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Cosmopolitan Capabilities in the HE Language Classroom

This study, concerning the development of cosmopolitan citizenship, draws on theories of human development and capabilities (Sen 1999; Nussbaum 2000) from a social justice perspective, where individual wellbeing is articulated as having the freedom to live a life of one's choosing. In the context of an English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) classroom this involves paying attention to pedagogical strategies, power dynamics and curriculum content as a means of developing valued beings and doings (or capabilities and functionings as they are described in the literature). Sample activities are presented and evaluated to see to what extent they achieve the desired end. These include critical pedagogical interventions, students' artefacts and extracts from focus group interviews, class reports and reflective journals. Results from the textual data offer research evidence of successful curriculum change, demonstrating that the learning that takes place there can make a difference: in terms of the learners' identity development, capability enhancement and cosmopolitan citizenship.

Keywords:
Capabilities, cosmopolitan citizenship, critical pedagogy, globalisation

1 Introduction

In this paper I present the workings of an English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) class in an institute of higher education in Ireland, demonstrating pedagogical approaches that are designed to assist learners to develop the awareness, knowledge and attitudes associated with cosmopolitan citizenship. These pedagogies concern tolerance, respect, social justice, interculturality and human capabilities, and focus on quality of life issues such as democracy, participatory freedoms and agency. Using a critical participatory action research (CPAR) approach, I see to what extent the learning that takes place there can make a difference: in terms of the learners' identity development, capability enhancement and agency.

Critical pedagogy is central to this case study, in which the classroom, according to Pennycook (2001, 138), is viewed as:

> …a microcosm of the larger social and cultural world, reflecting, reproducing, and changing that world (…) but also as a place in which social relations are played out and therefore a context in which we need to directly address questions of social power.

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Linked to the notion of critical pedagogy in this study is one espousing a cosmopolitan world-view with a philosophy that favours global social justice. In Appiah's (2006, 168) words, cosmopolitanism means "intelligence and curiosity as well as engagement" with global social issues, where "contamination is seen as a counter-ideal to cultural purity" (111). Cosmopolitanism posits a particular notion of global citizenship: as a means of "building an ethically sound and politically robust conception of the proper basis of political community, and of the relations among communities" (Held 2005, 10). Building on this, Papastergiadis (2012) points out that there are no records that prove the existence of a cosmopolitan society; however, through the ages, "the concept of cosmopolitanism has continually surfaced as a term to express the basic idea of human unity and a harmonious form of universal governance" (Papastergiadis 2012, 81).

Nussbaum (2002a) indicates that there are three arguments to put forward in favour of education for cosmopolitan citizenship: a) the study of humanity is of value for the development of self-knowledge; b) a focus on world citizenship acts as a counterfoil to partisanship, e.g. allegiances to local factions; and c) a *kosmou politês* stance is intrinsically valuable, recognising what is fundamental to human beings, namely, "their aspirations to justice and goodness and their capacities for reasoning in this connection" (Nussbaum 2002b, 8). In her vision of an ethically sound educational programme that fosters cosmopolitanism, she posits three central capabilities to realise this goal. These are: 1) critical examination; 2) affiliation, also referred to as global citizenship; and 3) narrative imagination. The first capability concerns cognition and critical thinking, the second relates to the ties that bind us to fellow humans, and the third involves the ability to understand and engage with other ways of

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being in a more visceral manner, through the process of engaging with the arts, including literature, poetry, cinema, art and theatre.

In the Irish context, citizenship education is included in formal learning curricula at primary and secondary level, in the case of the former through the subject called 'Social, Personal and Health Education' (SPHE), and in the latter through 'Civic, Social and Political Education' (CSPE). While educators welcome the addition of these programmes, criticisms have been levelled at the way in which they are taught. For the most part, citizenship education is learnt as a discrete subject and is not incorporated in a student-centred curriculum (McSharry 2008); it is also accorded the status of a marginalised subject (Jeffers 2008; Bryan and Bracken 2012).

When students move from second to third level education, they no longer experience a curriculum that is planned centrally by a state body. Nor do they study a module or programme that is taught to every student across the university campus. Their curriculum is designed around the aims and objectives of the specific discipline they have chosen; it is, therefore, quite possible that they may never be expected to contemplate issues such as citizenship values, agency or human rights agendas unless a particular lecturer chooses to present her course drawing on such frameworks. On the other hand, in a survey of civic engagement activities in Institutes of Higher Education (HEIs) in Ireland, there is evidence of "moderate to substantial acknowledgement" of civic engagement as reported by 75% of institutions surveyed (Lyons and McIlrath 2011, 16). Civic engagement activities are understood to include: service learning, community engaged research, volunteering and community-campus partnerships. While specific examples are cited across the board from the different HEIs participating in the survey, again, as in the case of primary and secondary level education, these activities appear to take place "over and above" the normal requirements (e.g. community-based teaching practice in Sligo, the Uaneen module in DCU (Ibid, 21)). Many of the activities focus on local or national contexts, appearing to ignore the global dimension. The case study presented here explores the workings of a HEI classroom, in which this dimension is foregrounded.

A construct that is central to this study based on an undergraduate language classroom is learner identity. Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research has been enriched by the addition of social psychological, post-structural and critical dimensions, which have transformed our understanding of the identities of language learners, from that of being part of the traditional dyad of *native* versus *non-native speaker* to a scenario that situates learners in a power imbued social context in which language and cultural difference is negotiated (Block 2007, Norton 2000), and from an understanding of the language learning process as residing primarily in the cognitive, or psycholinguistic domain, to one where the sociocultural perspective takes central position (Swain and Deters 2007). Accounts of identity development in an educational context aspire to the notion of the enhancement of human possibility (Norton 2000). Here we can see a strong link with the capabilities approach and its focus on the centrality of education as an enabler of other capabilities. According to Leach and Moon (2008), teachers who adopt empowering roles raise students' awareness of future possibilities and see the importance of supporting and building learners' self-esteem and identities.

Current understandings of identity construction (Block 2007; Norton 2000; Pennycook 2001) describe the range of variables that affect and shape identities. These include gender, ethnicity, nationality, language, age and class; all characteristics that play a major or minor role in the individual's life depending on the context and discourse settings the individual finds herself in and the identity attributes that are called into play. As discussed, education plays an important role in identity formation and it was with this notion in mind that I engaged in the action research documented in this study.

In the next section, I describe the context of the case and summarize its key features. This is followed by a brief overview of the methodological approach adopted. I then discuss the learners' engagement with the theme of globalisation and provide sample activities, followed by a discussion of findings from the study. This is complemented by a set of questions for further discussion.

