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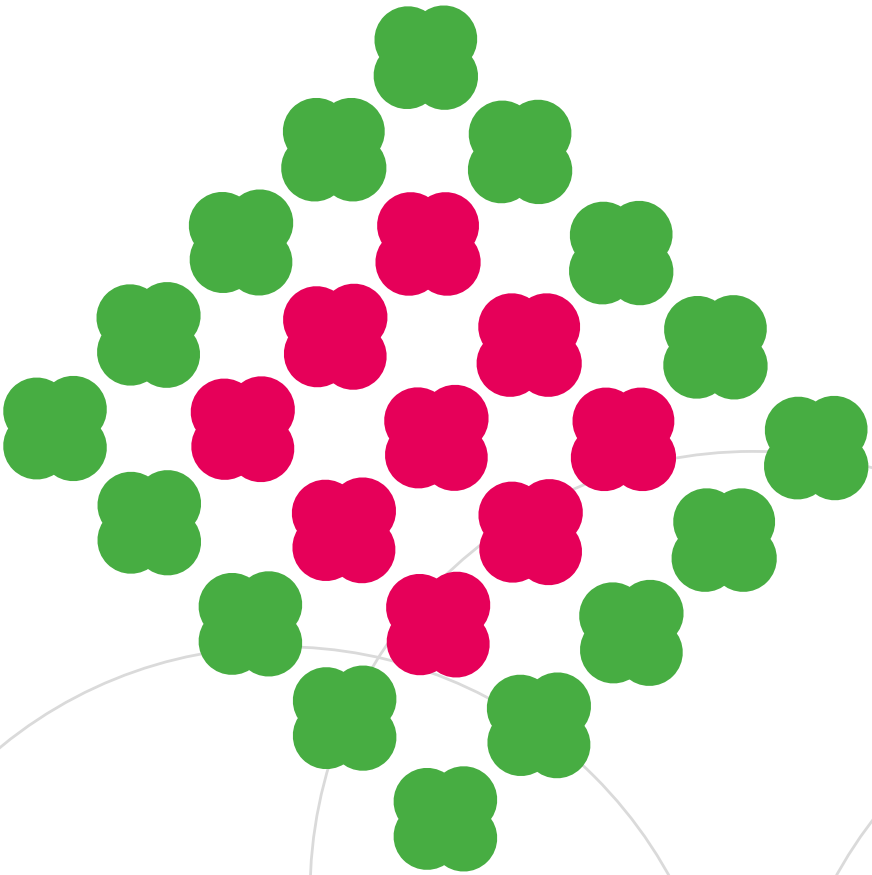

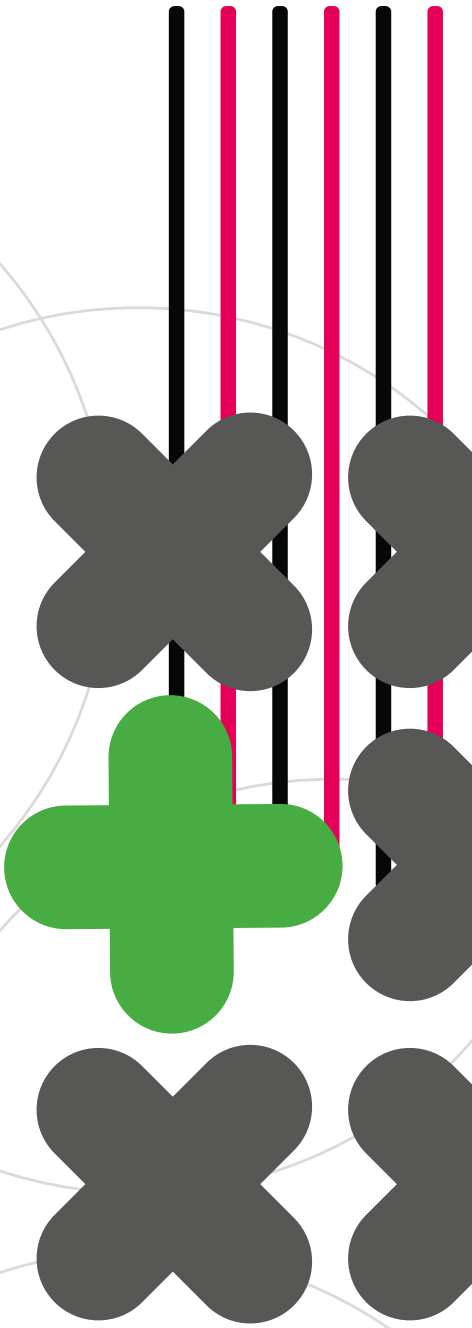

Reimagining Conversations

by Victoria Odeniyi

How to use this document

This document presents the Reimagining Conversations study, findings and recommendations for institutional change as well as opportunities for critical reflection on current practices.

It has been written with an imagined reader in mind who is a specialist and/or professional in their field, but who does not have specialist knowledge of linguistic ethnography as an approach to institutional research.The report length is a deliberate choice. It is anticipated that the report may be read at different times for different purposes.

Contents

1. Summary

The ‘Reimagining Conversations with Multilingual Students’ research project was developed to examine interaction with international students in order to raise awareness of the educational potential of the use of language at UAL.

This qualitative study is concerned with understanding the complexity of teaching, assessment and communication practices by observing everyday classroom practices. The study methodology is underpinned by research methods from applied linguistics and combines finely-grained analysis of classroom interaction with the examination of institutional structures and ideologies. Fieldwork comprised sixty hours of online observations across the four Colleges and interviews conducted with nine tutors and eleven students.

Findings

1. The experiences of international students vary depending on country of origin and perceptions of culture and ethnolinguistic background.
2. Although many ethnolinguistically Chinese students face significant challenges linked to the language and communication demands placed on them, limited English is an oversimplification for why students do not always speak in class.
3. The project found evidence of tutor talk which has a tendency to reduce opportunities for active student participation. For instance, some question formats were interpreted as instructions that override students’ sense of agency, reducing opportunities for discussion.
4. The day-to-day challenges reported by tutors appear to have their origins in two competing institutional imperatives: Internationalisation and Inclusive Education.
5. There is evidence of a monolingual English-only ethos and practice, despite students’ rich multilingual backgrounds and UAL’s position as a global university in one of the most linguistically diverse cities in the world.

Recommendations

1. The multilingual backgrounds of students and tutors should be seen as a pedagogic resource and as a legitimate part of classroom and creative practice.
2. One way of navigating existing imbalances would be to recruit tutors whose language backgrounds are more closely aligned with the multilingual backgrounds of the students they teach.
3. Facilitating class talk online is time consuming and can demand new pedagogic and communication practices. Tutors can be supported more in developing active student participation in the curriculum and in classroom activities in this regard.
4. Systematic cross-institutional work engaging a broad range of staff would help to raise awareness and to develop greater understanding of the complex and dynamic needs of linguistically, culturally and epistemologically diverse international students.
5. Develop an in-house equivalent to the NSS survey constructed specifically with the experiences of all postgraduate and undergraduate students with international fee status in mind.
6. If conversations are to be reimagined, changes are needed to promote greater linguistic, epistemic and culturally (more) open inclusion. It is envisaged that any discussions over changes in practices that result from the project findings will benefit all students. In this way more contributions can be recognised and diverse voices heard.

2. Acknowledgements

Thank you to Dr Duna Sabri Head of Academic Practice and Director of the Academic Development Fund (2018 - 2021) and to Professor susan pui san lok (Contemporary Art), Director of the Decolonising Arts Institute for funding the project. Thank you for the continued support from Helen McAllister and colleagues from the UAL Language Centre, the Decolonising Arts Institute and the Teaching, Learning and Employability Exchange. Also thank you to Dr Duna Sabri, Professor Constant Leung (Educational linguistics), Emeritus Professor Jennifer Jenkins (Global Englishes), Katharine Dwyer and Dr Ileana-Lucia Selejan for their close reading of the report and many critical and insightful comments. A special thank you to the tutors and student participants who took part in the project during what were extraordinary circumstances and to Dr Fei-Yu Chuang [庄斐瑜] for essential translation work.

3. Reimagining Conversations project overview

The ‘Reimagining Conversations with Multilingual Students’ research project was developed to examine interaction with international students in order to raise awareness of the educational potential of the use of language at UAL. The project is viewed as an opportunity to investigate three interrelated aims reflecting the complexity of the UAL context:

- To conduct a preliminary exploration of teaching and interaction with international students.
- To deepen understanding of the conditions that would optimise the intellectual and creative development of multilingual students.
- To raise awareness and visibility of linguistic diversity in order to lay the groundwork for UAL as a whole to be recognised as a multilingual space.

The project has implications for College and university-wide policies that may inadvertently limit the degree outcomes of multilingual students. The project findings inform an institution wide critical reflection on its current language and communication practices. It is envisaged that any discussions over changes in practices that result from the project findings will benefit all students through an exploration of some of the hidden and under explored day-to-day practices at UAL. This aspiration is closely related to the objectives of the ‘Internationalisation at Home’ working group.

What do we mean by international students?

UAL’s international students are ‘non-UK domicile students’ (HESA 2014) with Tier 4 Visa status[1]. They are labelled ‘international’ because of the fee status assigned to them by the university. They usually have to cross national borders to study, but this is not always the case with enrolments to online courses. Some international students have different motivations for studying at UAL compared to home students and compared to each other. Like all diverse groups, they may have varying levels of linguistic and communicative abilities and confidence with English.

[1] International students make up 45.87% of students, Home students 44.53% and EU students 9.59% (UCPU Enrolments data, 28 January, 2022).

What do we mean by multilingual?

Many international students are multilingual. This means that they use English together with other languages they know for study, work and socialising. Many multilingual international students are proficient users of English having learnt and used English at school. For this reason, this document uses the generic label 'multilingual' to refer to anyone (home students and staff) who knows and uses more than one language on a regular basis. The descriptor 'English-dominant' is also used when a multilingual speaker of more than one language is highly proficient in their use of English when it is especially relevant to the analysis. We prefer multilingual as it ascribes the same status to all languages spoken at UAL.

What do we mean by conversations?

A conceptual starting point for the project is an acknowledgment that experiences of multilingual international students are influenced by the context of learning and teaching as well as by the multilingual resources of the students themselves.

Specifically, conversations have been framed in two ways.

First, as discourses of higher education that circulate and position international students, their communication and language competences, ways of engaging and academic potential as somehow different from home students and different from other under-represented groups. In this sense, members of the UAL community have entered into conversations about international students before having met them.

Conversations are also framed as observable interaction between students, their peers and members of teaching teams which occur synchronously, in person and online. It is important to understand what impact these interactions may have on students' learning and social experiences. Yet, they are never neutral. Conversations have a rhetorical power which go beyond teaching, learning and classroom practices. It is hoped that the findings and recommendations from the finely-grained analysis of conversations reported in this document have the potential to effect institutional change.

4. The Study

The research questions

Two research questions frame the project:

1. What are the contexts and characteristics of conversations between tutors and students?
2. What can we learn from the pedagogic practices and institutional practices observed that might inform institution-wide debate and reflection?

The two research questions above reflect the projects' aim to deepen understanding of what pedagogic choices may be available to teaching staff when interacting with ethnolinguistically[2] diverse student cohorts.

Methodological influences

Ethnography values observation as a means of recording individual and group experiences from their perspectives in situ and does not shy away from complexity. The value in ethnographic approaches for educational research focussing on situated language and literacy is that the process of researching can help to make explicit hidden practices (what people do and say) and beliefs about language, teaching and learning, academic practices and can provide scope for institutional change.

'Reimagining Conversations' is an ethnographically-oriented study concerned with understanding the complexity of teaching, assessment and communication practices with significant emphasis placed on observing everyday classroom practices. The study methodology is underpinned by research methods from applied linguistics and combines finely grained analysis of language use in classroom interaction with the examination of institutional structures and ideologies. The approach is sometimes referred to as linguistic ethnography:

> Linguistic Ethnography is an interpretive approach which studies the local and immediate actions of actors from their point of view and considers how these interactions are embedded in wider social structures.
> (Copland and Creese 2015, 13)

In line with ethnographic approaches, the researcher collected data from a range of different participants and class activities to support the project aims.

[2] The students have a shared language and ethnicity in common.

A rationale for the design

Once institutional research ethics approval had been granted by the UAL Research Management and Administration (September 2020), the research team contacted Programme Directors and Course Leaders to discuss the feasibility of project participation. Course sampling began with the analysis of UAL metrics on international student enrolments (UCPU 2020/21).

Fieldwork (observation and interview) began with the analysis of UAL metrics from UCPU on international student enrolments for 2020/21 which informed course sampling procedures. A stage 1 undergraduate course and a postgraduate course across each of the four Colleges were approached. The criteria for selection were that the course cohort was larger than the mean average for the College, and that the cohort included a minimum of 50% international students with a mixture of international, home and European domicile students.

Participant recruitment involved pre-observation meetings with tutors. This stage in the research process was seen as essential for creating longer-term opportunities for dialogue and critical reflection (see research question 2) as well as for ensuring ethical researching during the pandemic and beyond.

Observations

Thirty courses were approached in total and the observational fieldwork of nine units took place from November 2020 to April 2021, summarised in Appendix One. Participants included associate lecturers, lecturers and senior lecturers, year leaders and course leaders across the four Colleges. Length of service varied from a few months to over 13 years. All tutors were English-dominant, and a minority identified as bilingual (interview data). The domiciliary status of tutors was not explored. Pseudonyms have been used throughout this document.

Retrospective interviews

Twenty retrospective interviews were conducted with 9 tutors and 11 students. Post-observation interviews supported the analysis of observational data and participatory approach.
The interviews explored:

1. tutors' and students' experiences and positioning;
2. exploration of a specific event or observational episode which emerged as significant during data analysis.

Data analysis

Data sources include observation, interview, digital artefacts and institutional documents and fieldnotes. Data analysis is guided by theoretical orientations and the research questions (See for example, Kaufhold 2020), and includes repeated listening of audio-recordings, close reading of fieldnotes and labelling transcriptions of classroom episodes with two overlapping phases. This first broader approach helped the researcher to engage with questions emerging during and after observations, in response to questions such as What is going on here? (Holliday 2015; Leung and Hawkins 2011). This was followed by coding of fieldnotes and the narrower transcription and analysis of specific features of classroom talk (See for example, Copland and Creese 2015).

Transcription refers to the translation of spoken language into a written form (or mode). For reference, a more extensive example of transcribed data can be found in Appendix Two. Transcription is an important part of the analysis and can take different forms. The table below provides some examples of the transcription conventions adopted with a brief explanation.

Table 1: Transcription conventions used to support the analysis of class observations

Example from research data	What it means
'...so a lot of this type of research might have a **<u>hundred people</u>** ...' (Site 8 observation)	**Underlined text indicates** that a word is stressed by a speaker for emphasis.
A couple of sentences will be fine [.] anyway over to you guys **[4 second pause]** (Site 4 observation)	Pauses are common features of naturally occurring talk. A short **micro-pause** of less than a second is indicated by a point in square brackets [.]. A longer **pause** is indicated by the number of seconds in brackets.
A: 'Okay I'll start now... **B:** ... You go ahead (Site 7 observation)	**Ellipses and dialogue** layout are used when: **1.** more than one person talks at the same time, known as overlapping talk. **2.** **Ellipses** [...] show that what someone has said may be incomplete. **3.** **Indentation** at the start of a speaker's turn indicates there is no gap, or pause, after one speaker finishes and another begins.
Hi, can you hear us? **[shuffling of papers]** (Site 2 observation)	Contextual information, or researcher explanation, is included in square brackets. In this example, the researcher emphasises that although no-one replies verbally, other classroom behaviour is audible.
Can you hear me? **((quiet laughter))** (Site 2 observation)	Non-verbal communication (laughter or a sigh etc.) can communicate important information. Double brackets indicate that more than one person in the classroom is participating in talk or another action.

The report is intended to immerse the reader in fragments of classroom talk, some of this material may feel familiar, and even trivial. The purpose of this presentation of the data is to invite the reader to consider this taken for granted classroom talk and associated practices afresh, to reflect on why they take place in these ways, and what it means for our teaching, learning and evaluation of students, especially in online contexts. The final section of the report places the findings in the context of extant literature and draws out some practical implications for all of us who teach and support students' learning. It also presents some questions for institutional policy and resourcing.

5. Presentation of Findings

What are the contexts and conversations like between tutors and students

This section presents project findings which have been grouped into key themes. It draws on observational classroom data examples in order to illustrate some of the characteristics of classroom talk. The author recognises that the reporting of classroom experiences is refracted through the pandemic and the specific challenges it has brought tutors to date.
The document is both descriptive and explanatory written with a broad UAL audience in mind.

We acknowledge that the exact form of classroom teaching and learning activities and communication practices are highly context-specific and will depend on, among other things, teaching objectives, a tutor's professional preferences and idiolect (the unique characteristic of individual language use).

5.1. The online classroom: pandemic talk as a new form of social talk

Sixty hours of observations took place online. One salient theme common to the majority of emerging findings from observational data is how educational technologies influence communication practices.

Example 1: Student connectivity in a one-to-one tutorial

The short exchange below between the tutor and a student highlights how virtual access issues became a topic of a conversation rather than more usual topics for social talk (such as the weather or public transport) which are typically used to initiate conversations in many British contexts.

