Using the Psychological Concept of Compassion to inform Pedagogic Strategies for Higher Education Seminars

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Abstract

This study used the university discussion-based seminar with the aim of exploring and improving students' experiences of face-to-face group work in Higher Education. The purpose was to devise a pedagogic strategy to address the communicative barriers that extant research and literature suggests often arise between ethnically and/or internationally different student groups in universities. A critical examination of literature relevant to co-operative behaviours in groups was undertaken across disciplines. The result was the assembly and development of a theoretical basis for designing a pedagogy that attends explicitly to compassion in HE teaching, learning and assessment. Compassion is relevant to co-operative behaviours. It is recognised across disciplines and it is valued across cultures. It is defined as the noticing of distress or disadvantaging of others, and then taking action to reduce this. The compassion-focussed pedagogy was then applied in discussion-based seminars across different subjects in a UK university.

The study adopted an action research approach, which was divided into two cycles. Cycle 1 was conducted amongst mainly white, local students in a Humanities department where (n=105) students were observed in their seminars, some of whom (n=14) participated in one-to-one interviews or focus groups. Cycle 2 was conducted amongst more diverse cohorts of students in the same HEI's Business department where (n=135) students were observed, some of whom (n=20) participated in one-to-one interviews or focus groups. In total (n=9) seminar tutors were observed and interviewed. Five sampling methods and seven data collection tools were combined to support the use of Template Analysis for comparative, thematic data analysis.

Overall, most students made use of the compassion-focused pedagogy, adapting and developing it in seminar discussions to benefit the learning and social experiences of themselves and others. Data from three students helped explore why the pedagogy might not be suitable for all students. There was evidence of a positive impact on seminar academic outcomes in terms of assessment for critical thinking skills, particularly for BME students, although this result is offered cautiously and requires further research. The main indications from the study are that explicit work with the concept of compassion, including overt formal assessment of its use, can be unintrusive on subject material (a tutor concern), ethically appropriate, and beneficial to enhancing social and learning interconnectivity between students. Traditional/ standard categorisations of students as local or international in origin are also found to be extremely problematic and profoundly unhelpful in understanding and unlocking communicative barriers between students.

Keywords: group work, compassion-focussed pedagogy, social, learning.

Contents

Chapter Four: The Methodology

Chapter Five: Findings of cycle 1 conducted in the Humanities department of a UK university

Chapter 6: Findings of Cycle 2 conducted in the Business department of a UK university

Chapter 7: Discussion and Conclusions

Chapter One: Introduction

1.0 Introduction

This study explored how diverse university students might enhance their ways of working co-operatively with each other in group work, specifically in discussion-based seminars. Literature on enhancing students' social and/or learning experiences in seminars and other group work suggests the use of peer assessment and negotiating this with students first (Wilson, 1980; Daniel, 1991; Mutch, 1998; Fejes et al, 2005; Kriflik and Mullen, 2007) or even uncoupling reading altogether from seminars. In one study, Kremer and McGuiness (1998) refused admittance into seminars of those students who had not read in preparation. Elsewhere, specifically in the literature on internationalising HE (Higher Education), language and cultural differences appear to be thought almost entirely responsible for the communicative barriers between local and international students that arise during group work (Skidmore et al, 2012; Turner, 2009; Harrison and Peacock, 2008; Leask, 2005). To help unlock these barriers, close linguistic analysis is conducted into these students' discussion work with each other; see for example, Roberts' (2008) valuable work on this, and Skidmore et al (2012).   Nevertheless, as an English Language teacher in FE and HE for 25 years, I have observed that even successful work on reducing differences of English language proficiency amongst linguistically diverse students does not necessarily reduce their communicative difficulties with each other. I have noted these can become acute in face to face seminar discussions. This is where there is a deficit of helping theory.

The aim of this action research study was to contribute to the limited amount, relevance and cohesion of current theory available to support HE stakeholders endeavouring to lower communicative difficulties amongst students in group work.   Contrary to past and current literature on the internationalisation of HE, I propose that language and cultural *differences* may not be the only important area to investigate to facilitate communicative ease between diverse students. During face to face group work, key, underlying psychosocial processes that are *similarly* experienced by students - regardless of their cultural and linguistic diversity – remain under-researched. Yet as Higher Education undergoes massification in the UK, assessed group work is proliferating.   A better theoretically-underpinned understanding of what these shared experiences in face to face group work are, why they occur and how students can make them (more) positive, is particularly pertinent now. I shall explain why.

To begin, perceptions of reasonable degrees of personal safeness can reduce individuals' (evolutionarily determined) internal attention to risk and threat. Feeling safe - for example, from being viewed negatively by others - can allow the brain to carry out higher cognitive processes that it cannot if an individual feels unsafe (Cozolino, 2013; P. Gilbert, 2005). When combined with my teaching experiences, this strongly suggested that impediments to communicative ease and effectiveness in student group work could be correlated with students' feelings of safeness/lack of safeness to take social and/or intellectual risks in task-focussed group work with different and/or unfamiliar others. To investigate this further, much of my literature search was related to the nature and role of compassion because of its potential to positively mediate interpersonal perceptions of safeness as identified in psychotherapy (Bates, 2005). I widened my literature search on the concept of compassion into several disciplines, to investigate whether and how it could be embedded explicitly and

usefully into teaching, learning and assessment in higher education. I found that compassion is defined across a range of disciplines - anthropology (Feather, 2006; Goetz et al, 2010), psychology and group psychotherapy (P. Gilbert, 2005; Bates, 2005; Neff, 2003) and neuroscience (Immordino-Yang and Damasio, 2009) - as a) first noticing physical or social distress in others and then b) attempting to reduce it.

My thesis is that explicit work with the concept of compassion, including as an assessable phenomenon, is unintrusive on subject material, ethically appropriate and potentially beneficial to enhancing social and learning interconnectivity between students in face to face, discussion-based university seminars.

I investigated in the literature whether or not explicit attention to the concept of compassion might be relevant to enhancing students' skills at noticing and positively mediating other students' social and learning experiences in seminars. My literature findings suggested that compassionate conduct by a group of students during seminar discussions might enhance each other's individual feelings of safeness and thus, also, inclinations to take more social and intellectual risks than they might otherwise attempt. Put differently, if students attended to increasing each other' feelings of ease and safeness to take these risks during discussion work, this might facilitate an equal spread of participation around the group - with more input by some and less monopolising by others.

I designed a compassion-focussed pedagogy (the CfP) for discussion seminars (see Fig 1.1, next page), and this model incorporates my key, relevant literature findings. I chose the seminar discussion group as the context in which to apply these findings (by using the CfP), because seminars provided the opportunity for micro-ethnography: to closely observe face to face interactions between task-focussed students in group work for the purpose of

research. That is, from the perspective of a tutor/researcher (not a therapist), I could study, at close hand, the effects of the CfP on these student interactions.   I realised that participant-led modifications of the pedagogy might emerge. For this and other reasons, I selected action research as the main research strategy after considering other options which I explain in the Methodology chapter. I recruited a sample of modules from two disciplines in a UK HEI and researched inside their discussion seminars amongst a diversity of students.

Fig 1.1   The Compassion-focussed pedagogy for HE small group discussion-based seminars

STEP ONE – SEMINAR ONE

1. Speed meeting.

2. What is compassion?

3. Small group → whole group concensus on:

a. noticing unhelpful seminar behaviours.

b. how to address these compassionately.

STEP TWO

– HOMEWORK:

1. After each weekly lecture, students carry out individual, independent research on the topic of the lecture.

–   IN WEEKLY SEMINARS

 2. In small groups, students share (present and join a discussion of) the research they have each done.

3. Tutor facilitates students to support each other in using the strategies they agreed during their work on (3a) and (3b) in Step one – seminar one

STEP THREE – IN WEEKLY SEMINARS

1. The final small group discussions, at the end of the module, are filmed and each student is assessed according to criteria seen in Chapter 4, Fig 4.2, p91

This framework for pedagogy was also used as a research tool for investigating my questions. These are shown next.

1.2 The Research Questions

The core research question:

Can the psychological concept of compassion be embedded into HE seminar pedagogy to produce for both home and international students:

- improved student social and learning experience of task-focused seminar groups, and

- improved academic outcomes?

Seven sub questions:

a. Why might compassion be an appropriate and useful concept to embed into HE pedagogy for seminars?[1]

b. In what ways is the compassion-pedagogy, designed for this study, used by participants in their seminars?

c. Is the compassion pedagogy used differently according to whether students are local or international?

d. Does the compassion pedagogy improve students' social and learning experiences of seminars?
   i. Is there a difference according to whether students are local or international?

e. Does the compassion pedagogy improve academic outcomes from seminars?
   ii. Is there a difference according to whether students are local or international?

1.3   Structure of the dissertation

In Chapter Two I explain why it is urgent to explore these questions for a range of reasons. One is the call from UK employers for more and better intercultural communicative skills from graduate employees. Another is the accusation from government education policy

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[1] This question is addressed in Chapter 3 by the literature findings.

advisors, both in the USA (Chickering, 2010) and in Europe (Cantle, 2012), that Western education is neglecting its primary function: to serve the public good. Instead it is nourishing attitudes of competitive individualism in its universities and schools. Third, the World Health Organisation (2002) finds that student populations, globally, are suffering increased instances and levels of anxiety and depression. Rising levels of competitive stress amongst students are cited as a primary cause. A fourth reason for my research is a current trend in HE is towards requiring students to demonstrate leadership skills – that they are different and separate from others in regard to their qualities as leaders (Marturano et al, 2005). This is individualistic, competitive and potentially stressful; it has particular relevance to behaviours that can occur in the seminar room. It is also irrational; not everyone can be leaders all together at the same time even without the current massification of HE.

Finally, as I also explain in this chapter, the trend towards multiculturalism - as a concept once thought useful for integrating people in the wider social context - was focussed on (protecting the rights of) minority groups. However, by itself this has only helped to divide communities in the UK from each other (Cantle, 2012).   This too is pertinent to the seminar room with its multicultural cohorts of students, in the same way as Cantle (2012) asserts its relevance to some problematic school settings (Ibid, 2012).   Thus, Chapter 2 places the research questions in their troubled, wider context.

Chapter Three   This is the literature review. I begin the chapter with a brief introduction to my combined epistemological and philosophical position because of its influence on the conception of my research questions and how I researched these, including in the literature review.   This account is extended in the methodology chapter.

The purpose of the literature review in Chapter 3 was to respond to research question (a).[2] A related aim was to find out whether and how it might be institutionally possible to reward seminar discussion participants for paying compassionate attention to the affective states of others during group learning.

In the anthropology literature, compassion is studied as a universally recognised and valued concept across, otherwise, very different world cultures (Feather, 2006; Schwartz and Bardi, 2001). Therefore, I thought it was likely to be also recognised and valued by students from different cultures and language backgrounds across the university, including local white students. I considered the potential in this for pedagogy design around group work. Focussed on this potential, I researched scholarship on compassion from within anthropology (my own academic background before coming into English Language teaching) (e.g. Scott, 1990; Feather, 2006), also group psychotherapy (e.g. Foulkes, 1975; Yalom, 1989; Nitsun, 1996; Bates, 2005) and finally, relevant studies in neuroscience (e.g. Immordino-Yang et al, 2007; 2009; Depue and Morrone-Strupinsky, 2005). From a critical synthesis of these cross disciplinary findings on compassion, I propose and present a theoretical base for designing seminar pedagogy. That is, I have identified from the above literature which kinds of compassionate action could be a) transferable into a practical framework of a pedagogy for seminars; and b) the most specific to replacing types of individualist behaviours that can undermine group processes, with others that are more pro-social and task-focussed.

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[2] **Question a**) Why might compassion be an appropriate and useful concept to embed into a pedagogy for seminars?

Chapter Four presents the design of methodology, and shows how the above findings have been integrated into this design. The chapter first sets out my underlying epistemological and philosophical positions as a researcher. This in order to identify, as early and as transparently as I can, what kinds of internalised, researcher world views were inevitably influencing the study's design and implementation. Next, I explain my mainly qualitative, action research-based methodology, and the methods I used within that framework. I give reasons for the selections made, and explain why other possible choices were less appropriate for my questions. Then, using Fig 1.1 (see p4, above), I explain the use of the compassion-focussed pedagogy in more detail, both pedagogically and as a research tool. From this point I refer to the compassion-focussed pedagogy as 'the CfP' for easier reference. The CfP was used in two complete cycles of the action research.[3] Cycle 1 was conducted amongst mainly white, local students in one department. Cycle 2 was conducted in another department that was able to provide samples of more culturally, ethnically and internationally diverse students. Later, results on use (or rejection) of the CfP and effects in each cycle would be compared, that is, white local student samples (cycle 1) with samples of more obviously diverse students (cycle 2).

In terms of recruitment of sample modules and student and tutor participants, I used five sampling methods. I explain what each one contributed to the design of the study. To use these participant sampling methods effectively, I used seven data collection tools over the course of the two cycles. These supported continuous, comparative cross checking of results. The number and range of collection tools provided clearer evidence of where and why the emerging results confirmed or disconfirmed each other. Next, for my data analysis, I explain the choice of Template Analysis (King, 1998, 2004), which explicitly adopts - and fully

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[3]   There were 3 stages per cycle; therefore, 6 stages in total.

acknowledges - certain aspects of Grounded Theory. I show why the particular methods of Template Analysis (TA), with its origins in applied psychology, were appropriate to the aims of this study. For example, TA supported the use of my literature search findings to help recognise and organise main themes emerging from multiple data sets. It was suitable for the numbers of participants – not too many, not too few – that were needed for the comparative aspects of this study.

The end of the chapter is concerned with the ethical issues of the study and how it was carried out. An example of these was my insider/outsider position during data collection. Therefore, in this section I address my participants' potential multiple experiences of me as student and/or researcher and/or tutor. I underpin my discussion of this ethical and methodological issue with a brief but critical reading of the relevant literature.

Chapter Five presents the findings of cycle 1 of the action research conducted amongst predominantly white local students of a UK HEI's Humanities department.

Chapter Six   presents the findings of cycle 2 of the action research conducted amongst ethnically and internationally diverse local and non-local students of the above, same UK HEI's Business department. Cycle 2's findings and cycle 1's findings were then compared for: a) whether or not similar seminar-related psychosocial states (Leahy, 2005; Yalom, 1985) were shared by participants within and between the two cycles; b) the ways in which the CfP was used, modified or rejected by students; and c) the effects on social and learning experiences, and on academic outcomes, if any, of students use, modification or rejection of the CfP, within and between the 2 cycles.

Chapter Seven the final chapter, offers a summary of the key findings of the study, suggestions for further research and alternative methods that could address the methodological limitations that emerged in this study.   I discuss the study's contribution to theory, practice and HE policy and the final section summarises these.

1.4   Summary

This chapter identified reasons to consider looking at broader humanistic concepts than are addressed in the literature on HE internationalisation, in order to assist diverse students to work more co-operatively in groups.   One such concept that might be useful is that of compassion, on which there is a growing cross disciplinary literature aimed at the development of more co-operative societies. This does not seem to have found its place yet in pedagogy for group work in HE partly because, as yet, there is insufficient theory for an explicit focus for it in teaching, learning and assessment.

The model of the compassion-focussed pedagogy which was used in the action research has been shown (Fig.1.1). This was designed using literature findings on the potential for compassion to enhance social and learning experiences of students amongst each other in group work. The structure of the dissertation has been explained chapter by chapter. These are: a context-setting chapter (Chapter 2); directions taken in the literature review (Chapter 3); the Methodology (Chapter 4) which explains how this action research study was conducted over two cycles;   Chapter 5 which presents findings from the first cycle; Chapter 6 which presents findings from the second cycle; and finally, Chapter 7 which evaluates the study overall, identifying its contribution to theory, (knowledge of) practice and HE policy.

Chapter Two: Background and Context of the Action Research Study

2.0 Introduction

Divisions in wider society are reflected within HE student populations.   As they move about the physical space of the university campus in the UK and elsewhere, discrete, clique-like groups of students can be seen to form on the basis of commonalities of nationality, ethnicity, culture, gender or religion. These cliques tend not to engage with other fragments of the university community that are ethnically, linguistically or culturally different.   As a result, opportunities for countless intercultural interactions that nurture the development of individuals' world mindedness are missed every day. I propose that the cause is not differences of nationality, culture, gender and so on in themselves, but more often, the assumptions we make about how and why they are (supposedly) key in determining group membership.   I first conceived this problem, in a very limited way, as one of internationalisation of the HE curriculum, on which there is a large body of literature. My study was originally conceived in the hope of contributing to the HE internationalisation platform.

 I open this chapter with a brief overview of what 'internationalisation' in HE can be taken to mean. This is important because many universities are competing with each other to become recognised as international HEI's. Then I will explore the differences between interculturalism and multiculturalism to show that both are possible outcomes of internationalisation but without the same rewards. I argue that progress towards internationalisation in HE has been undermined by misunderstandings of multiculturalism as a good enough model to aspire to. On the contrary, it is an elementary stage on the way to well integrated student learning communities. An intercultural model, which I will explain

further, represents a more advanced stage and is therefore a better model to underpin and inform a vision of socially integrated learning communities of students. With this model replacing internationalisation as my focus, I then consider, with examples, what students in my own teaching appear to be experiencing in their seminar groups with each other where intercultural processes are not in evidence. I do this with a preliminary search in the literature to find out why those experiences may be occurring. I also consider the tutor's role in mediating communicative experiences amongst and between students. This introduces the next section on language grading – speaking accessibly to people so that they can understand and are not excluded from the communicative circle. This is not only about language; it is about mindfulness and choice. I show with examples what happens in the HE learning space when language is not graded for white local native English speakers and next, when it is not graded for non-native English speaking international students, and I compare outcomes. I then explore alleged differences in capacity for critical thinking between national groups of students, and again find little evidence of difference. In my conclusions I set out what needs to be investigated in the literature search of the following chapter, specifically in relation to compassion. I suggest why this could be a route, in pedagogical terms, to mediating the difficulties of group work for students.

2.1 Internationalisation, multiculturalism and interculturalism

In both developed and developing countries, universities are internationalising themselves, or being internationalised, in response to globalisation. HE internationalisation is a difficult concept to define. In the current, relevant literature there are various stances on what it can mean (Leask, 2005), or should (not) mean (Haigh, 2002), and much conceptual and empirical work on what kinds of internationalisation strategies universities are, or should

be, pursuing and why (Biggs, 2003; Leask, 2005; Deardorff, 2006; Shuerholz-Lehr, 2007; Ryan and Louie 2008). Debate over the consequences of these strategy choices – whether in the long term they will help reduce, sustain or increase world inequities – is at last becoming more central in the literature.

Crichton and Scarino (2007) review four distinct stances over how internationalisation is to be defined. These concern: location, partnerships and mobility; the move towards more culturally diverse subject content; the teaching of English language and communications skills to international students for university studies; and the teaching of intercultural competence. The authors rightly recognise that these constructs, neither individually nor in combination, are adequate to address the challenges of internationalisation that HE is navigating. However the solution they propose is questionable and raises pressing issues around theory building deficits for the pedagogy of internationalisation.   Having set out in their empirical research to "understand the 'intercultural dimension' in higher education" (p10), their concluding "overarching message" (p19) is that   "…any construction of international education … must be referenced to the interaction of language and culture" (p19).   In the literature on internationalising the HE student experience, this focus on language and culture appears to subsume consideration of other conceptual frameworks for empirical research on group dynamics; it has somewhat hijacked the debates and empirical work on interculturalism in the HE learning community.   As a result, an urgently required theoretical base for interculturalising students through HE pedagogy has still not been developed:

> The phenomenon [internationalisation] needs to be explored in
> didactical terms, involving teachers' ways of *handling teaching and
> learning* aspects of internationalisation in practice [Wilhborg's italics]

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> … no coherent discourse has yet been established that investigates the
>
> phenomenon from a pedagogical/didactical stance…
>
> (Wilhborg, 2009, p128)

Similarly, in its 2009 report, Trends in Global Higher Education: Tracking an Academic

Revolution, UNESCO (2009) states on internationalisation processes within universities that:

> A great deal more research remains to be done…particularly in
>
> terms of understanding teaching and learning dynamics (p19)

In response, I propose that too little empirical investigation has been carried out into the

psychological factors that drive students' interactions in HE when they work in groups.

How language and culture are produced and represented by individuals working with others

are products of these psychological factors.   The relationship between affective and

cognitive processes involved in intercultural competence also requires explicit recognition

and investigation; language use and utterances in HE groups are an important outcome of

this relationship, but they are only one.

 Before discussing this further, I explore current definitions of intercultural competence. I

start with how Cantle (2012) defines this in relation to the more recent model of

multiculturalism that developed partly out of the work of Hofstede (1993).   Cantle

recognises how a multiculturalist notion of society has been favoured in the UK and

elsewhere as a vision for serving the needs and protecting the rights of ethnic minorities,

but he says that multiculturalism is a narrow frame, concerned with discrete groups. It has

led to plural communities in Britain living side by side, not integrated, but rather, a

collection of mono-cultures living in parallel. The current social tensions in the UK and

elsewhere that are arising from extreme right wing element takes on immigrant and migrant

populations to the UK are thought by Cantle to have been inevitable because of the

narrowness of the multiculturalism model.   In contrast, interculturalism, which he wishes to

see nurtured in schools and other communities across the UK and elsewhere, attends to the

interactions of diverse and complex, human individuals - not groups - and individuals, he

says, cannot be defined primarily by their religion, or nationality or some other one-

dimensional category.[4] Interculturalism means positive interactions in the sense of acting

and living together in collaboration (Zapata-Barrero, 2013) but "this can only be

accomplished if people feel free to act, as human beings " (Ibid, p8) in more "mobile and

dynamic processes" (Ibid, p8) than are prescribed by the categories implied by

multiculturalism.   Both authors are of the view that cultures can and should be entered and

exited freely by the individual because cultures are expressions of personal identity (Cantle,

2012; Zapata-Barrero, 2013).   This suggests that interculturalism on a university campus

could be correlated with individual students' perceptions of their own personal safeness to

be mobile and to move freely within and through different cultures of diverse groups. A key

question is concerned with how we can we facilitate this for students. The literature on HE

internationalisation seems not to offer sufficiently relevant answers, as I now illustrate.

From this, arguably, problematic literature, Deardorff's model of intercultural competence

of students refers to: knowledge, skills and attitudes. The skills include not only "to listen,

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[4] Professor Ted Cantle is founder of the **Institute of Community Cohesion (iCoCo)** and a UK government
    advisor on how rising levels of right wing opposition to the interests of UK's immigrant ethnic communities
    could be diffused.   He argues that increasing fundamentalism of some faith schools across Britain is
    entrenching divisions within and across the wider UK community and that this was facilitated by recent
    government policy changes within the UK education system.

observe, and interpret" (p248) but also "to analyze, evaluate, and relate" (p248) thus

implying the intellectual, cognitive work to be done by the individual student to become

interculturally competent.   The three "requisite attitudes" (p245) are summarised here as

respect for diversity, openness (e.g. withholding judgement) and curiosity (that can tolerate

ambiguity).   Deardorff's study was conducted by a mix of quantitative and qualitative

methods, with HE teaching staff and their senior administrators and managers from a

number of US universities as the respondents.   Findings revealed a consensus amongst

these participants on the need for students to make intellectual effort to be interculturally

competent. The difficulties with the study, as in much of the literature on HE

internationalisation, are that first, students were not participants helping to articulate the

model. Second, there is no discussion of the supporting learning, teaching and *assessment*

(institutional reward) practice that could nurture the three 'requisite attitudes.' Third, there

is almost no exploration of the psychology that could underpin such practice for

interculturalising student communities.   In other words, where these desirable attitudes

are to come from is not discussed, nor is any relevant theory referred to that might suggest

clues.   Yet, even though they are overlooked, the psychologies within multicultural student

communities (their affective states and cognitive processes) are strongly signalling they

need to be investigated. I illustrate the extent of this, next.

2.1.1 Multicultural student communities in Higher Education

As an HE teacher of English for academic purposes, I worked initially in my university with

international students only.   The aim was to enhance their academic English skills – writing,

presentation, seminar discussion and listening skills and so on – so that students could then

start (or continue with) their chosen under graduate or post graduate programmes of study

in the university. I had long noticed that some teaching staff representing many subjects around the university saw these students as a particular challenge and they talked about them as a single group: 'the international students.'   For example, in one faculty, a programme tutor described the struggle that having a number of 'international students' from East Asia meant for maintaining his programmes' academic standards, not least in the sense that they did not contribute well in group work. Similarly, Soonhyang's (2006) study of East Asian students in HEIs in the USA, found they were "a group typically known to be silent or reticent in class" (p1). Her study identified that the biggest concern to them on their graduate courses as a whole was: "participating in whole-class discussions" (p1).