2 Case description

The study was conducted in the academic year 2005-2006 in the University of Dublin (UD)[1]. UD maintains strong links with industry and commerce and modules offered tend to be applied in nature, that is, they deal with a subject in relation to how it might inform learners' future careers. In the HEI sector internationally, as well as in Ireland, an overarching focus on funding, budget allocations and strategic plans as a means to enhance competition paves the way for the rhetoric of the marketplace to embed itself in institutional structures. It is in the context of this new-managerial environment that I attempt, through pedago-gical intervention, to create a dialogue in favour of a values-led society that looks to humanistic concerns as an answer to the neo-liberal agenda, a society based on the concept of cosmopolitanism, with a vision of a "peaceful co-existence of peoples" (Cousin 2006).

2.1 The module

The module of learning, ENG06 *English and Globalisation,* was originally designed for international students studying Business, and included learning aims such as CV writing, preparing for interviews, and report writing. As module coordinator, I was in the position to make changes to the course content and learning outcomes and I chose to redesign the module, placing an

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emphasis on critical pedagogy and globalisation over a more instrumental, skills focused approach. The teaching practice thus shifted from a single focus on skill acquisition to one that used the target language to teach content. This way of teaching is in keeping with the pedagogical approach known as *Content and Language Integrated Learning* (CLIL) (Coyle 2007).

The course content, globalisation, was framed by an epistemology founded on social justice. The learners were called on to be active agents, both at the micro level of the classroom, negotiating syllabus content, designing and delivering classroom inputs and conducting self- and peer evaluation on an ongoing basis, as well as at the macro level of contemplating their differing roles in society, both at local and global level.

The module aims were adapted to include the items listed in Figure 1 below:

- To develop a deeper understanding of processes and issues concerning globalisation;
- To develop fluency and accuracy in the four language skill domains of Listening, Speaking, Reading and Writing in the context of the topics: a) globalisation, b) language and intercultural learning;
- To foster group work by identifying common goals and working towards individual & group aims;
- To work with an electronic version of the European Language Portfolio (LOLIPOP) and thus to assist learner autonomy by conducting self-assessment and goal setting exercises, as well as reflecting on the language and intercultural learning process.

Figure 1: Revised module aims

The associated learning outcomes, according to the module descriptor, were similarly adapted as per Figure 2:

- To be aware of motivating and organisational factors that affect learning
- To be an efficient manager of own learning
- To be able to comprehend complex scenarios relating to globalisation
- To be able to express ideas in a complex manner in speech and writing
- To be able to plan, develop and execute an interactive session on a topic related to globalisation
- To be able to learn from and assist peers through collaborative teaching and learning

Figure 2: Revised module learning outcomes

The module assessment tasks

The mode of assessment of the module was continuous in nature rather than by formal written exam. In the year when the study was conducted, the assessment was divided into three components: a) critical peer-teaching, b) written reports, and c) group oral discussion. These assessment activities took place in the latter half of the semester, with the oral component scheduled for the week after the end of the semester (Fig 3).

ASSESSMENT DETAILS

Task 1: 45' Interactive group session 40%
In groups of 3-4 you will plan and conduct an interactive session on a topic of your choice related to the theme 'Globalisation'.

As part of this session, you can choose to work with the following media: PowerPoint, Overhead slides, blackboard, videorecorder, taperecorder, internet; and choose from the following activities: presentation; jigsaw reading; vocabulary tasks - crossword puzzle, hangman, wordwebs, collocation, lexical sets, cloze test; class discussion; debates; questionnaire; worksheets... comprehension questions, true/false, multiple choice, test your students, draw pictures, design posters, role play, etc.

Your session will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- content
- relevance
- clarity
- interactivity
- entertainment
- individual contribution*
- use of English*
- body language, ability to communicate*

Asterisk (*) denotes individual criteria
Assessment load: 40% (20% group; 20% individual)

Task 2: Reports 40%
Each group will write 4 reflective reports, one as a collective group and the others on an individual basis:

a) Group report: reflective assessment of own interactive session (as teachers) 25%
Group of 4 students: 2,000 words; Group of 3 students: 1.500 words

b) 3 individual reports: reflective assessment of three other sessions which you have participated in (as a learner)

250 words for each individual report; each worth 5%
Each report will be graded according to the following criteria:

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- Content
- Clarity
- Use of English
- Ability to critically reflect

Task 3: Oral reflection on learning 20%
You will be expected, in groups of three, to reflect on the learning that is taking place throughout the semester for module EN103. This will include reflections on the following:

- Globalisation
- Intercultural competence
- Use of LOLIPOP and learner autonomy
- Working in groups
- Planning and giving class presentations
- Impact of learning on self
- Other
-

Criteria of assessment for the oral component include ability to summarize and reflect on learning as well as to engage with interlocutors through the medium of English.

Figure 3: Assessment details

When I say that this approach is a move away from a 'skills-focused' approach, I should add that this does not mean that skills were no longer part of the learning agenda, quite the opposite. Skill development such as researching, critical thinking, presenting, active listening and team building, which one might find on any list of transferable skills associated with career orientation, were embedded in the teaching and learning agenda. However, the students also engaged in activities associated with capability development such as critical examination, affiliation and narrative imagination; the three capabilities that Nussbaum (2006b) considers to be central to cosmopolitan learning in higher education.

2.2 The students

The module was available as an English language option to international students and was offered as a core module for students from Nishi University[2], Japan, who spend an academic year in UD as part of their degree programme. The module ran in the spring semester over a period of 12 weeks and comprised three hours of face-to-face teaching per week in addition to independent study time. In the academic year when the study was conducted, the enrolment for the module was 29 students, with a breakdown of nationalities as follows (Figure 4):

Austrian	1
French	6
German	1
Japanese	15
Nigerian	1
Spanish	5

Figure 4: Students by nationality

The cohort comprised a gender ratio of 21 females to 8 males with an age range of 19-25. The students were drawn from different academic disciplines including Anthropology, Business, Communications, Law, Linguistics and Literature. The fact that globalisation, as a theme, is arguably salient to all academic disciplines meant that the course content operated as a unifying force in this multicultural group in addition to the other strands of the module, i.e. learner autonomy and the English language.

3 Methodology

The research inquiry at the centre of this study, based on a critical theory perspective, could be viewed as a quest for social transformation in that it begins with a language-learning classroom in which students are encouraged to deal with cosmopolitan ideals, giving rise to a possible scenario where engagement with the world is shaped by social justice. It is an approach that is qualitative in nature and is underpinned by a constructionist epistemology (Crotty 1998). It can be viewed as insider-practitioner research or, equally, as a form of *interrupted* critical participatory action research, in that one particular cycle in an action research model is foregrounded. Figure 5 depicts the different stages that formed the action research cycle in the period in question. These include: reviewing the module as it stood, with its skills-based focus; working with new sets of ideas informed by research; making plans for change, including the addition of critical and participative elements; implementing the changes; monitoring developments and collecting textual evidence; reflecting on practice and textual evidence in the light of further research; preparing transcripts and reflecting further on the process, with a view to making modifications for the next cycle.