1. Mia: Hello
2. Tutor: Hi, Mia
3. Mia: I'm sorry I'm late, but it wasn't allowing me to log in (quiet laughter)
4. Tutor: It's not a problem, Mia, that is okay
(Site 4 observation)

Example 2: A research meeting: Are you still in London?

A mixed group of four stage one home and international students discuss and present artwork in progress. The tutor begins the research meeting and appears unsure whether the multilingual international student (Yichen) is in London or is accessing the teaching event from China. The tutor asks for confirmation (Line 5 below).

1. Tutor: ... Oh, Yichen is here! Fantastic! Hi, Yichen
2. Yichen: Oh, hi, hi. ...sorry I'm late ...
3. Tutor: ... oh that's okay. I have not seen you for such a long time. Are you ok?
4. Yichen: Yeah, I'm okay
5. Tutor: Yeah, are you still in London?
6. Yichen: Yes [.] I'm in London now

7. Tutor: Okay, okay, good. Okay, well we'd better start soon then, um [.] so you all know that you have 10 minutes to speak [.] and then we have 10 minutes [.] um, and we have a 10-minute discussion period [1] Okay? And [1] I think it's best to start by you sharing your screen so I'm going to start by who I have first on my list so, Sneha, I'm going to get you to start and Sneha [.] I'll let you know when you're getting close to 10 minutes, ok? [falling voice tone]
8. Sneha: Um, yeah sure
9. Tutor: Ok good ... [no overlap between speakers]
10. Sneha: ...Um, let me just set it up...
11. Tutor: Okay [quietly] [7 second pause]
12. Sneha: Oop, can you see that?
13. Tutor: Yep, it's come up, yep [rapidly] [music plays briefly] [pause while student sets up video]
14. Sneha: Okay I'll start now... [no pause between speakers]
15. Tutor: ...You go ahead, okay, yeah [rapidly].

(Site 7 observation)

Contrastive emphasis on line 1 ('Oh, Yichen is here!') is indicative of some element of surprise as the student enters the room. Data suggest (Lines 1-5) that Yichen had had little contact with the tutor before they entered the online classroom. The fact that the student had not attended for several weeks (Tutor interview) was confirmed during interview. In this classroom episode, the data show a tutor respond appropriately by welcoming Yichen, but also passing over the floor to Sneha efficiently after a short exchange.

Tutor talk (Line 7) is characterised by several micro pauses of around 1 second. Pauses have multiple functions in conversations and are a common feature of spontaneous talk in contrast to more rehearsed or 'scripted talk' (Cameron 2001). Towards the end of data example two above, the exchange between the tutor and Yichen (Lines 13 - 15) is characterised by the tutor's rapid speech, and is indicative of the tutor's desire to begin the session.

Increasing and decreasing the pace of speech is another common feature of everyday talk. While it may not have impacted significantly on opportunities for learning in this instance, within a context of teaching ethnolinguistically diverse students, pace of delivery may be a useful point of reflection. For example, pace and volume of delivery can be altered as a deliberate rhetorical strategy when tutors and students are transmitting knowledge or engaging an audience.

Example 3: Can everybody hear me?

This classroom example illustrates how class talk concerned with internet connectivity dominates the start of a learning session. In this example, three minutes at the start of the session are taken up with getting started and establishing a stable connection with both sound and audio. The example illustrates that tutors as well as students have challenges with maintaining stable connectivity which takes time away from learning.

1. Wanqing: Hi, uh, so we decided focus on this [unclear, tentative], uh, the [project topic] that we talked about in the last presentation, and we think it's, the [project topic] is ...
2. Tutor: [Interrupts student talking] …I, there might be a problem with um, with the sound I think ...[slowly]
3. Wanqing: Umm ...
4. Tutor: **Can everybody hear me?**
5. Wanqing: yeah
6. Songyi: yep
7. Mijin: yeah [pause]
8. Tutor: I think I might have some problems with my sound? [rising voice tone] I'm not sure.
9. Songyi: Can you hear us?
10. Wanqing: Can you hear me? ((quiet laughter)) [pause]
11. Songyi: I can
12. Wanqing: Yes, okay, for me
13. Songyi: Tutor can't hear us ((laughter))
    [Extended pause while group wait for tutor to reconnect]
14. Tutor: Hello?
15. Wanqing: Hey
16. Songyi: Hi [loftily]
17. Mijin: Hello?
18. Wanqing: Hi, can you hear us? [shuffling of papers]
    Site 2 observation)

Figure 1 below shows the group respond to the tutor's question: 'Can everybody hear me?' (Line 4 above)[3]. Some students in the room respond to the question verbally (Lines 5-7 above) while other students respond to the same spoken question across modes[4] using the chat function, as can be seen below.

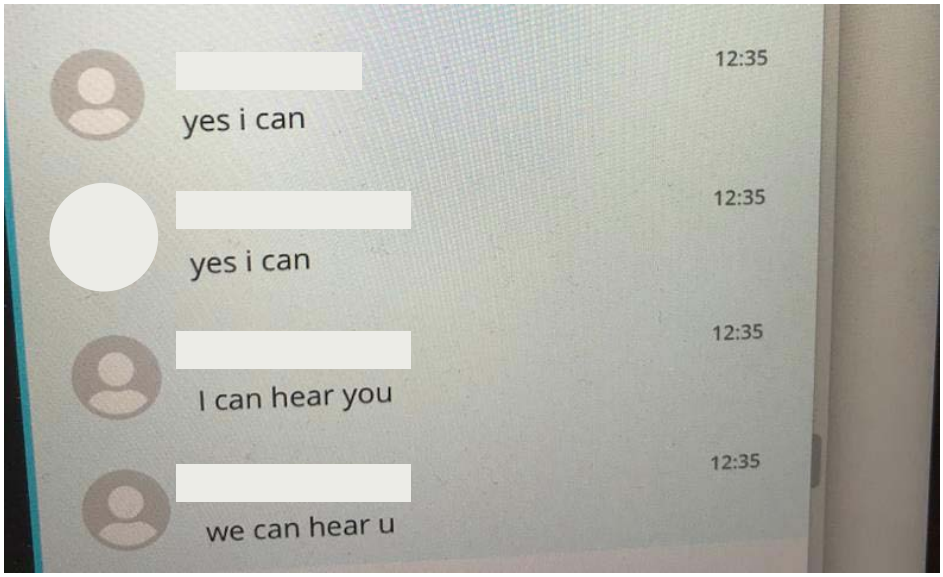

Figure 1: Screenshot of students backchannelling in chat

Students in the Blackboard Collaborate room use the chat function as a backchannelling device[5] to facilitate communication with the tutor in the absence of the tutor being able to hear them. The use of the chat function for backchannelling (ways of showing a speaker that you are listening) illustrates that although classroom interaction is thought of as verbal interaction, it can take place across modes during synchronous teaching activity. That is, responses to spoken interaction can be written, and vice versa. Not all online sessions observed made use of the chat function in online spaces, but the majority did (project fieldnotes).

Despite the laughter and convivial class atmosphere, time taken up with connectivity issues cannot be planned for, or mitigated easily, and uses up valuable contact time which may frustrate tutors and students. As can be seen from the example above, new classroom management skills are needed to welcome

[3] There is also ample evidence of students' loss of connectivity ('Did we lose Peter?' Observation site 5).
[4] Modes of communication are spoken, written, visual. The chat function has elements of both as a text-based literacy practice with features of unplanned, spontaneous conversation.
[5] Backchannelling refers to behaviour or words which indicates that you are listening. It can be verbal (mmm mmm, yeah, oh?) or non-verbal (nodding, facial expressions such as looking puzzled or gestures like waving at the end of a meeting or class).

students, carry out pastoral care online, set up class activities, share screens and links to resources and so on, as well as tutor and student own connectivity issues simultaneously.

There is a potential cost to learning as time is taken up dealing with more immediate issues.

New forms of social talk influenced by for example connectivity issues, time zones, bandwidth and microphone challenges appear to replace other more familiar topics of social talk which typically appear at the start of classes. Additional demands placed on tutors and their students can be acknowledged as well as the workload and demands on time as reported by a tutor:

> The main thing that could help honestly is more time, [.] just more time to build the trust that we need with those specific students [.] (Tutor 2 interview)

Recurrent connectivity issues which take up valuable teaching and learning time are not currently planned for at an institutional level. There is a case for additional resources to counter the technical disruption from loss of connectivity and time taken for file upload and sharing. What is involved in class participation online draws on different communicative resources and skills and is potentially more challenging linguistically and pedagogically. The value and legitimacy of listening only and reading only in the absence of visual or other non-verbal cues can be emphasised.

These examples highlight changes to the way in which tutors and students interact online which divert from in person spaces. They have the potential to disadvantage those international students who may have fewer reference points for how to 'do' tutorials in UK art schools and universities. The online environment adds an additional layer of uncertainty for tutors and their students.

Questions for reflection

1. What are some of the consequences for reduced time for social talk?
2. What is the impact on learning of new forms of talk?
3. What forms of class participation can or should be discussed explicitly?
4. What are the benefits or limitations amongst diverse groups of learners?

5.2. Backchannelling in the online classroom

Backchannelling is a feature of conversation that describes a listener's role and behaviour while a speaker is talking. It can be described as verbal (mmm mmm, yeah, oh?) and non-verbal (nodding, facial expressions such as looking puzzled or gestures waving at the end of a meeting or class). Figure 2 below illustrates how both students and tutors use the chat function to mitigate connectivity and audio and microphone issues as well as to comment on class behaviour. This section illustrates what multimodal backchannelling can look like and raises several questions for discussion and reflection.

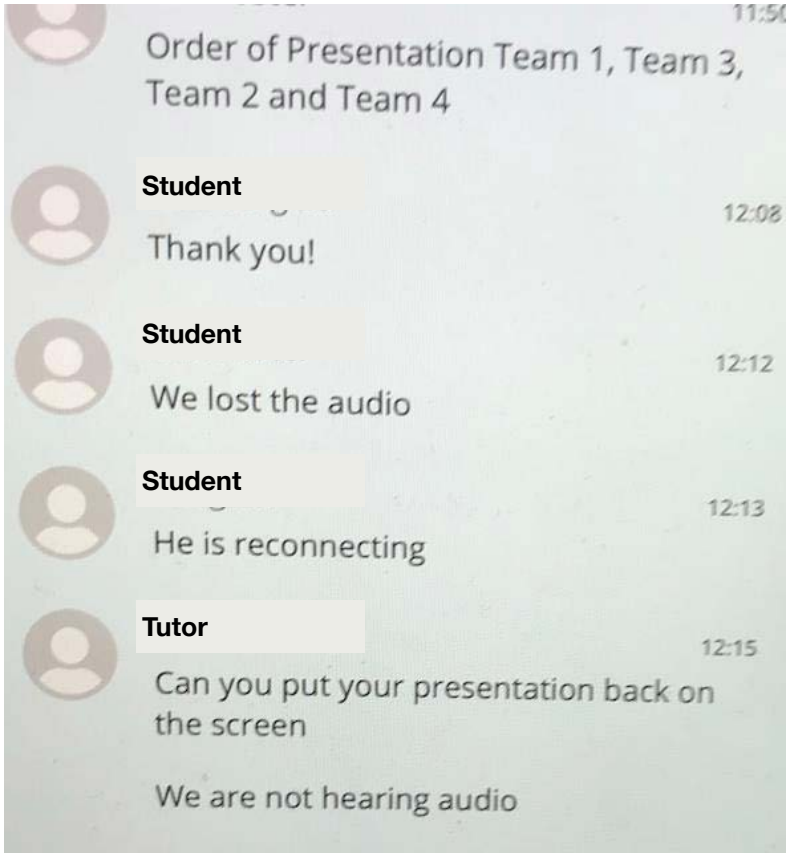

Figure 2: Chat image from site 6 observation

Both the students ('He is reconnecting') and the tutor ('Can you put your presentation back on the screen') captured in the screenshot above use the chat which suggests that while traditional understandings of backchannelling still apply, there are additional ways of communicating that are employed by both tutor and students to show that they are not only present but can hear and are listening. Discontinuities of this kind when diverse groups are connecting were a recurring phenomenon during

fieldwork of this kind and inevitably took time and focus away from class aims and learning.

The different ways in which tutors and students can and do interact with each other in teaching spaces can be made more explicit. There is scope for these practices to be negotiated in sessions with multilingual international students in particular. Time taken away from interacting with students, defined as direct involvement, can be acknowledged. Additionally, time taken up with connectivity issues is inevitably taken away from quality interactions which contribute to teaching and learning.

There are implications for how tutors make up time and how additional individualised support from tutors is time-consuming and takes away from other professional activity. The digital snagging observed, that is frequent minor delays to class proceeding that cumulatively cause delay and disruption, takes away from meaningful class interaction.

A further point to consider which has emerged from the data is how the multimodal and multifunctional nature of the chat function may pose additional challenges for some students.

A related question is to what extent is or should the educational purpose of the chat be made explicit to students during synchronous sessions? Backchannelling is a commonly used communication practice in online classrooms and there may be potential in making its function in relation to learning more explicit.

Questions for reflection

1. What is currently happening (incidentally) that demonstrates the pedagogic potential of backchannelling? Can a case be made for more systematic use?
2. What are the different educational functions of chat? In what ways do tutors make the different educative functions explicit?
3. In what ways do tutors encourage the use of the chat?
4. What does it tell us about learning in small groups?
5. Should institutional definitions of student engagement be revisited to include different modes of online practices?

5.3. Facilitating participation

Example 1 - 'I am listening now'

The previous section 5.2 introduces backchannelling and the chat function as one characteristic of interaction between tutors and their students in online spaces. In contrast, this example highlights how a tutor attempts to mitigate some of the uncertainty and challenges of online interaction.

The classroom context for this example is one in which the postgraduate tutor and the five international students present have multilingual backgrounds. The ethnolinguistic student profile[6] is Chinese. The session is described as a tutorial by the course team during which students present their work in progress usually with the support of PowerPoint presentation slides.

The tutor provides immediate oral feedback whilst 'thinking on their feet' and also refers to formative written feedback related to a written critical outline (research proposal) previously submitted by the students. The default for all present, including the tutor, is camera and microphone off, except when speaking. The data excerpts that follow are from midway through the session and highlight how a tutor compensates for the lack of visual or audio cues by repeating variations of the same phrase:

Tutor: I wanna know what made you change [focus of major project]. It's very important to be clear about the rationale for changes. **I am listening now [.]**
(Site 1 observation)

The words 'I am listening' are followed by a micro pause of less than a second [.] which may seem like a relatively insignificant feature of talk, but in the absence of visual or other non-verbal cues the words signal that it is the students turn to speak. One assumption about many conversations or patterns of interaction in English-speaking contexts is that one person speaks at a time and there are different ways to signal the end of a turn to speak. For example, through words, body language or eye contact during face-to-face conversations.

A relevant question to consider here is what alternatives were available to the tutor at that moment, and to what effect? For instance, would a direct question (Why did you change your topic?) have been considered more abrupt, more judgemental or more transparent?

[6] The students have a shared language and ethnicity in common.

The second longer extract below is from the same Masters supervision during which Yao Xiao and their tutor discuss women's empowerment and ways to challenging notions of women's fragility:

1. Tutor: **Okay [.] okay we're listening, Yao Xiao**
2. Yao Xiao: Okay so the next is uh [1] here [.] uh we're talking about [.] this uh powerful [1] and uh the rape[d] women as a fixed impression [.] is that [.] they are [.] fragile [.] so [1] what I mean of this powerful is that may be it could be a solution to break this [2] fixed [.] impression [1] but …
3. Tutor: **…yeah…**
4. Yao Xiao: … maybe like the [.] uh [.] diversity that we talk about earlier [.] maybe it's too early [.] to find a solution [.] [rising intonation] [.] or
5. Tutor: Absolutely uh I think it's way too early um to want to provide solutions to the problem the problem is so multi-layered [.] and so complex [.]…
6. Yao Xiao: …So… [unclear speech]
7. Tutor: we need to gather more information yes
8. Yao Xiao: So what I need to do is …
9. Tutor: … for years and decades international [women's] day has been really about [.] focussing our camera and our angle on weak women and trying to lift them [2] whereas now the conversation is only thinking about the strong women [rising] and I'm thinking why we are not thinking about the weak women [] that's where we need to work so [.] okay [2]
10. Yao Xiao: …yes, yes, I agree
11. Tutor: Um, yeah [.] **I'm listening now** …
12. Yao Xiao: Yes, and [.] here's the [1] uh the question about [.] ah [.] is that erh um [.] care [count] as an insight [.] that, uh, we must fear and of [.] women's [.] fragility? Is that could be insight or could I have wrong understanding of insight?
[Student steers conversation towards the key concept of insight]. (Site 7 observation)

The tutor initiates talk by repeating the same formulaic phrase with variations: 'okay we're listening' line 1, and 'I'm listening now', line 11). 'Yeah' (Line 3) is said with rising tone (Line 3) and signifies an authentic question. It also suggests the tutor is listening carefully.

The repeated phrase signals that the tutor has finished speaking and that the floor has been handed over to Yao Xiao. Nominating students in this way can make intentions more explicit to others in the virtual or physical classroom. Yao Xiao begins hesitantly, shown by the number of pauses and micropauses (Lines 2 and 12). Pauses as indicated in the transcription above (Line 2) suggest that talk is hesitant or tentative, that the student is

pausing to recall or that they are pausing to formulate new ideas during interaction. In other words, pauses do not necessarily signal a lack of fluency in English or academic ability.

