being particularly important as it "organises and suffuses" other capabilities (Nussbaum, 2000, p82). Interrogation of the data against this capability showed how the forming of relationships was fundamental to enabling other intercultural capabilities. Analysis by capability also helped to identify factors which created a more enabling environment for functioning with *Social Relations and Participation*.

For example, students who made the effort to cross borders created bridges between groups, helping to enhance agency in others and promoting functioning for themselves and others.

I'm interested in not being narrow-minded and you've got nothing to lose by talking to different people and finding out different information because you never know what you might learn. You never know what you might get yourself from it and help other people. We're all human at the end of the day. (Sarah, British, UK Campus)

Table 2*Capability Set for Being Intercultural*

Capability	Functionings
Social relations and participation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Able to form social and working relationships with others. 2. Able / willing to interact outside of comfort zone; desire to interact outside of comfort zone. 3. Able / willing to use intercultural communication to promote dialogue.
Respect, dignity, and recognition	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Having and showing respect for others; being treated with respect. 2. Recognising, accepting and respecting difference. 3. Recognising a responsibility to others. 4. Allowing and valuing inclusion and contributions of others; being included and having one's contributions valued. 5. Having a voice and allowing others their voice.
Mind and imagination	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seeking to understand others, their worlds and situations. 2. Able to imagine and appreciate one's local and wider connectivities. 3. Open-mindedness. 4. Willing to engage in moral and ethical debate; to explore disagreement; to accept disagreement.
Enquiry and reflection	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Seeking to learn from others, about others, their worlds and situations. 2. Valuing and enjoying difference. 3. Able to think about one's own situation, values, beliefs, received knowledge, practices and behaviours in the light of those of others.

Group work, through requiring students to interact and work with others with whom they might not naturally mix, emerged as a powerful enabling factor. Students expanded their functioning with *Social Relations and Participation* as they became more able to exert their agency and interact outside of their comfort zone.

Meaningful intercultural interactions may be more likely to occur in student-owned or student-created activities, and about one-third of students interviewed said they had found common ground for intercultural friendships outside the course, for example through societies or other social activities. Functioning with *Social Relations and Participation* was enabled as students could relate and communicate more easily about a common subject, opening up opportunities for friendships, discovery and recognition of others.

Social interaction with others, which is the essence of this capability, provides alternative perspectives and bases for choosing what we have reason to value. The above personal, social, and pedagogical factors helped to create situations in which capability could be accrued not only individually, but also collectively.

Nearly all students reported having friends of different nationalities and backgrounds (ranging from friendly acquaintances to close friendships) though, unlike most of the UK students, most of the international students said they desired and expected to make friends with students from countries other than their own. For example: “When I began this course, I wanted to make sure that I made more friends with my local classmates rather than stick to my Malaysian group, and I have done that so I’m really happy.” (Kayla, Kenyan, Malaysia Campus)

A majority of international students had formed intercultural friendships - though largely with other international students and not with British students, For example: “I have an Indian friend, Korean and some from the Caribbean and some, like, British friends and yeah, some of them are Asian as well. My closest friend is from Hong Kong. Another good friend is from Vietnam.” (Jane, Hong Kong, UK Campus).

Much of the literature on cross-cultural student friendships confirms international students’ desire for intercultural friendships, but emphasises the relative lack of interaction with the host culture (McKenzie and Baldassar 2017; Volet and Ang 1998; Caruana and Spurling 2007; Koehne 2006). Nevertheless, through friendships with students from other non-UK countries these students were developing their intercultural capability and a more cosmopolitan identity as they became more able and comfortable in making friends across cultures. UK students were less likely to make cross-cultural friendships, so from this perspective it is UK students who are not developing the capability of social relations in an international environment.

Factors which tended to increase the barriers to the forming of social and working relationships with others created a potential for mis-match between students’ capability and functioning. Making intercultural friendships required the ability to step outside of one’s comfort zone, necessitating effort, courage and confidence, reflected in Kudo, Volet and Whitsed’s (2020) description of students enacting ‘cosmopolitan agency’.