In the Business Department of my study's host UK university a post graduate programme manager told me that local students preferred not to work with international students in group work. This was because cultural and language differences meant that local students had to carry the international students. That is, the local students provided the ideas; the international students, particularly those from the Far East, offered little or nothing in return.   This was felt to be unfair to the local students in the face of widespread current practice in UK HEIs for students to share a single group mark, so on this post graduate programme, local students worked separately from international students. Thus, the model for group work on this programme was, overall, multicultural, not intercultural.   The student community was fractured.   Similarly, elsewhere in the HEI, on a module for undergraduates, small group memberships for a group work assignment were, again, decided by the students themselves.   A pair of French students on the module told me they had not been invited into any of them. They were left like this until the tutor intervened and allocated them to established groups.   One of the French students pointed out that he had seen the same

thing happen from time to time to non-French students in his own university in France and, he reflected, the experience must have been as embarrassing for them as it had been for him.   On yet another module, a tutor complained more recently that when a group of German students were asked during a seminar to take into their group a local black student who did not have a group, they declined. It may be that they anticipated no communicative difficulties if they could continue their group work in German.   In the same week, a post graduate Italian student described to me the 'arrogance' of British students who had studied with her in a university in the Netherlands. The curriculum was delivered in English. She said these students had not given even Dutch students the chance to participate equally in discussion groups.

Turner (a business lecturer in a Scottish HEI) offers an interesting rationale for the failure of interculturalism to thrive on her own programme despite her best efforts to facilitate it. First, she had designed a module around Hofstede's work on international cultures, as a way to help students consider how they might work more effectively together.   Second, she had purposely mixed local and international students together in task-focussed group work on the module. The objective was to provide all the students access to international perspectives and develop their intercultural competence in group work. At a conference at Oxford Brookes University in June, 2008, she reported that both measures had failed. Her international students had come to her to describe themselves as bullied by their fellow group members. They said the local students were impatient with them when they needed time to think in English during face to face group interactions (c.f. Soonhyang's 2006 study in US HEIs). Turner's local students had also complained, separately to her, about the international students because they did not contribute when the groups met.   Turner did

not attribute these communicative difficulties to her students' language and cultural differences. Rather, she noted her local students' tendency to "pathologise silence" rather than allow pauses for international students to come into discussion.[5]   She identified a persistent misuse by the local students of their communicative power to overwhelm the international students in group work – and so "disadvantage" them. Reflexively, she had tried to determine where this power came from and told the conference she had concluded: "I gave it to them; the institution gave it them."   She was of the view that across the HE sector: "Whether we like it or not, we are colluding in institutionalised imperialism." She proposed that the inequities faced by her international students in their academic experiences with local students in group work were intractable because they are institutionally embedded and endorsed.   In a similar vein, Haigh (2002) asserts that as soon as they arrive at western HEI's, international students are institutionally stripped of their potential to contribute to inclusive, world minded, intellectually demanding curricula.

So far, I have explored this kind of marginalisation of international students in relation to mainly UK universities. But the issue can be identified across HE globally. At a conference in Germany on HE Internationalisation in (Lost in Transnation: Bremen, October 2008) presentations by internationally diverse representatives from German, Spanish, French, North and South American and Eastern European universities built similar pictures of the daily visible, physical distance from international students that their own local students often maintained.

As suggested in Chapter 1, much of the literature on integrating diverse students tends to

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[5]   I noted down parts of Turner's presentation verbatim and some are quoted here.

emphasise difference between 'the local student' and 'the international student', rather than the potentials of their similar, shared, lived experience(s). The problem is that where only differences are emphasised they become clearly delineated, inviting unproductive, value-laden ranking. The UNESCO Delors Commission (1998a) states that to just bring diverse people together to do group work in Western education's competitively stressful environment only worsens the situation by more deeply entrenching attention to differences.

In an effort to provide opportunities for student-centred interculturalising processes (Cantle, 2012; Zapata-Barrero, 2013), I set up a regular, weekly speed meeting event - at the same time and place each week - in the study's host HEI in 2006/2007. It was advertised university wide on a continuous basis and managed collaboratively with attending students. It ran for 18 months. The activity followed the simple form of speed dating (re-termed speed meeting), that is, moving one row of students only, one chair along, every few minutes so each student was continually meeting new conversation partners until at the end of the line, she/he moved on to another table. There were typically several tables engaged at once. Any student arriving late during the 2 hour session just sat in any vacant seat and talked.

The event was held in an open thoroughfare of a main building of the university.   The tables were pre-set up by students and porters each week, and the fruit, juices and other snacks were provided from the English language team's budget.

The event was advertised continually on every available and appropriate channel within the university. The participating students were from Pakistan, India and Bangladesh, Japan, France, Norway, Spain, and Germany, China, Malaysia, Korea and Thailand, Turkey, Iran, six Middle Eastern countries and five African countries. From PhDs to 1st year undergraduates, students studying programmes ranging from Astrophysics to Art and Design met and conversed at the tables. Overall, from a number of perspectives, there was a diversity of participants each week.   International students gave positive feedback on the new friendships they had made and came to meet these friends again each week. However, no white local student participated in the speed meet over the eighteen months. This was despite efforts to welcome them including being allowed by an education department lecturer to speak directly to her students in a lecture hall. My short talk was met with spontaneous and loud applause by 100+ students. Yet, in the following weeks, the white local student union ambassadors recruited to reduce the imbalance, were the only white local students to attend the speed meets.   This was noted, commented on and questioned by the international and non-white local students who attended regularly.

The situation puzzled me in its suggestion that local white student attitudes to different others might be inhibiting progress towards integrated student communities. Turner's findings had suggested this too.   At the same time my teaching colleagues suggested that since we tutors may sometimes have attitudes that are unconsciously imperialistic or ethnocentric, then so might some of our students.

I prepared for the following programme of investigation as follows. I assisted in the training of a colleague to replace me as the Academic Skills Tutor to the university's Adult Nursing department. Then, when a vacancy became available, I transferred into the same post in the Humanities department. I targeted this department because student cohorts in most of its subjects were mainly white, local students. I wanted to investigate how they interacted amongst themselves when they might not know each other well – as in seminars. It was possible they might be interacting with each other in their group work in ways that were quite different from how they would interact with internationals. These nuances might not have been detected as yet. As I made my transfer into the target department, I made my first enquiries about a PhD programme of study.

My teaching role amongst Humanities students was to enhance their academic skills through workshops, lectures and one to one tutorials. Modules in three key subjects of the department - Philosophy, English Literature and History - attracted few students that the university would define as 'international.'

Once in the department, and particularly during one to one tutorials with me, I found some white local students wanted to talk about their personal group and class work experiences and how they felt about them. Their accounts were sometimes surprising to me. Importantly, they put in doubt the conclusions Turner had reached from her searching and outstanding work so far with local students. For example, below is a verbatim extract from an email sent to me by a white local post graduate male student. His descriptions here of his fellow white local students have obvious resonance with the discussion above in relation to international students (Soonhyang, 2006; Turner; 2002) yet this student worked only with

fellow white, local students.   Below, he refers to four out of eight white, local, post graduate

students who were in his weekly seminar group:

> [They] do not know how to conduct themselves in a seminar…they
> do not understand the difference between a lecture and a seminar.
> [They] just want the facts. Even though they have gone through a
> humanities first degree they have not been trained to be inquisitive
> or develop an opinion. …the tutor had to turn the hoped for
> seminar into a lecture… Students are too busy or too lazy….Even
> when the students have prepared they do not make a contribution
> in the seminar.   Issues… fester over time thereby damaging morale
> and performance.
> (Student X, Email 1)

Here, and in my Humanities tutorials, white local students were describing experiences to

me that the literature on HE internationalisation clearly indicated were lived by international

students only. As I continued to work one to one with white local students on their

academic progress, more similarities between their experiences of group work and

international students' experiences began to emerge. For example, there were accounts of

feeling personally overwhelmed or disabled by other, assertive, confident, white local

students in groups, or inarticulate and shy compared to how much more fluently and

persuasively others could speak in seminars. This resonated clearly with international

students' accounts of their need for pauses in which to enter discussions.   None of this

appeared to have been taken into account in the literature on international students'

experience of HE. I began to ask questions amongst my new Humanities teaching colleagues

about group work experience accounts they might know of from their students. Almost

immediately, I gained access to the following in-house survey which two of them had

recently conducted amongst approximately 100 English Literature second year students. 58

students had responded.

2.2 Questioning why we reify the international student's experience: A survey of local students

The survey (2008) explored students' evaluations of their own seminar contributions, based

on set reading in preparation for discussion, but the data had not been analysed. I carried

out a content analysis which identified that 26 out of the 58 student respondents reported

feeling that their contributions to seminars were inadequate, not good, poor or weak

(Question 9).   Question 10 asked respondents to give reasons for these evaluations. Many

of the 26 reported feeling anxious in seminars, for example, that their contribution would be

seen to be less articulate than those of others in the group. Thus they were giving

apparently greater importance to the way an idea was presented than its actual substance.

These were students who were implicitly stating that they did have ideas to offer but were

anxious about how to express them.

Others feared their contributions might be simply 'wrong', and that offering them

constituted too great a social risk. Two other Humanities lecturers noted that once the roles

of contributor or non-contributor had been practised by students in the first couple of

seminars on a module, the group dynamics were largely set. They found that how people

behaved with each other after that was difficult for a tutor to change. On the other hand, a

student revealed the role that tutors might themselves unwittingly play in curtailing

students' capacity to contribute. In an academic skills tutorial with me, she talked about

how she was impacted , apparently in affective terms, by particular expressions on tutors'

faces that signalled whether her contributions to whole class discussions were 'right' or 'wrong' : she could tell when she had 'messed up' in a seminar, she said. She gave the example of a seminar tutor who would make a slight inclination of the head to one side, and say something with rising intonation, like 'Mmm' or 'Well' with a worried expression, and it 'puts you off speaking for the rest of the seminar.' This account was surprising because this white, female student seemed confident and outgoing and in any case the body language she described sounded innocuous. But in this regard, Kingston (2008) sums up a very extensive literature on affect and learning from Vygotsky onward when she says "even the minutest emotion" can impact learning (p4).

The Humanities survey data further suggested the part such affect played in student evaluations of themselves as underperforming in discussion seminars. One student wrote that he would note down in seminars what he would like to say, but he was nervous; the moment to speak would pass and it was too late to contribute. This kind of hesitancy to take up the time of the group contrasted with the survey report of a student who said he spoke a lot, and then added in response to a follow up question on how he could improve his contributions in the seminars: 'I could read the texts'. Some students cited 'big mouths', 'loud mouths' as giving them no chance to speak, while another referred to the 'favourites' (presumably of the tutor) who spoke a lot. Overall, there was no evidence from the survey data that the affective states of hesitant or quieter students were being attended to by others. Instead, the opposite appeared to be true; a number of the responses of the 32 students who reported having no problem 'speaking up' were troubling in this regard. One student, clearly unaware of the hidden narratives around her reported she did not know why students 'who won't contribute bother to come to

25

seminars'. Several of the 'speaking' students felt uncomfortable with silence, perhaps not

seeing its usefulness as a group reflection point at which others could enter the discussion:

'I hate silences' (c.f. the narratives of Turner's international students, 2008).   Another

'jumped into silences', one 'spoke all the time', another could 'talk for England' - these

students appeared to see their readiness to speak, no matter about what, as a real asset to

the seminar.   The survey overall posed questions about how hidden narratives of

discontent around such students about their discussion group styles could be revealed

safely for all the students to address productively. It also posed questions about whether

group cohesion could be improved by explicitly learning with students how they could

attend to the affective states of others in order for the group to access all the intellectual

resources of the full group membership.   These were two issues the study's planned

interventions would attempt to address so that outcomes could be studied.

To end this section that considers evidence that problematizes Turner's understanding of

the communicative disadvantages of international students, I offer the following on an

incident I observed in a business department seminar. It shows that in discussion groups,

international students, even with difficulties with English, can overwhelm native English

speakers who seem reasonably confident.   The tutor put his local and international

students into mixed groups of four and gave them a module topic to discuss. A white male

German student with intermediate level English engaged one of his three white UK male

peers at once. These two became a pair who spoke only to each in the group i.e. to the

exclusion of the other two, who looked on in silence. As I watched, I noticed that, after a

few minutes, the white UK male to whom the German was speaking was making fewer and

fewer attempts to interject as the German student tended to talk over him. His lack of

accurate English appeared to be no barrier to his speedy and fluent monopolisation of his group.   He also fed back his group's discussion to the whole group.

From the above discussion it appears that much like some international students, some local English native speaker students also think, feel or imagine shortcomings in their own communicative skills in the discussion group context.   Local as well as international students may have a sense of being ranked, in competitive ways, as effective communicators or not by their fellow local and international students in university class work.

Overall, the various criteria for defining communicative competence that is based on language and linguistics are subject to diverse, therefore inconsistent and unstable, interpretations. Even if this could be remedied, they are still not helpful for understanding communicative barriers between students who are different from each other, or even apparently, when they are very similar.   Individual psychosocial processes emerge again from the above accounts as, likely, a more fruitful area to investigate.

2.3   The tutor role in mediating student to student communications

As suggested from the above student's close observation of a tutor's (arguably diplomatic) body language, tutors can have an important impact on students' affective states and how safe they then feel to communicate in seminars. This can happen in three ways.

In relation to the first way, Pitner and Sakamoto (2005), from psychotherapy, offer their model of Critical Consciousness Acquistion to suggest that critical consciousness can be

understood as a state of egalitarianism.   This is a position that a practioner may assume and go on to share with his or her clients, patients or students.   However, Pitner and Sakamoto also suggest two roadblocks to this state.   The first is cognitive overload of the 'expert' in his or her working relations with clients or students as individuals.   This results in heuristic shortcutting: stereotyping of people. Here is an example of how tutors can excercise little control over that cognitive workload and assume sole responsibility (and favoured status) for accessing other peoples' identities:

> ...The next step is to ....explore their social economic and cultural
> backgrounds, their ways of knowing and learning, their sense of
> identity and …
> (Hockings, 2010, p96).

Arguably, it may be just as helpful to consider that one tutor cannot do all of this alone, that students may be better at this and that, also, they they have the right to be co-partners in this classroom endeavour.

The second block to acquiring Pitner and Sakamoto's 'critical consciousness' is that there can be a retreat by the expert from the risk of being seen by clients, or students, as equal to them.   Therefore, they may feel inadequate to address a power vacuum (Ibid). I suggest this could be fundamentally related to protecting levels of personal agency compared to that of others; it is an issue of personal safeness.   This though suggests an arguably unjustifed assumption that a majority of students are predisposed to construct negatively a practitioner who seeks this co-learner status with his/her clients or students.

Third, attempts by tutors to converge with the language habits of some students may marginalise others. In a Business department English for Academic Purposes (EAP) class, two Spanish students explained to their class mates how they would both hope each week in their whole class discussion seminars that nobody would involve them in the discussion. Largely colloquial English was spoken, not standard, and it was spoken very fast in their views so they could not follow what was being said. Their English was good; both students were outgoing and communicatively competent. They felt too shy to ask the students to speak less colloquially or to slow down a little and in any case, the business tutor mirrored this colloquial speech and its pace. Both Spanish students felt, somewhat accommodatingly, that it was reasonable for the tutor to 'build up' her relationships with her (local) students in this way.

2.4 Grading language: for international students

It is not being suggested here that the skill of grading language[6] is easy. Standardisation of language (use of a core body of English language that is internationally recognised) can demand practice and mindfulness in speech communities of diverse membership.

Neither is it suggested that communication difficulties are not found amongst students of different nationalities. On the contrary, on a Business module in Market research, a tutor[7] fielded dissatisfaction from her English-fluent Nigerian students at her having put them each into project pairs with less fluent Chinese students for partners. They wanted to be re-partnered, preferably with fluent English speakers. In response she required them to remain

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[6] Grading language for others to understand can include avoiding: the use of colloquialisms, difficult words without explanation; convoluted sentences; or rapid speech.

[7] Elaine O'Connor, Lecturer in Market Research, personal communication, Dec, 2010

in their current pairs and further, that each student across the module group should write a reflection on the following two questions which she devised for them:

1. What is it that I contribute to the intellectual development of my fellow students in seminars that they most value in me?
2. What is it that I most value in my fellow students that they contribute to my intellectual development in seminars?

Feedback on the group experiences was generally better than expected and pairs gave evidence of how they had found ways to work together so that the Nigerians did not feel disadvantaged by working with students less competent than them in English. For example, one pair, researched what reputable Chinese sources were saying in China about a group of companies in difficulty. They compared this with Western views of the situation. Through the research and translation skills of his partner, the Nigerian had access to insights he would not have had with another Nigerian. Here, Haigh (2002) might concede that in this case, the very quiet Chinese student had not been stripped of her ability to contribute; on the contrary, she had entered into Pitner and Sakamoto's (2005) egalitarian contract with a student (not a tutor) and both worked collaboratively for a demonstrable degree of intercultural competence (Deardorff, 2006).

2.5 Grading language: for local students

A Humanities tutor and I came in to see a group of 70 x 1st year students immediately after a lecture. The students were predominantly white, local, native English speakers. She had come in to explain administrative arrangements to them and she asked them if they had enjoyed the lecture. The response was overall positive except regarding the use of words

and terms they said they did not understand. They gave the term 'paradigmatic' as one example. She asked them why they had not asked the lecturer what it meant. Various responses were given indicating a level of discomfort at stopping a lecture to ask for the meaning of vocabulary they felt they were expected to know at university level.   An email was sent afterwards from a white, mature male, local student. He said:

> I'm concerned about the lack of plain English used in lectures…. I
> normally find myself lost half way through a lecture (Email 1,
> 24.2.09).

He had been a builder for twenty years and explained that, having young children, it had been a 'big decision to come to university'; he was 'giving it all I've got'. He said he felt that some lecturers were speaking 'way above our heads' in lectures. He thought this was completely unintentional but it was problematic in his view.

So far it has been difficult to find differences between the experiences of local students here and international students, even in the matter of grading of language. Yet in the literature on teaching and learning in the mixed local/international HE classroom, language grading is important to international students only.

2.6   Critical thinking: for international students

It is necessary to examine the argument that, in general, the non-western international student is less able to think critically than local students. It is suggested for example, that many non-western students, such as the Chinese, are disabled from thinking evaluatively in Western HEI terms as a result of their culturally determined educational backgrounds. This

does not confirm Turner's qualitative findings. In her (2006) longitudinal,[8] exploratory study

of nine mainland Chinese students newly arrived in the UK, it was found that critical thinking

had been "… often poorly defined and illustrated" for them (p10). Even when two of the

nine were awarded distinctions in their MA's, they told her they considered this to be

"superficial, technical achievement" (p8).

Another Chinese student had this (below) to say about white local students:

> Local students.   I don't think they have their own ideas or
> something but they can get a good score in the coursework.   They
> just quote, quote some word and reference to others' words.   I
> don't know why. Because in China, the teachers always encourage
> us to have our own ideas in the coursework. We must have our
> own idea.   (Turner, 2006, p19).

Yin Li (2008) carried out an analysis of the lexicons of critical thinking in both Chinese and

English for comparative purposes. She found that a Chinese lexical framework for the notion

of 'critical thinking' is largely absent from Chinese language frames and is problematic in a

less individualistic society anyway. Instead, she reports that being 'smart' is seen from the

Chinese cultural framework as a state that is never a given. It can only be arrived at by hard

work, and this concept is reflected in the Chinese language.

Even overlooking that local students may appear more evaluative than they actually are

when working with less English-fluent internationals,   there may still be an overestimation

of the levels of comfort local students feel with the notion of critical thinking.   For the

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8   Turner (2006) conducted a loosely structured interview with each Chinese student every month for nine
     months.

methodological purposes of this study, academic standards are defined as concerned with the demonstration of critical evaluative thinking, rather than only descriptively reporting other people's/ sources' ideas. Critical thinking relates strongly to reflecting on existing knowledge in a cross referencing manner and reconsidering information from the perspective of newer knowledge acquired.

Ryan and Louie (2007) are sceptical of the notion that non Western students cannot think critically or creatively because they have not been long enough immersed in Socratic based educational systems. They present their anthropological argument by deconstructing   what they refer to as the false dichotomy between Western and Eastern ways of thinking. Elsewhere, Biggs and Watkins, (2001a, 2001b) and Devos (2003) in Turner (2005) support this logic.

While Turner finds critical thinking in Western HE to be a poorly defined term for international students to make sense of, it is apparent to me that UK students also struggle with what this can/might mean, and how to apply it in their own work. For example, from around 400 one to one tutorials for predominantly local students in the Humanities department (2008 to 2011), I found that problematic structure and critical thinking were the two most commonly raised issues in feedback from tutors for both under and post graduate Humanities modules. Students complained they could name the problem but they did not know how to fix it.

 It was this evidence that most clearly indicated for the study the importance of the function of seminars as forums in which both local and international students could explore what

'critical' , 'analytical' or 'creative' thinking can mean through productive group discussions of materials. Again though, as Cozolino (2013) and P. Gilbert (2005) point out, this requires no interference from anxiety, otherwise cognitive skills are tied up in attending to personal safeness and avoidance of threat.

2.7 Conclusion

This chapter has set out the problematic background context for the study and why it should focus on exploring and supporting face to face group work, namely discussion based seminars. Seminars offer immediate potential for the development of interconnectivity between students on social as well as learning levels.   Discussion-based seminars are spaces where tutors can immediately facilitate students' moves towards interactional styles that are alternative to those that may make people feel unsafe. Feeling unsafe (at risk) amongst others who may seem different in some way, may make students less inclined to connect socially or intellectually to those others.

2.8 Summary

This chapter set out the troubled, wider context for the study's focus on exploring and supporting students' face to face discussions in seminars. It opened with an overview of the current challenges facing progress toward internationalising HE. It argued the likely (in)effectiveness of striving for multiculturalism as a goal of internationalisation, rather than (also) interculturalism to draw separate, parallel communities of students together in co-operative endeavour.   I have outlined the reasons why, despite student' language and cultural differences, they still have similar psychosocial experiences in group work. I have explained that these similarities, and their implications for pedagogy design, are currently under researched. It was suggested that the same types of communicative barriers (that the

internationalisation literature indicates are exclusive to communications between international and local students), do also occur within homogenous groups, including amongst white local students. It seems this is not recognised in the HE internationalisation literature so far and this puts the premise of much of that literature in question i.e. that reducing differences in (English) linguistic competence is the proper priority focus. Therefore, Chapter 2 took forward the key points made in Chapter 1 to deepen and extend my rationale for exploring shared, relevant experiences in groups, and for focusing on compassion because of its potential to mediate these experiences. The next chapter sets out the search in the literature for what particular kinds of compassion might be relevant to pedagogical management of the HE discussion seminar room, and why.   That is, it seeks a new theoretical base for addressing the issues identified in this chapter.

> Whenever I try to understand myself, the whole fabric of the perceptible
> world comes too; and with it comes the others who are caught in it.
> (Merleau-Ponty, 1962, p15)

3.0 Introduction

The main purpose of this literature search was to address research question (a):

> Why might compassion be an appropriate and useful concept to embed
> into HE pedagogy for seminars?

Alvesson and Skoldberg (2000; 2007) advise researchers, especially those working with qualitative data, to take multiple epistemological perspectives into account when they conduct research. They argue that if a researcher does this and is able to identify and make transparent to others, his/her philosophical position which underlies the research, then both the researcher and others are better able to assess the validity and/or reliability of the researcher's interpretation of results. I used Alvesson and Skoldberg's (2000, 2009) model of reflexivity for qualitative researchers.   Its usefulness, and its limitations, for my action research study are discussed in the Methodology chapter.   In the meantime though, I briefly summarise here my reflexive (my epistemological and philosophical) position since, as the model suggests, the directions taken in this literature review were likely influenced by it.

Three perspectives influenced why and how this study was conceived and conducted.   The first was that of empirical research – coding and categorising data for thematic analysis (see Chapter 4, The Methodology).   Then, two philosophical perspectives which I used to help interpret the research here were critical theory (Cohen et al, 2007;   Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000; 2007) and, in particular, social constructionism (Burr, 2003; Searle, 1995; Pavlovic, 2011; Kövecses et al., 2000). In section 3.1.2 below, social constructionism is explained and exampled to show its theoretical usefulness to my study; my background as a student of anthropology of the Middle East informed my view of social constructionism.

To summarise my position: my epistemological understanding is that ways of producing knowledge (as through careful, rigorous, systematic empirical research) can also serve the interests of particular stakeholders at the expense of others (as suggested by critical theory) and this can be sustained vertically through a system, that is, from individual to institutional level.   At the same time, I understand that social constructs must be in place to sustain these inequities and I was interested in those that I identified in Chapter 2 in the context of face to face group work. Discussion group seminars were where students were most likely to be dependent on each other for their learning and social experiences. So I chose seminars as the context in which to explore whether these more stratifying constructs could be replaced with more equitable ones and if so, by what means and with what outcomes for students.

Below, I show the key terms used for keeping the literature search focussed on my aims.

3.1 The literature search

The search was carried out mainly from February 2008 to January, 2014. It made use of two

UK HEIs' libraries and the British Library in London.

3.1.1 Key terms

Key terms used for the literature search are shown in the box below in alphabetical order.