The short excerpts below are taken from a longer class episode between a third student (Yanghong) who is invited to speak by the same tutor with 'I am listening now' (Line 1).

1. Tutor: **'I am listening now'**
   […]
2. Yanghong: … I think this word [sustainable] has been *overused* and eh yeah I'm going to [.] delete this word [.] Umm… [1]
3. Tutor: Can I say?
4. Yanghong: Oh? [...]

11. Tutor: … if you believe ... [then] find yourself another word [.] I mean you beautifully use the word renovate [.] which a lot of people don't use well in the context of your working [.] and I love that [.] it's your, your actually creation [.] have fun with it [.] and you can use do that with the word sustainable as well [.] Yeah, **I'm listening carry on.**
12. Yanghong: Yeah, yeah, thank you…
(Site 7 observation)

'Overused' (Line 2) is emphasised by the student to convey meaning. The tutor interjects (Line 3) and the conversation is characterised by overlapping and unfinished talk in the mid-section of the data excerpt which indicate that both tutor and student are listening and responding to each other effectively. For instance, the student responds by talking about their ideas on escapism which are under development and 'how to renovate the personal identity' (Site 7 Observation). They go on to adopt a somewhat critical stance towards the end of the students' 'turn' and comment that the word sustainable is over-used and that they are planning on deleting it from their research proposal.

It is worth noting that, at the end the of the exchange (Line 11), the tutor creates further opportunity for exploring and redefining the use of the concepts sustainable and renovation. The student declines the offer, however, and seems to be mulling over these possibilities available to them and the time, indicating a productive exchange.

In this example a tutor uses a single phrase repeatedly with more than one student and on more than one occasion throughout the supervision in order to facilitate participation. 'I'm listening now' followed by a pause is a way of vacating space and a verbal strategy for the tutor to pass over responsibility for talk.

Rather than producing reductive interaction, this kind of classroom talk appears exploratory and open ended demanding that both tutor and student think and respond spontaneously. It can be viewed as an example of meaning-making through interaction.

These communication practices are not conventional backchannelling in the sense that words spoken are a way of simultaneously communicating listening, but instead are a deliberate and systematic approach to encourage participation and exploration through talk, which can compensate for the lack of visual cues. In summary, even though the data extracts convey tiny fragments of much longer teaching events, they offer a sense of the communication practices which may work in the absence of visual cues in online settings.

There is some potential for language and communication practices which are used to facilitate participation and learning to be made more explicit and to be deployed systematically.

These practices can include:

- making the expectations tutor have of their students explicit
- making explicit the different forms of appropriate class responses
- reducing unproductive silences by, for example, creating extra time to think.

5.4. Giving feedback, initiating questions and the ‘IRF/IRE’ framework

This section highlights instances of tutor-student interaction with an initial focus on questions, the form they take and potential consequences for class talk. A dominant approach to a classroom exchange in ‘Western’ educational settings has been described as dialogic talk by Alexander (2020). As an approach, dialogic talk can take different forms. However, it can be described in terms of a tutor **initiating** class talk by asking a question, a learner **responding** and a tutor following up with some form of **feedback** (IRF) or **evaluation** (IRE) of a learner’s response.

This next section presents examples of the Initiate-Response-Feeback or Initiate-Response-Evaluation (IRF/IRE) approach in action followed by commentary on the pedagogic effectiveness of different types of questions.

Example 1: One-to-one tutorials – giving directions and instructions

In this example a stage 1 tutor provides individual tutorials to students who are preparing brand boards ready for submission the following week. Each student has 10 minutes to show their work on fashion branding. At the beginning of the tutorial, the tutor offers a student alternative ways of showing their work: screen sharing or talking about it (Fieldnotes). Relevant background to this example is that the student is unable to show the tutor their work because it is stored on a laptop shared with a family member. The tutor probes to determine what the student’s work looks like and the progress made.

1. Farah: ...I mean I added some objectives of the brand
2. Tutor: Okay [.]
3. Farah: and eh like mainly that’s what I did [.] till now [.]
4. Tutor: Okay and did you [elongated] show a transition [.] in terms of the brand evolution from the <u>start</u> of [brand name] over the years to what it’s like now?
   [Tutor initiates question]
5. Farah: No, I did not
   [Response]
6. Tutor: That might be a good thing to consider … [tutor gives direction] … so it’s just, it sort of gives you <u>more</u> to talk about when you do

the presentation this week in the seminar [↗ rising voice tone[7]]
[Feedback]

7. Farah: yes ok [quietly]
8. Tutor: good [rounded, emphatic tone] **[Evaluation]**
9. Farah: yes I'll add that as well [.]

(Site 4 observation)

The student summarises the work to date and indicates they have finished speaking with 'that's what I did [.] till now [.]' followed by a micropause. The tutor responds with a question about tracking the brand board development (Line 4) to which the student responds 'No I did not' (Line 5). The tutor then follows up with an evaluative comment: 'That [course of action] might be a good thing to consider' (Line 6). Here the tutor provides clear and timely direction given the close submission deadline and the time available, yet the evaluation potentially reduces the opportunity for the student to ask the questions in the contact time available. The closed question (did you...) plus the finality of the positive response 'good' communicates that no further interaction or exploration is needed at this time. It is possible that the student interprets the closed yes/no question as an instruction that overrides their own plans for the presentation.

While the approach can encourage dialogue and gives the tutor control, according to Alexander (2020) educational research has found this form of classroom dialogue to be potentially limiting when, for example, the question posed is closed rather than open. In this example of the IRF/IRE approach the student is able to participate in the practice of doing a tutorial by responding 'no' and then 'yes'. For the tutor, there is less opportunity for unforeseen responses and questions from students which may take up more time to resolve appropriately. Risk is an inevitable part of the process and practice of knowledge making, suggest Thesen and Cooper (2013), and the cumulative impact on the potential of the Initiate-Response-Feeback/ Initiate-Response-Evaluation approach to class on learning is a useful point of reflection.

[7] A rising tone, 'uptalk' or 'talking in questions' refers to when spoken statements have a rising pitch at the end to indicate a question (Cameron 2001).

With more time available, the tutor could adopt an open-ended questioning technique ('What do you know about the brand's transition? or 'How could you find out more?'), in so doing extending the possibility of joint problem-solving with the student and understanding the student's expectations of the task at hand:

8. Tutor: good [rounded, emphatic tone] **[Evaluation]** *What are your priorities for submission next week?*

These reformulations from the tutor are still evaluative according to Rymes (2016,110) but can create an opportunity for students 'to draw on their own experiences to reflect on their process, to think critically' and potentially engage in more meaningful interaction in support of learning.

Relevant questions

1. Who asks most of the questions? What form do they take?
2. Who does most of the talking in classes?
3. In what circumstances is it appropriate to instruct rather than probe students?
4. What is the impact of different types of tutor questions on student learning?

Example 2: I don't have an opinion for now sorry

In this second example of the IRF/IRE approach, a tutor also uses a question to initiate dialogue with a student (Paolo), but also between learners (Line 3).

1. Tutor: ...and Paolo, what do you think in your um opinion [.] this Zine needs now? [falling voice tone] [3 second pause]
[Tutor initiates question]
2. Paolo: Uh, my opinion? [.] I don't have an opinion for now sorry ...
[Response]
3. Tutor: That's okay don't worry! I know it's all quite new to you at the moment so no problem [.] **[Evaluation]** um but have a think about it and see if there's anything you think could be included that's not there right now [.] and I'm sure Miaoyu will have her own ideas ...
[Tutor gives concrete direction with regards to action plan]
[Feedback]
(Observation site 1)

The pause of 3 seconds (Line 1) creates an opportunity for the student to respond appropriately. Not having a fully formed response or indeed anything to contribute at a particular moment is not usually problematic. In contrast, not saying anything at all might create confusion for both the students and tutor, especially in online spaces. There are two further points to mention here.

The first is that the open question 'What do you think?' (Line 1) creates opportunity for a more fulsome response. Second, the tutor's response (Line 3) is constructive and any negative 'face', or potential threat to the student's sense of self (by not having anything to say), is minimalised. Whether a tutor makes a narrow evaluation or follows up and extends the student contribution can make a significant difference to class participation particularly with multilingual learners, according to Zhu Hua's (2019) extensive scholarship on multicultural and multilingual classrooms. To underscore this point, a third example from fieldwork is presented below.

Example 3 – Was that interesting? Yes!

In this example a tutor sets up a class activity to watch to a YouTube poetry reading by two Asian Americans who tackle race in the US. As the students listen, the tutor posts keywords into the chat: 'self-interrogation', 'complexity', 'power relations' (Fieldnotes) and so forth to support a critical collaborative 'critical reader task' students are working on:

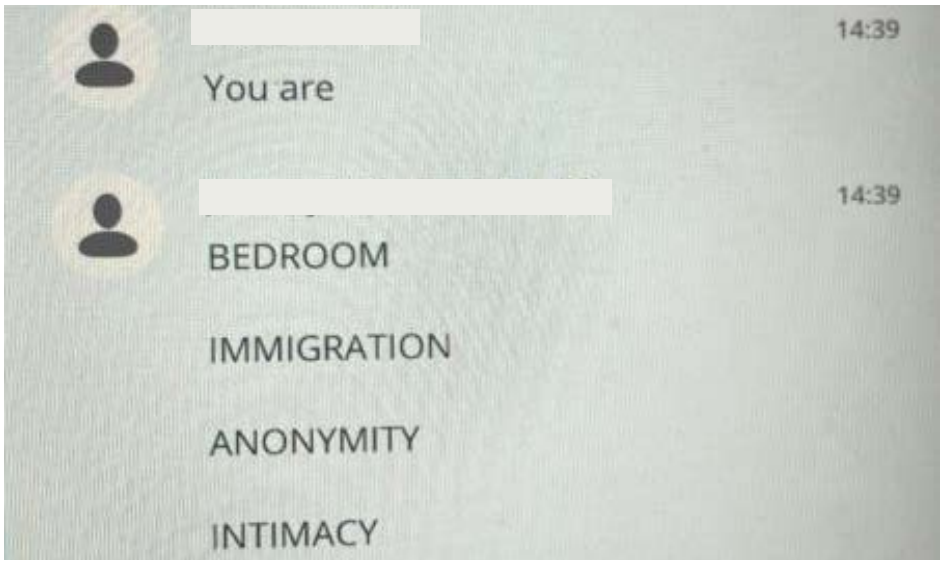

Figure 3: Chat image from site 6 observation

After the viewing, the end, the tutor asks the group ‘Was that interesting?’(Fieldnotes). One person responded verbally ‘Yes, that was interesting’ and the remainder respond ‘yes’ across modes as can be seen in the chat below:

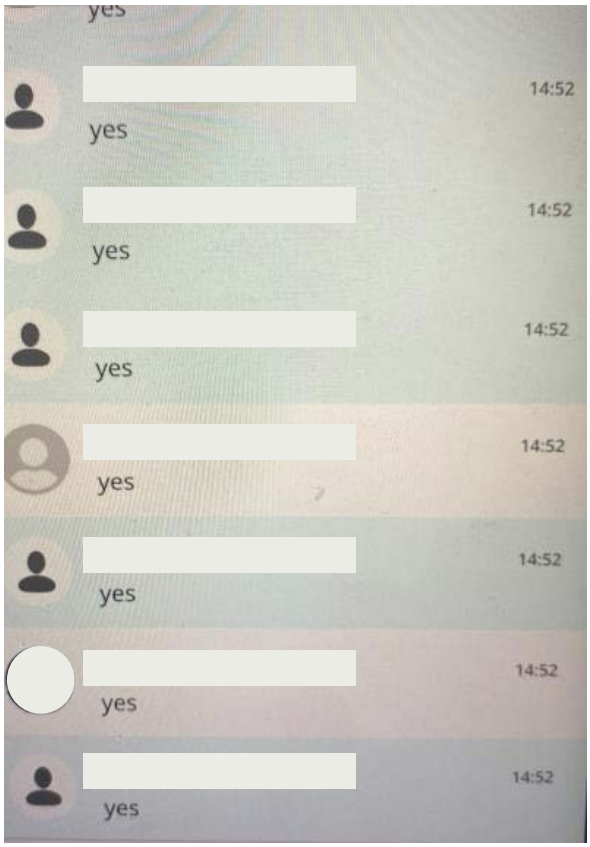

Figure 4: Chat image from site 6 observation

The international student group, majority Chinese students, do everything that was asked of them as they respond to the closed question. It is possible that the international students had more to offer at that moment and that the opportunity for learning created by the tutor was under-utilised.

An alternative reading of the fragment of data is that the closed question was a deliberate time management device as the group stopped for a break immediately afterwards. Given the topic, students may have had more to contribute at that moment and could potentially open up dialogue around positionality[8], language and ethnicity explored in the YouTube clip which could have been elicited with open questions.

[8] Positionality (gender, race, ethnicity, socio-economic background, languages spoken, ability and so forth) plays a role in shaping who we are. See CohenMiller and Boivin (2022) for a more detailed discussion.

According to prominent critical discourse analysts such as Cameron (2001) and Fairclough (2010), one reason for this is that a feature of institutional talk, including university classrooms, is an asymmetrical distribution of power where the person in the position of power has the right to ask questions, while a subordinate has a more 'restricted right' to ask questions. Such power relations can restrict responses as well as students' questions as can be seen in examples 1 and 3 above.

The data example above remain extremely useful for raising awareness of the features of teacher student interaction. It also has potential to be a useful focus for reflection and debate on the pedagogic effectiveness of a range of approaches to teacher questioning and ways of facilitating participation. Making the range of expected responses and/or possible responses to questions explicit can help to alleviate restrictions on right to speak.

In other words, making tutor expectations around class participation and the function of different communication practices visible – such as talking versus posting in the chat – may help to alleviate these perceived or real restrictions for students, at least some of the time.

Example 4: Students subvert the IRF/IRE framework

The class episode below originates from a consultation with a small group of masters students during which they discuss their approach to a forthcoming presentation to an environmental charity. Five students are present: four Chinese international students and one multilingual home student. Similar to example 1 above, the tutor sets up the 30-minute session by offering alternatives: the students can present their work in progress or ask questions (Line 1). Rather than sharing screens and presenting work using PowerPoint slides which is common practice, the students first give a brief update on their collaborative working (Line 2) and then they begin to negotiate what is expected of them by the tutor and by the charity by asking questions.

1. Tutor: ...so whenever you're ready, um, you don't have to have a presentation if you don't have one [.] I could just answer questions, uh, if you have any queries [...]
2. Giovanna: um, yes we did we discuss about during our meetings, and we're, um, what we're thinking is we're going to make a video ...
3. Tutor: yeah, I think that makes sense, I think that's a really good idea already for giving a short video, ... with the short video, how long, how long was that short video going to be? [pause] is it go ... **[Tutor initiates question]**
4. Giovanna: [student interrupts] ...ah, ok so we need to be clear of the... **[Response]** and interesting as well right? **[Student initiates question]**
5. Tutor: yeah right, because um because um when you watch a video and if you're going to put any facts and figures on there, and any data on there, um, people people don't have a lot of time to read it so you have to keep that in mind **[Tutor response]**
6. Giovanna: okay, yep [pause] **[Feedback]**
7. Na Zhou: and um like in the active charity brief of this project that they want a report or storyboard, do you think it's ok to just have a video as our like for the final work? **[Student initiates question]**
8. Giovanna: ... uh, no longer than 5, I think like it should be around 5-minutes
9. Tutor: ok, ok, 5-minutes is actually quite a long video ((laughter)) **[Evaluation]**
10. Giovanna: Yes **[Feedback]**
11. Tutor: so I would say, you know, when it comes to videos, um, the short of the better because people don't have very long attention spans, [...] **[Evaluation]**
12. Giovanna: yeah sure we are trying to figure out how to make them shorter. So, um, so as you said about, like, 3 minutes, 2-3 minutes would be perfect? [pause] **[Student initiates question]**

(Site 2 observation)

The tutor asks a question: '...how long was that short video going to be?' (Line 3) and is interrupted by Giovanna (Line 4). In this episode, a student disrupts the three-part IRF/IRE exchange by asking a further question (Lines 4) in addition to giving a response. Giovanna appears in control of the topic of conversation and seems to be aware of the tacit rules of engagement, as well as comfortable and confident enough to be able to negotiate the length, function and format of a video clip.

There is evidence that the interaction is effective and that Giovanna has understood what is required of them ('okay yep', line 6). Giovanna then pauses to signal the end of the conversational turn which opens up the floor for the second speaker (Na Zhou, line 7) to begin to talk about the assessment brief for their collaborative project.

Turntaking[9] between the tutor and the two students captured here reflects a more equal balance of power during this class episode which lasted for 7 minutes in total. The outcome of the co-construction and negotiation of meaning is that the group have a better understanding of what is required of them as well as some of the steps to be taken for the successful completion of the task.

Questions for reflection

1. How familiar are the 'Initiate – Response – Feedback/ Evaluation' framework for classroom exchanges?
2. What are the possibilities for maximising learning when contact time is limited?
3. What kind of teacher talk encourages/restricts class participation?
4. What kind of teacher talk supports classroom management?
5. Are there tacit expectations for how students can/should participate in online spaces that could be made more explicit?