The overarching research question that I used for the study asked: "*In what ways can the language classroom be seen to contribute to the formation of learners' cosmopolitan and learning identities, which affect their capability to live and act in the world?"* This question was supported by a set of ancillary questions dealing with themes related to capabilities, cosmopolitan identity, autonomy and agency, practitioner identity formation and curricular considerations (Figure 6)

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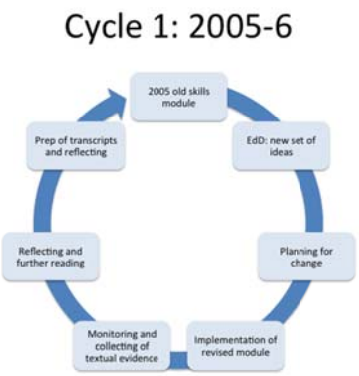

Figure 5: Action research cycle

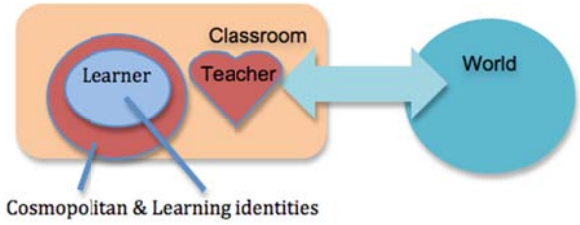

Figure 6: Research question conceptual frame

Research was conducted over the course of the semester. It comprised a mixture of texts, including a mixture of: focus group inter-views, classroom observations, students' reflective reports, end of semester oral examinations, learning artefacts, presentations and homework assignments.

My role as practitioner researcher meant that I was with the students consistently throughout the semester and had opportunities to observe classroom practice when the spotlight was not directly on me. As the nature of the pedagogical practice was task based for the most part, this gave me many opportunities to observe how the students interacted with each other and went about their work. My practice was to observe and later write up field notes. As I got to know the students reasonably well as the semester progressed, this made the task easier. However, my perceptions of what was going on for the students would never have been enough through observation alone. The pooling together of other methods such as the focus groups, orals, reports, journals and artefacts all helped me to create a *bricolage* of senses, ideas and meanings.

During the action research cycle outlined above, a lot was happening: some, all at the same time. For example, planning, reviewing, revising (on an on-going basis, especially as I had made a complete change to the module), teaching, observing, assessing, collaborating, interviewing, discussing, creating, collecting, reading, evaluating, mentoring, and catching my breath to go teach another class.

As the semester progressed, I monitored events, noting any rich points of learning that were arising and the culture that was developing in this particular community of practice. However, I allowed some time to lapse before I began to systematically work with the material and do a textual analysis. In the meantime, I set to work on researching the theoretical constructs underpinning this study and only came back to do a full write-up four years later. During this time, I had taught the same module three times over, on each occasion gathering fresh insights, modifying my practice and working in a manner conducive to a typical action research spiral.

As I was focusing on the original cohort exclusively for this research, I realised that these other iterations would have to be left to the side; however, the experiential knowledge I had gained through these subsequent years helped to filter the analysis to some extent. The distance also helped me to make the familiar feel strange and allowed, I would argue, for a more dispassionate interpretation of the texts.

At first view, it all appeared to be quite banal and as I would have expected: no eureka moments in sight. On closer examination, and especially though the lens of theories and writers I was engaging with, the texts soon revealed hidden details that I had previously been blind to. For example, until I had read Leach and Moon's (2008) account of pedagogy that, like art, should shock us out of our everyday comfortable lives, I had not noticed the amount of times students used the very word "shock" in their peer assessment reports, for example with regard to the session on child labour.

In advance of carrying out my first action research cycle, I followed ethical guidelines laid down by the University for dealing with human subjects. This included the construction of a Plain Language Statement and a consent form for participants to sign. While my research would not be classified as "high risk", on the other hand, my dual role of teacher and researcher added a layer of complication that needed to be acknowledged, especially given the inherent power dynamics of the situation (Crosbie 2013). I was aware that as their teacher, I would have to grade the students at the end of the semester; I therefore had to be mindful of potential bias creeping in from either side.

In addition to the above, it is important to emphasise the fact that the study is to be viewed as *intrinsically* ethical, in both its conception and design. Ethical discussions are a substantive element of the work, and are not reducible to simple legislative ethics statements. Examples of this ethical perspective can be seen in the choice of method used (critical participatory action research), in the module design and engagement with and between learners, and in the theoretical constructs chosen to investigate the study.

4 Course Design

When asked about their previous knowledge of globalisation, many of the students mentioned that they

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had already studied the subject, both in Ireland and in their home countries. However, they often qualified their statements by expressing a level of dissatisfaction with their studies. They said that they had only looked at surface issues, that they knew the 'vocabulary' of globalisation but not the reality behind the words. Some mentioned that they had studied globalisation from a particular angle in the past, for example, looking at the economic context in relation to transnational companies in a business context, or the impact of globalisation from a Japanese perspective. In such cases, wider views encapsulating social, cultural and political dimensions had not been addressed. When analysing focus group interviews and oral exam transcripts on the subject, four dominant themes emerged: a) unexamined positive connotations; b) living with the ubiquity of globalisation without having expertise on the subject; c) the impact of globalisation on national and local culture; and d) the experience of studying globalisation in a multicultural environment away from home.

4.1 Tutor-led topics and activities

In the *Globalisation* module, I wanted to theorise concepts of cosmopolitanism with the students: to make them aware of personal, familial and local allegiances and juxtapose them with national and global ones; in so doing, observing threads of critical consciousness and agency, in a Freirean sense, and how these could bind people together through a vision of social justice. This was addressed by working on material in the students' immediate environment, such as postcards, newspaper reports, *Fairtrade Fortnight* activities, personal drawings related to individual and national themes, videos concerned with fair versus free trade (e.g. The Dollar a Day Dress, BBC), as well as formal lecture inputs concerning social, political and economic aspects of globalisation. Where possible, the students were encouraged to be active and agentic, for example concerning consumer patterns of behaviour, and they were expected to work in multicultural groups in different formations throughout the semester, sharing and exploring themes cross-culturally and through the target language, English.