Sometimes making the first step outwards is the hardest step and overcoming that fear of my consciousness and overcoming the fear of not being understood. I think that is the real hindrance, the real barrier in understanding each other and to establishing that friendship as well. So I think we just have to be brave. (Ken Hooi, Malaysian, Malaysia Campus)

I think it takes a lot of confidence to actually walk up to someone who is not of your nationality and talk to them and interact with them, but I think it helps. (Wen Peng, Malaysian, Malaysia Campus)

Actively seeking to make friends from other countries was personally challenging. For example, all three students from Hong Kong interviewed described how they responded to the perceived exclusivity of their compatriots:

I was quite struggling at the first three months. Hong Kong people tend to do things together, have lunch together and even if they finish the lecture they will get all the people and then go to a canteen. And I didn’t like that. I wanted to get more people and that’s why I think the second semester of the first year I tried to – not avoid them

but... I wanted to sit with some other people at the lecture and know more people.
(Julia, Hong Kong, UK Campus)

Julia ran the risk of being seen as rejecting co-national students and what she thought were their behavioural norms when she needed as many good friendships as possible, particularly in the early days of university life. Although Julia was willing to move out of her comfort zone to build cross-cultural relationships, it was a struggle for her to gain the freedom to function in a way she valued. And Julia was unusual in the study. Most students felt that 'it's just easier' to mix with people of similar background, and friends were predominantly of their own culture - a trend reflected in literature (Bochner et al., 2001; Hyland et al., 2008; Volet & Ang, 1998).

The inhibitory effect of the effort or 'mindfulness' (Harrison & Peacock, 2010) needed for successful cross-cultural communication (Kimmel & Volet, 2012; Dunne, 2009; Peacock & Harrison, 2009) was evident. Within the course, conversations and discussions were hampered: "Sometimes they cannot understand my accent and that's the major problem for them. And sometimes I cannot really catch what they are trying to say." (Kimi, Burmese, Malaysia Campus) and "Their English is so limited. So it's really hard to communicate and it's such a barrier between us". (Shaun, British, UK campus)

Socially, friendship groups were often determined by language, because of ease of conversation and a feeling of greater understanding.

I think that most people will just tend to stick to the people who speak the same language and that is mostly the case. I don't see, like, people stepping into other groups that are different nationalities. I think because of the language and it's mainly with the background as well, that's why. Because sometimes I think it is difficult to share my inner feelings in a foreign language to them. (Jane, Hong Kong, UK Campus)

Both international and UK students found it difficult to participate socially when students had different social interests and needs, made additionally difficult through not having an intrinsic understanding of each other's sub-culture.

I feel sometime that our jokes are different and sometime they crack jokes and they would laugh and I wouldn't understand it. It's hard to grasp intercultural and it's a bit different. I do try to understand but it's not that easy. (Ken Hooi, Malaysian, Malaysia Campus)

Even the content of a conversation is slightly different from what we talk to our Malaysian friends. Because the lifestyle is different and the whole growing up is different, so the content is different. (Siew Lan, Malaysian, Malaysia Campus)

It is apparent that attitudinal and behavioural factors, as well as language itself, have a marked impact upon communication. The development of intercultural communicative ability therefore depends upon sensitivity to the multiplicity of factors which impinge upon language use and conversation. Mutual interaction provided the potential for students to develop their linguistic and social skills and strategies for communicating when language impedes the flow of conversation, hence expanding their capability for *Social Relations and Participation*.

Analysis of the data against *Social Relations and Participation* has illustrated how this capability can be hard to put into practice, requiring a degree of effort and, on occasions, difficult personal choices about friendships. Interacting productively with those from different cultures might require

facing unwelcoming behaviour, coping with difficult communication, finding courage, and finding common ground. It appears that those students who made the effort to cross borders connected the inclusion of others with their own well-being. Their actions helped to reduce barriers, enhance agency in others, and create a more enabling environment for capability development.

Intercultural Capability 2: Respect, Dignity and Recognition

This capability is fundamental to conceptions of cosmopolitanism (Nussbaum, 1997, 2002; Appiah, 2006, 2008) whose justice-centred approaches are founded on the respectful and concerned relations of human beings with each other.

Analysis of the data against *Respect, Dignity and Recognition* showed how the ability to function with this capability was particularly affected by the capability of others in allowing students freedom, choices and inclusion, and pointed to the potential impact of educational arrangements in enabling or diminishing both individual and collective capability. Students' discussions about their interactions within group work provided most evidence of this. We see the potential of the student learning community to provide a forum for developing, respectful, inclusive and inquiring attitudes, but also for stifling capability through disregard for or an unwelcoming attitude towards others.

Difficulties existed because of students' own, and others', lack of capability. Some struggled to participate, to be given a voice, and to have their contributions to group work acknowledged. Some students from the Malaysia Campus initially felt excluded from group work activities or found it hard to get local students to listen to their point of view, which diminished their capacity for self-expression. "I try to give my thoughts and sometimes they don't really care about me so I tend to be quiet" (Wee Ting, Malaysian, Malaysia Campus).