Example 4: Direct feedback: You didn't listen

This fourth example raises awareness of the potential significance of tutor communication style adding to the examples of the diversity of classroom practices observed. Specifically, the data below provides insight into a conversation between a postgraduate tutor and student undertaking a supervision tutorial.

1. Lu Hang: …In the last week [.] Friday [.] the presentation
2. Tutor: …yeah…
3. Lu Hang: …that the Nike as a [.] example is too commercial so [.] ah [.] may be now the branding auditing is [.] too early and [.] I want to know uh can you give me some suggests that which area [can you give me some suggestions in that area?]?
4. Tutor: Yeah [.] **I did give you suggestions last week, you didn't listen** [tutor softens voice pitch while emphasising individual words]. Cool [.] Okay [.] Fantastic [Falling intonation. Clipped speech] As we said as we had a look in XX's um um …
5. Lu Hang: **... oh no no no [rapidly] [.] I know that [.]** you give me [unclear] the list [unclear] of this may be could be the films or…
6. Tutor: …yes…

[9] For meaningful conversations and a significant feature of talk is where one person speaks at a time and has their "turn".

7. Lu Hang: …technology yes and [.] uh what I am understanding is that this visual auditing [.] in this larger context is defined inside or [unclear] to... [unclear] visual language and what I'm understanding is to build the narrative first [.] and then create the brand so what I'm doing now ...
…is that right?

8. Tutor: absolutely … [Tutor continues by extending advice to the group rather than the individual student]
(Site 8 Observation)

During Lu Hang's turn to speak with their supervisor, the student first recasts the tutor's previous evaluation that Nike as a brand example is too commercial (Line 3) and asks for suggestions from the tutor (Line 3) to support their project work. Although Lu Hang's English deviates from notions of standard English question formation and syntax, the tutor's response (Line 4) shows that they have understood the request. That said, the response from the tutor can be described as an unexpected response as the request for help is declined.

The tutor's response ('I did give you suggestions', line 4) and Lu Hang's response ('... oh no no no [rapidly] [.] I know that', line 5) can be described as 'face saving' as both speakers say something to maintain a positive self-image. The tutor reminds the student of the help offered previously deflecting any blame with: 'you didn't listen' (Line 4). The student confirms this, rephrasing the request (Line 6). The repair strategy appears to work, and the conversation continues with both the tutor and Lu Hang exchanging ideas (Lines 6-8) and towards the end of the excerpt the tutor responds to the student with a positive response to the student's question ('absolutely', line 8).

Towards the end of the group tutorial a student who up to this point has not contributed, posts in the chat:

Yingchen:

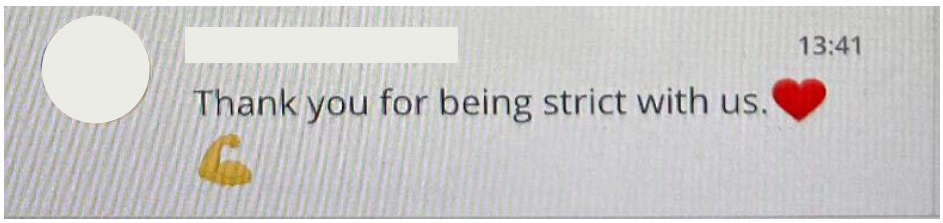

Figure 5: A student provides spontaneous feedback (Site 8 observation)

This spontaneous positive feedback seems to indicate that the direct and emphatic response from the tutor is received positively by other students in the room. This final example highlights the diversity of tutor interaction and individual teaching style as tutors and their Chinese students co-construct class dynamics,

the interaction between students and teachers in a classroom in diverse ways. There is a good case for exploring further why students, including multilingual international students, conduct themselves as they do. These examples have focussed on who asks questions and what interaction develops as a result.

Several analysts concerned with the analysis of class talk, such as Alexander (2020) in the UK and Rymes (2016) in the US, suggest that conversational turns or 'dialogic talk' are crucial for developing thinking. These four examples highlight interaction from much larger episodes of classroom communication practices during a stage 1 tutorial and Masters supervision.

The examples have focussed on formative and developmental feedback on artefacts (brand boards) but also conceptual work and under development.

If formative feedback is at least part of the aim of contact time with students in these sessions, one issue that emerges from the analysis is what is the pedagogic value of minimal responses or no timely response from students or from tutors.

Questions for reflection:

1. How much risk is involved when tutors and students talk together?
2. Are tutors aware of the risks students take, and vice versa?
3. To what extent do students' expectations about class talk align or contrast with forms of indirect feedback?
4. To what extent does teaching style and communication style affect conversations with multilingual international students?
5. Which multilingual students speak more/less frequently and more/less time? How can active participation be encouraged? Is this always desirable?

5.5. Peer talk

Peer talk is defined as interaction among students with little intervention or involvement from tutors. This next theme emerged as significant as although group discussions, work in break out rooms and dialogic talk are significant for university teaching and learning, fieldwork captured few instances of sustained peer talk among students, as most research observations involved direct and often extended interaction between a tutor and an individual student or a group of students.

The three data examples that follow illustrate significant features of peer-to-peer talk in fashion, fine art and design. First two postgraduate fashion students discuss work in progress:

Example 1 – Peer-to-peer interaction

1. Anna: that's ... so we can do a medley, a bit of a PowerPoint and then show them a short clip of, of a video?
2. Tutor: yes, yes, so you can uh, maybe you, what you can do is have that PowerPoint to watch you can do a, you know explain to them where you got your ideas from and um what the concept is about and then show the short, short video, it's almost like an introduction really to the video themselves
3. Anna: That's great! Yeah, that's good! I think I like that we can have a bit of both.
4. Tutor: yeah, yes I think that would really work for your project
5. Anna: for the short clip we can really focus on corn 'cause um, **[Paoyu] has done more research on corn, haven't you, [Paoyu]? She found...**
6. Paoyu: **...yeah, ...**
7. Anna: **...something which...**
8. Paoyu: **...I found, like, the every user use like this [...]**

(Site 2 observation)

Anna invites her classmate to speak by using her name (Line 5) and encourages talk through the use of a tag question ('haven't you?', line 5). Questions like these characterise social talk and are generally used to confirm knowledge already known rather than to seek new information. This suggests that the two students featured in this exchange have a degree of familiarity, developed in this example in part through a collaborative group task before the observation (Fieldnotes and tutor interview).

Paoyu accepts the invitation to speak and signals the start of her turn with 'yeah' (Line 6). Talk between the two students at this point is overlapping with incomplete statements (Lines 5-8)

where each speaker contributes more or less equally and shows how the two speakers display familiarity during interaction. Here incomplete statements are seen as an indication of a positive class atmosphere and interaction between two multilingual speakers, one based in the UK and one an international student from China, despite not having met in person due to travel restrictions at the time.

Example 2 - Solidarity through peer talk: I don't know if Yichen wants to say anything?

This class episode is divided into two data excerpts to show how one multilingual international student struggles to participate in an art research seminar as they introduce the sensitive topic of historical infanticide and the related artefacts they have created. In contrast to the example above, the interaction below is characterised by a slow pace of delivery and frequent long pauses (See lines 1 and 5):

Episode 1

1. Yichen: Un uh baby tower photo in China **[pause]** [traffic noise in background] um towers but I found some books **[3 second pause]** um **[4 second pause]** uh which British uh with Gordon [name unclear] and British writer Jameson and Chinese writer umm Wei Wei [unclear] book uh uh
   [25 second pause]
2. Tutor: Are you okay, Yichen? **[3 second pause]**
3. Yichen: Yeah, yeah, here
4. Tutor: Okay [rapidly] **[2 second pause]**
5. Yichen: Uh and I found some documental [unclear] both **[12 second pause]** and uh when I research about the tower I feel really uncomfortable ...
   [7 second pause] so I will make some work to shape my feelings **[noone speaks for 85 seconds as student shows work on slides]**
6. Tutor: Are you going to the next page?
   [Student continues in the same way and shows images of cultural and historical artefacts they have sculpted]
   Um so are you finished?
7. Yichen: Uh yeah that's all
8. Tutor: **Any thoughts from the group on this work? [...]**
   If you show us the PowerPoints sides which had the image of your sculpture... [no pause]
9. Izzy: ...sculptures, yeah

(Site 7 observation)

The tutor steps back and allows Yichen to present using PowerPoints slides with images of the sculptures. As a consequence, classroom talk is punctuated by repeated extended pauses (Lines 1-3) of between 3 and 85 seconds. The tutor asks questions, not to offer verbal feedback or evaluation of the work at this point but to check whether the student is okay (Line 3). While it is not possible to pinpoint what causes the silences from the observational data alone, fieldnotes support the view that reasons were multiple and included a challenging topic and communicative context. For instance, as Yichen shares images of his research and artefacts (Line 5) and comments that investigating infanticide towers makes him feel 'really uncomfortable' (Line 5), no-one responds. While the student struggles with screen sharing (Fieldnotes), the tutor steps in briefly and asks the group to comment ('Any thoughts from the group...? line 8'). Izzy echoes the tutor's request to re-show the images of his own sculptures which suggests that, in spite of the digital snagging, pauses and slow pace of presentation as well as lack of elaboration from the presenter, those students present are listening and interested in Yichen's art practice.
This is confirmed as Izzy provides extended feedback lasting a few minutes:

Episode 2

1. Izzy: I quite like the way the sculptures they like [3 second pause] I can't explain cos from what I saw briefly it's like quite like menacing [rising tone] and I think that like really reflects on like **[4 second pause]** how you kinda like <u>feel</u> about um uh the towers when you are doing your research [pause] cos its quite black and like <u>black</u> represents like <u>death</u> and it kinda like has more violent like menacing appearance rather than like if it was pink or something [1 second pause] and I quite liked the image of the spike on one of the towers which kinda like seems quite aggressive and the other specific sculpture with the red on top I thought that was quite kinda interesting like maybe I'm getting it wrong but ...
[Peer talk continues as the student continues for a further 2 minutes of unscripted talk, feedback and evaluation] ... I feel like it's quite interesting [.] it's quite different [8 second pause, no-one speaks]
2. Sneha: I really like the historical folklore [overlapping talk] ((laughter)) sorry you go ahead
3. Izzy: I wasn't saying anything **I don't know if Yichen wants to say anything?**
4. Sneha: Yeah I thought Yichen wants to say something
5. Yichen: Ah, no, no, no, thank you
(Site 7 observation)

Although Yichen's brief presentation (Lines 1-7, episode 1 above) is characterised by a simple narrative account, the two students' responses, as seen in episode 2 above, suggest that meaning making through verbal interaction and visual support is effective in spite of the challenging topic and disjointed delivery. What seems significant here is that despite the disruption to free flowing conversation in the first excerpt, there is evidence of attentive listening from Izzy and Sneha. Thus, while the conversation between Yichen and his peers is impaired by contextual and linguistic factors, the second excerpt seems to illuminate the essence of talk underpinning 'the crit model of learning whereby artists present their work to a group in order to gain feedback on how that work is being "read"' (Moore 2013).

What is more, Izzy and Sneha display solidarity for their peer as they invite Yichen to speak (Lines 3 and 4), apologising for dominating the floor ('sorry you go ahead,' line 2). Although Yichen declines the invitation to speak it seems significant that he has been invited to do so by his peers, and not the tutor.

An 'individual's multilingual' repertoire has been described as 'the totality of linguistic-semiotic resources available in a given space to individuals or a community in local communicative practices' (Juffermans and Tavares 2017, 100). That is, the different languages (English, Mandarin, Yoruba) learned and bits of language acquired during one's life plus the practices, materials and artefacts we use for communicative purposes.

There is just enough observational data in the excerpts above to show diversity of the language and semiotic resources UAL students have and use for language and communication practices. For example, Yichen actually speaks very little while presenting his art practice; and his repertoire is characterised by restricted lexical and grammatical range and short conversational turns. During interview, the tutor confirms this observation and the challenges it creates from their perspective:

> His English is s::o[10] limited that I just can't draw out what's going on with him, I'm not sure if he's okay or not, yeah, yeah, it's been a very difficult case (Tutor 1 interview)

Even though Yichen appears to have researched and presented a phenomenon of historical, cultural and personal significance to him, albeit superficially, the tutor expresses the difficulties understanding 'what's going on with him' with limited English is cited as a primary cause for the difficulty.

[10] Elongated pronunciation and word stress.

To contrast with Yichen, Izzy, an English-dominant speaker, uses the filler 'like' frequently ('I think that *like* really reflects on *like* [4 second pause] how you kinda *like* feel about ... the towers). The use of 'like' is likely to reflect her age and gender, but is also an important signifier of identity (Laserna, Seih and Pennebaker 2014). 'Like' is characteristic of a conversational style as, for example, speakers create time to think or expresses caution before an evaluation, rather than evidence of 'sloppiness', or an inability to articulate oneself using Standard English.
At this point there is some value in contrasting some features of Yichen and Izzy's class talk. There is also a good case for exploring further why multilingual international students conduct themselves in the ways they do in class.
The questions below may be helpful in this regard:

Questions for reflection

1. What does peer talk look like, and sound like, in your teaching practice?
2. Is peer talk routinely assessed? Why/why not?
3. Do you have deliberate strategies for 'holding back' in order to allow students to support and instruct? How are these strategies and approaches communicated to your students?
4. Whose responsibility is it when students are difficult to reach?
5. What strategies do/do not work? Why/why not?

Example 3 – Performing peer talk

The third data example focuses on a crit with a mixed profile of postgraduate students. English is the dominant language spoken by the tutor and by the majority of students, although the majority of the seven students present are multilingual speakers. The teaching and learning context is one in which students meet to discuss and share design work in progress (Fieldnotes and tutor interview) and the tutor and students have worked together over several months prior to the research observation.
The extended episode below begins with the tutor inviting Aileen to talk about her design practice and intentions for research. This is followed by some analysis of peer talk centring on Connie, a multilingual international student, giving Aileen some constructive feedback (See episode 2 below).

Class episode

1. Tutor: …I wonder if a starting point [slowly] [.] um [.] would be, can you talk a little bit more about what the intentions are, because

potentially these two different directions have quite distinct intentions in what you want then to accomplish

2. Aileen: [slowly/deliberately] Um [.] um [.] **[sighs]** [2 second pause] my intentions, well, the intention with like, this, um direction of, um, the project was like [.] kind've to give a place for [elongated], to give a place for an object that had such like, um, weight behind it in history [deliberately] that no longer has a weight behind it now, like how can we find a place for it in the 21st century, and that's kind of where, what I'm trying to do with **these illustrations** [rising tone] [.] but [3 second pause] yeah [3 second pause], I don't know, does that cover, does that makes sense? What I just said? I don't know... [latching/no pause]
3. Tutor: ...Mmm [.] **Let's take it to the group [brightly]**
4. Aileen: Humph
5. Tutor: **Does that make sense? Is that clear as an intention?** [clears throat] [4 second pause]
6. Connie: I think [pause] the clearest one is the one with the converse [rising tone] [2 second pause]
7. Tutor: ... Mmm mmm ...
8. Connie: ... it's just because it has, like, you know [.] hints of the modern and ....
9. Connie: ... historical, I, I just think I need a little bit more context [.]
10. Aileen: ... mmm [flat] ...
11. Connie: ... if [.] I didn't know [.] your project [rising tone] [.] I wouldn't know what you're [.] trying to say [deliberately]
12. Aileen: Yeah
13. Connie: Like I think may be the, mmm, your poetry aspect that you did before [.][rising] could you work together maybe [rising intonation]. I'm not sure.
14. Aileen: Ooh, the haikus, really?!
15. Connie: Maybe.
16. Aileen: Ooh! Yay, (laughs)...
17. Tutor: ... um, Connie, what do you think that um, the poetry would do here [deliberately], how would, how would it work alongside it? What would it add? What would it change?
18. Connie: I think it would just guide the [.] viewer a little bit, right? Instead of us interpreting what Aileen wants [rising tone] Cos this is kind of like Aileen's interpretation [rising tone] [.] so, in this this type've project I would want to know what the artist is trying to do, ...
19. Aileen: ...mmm... [quietly]

(Site 5 Observation)

Aileen, an English-dominant speaker, responds to the tutor's invitation and screenshares images of the illustrations ('...that's kind of ... what I'm trying to do with these illustrations, line 1) as she talks about her intentions for her research practice.

Rising voice tone indicating a question, a sigh and repeated pauses (Line 2) suggest that the student appears to express some discomfort or doubt over the design practice approach taken so far, that is what she is trying to do. Indeed, she ends by verbalising the uncertainty ('I don't know, does that cover, does that makes sense? What I just said? I don't know' line 1).
The tutor immediately invites a direct response from the group rather than responding directly themselves.

The exhalation 'humph' (Line 4) may indicate some dissatisfaction with her short presentation, the tutor's response or her anticipating peer feedback. Frequent pausing and small interjections like these, (and 'like' in the previous example) are sometimes seen as indicative of a lack of ability to articulate one's thoughts well. Yet, they can also be said to fill a gap when a speaker is unsure what to say, which may be the case here as Aileen engages in talk around her design practice and is unsure how what has been said and shared visually will be received. From this perspective, small seemingly trivial aspects of talk can communicate useful information to a tutor and group about the learning environment from a student's perspective.