From the early stages of the search, I used different combinations of these terms:

> Academic output, academic outcomes, academic quality, affect, affect and
> learning, affect and group work, anxiety, assessment, clique, cognitive,
> compassion, collaborative, collectivism, communication, community, competitive,
> competitive behaviours, complexity, connection, critical theory, culture, curricula
> design, discussions, diversity, education, emotion, emotional intelligence,
> empathy, ethnography, experimental, eye contact, facilitator, gaze, groups, group
> cohesion, group dynamics, group psychotherapy, group work, group work
> outcomes, HE, hermeneutics, Higher Education, Higher education seminars,
> Higher education group work, HE internationalisation, inclusivity,
> inclusive/inclusivity strategies in groups, individualism, individuate, intellectual
> output, intellectual quality, interaction, intercultural competence, intergroup
> contact, intergroup friendships, internationalisation, interpersonal relationships,
> intersubjectivity, learning, learning effectiveness, learning objectives, learning
> outcomes, ontology, out groups, peer assessment, peers, peer evaluation,
> politics, presence, quality, quality indicators, ranking, retention, reward,
> satisfaction, seminars, self-esteem, self-compassion, psychology, psychotherapy,
> social constructionism, social cohesion, social presence, strategies, stratification,
> student, student-led, student performance, support, teaching, team-building,
> trust, university.

3.1.2 The aims of the literature search

With no currently available theoretical base adequate or sufficiently relevant for HE

discussion seminar pedagogy, I thought it possible and necessary to assemble one – starting

with combining relevant scholarship from across disciplines.   As stated earlier, it might then

be possible to address the issues explored in Chapter 2 through the design and trial of a

compassion-led pedagogical framework – theoretically   supported from the literature - for

use in small group task-focussed discussions. This could be a model that supported and

rewarded students' attentiveness to anticipating and reducing perceptions of threat for each

other. First, I point to recognition, in the literature, of the absence of a cohesive, theoretical

base available for the design of such pedagogy, as here:

> ..no single theoretical framework would be likely to explain
> what happens in the place where university teachers and
> students come together in the classroom for the explicit
> purpose of teaching and learning.
>
> Bowl, Cooke and Hockings (2008, p92).

This is understandable because as complexity theory (Law and Urry, 2004) suggests, the

nature of social interactions in groups can change dramatically as the result of the smallest

events.   I suggest that any cohesive theory for recognising and working with communicative

processes in the class room must recognise this. In this chapter, this complexity of class

room interactions will be demonstrated though the class room-based, linguistic

ethnographic research of Ray McDermott (1989; 2009).   Another challenge to assembling a

cohesive theory to underpin pedagogy for co-operative communications in the seminar

room is that people tend to hide from others the psychosocial processes they are

experiencing during group work. This was identified in Chapter 2. But from anthropology,

Scott's (1990) seminal work suggests an interesting theory for how this can be changed in

groups: triggered by small event(s) (c.f. complexity theory) private narratives that people

have kept to themselves, can suddenly be revealed to the group. These are narratives which,

once brought into the open, can fundamentally alter the group's dynamics and actions.

Law and Urry also discuss how social interactions depend largely on peoples' social constructions of each other. Elsewhere, Pitner and Sakamoto (2002) refer to these, in a more collective sense, as social constructs, including those that become stereotypes. They argue that practitioners, including tutors, fall back on these to help manage the cognitive workload of processing the individual diversity of their students or clients.   Therefore, it would be helpful if the study could design a pedagogical framework for seminars that helped to dismantle the 'sage on stage' tutor view of the self, and instead, help tutors to share out to their students, the cognitive load of engaging with students' identities across the group.

That said, the social constructions which lead to the above heuristic thinking, as Pitner and Sakamoto refer to it, can change at any time according to what resources are being pursued. For example, Hofstede's view (1983) of the Japanese as a cultural community is that they observe power distance and avoidance of uncertainty. This is suggested as a defining feature of the Japanese because of their 'mental programming' (p76). It is informed by Hall's (1969) earlier theory of proxemics in which people observe and maintain distinct physical distance from each other according to their national cultures.   I suggest neither Hall nor Hofstede offer sufficient depth of exploration of the range of resources that individuals need to pursue on a daily basis, even though human interactions are mediated so much by these. Identifying them is key; they are why social norms that are widely and consistently adhered to in a society can be switched for others that seem in direct conflict, when goals change as for example, here in Japan:

The seminar, like the train carriage above, is a space for human interaction and in any such space, new behavioural codes can arise and be adopted by the group, sometimes suddenly. I will show how Scott (1990) also demonstrates this, below. Social constructs that seem normal elsewhere can be rewritten in any space where people meet, because no cultures are fixed and stable enough to define people and how they behave on a national scale as Hofstede suggests is possible. Moreover, since Hofstede's careful, empirical work, global flows of people, ideas and the arrival of the internet[9] have been impacting incrementally on countless global communities and their cultures, making Hofstede's work still less helpful and less relevant today. Nevertheless, even Turner (2009) finds Hofstede's model is currently the best available theoretical candidate to be incorporated onto her module aimed at increasing interconnectivity amongst internationally diverse students (c.f. Wilhborg, 2009; UNESCO, 2009, in Chapter 1).

Thus complexity theory and social constructionism were the initial theoretical frames that, in reflexive terms, guided the design of a seminar-relevant pedagogical framework that might be able to address the issues discussed in Chapter 2, including Turner's situation.

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[9] At approximately the same time that Hofstede was discovering his data in IBM's archives.

It might be possible to provoke new conditions – thus perhaps new behavioural codes - in the seminar room that are contingent on the concept of compassion. This is explored below in terms of what compassion is, how it is related to leadership (not leaders), where it comes from in our shared psychology, and why it has potential to be embedded explicitly into HE seminar learning, teaching and assessment pedagogy in ways that might enhance students learning and social experiences in seminars.

As noted in Chapter 2, at ground level universities continue to generate reports of trials of strategies aimed at improving outcomes of student group work in Higher education (Wilson, 1980; Daniel, 1991; Mutch, 1998; Fejes, Johansson, Dahlgren, Abrandt, 2008b; Kriflik & Mullen, 2007). The conclusions drawn in a number of such studies have been that good, subject-centred task design is the way to facilitate effective learning in groups. Elsewhere in the literature, similarly narrow positions appear to be taken on other fronts. Focussing on language utterances as the route to enhancing communicative processes in student discussion groups, the conversation analysts, for example, claim that the obvious markers of cultural, linguistic and/or national differences explain just about all the communicative processes going on in such groups. A report to this effect, based on a study by Skidmore et al on turn taking in student discussion groups, was published by the HEA as recently as July, 2012. One of the recommendations of the study was that in student discussion groups that included international students, a group leader should be nominated.

Whether on task design or language utterances, none of the studies above have tested the transferability of the group work strategies they are recommending. In other words, the strategies have not been delivered and evaluated over a range of subjects, nor compared across disciplines, nor tested between contrastive samples of teaching staff and students.

This signals the absence of a sufficiently robust and comprehensive theoretical and ontological base supporting the strategies. I focus on bridging this gap in this chapter. Currently, the literature on student group work does not acknowledge the pedagogical work to be done with the psychosocial processes underpinning how students work in their discussion groups, and so it lacks pedagogical enquiry into the potential of compassion to mediate these processes, perhaps positively. Yet these are processes by which, in social and affective ways, students might be unconsciously steering each other's lived experiences of their discussion group work and, perhaps therefore, also their own and others' seminar learning outcomes. This is a difficult area to explore because of its complexity and because these psychosocial processes are personal and largely hidden during seminars. In addition, there are questions around whether compassionate behaviours, defined in detail below, might be demonstrated by students for strategic purposes and therefore mechanistically.

Therefore the rest of this chapter is structured as follows. The next section is an exploration of the concept of compassion and its significance to my study. This is followed by a critical review of the possible contributions to my study that can be made by current scholarship in socio-linguistics, for example, Bales (1950), also anthropology and group psychotherapy, for example, Nitsun (1996) and Scott (1990), and finally, from the literature on psycho-social processes in non HE groups, for example, McDermott (1988, 2009), Bion (1961) and Foulkes, (1975).

3.2   The concept of compassion across cultures

As indicated in Chapter 1, anthropological studies show that compassion, and the social value placed on it, is defined and understood in similar terms across cultures (Feather, 2006; Kövecses et al, 2009; Goetz et al, 2010). In the psychology and anthropology literature (Neff,

2003; P. Gilbert, 2005; Bates, 2005; Kirkpatrick et al, 2007; Goetz et al, 2010;) compassion is generally defined as observing, noticing, paying attention to the social or physical distress of others, and importantly, this is accompanied, unlike empathy, with the will, the intention to act to reduce that distress – to effect a change. Such action may not affect only the person it is directed towards, but other group members too.

Goetz et al (2010) have reviewed a recent wave of studies on the origins and evolutionary purposes of compassion. They find that there is an appraisal stage, carried out in the brain's medial prefrontal cortex that assesses the deservedness of others who are in need or distress. Further they find agreement in a range of studies that compassion arose in the old brain to enhance the survival chances of the young, but also to enhance survival of *non* kin, so that the group might also thrive. Compassion fosters co-operative acts in social groups (Immordino-Yang et al, 2007; 2009). In terms of compassion's being a cross culturally recognised and valued concept, Goetz et al (2010) point to its place in the work of Aristotle, Confucius and in Buddhism. More recently, from psychological research, they cite eight studies of compassion (India, China, Brazil, Malaysia, Japan, Indonesia, Spain and Germany), and conclude from these, and from a study of value hierarchies in 54 nations (Schwartz and Bardi, 2001), that "suffering and need are universal elicitors of compassion" (p364), and that this "should play an important part in the formation of alliances across radically different cultures" (p364). See also Feather (2006).

This means that, in theory, compassion is an available, recognised concept amongst students of diverse cultures, nationalities and ethnicities. This is valuable for two reasons. First, the links between affect and learning are well established (Mortiboys, 2012; Kingston, 2008;

Cozolino, 2013), and more specifically, the links between *self*-compassion and effective learning are also well established (P. Gilbert, 2005; Neff, 2005). Neff (2003) defines the construct of self-compassion as constituted by three components:

    a. self-kindness—being kind and understanding toward oneself in instances of pain or failure rather than being harshly self-critical;

    b. common humanity—perceiving one's experiences as part of the larger human experience rather than seeing them as separating and isolating; and

    c. mindfulness - holding painful thoughts and feelings in balanced awareness rather than over-identifying with them*.* (p1)

She draws clear distinctions between self-compassion and self-esteem that are important to this study. Her argument is that high self-esteem is a problematic construct that does not compare well with self-compassion (Neff, 2003); it is at odds with altruism and 'agreeableness' because it is based on measuring oneself against others in some way. This kind of individualistic competitiveness can be at odds with the learning objectives of the group in a university discussion based seminar. Self-esteem in a seminar discussion can be related to 'good' performance wherein fluent, confident speakers are effective at promoting ideas to others that may be fundamentally flawed or limited. However, discussion seminars are intended to provide formal, public opportunity for competition and conflict between beliefs, ideas and perspectives. Once thinking processes that are in conflict or discordant have come to light, they are available to be challenged and tested. This is not the same kind of conflict and competition that is pursued for the technical triumphs of performance: being the most articulate, the most fluent, or the most confident speaker. Also, personal performance based on high self-esteem is experienced only when things are going well. When confidence is diminished by perceiving the achievement of others as greater than

one's own, self-esteem can be reduced disproportionately quickly.

Additional literature from clinical psychology cites other linkages with self-esteem. Two of them - narcissism (Bushman and Baumeister, 1998) and prejudice (Aberson, Healy and Romero, 2000) - have direct implications for HE seminar interactions, for example through monopolising (Yalom and Leszsz, 2005), stereotyping, and other heuristic thinking (Pitner and Sakamoto, 2005).

While self-esteem has a precarious and questionable basis, self-compassion is worth attention because it is less dependent on external factors for its maintenance.   Instead, it is cultivated over time by more measured, internally conducted rationalisations of what constitutes personal success and failure (P. Gilbert, 2005). Self-compassion can deactivate the brain's threat alert system (Ibid.) through the release of oxytocin in the brain (Depue and Morrone-Strupinsky, 2005). Self-soothing is therefore facilitated.   This leads to a greater sense of safeness which in turn stands down the threat alert system:

> When children and adults feel safe, they are more creative in
> their problem-solving, more integrative in their thinking
> (P. Gilbert, 2005; p22).

This supports educationalists, from Vygotsky to Cozolino (2013), who link affect and learning.   Similarly, how the need to attend to safeness is a priority over learning in an educational setting is explained by Cozolino (2013: 241): "The neural circuitry that assesses the environment for danger also serves as the infrastructure of attachment circuitry in social animals" so that safeness and learning "have evolved as *interdependent* [my italics] processes" (p241). He explains in biological terms (p74-92) why, when people do not feel

safe, cognitive processing cannot be made available for learning to take place: the brain is otherwise engaged in monitoring outside risks and potential dangers.

This theoretical concordance across disciplines is pivotal to my distinction between individualistic, self-esteem driven, performance-based competition which can be seen by others in the group as threatening to them, and the compassion-generated safeness necessary for competition between ideas (rather than individual performances) in seminar group thinking. Key here is an interdependent self-concept rather than a singular and insular one. In peoples' self-talk, Neff, Kirkpatrick and Rude (2007) identify an interesting common finding between their own earlier study of 2004 and the work of both Sillars et al (1997) and Stirman and Pennebaker (2002). All three studies identified that in self reporting, "the use of first person plural pronouns and social references is linked to lower levels of depression and better relationships, while the use of first person singular pronouns is linked to elevated suicide rates" (Neff, Kirkpatrick and Rude, 2007, p7). They conclude: "…these results suggest that the psychological benefits of having a more interdependent self-concept are far-reaching" (p145). Thus, Goetz et al call for more research on the "appraisals, experience, displays and physiology of compassion" (p364).

My premise was that attention to safeguarding personal self-esteem could impede the development of this interdependent self-concept and thus the cohesion of the discussion group as a single, thinking organism.

3.2.1 Compassion: accessing it in the seminar room.

One important reason why compassion has been found by anthropologists to be a cross cultural social construct may be partly because of where it is generated in the brain. In neuroscience, Immordino-Yang et al (2007; 2009) used MRI to identify where compassion was located in the brains of their subjects. The researchers showed visual stimuli to subjects while they were being brain scanned. The stimuli were designed to arouse compassion. Results showed that brain activity indicating the arousal of compassion, was located in older human brain architecture, in evolutionary terms, than had been expected. The implication was that compassion has long served an evolutionary purpose to promote the survival of the species. It has done this by facilitating first, recognition of others as being in social or physical pain or distress, and second, feelings of connection to others. This is not the same deep/old brain mechanism of caregiving to offspring.

As will be shown next, all of the above corroborating scholarship from anthropology and from neuroscience on compassion, indicated the first part of my emerging rationale for attempting to facilitate students' compassionate practice in the seminar room.

3.3 Socio-linguistics and leadership language

Investigating language use and its function in group dynamics, Bales' (1950) seminal work on group interaction resulted in his model of Interaction Process Analysis (IPA). Here, he focussed on leaders' language use within small groups working face to face and he divided the language behaviours he observed in these groups into two main categories. One was related to the language of task-focussed, instrumental leadership, marked by, for example, the giving and requesting of information. The other employed the language of socio-

emotional leadership; it focussed on keeping the group functioning and moving forward - validating and recognising the contributions of individuals and their concerns. Bales' model offers an interesting contribution to my data analysis toolbox because it identifies the two primary language functions that appear to me, as an English language teacher, to operate in group dynamics, and these do help to distinguish different kinds of 'leadership' amongst students in group discussion. Also, IPA's attention to the functions of language used by group leaders makes an interesting contrast to Yalom and Leszcz's (2005) work on the 'monopolist', or monopoliser, of group discussions which is discussed below. What is most interesting for my research though is IPA's framing of the language of leaders and leadership. It provides an early benchmark from which to look at progress made in linguistics on the issue of leadership in groups since Bales.

Progress since Bales is important because IPA is problematic. It overlooks the changing roles of other group members who are not designated leaders, as though they are receptive and passive throughout the whole group communication process. This is questionable to anthropologists and group psychotherapists, and would also represent anathema to a seminar group discussion where ideas are to be shared for immediate cross referencing to others, not controlled by the device of a leader opening and closing doors for people to speak through him/her - a single gatekeeper.   Also, Bales' use of the term 'functional' language can only refer to the intention of the speaker, and even then, only if that the speaker's conscious intention and unconscious motivations are in alignment.   There is also the difficulty inherent to all language in assigning meaning: cost benefits of group leadership apparently agreed by the group (see discussion of Scott, 1990, below), let alone group and individual socio-affective responses to the leader, are extremely complex to pin

down. Thus, in terms of individuals' lived experience, the signifier, 'leader', will always have

loose and unstable meaning.   Nevertheless, there is an emphasis on the shaping of

graduates into leaders in HE group work. As noted above, in their 2012 report to the HEA on

how to enhance turn-taking in HE student group discussions, Skidmore et al. recommend the

nominations of leaders in HE student discussion group work.

A focus of interest in my research is leadership - rather than leaders - its nature, and its

potential mobility from member to member of a task-focussed group. I suggest that the

leadership that might best serve group thinking in task-focused discussions is represented by

noticing any group member in difficulty and then attempting to assist. For example, a

student might be lost for words or confidence suddenly, be prematurely interrupted by

someone else, or need prompting for a logical conclusion to his/her thoughts. The

leadership that intervenes for such fellow members is potentially fluid in its movement

around the group; it is not enacted by just one person but by anyone in the group. In

practical ways for seminar pedagogy, this version of leadership – to notice and take action -

aligns with the proactive nature of compassion.   Empathy alone does not include this

action-taking component. Compassion, in contrast, does appear to share more similarities

with leadership instead in that, under some circumstances, both require *courage* to act.

Also, nominating one particular leader in a group discussion may be a short term solution to

apparent blocks in the flow of seminar interactions, but these blocks might only be silences

that are needed for thinking (c.f. Turner, 2009). Any student might find unobtrusive ways to

support this from within their own leadership potential.   Thus the nomination can inhibit

the development of leadership traits that might otherwise develop around the group as a

whole.   In this way it may deactivate the group's inherent resources for sustaining the flow of ideas.

Bales' IPA provided another useful reference point for directing my literature investigation. He subdivided his two categories of leader language into a total of twelve subcategories, each looking at functional language that could be placed in either of the two categories (instrumental and socio-emotional). In these categorisations, Bales' appears to have overlooked some aspects of meta language. This includes intonation, or the registers that people use when they speak to others.   For example, a request for information is simply instrumental in Bales' terms, but it can also be made with interested, or impatient or encouraging intonation. Meta language impacts group dynamics because as each person speaks, others can be listening to, watching for, processing, and interpreting this meta language. The reason why meta language needed to be considered is that sometimes, the group, or single individuals, may have a sense that the meta language being used is at odds with what is actually being said (see Scott, 1990; below). Therefore, 'task-focussed' language can seldom have task only as its focus; it will carry   positive or negative socio-emotional substance in the delivery too.   The role and importance of, specifically, non-verbal behaviours, not just meta language, is not accounted for in Bales' model either. Taking a somewhat structuralist view of his painstaking work, Bales believed that IPA could be applied to understanding group interactions in wider society - that it was concerned with group processes and not just language utterances. It does seem though that the focus of IPA was on the latter.

Today, for student-relevant analysis of the concepts of leaders and leadership – both thought highly pertinent in HE for the development of students - it seems very little progress has

been made in linguistics since Bales. Therefore, for building a theoretical base intended to help reduce communicative barriers between students in their discussion group work, I turned back to other disciplines. In the rest of this chapter, I explain and discuss my findings.

Scott (1990), an anthropologist, is currently cited by academics working in disciplines as far flung from each other as business, anthropology and clinical psychology. His work transcends IPA's somewhat structuralist linguistics model of analysis for human interaction. Scott's model is more nuanced, insightful and useful. It bears resemblances, paradoxically, to both structuralism and complexity theory. In complexity theory, events in future unpredictable times and future unpredictable spaces arise (Law and Urry, 2004) partly because of the orchestration (intended or not) of events (c.f. McDermott, 1988; 2009) which escape the evaluation processes of studies and research. I argue that Scott's work, which I explore next, shows clearly how complexity theory can be seen at work in social communicative practices.

3.4 Anthropology, group psychotherapy and social communicative practices

A group leader might be working with both task-focussed, instrumental language and socio-emotional leadership to move the group forward, but there may be private narratives– of the group as a whole and of its individual members – of which the leader is largely unaware. In wider social contexts, where Scott places his work, he refers to these narratives as hidden transcripts and he compares them with what he calls public transcripts. He posits that there are elites and subordinates at every level of society, and that elites use certain transcripts for the public arena but they have private, hidden ones too that they use only amongst themselves and these are not for their subordinates to hear or witness. Scott argues that

subordinates have these dual transcripts also, and that their hidden transcripts about those in power over them are often not to be heard or witnessed by these elites. Thus, the term 'transcript' derives here from Scott's extensive examination, as an anthropologist, of how the countless layers of subordinates and elites that make up diverse societies everywhere operate communicatively together. To be clear, drawing on historical documents, literature, political records and the media, Scott proposes that subordinate groups and elite groups *each* make use of both public and private transcripts: four transcripts. The phenomenon of the four transcripts, or narratives, works horizontally: amongst and between the subordinate and elites on a school playground in London or on the factory floor in China. It also works vertically: in the family household and within international organisations and political systems. How subordinates interact with the playground bullies or the unsmiling and unjust factory manager in their public transcripts that are heard by the elites, may be very different from what they do and say in private transcripts with their fellow subordinates about that manager or the bullies. Similarly, elites, such as would include this manager, also switch between their public and private narratives. That is, what they say and do in public to legitimise their hold on resources and (therefore) power, may be different from what they say and do in private, amongst their peers. This is pertinent to the results of survey of the 58 students referred to in Chapter 2, and to the aims of this study.

Watson (1995) would argue that, communicatively, people are able to switch codes of interaction according to their social situation - what we are doing and who we are with. Thus, the manager above, however powerful at work, may also be a subordinate to a challenging teenager at home. As in the Japanese example, above, this switching is of interest to me. Students can function (over) assertively in some seminar groups and be

silent and overwhelmed by others in discussions on other modules. It is their private

transcripts that are of interest to this research, and also, how a designed pedagogy might

help some students change their subordinate status in these groups, without subordinating

others.

Their underlying transcripts will have significant impact on group task achievement

outcomes. This demonstrates the pointlessness of excising language utterances for

inspection by severing them from the complex, tangled moorings of their social and political

substrates that so much determine them. Inclusive spread of participation across group

membership cannot be achieved solely through the agency of the linguistic leadership of

certain fluent speakers in the seminar group, and this is true even if such leaders employ

both instrumental and positive socio-emotional language. On the contrary, hidden

transcripts may flourish.

Nitsun (1996), a group psychotherapist, demonstrates this throughout his case studies on

'anti-group' forces in group psychotherapy sessions which, I argue, are like a HE seminar in a

number of key aspects. Both are constituted by a small number of people who meet for a

limited number of group discussions held regularly. In both contexts, members are asked to

learn by articulating their thinking processes to each other. In group psychotherapy sessions

and in HE seminars alike, the aim is for each individual to progress himself and the group

towards achievement of an agreed task.   Thus, it is not surprising that facilitators of both

university discussion seminars and group psychotherapy meetings may share similar

challenges.   For example, Yalom (2005, p391-397), a major influence on good practice in

group psychotherapy, argues that the monopolising client in a group session is as damaging

to him/herself as to the group because he/she is blocking out engagement with others'

ideas. I would argue that, similarly, in a seminar discussion the linguistic fluency of certain group members can also function (whether intentionally or not) to exclude others if unchecked and to arrest their own intellectual growth by blocking out critical voices. This too could be framed in Nitsun's terms as an anti-group behaviour.   It is particularly damaging to the seminar context because cross referencing and testing of ideas as a group cognitive process is a central purpose of the HE seminar discussion.   This is why group psychotherapy and some of its insights for productive group discussion management could contribute usefully to new possibilities in seminar pedagogy.   This is the case even though in some aspects, as Scott's model of domination and the arts of resistance confirms, every seminar discussion group is a unique, unrepeatable experience for each member. In this regard, the key tenets of complexity theory emerge repeatedly in the evidence that he provides from events in many social worlds. This is so even though in his best known work Scott never once referred to complexity theory which was then only in its earlier stages of development. Nevertheless, I will illustrate, with an example, how Scott's scholarship anticipates the more recent thinking on complexity theory, and why his work turned my attention to how equalising the distribution of power and agency in groups where this was not equitable, might be possible if hidden transcripts that mediated that distribution could be revealed and addressed in and by the group, safely. This had promising implications for making compassionate interconnectivity between students a feasible goal in the design of pedagogy for HE seminars.   To substantiate this further, I now offer an example from Scott, of how behaviours that determine the distribution of power between subordinates and elites can switch suddenly, and change that distribution. This can happen when some small unpredictable event (c.f. complexity theory) triggers the revelation of a hidden transcript.