From student accounts, an apparent 'stand-offishness' of the British students appeared to be restricting functioning in students who had the desire and willingness to interact for learning or friendship. UK students, in the main, might be considered to be in a position of relative power, being on 'home' ground, with the advantage of familiarity. Sen (2009) argues that with power also comes the obligation to consider how one's actions can reduce injustice and promote freedoms of others. Viewing the data against the capability set illustrated how some UK students did help to increase others' opportunities for inclusion. For example, Sahen, a UK student, described how he recognised a tendency for many international students to remain quiet, and he encouraged their participation. Ken Hooi, from Malaysia, described how the respect and friendliness shown by other students helped her to 'be brave' and speak up, despite her fear of being misunderstood.

Socially, students' attitude and outlook affected how they dealt with situations of difference. Although clashes of social practices and attitudes did inhibit mixing, some students explicitly stated that it was a matter of respecting, adapting and including those differences rather than treating them as obstacles.

There is no barrier in terms of, oh well different people have different religions, different times of going to church or the synagogue or whatnot. It doesn't [cause a problem]. Everyone's like, 'Oh well I can't come then because I'm going to wherever' and it's 'Oh right, oh well we'll do something else tomorrow'. (Sarah, British, UK Campus)

Individuality and difference were recognised as important, and it was apparent that there was a balance to be struck between seeing the individual, whilst not disregarding the significance of their nationality or culture.

There are two different ways of looking at it and in some ways you should accept that everyone is just a person and it doesn't matter what background they come from but, at the same time, you should realise that their backgrounds do matter. You can't just box people. So it's trying to find the balance between those two things. (Jacqui, Swiss, UK Campus)

Jacqui (above), Sarah ("We're all human at the end of the day") and Pei Ann (quoted below) illustrate how some students were developing a cosmopolitan way of thinking, as they recognised the common humanity beneath some comparatively superficial cultural differences.

I'm almost at the end of the course and I do realise that there are a lot of things, a lot of similarities in the culture if you want to view it that way. I suppose I've just come to an understanding that we are really the same people... kind of different but basically the same. (Pei Ann, Malaysian, Malaysia Campus)

Examination of the data against the capability of *Respect, Dignity and Recognition* highlighted the extent to which respect featured in enhancing or diminishing students' relationships and hence their sense of self. Functioning with this capability enabled students, through respecting and accommodating difference, to find basic shared interests and recognise common humanity. Displaying a greater concern for the well-being of others, through the affording of respect and encouraging inclusion, helped to expand capability and promote agency in others. When students were not afforded respect or recognition, their capability was diminished.

Intercultural Capability 3: Mind and Imagination

The capability of *Mind and Imagination* involves the way in which one views others and the challenge that this might therefore present to oneself. Nussbaum (1997) argues that education should be a medium through which the capacity for interpreting and arriving at an understanding of others can be cultivated, and many students, through exposure to different practices and perspectives, had developed this capability and found opportunities for functioning as they learnt and gained understanding about the lives and situations of others.

Some (notably British) students said that, having given little consideration to intercultural aspects of their lives or education before coming to university, they had been provoked to engage with difference.

I think it's good that there are different people, because at school it was white basically, so it's good in preparing me for that next step in your life and you are knowing all these different kinds of people and learning from them and their cultures, where they're from and things like that. (Sandra, British, UK Campus)

Both socially and academically, students gained from seeing different ways of learning and thinking. Nearly all students said that interacting with others of different backgrounds, cultures and persuasions had broadened their horizons and their views. It was apparent that the extent to which students attempted to internalise and make sense of the challenges presented affected the way in which they ultimately viewed others in comparison to themselves. Some students described how they had become more open-minded; more likely to listen to and accept others' points of view and ways of thinking. "It did open my mind a lot because I think I was a little conservative but now I've grown to accept a lot of different things. I'm not so stereotyped" (Wen Peng, Malaysian, Malaysia Campus).

Previously held stereotypical views were challenged and reduced, as students got to know and judge the individual rather than merely associating them with the expected behaviours of a group.

There is such a lot of stereotyping and people say ‘Oh [nationality of] students, they are such and such’ but when you get to know them that isn’t right at all. It’s just whether you want to get to know them and see. (Kah Yeang, Malaysian, Malaysia Campus)

Having friends from different countries or religions enabled students to become more relaxed and able to discuss different practices and opinions. It helped to put issues into perspective - for example, seeing different points of view and understandings of the world helps one start to appreciate how some situations reported in the media might arise. Jennie described having to escape the stereotyped views held by co-nationals (including family members) about other groups which, in her experience, did not hold true.