From lines 7 onwards there is evidence of peer talk between two students with minimal intervention from the tutor. After the tutor's invitation to talk ('Does that make sense? Is that clear as an intention...', line 5). Connie, an English-dominant and multilingual international student, also begins hesitantly at first: 'I, I just think I need a little bit more context' (Line 9 above).

The point of her critique is that she needs more contextual background in order to make sense of Aileen's intentions:

> ... if [.] I didn't know [.] your project [rising tone], I wouldn't know what you're [.] trying to say [deliberately] (Line 11 above)

As Connie talks, Aileen backchannels with a neutral tone and this suggests she is listening attentively as she interacts with Connie, but is not necessarily comfortable or in agreement with the feedback.

10. Aileen: ... mmm [flat] ...
11. Connie: ... if [.] I didn't know [.] your project [rising tone] [.] I wouldn't know what you're [.] trying to say [deliberately]
12. Aileen: Yeah
13. Connie: Like I think may be the, mmm, your poetry aspect that you did before [.] [rising tone] could you work together maybe [rising intonation]. I'm not sure.

Connie appears to provide appropriate feedback as she refers to a previous piece of work (see line 13 above). The comment relates to the Unit project brief, the aim of which is 'to build on iterative process from previous Units' (The Unit brief). Here peer talk does appear relevant and interaction can be said to support learning.

The next shorter excerpt that follows is part of the previous class episode and presented separately for ease of interpretation. A further interesting feature of talk highlighted below is how Connie performs her critique using a self-stylised voice, that is by assuming a voice that is not her own:

18. Aileen: ...mmm... [quietly]
19. Connie: ...rather than me being like, oh! **This is a modern take on an, I don' know, Egyptian painting [performative voice]**
20. Aileen: (Cautious laughter)
21. Connie: I dunno, yeah, that's really ...
22. Tutor: ...mmm... [quietly]
23. Aileen: Okay, yeah, no, that's a really good point[11]. **I'm halfway through the article that you suggested, like ages ago [pause] It's really, wordy, [laughter], I had to break it up a little bit.** (laughter) [3 second pause]
(Site 5 Observation)

One line 19 above the bold text depicts how Connie's voice is deeper, 'throaty' and more dramatic in tone than her usual voice. A relevant question to ask is why now? What is this performance doing? Previous research by Snell (2010) in school settings found that these types of linguistic features aimed to preserve rather than destabilise relationships.

Therefore, although Connie assumes a dominant role in the class in terms of her 'peer talk' and participation in the crit, she may also find the direct peer-to-peer interaction uncomfortable. The reason she adopts a voice that is not her own in order to preserve her otherwise convivial relationship with Aileen.

Now to focus on Aileen's response highlighted above ('I'm halfway through the article you suggested', line 24). Although it is not possible for an observer to know why previous advice was

[11] The heavily stylised voice in which speakers use a voice that is not their own was observed elsewhere including, tutor talk. For example, as a tutor attempts to make a class announcements, read and respond to chat posts and welcome students simultaneously: 'So I sent out some ...ooh! wait a minute [performative voice] ...' (Site 8 Observation).

brought up at this moment in the interaction, it can be useful to ask what it might mean as the statement contrasts with the positive feedback from Aileen ('that's a really good point'). One reading is that it is an indirect rebuttal of Connie's direction given earlier on the course ('...It's really, wordy, (laughter), I had to break it up a little bit.') in doing so minimising the immediate critique.

Peer talk is defined as interaction among students with little intervention or involvement from tutors.

These data examples illustrate how what are described as desirable communicative practices and supportive of learning of the whole class are realised in different ways.

The assumption that peer talk is an uncontentious form of class interaction is not fully supported by the evidence here.

Data examples show evidence of free-flowing conversation characterised by overlapping speech, turntaking and unfinished utterances reflecting convivial relations among multilingual international students and their peers. Evidence shows displays of solidarity through talk, but also performative strategies adopted by students to manage the talk that is needed to support learning when conversations are more difficult. Dysfluency and pausing are common to all speakers as they think, listen and critique at different times irrespective of language background.

Relevant questions for reflection

1. How can we better understand the advantages and risks associated with peer talk?
2. How can we better understand the communicative repertoire of the same individuals at different times?
3. What strategies do tutors and students use for classroom management of talk?

Example 4 - Why don't they talk in class?

Several complex and interwoven factors have been reported as to why multilingual international students, and Asian students in particular, do not participate actively in class. These include: **individual factors**, for example, an (in)ability to communicate in English, personality, anxiety and knowledge of a topic.

Social and cultural orientations such as respect for authority, norms and expectations around speaking and disagreeing in public.
Communication including interactional patterns such as turntaking, ways of giving opinions; and teacher communication patterns such as Initiate-Response-Feedback, explored earlier sections of this report.
The effects of **language ideology,** or persistent beliefs about and attitudes towards language. For instance, for many, access to and use of standard English is a route to economic wealth, citizenship and security whereas for others the dominance of English and other post-colonial languages embody the continued influence of postcolonialism and imperialism (See Horner and Weber, 2017; Zhu Hua, 2019). However, while language can be an obstacle for some, recent research has shown that it is not the only issue for international students studying abroad (Zhang Wu 2022; Xuesong Gao and Zhu Hua, 2021).

Example 1 – We don't call students out

This example centres on the practice of tutors not calling students out, or referring to a student by name, in order to control which students speak and in which order.
In this example the first three fragments are taken from a longer class observation.

Twelve design students present work in progress. Ten present as having Chinese ethnolinguistic backgrounds and two are non-Chinese. After the students in the group have presented their work, the tutor speaks freely for several minutes adopting a systematic approach to feedback (Fieldnotes). First, by giving immediate presentation feedback to individual presenters in their teams, and second by extending feedback to everyone present in the Blackboard Collaborate room. The tutor speaks not only to the students present, but also provides generic feedback which applies to students who presented earlier in the day but are no longer present. This multi-layered approach to the feedback can be seen in the data fragment below:

Tutor 1: Thank you well done guys [claps loudly/speaks loudly] [.] handclap to everybody and **another handclap to everybody from before** [.] um well done guys!
[Site 4 Observation]

Even though the feedback comments were applicable to the presentation task and Block assessment, it was not clear to the observer whether the students present had seen all the

presentations and therefore to what extent they were able to interpret how the feedback might apply to them as individuals. The tutor continues to talk on a broad range of topics for six minutes ranging from team working, the students' creative design potential, employability, a written reflective workflow blog task and even alluding briefly to Max Weber's (1905/1930) 'The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism', within the context of social media engagement:

Tutor 1: '...to be a good Christian [.] you had to be active you had to make things [.] ... [.] you had to be making an active contribution [.]...you weren't able to be idle'
[Site 4 Observation]

What is significant is that the function of teacher talk is complex. Different teams of students appear to be praised simultaneously: some directly and some indirectly as they are no longer present. As a consequence, it may have been difficult for students to know how to respond, or indeed whether they were required to.

The tutor also gives direction informing the group what to expect for the remainder of class time:

Tutor 1: ...I'm going to concentrate on a couple of things quickly and then I want to open it up to you guys [.] and <u>don't be shy</u> [.] there's not that many people in the room and **you've all been talking anyway and done a <u>fantastic job</u>** [.] and that's what I **say a <u>fantastic job's</u>** been done by everybody [.]
[Site 4 Observation]

The tutor is emphatic and encouraging ('<u>a fantastic job</u>'s been done by everybody', line 5) and reminds the group that they have already contributed ('you've all been talking anyway', lines 3-4). The tutor provides clear direction to the group by explaining that the tutor will talk first and afterwards the students are expected to talk ('I want to open it up you guys', line 2).

The third fragment of data below highlights how, after providing extensive feedback in support of learning, the same tutor invites the class to comment:

Tutor 1: **We don't call students out** but if anyone wants to add some comments right now I've got some time now [.] we've got about 10 minutes so if anybody wants to ahm [.] **I'm not going to call anybody out** [.] but if anyone wants to ah make a <u>comment</u> or say something in addition to what I've said or what they've seen from their from their peers today [.] <u>please don't be shy</u> [.] and **just remember to turn your mic on** and ah just a couple a

couple of few sentences will be fine [.] anyway over to you guys
[4 second pause]
Don't be shy! [performative voice] ...
[3 second pause]
If you don't want to speak you can also put the ah comment in the chat
[12 second extended pause]
Well everyone must have a perfect, perfect feeling about the situation
[tentatively/gently]... [Site 4 Observation]

The tutor states explicitly that 'We [tutors] don't call students out' and how during the discussion they are 'not going to call anybody out' (Lines 3-4). The repetition suggests that the practice of not calling anyone out in front of their peers is important. The comments also suggest that talk at this point is optional, an interpretation supported by the tutor's comment 'If you don't want to speak...', line 11) followed by the reference to chat as an alternative mode of communication (Lines 11). The tutor's extended pause of 12 seconds (Line 12) would seem to be an adequate amount of time for students to turn their microphone on (Line 7) should they wish to take the floor and comment. On a practical level there may not be enough time to consider or formulate what might be an appropriate response. Students are encouraged to contribute but are not asked to do so individually. What seems significant is that despite the work involved in setting up the class discussion, no-one speaks.

The practice of not calling students out by name when actively seeking their verbal participation came up more than once during fieldwork. The interview excerpt below shows an experienced tutor reflect on their experiences at UAL. The tutor talks at length about some of the challenges of engaging multilingual international students from their point of view.

1. **Interviewer**: Is there anything else that you think I ought to know about the experiences of supporting multilingual international students?
2. **Tutor 2:** I think it's very difficult to speak to that group as a whole because obviously we're including students from all over the world ...if we're speaking about Asian international students **Chinese students** I think probably one of the biggest [factors] is obviously around you know language learning [...] [as] they don't speak the language there is sometimes I think a moment where I'm like not quite understanding what that student's saying but I don't, **I never call them out in front of the class** occasionally I think if it's really getting in the way of the communication and their learning that I might have a quiet conversation with them in a one-to-one
(Tutor interview, site 4)

The tutor refers to the practice of '... never call[ing] them out in front of the class' (Lines 10-11). This time it is with specific reference to 'Chinese students' (Line 6) who 'don't speak the [English] language' (Line 8). The tutor reports that there are moments in interaction where communication breaks down because they do not understand what their students are saying when they talk. In practical terms, the tutor reports that Chinese students who are 'hard to critique' (tutor interview) are supported outside the mainstream classroom 'in a one-to-one' (Line 11).

According to Blair, Blythman and Orr (n.d., 4) 'there are diverse approaches to critical pedagogy in art and design education' which aim to encourage talk by 'shy' students, yet the data illustrate that although talk is encouraged, it remains optional at times. For these tutors, the practice of avoiding student embarrassment, discomfort or loss of face associated with asking students to talk, seems to have consequences for class interaction. As a result, at the moment of interaction when communication breaks down, Chinese students who are understood to have limited English, or no language (tutor interview), may not be given the same scrutiny or opportunity for critique from their tutors as other students.

'Calling out' is often framed negatively as a confrontational style of communication according to social psychologists Woods and Ruscher (2021) and is understandably avoided by tutors in group settings.

This is an ethical practice with desirable outcomes, but there is also the possibility that by not nominating or inviting students to speak, even when they cannot be understood easily, opportunities for learning are missed.

This example raises awareness of how students are encouraged to talk in class but that verbal class participation remains optional. Second, how the practice of not calling students out can supersede the need for a verbal response. At times, class talk is avoided by both students and tutors alike which may lead to unintended consequence of not calling students out that are worth further consideration.

Questions to consider:

1. How do you invite students to contribute in class? Why/why not?

2. What are some of the alternative ways of encouraging active participation?
3. Are there respectful/ethical ways to invite individual students to participate or respond without pressuring them?
4. When communication breaks down, what do you do and why? Does it work?
5. When do you/don't you push students?

Example 2 - Tutors hold back

This example explores tutor dilemmas and admissions of holding back from interacting with Chinese international students. It follows on from the practice of not calling students out explored in the previous example, this time touching on the potential impact of holding back:

Tutor 2: ...it can be hard to critique a student sometimes when ... they feel obviously they have done an incredible job ... we don't feel as though we can be like **oh you need to work on this this communication skill** a little bit more **I think we hold back a lot with that as tutors because we don't want to say to them you're not good enough** ...I think that there is a that **pride** is it is an amazing thing and a really positive thing but **it also can be something that holds them back as** well and now it's not just that you know their own reactions and responses to it I **think our misconceptions as a teaching team have [influenced] ... what can we say and I have said to students in the past like we need to work on this little bit more and this student has clearly been very uncomfortable with that idea and that held me back** from maybe saying it again (Tutor interview)

In the data extract above, the tutor explains that in their experience some students can be 'hard to critique' (Line 1) when there is a mismatch between the students' perceptions of what they have achieved and tutor assessment of the same piece of work. For instance, 'when they feel ...[that] they have done an incredible job' (Line 2-3), but tutors do not agree. In this case, 'critique' appears to refer to a negative evaluation only: 'we don't want to say to them you're not good enough' (Line 4-5).
The tutor explains that because of a reluctance to provide negative feedback, 'as tutors, they hold back a lot' (Line 5) with reference to some Chinese students.

The reasons cited for this classroom communication practice are numerous, orienting towards students' individual factors. These include a lack of language (tutor interview) and limited English (see 5.5, page 37 this document), inadequate communication

skills (Lines 3-4 above) and student sense of 'pride' which the tutor reports 'holds them back' (Lines 6-7). There is likely to be a complex interplay of dynamic factors including students' language background influencing class talk. However, the data examples here suggest that Chinese students do not speak, at least some of the time, because tutors hold back from moments of face-to-face interaction they find difficult.

The next data excerpt explores the issue of holding back further:

1. Researcher: ...In what ways do you alter your teaching or professional
2. practice in order to accommodate the needs of a diverse
3. international student cohort? ...
4. Tutor 3: ...**This is a complex question [carefully]...An easy answer**
5. **to your question, Victoria, is not very much at all**. The
6. more complicated answer...
(Tutor interview)

There are tensions between the question and response above. Implicit in the question is that modifying teaching practice to accommodate the needs of 'a diverse international student cohort' is desirable and expected. In contrast the tutor responds initially: 'not very much at all' (Line 5).

The tutor explains carefully that for day-to-day practice this can be challenging in a classroom environment with the large numbers of students they and other tutors have to deal with. See lines 1-2 below:

1. Tutor 3: **The way I deal with it is to ensure that all teaching is as**
2. **inclusive as possible** [...] With our overseas students I, I
3. think well [.] like [.] if I try and make my teaching as
4. inclusive as possible so that I [.] **say everything that's**
5. **written in an individual support agreement for a student who's**
6. **got a learning disability** [.] **I should make that apply to**
7. **every student in the classroom** [.] With the overseas students
8. I think right I've got to [1] make sure that um [.] every
9. student is treated the same so you wouldn't, I know, I
10. remember before [rapidly] [tutor's name] and I in the
11. physical classroom were saying [.] we've got to be careful
12. 'cause **I've noticed sometimes we gravitate towards the tables**
13. **which have got the home students on them [.] and tend not to**
14. **gravitate towards the students who are the Chinese students**
15. ... you know you don't even realise you're doing it
16. sometimes... so you have to b::e [elongated] proactive in
17. saying to yourself [.] **you must treat all tables equally** ...
(Tutor Interview)

The tutor talks knowledgeably and at length about UAL's Disability Services and the Independent Support Agreement document. This is a document the Service produces on behalf of students and is distributed to staff to ensure staff are inclusive. The length of response suggests strongly that the tutor interviewed takes inclusive practice seriously. In fact, the data suggest that it is this information in this document that alters practice:

> 'I try and make my teaching inclusive as possible so that ... everything that's written in an individual support agreement for a student who's got a learning disability [.] I should make that apply to every student in the classroom' (Lines 4-7)

Inclusivity is seen here as treating all students equally in support of learning. Are all students treated equally? The data extract above suggests that this may not always be the case in large classes:

> I've noticed sometimes we gravitate towards the tables which have got the home students on them [.] and tend not to towards the students who are the Chinese students (Lines 12-14)

Rather than treating all students equally, a position underpinning inclusive practice, there is evidence that some tutors hold back from interacting with Chinese students. Conversations with some Chinese students are reported as more difficult than with other students and, as a result, they are not always treated in the same way as home students (Line 13 above).

The institutional imperative to treat all students equally may be difficult to sustain across larger diverse and dynamic groups. The previous data examples highlight some of the pressures of teaching large classes of up to 50 (Fieldnotes), but also the dissonance felt when interacting and criticising students directly.

Wang (2012) confirms that there are huge benefits of language development programmes for international students, but that these forms of institutional provision are not the same as inclusive practices and may even run counter to them. One reason for this is that English language and communication skills are seen as individual problems to be fixed with causes and solutions lying with the individual rather than the institution.

Where this is the case, UAL staff need more support than they receive currently on how to hold back less with students perceived as being unable to express themselves adequately within the context of university classrooms. Although Chinese international students do face significant linguistic demands placed on them in academic and social settings, a 'limited

English' explanation is an oversimplification for the reasons why multilingual international students do not always speak in class.