Scott cites the televised downfall of President Nicolae Ceausescu on December 21, 1989.

Standing on a high state building balcony, the President was addressing a crowd of tens of

thousands of people on Romania's continued economic progress as a free, socialist state

under his rule. Hundreds of people in the crowd can be seen on film holding state banners

in support of the regime. Somewhere in this enormous sea of people, crowded together,

somebody booed and a television station microphone picked this up.   Acting quickly,

television technicians added and transmitted taped, canned applause in response, and so

the crowd thought it heard itself validating the few boos. Within moments, the tens of

thousands of Romanians are seen in tumult, clamouring for the president's immediate

removal. In the front, people are surging into the building. The president's wife is seen

remonstrating firmly with the crowd at first, trying in vain, to call it to order until, clearly

confused, the president is urged back from the balcony by his aides to escape by helicopter

from the roof of the building after decades of absolute rule. Scott quotes Vaclav Havel,

President of the Czechoslovak Republic, who, speaking a few days later, makes a very

interesting comment in relation to my study of co-operative behaviours in groups. It relates

to the immediate communicative interconnectivity that swept over the crowd, despite its

great size, as soon as the right hidden transcript broke through to the public domain:

> How is it possible that so many people immediately understood
> what to do, and none of them needed any advice or instructions?
> (p221)

Scott is interested in how and why the private transcripts of the oppressed can burst,

sometimes suddenly, into the public arena (c.f. complexity theory). It could be that the

oppressed realise they are not alone in their sufferings or aspirations (c.f. Leahy's Model of

Validation, 2005) and that therefore, it may be safe enough to take action when the right moment arises and they construct themselves and others to be a single entity. On 21 December 1989, in Romania, it seems that the collective realised that such a key moment had arrived. Small things may trigger such realisations. Scott examines many historical and literary instances of these, deconstructing them to examine how they have acted as catalysts for breakthroughs in the real, socio-political world.

The combined work of McDermott (1989), a class room ethnographer, and Foulkes (1975) on group psychotherapy is relevant here and to my study. They both take account of the background biography of an event (McDermott, 1989, see page 38), and of each individual's personal matrix of experience (Foulkes, 1975). Although from different perspectives, both scholars provide arguments for such rich and complex journeys behind each and every lived human experience and its outcomes that, as complexity theory suggests, the number of mediating variables involved is overwhelming.

3.4.1 Revealing hidden transcripts safely: a pedagogical strategy for seminars

In the 2008 in-house survey of 58 Humanities students at the study's host university (see Chapter 2, section 2.2) those who felt they could not speak because of anxiety over being wrong in public, seeming foolish, or because they felt themselves denied opportunities to speak by other students, spoke of their fellow students as oppressors - "loud mouths", "loud people" - in the private transcripts of their questionnaire responses. Scott's example above shows how revealing hidden transcripts of the many, which challenge the legitimacy of others to hold power over them, can force those who overwhelm others into a new state of powerlessness and silence. This, clearly, is not the objective in seminars.

I wondered what might be the result if all students, ideally in the first seminar of a module, could openly explore together these kinds of negative transcripts that could otherwise be hidden and left to 'fester' (p23, above), i.e. if the transcripts could be 'put on the table' to be addressed by students themselves. The challenge was for this to be done ethically, in safe, transparent and unthreatening ways. Facilitating reproach or personal adversarialism was to be avoided in favour, instead, of raising awareness for proactive, pre-emptive and preventive purposes. This would make use of Leahy's (2005) Model of Cognitive Validation wherein seminar discussion students could learn their negative experiences were experienced by others; they were not alone. The next challenge was for engagement with the concept of compassion, as it is defined above, to be facilitated in practical, straightforward terms. This might allow seminar participants to reframe (Nitsun, 1996) how power and leadership might be moved around the group more fluidly than when held onto by certain discussion group members only.

In the private forum provided to seminar students by the 2008 survey, some of the views from the more confident speakers about the quieter ones were negative, sometimes even hostile. There is a contradiction here that is not so clear in Turner's (2008) account of communication breakdowns between her local Scottish and international students (pp18-19, above). It is this. The more vocal students in the questionnaire-based survey expressed satisfaction that their performance in speaking a great deal was positive and, yet, at the same time, irrationally, they expressed hostility for those, who largely *as a result*, did not get their chance to speak in the seminar time available (50 minutes). The paradox raised interesting questions about whether the more assertive of the students engaged more equitably with those who were confident speakers like themselves.

3.5   Psychosocial processes

McDermott (1988), Bion (1961) and Vertegaal et al (2002; 2003) are from three different disciplines but their work and findings intersect at points that are relevant in very specific ways to seminar interactions, namely the key seminar behaviours that my participants could watch for and act on.   This is a good starting point from which to then look deeper for possible psychosocial processes that drive those behaviours and thus help participants witnessing them to reframe them compassionately (see section 3.5.2).

3.5.1   Linguistic ethnography

The linguistic ethnographer, McDermott (1988), illustrates the depth, detail and richness of what there is to be noticed about human behaviours in a class room, and so, potentially, in the HE seminar room.   He video-taped class room settings where 'disruptive' or 'inarticulate' (p37) behaviours had been attributed to some of the children. His work was intended to form a basis for remedial intervention by educational authorities, of the apparently disorganised, disruptive, even nonsensical moves that these children were making. Through micro observational analysis, McDermott discovered to his surprise that these apparently arbitrary behaviours were highly articulate, with robust agency and purpose:

> What first appeared to be a simple scratch often turned out to
> be a way of changing the focus of the group; what first appeared
> to be a disruption often turned out to be a call to order; and
> what first appeared to be a call for a turn came up as an effort
> not to have a turn. Timing was of the essence. (p48)

Evidently, McDermott was interested in much more than language utterances here. He was becoming attentive to, and interested in, the context-embedded psychosocial processes that drove them.

> In trying to understand the organisational import of each of the
> moves, my job was to locate what came before and after in order
> to situate them as moves of a particular kind…. to locate the
> range of institutional relevancies served by the fast-paced moves
> I was examining. It took me years … (1988, pp 48-49)

Even though inarticulateness is a term we must use carefully because it is itself a social construct, McDermott is compelling when he concludes that inarticulateness can be "…understood as a well-orchestrated moment in which [it] is invited, encouraged, duly noted and remembered, no matter how much it is lamented." (p38)

As McDermott describes his journey to sharpening his observational skills there is much about critical theory to be seen in his work.   Its emancipatory drive to interrogate the role of the institution, to call the institution to account for its constraints on human creativity and community building resonates with my own philosophical position for my research.   I explain this further in Chapter 4: The Methodology.

Neither tutors nor our students can simply acquire all of McDermott's micro ethnographic observational skills for their seminar work, but they may already have some of their own. Moreover, there is no reason not to offer task-focussed, discussion group members, in straightforward, practical, pedagogical terms, the insights that McDermott offers, for example:

> …[that] occasions in which people are left without words are
> systematic outcomes of a set of relations among a group of persons
> bound in a social structure...   Every utterance has its biography… its
> point of contact with ongoing events, we can learn a great deal

about the powers of the talk that constructs, maintains and resists

the order of those events. (McDermott, p38)

For the aims of my study, the 'relations' between people in groups that McDermott refers to were further investigated in the relevant literature on group psychotherapy, as follows.

3.5.2 Psychotherapy in groups: destructive and creative forces

The work of three group psychotherapists, Bion (1961), Foulkes (1975) and Nitsun (1996), offer an analytical lens on the group processes that can be enacted in seminar groups. Taken together their work offers useful insight into the forces that shape students' ways and levels of engagement with difference and diversity in task-focussed groups.

 Bion's (1961) work indicates the difficulties that students, and tutors, may encounter when the negative behaviours they have experienced are left unarticulated, unshared and unaddressed by the seminar groups involved. It heralds the much more recent thinking on what higher intelligence in the intra-psychic group context must override in order to attend to other cognitive tasks rather than threat avoidance (Gilbert, P. 2005; Leahy, 2005; Bates, 2005, Cozolino, 2013). First and foremost are distractions from task that arise from what Bion referred to as three (flawed) basic assumptions that are made by groups and the individuals within them. These are groups that are unable to be fully task-focussed because they are operating dysfunctionally.   The first of the flawed 'basic assumptions' that Bion proposed was related to fight/flight. I will discuss this first in comparison to the work of Foulkes (1975), Nitsun (1996) and McDermott (1988).

Fight/flight derives from the species' older brain structure, the reptilian brain, and was designed for survival of day to day physical threats, such as from predators that put the species in danger in its early history. It is perhaps this 'basic assumption' that most shaped Bion's own view, as he worked with groups in psychotherapy through the 1950s, that the group is a closed system in which regressive, primitive and destructive forces channel it towards failure. This pessimistic view is much in contrast with that of his fellow group psychotherapist, Foulkes (1975), who believed that the group is not at all closed. On the contrary, in Foulkes' view, sociological constructions come first and the individual comes out of these; the individual is part of a matrix, he believed – a network of experiences, conscious and unconscious. Foulkes is known for this concept of the group matrix, a common shared ground of communication and relationships in a group. His application of this understanding into group psychotherapy was, in Nitsun's (1996) view, Foulkes' genius.

McDermott's notion of 'the biography of every event' (1988, p38) supports Foulkes' notion of the matrix. Moreover, both observations satisfy the postmodernist frame of reference that is in some ways supported by complexity theory (discussed further in Chapter 4). However, unlike McDermott, Foulkes is thought to have taken an unrealistic view not only of creative potentials of the group that emerge from this matrix, but of their outcomes for the group too; these outcomes he long maintained were positive in the main. Therefore, as group psychotherapists, Foulkes and Bion represent polarised views on the forces and potentials at work in groups. This polarisation is felt by Nitsun (1996) to have contributed to the lack of a cohesive theoretical body for group psychotherapy, such that it has been disabled, he says, from making its contribution "in the non-clinical sphere" (p3) in work groups for example, and I will show, in learning and problem solving communities too.

However, Nitsun has tried to integrate both Bion's and Foulkes' group forces, both

conceptually and in his own group psychotherapy practice. His concept of the 'anti-group'

and the creative potential of destructive forces in the group contribute to the conceptual

basis of this study and its research questions. Further, Nitsun evidences from his own

detailed records of work within groups how negative behaviours - arising from transference

that also occurs in one-to-one psychotherapy - can be reframed by the group. This notion is

critical to the design and the aims of the interventions designed in this study. He records his

experience of group work in which it was possible to reframe, or deconstruct, negative

experiences and feelings in the group and then reconstruct them to be more positive.

Following a sharing of transcripts in a student discussion seminar to start a module, I

thought it possible that to make these safe, this reframing that Nitsun encouraged his clients

to use could be carried out within the group by individuals for themselves and for each

other. He concludes (in the manner of Winnicott's (1953) concept of the transitional space)

that the group space is a holding space:

> …in which the destructiveness of the membership paradoxically
> contributes to the strengthening process by confirming the
> group's capacity to survive….the anti-group is …not a self-
> limiting disintegrative force but … an integral part of the
> constructive potential of the group (p 208).

This had encouraging implications for the intervention[10] (see Chapter 4) to be trialled in this

action research study – an intervention which took account of this balance of forces. Also

encouraging was the resonance of Nitsun's work with the literature in education and

psychology on resilience theory. This theory is based on phenomenological inquiry into the

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[10] In the form of compassion-focussed pedagogy, explained in Chapter 4.

forces that enable a person to grow despite, even because of, adversity and disruptions (Richardson, 2002). Foulkes' ideas too are of significance to how group members negotiate difference with each other across diverse memberships. In his later life he began to take a different view from the positive one he had espoused about group forces throughout most of his career as a psychotherapist. Becoming much more circumspect, he began to write about a universal need that people have to suffer and to cause suffering, a need which so troubled him that he asked "Why do we fail?" in his 1974 paper of that title. Possibly, what caused Foulkes to rethink his world-view of the human condition were his criteria for assessing his clients' success at achieving fitness for integration into society. Limited to their time and place they were, arguably, flawed. That is, in his earlier career, for which he is best known, Foulkes predicated his work on a questionable premise, the significance of which Nitsun appears to overlook, even for its relevance to the ideas he discusses at the end of his own book. Foulkes maintained that the intra psychic dynamics of group psychotherapy could lead even destructive individual behaviours eventually to social norms. But social norms are a problematic concept because they are only constructs. They must be contextualised to the communities, cultures and times in which they are constructed. Here it seems that Foulkes' usual mindfulness of human interconnectedness appears to have left him and this is what led to his later sadness and disappointment. It is interesting that, because of the events of his time coupled with his being of German origin, he changed his name to Foulkes; he wanted to be accepted in Britain to work as a psychotherapist. This bears clear resemblance to Page-Gould et al's work with race-related rejection sensitivity (see section 3.5.3 below); thus, Foulkes' mindfulness may have been disabled by his very human, personal attention and sensitivity to localised 'social norms.'

Foulkes' great faith in the human spirit, despite (or because of) his experience of the Second World War, led to accusations that he over-generalised and was often too vague. Again, without deconstructing the social norms to which he guided his patients, or observing how cultures develop and change these norms, this accusation has some substance. However, his work underlines the universality of such sensitivities in the human condition. This is what makes it theoretically useful and relevant to the study's interest in a universally understood concept, namely compassion, which is sensitive to the human condition.

Bion and Foulkes work indicates the value of seminar participants identifying their lived examples of negative seminar (group) behaviours. Attention to Leahy's Model of Validation (2004) could be one way to support this, as a first step towards reducing the arousal of destructive forces in the group. Returning to Bion, the second basic assumption he proposed was that dependency can undermine a group's cohesion and achievement of task. He argued that dependency occurs when the group seeks a leader on whom to be dependent so that, for example, when questions are asked of the group, it will respond with silence as it waits for a leader to emerge who will then organise the group to fight or run (Billow, 2005).   'Running away' could be argued in Bionian terms to be seen in task-avoidant behaviours (such as perhaps, chatting off the topic in seminar group work.)

Bion's work from psychotherapy combined with Bales' from linguistics suggested that for my study:

     a. a single leader in a small task-focussed group could be an indicator of the group's dysfunctionality

    b. responses to a leader's behaviours from others could be understood in terms of Scott's model of:

        i)   Public transcripts.   I could observe these in seminars, and

        ii) Hidden transcripts. These might emerge from interview data.

Thus, with reference to the 2008 survey responses of the 58 students, 'leader' behaviour in the seminar context might present itself as monopolising the discussion and so controlling others' entry to it. Bion had suggested that others accept, even encourage, leaders and alpha pairs to take over but there was no evidence in the survey that students did this willingly.

'Pairing' is the third basic assumption that Bion suggests will hold a group back from focussing on task. Pairing happens when two people may be allowed by others in the group to monopolise interactions by interacting with each other exclusively. That is, the two group members become what Bion (1961) refers to as an alpha pair. I propose that this invites questions about eye contact that occurs within a small discussion group. Therefore, I integrate the work of Vertegaal et al (2002; 2003) on eye contact in task-focussed groups, into Bion's (1961) on alpha pairing as follows. Using computer-tracked eye gaze, Vertegaal et al investigated the role of eye contact in video conferenced group discussions. Their findings identified that the spread of eye contact around the group was correlated positively with a) the spread of participation around the group, and b) the quality of task achievement/decision making. As a result of these findings, Vertegaal et al developed video conferencing technology that enabled each group member to experience the speaker as looking and speaking directly to him or her. This was important to note for any future design by this study of a pedagogy that focussed on compassion - and therefore inclusivity. At the

same time, Vertegaal et al's findings also raised questions about the role of eye contact in the formation and maintenance of the alpha pairings that Bion wrote about, pairings which his work suggested were likely to arise in some seminar discussion groups.

The work of Bion, Foulkes and Nitsun delineated the forces at work within groups. Scott helped greatly to understand how these forces build their legitimacy.   Overall, the indications from the literature search so far were that destructive forces - 'anti-group' behaviours – can tend to come into group spaces, including learning spaces such as the seminar space, as was seen in the 2008 survey. However, the literature also suggested that destructive forces can be transformed into creative and task-focussed ones, and that one key way to effect this is through reframing 'negative' behaviours (Nitsun, 1996), and the avoidance of negative transference processes that are hostile, accusatory and counterproductive to group cohesion. Reframing requires cognitive skills to see where the opportunities are to do this appropriately and usefully. It also needs practice. If this study was to design and try out an explicitly compassion-focussed pedagogy in seminars to address the above issues, then account would need to be taken of how such skills and time for practising them were to be embedded into seminars that were meant to be *subject*-focussed. This would require close liaison with subject tutors (see Chapter 4, The Methodology).

3.5.3   Affiliative bonding: aims, costs and benefits

Within neurobiology, Depue and Morrone-Strupinsky (2005) have investigated the "affiliative domain within the structure of personality." [11] I will explain this research to show its relevance to my study.

In their study they made use of Tellegen's Multidimensional Personality Questionnaire (1982) which distinguishes between two types of affiliative behaviour. One is identified as Social Closeness (demonstrating capacity for warmth, co-operation and altruism) and the other, independent of the first type, is defined as Agentic Extraversion (demonstrating capacity for boldness, leadership and assertiveness). Depue and Morrone-Strupinsky suggest the latter can resemble "competitive aggression" (p314) which, they say, can impact social group formation and group cohesion. For each of these types of affiliative processes they have identified three central neurobiological processes. These are: "appetitive and consummatory phases of reward processes and the formation of affiliative memories" (p1). For the purposes of seminar groups, these processes are understood to represent first, felt need or want for certain affiliative bond(s) based on the prospect of reward; next, the process of initiating or being receptive to contact and the reward (or otherwise) that this results in; and third, the creation of memories of the events involved - memories that may be negative, positive or mixed. One function of my study's proposed behavioural interventions (through an envisaged pedagogy for seminars) was to enhance students' incentives to initiate interpersonal affiliation processes with as many fellow students in seminars as possible. If positive affective experiences resulted, these might form the basis of new memories that could override the effects of contrasting, negative memories of previous

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[11] They define affiliation as "enjoying and valuing close interpersonal bonds and being warm and affectionate" (sect. 2). They state that "affiliation is clearly interpersonal in nature" (p2)

seminar experiences. If this occurred, then negative hidden transcripts and/or resulting anti-group behaviours related to past seminars might also be dismantled because:

> The binding of context into an ensemble that represents the
> context of reward, and attributing an incentive reward salient to
> that ensemble, represents the basis of forming affiliative
> memories (Depue and Morrone-Strupinsky, 2005, p315-350).

Page-Gould et al's (2008) study with white and Latino university students in the USA, illustrates this very well.   It is clear from the study of affiliations that the researchers engineered to be formed amongst ethnically mixed students, that levels of participants' felt safeness were central. This reinforced the requirement of a designed pedagogy for my study (see Chapter 4) to purposely seek to foster safeness amongst possibly very diverse group discussants. P. Gilbert (2005) relates a personal communication to him by fellow clinical psychologist Michael Chance that there is a difference between safety and safeness as follows. If safety in the environment is attended to, for example, when a mountain climber checks his ropes and equipment before a climb, his levels of felt safeness increase. Thus (the feeling of) safeness is dependent on evaluations of safety in the environment.   The findings of the Page-Gould et al's (2008) study at the University of California illustrated this clearly.   Using a questionnaire, Page-Gould et al found that the Latino students in their sample felt anxious (which, arguably, can be taken to mean they did not feel safe) to engage with white students due to "race-based rejection sensitivity" (p1,080). At the same time, results on the white American students showed them to be "high in implicit prejudice" (p1,080) towards the Latino students. Page-Gould et al then put together students who were unknown to each other, in pairs comprising a Latino student and a white American student. Each pair was required to meet for one hour a week for three weeks, with no

contact in between. For each meeting all the students were given particular questions to

ask their partners.   These questions had been designed by psychologists to facilitate

students' increasing levels of personal disclosure to each other of their values, attitudes,

vulnerabilities, hopes and so on. Saliva samples were taken from all the participants after

each meeting. At first, there were notably higher levels of the stress-indicating hormone,

cortisol, in the samples of the Latino students compared to the white American students.

However, for my study, what is most promising from Page-Gould et al's study is that:

> … both participants high in implicit prejudice and participants high
> in RS-race[12] experienced significant decreases in cortisol reactivity
> over three cross-group friendship meetings. These findings suggest
> that the attenuation of anxiety ….can occur relatively early in the
> development of cross-group friendship (p1,089).

Thus, with appropriate intervention, I thought it might be possible in seminars to fairly

quickly reduce those communicative barriers in which anxiety and/or prejudice were

factors.

Page-Gould et al's participants also kept diaries through the study. From these it was found

that:

> over the week and a half after the final cross-group friendship
> meeting, implicitly prejudiced participants sought out more
> intergroup interactions, and participants felt less anxious in the
> diverse university environment (p1,089).

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[12] **R**ejection **s**ensitivity on the basis of **r**ace.

In light of these findings, it follows that positive memories of new affiliations in seminars with unknown others might attenuate earlier, more negative memories of seminar experiences. In this regard, Brown and Brown (2005) find that the Depue and Morrone-Strupinsky model:

> lays out the means by which rewarding affective processes that underlie selective preferences might lead to long-term changes in memory that support an altruistic function of social bonds (p352).

There are two points to make about these potential long term changes.   First, much of the cross disciplinary scholarship discussed so far in this chapter supports resilience theory (Richardson, 2002) as located in educational literature. The premise in common is that the formation of new, positive memories can mediate the damaging effects of memories of other, negative experiences.   Second, related to McDermott's (1989, p48) recognition of class room behaviours being steered by "the range of institutional relevancies," these relevancies could be taken in my study to include, from students' hopes of institutional reward - credit - towards their degrees for acting compassionately in their seminars.   But the ethical concern here about compassion being enacted strategically and mechanistically and only for personal reward, can be allayed. One reason is that from a longer term, Aristotelian point of view, behaviours can be learned and internalised through repeated practice. There is no reason why this could not include compassionate behaviours.   Also, none of the 58 students in the Humanities survey, who assessed their own seminar contributions, can have been without any capacity for affiliative behaviours.

Therefore, it is useful to consider what affiliations students might make in the seminar room and the reasons why. Responding to the Depue and Morrone-Strupinsky study, the

philosopher Nyquist Potter (2005) views its frame of interpersonal relationships for the study of affiliation processes, as too narrow.   Affiliations are made by humans to many entities, objects and constructs, she argues, not just other humans. People make affiliations to cultures, ideologies, nationalisms, fundamentalisms, sports teams and so on, and in some cultures to inanimate objects such as trees and rocks to which living, spiritual entities are attributed. It does appear that some students in the Humanities (2008) in-house survey were making affiliations not within their immediate interpersonal seminar environment but to institutional, external loci of rewards associated with it. Kingston (2008) found this to be the case amongst UK HE students with high levels of high self-esteem who sought to maintain this through validation from grades, scores, feedback and tutor approval. These students who were found to be less interested than other students in seeking or accepting comfort or criticism from peers were also found to be more likely than others to drop out of university, in spite of being high academic achievers. Thus types of affiliations made, not only academic ability, appear to be key to some students' academic success.

I suggest that some students who are high academic achievers can suffer particularly high levels of anxiety related to whether their continued considerable academic effort will be enough to sustain their levels of achievement. Yet these students are the least likely to be able to seek or receive validation from other high achievers - who may similarly suffer anxiety – because they are highly competitive. Similar transcripts may be kept hidden from each other. Separate from the work of this study, a student in obvious distress visited me for academic writing support. Despite having achieved just above 70% for a recent essay in keeping with her previous assignments, she was highly self-critical. She said she had missed out a key paragraph that she had intended to include in the essay and now felt stupid and

wanted to kick herself.   She seemed to over-identify with the essay throughout the whole of

our meeting.   She did not regard herself with any kindness over her human mistake and

seemed to think only she could have made it. At the same time, she was sure that if a fellow

student was similarly distressed she would not call this student stupid or want to kick him

when I suggested that to her. Still, she did not see how this applied to her situation. None of

Neff's (2003) three components of self-compassion seemed present. She had not confided in

her friends that she was in distress over her grades (c.f. Kingston, 2008) and she did not intend

to.   With no focus on self-compassion but concerned with sustaining the highest grades

possible to maintain her self-esteem, she left me still in her state of competitive (dis)stress.

For these students a pedagogy that explicitly coaches students in compassion to themselves

and to others may be overdue for the following reasons. First, such students appear to fit

Kingston's description of students who she found were at high risk of dropout; in her view

HESA tends not to make clear enough in its reports that a high proportion of university drop

outs are high academic achievers.

  Second, P. Gilbert et al's study finds that:

> Self-criticism is not a single process but has different forms,
> functions, and underpinning emotions. This indicates a need for
> more detailed research into the variations of self-criticism and
> the mechanisms for developing self-reassurance (p1).

Relevantly, Depue and Morrone-Strupinsky found that naturally produced soothing and

calming opiates played a part in the physiological stages of affiliation: "opiates mediate a

capacity for affiliative reward, which to us is the sine qua non for forming an affiliative bond"

(p1). This is supported by Page-Gould et al's findings. The above student appeared unable

to access such reward because she could not reveal her hidden transcript of competitive stress to peers and seek affiliation. This was even though it was clear that she could and would offer support to a peer in her position.