4.2 Student-led topics and activities

A key aspect of the module, which acted as a complement to the study of globalisation *per se*, was the pedagogical approach adopted whereby the students taught each other in peer-teaching mode. This was done in two steps: a) a set of short group presentations on global bodies, approximately fifteen minutes each; and b) a longer, interactive session lasting forty-five to fifty minutes, with a different group cohort focusing on an aspect of globalisation of the students' own choosing. The first set of presentations did not form part of the assessment but was used, rather, as a means of giving formative feedback. The students were encouraged to develop critical lateral thinking by following de Bono's (2009) model, highlighting a) positive, b) negative and c) interesting points related to their chosen topic.

4.3 Short peer-presentations

The short peer-presentations were designed with a number of aims in mind: to get the students used to working with each other in collaborative groups; to study, in some depth, major global bodies that have an influence on the balance of power; and to give them the opportunity to present in English in front of their peers. They brainstormed global bodies and came up with a list that included: Amnesty International, G8, International Monetary Fund, UNESCO, UNICEF, United Nations, World Bank and World Economic Forum.

I have selected one presentation as an example of best practice: the case of the United Nations. In it, it is clear that the peer-teachers had taken on board the key instructions: to be informative, interactive and critical. In the following sample slides, they presented their information in quiz mode (Figure 7):

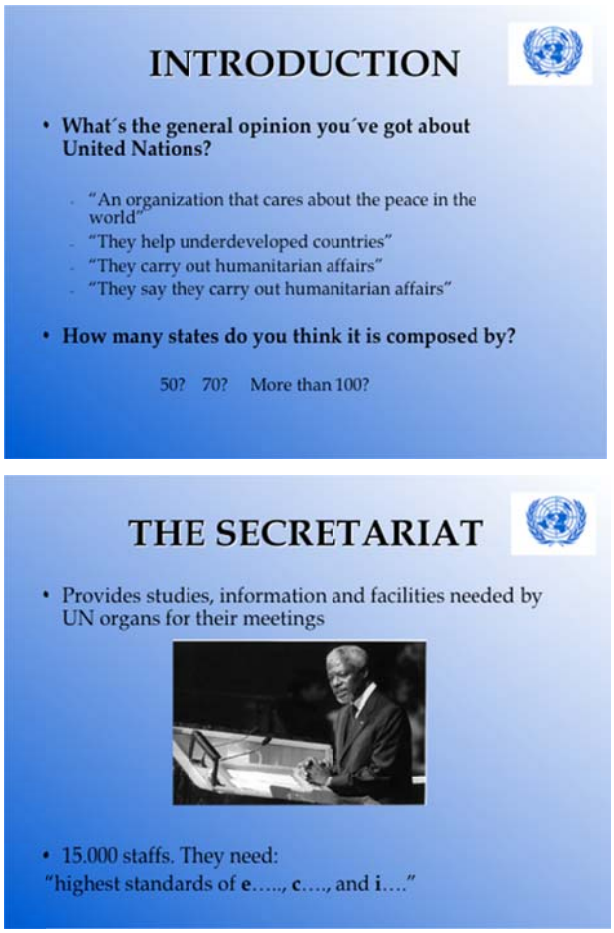

Figure 7: Short peer-presentation: United Nations (1)

The students enjoyed this interactive mode and gave answers to the questions and cloze test without hesitation. The peer-teachers had done research into some of the problems that are associated with the UN, such as the issue of the exclusive nature of the power of the veto or the influence of lobbies on decision-making

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bodies, and they presented them for the class to consider (Figure 8).

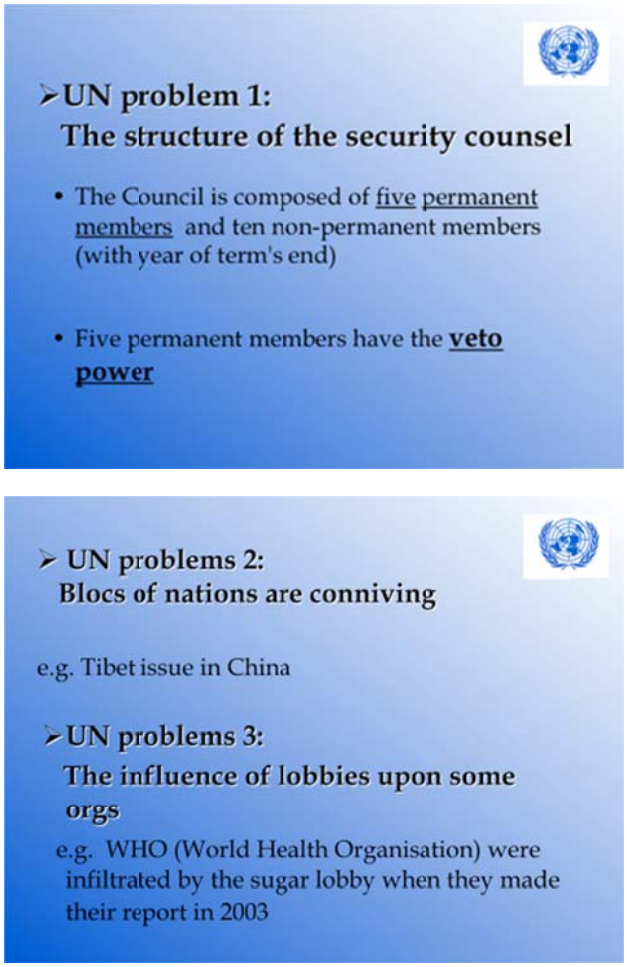

Figure 8: Short peer-presentation: United Nations (2)

In the feedback sessions, we looked at ways to improve presentation skills, being especially mindful of the receivers of the message, the power of visuals and the use of the face-to-face encounter as a powerful conduit of "intersubjective interchange" (Bruner 1999:12).

In a journal reflection during the semester, Mayuko wrote about her experience of doing research for her group presentation on the International Monetary Fund (IMF). She mentions that, previously in Japan, she had studied the IMF but only on a surface level. She wrote:

> "Before I started my research I had never even thought that there were objections [to the IMF]... [In Japan] I've just learned the surface of a large amount of things so I've not understood deeply even one thing…so it was very hard to read a lot of information and understand them but I was grateful that I could have a chance to study about a thing deeply. I don't think I'll forget about the IMF."
>
> (Student Reflection, 15 March 06)

4.4 Long peer-presentations

Preparation for the full-length critical peer-teaching sessions involved a re-grouping of students, again making sure that each group was composed of different nationalities, as well as a new selection of topics to teach. A list of possible topics was drawn up through brainstorming and the students were asked to go away and think about what they would like to work with. In the next class, topic choices were finalised and the groups set about preparing for their sessions. We had discussions on what makes a class interesting, how to involve everyone, what level to pitch the material at, and how to make the exchange of ideas and information both informative and entertaining. It transpired, through texts collected throughout this study, that most students were accustomed to a pedagogical environment where rote learning or, at most, "learning from didactic exposure" (Bruner 1999:9) was the norm, both in Asian countries and throughout Europe. In one of the focus group interviews, Sebastian said he had welcomed the opportunity to have a say in what would be learned in the module, rather than following a prescribed syllabus, as per usual:

> **Sebastian:** It was really interesting to reflect, just to reflect on some background and on some topics like ethnicity and so on. And I think it was good that there was no fixed topics that were provided [or] input, [or that] we had to learn something and we had, ... yeah, really to learn and to give it in the end by an exam. But [instead] we had just to reflect on something and to think about it … I think it's a good approach to learn something and to deal with some topics.
>
> (Focus Group 2a: 2)

Before the students commenced the peer-teaching, they were shown a set of criteria that would be used to assess their sessions and each group scheduled a tutorial with me to discuss lesson plans. Many groups displayed a high level of creativity in their work and ideas. As well as the ubiquitous quizzes and close-tests, they conducted mini surveys, made short vox-pop videos, used films for didactic exposure (for example *Supersize Me* and *Salaam Bombay*), deconstructed images and text and built up a narrative tension in their presentations through songs, images, role-plays and debates.

Eight groups were created for the longer peer-presentations. These were based on ethnic and gender criteria to achieve as much group diversity as possible. The students chose the following themes: Child Labour, Drugs, Ethnicity, Fairtrade, McDonaldisation, Sport, Transport, and World Music. I have chosen three topics to discuss briefly here: Child Labour, Fairtrade and McDonaldisation. These were the sessions that were most popular, according to the peer assessment reports.

4.4.1 Child labour

The peer-teaching session on child labour was perhaps one of the most profound of all the classes taught, and acknowledged as such by many students in their peer-assessment reports, e.g. "I believe this was the most

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shocking and unforgettable presentation given by the class" (Harumi), "Today's presentation on Child Labour was the most interesting one so far I think. Mayuko, Airi and César managed […] to fascinate the whole class" (Sebastian).

As a witness to this "rude reality" (Laurent) session, I watched how skilfully the student teachers drew connections between the topic and the students' lives, making them feel empathetic and connected to the young children they portrayed. At times there was a palpable hush in the room, and many students appeared to be brought close to tears as they witnessed the lives of these vulnerable children.

They drew first on their peers' knowledge and understanding of the phenomenon, guided by prompt questions, and then juxtaposed the students' life experiences with those of the children, victims of globalisation and inequities in society. The following PowerPoint slides, taken from their presentation, are examples of this mode of pedagogical enquiry (See Figure 9 below), where a connection is being sought between the learners and the knowledge being constructed.

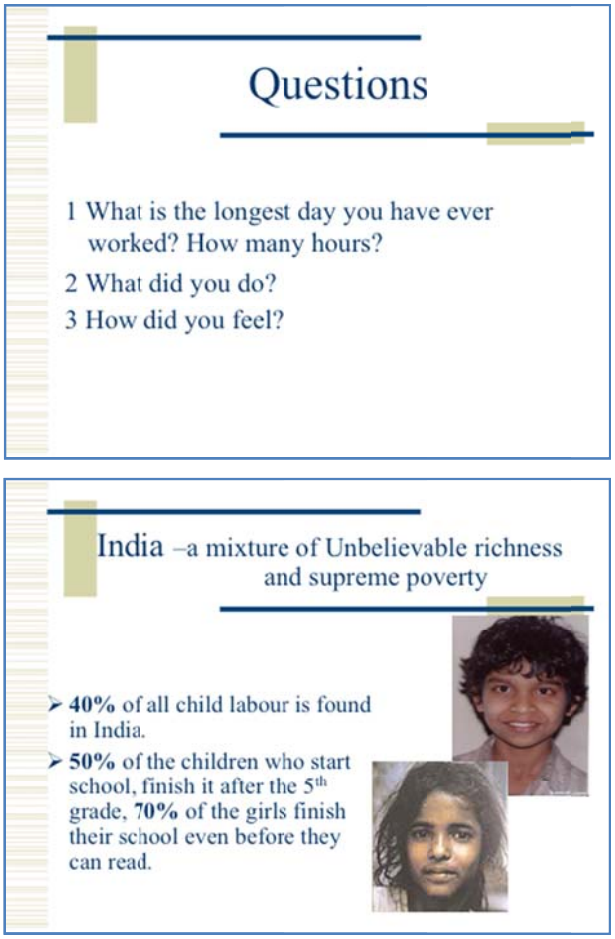

Figure 9: Child labour peer-presentation

In the course of their session, they presented extracts from the film *Salaam Bombay* (Nair 1988), together with a worksheet with pre/ while/ post-viewing activities, as well as presenting facts and figures on the subject and outlining agencies at work to combat child poverty. César, one of the peer-teachers, had a friend who worked for an Irish Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), called Trócaire.[3] He taped an interview with him, which he played back to the class. The timetabling of the Child Labour session coincided, fortuitously, with a Lenten campaign being widely promoted in Ireland at the time to combat child poverty. The peer-teachers drew on this to show that what was being discussed in the classroom was also being debated in society in Ireland. The closing activity was taken from the Lenten appeal, where students were shown that they could take action themselves to alleviate the suffering of victims of child labour by filling in a "dream card" which would be sent to a targeted group of children. See Figure 10 below.

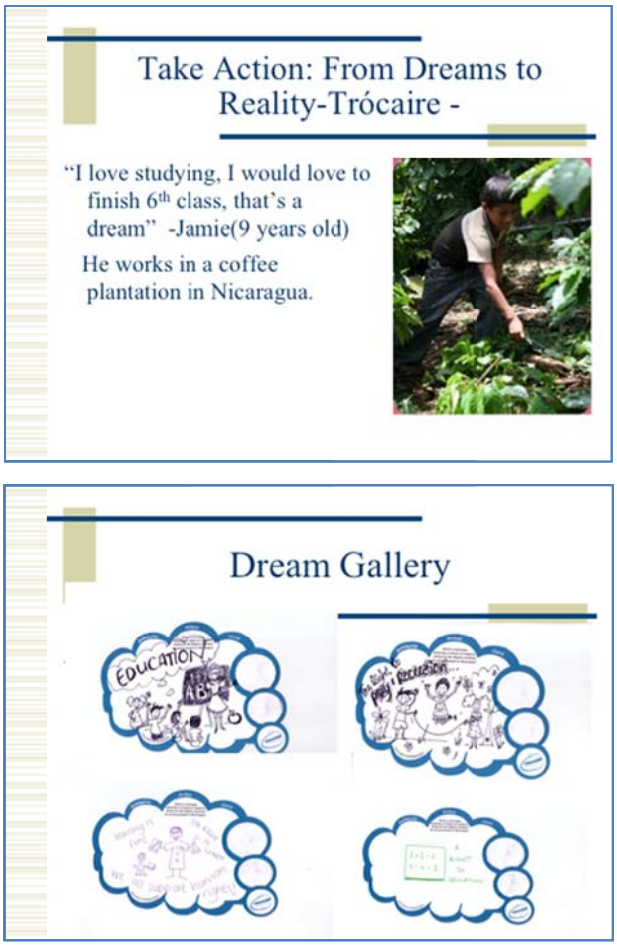

Figure 10: Extract from child labour peer-teaching presentation

Over the course of the focus group interviews and orals, students often spoke about this lesson on Child Labour. It was also positively evaluated in the individual peer-assessment reports. Harumi's report, represented in full below, reflects well the feedback from peers on the session:

Child Labour

I believe this was the most shocking and unforgettable presentation given by the class. Although the topic itself was sensational enough, [...] the way that they presented the topic, alone, was special. They expressed the points clearly and

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concisely. Although at the beginning they couldn't show us their movie, they recovered from this shock quickly and the rest of the speech was quite smooth.

Most astonishing was, I think, the case studies they presented in the middle of their presentation. Rather than listening to some statistics or graphs, it is much more effective to express a point with examples of real children's situations.

Their photographs on screen were also effective visually and especially informed us of the fact that, despite our differences we all share the same earth and are not only paper statistics.

Another aspect of their presentation that I found notable was their ability to make the topic tangible. This was achieved through examples that stimulated thought. For instance, their discussion of coffee prices revealing the minimum benefit gained by the producers, who only earned 5% of the final sale price.

And finally, they provided picture-drawing activities where we were encouraged to draw our own feeling and impressions to hopefully provide these children with a message of solidarity. These pictures will be sen[t] to the children by UNICEF.

As a conclusion the presentation was compre-hensible.

(Harumi, Individual Peer-assessment report)

The Child labour presentation can be seen as an example of a "disruptive" pedagogy, which Schwabenland (2009) describes as:

> … a metaphorical device, using associative, metaphoric or poetic logic to promote the possibility of transformations in students' underlying belief systems through creating a rupture in the hitherto taken-for-granted in which wonder and empathy may be experienced and new perspectives considered.
>
> (Schwabenland 2009: 305)

It thus draws on emotional capabilities, the other side of the coin of rationality. These capabilities are often neglected in education, especially at the level of higher education. We are exhorted to develop critical thinking skills but seldom emotions or emotional resilience (exceptions include Nussbaum 2010; Walker 2006). The students in this study often describe their learning from an emotional perspective: how course content, working in groups or doing a peer-teaching session made them *feel*. For example, in relation to the peer-teaching sessions, Moe says: "but this time we really cared about how people react and how people would think about this topic…" (Focus group 2a: 4). In the context of pedagogical power, these emotions are vital (c.f. Freire 2005; Leach and Moon 2008; Walker 2004, 2007).

4.4.2 Fairtrade

The Fairtrade peer-teaching session was also very popular with the students, partly because it linked well with and built on class discussions that had taken place during the first half of semester, e.g. Dollar a Day Dress and Fairtrade Fortnight, and also because the students took a lot of care and attention, once again, to make the connection between the theme and students' lives. They used a quiz methodology for constructing knowledge (Figure. 11), and the students themselves created many of the artefacts (Figure. 12).

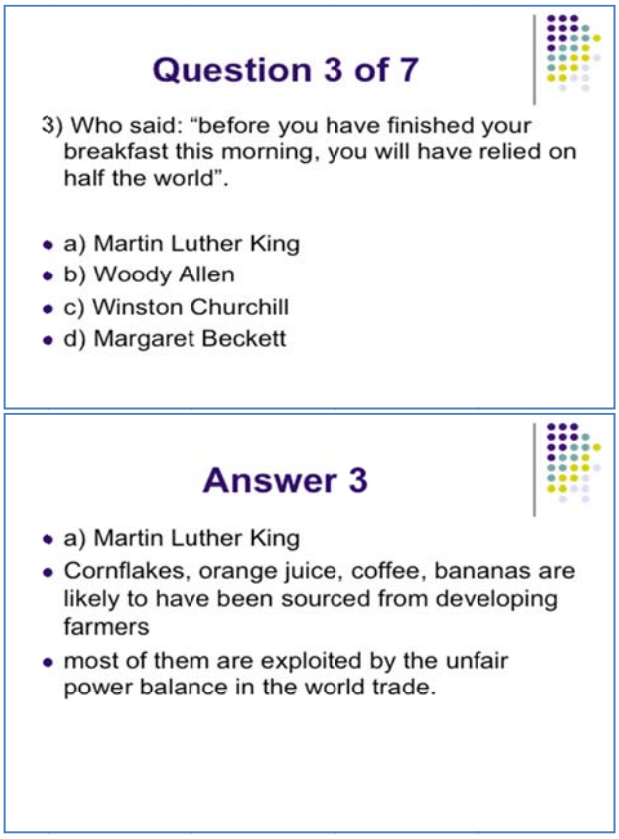

Figure 11: Extract from Fairtrade Peer-teaching Presentation (1)

They created a video where they interviewed a number of students on campus about their awareness and knowledge of the Fairtrade movement, asking the same set of questions to each informant (Figure. 13). The video was very professional with captions, soundtrack and humour and the students appeared to be captivated by it, as was I.

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Figure 12: Extract from Fairtrade Peer-teaching Presentation (2)

Some extracts from the peer-assessment reports consolidate these comments on the Fairtrade session, as follow:

> From the beginning of this course I have been interested in the relatively new concept, Fairtrade. It was the first time I heard about Fairtrade and I did not know much about the system of Fairtrade. So, the presentation was really helpful for me to understand the condition of the third world and why Fairtrade is important. Besides, I could connect the presentation with what I have known about Fairtrade.
>
> (Makiko)

> The first point is having used a lot of quiz as activities. It worked well to wake up attention of class and make them have an interest in the next speech they would continue (...) As the second point, I would like to respect their cheerful attitude to deal with this problem. They could be too serious or too virtuous as explaining the subject. But they explained them as a very fun and attractive movement to participate it. It is very difficult thing to do this, but they did and made me visit the shop they introduced. I think this commercial power is the most successful point of their presentation.
>
> (Harumi)

> Maybe, this is the most interesting topic and, at the same time, it is the most related to the globalization of all the session[s], which I attended, because I think that the Fairtrade is one of the few good fruit given by the globalisation…. The group… knew to present the topic in an entertaining way which is not easy because it is a weighty topic…they made a film where appeared several international [UD] students who were interviewed about their knowledge of the Fairtrade.
>
> (Jaime)

In their Group Report, the peer-teachers of Fairtrade, Aiko, Mai and Nicole, said that they were drawn to the subject because "it seemed to be a very interesting way to fight poverty because it is fundamentally different from ready-made solutions such as charity or aid". They wanted to know more about how it worked, how much potential for development there was and how they might get involved, and to share this information with their peers. In this they were successful. At the end of their session, the team handed out Fairtrade biscuits to everyone, which the students commented on favourably in their peer-assessments.