Questions to consider:

1. When/why do you hold back?
2. What is the impact of holding back on student learning and academic success?
3. How do you open up conversations with shy or reticent students?
4. Are there ever moments in class when you give up?
5. How do you plan for the needs of multilingual international students?

5.6. Multilingualism at UAL

Multilingualism refers to an individual or a community knowing and using more than one language. It is estimated that over 300 languages are spoken in London (Office for National Statistics, 2011), making it one of the most linguistically diverse cities in the world. UAL's international student cohort comprises over 45% of the student population (University Central Planning Unit, 2022). It is therefore noteworthy that languages other than English were largely absent from class talk during fieldwork observations.

At the same time, an international student label alone reveals very little about an individual's language background, the languages they use on a daily basis or for what purposes. For this reason, during interview students were asked what languages they know, which languages they use regularly as well as the languages they use for educational and creative purposes.

Responses from student were varied. Some expressed the desire to communicate in English only as it was one of the motivating factors for travelling to the UK to study. Other students felt that there was more scope for using different languages for creative practice and that making other languages visible was an issue of representation within their College, explored later in this section. The remainder of this analysis section presents four examples related to the theme of multilingualism at UAL.

Example 1 - One mother tongue or a multiple language?

Home student interview

1. Researcher: What languages do you know?
2. Jane: ...I can speak **English** obviously **Afrikaans** and conversational **Xhosa**
3. which is a South African and then I'm I'm currently learning
4. Korean, so conversational **Korean**
5. Researcher: ...so what's your relationship to English? How do you feel about **English**?
6. Jane: I would say English is my most natural language **um** [but] **[English]**
7. **wasn't** necessarily ... my first language was [a] **sort of multiple language**
8. I was having languages, different languages spoken to me constantly at the
9. exact same time but I think just being taught in English um in school it's my
10. most natural state of speaking and so it's my main language...

(Student interview)

When asked, Jane reported that they speak a minimum of four languages: English, Afrikaans, Xhosa (Line 2) and Korean (Line 4). They confirm that although English is 'their most natural language' (Line 6) and 'their most natural state of speaking' (Line 10). Jane stops short of saying that English is their mother tongue or first language. The student is hesitant ('um', line 6; 'sort of,' line 7) and explains that when growing up in South Africa the language of the home was not English or another single language, but in fact a 'multiple language' (Line 8); that is, 'different languages spoken...constantly at the exact same time' (Lines 8-9). Even though Jane has home student status, this widely used institutional label is not synonymous with speaking English-only or identifying as monolingual (speaking one language only).

Speaking languages at the same time is a normal communicative practice among multilingual speakers as they draw on the languages they know for communication and creative purposes (See Figure 8: 'Simultaneous Conversations' p.71, this document). It is also known as translanguaging by educationalists and linguists who wish to emphasise that using multiple languages is a normative rather than deviant practice (See for example, McKinney (2020) on decoloniality and language education).

The screenshot below depicts students using the languages they know as they work together to complete a workshop task in a Blackboard Collaborate breakout room.

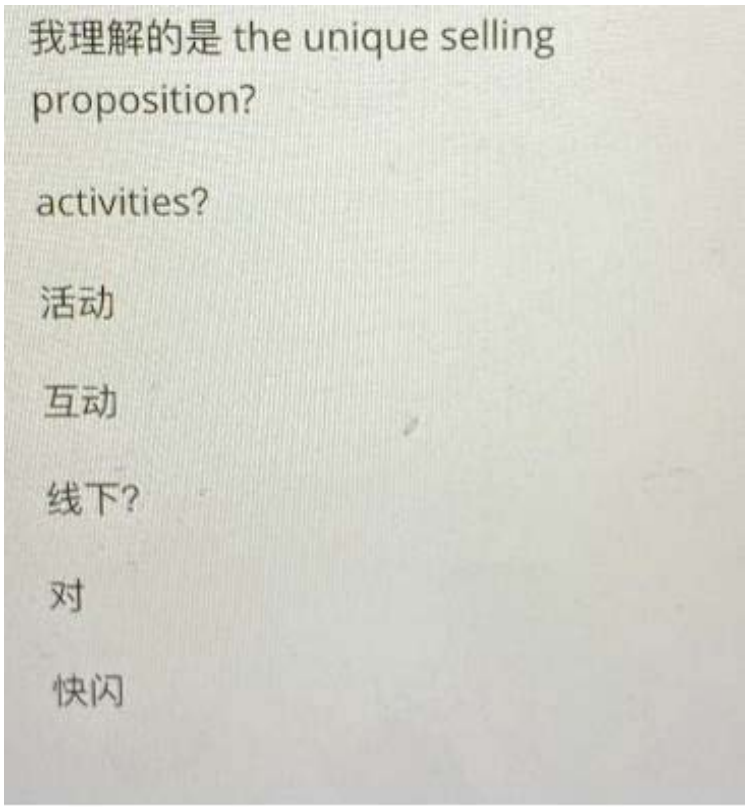

Figure 6: A screenshot of students translanguaging in English and Mandarin

The first chat post is in Mandarin and English within the same post 'at the exact same time'. It is an example of classroom practices which evolve in response to academic tasks that students engage in using the languages they know. These bottom-up practices reflect what Madiba (2018) refers to as a broad understanding of a multilingual university. Multilingualism as a normative practice will be returned to briefly in Example 4.

International student interview

Connie: I know three languages, **English**, **Cantonese** and **Mandarin**, um, I classify English as my first language and then **Cantonese** as my mother tongue and **Mandarin** as my additional language

Researcher: ...is there anything you'd like to add about your relationship [.] to each of those languages?

Connie: ...it's a little different because yes technically technically my **first language**
is supposed to be Cantonese right if you [.] **take first language literally** [1 second pause] but I've been taught that first languages should be your strongest language [rising voice tone] so I kind of changed the way that I communicate that to people...my relationship to English has changed over the years...
(Student interview)

Connie knows three languages: English, Cantonese and Mandarin (Line 1). She refers to Cantonese,spoken widely in Hong Kong and southeast China, as her mother tongue (Line 2), the language she inherited from her family, but also as her first language (Lines 5-6) as it is the first language she was exposed to growing up 'if you...take first language literally' (Line 6). She explains that as she has been taught that 'first languages should be your strongest language' (Line 8), she has changed the way she communicates her language background 'over the years' (Line 10). Now Connie describes English as her 'first' and 'strongest' language and not Cantonese, or Mandarin her additional language.

Commentary

The language background of the two students offers a tiny snapshot into the multilingual complexity of the UAL student population. Both students are English dominant speakers and multilingual, that is, they know and use languages including English for different purposes. While they use English for educational purposes both students express difficulty naming English as their first language. This hesitancy challenges the belief that everyone has one mother tongue only or a dominant language that it easily identifiable. It also disrupts the belief that English either is or is not someone's first language. While many students and staff may identify as having one mother tongue or speaking English-only, these students articulate skilfully that using one or more language acquired from an early age does not necessarily reflect their relationship to English or their ability to use English at university.

The data make the multilingual backgrounds of the two student participants visible. Importantly, they show that labels like home and international as well as the potential for other terms in common use that describe a student's relationship to English (such as first/second language, additional language or the more pejorative 'native' and 'non-native' speaker label of English) can hide as much as they reveal in terms of language use, affiliations and preferences.[12]

They also skilfully challenge the view of the international student as a deficient, second or non-native speaker of English and the home student as a monolingual English-only speaker.

[12] See Leung, Harris and Rampton's (1997) influential paper for a more detailed exploration of multiethnic and multilingual language affiliations.

Example 2 - I can't speak any language other than English

This data excerpt originates from a longer interview where researcher and tutor explore the tutor's experiences of working with large mixed cohorts with a large proportion of international students. The researcher asks whether there is a role for languages other than English on their course:

Tutor interview

1. Tutor: **...the fact of the matter is that um students from overseas know that**
2. **when they sign up to study here [.] they have to write in English ...**
3. [sharp exhale] **... A student said a couple of weeks ago I speak ten**
4. **languages, and I said oh my gosh, I bow down to you, I get on the**
5. **floor, that's incredible I said I can't speak any language other than**
6. **English and I** feel appalled that I can't but unfortunately...I am
7. an English teacher teaching art at an English university but I am teaching
8. **Chinese students** who **must feel overwhelmed coming here**

(Tutor interview)

The tutor's affective response begins with 'the fact of the matter is' (Line 1) indicating that they have strong views on the topic. They confirm that students have to write in English:

> [They] know that when *they* [italics added] sign up to study here *they* [italics added] have to write in English (Lines 1-2).

Words like must and have to are indicative of the belief that students have an obligation to write in English. This is an accurate statement for an Anglophone (the English-speaking world) university context like UAL, yet the burden of responsibility for writing and speaking in English seems to be placed on the students and not on the wider institution. The use of 'they' – and not 'we' or 'our students' – does not seem indicative of a sense of shared responsibility for language use and academic writing.

The language used is emphatic, even hyperbolic, as the tutor refers to ten languages (Lines 3-4) and bowing down and getting on the floor (Lines 4-5) in false deference. The tutor describes themselves as not being able to speak any language other than English (Lines 5-6) in contrast. It is not surprising, then, that the tutor deduces that their Chinese students 'must feel overwhelmed coming here' (Line 8).

The choice of language tells us something about the social context into which some multilingual international students enter. This example highlights a monolingual bias, where speaking one language is the norm and speaking more than one language is the exception to the norm with little recognition of the potential role or value of languages other than English.

One question that arises from such conversations is that if all writing and speaking has to be in English, how can we better support students to feel less overwhelmed in an English-only university context?

Example 3 - Does it always have to be in English?

An MA supervisor discusses a major project with a student on a one-to-one basis while the other students in the room listen. This classroom scenario is typical for tutorials sessions observed across field sites. The tutor speaks English and Chinese (tutor interview) and shares a similar ethnolinguistic background to the students present.

Class episode

1. Tutor: Um, so I think I've just said the study tried to explore aspects of all people living abroad. **So you just need to be more specific [.] so what aspects of people living abroad** [falling voice tone] [pause]
2. Xin Peng: ... aspects, ahm [quietly] let me see, um... **[8 second pause]** Well actually, um [.] ah [.] you know [.] **I don't know how to start to say it** (laughter) ah...
3. Tutor: **Do you want to say it in Chinese?**
4. Xin Peng: No, no, no, I can speak in English (laughter).
5. Tutor: Okay! ((laughter))
6. Xin Peng: Okay! (shrill laughter) [.] **I just [.] I just don't know how to start to talk** about this question [.] because when I first come to London because there [were] many students around me and we usually talk with each other and we find we usually face the, uh, similar difficulties and, uh [pause] it's not a bad things and all of them think it can make them be independent and [unclear] new experience in a strange country, but, I think if **I can get some help** [.] **maybe I can live here [student continues to express how they are feeling]** ...
(Observation site 8)

The tutor begins by repeating the essence of the formative feedback written on a critical outline previously submitted by the student, ('...you just need to be more specific') and then pauses for a response (Line 1). Initially, Xin Peng is unable to respond and class talk characterised by conversational fillers (ahm, let me see, um, uh) and an extended pause of 8 seconds (Line 2). The hesitancy indicates uncertainty, a potential lack of preparedness, but also some understanding of what is being asked of them.

Xin Peng engages in some conversational repair work, confessing 'I don't know how to start to' (Lines 2 and 6). In response, the tutor creates an opportunity to speak Chinese in a Chinese speaking room: 'Do you want to say it in Chinese?' (Line 3). The offer is declined emphatically ('No, no, no', line 2) and the student replies that they can speak in English (Line 4).

The tutor's response 'Okay!' (Line 5) signals their approval. Xin Peng's class talk is characterised by limited vocabulary and grammatical range, yet from this moment in the interaction, Xin Peng is more able to communicate the difficulties they experienced as a newcomer to London living abroad, even articulating a plea for help: '...if I can get some help, maybe I can live here' (Line 6).

A key moment in the interaction appears to be the tutor's flexibility and offer to 'say it in Chinese'. The student's ability to express current and past challenges they have experienced in front of the others in the class is made possible, in part, by the tutor. At a significant moment in the class interaction, the tutor draws on the possibility for speaking Chinese, as well as English, to be seen as a pedagogic resource and as a legitimate form of classroom practice.

Example 4 - It's political

This final example returns to the practice of speaking more than one language explored in Example 1. It is known as codeswitching, and as translanguaging by educationalists and some linguists who wish to emphasise that the boundaries between different languages are less distinct than often thought (See for example, Garcia and Li Wei 2014).

For multilingual international students like Connie, however, who may not necessarily need languages other than English to excel, multilingualism is political and a matter of representation:

> ...in terms of my upbringing...**codeswitching** [using two or **more languages in a conversation] is a lot to do with like colonisation, immigrants, and like it's just a whole bunch of topics**, it's political (Student interview)

With respect of their creative practice, Connie expresses some frustration with the additional efforts needed to show and explain their creative work to who they describe as 'British' 'monolingual' tutors (Line 3 below) who do not have knowledge of the other languages she knows and uses for creative practice:
Interview data

1. **Connie:** ...**it's a lot** and I **had to keep explaining that...when I am showing my**
2. **work like** [to] **my tutor who is British and** [who] **I think is monolingual,**
3. he kept asking me oh why did you say it like this, why is like that and I kept
4. or kinda have to keep explain it a lot, while if someone who is multilingual
5. knew the same languages as me watched my videos they were like oh
6. yeah I totally understand that it's totally relatable! ...**there's a lot**
7. **of hand holding in terms of explaining it to tutors so they will**
8. **understand where I am coming from** ... **because they** [the tutors] **don't' understand'**
(Student Interview)

Connie is comfortable with English at university because it is the language she is used to (student interview). Yet they also refer to the need for:

> ...a lot of hand holding in terms of explaining it [creative practice] to tutors so they will understand where I'm coming from (Lines 6-8).

What this entails is not divulged, although the experiences reproduced above briefly reflect the perception that the greater burden of responsibility lies with the multilingual international students to make themselves understood rather than their tutors or the wider institution.

There may be attainment consequences for students who draw on languages and other semiotic resources that are not known by their tutors. There is also the political issue of the fair representation of the languages, cultures and histories of all students which transcends individual student and course teams. Reference to power asymmetries is often missing from contemporary discourses of the student experience, according to Sabri (2011).

One way of redressing the imbalance would be to recruit tutors whose language backgrounds are more closely aligned with the multilingual backgrounds of the students they teach.

Questions for discussion and reflection

1. What languages do you know? How might you describe your relationship to English?
2. Should languages other than English have a more prominent role in UAL learning spaces? And how can they be assessed equitably? What training and support might you need?
3. How do you feel when students cannot write or speak in ways that you feel they should?
4. The English language has been described as an artefact of colonialism (McKinney, 2020). What are your views on this?
5. What role can language play in decolonising the arts curriculum?

6. What have we learnt from the Reimagining Conversations project?

This section focuses on emergent findings from the project and indicates points of reflection and institutional change.

6.1. Digital practices continue to shape communication practices

One finding common to the majority of observations across all research sites is how educational technologies influence class interaction (language in use) and communication practices. There is also ample evidence that online classrooms and emerging pedagogies can demand more from students and tutors. Two examples illustrate this point.

- Tutors and their students experienced frequent delays and disruption to class proceedings that, cumulatively, reduce the scope and time available for meaningful class interaction in support of learning and community building. 'Digital snagging' of this kind also takes time away from other more useful forms of social talk supporting, for example community building amongst diverse ethnolinguistic (having a shared language and ethnicity) groups of students and can make time management and planning ahead of time more difficult for tutors.

- There are also new forms of online communication for tutors and their students to mediate. For example, the use of the chat for backchannelling (ways of showing a speaker that you are listening) illustrates that, although classroom interaction is often described and understood as verbal interaction, it can take place across modes during synchronous teaching activity. The multimodal, multifunctional and multilingual nature of language use observed in the chat function may pose additional challenges for some students.

Tutors and students routinely change the topic of communication and the way in which they communicate in order to navigate the technological challenges encountered. They also to exploit the online tools and resources available to them.

What does this mean?
Workload

New classroom management skills are needed to welcome students, carry out pastoral care online, set up class activities, share screens and links to resources and so on, as well as respond to tutor and student connectivity issues simultaneously. The additional pedagogic and communicative demands placed on tutors can be acknowledged. There are also implications for how tutors make up time, and how additional individualised support for multilingual international students can be time-consuming and takes away from timetabled teaching and other professional activity.

What was previously taken-for-granted can be made even more explicit online

New and longstanding rules of engagement can be made more explicit more frequently to diverse groups students so that they know the legitimate and expected possibilities for how to interact and engage in conversations with others. This is especially relevant for multilingual international students who may be used to a different set of norms, expectations and classroom practices around face-to-face teaching and online environments.

The use of formulaic phrases (For example, 'I am listening') will not be appropriate or necessary for all teaching and learning sessions or tutors. That said, repeated deliberate strategies have the potential to increase active participation given the reduced scope for nonverbal cues/communication online. This is especially relevant for multilingual international students who may be used to a different set of expectations around in person class behaviour and class talk.

There is potential to disadvantage those international students who may have fewer reference points for how to 'do' tutorials in UK art schools and universities. The online environment adds an additional layer of uncertainty and complexity for tutors and their students.