While Potter points out the complexities or people's choices of affiliations, Foulkes' understanding of each individual as being at the centre of a matrix of countless conscious and unconscious culture-driven relationships suggests this too. So also does McDermott's 'biography of events' leading up to anything we ever do. Such complexities were too great an issue for my research to address. Instead, I thought it might be possible for the concept of compassion to orchestrate student affiliations in the directions of the group, that is, towards each other in seminars and away from sometimes tenuous, unreliable external loci of reward.   Returning to group psychotherapy, I illustrate the feasibility of my proposal with the following account.

Bates (2005) reports an incident involving two particular individuals at his group therapy sessions for people with phobias. One was a young man who experienced great anxiety that he might have body odour, and worse, that other people would be aware of it. He wore thick clothes and jumpers even in warm weather so that he could hide or smother the problem he believed he had. Another patient, a female, had an overwhelming fear of writing in public. She had gone to great lengths to avoid having to do so for a number of years.

At a particular session, the young man was invited by supportive group members and the facilitator to remove his jumper as it was very warm and to sit only in his tee shirt. Although

he was finally persuaded to do this, his manner changed from his usual agreeable persona to one that was irritable and aggressive. The facilitator asked the group what they most appreciated about the young man in an effort to remind him that he was in a safe place. The group had much positive comment to offer to this much liked patient who had been supportive to others in the past, but he remained agitated. The facilitator then turned to the patient whose phobia was focussed on writing in public and asked her if she would confirm the group's supportive comments by writing them on the flipchart that was nearby. Overriding her writing phobia for that moment, the woman wrote out on the flipchart what the group called out as the positive qualities that the young man had come to be appreciated for (c.f. Brown and Brown, 2005 on cost benefits of affiliations). This high risk act of compassion returned the young man to his agreeable self or, as Bates (2005) and P. Gilbert (2005) might argue, it provided the means for the whole group to approve and validate him and return him to a state of feeling safe in the group. Not forgetting that the event unfolded as it did largely because of the psychotherapist's focussed work on coaching his patients in (self) compassion techniques, two outcomes from the incident were noticeable because of their relevance to setting up HE discussion seminars. These outcomes were: closer group cohesion and greater task achievement.   They appeared to work in a close relationship with each other where affect related to safeness had a central role. The literature indicates why.   Human affiliative processes (Depue and Morrone-Strupinsky, 2005) are mediated by attention to threat, including in the classroom (Cozolino, 2013). The literature also explains why the woman was well placed to help her fellow phobic: the group membership was made up of matrices of shared and collective experiences (Foulkes, 1975). The example of compassionate attention to others suggested similar possibilities for enhancing group cohesion and achievement in seminars.

From the literature explored so far in this chapter it was now possible to draw some

conclusions on which types of compassion were the most pertinent to designing a pedagogy

for university, discussion based seminars - that is to say, a pedagogy where the core

objectives of group cohesion and task achievement were considered inseparable.   Fig 3.1

below, offers a visual representation of these conclusions, which are then explained further

in the next section.

3.6   Conclusions

Fig 3.1   The literature findings applied: compassion relevant to the HE seminar.

Compassionate acts relevant to the seminar

**Share transcripts of
negative seminar experiences
(1)**

**Notice/anticipate
disadvantage to others (2)**

**Prevent or reduce (3)
disadvantage to others**

**Initiate & sustain
Inclusive eye contact
(3a)**

**Initiate & sustain
inclusive vocalisation
(3b)**

**Interrupt
Alpha pairs**

(i)

**Interrupt
Monopolisers**

(ii)

**Encourage spread
of participation**

(iii)

**Invite &
acknowledge**

(i)

**Grade
language**

(ii)

**Develop
speakers'
thinking**

(iii)

**Speak
concisely**

(iv)

Key:

(1) Sharing inside the seminar room, therefore publicly, those previous transcripts/ narratives on personal group work experiences in seminars (Scott, 1990) that might have been negative. Sharing the narratives safely: difficult seminar experiences can be validated as potentially shared, not unique to individuals (Leahy's Model of Validation, 2005).

(2) Paying close attention to fellow group members [c.f. Vertegaal et al (2002, 2003) on looking at others, and McDermott's (1989) micro-ethnographic skills] to notice or anticipate negative experiences amongst other group members while the group is in a task-focussed, subject-related discussion.

(3) Acting to prevent such disadvantage to fellow students in their social and learning experiences in the group work, as through:

    a. Initiating and sustaining inclusive eye contact to:
        i.   Interrupt alpha pairs (c.f. Bion, 1961)
        ii.   Interrupt individual monopolising behaviours (Yalom, 1985)
        iii.   Encourage a more equal spread of vocal participation (Vertegaal et al, 2002; 2003).

    b. Initiating and sustaining inclusive vocalisation, as through:
        i.   Inviting quieter members to speak; validating and acknowledging each other's contributions.
        ii.   Grading/standardising English[13] language use for effective international communication amongst culturally diverse fellow students with different levels of familiarity with non-standard English.
        iii.   Developing speakers' thinking processes through critiquing what they say (Yalom, 1985).
        iv.   Speaking concisely for management of the discussion time available and thus helping facilitate a more equal spread of participation.

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[13] Standard English does not contain local slang or colloquialisms. It is defined in Miriam Webster's dictionary as: "the English that with respect to spelling, grammar, pronunciation, and vocabulary is substantially uniform…and is widely recognized as acceptable wherever English is spoken and understood."

The anti-group behaviours (Nitsun, 1996) that the above compassionate behaviours were intended to dismantle in seminars, are summarised in Table 3.1, below.   These anti-group behaviours, identified from the literature and from Chapter 2, undermine social and learning experiences in task-focussed, small group HE seminar discussions.

Fig 3.1 and Table 3.1 were central in the design of the compassion-focussed pedagogy (the CfP) that was seen in Chapter 1 (Fig 1.1, p4). This pedagogy was used as a research tool in ways that are explained in the next chapter – the Methodology Chapter.

Table 3.1   Anti-group behaviours likely to negatively impact seminar discussions

Anti-group (Nitsun, 1996) behaviours in discussion seminars	*Elaborated in:*
1. Talking in silences when the shyest students are getting ready to speak.	Chickering (2010); Turner (2002); and c.f. Bates (2005); and Chap 2, Section 2.1, p18 and Section 2.2, p25.
2. Fixing eye contact with the tutor only, or just one student and forgetting to look at all the other people in the group.	Vertegaal et al (2002, 2003); Kingston (2008); Bion (1961)
3. Using difficult language; not explaining difficult words or expressions so that other people in the group cannot understand	Nitsun (1996); c.f. Chap 2, Section 2.4, p29 and Section 2.5, p30. Holmes (2004); Kim (2006)
4. Not listening carefully to other peoples' ideas	Yalom & Leszsz, (2005); Chickering (2010); Kingston (2008).
5. Not helping others when they are getting into difficulty while they are speaking. Instead, taking control and their chance to speak away from them. Talking over them.	Bates (2005); Chickering (2010); Turner, (2002); Kingston (2008); Feather, (2006)
6. Not inviting others to speak; not thanking others for their contribution.	Leahy (2005); Chickering (2005); Page-Gould et al (2008)
7. Not speaking at all; becoming 'too shy and so giving nothing to the group.	Neff (2003); Kirkpatrick et al (2007); Yalom & Leszsz (2005); Nitsun (1996); McDermott (1988)
8. Not even reading a little bit in order to bring something to the discussion.	c.f. Chap 2, Section 2.2, p25.
9. Letting other people talk and talk without interrupting them.	Scott (1990); Yalom & Leszsz (2005); Bion (1961)
10. Letting them use difficult words or expressions. Allowing them to speak too fast for everyone to understand them.	Scott (1990); Holmes (2004); Kim (2006)
11. Not asking for more explanations when understanding is becoming too difficult.	McDermott (1988); Holmes (2004); Kim (2006)
Other …………………………………………………………	

3.7 Summary

Compassion is a psychological concept which is recognised and valued across global and local cultures (Goetz, 2010; Feather, 2006; Immordino-Yang et al, 2007; 2009). It is not contingent on language, ethnic or national differences. Therefore, this literature review explored whether it was possible to construct a robust theoretical basis for explicitly embedding the concept of compassion into teaching, learning and assessment for HE seminars which might help students achieve optimally co-operative discussion based group work.

The findings in this chapter have made a positive response to research question (a).[14] The literature search results indicate reasons why compassion could be an appropriate and useful concept to embed into HE pedagogy for seminars. Moreover, a theoretical base to do so has been assembled by identifying and critically synthesising components of cross disciplinary scholarship which are relevant to enhancing seminar experiences. The components of this theoretical base, and how they interface, are summarised as follows.

- Scott's (1990) anthropological work on hidden transcripts in groups and what can happen to communicative flow when these are made transparent;

- McDermott's (1988, 2009) micro-ethnographic work on how and what to observe in class room interactions, and how students might be trained in this too, so that they can develop as compassionate group members;

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[14] *Question (a)* Why might compassion be an appropriate and useful concept to embed into HE pedagogy for seminars?

- Foulkes (1975) theory from group psychotherapy of close human interconnectivity which supports McDermott's a) ethnographic methods; and b) attention to critical theory;

- Nitsun's (1996) demonstrations of how the mental reframing of other people's (negative) behaviours during group work can initiate a change in the reframer's attitude and approach to these observed behaviours. This reframing is a helpful bridge between noticing a negative behaviour and compassionate interruption of it;

- Bion's (1961) work on dysfunctional groups in psychotherapy shows the *functions* of key negative behaviours that can arise in groups;

- Depue and Morrone-Strupinsky's (2005) study of the neuroscience of affiliative choices and their cost benefits;

- In relation to Law and Urry (2004) on complexity theory, Bates' (2005) work that shows how unpredicted opportunities for compassionate action can arise, be acted upon and result in changes to, even phobic, behaviours.

As a whole, my literature findings identified which types of compassionate behaviours were most likely to assist students' in establishing closer interconnectivity in task-focussed seminar work. In the next chapter the compassion-focussed pedagogy (CfP) for seminars that was designed using these findings will be explained. This will include explanation of how it was used as a research tool as well as for teaching, learning and assessment.

4.0 Introduction

First I explain my epistemological and philosophical position because it inevitably

underpinned aspects of my methodology development.   Then I will outline the rest of the

chapter's structure.

I identify my position through reference to Alvesson and Skoldberg's (2000; 2009) model of

reflexive methodology. Reflexivity, in contrast to reflection, is defined by them as the

researcher's examination of his/her own identity as a researcher, in order to continually (re)

examine his/her values and beliefs through the process of conducting research to see how

these are directing his/her research – its questions, methods and findings – and to respond

accordingly, as a researcher. This reflexivity can be achieved through a number of

perspectives and Alvesson and Skoldberg explain what these can be. Overall, they suggest a

three level map of the connections between the philosophical considerations that surround

certain research methodologies, the epistemologies that feed these, and the practicalities of

carrying out their associated types of research. This is a tripartite relationship between

empiricism, theory and philosophical considerations. They argue this is a working frame

suitable to conducting qualitative research where it is fruitful and pragmatic to assume that

there is a reality external to paradigms, consciousness, text and rhetorical manoeuvring (p3)

and "researchers should be able to say something insightful about this reality" (p3).   At the

same time they defend this claim as still entirely consistent "with a belief that social reality is not external to the consciousness and language of people" (p3).

Identifying my own frames of reference, on which I based my epistemology, led me to acknowledge two in particular. Critical theory and social constructionism resonated with my own world views and philosophy on the nature of reality. For example, a previous programme of post graduate study allowed me to explore how and why social constructs in diverse cultures tend to be built in similar ways around the protection of resources, whatever these are construed to be. In this sense, social constructionism was a useful analytical perspective from which to design my methodology for exploring such psychosocial processes in seminars. My literature findings supported this.

I concluded social constructionism, and to a lesser extent, critical theory were likely to be shaping my epistemological perspectives and that these two frames of reference that bore on my approach to conducting research should be acknowledged, declared and used to enact my reflexivity on the work as it progressed. This acknowledgement and declaration of position helped me make transparent to the reader what was informing the third, hermeneutic,[15] interpretation I would make on the work to be done. My awareness of this third ongoing interpretive process contributed to my reflexivity in prompting me to identify and challenge my own habits and ways of thinking about what I have accepted of the social status quo regarding 'HE discussion seminars' as being unchangeable, or not else requiring

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[15] In the hermeneutic analytical frame, the first 'interpretation' is by a research respondent who is interpreting his/her own experience of the world to the researcher. Whatever this may be, it is then (re)interpreted by the researcher. The third interpretation occurs if/when the researcher examines his/her own interpretations of data in the light of combined philosophical and theoretical perspectives. This is an act of reflexivity (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009).

change. As suggested above, reflexivity was carried out at strategic points and where

evidence emerging from data analysis indicated there should be a pause for this.

The rest of this chapter is structured as follows.   Based on its literature-based findings, the

previous chapter's conclusion identified which behaviours satisfied two criteria: a) they

were compassionate (as defined by the literature); and b) they were relevant to small group

discussion work in university seminars. On this basis, a compassion-focussed pedagogy (the

CfP) was designed to use in action research in a range of sample modules.   This CfP

comprised three steps and they are explained one at a time, in section 4.1.   How the CfP

was used as a research tool as well as a pedagogical tool is shown in section 4.2, Table 4.1,

p93. This fig also shows how each stage of a complete cycle of action research was related,

respectively, to step one of the CfP, then steps one and two, then steps one, two and three

(all three steps of the CfP) in an iterative process. When all three of these stages had been

conducted, a complete cycle of the action research had been completed.

Two cycles were conducted overall. The first of these was in a UK university's Humanities

department with its mainly white, native English speaker, local students on modules such as

Philosophy, History and English.   Then, cycle 2, another whole, three-stage round of the

action research was run separately, in the university's Business department. This was

because of the availability of a much more diverse body of students with which to compare

results from cycle 1.   Within cycle 2's participant modules, seminar groups were made up of

international students and local students who were white, black and ethnic minority.

In section 4.3 two tables of participants are shown – one table for each cycle.   These tables

indicate who the participants were for each cycle, how they participated and what data

collection methods this involved. I then explain in section 4.4 why action research (AR) was

selected as an appropriate overall research strategy with which to address the research

questions for this mainly qualitative study. After this, the sampling methods used for the

study are identified and explained in 4.5, as are the selection and use of data collection tools

in section 4.6. The data collection tools used in response to each question are shown in

Table 4.3.   Section 4.7 addresses the key issue of my insider and/or outsider position - how I

and others identified this from the ways I conducted myself inside seminars, how I (was seen

to) collect(ed) data and how I analysed it.

Analysis of the data was mainly through the use of Template Analysis (TA). This is a set of

data analysis techniques for analysing data thematically. In section 4.8 I discuss why TA was

appropriate for this study, its questions, and how it was used.   In the chapter's introduction

(above) my philosophical and epistemological position was explained through the

perspective of Alvesson and Skoldberg's model of reflexivity.   Section 4.9 looks back at this

and critiques the model, before the ethics of the study are considered in 4.10.   There is then

a final brief account, first for cycle 1 then for cycle 2, of how the planned methodology was

adjusted in response to unexpected events as the action research unfolded.   Finally, a

summary and conclusion consider what the above methods, combined, were able to offer

regarding opportunities for triangulation of the data to be addressed in the two findings

chapters that follow.   Overall, these were selected together to be a useful basis on which to

compare the results of the AR between the two cycles. This was central to forming a

response from the data to the research questions. To remind the reader, these were:

The core research question:

Can the psychological concept of compassion be embedded into HE seminar pedagogy to produce for both home and international students:

- improved student social and learning experience of task-focused seminar groups, and

- improved academic outcomes?

Seven sub questions:

a. Why might compassion be an appropriate and useful concept to embed into HE pedagogy for seminars?[16]

b. In what ways is the compassion-pedagogy designed for this study used by participants in their seminars?

c. Is the compassion pedagogy used differently according to whether students are local or international?

d. Does the compassion pedagogy improve student social and learning experience of seminars?

    i. Is there a difference according to whether students are local or international?

e. Does the compassion pedagogy improve academic outcomes from seminars?

    i. Is there a difference according to whether students are local or international?

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[16] This question was addressed in Chapter 3 by the literature findings.

4.1   A compassion-focussed pedagogy for seminars

The design of a compassion-focussed pedagogical framework for seminars is represented here in Fig 1.1 (shown again, from Chapter 1).

Fig 1.1   The Compassion-focussed pedagogy (the CfP)

STEP ONE – SEMINAR ONE

1. Speed meeting.

2. What is compassion?

3. Small group → whole group concensus on:

a. Noticing unhelpful seminar behaviours.

 b. How to address these compassionately.

STEP TWO

– HOMEWORK.

1. After each weekly lecture, students carry out individual, independent research on the topic of the lecture.

 – IN WEEKLY SEMINARS

 2. In small groups, students share (present and join a discussion of) the research they have each done.

3. Tutor facilitates students to support each other in using the strategies they agreed during their work on (3a) and (3b) in Step one – seminar one

STEP THREE – FINAL ASSESSED SEMIINAR

1. The final small group discussions, at the end of the module, are filmed and each student is assessed according to criteria seen in Chapter 4, Fig 4.2, p91

4.1.1   Step One - Seminar one

1.   Speed meeting

This intervention was intended in particular for first meetings of whole seminar groups. It was to pre-empt anti-group behaviours (Nitsun, 1996) that could arise out of some unconscious cost/benefit processing of potential affiliations (Depue and Morrone-Strupinsky, 2005), such as those that might tend towards forming cliques.   Therefore,

students were asked to set tables end to end then to sit at the table - one long row of students facing the other. Those sitting in friendship groups/cliques already formed were directed to sit on one side of the long table in a row, side by side. Students were asked to introduce themselves to the one person, and only that person, sitting opposite them. This was designed with the *combined* work of Page-Gould et al (2008), Depue and Morrone-Strupinsky (2005) and Bion (1961), in mind. Students were asked, if they could, to initiate each contact by shaking hands with their partner and maintaining direct eye contact with that person as they continued to speak. This action was for new partners to signal to each other positive anticipation of an agreeable interaction (c.f. Vertegaal and Yaping, 2002; Vertegaal et al, 2003). Eye gaze connection with one person at a time in this exercise was intended to initiate the process of building students' feelings of safeness with each other across the group. After each introduction, initiating conversation with a new partner was supported by questions (c.f. Page-Gould et al, 2008) from the subject tutor e.g. what do you feel should be the purpose of a discussion-based seminar? What is it that most attracted you to the subject of this module?   After three minutes, one row of students was asked to stand and move one seat to the left, in order to engage a new seminar colleague.   Each time this happened, the student who moved off the final seat at the end of the row stood up and moved to the first seat on the other end of the row as it was vacated. Later questions turned to the nature of helping behaviours amongst students in discussion group work and what students thought these might include.

2. What is compassion?

Following the speed meet, the literature on compassion was then summarised to students: how compassion is defined across disciplines, how self-compassion is different from self-

esteem (Neff, 2003; Kingston, 2008), and that compassion is recognised across cultures (Goetz et al, 2010; Feather, 2008). Students were then asked to consider in small groups the following two questions suggested by a Market Research business lecturer, and to do so in light of the above brief exploration of compassion:

> What do I contribute to the learning experience of my fellow students that they most value in me?

> What do my fellow students contribute to my learning that I most value in them?

3.   Small group consensus on working with negative behaviours

In newly formed groups of four students each student in his/her group of four was given the following (evidence-based) checklist. This was a record of behaviours which had been suggested by students and tutors (see Chapter 1) as undermining to students' social and/or learning experiences of seminar discussions.   The AR students were asked to tick any they were familiar with. The purpose was to make available (transparent) for sharing with others (c.f. Leahy, 2005) potentially negative transcripts (c.f. Scott, 1990) relevant to the seminar context that may previously have been withheld from public discussion. Students then addressed in small groups how they might intervene in these recognised behaviours should they occur again in future seminar discussions. They were asked to identify how they might intervene with compassion. Towards the end of this preparatory seminar, there was whole group feedback; students' strategies for dismantling negative seminar behaviours were endorsed as compassionate and proactive for whole group use in future seminars, or else modified by the whole seminar group.   Here is the checklist:

Fig 4.1   Negative seminar behaviours

Please tick any of the following that you have encountered in your university discussions/seminars?

1. Talking a lot so that others do not get many chances to speak.

2. Talking in silences when the shyest students are getting ready to speak.

3. Fixing eye contact with the tutor only, or just one student and forgetting to look at all the other people in the group.

4. Using difficult language; not explaining difficult words or expressions so that other people in the group cannot understand

5. Not listening carefully to other peoples' ideas

6. Not helping other people when they are getting into difficulty while they are speaking. Instead taking control and their chance to speak away from them. Talking over them.

7. Not inviting others to speak; not thanking others for their contribution.

8. Not speaking at all; becoming 'too shy' and so giving nothing to the group.

9. Not even reading a little bit in order to bring something to the discussion.

10. Letting other people talk and talk without interrupting them.

11. Letting them use difficult words or expressions. Allowing them to speak too fast for everyone to understand them.

12. Not asking for more explanations when understanding is becoming too difficult.

13. Other: ………………………………………………………………….

4.1.2   Step Two

Homework and its use in their seminars was explained to students, as seen in Fig 1.1 above.

4.1.3 Step Three

Assessment, including of compassionate behaviour, was also explained as seen in Fig 4.2 (below) to those students who were to participate in stage three (of either cycle).   Below are the criteria for assessing a) demonstration of compassion as defined in the literature and practised in the action research seminars, and b) quality of critical thinking and research demonstrated. Key terms in the criteria, e.g. eliciting, validating, encouraging and inclusive - were first agreed with student and tutor participants. These were taken to the language and learning research centre of another UK university to be checked for appropriacy. This was done by a published, peer-reviewed, Japanese post-doctoral, linguistics researcher working on assessment of student small group discussion work. I suggested 5% or 10% could be allocated for compassionate behaviours. Tutors renamed these 'Group Management Skills' and allocated them 25% - 35% of the overall marks (varying by subject).   This allocation was approved pre-use, by an external assessor and two external assessors to the Humanities and Business departments respectively, the host university's head of Academic Quality Assurance and the university's Learning and Teaching Institute.   These marking criteria are shown next.

Fig 4.2 Small group, research-based discussion: Marking criteria

Small Group, Research-based Discussion

Student: …………………………………..   *Candidate No:* ………………   *Date:* ………………
Tutor: …………………………………..   *Module* …………………………   *Code:* ………………

Content (70%)		
The research undertaken by the candidate for the examination topic is demonstrated to be extensive; it is appropriate in content, level and relevance. **(30%)**	A B C D E F	Little or no evidence is offered of sufficient and/or appropriate research.
Critical perspectives - as in questions posed, arguments offered, analytical and or evaluative insights into the student's own research and that contributed by others - are integrated relevantly and helpfully into the group discussion. The student helps keep the group focussed on task. **(40%)**	A B C D E F	**Few or no critical perspectives** – as in questions posed, arguments offered, analytical or evaluative insights into the student's own research and that contributed by others – are demonstrated during the discussion. The student may contribution little by remaining silent, or else may input in ways that lead the group off task.
Group Management Skills (30%)		
Body Language (10%) Eye contact and other body language is appropriately inclusive.	A B C D E F	**Body language** is signalling little interest or engagement with what is being said by others; or, may focus repeatedly on some students to the exclusion of others.
Language (10%) is graded (it is international English and it is appropriately paced). It is also mindful in other aspects when: • Disagreeing and/or critiquing • Questioning • Enacting inclusivity skills (see below)	A B C D E F	*Student may:* • speak too fast; or too quietly • use excluding, localised English • use inappropriately individualistic or disrespectful language when challenging or questioning others, or when enacting some group management strategies.
Group management strategies (10%) • Eliciting , encouraging, acknowledging • Accommodating reasonable hesitations/silences while less confident speakers are engaging the group's attention • Checking understanding of the group when speaking • Intervening proactively and compassionately in the excluding behaviours of others, e.g. monopolising	A B C D E F	*Student may*: • tend to monopolise discussion or speak over others *Student may* make little or no attempt to: • check the group's understanding (of his/her own research) e.g. when presenting an unfamiliar term/concept • get clarification when it is needed during presentations • listen to and respond relevantly to others • proactively support the efforts of others to contribute effectively to group task achievement.

Comments:

First assessor…………………….   *Second assessor …………..…………*   *Grade: ……..*

4.1.4   Summary of the CfP

Step one introduced and supported individual student responsibility for others' social experiences during discussion by drawing students' attention to compassion, and making it explicit to the seminar context.   Stage two represented the continuation of this in subsequent weekly seminars but with the addition of a responsibility for each other's learning experiences too. This was through sharing of findings from weekly, individual, independent research – not from set reading for all.   Stage three represented the assessment stage of the CfP. It maximised students' dependency on, and responsibility for, each other's social and learning experiences by means of a final, timed, filmed, face to face small group discussion: the assessment. Students were to show the practice of compassionate, student-managed, group learning through their research-driven discussion in this assessment.