Just having different groups around you from different areas does get you to think about some of the ideas you’ve got, or the way that you think about things, because different people and different cultures do think about things differently. I think it is important to have all those different inputs so that your ideas and your way of thinking isn’t skewed. When I go back home or when I’m with certain groups, their view is not based on experience; it’s just based on what they believe is the norm. (Jennie, Ghanaian, UK Campus)

As reflected in other studies (Erichsen, 2011; Marginson, 2009; Osmond & Roed, 2010), students who, through exposure to difference were able to develop their capability for *Mind and Imagination*, came to realise the value in having their ideas and preconceptions challenged. However, there had been some reinforcing or forming of negative stereotypical opinions, particularly in the academic environment, as evidenced by comments about cultural traits. It appears that these students had been unable to find some common basis upon which to engage with difference and recognise the individual person. Their capability for *Mind and Imagination* was low as they found ‘others’ to be the problem.

Examination of the data against this capability has demonstrated the potential created by the internationalised higher education environment to expand students’ intercultural capability - offering choice and possibilities to students through challenge to their views and opinions. Some students had embraced a cosmopolitan ethos and used the opportunities presented to *actively* explore difference, as we see in the final intercultural capability below.

Intercultural Capability 4: Enquiry and Reflection

Intercultural friendships and working relationships provided a medium through which students could question, explore, and develop their identities. Some (particularly international) students actively sought to learn from and about others, whilst others were stimulated to further engage with others, having discovered value and enjoyment through experiencing differences and seeing life’s rich tapestry of cultures at university. They were functioning with *Enquiry and Reflection*. “I love to learn, like, the way they cook their food, or their languages, or different things about their cultures. And it’s inspired me to maybe go travelling later on and, you know, learn things about their cultures.” (Soraya, British, UK Campus)

Opportunities to share and learn were valued and treasured within their relationships. Students increased their capability for *Enquiry and Reflection* as, seeking to understand and learn from each other's situations, they reflectively considered their own.

It's great and you get to learn so much more because, OK people in the UK are different nationalities and you can learn from them, but when you are with people from abroad as well you can learn so much more about people, different ways of life and everything. (Sarah, British, UK Campus)

I like to share the culture as well. My food, they never tasted it before and so they really enjoy it. And it makes me feel a bit different. (Kimi, Burmese, Malaysia Campus)

The capability of *Enquiry and Reflection* involves a re-examination of one's identity and students found that their own lives and perspectives were thrown into contrast: "I began to find something about my own country because if you stay with the same people from your own country then you won't think these things are such a difference from other countries." (Jane, Hong Kong, UK Campus) and "I think you think about Britain as well because you can see Britain from other people's perspectives." (Serena, British, UK Campus)

Others described a tangible shift in their behaviours and identities: "Obviously there are different clashes between cultures, but you just make yourself how you can manage to form relationships and, you know, bend or stretch the bits that you might have." (Soraya, British, UK Campus)

The capability set allowed this valuable functioning to be identified from the data, demonstrating that a more cosmopolitan outlook can result from an internationalised higher education experience as, through exploring difference, students also found the common humanity within their friendships.

Conclusion

This study has illustrated the potential for exploration of students' intercultural experiences through the lens of capability. Construction of the capability set, and examination of the data against it, proved to be a valuable tool in evaluating the extent to which students are able to develop and, importantly, function with intercultural capabilities in the internationalised higher education environment. We see how students can be enabled or constrained by social and pedagogical arrangements as well as by personal or relational factors. Choices made by university staff about pedagogical practices therefore influence the opportunities and choices available to students. If students are to be helped to recognise the potential of their cosmopolitan selves, then teachers must adopt attitudes and values which pay attention to justice within classrooms and which allow students to flourish as intercultural beings.

Findings highlighted the immense potential of group work in enabling capability development through creating opportunities for students to form intercultural relationships and, in so doing, become challenged to understand something about others and themselves. However, it is a forum which does not of itself promote capability and can have the opposite, negative, effects of constraining agency and capabilities, and of emphasising differences. If institutions are to keep their promises of the benefits of internationalisation, they also bear a responsibility for promoting an environment which nurtures the development of capabilities, values and freedoms. The development of intercultural capabilities and greater cosmopolitan awareness amongst the student population cannot rely on chance interactions through casual exposure. It is apparent that purposeful

opportunities are required in order for students to discover something of others and themselves, in both personal and academic contexts.

Examples of how the findings are influencing practice in the site of study include: the introduction of workshops and small group work early in the course, in which students, through discussion of their own backgrounds, health systems and beliefs about health and illness, start to understand the different perspectives and needs that exist; and the use of case studies throughout the course to illustrate and encourage students to consider the differing health, social and cultural needs of individuals and populations.

Pedagogical arrangements should create spaces and opportunities for students (and staff) to share, explore and reason together - promoting understanding, open-mindedness, and a more global outlook. Expanding freedoms and opportunities for mutual discovery can provide a richer higher education experience and help prepare students for contributing meaningfully to an interdependent and interconnected world.

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