4.4.3 McDonaldisation

The final session I discuss here deals with the phenomenon, "McDonaldisation", chosen by Jaime, Charlene and Makiko because of its direct connection with globalisation, the fact that it is a very familiar brand, and also because it is controversial, having engendered much debate across the globe (McDonaldisation Group Report). This group also successfully incorporated their own texts (Figure. 14) into the session, in this case by interviewing students on campus about their experience of McDonald's, collating and converting the texts into pie charts and graphs and, before presenting each piece of information, soliciting a response from the class, thus making all the students active contributors to the session. It worked well, as the peer-assessment reports attest:

> The beginning of the presentation was the best part. The class was questioned on its McDonald's habits. Questions were relevant and Camembert graphic illustrated clearly answers. Also the questionnaire was supported by students' interview.
>
> (Yves)

> I liked the idea of the interview, it kept the whole session alive.
>
> (Brigitte)

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Figure 13: Extract from Fairtrade Peer-teaching Presentations (L: PowerPoint slide; R: Screenshot from video)

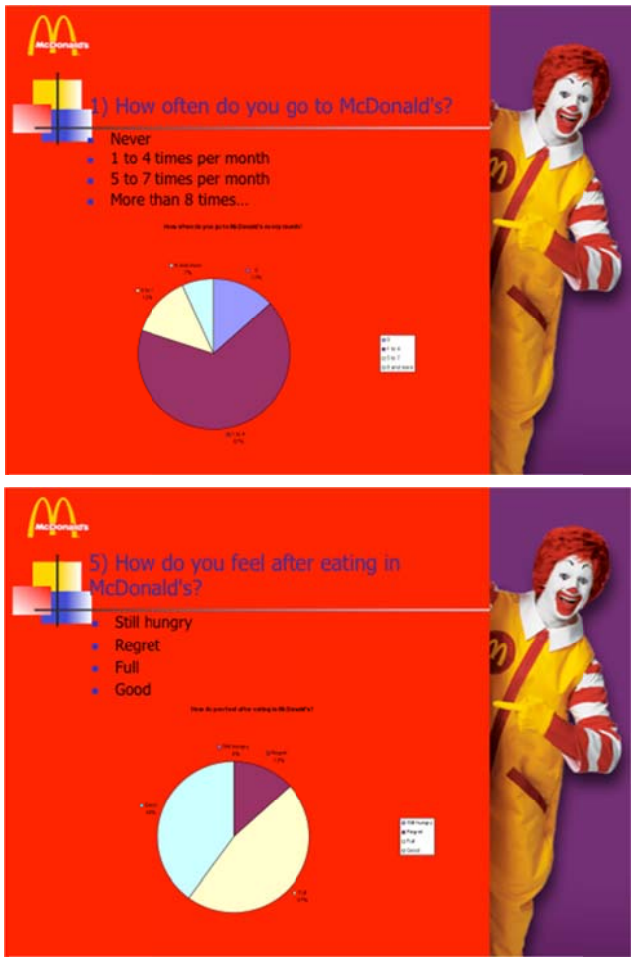

Figure 14: Extract from McDonaldisation Peer-teaching presentation

The students then introduced some detailed core theories concerning the process of rationalisation, teaching their peers about the four unique characteristics of McDonaldisation, namely, efficiency, calculability, predictability, and control. They crafted the lesson plan well, having each part linked to the next, as is evidenced in their detailed notes (Figure. 15)

PART 3.

This is the part of the theory: explanation of McDonaldization by George Ritzer and Socialitzacion. We will do some games like gaps in the words

E_____(efficiency) P_____(Predictability)
C_____(Calculability) C_____ (Control or substitution)

Advantages and disadvantages, playing the video supersize me. About 15 minutes.

Link this part with globalization and the tendency to eat healthy food and how an American problem (obesity) is spreading all around the world, because we want to explain the globalization and localization in part 4.

Figure 15: Extract from Students' McDonaldisation Lesson Plan

In the final section of the plan, they displayed McDonald's products from different parts of the world, making sure that all the nationalities in the class were represented. Again, many students appreciated this, as commented on in their peer-assessment reports.

4.5 Some observations on the peer-teaching sessions

Throughout the focus group sessions and orals, the students made many positive references to the peer-teaching. They discussed the difference between the first and second presentations, noting that many students had heeded the formative feedback from the first presentation and had improved their skills on the second attempt. They also talked about being, on the one hand, apprehensive about accomplishing such a task as teaching a whole class for 50 minutes, but on the other about the satisfaction gained from really trying to motivate and teach their peers:

> ***Lola:*** It was very different between the first presentation and the other ones. You could see the same people act in a very different way. Much better like they were trying to involve the lesson and I think that's very valuable.
>
> (Focus Group 2a: 4)

They also talked in the same vein about the importance of getting their message across to their listeners so that

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they would really think about the issues. Moe describes this sentiment thus:

> ***Moe:*** Yeah, like, normally, if we have to give some presentations like normally we have five or ten minutes, if it's so long, we just think "Oh I have to do that five minutes talking and I have script and if I finished, it's finished. That's all." But this time we really cared about how people react and how people would think about this topic.
>
> (Focus Group 2a: 4)

The picture painted thus far is one of successful teaching, mindful and motivated students, and positive outcomes for the sessions. While this is, to a large extent, true, there were problems and some criticism levelled at these sessions. For example, many of the presenters, in their desire to entertain, had relied heavily on multimedia activities and many of them encountered problems with the technology, which often left the class at a loss while they were being fixed. There were also problems with some of the presenters' level of English or heavily accented speech, which acted as a barrier to understanding. It was also noted that some teachers were tied to their pages and did not sufficiently engage the class, or that the PowerPoint presentations were too long. Some of the groups did not work in a cohesive manner, for example some of the group members chose to prepare their segment alone, rather than in close cooperation with the group, which caused some anxiety. Some unease was also expressed in Focus group interviews and orals concerning the fact that being taught by peers was perhaps not as valuable as being taught by a professional teacher with research knowledge and training:

Aleks: *Airi, you mentioned that because you taught one another you found it not always good. Is that right?*

Airi: Yes, that's right. Not always good. Because students cannot be right you know - teachers as well. But people can't be perfect so it was sometimes boring or sometimes sleepy. [Laughter] But totally was good, I think. The topics were really interesting.