4.2   Conducting action research with the CfP framework

The CfP was both a pedagogical tool and a framework for research and Table 4.2 below shows this in a representation of one complete cycle of Action Research (AR) that was carried out using the CfP.   The table also shows that two cycles were carried out, and notes the procedural differences between each of them.

Table 4.1   The three stages of a cycle of the action research

	Stage one: **Pilots of the CfP step 1 in samples modules for one seminar.**	*Stage two:* **Partial Implementation of the CfP steps 1 and 2 in one sample module for eight consecutive seminars.**	*Stage three:* **Full Implementation of the CfP steps 1, 2 and 3 2 in one sample module for eight consecutive seminars.**
	Pedagogy	*Pedagogy*	*Pedagogy*
C Y C L E 1	STEP TWO – HOMEWORK 1. After each weekly lecture, students carry out individual, independent research on the topic of the lecture. – IN WEEKLY SEMINARS 2. In small groups, students share (present and join a discussion of) the research they have each done. 3. Tutor facilitates students to support each other in using the strategies they agreed during their work on (3a) and (3b) in Step one – seminar one	STEP ONE – SEMINAR ONE 1. Speed meeting. 2. What is compassion? 3. Small group → whole group concensus on: a. Noticing unhelpful seminar behaviours. b. How to address these compassionately. STEP TWO – HOMEWORK 1. After each weekly lecture, students carry out individual, independent research on the topic of the lecture. – IN WEEKLY SEMINARS 2. In small groups, students share (present and join a discussion of) the research they have each done. 3. Tutor facilitates students to support each other in using the strategies they agreed during their work on (3a) and (3b) in Step one – seminar one	STEP ONE – SEMINAR ONE 1. Speed meeting. 2. What is compassion? 3. Small group → whole group concensus on: a. noticing unhelpful seminar behaviours. b. how to address these compassionately. STEP TWO – HOMEWORK, 1. After each weekly lecture, students carry out individual, independent research on the topic of the lecture. – IN WEEKLY SEMINARS 2. In small groups, students share (present and join a discussion of) the research they have each done. 3. Tutor facilitates students to support each other in using the strategies they agreed during their work on (3a) and (3b) in Step one – seminar one STEP THREE – IN WEEKLY SEMINARS 1. The final small group discussions, at the end of the module, are filmed and each student is assessed according to criteria seen in Chapter Four: Fig 4.2 (p91) *Research:* 1. *Observed/recorded participants' seminar interactions on two modules for several weeks.. Conducted interviews and focus groups.* 2. *Analysed film of the final assessed seminar group discussion.* 3. *Analysed the written feedback from subject assessors to students.*
	Research: 1. *Observed/recorded interactions in one off seminars.* 2. *Conducted interviews.*	*Research :* 1. *Observed/recorded participants' seminar interactions on one module for 8 weeks* 2. *Conducted interviews and focus groups.* 3. *Used checklists at start and end of module for comparative purposes.*	
C Y C L E 2	*As above.*	*As above except for:* *Removal of use of checklists for comparison*	*As above and with addition of a comparison between individual marks for critical thinking in a) seminar b) essay – both on the same module and marked by the same two subject tutors*

4.3 The participants

For cycle 1 (in the Humanities department) the first part of Table 4.2 shows the students and tutors observed in each stage. The second part shows the interview and focus group participants.

Table 4.2   Cycle 1 participants by stage and data collection methods
Key: f – female   m = male;   T = tutor,   S = Student (All white/local students)

In-Seminar Observations/field notes					
Stage One with Pilots		**Stage Two** One module, no assessment		**Stage Three** Two modules with assessment	
Students: Numbers subject, level, gender	*No of Tutors*	*Students: Numbers, subject, level, gender*	*No of Tutors*	*Student: Numbers, subject, level , gender*	*No of Tutors*
19 – History 2nd yrs: 8 m/11f	1 (T1/f)	21 History 2nd yrs: 9m/12f	1 (Hist T4/f)	2 – Literature/MA : 2f	1 Lit MA (T2/m1)
18 – Lit 3rd yrs: 7m/11f	1 (T3/m)			5 - Literature/MA : 2 m/3f	1 Lit MA (T6/f)
34 – Philosophy 1st yrs: (two seminar groups) 16f/18m	2				
17 – Journalism 1st yrs: 10m/7f	1				
Participant totals: 88	5	21	1	7	2

Total seminar participants observed: **105 students + 8 tutors**

Interviews and Focus groups					
Stage One with Pilots		**Stage Two** One module, no assessment		**Stage Three** Three modules with assessment	
Students: subject, level, gender	*Tutors: subject and level*	*Students: subject, level, gender*	*Tutors*	*No of students by subject and level*	*Tutors*
interviews: Lit 3rd yr: (S1f) Lit 3rd yr: (S2f)	*Interviews* Lit (3rd yrs) (T3/m) Hist (2nd yrs) (T1/f);	*Interview:* Hist/L5 (S3/f)	*Interview* Hist (1st yrs) (T4 /f)	*Joint interview:* Lit/MA: (S4f; S5f)	*Interview* Lit MA (T2/m):
					Lit MA (T6/f)
					1 Hist (T5/f)
Total 2	2	1	1	2	6
		Student focus group: Hist 2nd yrs: (S6f, S7f; S8, S9m)		*Student focus group:* Lit MA: (S10m, S11f, S12f, S13f, S14m)	
		4		7	

Total seminar participants in focus groups or Interviews
14 students + 6 tutors + 1 external assessor

One External Assessor for MA Lit final, filmed seminar:
Telephone interview and email correspondence (m)
1

For cycle 2 (in the Business department) the first part of Table 4.3 shows the students and tutors observed in each stage.   The second part shows the interview and focus group participants.

Table 4.3   Cycle 2 participants by stage and data collection methods

Key: f = female   m = male;   T = tutor[17]   S = student

In-Seminar Observations/field notes					
Stage One Pilots		**Stage Two** One module, no assessment		**Stage Three** One module with assessment	
Students: Numbers subject, level, gender	No of Tutors	Students: Numbers, subject, level, gender	No of Tutors	Student: Numbers, subject, level , gender, local or international	No of Tutors
16 x Finance & Accounting 2nd years (9f/7m)	1 (f)	21 x Technical Trends in Business 2nd yrs: (10m/11f)	1 (T10/m)	41 - Technical Trends in Business (26m/15f: 10 black locals, 17 ethnic minority locals, 9 white locals, 5 internationals)	(T10/m)
22 x Tourism 2nd years: (9m/13f)	1 (f)				
17 x Financial Strategies (9f/8m)	T7 (m)				
18 x Market Research (9f/9m)	1 (m)				
73	**4**	**21**	**1**	**41**	**1**

Above: Total seminar participants observed: **135 students   +   5 tutors**

Interviews and Focus groups Participants					
Stage One Pilots		**Stage Two** A whole module, no assessment		**Stage Three** Three modules with assessment	
Students: level subject, gender	Tutors: subject and level	Students: subject, level, gender	Tutors	No of students by subject and level	Tutors
Joint interview: *Financial Strategies:* *2 x PG Internationals* *S15 Nigerian, f* *S16 Malay m*	*Joint Interview:* *Financial Strategies:* *T7 local white m* *T8 German, f*	*Focus group:* *3 x 2nd yrs* *Technical Trends in Bus* *S17 local ethnic min, f* *S18 Thai, m* *S19 local, white f*	*Interview* *T9 local, White, m*	*Interviews/Focus groups* *Technical Trends in Bus* *Focus group 1:* *S20 Ethnic min, local, m* *S21 Thai, f* *S22 Thai, f* *S23 Ethnic min, local, m* *Focus group 2:* *S24 Ethnic min, local, f* *S25 Malaysian, f* *S26 White, local, m* *Joint interview:* *S27 Black, local, m* *S28 Ethnic min, local, f* *Focus group 3:* *S29 Ethnic min, local, m* *S30 Ethnic min, local, m* *S31 Ethnic min, local, m* *S32 Ethnic min, local, m* *S33 Black, local, m* *Interview:* *S34 French, m*	*Interview* *T10 local, White, m*
Total 2	*2*	*3*	*1*	*15*	*1*

Total seminar participants in focus groups or interviews: **20 students + 3 tutors**

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[17] The Market research tutor in stage one was from Sierra Leone. Tutor 8 was German. Otherwise, as for Cycle One, all of the tutors were white and local.

4.3.1 Template Analysis and sample sizes

Template Analysis (King, 2004) was the set of techniques used for thematic analysis of the data. Why it was selected and how it was used is explained in section 4.8. Relevant to the current section is that in Template Analysis, samples of human participants typically go into double figures (Ibid, p258) as did my overall participant sample size when the tables above are combined. This is not so often the case with more phenomenological methods where samples are small and the individual account is of much more interest than the comparison between such accounts. Suitably for my research questions, Template Analysis is for researchers interested in the comparisons between accounts. King (2004) identifies a range of convenience for sample size and suggests that if a sample size goes up to around 40 or 50 subjects, the trawling and retrawling to check, add, modify and/or re-situate codes starts to become too difficult to navigate. My interview and focus group participants for the whole action research study numbered 44 (9 tutors and 34 students) and so were reaching this limit, but the use of AR made handling the data from the total sample size manageable because it divided and spread the participant numbers between two cycles, and between their separate and consecutive stages, each stage with its own sub sample of participants. Also, the participants were divided into two groups, tutors and students.

4.4 The research strategy: Action research (AR)

McDermott (1989), an ethnographer-linguist, identifies how people in classrooms act in response to what he calls institutional relevancies, but though he strongly recommends from his own research findings that these relevancies must be changed, he is not sure how. This action research (AR) is aimed at changing these relevancies - or institutional cultures to use Kemmis and McTaggart's (1992) term - where they disable people. As originally developed

96

by Kurt Lewin (1946) it pursues such change through "the gradual techniques of behavioural modification" (Cohen et al, 2007, p297). This study arose from my sustained observations, over years, of inequities of power and voice amongst students in HE group work. I realised there were anti-group behaviours involved that Turner (2002) helped me to realise were institutionally supported, including by me. Next came questions about what could be done to dismantle the observable and frequent inequities of people's agency inside seminars groups, and how this could be endorsed institutionally, at a sufficiently meaningful level for students. There was also the question of whether teaching staff would join in this endeavour to change institutional cultures and relevancies, and whether they would be inclined to do so at the level needed:

> Talking about practice as activity, rather than as considered,
> committed and purposeful action (praxis), presents teachers as
> implementers of practice but not theorists of practice…. That's
> where action research comes in….. it can… help people to see their
> practice as practical theorising. (McNiff & Whitbread, 2005, p4)

From both the literature and from my observations, action research was an appropriate research strategy through which to attempt to trial an explicit, institutionalised attention to compassion in the university seminar room. It was the most suitable vehicle through which the CfP framework might be used to initiate an institutional precedent in HE, namely, that of offering credit on under graduate and post graduate degree programmes for observable, assessable compassionate behaviours. There are a number of models of AR in the literature. They tend to depict it as a spiral of steps like Zuber-Skerritt's (2001) model seen here.

Fig 4.3   Cycles and their stages in action research
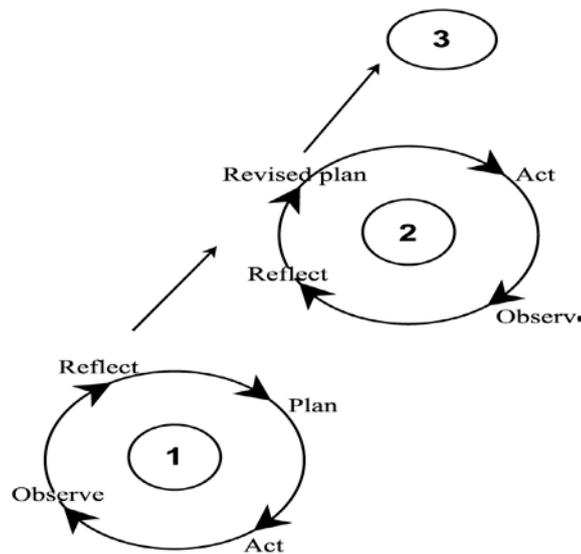
Source: Zuber-Skerritt (2001, p15)

A literature search reveals that McNiff and Whitehead (2002), Zuber-Skerritt (2005), Kemmis

and McTaggart (1992) and Cohen et al (2007) are in general agreement on these AR steps:

1. Look at current practice

2. Identify which part(s) needs to be improved

3. Think of a way to address these

4. Try it out

5. Observe and reflect on processes and outcomes

6. Respond, adapt and adjust what you did in the light of the findings/outcomes.

7. Continue from point 4 above until necessary.

Points 1 to 3 have been addressed in previous chapters, resulting in the design of the CfP.

Point 4, 'Try it out', describes the first stages/cycle 1 of the research.   Point 5   relates to the

questions expected to arise from the work as it unfolded; for example, about how the CfP

strategies for enhancing student social and learning experiences in seminars could be

improved, modified, even dropped. Point 6 relates to the next stages/cycle 2, to adapt and

try again.

4.4.1 An alternative research strategy considered

Action research was not the only research strategy considered for the study.   An

experimental design was considered. This was because of the comparative work to be done

between mainly white students and ethnically different students in their response to the CfP.

Setting aside philosophical issues (see next section) that also discounted the use of an

experimental methodology, an additional problem was that student numbers and ratios, e.g.

of gender, or (for cycle 2), spread of ethnic diversity on participating modules, could not be

prescribed or achieved as required by an experimental design. Moreover, such a strategy

would not be sustainable in the event of adjustments or adaptations being made by

participants to parts of the compassion pedagogy (see research question b).   Indeed, some

participants might reject all of the compassion pedagogy - the whole framework and

everything in it. Also, trying to control so many variables for an experimental design would

require curtailment of the collaborative processes essential for conducting the study at all.

This could not be justified.   Ainscow et al. (2004,) for example, emphasise the centrality of

collaborative relationships for the AR they conducted with schools and universities working

on increasing inclusive practice in schools – a study with interests clearly similar to this one.

4.4.2 Alignment of AR with my philosophical position

AR aligns philosophically, with critical theory and the connections and cross overs between

them are noted in the literature (e.g. Levin and Greenwood, 2001).   Also, stemming from

my study of international ethnography, I had some familiarity with social constructionism in anthropology. This challenged me to pay more critical attention to the role that unconscious endorsement of social constructs plays in human interactions. In combination, these influences prompted me to sharpen my micro ethnographic observational skills for action research inside seminars (McDermott, 1988; 2009), and also my data interpretive skills (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009), as I prepared for action research in the seminar room.

4.4.3 The collaborative work with tutors in their seminars

During subject focussed seminars, I facilitated tutors' and students' compassionate seminar practice and acted as a researcher. This kind of co-working is a useful feature of some kinds of critical praxis according to Holly and Whitehead (1986, cited by Cohen et al, 2007). This did raise questions about my insider outside position though, and I discuss this in section 4.7 below. In the seminars, I was introduced by the subject tutors as a student/researcher currently on a programme of post graduate study, who was exploring what happens in seminars in UK HE, and how students might make the most of them.[18] A study by DiMeglio et al (2005) carried out in a hospital in the USA, used a facilitator in similar way to work inside handover sessions of nurses and assist them in making their communications with each other more effective and collegial. The facilitator was a senior nurse and so, like me, could be described as an insider. Also, while I researched across subjects, she did the same across medical units. Crucially though, DiMeglio et al do not explain exactly what communicative strategies were offered, nor how these were practised and supported inside the handover sessions.[19] For my study, these multiple partnerships between me (as

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[18] Depending on whether I was observing in a single seminar (stage one) where there was no use of the CfP.
[19] There also appears to have been scarce data collection for evaluative purposes.

insider[20]/facilitator) and subject tutors extended the reach, variety and complexity of the collaborations that formed as the AR steps and cycles unfolded. DiMeglio et al do not explain the boundaries of the facilitator's remit inside her collaborations with medical unit staff.

During my early collaborative discussions with teaching staff, they explained the learning objectives of their seminars. From these discussions it was always confirmed to students in seminars that I had no subject expertise at all, and thus I could be thought of as a kind of classroom assistant to the tutor and the students (See section 4.7 below).

Across both cycles, participating tutors formalised the place of the CfP framework for their seminars in their respective subject module descriptive documents.   They did this with their departmental line managers and/or their other academic colleagues and/or in liaison with their external assessors, not with me.   This is how compassionate behaviours came to be re-termed 'group management skills.'

4.5 Sampling methods
To recruit tutors, and their modules into the study, I carried out the following:
a) Three in-house learning and teaching conference presentations which some Humanities and Business teaching staff attended.
b) Emailed staff in both target departments with invitations to participate.
c) Knocked on doors down the length of the Business department staff office corridors.
d) Ran two workshops: All Humanities tutors were invited to the first; 22 attended. After cycle 1, all Business tutors were invited to the second; 13 attended. (For a more detailed account of the workshops see Appendix II).

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[20] 'Insider' in that I was also teaching staff.

When a Humanities or Business tutor opted to bring a module onto the study their seminar students were automatically recruited, in principle. All of these students were then asked for their written consent to participate in the action research.   In both departments, undergraduate seminar groups typically numbered around 20 students.

To try to get a balance in each seminar group of gender and (in the case of the Business department) ethnic diversity, tutors in both cycles liaised early with their administration offices which drew up the lists of enrolled students and then seminar attendance registers. That said, students chose the modules they wanted and so overall numbers and balances were not totally controllable.   This was another reason why an experimental design would not have been an effective methodology.

In each cycle, the minimum number of modules needed for each stage was:

> Stage one: 3 or more
> Stage two: 1
> Stage three: 1.

This was achieved for each cycle as seen in Table 4.2 (cycle 1) and Table 4.3 (cycle 2).

Writing on sampling methods in qualitative research, Patton (2001) suggests it can be necessary to use more than one sampling method if the research questions are to be properly addressed and this was found to be the case in this study.   The sampling methods that were selected are shown here in Fig 4.4.   Then I explain what each one offered the study.

Fig 4.4   The five sampling methods
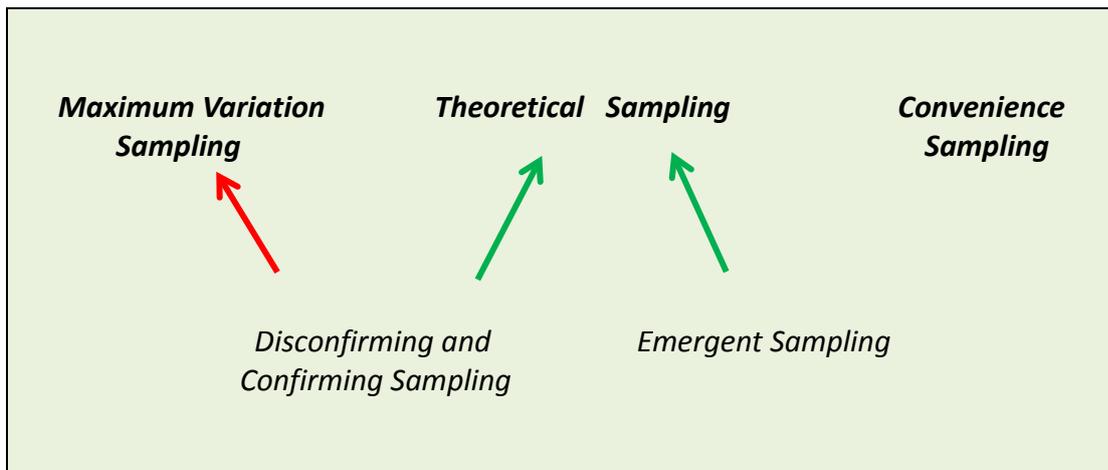
In this combination of sampling methods:

- Maximum variation, theoretical and, to a limited extent, convenience sampling were the main methods used.
- Disconfirming and confirming sampling supported maximum variation sampling.
- Emergent sampling and disconfirming and confirming sampling supported theoretical sampling.

While supplementing each other, some of these methods appeared at times to overlap in some aspects. Nevertheless, they were each separate enough in overall function to aid data triangulation.

4.5.1   Maximum variation sampling

The need for maximum available ethnic diversity of students, experiencing a range of subjects in contrasting disciplines, and with post graduate and undergraduate participants, required this type of sampling.

Also, participant tutors came into the study, with their modules, for a variety of reasons. Some took part because they were curious about and felt uncomfortable with behaviours in their seminars that they did not believe were intractable or acceptable in HE where group

thinking was meant to be exercised. One felt that as a researcher she had a responsibility in her teaching to help students also do research.   Another tutor thought that certain behaviours, which (he noted) established and sustained inequalities in his seminars, were entirely normal in life and not to be interfered with; students were adults. At the same time, he was seeking better academic output from more students in his seminars than was currently evident to him.   Another tutor came into the study describing some of his students as lazy; he cited young, local, black male students in particular as tending to grandstand in seminars and while doing so, demonstrate they had not read in preparation for the seminar.[21]   In effect, the study engaged the participation of tutors representing a diversity of beliefs about their students' and their own responsibilities and agency in the seminar room. Thus maximum variation sampling applied to tutors and not just students.

4.5.2   Theoretical sampling

This is attributable to Glaser and Strauss (1969). It was used for triangulating data in a pragmatic sense (Emmel, 2013; Patton, 2001).   Cohen and Crabtree (2006) define theoretical sampling as using separate pieces of information to deepen understanding of something that is not yet well understood or known, and for this purpose it was selected as the most centrally appropriate sampling method for the overall iterative strategy of the study.   In other words, findings that emerged from constant comparison of data as it became available (Glaser and Strauss, 1969) helped to determine who should be interviewed next or what behavioural tendencies I had better observe more closely in future seminars and so. This means of building up understanding of the phenomena under investigation helped to delineate concepts or major overarching themes out of my codes and categories. An example of how these codes, categories and overarching themes (or

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[21]   It will be recalled that in Chapter 2 this was also found amongst mainly white local students in the Humanities survey of 58 students.

concepts) were nested in Template Analysis is shown in Appendix I. This shows, first, an example of a template of categories, and then a sub template of codes pertaining to one of those categories. (See section 4.8 below on the selection of Template Analysis.)

4.5.3   Opportunistic or emergent sampling

I directly approached certain students for their interview or focus group participation (according to which they felt most comfortable) if I had observed a particular behaviour or incident(s) in one or more seminars that involved them, and required deeper investigation. This was emergent sampling (Patton, 2001; Cohen and Crabtree, 2006) and it supported the overall strategy of theoretical sampling.

4.5.4   Confirming and disconfirming sampling

This too was used alongside emergent sampling, but with the distinction that it focused on resistance to the CfP that disconfirmed the data from other students in the AR. Used for this purpose, this sampling method supported both maximum variation sampling and theoretical sampling.

4.5.5   Convenience sampling

Modules lasted for a limited number of weeks and therefore I also used convenience sampling. I sometimes asked students if they would consider participating in an interview or focus group when I met them by chance in the department.   This was an opportunistic way to take advantage of a situation that offered randomisation of student interviewee selection: I had not expected to see them, had not invited them or controlled their visit to the department. Also, during all stages of both cycles (and assessments too) I invited all and any students to participate in an interview or a focus group.   Another means of getting student respondents was to email invitations to all students who were involved in the action research, as was done in stage three of cycle 1.

Overall, my range of sampling methods was intended to assist data triangulation for responding to my research questions.

4.6   Selection and use of data collection tools

The following table shows the numbers and kinds of data collection tools selected to respond to each question. After the table, I explain how these tools were used.

Table 4.4   The data tools/sets used for each research question

Data collection tools used to address the questions	Research questions
1. Students' interview and focus group transcripts (all stages) 2. Tutor interview transcripts (all stages) 3. Seminar observation/field notes (all stages) 4. Module start and module end student-completed checklists (stage 2, cycle 1 only) 5. Film of assessed seminars (stage 3) 6. Internal assessors' written feedback to individual students (stage 3)	*Question b. **Cycles 1 and 2** In what ways is the compassion-pedagogy designed for this study used by participants in their seminars?*
1.Comparison of findings from cycle 1 with findings from cycle 2**.**	*Question c. **Cycle 2 only** Is the compassion pedagogy used differently according to whether students are local or international?*
1. Students' interview and focus group transcripts (all stages); 2. Tutor interview transcripts (all stages); 3. Seminar observation/field notes (all stages); 4. Film of assessed seminars (stage 3); 5. Internal assessors' written feedback to individual students (stage 3); 6. External assessor's report and correspondence (stage 3).	*Question d. **Cycles 1 and 2** Does the compassion pedagogy improve student social and learning experience of seminars?*
1.Comparison of findings from cycle 1 with findings from cycle 2 for question d).	*Question d. (i) **Cycle 2 only** Is there a difference according to whether students are local or international?*
1. Internal assessors' written feedback and grades to individual students (Year 2 of stage 3 of cycle 2); 2. External assessor report and correspondence. (Year 2 of stage 3 in cycle 2).	*Question e. **Cycles 1 and 2** Does the compassion pedagogy improve academic outcomes from seminars?*
1. Comparison of marks between white local students, international students and non-white local students: critical thinking in assessed essay, and critical thinking in assessed seminar discussion**.**	*Question e. (i) **Cycle 2 only** Is there a difference according to whether students are local or international?*

4.6.1 Seminar observations and field notes

Seminars in both the Humanities and Business Departments were 50 minutes long. In the first stage of both cycles I observed student/student and student/tutor behaviours in a small number of different subject seminars where the compassion pedagogy of Fig 1.1, (p4) had not been introduced. This was to look for compassionate (for example, inclusive) behaviours that were not attributable to introduction of the CfP. In stages two and three of both cycles I closely observed the first seminar of the module, without the CfP, and then introduced the CfP the following week.