In a recent paper on educational linguistics, Leung (2021) questions to what extent digitally mediated communication can involve and account for participation in different physical locations, and at different times. This is a relevant issue to raise as multilingual international students have the potential to access their degree curriculum and teaching sessions from any geographic location. As a consequence, the complexity and dynamic nature of language and communication practices can be emphasised and made more explicit to diverse groups of tutors and students.

6.2. Questions and the age old authority of the teacher

Tutor questions play a prominent role in interaction practices. The project found ample evidence of tutor questioning techniques which have the tendency to control and to dominate class turntaking (who talks, to whom and for how long). Emergent findings focus on the potential of open and closed questions and a brief discussion of what this might mean for pedagogy within an institutional context of decolonising knowledge.

Closed questions (requiring a yes/no response) can limit opportunities for discussion

A closed question from a tutor can indicate that no further response, or interaction, from students is needed or required. Students are often able to participate in the practice of doing a tutorial, a crit, or an alternative group session with limited responses of 'yes' and 'no' when asked. For the tutor, closed questions have the benefit of limiting opportunity for unforeseen responses and questions from students which may take up additional time to resolve. It is possible that in some instances the multilingual international students observed interpret closed yes/no question as an instruction that overrides their own sense of agency, and opportunities for discussion and learning are reduced.

Open ended questions can encourage dialogue

Some tutors and students adopted open-ended questioning techniques ('What do you know about ...?), extensions ('Go on') and less frequently invite student peers to respond. Open questions which follow a predictable format can encourage dialogue and give a tutor control over class proceedings. Used systematically and creatively, open questions may increase the possibility of joint problem-solving and task negotiation between tutors and their students and between students and their peers.

What does this mean?

The way in which questions are framed and student responses are followed up can be significant for learning. Most tutors have both the authority and the potential to create opportunities for all students to draw on life experiences, to reflect on their processes of learning and making, to think critically and to engage in more meaningful interaction in support of learning.
Yet there is evidence to indicate that 'dialogic talk' is not always as democratic or inclusive as it sounds.

According to Alexander (2020), educational research has found this form of classroom dialogue to be potentially limiting when, for example, the question posed is closed rather than open and with minimal feedback. Added to this, whether a tutor makes a narrow evaluation ('Good') or follows up and extends the student contribution can make a significant difference to class participation among multilingual learners. This observation is supported by Zhu Hua's (2019) extensive scholarship on multicultural and multilingual classrooms.

It may be unsurprising, even obvious, to learn that UAL colleagues deploy a variety of questions, feedback and evaluation techniques at different moments to meet the demands of dynamic and unstable classroom environments. There are, however, tensions between tutors as authority figures and the democratic and inclusive ideal imagined for the university's classrooms and studio spaces.

From this vantage point on class interaction, 'Western' pedagogic traditions of dialogic and exploratory talk impose both a valued and culturally-specific classroom conduct on cohorts of ethnolinguistically diverse multilingual international students.

Are there alternatives to the traditional patterns of interaction?

'Age old' in the title for section 6.2 above refers to longstanding interactional patterns of authority found in many university classes where the teacher does most of the talking and asks most of the questions, according to discourse analysts (Blommaert 2005; Rymes 2016).

Related to these traditional patterns of interaction, there is a broader set of implications which link the Reimagining Conversations project to decolonising pedagogy. They relate to the alternative ways of fostering active participation and learning that may exist that deliberately advantage multilingual international students as well as other students who have not had the advantage of a UK or Western style education prior to studying at UAL. There may be alternative approaches to classroom interaction which do not reify Western notions of active class participation.

Further exploration in this area may help to mitigate tensions between the value attached to active participation and the increased recruitment of a diverse range of students who may have a preference for or experience of different classroom behaviour which leads to academic success.

6.3. Redefining inclusive practice(s) to include the complex needs of international students

The challenges of day-to-day professional practice reported by some tutors have their origins in two competing institutional imperatives: Internationalisation and Inclusive Education. Two tropes are common to the views and experiences voiced:

- Ambivalence associated with the time and effort needed to accommodate the needs of diverse international student cohorts. This was expressed most acutely by tutors responsible for large groups.
- Concerns associated with adhering to the institutional imperative to be inclusive at all times to all students.

The first view reflects the impact of the university's International Strategy. The main focus of the strategy remains the development and expansion of campuses at home, abroad and online with ever increasing numbers of international students. The second statement reflects some of the challenges of enacting Inclusive Education policy and philosophy. The origins of this policy and institutional practice are domestic and lie in the Equality Act (2010) and more recently in the Department for Education publication, 'Inclusive Teaching and Learning in Higher Education as a Route to Excellence' (2017).

On a practical level, and familiar to most readers, reasonable adjustments for those students with disabilities need to be made to ensure equal access to education without discrimination. Reasonable adjustments are made for home students to ensure that UAL meets its legal requirements under the Equality Act (2010). This legal requirement is reflected in the excellent 'Disability Inclusion Toolkit' and the 'UAL Attainment Programme: Learning for All' resources available to all staff.

Additionally, and with reference to widening access and participation[13], the AEM (2018) states "Inclusivity in teaching practice is about valuing the diversity of our students". There are, however, a limited number of explanatory statements available to all staff which define the range of overlapping terms in use (inclusion, inclusive practice, inclusive learning and teaching and so forth). This implicitness suggests that there is a shared tacit understanding around how these concepts are understood, applied and what they aim to achieve.

The 'Reimagining Conversations' project found that institutionally, international students were sometimes framed in terms of the additional demands or challenges they presented.

There is evidence that tacit understandings do not extend to the needs of international students who are often excluded from institutional discourses on what it means to be inclusive.

How are complex needs of multilingual international students met?

One solution to the competing demands placed on tutors reported is to make all teaching as inclusive as possible and to make an equivalent to Individual Support Agreements apply to all students. Reasonable adjustments are applied to everyone: inclusivity is seen as treating all students equally in support of their learning.

Focussing on inclusive teaching and learning, Bond (2020) argues that although the strategy is well developed, the vision in relation to international students is not fully embedded across all higher education practices. This seems particularly pertinent with regards to the complex needs of diverse multilingual international students and may be difficult to sustain across large and diverse cohorts.

While inclusive teaching and learning strives to accommodate the needs of all students through, for example, decolonising the curriculum initiatives and internationalisation at home strategies, it must also '...include consideration of the similarly complex and intersecting needs of international students' (Bond 2020, 4). At institutional level, there are tensions between the practices and processes enacted as a result of internationalisation of HE policies and the institutional imperative to develop and sustain inclusive teaching and learning.

[13] Also see the Office for Students publications and ongoing work on Access and Participation.

What does this mean?
And what adjustments are reasonable?

Inclusive practices can be redefined to include all students including those not protected by the Equality Act (2010). If '... equality is giving everyone the same thing, equity is giving individuals what they need' (Zakrajsek 2021). Yet the needs of international students, while equally complex, do not feature explicitly to the same extent as home students and are often framed in terms of linguistic and cultural difference. UAL can problematise what is currently meant by being inclusive.

It is relatively easy to recommend that more training and resources are needed. Specifically, UAL needs resources with multilingual international students in mind which complement documents and training already available for staff in support of those students protected by the Equality Act (2010). Additional work with staff with this focus would help to raise awareness and to develop understanding of the complex needs of a broader range of linguistically, culturally and epistemologically diverse (different ways of engaging with the curriculum, existing knowledge and the world in order to make sense of it) students. Lastly, it can be acknowledged that for tutors, especially those responsible for large cohorts, inclusive practices are complex and difficult to sustain within a dynamic institutional context. Arguably resource allocation should operate in recognition of this at course level.

6.4. Limited English is only part of the puzzle

Although many Chinese international students face significant challenges linked to the language and communication demands placed on them in academic and social settings, a limited or deficient English explanation is an oversimplification for why students do not always speak in class. There is significant and increasing evidence from research carried out in international Anglophone (relating to the English-speaking world) universities corroborating the assertion that it is a myth that English is responsible for all the challenges facing Chinese international students. This has been reported recently by Zhang Wu (2022) in US HE contexts.

'The Reimagining Conversations' project found that in diverse groups, multilingual international students tend to take the floor less frequently and take shorter turns in conversations. There were, however, several exceptions to this observation where students subvert interactional patterns by initiating rather than answering questions, and by inviting their peers to contribute by name.

Talk is optional

All students are expected to contribute to class in a variety of ways. These modes of communication are not always verbal, even in synchronous sessions, as tutors and students make use of a variety of tools and software (chat, Mentimeter, Microsoft Excel, Padlet, WeChat) to facilitate collaboration and communication. Second, the pedagogic practice of not calling people out was reported by tutors and observed as part of classroom practice. By not calling out, or inviting students to speak by name, many students from a range of ethnolinguistic backgrounds remain silent listeners. Consequently, although students are encouraged and invited to talk in class, verbal participation remains optional.

Communication breaks down

There is likely to be a complex interplay of dynamic factors including students' language background influencing class talk. However, project findings suggest that Chinese international students do not speak, at least some of the time, because tutors hold back from moments of face-to-face interaction they find difficult. Instead, Chinese students who are 'hard to understand' are supported outside the mainstream teaching event on an individual basis creating additional work pressures for tutors.

It's not our problem

When probed about who supports them, all students interviewed complimented their course tutors and supervisors, and also singled out specific Language Development and Academic Support tutors for praise. At the same time, student interviews revealed mixed experiences and attitudes towards support classes attended in terms of the extent to which they met their individual expectations or needs. There were also expressions of stigma attached to provision outside regular course contact time, with extra timetabled classes described as being appropriate for Asian students with inadequate English.

These conflicting views – it's valuable, but it's not for me – are unsurprising, even expected, given the mixed profile of multilingual international students interviewed.

The comments also raise questions over how best to support English language and academic literacy development (reading, writing and other text-based practices) amongst English-dominant international students, many of whom have been

educated in EMI contexts (where English is the language of instruction) outside the UK.

Language matters are dealt with both inside and outside core course teams, with individual tutors often taking on additional work to support students. As a consequence, when issues arise related to language, multilingual international students are sometimes perceived as disproportionately contributing to tutor workloads. There is a sense that responsibility for English language lies with the individual who chose to study at UAL and with professional services beyond the immediate Unit or assessment.

Not talking is not the same as not participating

Non-participation is often referred to as the deliberate lack of involvement in on-task class talk. Commonly held beliefs around the lack of active participation are numerous and include shyness, reticence, passivity, English language deficiency, inadequate knowledge, a culture of respect for the teacher and collectivism where taking the floor is equal to showing off. Tang, Wang and Wong (2020) confirm that Chinese university students can remain silent as a result of past educational experiences where they have learned to be silent in classrooms. They also found that silence has the potential to communicates a range of different intentions concluding that for the new generation of Chinese university students, non-participation can signal their '...identity as egalitarian independent thinkers' (Tang, Wang and Wong 2020, 398).

What might appear to be passivity may be deliberate agentive behaviour. That is, students are participating, even though they do not necessarily talk when invited or for as long as expected. The pedagogic challenges and opportunities of recognising active participation in this way can be contrasted with students who talk a lot but communicate little new knowledge, by, for instance, reading text on PowerPoint slides or reading notes out loud.

It's cultural

Tutors cited culture and cultural identity as the origins of non-participation often demonstrating significant and nuanced awareness. Yet, according to Kumaravadivelu (2003), there is little empirical evidence 'to confirm any causal connection between the cultural beliefs and practices of students from Asia and their classroom behaviour.' Discourses around culture are far from neutral (Said 1993). Therefore, the UAL community can be clearer about what it means by culture to prevent it from being little more than a marker of ethnicity and difference.

What does this mean? What are the alternatives?

A Canadian scholar researching language and identity (Norton 2013, 48), found that although learners may be highly motivated, they may not be invested in a particular set of classroom communication practices, if a classroom is or is perceived to be unwelcoming. Norton (2013) theorises that it can be more difficult to speak or to make oneself heard if no-one is or appears interested in what you have to say. Where classroom environments like these exist, students need to know what they are allowed to do or say, and how it can best be communicated. Issues like these can be addressed by tutors. For instance, by those tutors who wish to engage more students more frequently in free-flowing conversations; when students are invited to comment on an entire class; or when they are expected to provide feedback and evaluation on a discussion topic or artefact.

If conversations are to be reimagined, they will need to take into account the communication practices that are consciously and unconsciously performed by tutors and their students. In this way more contributions can be recognised and diverse voices heard through existing and alternative modes of communication.

Increased visibility for language and academic literacy specialists

There is potential for multilingual international students and their course tutors to benefit from increased resourcing to extend co-teaching with the well regarded (English) Language Development and Academic Support provision specialists. Additional resources to support such co-teaching within departments have the potential to: reduce the potential stigma attached to language support external to course team teaching; broaden the responsibility for English language development; work towards further contextually sensitive and epistemological embedding of language and literacy provision within departments; and counter the view that imperfect English is a problem to be fixed elsewhere.

6.5. Reimagining UAL as a multilingual space or dispelling a few myths about language

Language backgrounds are complex and dynamic

Students interviewed offer a snapshot into the multilingual complexity of the UAL student population. Many were English-dominant and/or highly proficient learners of English. All knew at least one other language in addition to English, and knowledge of three or four languages was not uncommon. Students challenged the belief that everyone has a single mother tongue or first language that it easily identifiable. While many students - and staff - may identify as having one mother tongue or speaking English only, the project found that knowing or acquiring a language from an early age does not necessarily reflect students' relationship to English or their ability to use English at university.

Anglonormative discourses or language difference as a problem

The project highlights conversations with tutors and their students as well as between students with varying linguistic and communicative abilities displayed in class settings. In fact, many UAL students were keen to tell their stories. Some were keen to dispel the stereotype of the 'silent Asian' while others were keen to distance themselves from East Asian students pointing out how their own language(s), cultural capital and educational experiences, also gained outside the UK, made them different.

The choice of language and attitudes voiced about the English language abilities of mainly ethnolinguistic Chinese students tells us something about the institutional context into which multilingual international students enter. It can be described as one in which 'non-normative', 'non-native' English language is seen as a problem to be remedied. It can also be described as one in which there is an '...expectation that people are or should be proficient in English and are positioned as deficient...if they are not' (McKinney 2020, 116)[14]. To underscore a point made earlier, the greater burden of responsibility lies with multilingual international students to make themselves understood in ways that are accessible and acceptable to the English-dominant majority. A corollary to this is that, during pressured times, there seems to be little recognition of the potential role or value of languages other than English in classroom contexts. Yet, as Ramjattan (2020) argues, English language abilities and notions of appropriacy are always relational and contingent on context.

[14] The quotation defines Anglonormativity which, according to McKinney (2020, 130), draws on current understandings of heteronormativity, in doing so foregrounding notions of the institutionalised normativity of heterosexuality and the consequences for individuals who do not identify as such.

Translanguaging as pedagogy or language difference as a resource

Translanguaging relates to communication practices which involve more than one language, and semiotic modes beyond language. The concept acknowledges that:

> ...the productive potential of using students' languages as a resource for communication and full engagement in educational contexts (King and Bigelow 2020, 199).

In addition to the Anglonormative discourses, there were students – and tutors - who felt that there is additional scope for using different languages for communicating and for creative practice. Chinese languages (Mandarin and Cantonese) were most frequently visible as a language of creative and communication practice as can be seen in Figure 7 and Figure 8 below:

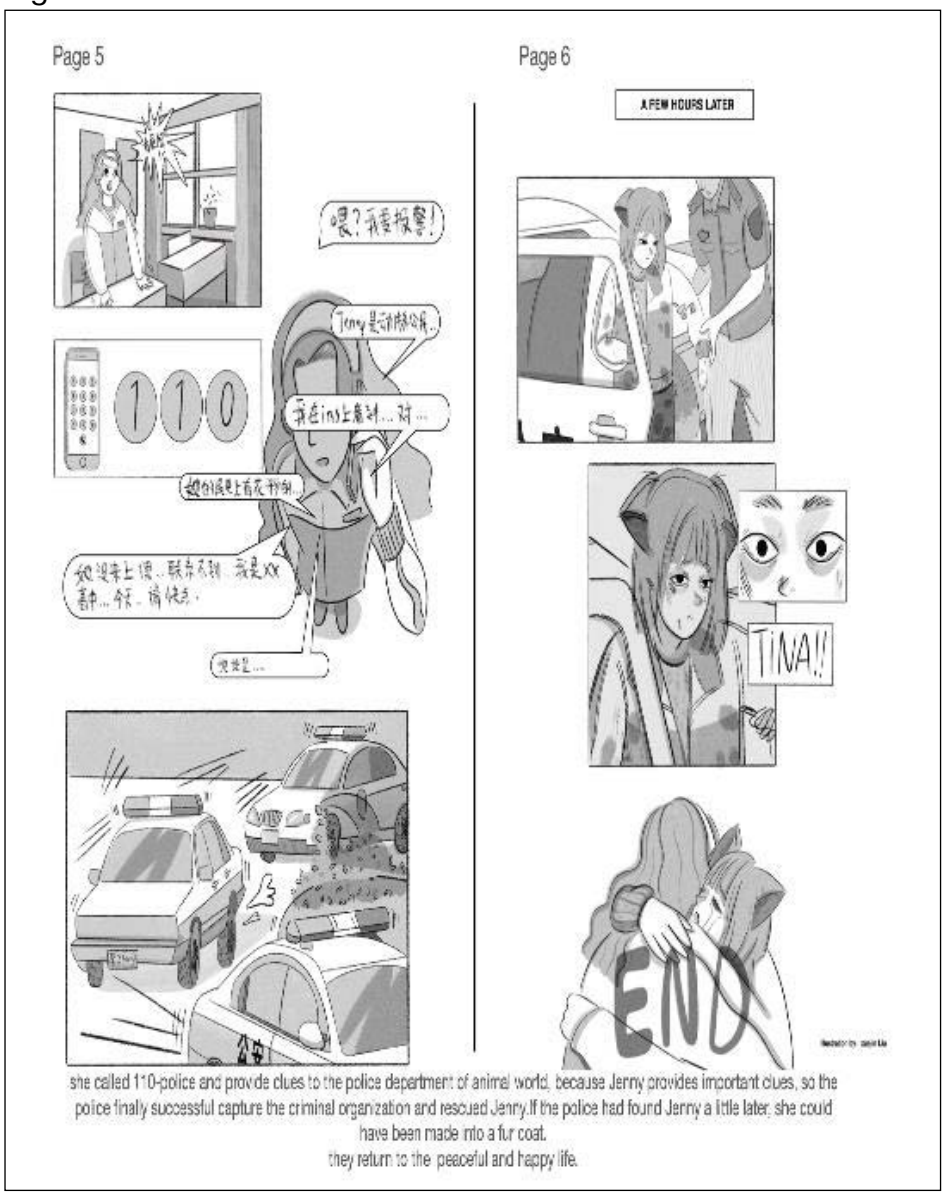

Figure 7: Image of a graphic novel with speech and captions in English and Mandarin

Figure 8: Screenshot from a student curated video, 'Simultaneous Conversations' in English and Cantonese

The images above show how students draw on multilingual resources (the languages they know and value) in the completion of formative and summative academic tasks. In contrast to Anglonormative discourses, some students - and some tutors - expressed a more decentred approach to the role of language in knowledge creation. The practice of translanguaging in spoken and text-based modes may not provide immediate solutions to power asymmetries and awarding gaps. It can, however, create opportunity for increasing the visibility of speaking and writing in more than one language to be viewed more easily as a normative and creative rather than as deficient practice.