(Focus Group 2a: 2)

Others mentioned that perhaps the peer-teachers benefited more than those being taught. They mentioned the value of preparing for the peer-teaching sessions: working closely and deeply on a topic, discussing and sharing ideas with one another and planning how best to entertain their classmates.

As mentioned above, I selected the three most successful peer-teaching sessions for exemplification, not so much to give the impression that everything worked perfectly, but rather to show the potential of this pedagogical practice. I have taught this module on four successive occasions since the texts for this study were collected and, according to the principles of action research, have sought to improve the peer-teaching support incrementally with each iteration. For example: a) students are given advice on how to prepare for technical hitches, also the advent of YouTube and its ease of access have made many of these issues disappear; b) students are now taught to use PowerPoint slides as a separate and distinct visual support, rather than as a bulleted imitation of the key points; c) more effort is placed on the development of group harmony and team-building in preparation for the peer-teaching sessions.

5 Capabilities for the cosmopolitan classroom

As mentioned above, I had set out to teach the module with cosmopolitan citizenship in mind, moving from a more vocational approach to one that focused on globalisation, social justice and intercultural communication through the medium of English. In the case of the latter, this involved developing reflexivity and understanding of the self, including values, attitudes and practices that had hitherto not been consciously examined; in addition to being exposed to and critically engaging with cultural others, both at the level of classroom contact in this multicultural environment as well as through the literature and pedagogical artefacts. This approach towards interculturality eschews essentialist practices as proposed by the Hofstede school of thought (c.f. Holmes' (2014) critique) in favour of ones that echo Kramsch's (2006) notion of symbolic competence. I was thus interested, from an action research perspective, to see how the new syllabus had been received and valued and whether the cosmopolitan citizenship aims had been recognised and truly embraced. As citizenship entails participation, voice and agency, I also looked for evidence of these features in the students' work and reflections, both written and articulated through the interviews and oral exams. And, finally, in order to see whether these features had become truly embedded rather than appearing as surface knowledge, I looked for identity shifts and ontological perspectives in the texts. The three central capabilities are inextricably linked, with each affecting the others in demonstrable ways.

Much of the course content of module ENG06 related directly to cosmopolitanism, which, to paraphrase Held's (2005) interpretation of the concept, involves the development of an ethically sound and politically robust system for the governance of communities at both local and international level. As mentioned elsewhere, this focus on ethics and social justice corresponds with one of the central tenets of the capabilities approach: ethical individualism. There is therefore, as has been argued, a direct link and compatibility between the two constructs.

If the action research study is analysed from a cosmopolitan perspective, it can be said that the aim of the module to develop a deeper understanding of globalisation from a social justice perspective was

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achieved to a certain extent based on the evidence of active knowledge co-construction, social arrangements in the classroom and reflections on learning that took place, both at individual level and as focused group work.

Many students reported having developed a greater awareness of global issues and a desire to effect change, albeit in small ways. They commented frequently on the fact that through the intercultural group work and extended task-based learning they were able to recognise and apply theory to practice in their own lives, thus developing many of the features of a cosmopolitan outlook.

This outlook was expressed in relation to new insights on themselves as individuals with reference to ethnic identity, personal attributes and modes of behaviour. Expanding outwards from themselves, they acknowledged the intensive intercultural group work in the classroom as having a big impact on them, opening their eyes and minds to new ways of thinking and acting. Through engagement with the course materials they spoke of adopting new dispositions with regard to people, events and structures at local, national and global levels. This awareness translated into desire for action and in some cases actual agency by, for example, changing consumer patterns of behaviour.

These perspectives are illustrated by opinions voiced in the focus group interviews and orals. Below is a sample of comments representing these nascent cosmopolitan dispositions, taken from one of the end of semester focus group sessions:

> **Makiko:** I strongly felt so, as Aiko said, [concerning] the video about globalisation and some foreign people in poverty. When we're living normally we don't maybe recognise that people really exist […] that particular area in the world but all the things we learn[ed] in that module were very impressive for me, like to know the world situation, the world problem, or the other current situation as well. I'm not sure what can I do for such kind of people. What should I do in the future but it totally changed my view, through that module. I can see, as I said before, when we travel […] we can see all the same things in the city and if I didn't learn such kind of things like [that] globalisation is really happening in the world, maybe [I wouldn't have] recognised it, even [though] I'm living here. So that's a kind of shame. I really appreciate it for that.
>
> **Aleks:** *Thank you Makiko.*
>
> **Aiko:** Before the presentation I didn't care that there were a lot of McDonald's all over the world. But after the presentation, if I go to McDonald's I contribute to McDonaldisation. And there was the child labour: about the presentation on child labour, our shoes are made by child labour and it's a pity but I couldn't help it but I don't know how to help. It's a big problem of globalisation.
>
> **Makiko:** But we have to think about what can we do […]. And the kind of awareness: [of] thinking not only [about] our future but the other peoples' like in that kind of situation. So it's really changed my thinking.
>
> *[…]*
>
> (Focus Group 2b, 7-8)

These articulations can be seen to correlate with Nussbaum's four arguments for cosmopolitan education insofar as the students refer to new insights gained about themselves and their understanding of the world. While they do not profess to having made progress in solving problems that demand international cooperation, at least they are actively thinking about it. They show evidence of recognising tangible moral obligations to fellow citizens at a global level, and have begun, through their learning throughout the module, to develop robust arguments that they are willing to defend.

6 Conclusion

Research on cosmopolitanism indicated that it is an unfinished project that has endured for centuries, with an aim to build ethically sound, sustainable communities that coexist in a principled manner based on democratic equality. Many of the tenets of this approach complement theories of interculturality, the difference here being one of a focus on civic duties and agency and on a linking of the different spheres of social influence from local, through national to global. The implications for higher education lie in a desire to have students critically engage with their social worlds, being able to critique different social discourses and practices and to envision a life of flourishing based on notions of hospitality and social translation; challenging, partial and provisional though these may be. If cosmopolitanism is deemed unfinished business, it begs a set of questions that can be explored further. These include: a) to what extent are the different terms such as 'global', 'international' and 'cosmopolitan' interchangeable or do they each offer unique and disparate perspectives? b) Is it possible or desirable to measure a cosmopolitan disposition? c) What does an ideal cosmopolitan disposition look like? d) Does a student need to possess certain personality traits or characteristics in order to be able to develop a cosmopolitan mind-set?

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Endnotes

[1] Pseudonym
[2] Pseudonym
[3] Trócaire (Irish for 'Compassion') is the official overseas aid body for the Catholic Church in Ireland.