Therefore, in relation to my questions, I observed micro social processes within seminar rooms both with and without the CfP. I observed which students appeared to be the most vocal or withdrawn and quiet, and how other students and the tutor responded (c.f. Scott, 1990). I noticed how clique/friendship groupings arranged themselves in the room, and how intimate was the proximity of the individuals in these groups to each other. I looked at how some single students or pairs of students came to monopolise the group (Yalom, 1985; Bion, 1961) and how others responded to this. I noted how, in other ways, students were excluded or included (Depue and Morrone-Strupinsky, 2005), by which verbal and/or non-verbal moves (McDermott, 1988), on whose part, when and why this appeared to happen and what observable effect there was (or not) on the group (Nitsun, 1996). I recorded whether features of the physical environment were used to mediate (non) communication.

In other words, the consistent use of McDermott's (1988; 2009) micro ethnographic methods for classroom observations was sustained through all stages of both cycles. I observed what effect there was, if any, on how these processes unfolded when group

member(s) engaged compassion strategies within their seminars. As much as possible I wrote my field notes unobtrusively during seminars, but handwrote most notes immediately after each seminar.

I used Glaser and Strauss' method of constant comparison with these notes (Charmaz, 2006). This is acknowledged as essential in Template Analysis (King, 1998, 2004) which was my preferred method of data analysis for reasons explained below. Therefore, the field notes were retrawled repeatedly and annotated with memos to keep track of incidents, processes and events that appeared to be related in some way from seminar to seminar, stage to stage and/or cycle to cycle.   This constant comparison assisted triangulation of emergent evidence across a range of data sets. These were collected through seven different methods. Thus, emergent categories (such as eye contact, or validating) were cross-referenced between field notes, interview/focus group transcripts, seminar observations,[22] analysis film of assessed seminars and so on, as these data sets became available (Padgett, 1998; Willig, 2007; 2008) provided useful and practical advice.

4.6.2   Interviews and focus groups

When students participated in focus groups, they most often opted to do this in their lunch hours, or in the evening because they tended to have different timetables. In these cases I provided sandwiches, crisps, fruit, and juices, aiming for a relaxed discussion, in which hopefully, they would discuss my questions mostly amongst themselves and with minimal input from me.

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[22]   In the findings Chapters 4 and 5, extracts of observations/field notes are in boxes to distinguish them from differently collected data.

Where I wanted to get representation in a focus group of say, local minority ethnic students, local white students and international students it was difficult when an individual was late or did not arrive. Therefore, although Morgan (1988) recommends around four people as the smallest focus group, there were occasions when there were three in a focus group during cycle 2.   I would suggest that if the sampling was on target i.e. the representation of the group membership (Morgan, 1998) was present, and if discussion was not impeded within the group by there being only three participants, then this group size was still feasible and capable of producing rich(er) data. Similarly, in their work on determining the optimal size of focus groups, Tang and Davis (1995) identify four critical factors, including the number of questions to be asked, and the time allowed for responses. They find that, above all, it is the aims of the research study which should determine the size of the focus group.

Interviews allowed a more in depth exploration of certain issues or aspects of a participant's experience than was sometimes possible in a focus group. Interviews allow for pauses to think that might be filled by others in a focus group.

4.6.2.1   Semi-structured and unstructured interviewing

It was made clear to interviewees and focus group members that the views and thoughts they expressed would be anonymised and treated as confidential. To try to put subjects at ease I began interviews and focus groups with very general questions (Kvale, 1996) about how participants had been enjoying the weather, a weekend or a special occasion for example.

The interviews and focus groups were initially progressed in a semi-structured way.

Examples of questions to suit this approach were:

> Q**:** In small group seminar discussions what do you think encourages
> students to talk?
> Q: What was your experience of the CfP?

As students began to talk, the interviews and focus groups became less structured and this was to provide students with sufficient space and time to confirm (or disconfirm) through substantiation (or the absence of that) any claims they made regarding their 'use' of the CfP and any possible effects. In other words, initial questions as above were followed up with probes[23] and these depended on what the students chose to talk about in response to these main, opening questions.

Unstructured interviews and focus groups are appropriate when there has already been some contact and familiarity building with informants prior to the meeting (Cohen and Crabtree, 2006) and this was the case with all my interview and focus group respondents. Nevertheless, in an unstructured approach the interviewer still has the research questions in mind. But data that may disconfirm data that has come before may be more likely to emerge in an unstructured interview than in a structured one (Ibid, 2006). For example, the unstructured interview could be the most likely to capture data from participants who found the CfP problematic or unsuitable.   .

Cousin (2009) notes the importance of the 'researcher's capacity to build a rapport' with interviewees (p74). In the same vein, Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) call attention to

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[23]   Examples: "Can you explain that?"   "Can you tell me about that?"   "Why do you think that is?"

the emotional and social aspects of the interview, and the need for researchers to be alert

and sensitive to these.   Cohen et al (2007) also cite Arksey and Knight (1999) on how joint

interviews help the researcher to "detect" how people "support, influence, complement,

agree and disagree with each other and the relationships between them" (Cohen, Manion

and Morrison, 2007, p373).   At the same time, I knew I could not eradicate my identity to

my participants as facilitator/teacher. This might steer what they said in interviews and

focus groups and so bias the data.   (See section 4.8 on my insider/outsider position.) This

underlined the importance of a sufficient range of data collection tools/sets (7) and sampling

methods (5) to constantly compare data and then triangulate findings.   With these

measures in place, pre-interview and pre-focus group, I reiterated my role clearly: as a

research student rather than a teacher. I emphasised my dependence on them to guide me

and the research away from 'imposing useless stuff' on future students.

In addition, Sherrard (1991) was helpful in pointing out that participants are not often

enough invited by the researcher to check on the interviewer's account of what the

participants have said, what they have done and what it means. For focus groups and

interviews, Kvale (1996) makes a similar point, so I asked for clarification when a respondent

said something that I thought ambiguous, or else I asked for more information: "Could you

tell me a bit more about that?"   In earlier interviews I would paraphrase a response back to

the student for him/her to validate or correct my interpretation of their words: "Have I got

that right?" Later I found it more useful to ask participants to do that instead of me, that is,

to explain again what they had just said. The local ethnic minority males in the study tended

to speak very quickly in their focus groups, and this was particularly useful with them.

One difficulty that can arise from using an unstructured or loosely structured approach is that when the data is transcribed, it can be seen that data responding to one research question may also respond to one or even more other questions.   This raises particular challenges for separating the data for each question.   How this affected my data analysis was a finding in itself and required interpretation in its own right.[24]

A key advantage for the study from using focus groups was that some questions might stimulate discussion amongst and between participants with minimal input from me. Participants might even ask each other their own questions.

4.6.2.2   Collecting and processing interview and focus group data

The interviews and discussions were recorded on an MP3 recorder, with a small cassette recorder also running as back up for possible equipment failure. In early interviews I tried to take notes but abandoned this for nil or minimal note-taking, in order to avoid unsettling participants, and distracting myself. Instead, before the interviews, I pre-planned a quiet space in which to make notes as soon as the interviews or focus groups were over.   Notes might be on non-verbal behaviour that could be important and so ought to be integrated into the transcripts. I noted, for example, suddenly raised eyebrows or repeatedly down cast eyes, an emphatic tapping on the desk to emphasise a point, lip biting, rolling eyes to heaven when recounting a particular experience and so on (McDermott, 1988).   I would listen to the tape the same day as the recording was made in order to correctly recall this body language, and identify where to attach these notes in the recording.

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[24] I explain this in the findings Chapters 5 and 6, and in the concluding Chapter 7.

My reflections on focus group proceedings – how they went, participants' apparent moods when they arrived, engagement with the questions, how appropriate these were in retrospect, and whether they should be reworded - were also made in writing immediately after each focus group had taken place. I typed up these reflections and placed each one at the end of its completed transcription. I also typed all the transcriptions myself because this engagement with processing the language whilst repeatedly listening in order to type complete phrases, helped me notice nuanced but sometimes relevant meta language - sighs, strategic pauses, emphasis placed on particular words,[25] light heartedness, or thoughtful noises and so on. It was also helpful, as McDermott (1988) and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) stress, to notice small gestures and moves or others kinds of body language. These too, when they seemed important for the analysis process, were recorded on the transcripts. This process was helped by keeping alongside me as I typed, the notes I had made immediately after the interview or focus group.

As each transcript was being typed, and again when it was completed, the first memos [notes and annotations (Charmaz, 2006, p72)] were written in the margins of the transcripts. Margins were left wide enough for these initial comments. Memo writing was essential. As in Grounded Theory (Ibid, 2006) and in Template Analysis, this tool captured and recorded interesting connections and contradictions across and within transcripts and between field notes and transcripts and other types of data sets. Memos were written constantly and from time to time took the form of mind maps. Overall, I did not find mind maps as helpful as I had first thought they would be because as the number of memos and sub memos

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[25] *Word stress*:   In some excerpts of transcripts seen in findings Chapters 5 and 6, the use of italics denotes particular words that participants stressed or emphasised.

comprising a mind map increased, it became too difficult to discern a coherent structure from the too many overlaps. The use of Template Analysis helped to correct this with its more structured linear, nested coding approach to the data (see Appendix I)[26] and in the meantime, I returned to memo writing in word documents, note books and in the purposefully wide margins of the interview transcripts.

Repeated reading of transcripts allowed me to reflect on and so deepen (and sometimes develop) my understanding of data. I then added to or changed my memos. New nuances would come into focus as I compared the transcripts of any earlier stage with data of a later stage and/or from a different collection method. Overall, the memos helped to refine the ongoing coding and categorization as is explained below in the section on Template Analysis.

4.6.3 Checklist of negative seminar behaviours

Shown above in section 4.1.1, (p89), this checklist was used as a pedagogical tool and was given to any student participating in step one of the CfP. It was also used as a research tool in cycle 1. That is, in cycle one, the students participating in stages two or three were given another blank checklist to fill in again, at the end of the module. This meant I could pair each student's first checklist to his/her second checklist filled in much later and make comparisons. I used a student numbering system to pair up the correct checklists together. The use of the checklist for this research purpose was ended after cycle one. The reasons are explained in Chapter 5 which presents findings from cycle 1.

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[26] Appendix I: Two example templates. One for categories (A) and a sub template: Codes
for one category (B)

4.6.4   Films of assessed seminars

It was not uncommon for oral assessments to be filmed in a number of departments in the host university.   In my study, the assessed CfP of each cycle (that is, stage 3 of each cycle) was filmed. Two subject tutors were present during assessment (the five MA literature students, cycle 1; the 38 undergraduate business students, cycle 2). The subject tutors assessed all the discussions separately and then moderated.   Then the films were sent to external assessors.

The 38 business students were filmed in the university's TV studio. With the help of the TV studio crew, multiple cameras were positioned strategically around each discussion group. This meant each individual student's facial expressions and non-verbal interactions through the discussion could be recorded for analysis afterwards [using McDermott's (1988; 2009) use of micro-ethnography].   This data was not available for all students all of the time during the assessment, but the cameras tracked speakers and responses to speakers constantly around the group throughout the discussions.

The filmed data was analysed blind by the post-doctoral researcher of student discussion group work based in a language research centre of another UK university. Having already assessed the appropriacy of the marking criteria key terms, discussed above, she now checked for correlation between the terms in the criteria and the associated behaviours actually observed on film.   Then she made an independent check for consistency of use of the criteria (or lack of it) by the four tutors in the two participant departments. Separately from this independent expert, I also analysed the film, not in terms of linguistics which was her core area of expertise but, with a view to exploring possible correlation in our findings,

through micro ethnography (Ibid, 1988; 2009). That is, I observed closely not only what was said, but out of what interactional processes these utterances arose. As part of those processes I examined eye contact along with tone of voice and other communicative signals that were observable on film.

The use of film allowed my repeated viewing of the same moves and I was able to identify nuances that might have been missed on a single viewing (McDermott, 1980). Under the presumably stressful conditions of a filmed, summative assessment with two assessors, I identified how far students were able to maintain the step one strategies compared to what they had been doing in their weekly seminars before the assessment. This filmed data was useful for a response to question (b).   I analysed the filmed data according to the methods of Template Analysis. I interpreted the findings with the help of my literature findings, from Bion (1961), Yalom and Leszsz (2005) and Nitsun (1996) for anti-group behaviours; and Bates (2005), Leahy (2005), P. Gilbert (2005), Neff et al, (2007) and Immordino-Yang et al (2009) on more pro-group behaviours.

The film data was compared with data collected by other methods and this supported the triangulation of findings.

4.6.5   Written feedback on assessed seminars

With students' permission I investigated the grades and written feedback given to each student by the internal assessors and agreed by the external assessor. This was also to respond to question (e).   The feedback was analysed for how tutor comments had been

framed linguistically.   Of particular interest to me was whether, and if so how, tutors had integrated their comments on behaviours with those on academic performance.

To conclude this section, seven data collection tools were used in response to my questions. To explain this range of tools, I note that Kingston's (2008) study of high levels of self-esteem amongst students likely to drop out of university made use of two data collection methods: a questionnaire and ten interviews. From these two, Kingston links high 'self-esteem' and attrition, but it is possible that the use of more tools from which to triangulate data may have mediated her findings in important ways and my own literature findings support this. Also, a range of data sets can help identify contradictions and relationships between three elements that are fundamental in anthropological field work: what participants report they are doing, what they are observed to be doing and what they state they *should* be doing [c.f. Scott (1990) and his notion of the public transcript].   These three phenomena might be found to be in conflict. One or more could be mediated by my insider/outsider position. I explain this position next.

4.7   Insider or outsider position?

This issue related to the ethics of the study. As a fellow student to the students, and a fellow tutor to the tutors, I might gather thicker description through this "heightened familiarity" (Mercer, 2007, p6) as an insider. Equally though, I might assume I understood more than I did and 'develop myopia' (Ibid, p6). Similarly, Alvesson and Skoldberg refer to how researchers may construct their own 'data' and this is another reason to value reflexivity.

On the other hand, as an outsider, (i.e. unknown to both students and tutors from outside the subject of the seminar) I might be more objective as a researcher, but this might not be much use if I was held at a distance by participants because of it. That could make candour, rapport and openness difficult to establish.

Generally speaking, the literature on insider outsider has moved away from the 1970's assumption of an either/or dichotomy between these two positions. Dwyer and Buckle (2009, p60) describe the space between these two and this is where the qualitative researcher is most likely be located because:

> noting the ways in which we are different from others requires that
> we also note the ways in which we are similar. This is the origin of
> the space between. It is this foundation that allows the position of
> both insider and outsider.

Mercer (2007) considers the researcher to be on an insider/outsider continuum; she suggests that the researcher moves back and forwards on this continuum constantly. I would suggest further that even within one interview, this insider or outsider position can shift several times, from topic to topic. I think this is likely mediated mostly by safeness - what the interviewee thinks it is safe or unsafe to reveal. Hellawell (2006) has refined this model of a continuum still further, to be several continua in parallel. This model did seem the most useful and realistic one, for example where I was researching amongst multiple participants in one room at a time I had very little control over where each participant could be placing me on an insider/outsider continuum. Hellawell suggests this more complex model will properly tax the researcher's attention to reflexivity.

118

One thing of note is that Nitsun (1996) suggests disciplines are sometimes guarded by informal, internal gatekeeping against the admission of knowledge, theory or practice that appears to be outside the imagined parameters or main narratives of the discipline. The majority of the theory underpinning step one of the CfP was not from current scholarship in the field of education, the humanities or business. I thought this might undermine tutors' inclinations to participate in the study but, as an English Language teacher, I was as much an outsider to the disciplines generating the theoretical basis of the action research as the other tutors in the study.   This had a helpful equalising effect between us as collaborating tutors and as fellow action researchers in their subject seminars.

4.8   Analysing the data: Template Analysis (TA)

My premise for this a study was that an over focus, found in the literature, on attending to student differences of language and culture had produced disappointing progress on repairing their communicative difficulties in fragmented learning communities. My literature findings had indicated why this might be so, namely that other, deeper aspects required attention, and these were based on similarity, not difference, between students. Thus, a number of semantics-oriented data analysis methods such as those explained and exampled by Leech and Onwuegbuzie (2007) were not suitable.[27]   Finally, despite being an English language teacher for many years, my reflection on Alvesson and Skoldberg's model, discussed above, discounted any last argument for using linguistics as my methodological basis for data analysis.   A range of data analysis techniques was needed for analysing, not linguistics, but psychosocial processes in the seminar room. These techniques were

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[27] *Data analysis methods:* keywords-in-context (KWIC), word count, classical content analysis, domain analysis and taxonomic analysis

available through Template Analysis.   Building on the work of Crabbe and Miller (1999), Template Analysis was developed by Nigel King (1998; 2004) for qualitative researchers interested in thematic analysis.   King is a qualitative researcher in applied psychology and Template Analysis is most often used in social psychology, but it has spread further, for example into business research (McDowall and Saunders, 2010).

As my chosen data analysis method, I explain the suitability of Template Analysis (TA) for analysing data in response to my set of research questions, as follows.
In relation to my research questions, it will be recalled that a set of a priori themes emerged from the literature search that were then incorporated into the design of the CfP. These themes were set out in the conclusion of Chapter 3, the literature search (Fig. 3.1, p76). In contrast to (what is acceptable in) Grounded Theory, a priori themes are a purposeful, pragmatic part of the use of TA. Its flexibility lies in its also allowing codes to be constructed from the data.

I initially considered using Glaser and Strauss' (1967) Grounded Theory (GT) instead to identify themes in my data.   For several reasons which I will explain next, Template Analysis was selected instead of Grounded Theory for the research strategy. First and foremost, GT could not be used because this study relied on its literature findings, which were found to provide an initial conceptual framework out of which the CfP was designed. Also, data generated from the use of the CfP and analysed was then interpreted using the theoretical base assembled from the literature search.   In GT this central position for literature findings is thought to present too great a risk to sound theory building.   At the same time though, it could suggested that attention should rather be on what it is in the researcher's head,

phenomenologically and historically (c.f. Foulkes, 1971 matrix, or McDermott's institutional relevancies).   This is a question not just of familiarity with parts of the literature, but of the researcher's underlying philosophical position, which mediates what a researcher 'knows' about the topic and his/her views on it (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2000; 2009).

In Template Analysis categorising and coding are carried out in much the same way as in Grounded Theory. Unlike in GT though, the process is not carried out to the degree of breaking the data into sometimes very small parts.   Alvesson and Skoldberg (2007) argue that over fragmentation of the data can mask key themes and processes that might otherwise be seen to emerge within and between data sets.   Though this degree of fragmenting of the data is not part of the TA approach to data analysis, TA does acknowledge its debt to Grounded Theory as in the use of constant comparison of the data. Thus within less atomised data, constant comparison conducted within data from up to 50 interview and focus group participants remains manageable.

4.8.1   The a priori themes and their codes: an initial template

Some a priori themes were posited by my research questions and literature findings.

4.8.2   A priori themes and emergent themes

Template Analysis allows for a priori themes to be identified that are directly concerned with responding to the research questions. However, there must be openness to the emergence of other themes besides those in these initial template(s). Unanticipated themes can subsume, override or change understandings of previously identified themes, including a

priori themes. From the above transcript rereading, memo writing and comparisons between and within data sets, a structured list of codes emerged that was hierarchical. That is, the coding was nested so that there were main codes and then sub codes. The task was to focus on the research questions allowing for other themes to emerge – new themes that were not the a priori themes.

 Finally, these codes and categories, or in TA's terms - sub themes and themes - and their master themes were nested in a hierarchical fashion into potentially, multiple templates. At the end of the study was the task of examining reflexively how the templates might be linked by unifying concepts.

http://hhs.hud.ac.uk/w2/research/template_analysis/whatis.htm

4.8.3 The use of TA and its relationship with the literature findings

I appreciate King's (1998; 2004) suggestion to researchers to begin work in a realistic way by having an initial a priori set of themes and codes to work with. Yet at the same time, there may be a tendency to overlay the data, even before the researcher has seen it, with expectations that can bias analysis and interpretation of results (c.f. Husserl's notion of bracketing off preconceptions about the nature of reality). Therefore I opted instead to anticipate main theme/template headings derived from my literature findings, but to keep the anticipation of other codes to a minimum. I opted for a priori themes that were indicated by my research questions and from the literature search findings. For example, to take the social and intellectual risks in the seminar room that make the seminar productive requires some degree of participants'   beliefs that they are safe to risk themselves.   The literature had identified the issue of safeness (Scott, 1990; P. Gilbert,, 2005; Bateson, 2005)

as being very likely a benchmark theme that needed to be watched for in the data, because it indicated what compassionate actions in seminars would be directly addressing. But I was not sure what codes would emerge, especially for tutors' experiences. I did not consciously anticipate these; I tried to guard against expectations impinging on the data from 25 years as a teacher in Further and Higher Education. Helpfully, Template Analysis is neither a completely top down nor bottom up approach to data analysis. It lies in between these two and this is one of its strengths: it is extremely flexible. King emphasises the importance in Template Analysis of an approach to the data that remains open ended to the very end of the research process. That suggested to me that it could accommodate complexity theory's acknowledgement of the sudden, the unpredictable, sometimes the small but highly consequential.

Thus the templates for this study were constructed in three stages over time in an organic way. First, from the research questions came anticipations of what some themes might be. Then these were rethought in the light of theoretical considerations found in in the literature. Next initial stages of the data analysis helped to reconfigure these where necessary. Finally, the main body of the data as it unfolded, my memoed reflections using Alvesson and Skoldberg and Grounded Theory's constant comparison and retrawlings of the growing body of data (re)shaped, side lined or deepened the a priori themes. Sometimes final templates moved quite far away from the original anticipations of what these would contain.

4.8.4 Descriptive versus analytical coding

There is a risk of making a false distinction between descriptive coding and analytical coding. To choose anything to describe from the data is an interpretative act. Going further,

Alvesson and Skoldberg support and extend the arguments of others, that selection of anything from data, even to describe it, involves a triple interpretation. A participant is interpreting his world when he/she acts in it, then he/she interprets his interpretation to the researcher (as during an interview) and this is the second interpretation. This double interpretation is then interpreted again by the researcher (if and when this researcher decides this item is worthy of note at all). At the same time, if the distinction between descriptive coding and analytical coding becomes very clear in a researcher's rendering something may have gone wrong: what is clearly descriptive and no more than that must move on or remain too shallow. Alvesson and Skoldberg assert that some GT-based studies can meet difficulties with this. I would suggest though that the superficial findings Alvesson and Skoldberg illustrate and worry about in some GT studies must be hard to avoid when all the data is to be coded from a completely bottom up starting point. It is not clear how important themes might be allowed to emerge and take precedence under this sheer weight of detail.

Going to the opposite consideration, where the distinction between descriptive and analytical codes is clear because the researcher is over analysing – jumping to conclusions about what the data means beyond what can be actually seen in it - again, something seems to have gone wrong. For my own data coding I could seldom make a clear, purposeful distinction between descriptive and analytical coding, although some methodologies propose the distinction can and should be made. Appropriately for my study, in Template Analysis the template does not make this (I agree with King) false distinction between 'descriptive' codes and 'analytical' codes. King points out that this does not mean that a theoretical model cannot emerge and/or theoretical questions cannot be answered when

the later stages of data analysis and constant comparison reach completion. By this time it has become clearer how and why the themes relate to each other. This can be represented by a mind map that shows links across the themes in different templates, something that King suggests can be very close to model building.

King also talks about meta levels of templates that describe underlying themes on which other main themes may sit together. He describes how this has led him in his own research to superimpose one template on top of another. For my study this indicated again that Template Analysis was an appropriate methodology: I considered there could be this 'superimposing' of templates, perhaps one for the psychosocial processes of white local students working with the CfP and another for such processes amongst more ethnically diverse students also working with the CfP. Triangulating the data could be assisted using these templates, for example using templates of themes (categories) and subthemes (codes) derived from data collected through different sampling methods.

4.8.5 Analysis of data and interpretation of findings

No matter how reflexive a researcher may try to be in identifying underling drivers to his/her ways of conducting research, there remain layers, nuances and subtleties in qualitative data (Cousin, 2009) that can remain beyond the researcher's perception (Alvesson and Skoldberg, 2009). In my research there might have been variables out of my sight (Law and Urry, 2004) that played an important part in how I constructed what emerged from the data and impeded my analysis. The influence of my philosophical position on how I interpreted my data must also be taken into account. However, I have tried to recognise and address such issues by making my philosophical position as transparent to myself and others as possible.