What does this mean? What can we do differently? Pedagogy and practice

The multilingual backgrounds of international students and tutors can be seen as a pedagogic resource and as a legitimate form of classroom and creative practice. New pedagogies and assessment practices are needed which may demand more from teachers as inequalities and injustices are tackled.

Changes in the rules of engagement with regards to tutor development and assessment practices are needed to promote greater linguistic and epistemic inclusion.

That said, 'the teacher remains a powerful agent of change' (Cummins and Early 2010,153). One way of navigating the imbalances would be to recruit tutors whose language backgrounds are more closely aligned with the multilingual

backgrounds of the students they teach.

Recognising UAL as English dominant *and* multilingual

The monolingual English only ethos in contemporary international universities is 'anachronistic' (Preece 2022) and an important focal point for critical reflection. UAL can and should be recognised as a multilingual university in an Anglo-centric part of the world. One reason for this is that a multilingual perspective challenges the view that enhancing academic English alone to existing multilingual repertoire will improve academic success and reduce awarding gaps.

Chiappa and Finardi (2021, 25) argue that:

> '...efforts to internationalize higher education that do not make visible the colonial legacy in the higher education space become catalysts that intensify and reproduce the power asymmetries among countries, universities, and ways of knowing.'

The dominance of English around the world today should not be viewed in neutral terms and instead can be viewed as a reflection of the continuing impact of neo-colonialism and English-mediated neoliberal market forces.

An institutional paradox

A paradox emerges in which there is an erasure of linguistic difference within an institutional context of decolonising the curriculum, anti-racism, equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) work. Drawing on languages students know can serve to push back against the internationalisation of HE policies, processes and practices which serve to bolster, in Kubota's words (2009: 612), an '... Anglo dominance of language, culture, and academic knowledge.'

This is also a political issue of the fair representation of the languages, cultures, histories and identities of all students which transcends communities, individuals or home-international student fee status.

Addressing issues of (unequal) linguistic and cultural representation is crucial and there should be an institutional imperative to effect change in this area.These are contentious and difficult issues yet neglecting them may hinder the progress of EDI work across UAL.

7. Summary of Recommendations Reflections on Pedagogy and Classroom Practice

7.1. Be (even) more explicit in digital classrooms

Facilitating class talk online can demand different pedagogic and communication practices which ultimately demand more time and skill from tutors. The rules of engagement can be made more explicit more frequently when teaching diverse groups so that students are familiar with the legitimate and expected ways of interacting with others. The complex and dynamic nature of language and communication practices across modes, platforms and time zones can also be emphasised and made more explicit. Shades of Noir resources on Virtual Learning Netiquette may help tutors and their students to navigate boundaries. This recommendation is particularly relevant for the growing transnational and intercultural work of Shared Campus.

7.2. Decentre pedagogy and epistemology

The 'Reimagining Conversations' project findings can be linked to alternative ways of fostering active participation and learning that deliberately advantage multilingual international students as well as students who have not had the advantage of a UK or Western-style education prior to studying UAL. There may be alternative approaches to classroom interaction which do not reify Western notions of active class participation that can be explored. From this vantage point, the ways in which 'Western' pedagogic traditions of dialogic and exploratory talk are imposed on ethnolinguistically and culturally diverse students is a useful point of reflection.

7.3. Reimagine UAL as English dominant and multilingual

The monolingual English-only ethos in contemporary global universities is further point of critical reflection. The multilingual backgrounds of students and tutors should be seen as a pedagogic resource and as a legitimate part of classroom and creative practice. A multilingual perspective challenges the view that enhancing students' academic English alone will improve academic success and reduce awarding gaps.

7.4. Language and social justice

In an Anglonormative environment, there may be attainment consequences for students who draw on languages and other semiotic resources that are not known by their tutors. Changes with regards to tutor development and assessment practices are needed to promote greater linguistic and epistemic inclusion. The changes needed may demand even more from teachers as inequalities and injustices are tackled.

One way of navigating existing imbalances would be to recruit tutors whose language backgrounds are more closely aligned with the multilingual backgrounds of the students they teach. Where multilingualism is promoted and evident in students' work (see Figures 7 and Figure 8 above for reference) appropriate assessment criteria and resources for evaluation should be developed and made readily available to all. For example, external assessors with relevant language expertise could be consulted. In this way more contributions can be recognised, and diverse voices heard.

7.5. Reconceptualise inclusive practices

Inclusive practices are complex and difficult to sustain within a dynamic institutional context. UAL can problematise and make explicit what is currently meant by being inclusive. Specifically, UAL could divert funds in order to commission resources which complement the comprehensive resources and support already available for staff in support of students protected by the Equality Act (2010). Additional work with staff with this focus would help to raise awareness and develop understanding of the complex needs of a broader range of linguistically, culturally and epistemologically diverse students. International students should be seen as central to EDI work, and not peripheral to it.

Resources For Staff

7.6. Language and academic literacy specialists

There is potential for course teams to benefit from increased resourcing to extend co-teaching with the well regarded (English) Language Development and Academic Support provision specialists. Additional resources to support such co-teaching opportunities have the potential to: reduce the potential stigma attached to language support external to course teams; work towards further contextually sensitive and epistemological

embedding of language and academic literacy provision within departments; and counter the view that imperfect English is a problem to be fixed elsewhere.

7.7. Staff development and awareness-raising of multilingualism

Create space for critical discussions to raise awareness of the potential benefits and challenges of making languages visible. This activity can include: language varieties in addition to British English, post-colonial varieties of English, diverse accents and communication styles and the languages widely spoken by racialised minorities in the UK.

Resource the development of contextually sensitive staff training and resources on the multilingual backgrounds of students, staff and links with diaspora, migration and identity.

This work would complement existing resources such as Shades of Noir's Discourse: The Language of Power and Communication n.d.). Work is underway in this area but is often siloed within individual Schools and Departments. See for example the Becoming Lost and Found in Translation project (Ingham 2021) and the developing 'How do Mandarin-speaking fashion design students represent themselves and their learning experiences? An autoethnographic study tool kit' (Lin n.d.).

Additional open access resources that are readily available are the project reports from the UAL funded longitudinal study on the student experience.[15] Of particular relevance to the Reimagining Conversations project is the Student Experiences of Identity and Attainment at UAL report (Sabri 2017a) which explores the experiences of international students in feedback conversations and navigating the curriculum.

[15] Sabri, Duna. UAL students' engagement with industry and communities of practice, Year 3 report of a 4-year longitudinal study for University of the Arts London, 2017b. Sabri, Duna. Fine Art Students at UAL 'We are layered by the different paces we live in aren't, we? Mid-study report of a 4-year longitudinal study for the University of the Arts London. Project Report. University of the Arts London, London, 2016. Sabri, Duna. Students' practice and identity work at UAL: Year 2 student experiences, Year 2 report of a 4-year longitudinal study for the University of the Arts London, London, 2015b.

Future Work

7.8. Promote language difference not deficiency

If language difference is to be viewed as a potential resource for learning, institutional cohesion and access to knowledge; then the multilingual backgrounds of UAL students and staff can be better understood. One way to achieve this would be to develop a languages survey to distribute and collect data alongside ethnic monitoring data.

7.9. Develop an in-house equivalent to the NSS survey constructed specifically with the experiences of all postgraduate and undergraduate students with international fee status in mind.

7.10. Curate pedagogically-oriented resources with the needs of the vast number of associate tutors employed by UAL who, due to contractual precarity, may lack timely access to the pedagogic support needed.

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9. The Appendix

Table 1: Overview of research observation schedule: December 2020 – May 2021

Site	Tutors	Length of observation	Class size	Online teaching event
CCW UG	Tutor 1	1	3	Post-lecture seminar
CCW UG	Tutor 2	2.25	4	Research presentations
CCW PG	Tutor 3 and 4	1	16	Workshop
CCW PG	Tutor 3 and 4	1	18	Workshop
CCW PG	Tutor 3 and 4	1	18	Workshop
CSM UG	Tutor 5	1	8	Tutorials
CSM PG	Tutor 6	6	6	Crits
CSM PG	Tutor 6	6	7	Crits
LCC UG	Tutor 7	2	11	Tutorial
LCC UG	Tutor 7	2	12	Tutorial
LCC UG	Tutor 8	1.5	17	Tutorial
LCC UG	Tutor 8	1.5	14	Tutorial
LCC UG	Tutor 9	6	35-50	Team-taught seminar
LCC PG	Tutor 10	1	9	Tutorial
LCC PG	Tutor 10 and 11	2.5	55	Lecture/Workshop
LCC PG	Tutor 11	1	7	Tutorial
LCC PG	Tutor 12	1	6	Tutorial
LCC PG	Tutor 13	2	8	Tutorial
LCF UG	Tutor 14	1	6	Tutorial
LCF UG	Tutor 14	3	11	1to1 Tutorial
LCF PG	Tutor 15	4	25	Consultation
LCF PG	Tutor 15	5	25	Consultation
LCF PG	Tutor 15	2	25	Consultation
Total	15 tutors	60.75 hours	6-55 students per observation	

Appendix Two - Data example – Observation Site 7

Observation schedule	**Class profile**	**Themes emerging from observation**
22/01/2021 11.00-12.00	1 tutor 3 students 1 x home assumed English L1 2 x assumed international/Mandarin L1 **Pedagogic context** UG students discuss lecture on identity, positionality as artists, philosophers, fashion students and tackling stereotypes **Teaching event –** Chain tutorials with tutor to discuss final/major project.	Questioning techniques Rhetorical listening Student criticality

Guiding questions

1. What are the contexts and characteristics of conversations with students with English as an additional language?
2. What can we learn from the practices observed that might inform institution-wide debate and reflection?

Transcription conventions

underlined text stressed word
[Contextual information added for clarity by the author]
((non-verbal information))
Short micro pause [.]
Longer pause [number of seconds in brackets]
Indentation/ellipses: overlapping talk
Translation in simplified Chinese characters if applicable.

Tutor [1' 20"]:	Why don't then, why don't we start by [8] by going [deliberately] and perhaps XX if you want to, if you want to start, um, as you were first, um, and either we could just share a thought from the lecture [.] we could just say how we feeling today [.] or [.] we could just say a little [glottal] bit about what's going on in our practice at the moment [.] whether it relates to the lecture or not.How does that sound? [2]
Student 1:	Yeah good, but I need a minute to think (laughs)
Tutor:	Alright when then, when then I'll start [2.] Um [.] some of the things that the lecture made me think about [slowly] [.] which is a later slide here, is whether I see my practice as expressing an aspect of my identity and in particular when [lecturer] raised this

question in the lecture [.] about [.] um [.] individual and collective artists I was thinking do I my work as articulating a singular position, a p, position of one artist, as a kind of individual, or do I see my work expressing the, uh, the ideas or the possibilities of a group of people, of a collective do I see myself as speaking through a collective position or an individual one [.] um [.] and that's something I think that I have found difficult [.] in my work [.] um and I am just interested to hear whetherother people [.] um had felt similarly.so that was, that was the thought that was raised for me through the lecture [2. um XX do you wanna start?

Student 1: Yeah sure [.] like [.] um. ...

Tutor [3' 16"]: [unclear] [interrupts] ... and also I should say, we can use the chatterbox if it's easier, um, if, you know, t', t' put images in or to put text, or whatever. Go on, sorry.

Student 1: Ok, like what you just said, and also the lecture just reminded me of, um, like there was [.] a feeling I have, that I got in the past that my perception of the world [2] is, like, very limited by my surroundings, like [.] I, um, like in the past I have some, like know how the world is like, but then [.], I think I actually only care about like the stuff that is similar to me. And also like if, because if we [rapid], um, tend to have more conversations with our friends, or people we are familiar with, but [.] there are also like the people that are highly like us [rising intonation], no matter their education or like you are, life experience or like where you live. You are like highly similar so you tend to have similar [.] mmm, perceptions of ... [unclear] so, yeah. [3]

Tutor [4' 37"]: I. I mean, when it comes to your work then XX...
Student 1: ...mmm mmm...
Tutor: ... [3]do you, um [2], is it important that you try and [.] step out of that or do you want to connect with people who have similar interests to you and [.] who come from a similar background? [3]

Student 1: Um, I don't have, its' like a separate in my work, um, I normally work with concepts that is very far from myself. I don't really work with those, like, my personal experience or like my, um, [1] I don't like my situation doesn't,[1] um mostly come from my personal life. It's always like stuff out there, but [3], like, ...
Tutor: ... [unclear] ...
Student 1: ...if you [2], I have a question ...
Tutor: ...Yeah...
Student 1: Ah, I don't, I was wondering if [.] I was making work for, like people that re like m::e [elongated] or [.], yeah, I just didn't' know, like, when I was younger I thought that I could make art to influence a lot of people or to like to change the world or

something like that. I thought that's kind of impossible (laughs)

Tutor: [5' 52"]: (laughs). I don't think it's impossible. Surely there are examples of works that have changed perceptions of the world?

Student 1: :... mmm mmm...

Tutor: ... You know? I mean this is something we touched on last week, wasn't it, when we were talking about aesthetics and the aesthetic experience, um[.] I'm just making a note of your question there. XX and hopefully we can, we can, [2] touch on that throughout the session. Does anyone else feel, um, XX your kind've next on my little [glottal] screen if we're in a clockwise [.]... Do you want to touch on something that XX's mentioned there about, um, whether we make our work, um, what, wha', perhaps whether our work comes from a personal place or whether our work is an attempt to connect with people who are from a similar background or the opposite whether it's, you, know, an attempt to [.] connect with people who have very different experiences [falling intonation] ...
[latching]

Student 2:
[6' 54"] ...for me it's really interesting for me because yesterday we had our research reviews and I was partnered with XX [student 1], so I looked specifically at her Padlet [rising] [3] and one of the first thing she said to me after watching the film piece what did about it? [falling intonation] What did you think it was about?]2] And because it was quite an abstract concept,[2] it wasn't so specific [.] to her, it was sort've [2].It was just how interested she was to find out somebody else thought [2] and I think abstract work is really good for doing that, um, [2] but[.] for me [1][tentative], um, a lot of my work comes from quite a personal place, and [.] it doesn't create my own[2] aesthetics and [1] it's very connected with [.] the idea, sort of like the Groupaction [unclear?] aesthetic in a social media context.
[long pause]

Tutor [08' 02']: Go on, in what sense?

Student 2: [2] um, I mean, if you have sort of gone on to social media and, you've, you've heard of all these different sorts of styles [1] that was one of the ways that [.] really [.] changed my [2] perspective of, of way aesthetic as a word ...

Tutor: ...Mmm. Hmm...

Student 2: ...um, is used [1], um ...

Tutor: ... um, okay ...

Student 2: ...because, [unclear] yeah [3] and in terms of social media it can sort of, in a way you can kind've identify with other people [2] by having similar styles [1] um, and [3] it wasn't something that I necessarily went, look I'm going to fit into one style one just things I like but in terms of going back to what XX was saying in terms of surrounding yourself with similar types of people, [3] um,

I think actually social media is another way [2], a sort of filtering, through the world, that is also another way, I guess of reaching out further, [.] to less likeminded people [pause][words inaudible] ... Wordscrabble.

Tutor [9'24"]: in a way though, do we think that social media has a similar dynamic ...