4.9   A critique of Alvesson and Skoldberg

Alvesson and Skoldberg discuss the need for qualitative researchers who attend to reflexivity in their interpretation of data analyses to make sure that this is based on systematically handled empirical, data-oriented work. They suggest Grounded Theory for this but with cautions concerning the problem of data fragmentation from over-coding. They also discuss with philosophical rigour the difficult question for GT of the literature review.   I suggest though that Alvesson and Skoldberg do not go far enough in offering a convincing argument as to how these difficulties and grey areas surrounding GT are to be handled by the researcher.   Interestingly, they make no mention of Template Analysis even though it addresses both of their cautions regarding the timing and use of the literature, and the costs of over coding.

Something that is also interesting in Alvesson and Skoldberg's work is the absence of any acknowledgement of complexity theory, even though their core proposal is that the researcher should seek ways to facilitate a triangulation of findings from different analytical perspectives because of the risks of one dimensional takes on data interpretation. This is a fundamental interface with principles that are also central in complexity theory. The rationales too are the same: in complexity theory it is held that methods are not innocent (Law and Urry, 2004) and this is a core reason why Alvesson and Skoldberg argue for research to be conducted reflexively.

4.10   The ethics of the study

The ethical issues arising for this study are that, first, social scientists enact selected realities whether they like it or not, and so must try to identify which ones they are selecting to reinforce and which to diminish (Law an Urry, 2004) and why. In other words all social scientists are involved in some aspect of social engineering.   Reid (2008) states further that without directing research-based, social engineering at purposeful reduction of current HE-generated inequities amongst students, just as much social engineering is needed to sustain the status quo, perhaps more.

Another ethical issue was a methodological one, related to complexity theory. It was not unique to this study but applies to any qualitative study, as follows.   Even at the time and place of investigation, observation can only occur "inadequately" (Law and Urry, 2004, p403) in sequential episodes and in one space at a time.   They find that current social science methods are not yet able to take account of the "fleetingness" (Ibid, p403) of inter subjective realities, their multiplicity of forms or their distance in time and space from the observed event.

Other ethical considerations (below) were identified in the planning and execution of the study.

4.10.1   Protecting academic standards

At the request of the Director of the University's Teaching and Learning Centre, I visited the University's Head of Academic Quality Assurance (AQA).   I explained to him the nature of the study. I showed him the marking criteria for assessment of seminars (Fig 4.2, p91) in the two departments where the action research was being conducted. He responded in writing, that the AQA office approved the teaching of the compassion strategies and that they

carried credit towards attainment of degrees from the university. The assessable ability to use the strategies for compassionate group management were considered to be a 'graduate attribute.'

4.10.2   My researcher role

Still looking at ethics, this section further develops the discussion of my insider-outsider position above. One ethically sensitive challenge I met on occasion was to stay within the bounds of my agreed agency as an observer and facilitator and not impinge beyond that boundary on someone else's (paid for) learning space. Sometimes it was not precisely clear where this boundary was. At other times it was clear but still ethically problematic.   For example, in some pre-pilot observations seminars I witnessed incidents that I judged called out for intervention, but I had to remain a silent observer; a guest in another tutor's seminar.   Incidents concerning the physical isolation of apparently friendless students were difficult to witness, as were the rare but memorable instances of bullying amongst students. One was particularly sexist and I could not stop myself intervening. I reflected on my role and entitlement as a researcher for some time afterwards.   On another occasion, I wanted to signal, almost illicitly, my encouragement to a quiet student who ventured an answer, even though her voice was shaking, but whose contribution the tutor did not respond to or acknowledge. It was sobering and humbling to sit in dozens of other people's seminars and to wrestle with the ethics of keeping to agreements over why I was there.

There was also the continuing possibility of the quality of participants' social and/or learning experiences being reduced as a result of their participation in this kind of study.   Students might feel disadvantaged by having people - from 'outside' - observing their actions closely and encouraging others to do the same, or they might feel that in my role as

researcher/facilitator, I was intruding on their relationship with their tutor and/or impinging on their time with him or her.

From a different perspective, some students might feel that step one of the CfP was a patronising exercise, perhaps useful to the few but inappropriate to the many and particularly themselves. Such students might not feel able to express these feelings to either tutor or facilitator/researcher.   Though I endeavoured to stay alert and mindful to such potentials throughout both cycles, I acknowledge that there were likely some transcripts – of both tutors and students - that were kept hidden from me throughout my involvement on a module with them.   Whether participants were constructing me as an insider or an outsider was likely a mediating factor.

4.10.3   Ethics approval

Ethics approval (Appendix III) was needed by more than one Ethics Committee of the host university, and was also re-applied for.   This was either to extend the permitted time of study or to add amendments. For example, permission to use a new type of data collection tool was applied for when I thought the collection tools already in use might not provide sufficient data to respond fully to a research question. Also, pedagogical aspects of the research itself required appropriate and respectful responses to unanticipated tutor and/or student takes on the compassion pedagogy, whatever these might be. The tutors and I acknowledged and understood that if one student objected to the action research inside his/her seminar it was unethical to continue, and in any case we were not permitted by the Ethics Committees to proceed under that circumstance. Teaching would continue without the CfP.

Before moving on to the findings chapters, there is now a brief overview of the how the above methodology unfolded in cycle 1 and cycle 2 respectively.

4.11   Conducting each cycle

4.11.1 Cycle 1

This cycle was able to address research questions b) and d) and to a limited extent, e). Its findings are presented in Chapter 5.

Stage one (Pilot: step 1 only of the CfP)

No adjustments were made to the planned methodology.

Stage two (Partial implementation of the CfP: steps 1 and 2).

The participant tutor (T4)[28] decided to continue her normal practice of pre-setting one set text per week for every student to read in preparation for discussion in small groups at the next seminar. This replaced the planned stage two of the CfP where each student would have prepared independent reading research each week for the small group seminar discussions.

Stage three (Full implementation of the CfP: steps 1, 2 and 3)

This was carried out on a Masters Literature module, but only two students enrolled on the module. Therefore this stage was repeated the following year. It was conducted on the same post graduate module amongst the five students enrolled.   In this second year of the module's participation, the lead tutor and I were only able to support students with the CfP for one seminar after it was introduced to them. After that, a different tutor each week took

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[28] See Chapter 5, section: **5.3.3**   Non-use of independent reading (step two of the CfP)

the seminar according to his/her particular area of expertise in literary theory. This was different from the previous year. It limited my collection of observation notes to the first two weeks only on this sample module.

Unplanned additional tutor interviewee: Tutor 5

While cycle 1 was being conducted, a tutor not directly involved in the study became interested in the CfP. Although not planned as part of the original methodology, she and I worked together with the CfP (steps 1 and 2) for several weeks in her seminars (2nd years/Level 5).   A year after our collaboration, she had combined her lecture and seminar into a single two-hour weekly workshop for her 28 x third year undergraduate students, and adopted full implementation of the CfP framework - all three steps - as the basis for these workshops.   She agreed to be interviewed for the purpose of exploring her rationale for raising the allocation of marks for the compassionate strategies to 35%. She is seen as Tutor 5 (T5) in Table 4.2 above.

4.11.2 Cycle 2

This cycle was able to address research questions b), c), d) and e). Its findings are presented in Chapter 6.

In stage one (Pilot: step 1 only of the CfP) I observed one seminar in an undergraduate Finance and Accounting module and another seminar in an undergraduate Market Research module. That is, I observed how students of greater ethnic diversity than in Humanities interacted with each other in discussion based seminars without the CfP.   I piloted step one of the CfP in a Tourism module.

Financial Strategies Module: I also piloted the CfP in a single seminar at the beginning of

module that aimed to prepare mainly international students for entry onto various Masters'

degree programmes in the Business Department. On this module two notable factors arose.

I will summarise them and explain how I adapted my methods to them for theoretical

sampling.

First, although the above module had initially been posited to host stage three of the cycle,[29]

both the business lecturer (T8) and the subject seminar tutor (T7) rejected use of the CfP

step one after the seminar in which it was first introduced.[30]   Their reasons are given in

cycle 2's findings, Chapter 6. The second factor was that assessment at the end of the

module was run as in previous years: students were assessed by the seminar tutor (T7) and

the module business lecturer (T8), as follows.   Debates amongst six students sat around a

table (three students per team) were filmed. Prior to the assessment, each student did

individual research on the accounting strategy that his/her team was advocating for the

scenario given out by the subject tutors.   In the assessment there was presentation of each

student's findings and then debate on that contribution towards settling the question of

which team's strategy was the more appropriate for the scenario.

The assessment design had particular similarities to the assessment (stage three) of the

CfP.[31]   This factor, combined with the seminar tutor's rejection of the CfP, allowed

theoretical sampling as follows. It was possible to explore whether it was the nature of a

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[29] T7 (seminar tutor), the lecturer (T8) and the programme tutor (T9) had each given written consent for this.
[30] The business lecturer (T8) did not attend the seminar.
[31] a. independent research by each student
     b. use of the research to contribute to face to face, task focussed interactions
     c. dependency on other students (in each team of three) to achieve the task.

group interactive/speaking assessment in itself, and not the CfP, that might facilitate observed acts of inclusivity.

Therefore, after the above assessment had been marked, I carried out:

a. analysis of the films of the students (not done in stage *one* of cycle 1).

b. a joint interview with two students: Nigerian student, 15 (S15), who had attended the CfP step one introductory seminar; and Malaysian student, 16 (S16), who had not.

Also for theoretical sampling, I joint interviewed T7 and T9 to further explore reasons for the rejection of the CfP. This too was carried out after the module was over. T8, the assessing business lecturer (T8) was not available for interview.

Stage two (Steps 1 and 2 of the CfP)
Steps one and two of the CfP were run for eight weeks in a single module to address questions b), c) and all of d). The seminar subject tutor, T10, provided the participating module on which were 22 x 2nd year students of mixed ethnicity.

Stage three (Full implementation of the CfP: Steps 1, 2 and 3)
Stage three was implemented as planned in a single module. T10 was the subject tutor again, and 41 students were on the participating module. The students were divided into two seminar groups of around 20 each, as would have happened with or without the action research. At the end of the 12 week module, students were individually assessed in small group discussions, as for step three of the CfP. The seminar assignment carried 40% of the module marks. An essay carried the other 60%. Of the 40% allocated for the assessed seminar discussion (70%) marks were for critical thinking, and (30%) were for eliciting from

others, including them in eye contact, validating and so on according to the terms of the marking criteria seen in Fig 4.2 (p91).

Next, each student's mark for critical thinking in the assessed discussion was compared with his/her mark for critical thinking in the 2,000 word essay.   In response to question e) and e(i) this was to explore whether assessing students' use of step one of the CfP enhanced or diminished their demonstrations of critical thinking, relative to the same category in the essay. This comparison had not been possible in cycle 1.

The next two chapters (5 and 6) present the findings from using the above methods, for cycle 1 and cycle 2 respectively.   Each chapter ends with a discussion of its cycle's findings.

4.12 Summary

This chapter has described the study's methodology, starting with its origins in my philosophical and epistemological position.   Action research was conducted over two cycles to trial the compassion focussed pedagogy (CfP) that was designed using the findings of the literature review. Cycle 1 conducted research amongst mainly white local students in and after their CfP seminars. This was done in a Humanities department of a UK university. Students were observed in their seminars (n=105). Of these, some participated in one-to-one interviews or focus groups (n=14).   Cycle 2 was conducted amongst more diverse cohorts of students in the Business department of the same university.   Again, students were observed in their seminars (n=135). Of these, some participated in one-to-one interviews or focus groups (n=20).   Five sampling methods and seven data collection tools were used over the two cycles. In combination these tools allowed constant comparison of the data as it became available within and between the two consecutive action research

cycles.   For data analysis, I used Template Analysis, a thematic analysis method, and I explained why this method was used and why other possibilities were rejected as less suitable.   My insider/outsider perspective was explained in this chapter and linked to the discussion of the ethical implications of the research.

5.0   Introduction

Cycle 1 addressed research question (b) on use of the CfP, and question (d) on whether or not using the CfP improved students' social and/or learning experiences.   The data sets used for each question are immediately below in Table 5.1, and Table 4.2 (from Chapter 4) is a reminder of the participants. Section 5.2 identifies findings on data handling such as what to do about pieces of data that responded to more than one question. Using data sets related to assessing compassionate conduct in seminars, I demonstrate the extent of this issue in section 5.3. After this, I present the rest of the evidence under each question. I start with the negative evidence: *Delays and barriers to use of the CfP* (section 5.4). This is to inform and support a (more critical) reading of the much greater amount of contrasting, positive data that follows. Section 5.7 is my conclusions and 5.8 is the chapter summary.

Table 5.1   The questions and their data sets

Research questions	Data collection sets
Question b. In what ways is the compassion-pedagogy designed for this study used by participants in their seminars?	1. Students' interview and focus group transcripts (all stages) 2. Tutor interview transcripts (all stages) 3. Seminar observation/field notes (all stages) 4. Module start and module end student-completed checklists (stage 2) 5. Film of assessed seminars (stage 3) 6. Internal assessors' written feedback to individual students (stage 3)
Question d. Does the compassion pedagogy improve student social and learning experience of seminars?	1. Students' interview and focus group transcripts (all stages); 2. Tutor interview transcripts (all stages); 3. Seminar observation/field notes (all stages); 4. Film of assessed seminars (stage 3); 5. Internal assessors' written feedback to individual students (stage 3); 6. External assessor's report and correspondence (stage 3).

5.1 Cycle 1's participants

This table identifies numbers and types of the participants in each of cycle 1's three stages, and the data collection methods that were used with them.

Table 4.2 Cycle 1's participants by stage and data collection methods

In-Seminar Observations/field notes					
Stage One with Pilots		**Stage Two** One module, no assessment		**Stage Three** Two modules with assessment	
Students: Numbers subject, level, gender	*No of Tutors*	*Students: Numbers, subject, level, gender*	*No of Tutors*	*Student: Numbers, subject, level, gender*	*No of Tutors*
19 – History 2nd yrs: 8 m/11f	1 (T1/f)	21 History 1st yrs: 9m/12f	1 (Hist T4/f)	2 – Literature/MA : 2f	1 Lit MA (T2/m)
18 – Lit 3rd yrs: 7m/11f	1 (T3/m)			5 - Literature/MA : 2 m/3f	1 Lit MA (T6/f)
34 – Philosophy 1st yrs: (two seminar groups) 16f/18m	2				
17 – Journalism 1st yrs: 10m/7f	1				
Participant totals: 88	5	21	1	7	2

<u>*Total seminar participants observed*</u>: **105 students + 8 tutors**

Interviews and Focus groups					
Stage One with Pilots		**Stage Two** One module, no assessment		**Stage Three** Three modules with assessment	
Students: subject, level, gender	*Tutors: subject and level*	*Students: subject, level, gender*	*Tutors*	*No of students by subject and level*	*Tutors*
interviews: Lit 3rd yr: (S1 f) Lit 3rd yr: (S2f)	*Interviews* Lit (3rd yrs) (T3/m) Hist (2nd yrs) (T1/f);	*Interview:* Hist/L5 (S3/f)	*Interview* Hist (1st yrs) (T4 /f)	*Joint interview:* Lit/MA: (S4f; S5f)	*Interview* Lit MA (T2/m):
					Lit MA (T6/f)
					1 Hist (T5/f)
Total 2	2	1	1	2	6
		Student focus group: Hist 1st yrs: (S6f, S7f, S8m, S9m)		*Student focus group:* Lit MA: (S10m, S11f, S12f, S13f, S14m)	
		4		7	

<u>*Total seminar participants in focus groups or interviews:*</u>

14 students + 6 tutors
(And 1 external assessor)

One External Assessor for MA Lit final, filmed seminar:
Telephone interview and email correspondence (m)
1

5.2   Findings on data handling

a.   **Field notes/observations in seminars:**

There was not always observable, physical evidence of students noticing or not noticing

unhelpful behaviours. Students could be consciously noticing disadvantaging behaviours,

but I could not always identify this if they did nothing about them.   At the same time, the

student might take action later when what the student felt was a suitable opportunity arose.

I might not be observing in that moment and this was a difficulty for my observations.   A

stage two incident concerning two first years, Cathy and John,[32] demonstrates this waiting

for the right opportunity to help (see section 5.4.1 below).

b. **Checklist of negative behaviours**

As shown in Fig 4.1 (p89) this was given to each student in any seminar intended to

introduce the CfP, for him/her to record what negative behaviours he/she had noticed, if

any, in previous seminars. In stages 2 and 3, at the end of the CfP module, students filled in

blank checklists again. Then pairs of 'before' and 'after' checklists were compared. This

usefulness of this data set was limited because even the intention to take action on these

ticked behaviours could not be assumed from what appeared on the checklists.

Another finding arose with the checklist as both a pedagogical and research tool.   It was

suggested before the stage 1 pilots by a teaching colleague outside the study, that there was

over emphasis on negative behaviours. They represented the difficulties with seminars that

helped conceive the study and have been explored in Chapters 1, 2 and 3. Nevertheless, she

felt strongly that students should have the opportunity to match these negative seminar

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[32] All student participants who are individually cited from my observation notes of critical incidents have been
given pseudonyms: 'John', 'Cathy', 'Lucy', 'Lorraine', 'Mandy' except for S3 who was also an interviewee.
The interview and focus group student participants were given numbers as seen in the tables of participants
above.

behaviours with more helpful opposite behaviours and that these should be provided to them on another list.   When I devised this matching exercise for students to do in small groups they found they could not agree on neat matches; groups and individuals offered different rationales for different choices. The exercise was dropped from the CfP at stage one because it was identified as too prescriptive and neither supported nor informed participants' subsequent explorations of their own compassion resources for seminars. Students adapted the CfP strategies during their discussions while still keeping to core definition of compassion: to notice disadvantage and take action to reduce it. This was demonstrated by most of the findings of cycle 1.

c.   Coding and categorising

Regarding question d)[33], there was a methodological difficulty with isolating the data on student social experience from that on learning experience. The transcript data showed these two aspects of d) tended to be linguistically integrated in complex and nuanced ways. Breaking the data down too zealously in the process of coding and categorising, in order to separate it into either 'effects on social experience' or 'effects on learning experience', had the effect of decontextualizing key units of data and falsely removing the link between social and learning experience that was emergent in the majority of interviews and focus groups. This seemed counter to a main principle of both Grounded Theory and TA, which is to let the data speak. However, using Template Analysis it was possible to allow potentially important findings, on the relationship between social and learning experience, to emerge contextualised and intact. In the next section, I use just one data set to demonstrate the extent to which findings for one research question were equally pertinent to another.

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[33] Does the compassion pedagogy improve student social and learning experience of seminars?

5.3 Overlapping data on CfP use and social and learning experience

This section provides the first part of the cycle 1 findings for questions (b) and (d):

Question b.	In what ways is the compassion-pedagogy designed for this study used by participants in their seminars?
Question d.	Does the compassion pedagogy improve student social and learning experience of seminars?

The five post graduate students in stage three (full implementation of the CfP) were required in their final, assessed discussion group to sit around a table with their four fellow students and each present - for five minutes - his/her individual research on a different literary theory.[34] Then they discussed together how the five theories applied to a particular novel selected for the assessment by the module tutor. [35]

Individual written feedback to all five students showed that the two assessing tutors did not separated their feedback into the two broad categories - research and group management skills (compassionate conduct). Yet these were clearly distinct in the structure of the marking criteria (Fig. 4.2, p91). As can be seen next, the feedback on both categories was integrated in ways that could not then have been separated back into the original, two categories:

> ***Feedback to S13***: … [you] demonstrated some effective interpersonal skills (for example, questioning another member of the group in order to help him develop his reading, asking for clarification at a key point). Your contribution to the group discussion was effective on a number of levels. *Grade: B+ / 60%*

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[34]   The five literary theories were: eco-criticism, authorship, post colonialism, Marxism and feminist literary theory.

Feedback to S12:   You are very good at questions which draw out responses from others ('Did you notice ...?'; 'What did you make of ...?' etc.)
Grade: C/54%

Feedback to S11:   Your interpersonal skills were good. You asked relevant questions... Your contribution to the group discussion was effective on a number of levels. Throughout the hour you remained an open, responsive and highly-engaged member of the group.
 Grade: 60%

Feedback S10:   You brought a great deal of useful research and insight to the table with excellent signposting, eye contact and verbal clarity.   You asked direct and relevant questions of other members of the group, maintaining the momentum of the discussion.
Grade: A / 72%

This feedback suggests some correlation between student actions to enhance social inclusivity, and the opportunities available to others to participate and to think more critically.   With a different tutor (T5), teaching a different subject to a different level, but using the CfP (all steps) for her seminars, the same correlation occurred. It occurred to the extent that T5 was surprised at the effect it had on some students' marks for critical thinking. This is an extract from her interview account of assessing 28 x 3rd history students in small discussion groups under CfP conditions:

> T5: ...[Five] students who were actually very weak
> academically in their writing I gave very high marks to -
> because they did actually ask very interesting questions....

[They] did really well in the discussion groups – because of
things like being encouraged to speak, and pushed a bit more.
And *they* encouraged other people to ask questions and
supported *them*.[36]

T5, a graduate of, and ex teaching staff member of Oxford University, awarded a 1st to each of these five 'very weak' students for the greater strength of their sustained arguments on aspects of British history, against students who she knew were high academic achievers:

T5:   *That* surprised me. [37]

She said her internal moderator was initially also surprised, but approved all five 1^{sts} on viewing the film.[38]   Both markers concluded some correlation between the quality of the thinking processes in the discussions and the work on compassion in the seminars. They raised the allocation of individual marks for students' compassion in seminar group work from 25% to 35%. The external assessor approved.

On the other hand, returning to the post graduate literature assessment feedback, there was also evidence on film of student *impingement* on other group members' social and learning experience. During the assessment, S12 presented her theory - eco criticism - for 20 minutes instead of the required 5 minutes:

Feedback to S12: [There was] a lack of editorial control over your
material and implicitly a lack of consideration for the group.
Grade: C / 54%

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36   T5 stage three, post assessment, one-to-one interview, page 1, lines 32-35
37   T5, stage three, post assessment, one-to-one interview, page 1, line 39
38   It must be noted, for its relevance to my stated methodology, that T5 later explained two of these 1sts
      went to local, ethnic minority students arguing on British History.

In addition, S14 demonstrated limited contribution to others' learning ('interrogative') or social ('supportive') experience during the assessment:

> ***Feedback to S14:*** You were not proactive on an interpersonal level; for example, you rarely addressed other members of the group in either interrogative or supportive ways. Grade: C / 54%

Taking all the above data together, it is clear that use of the CfP and learning and social experiences were closely interdependent in the data. Multiple sampling methods and data collection tools helped to cross check findings as they emerged. One way this was helpful was to indicate which question was most pertinent to which items of data. On this basis I present the rest of my findings under their related questions.

Section 5.4, *Delays and barriers to use of the CfP*, is offered next. Here, I present the rest of the available evidence, all that could be found, of a negative response to questions b) and d), i.e. that for some students, the CfP might not have been appropriate. This is largely focussed on some students' *initial* responses to the CfP but the main interest is in S3 who experienced particular discomfort with it for a longer period into her participating module (stage 2).

5.4 Delays and barriers to use of the CfP

Mainly in relation to step one of the CfP, all of this section responds to:

Question b.	**In what ways is the compassion-pedagogy designed for this study used by participants in their seminars?**
Question d.	**Does the compassion pedagogy improve student social and learning experience of seminars?**

5.4.1 Avoidant eye contact: observations

When it occurred, avoidant eye contact was the strongest inhibitor of use of the CfP than any other that was identified. The meaning of avoidant eye contact is illustrated by the following incident. In the third seminar of stage two, cycle 1, I observed a session where, unusually, students were taken to a computer room. They were put into pairs by the tutor and asked to search for particular historical court records online. In their pairs, students sat side by side, at one computer each and were clearly able to see each other's screens. One pair of students at the end of a row of computers, included a male, John, who seemed to be often shyer than other students.   His computer screen activity showed he was making rapid progress with the online research task but his female partner, Cathy, was making none because she could not log on. Neither student spoke; they did not appear to know each other. Cathy had missed the seminar that introduced the CfP.   She did not ask John for help and he did not offer it. Other pairs were interacting around them. Only inches apart, they remained focused on their screens and notably, appeared to be intending to avoid all eye contact with each other. This continued for several minutes, until finally, I approached and said to them: "Cathy this is John, John this is Cathy." As I withdrew, eye contact and introductory conversation between the two commenced at once, almost with urgency. John leaned over and helped Cathy log on and both now seemed comfortable to share a confined space as though there had been no previous difficulties. It appeared there had been no underlying unwillingness on John's part to help; it seemed possible he had been waiting for some external loci to offer him legitimising permission - the opportunity - to address Cathy's difficulties.   This suggested that even if students noticed disadvantage to others and wanted to help but did not do so immediately, they might nevertheless be alert for a suitable opportunity to do so when they could. This was a challenge for my observation skills.

Lucy

In the initial weeks of the module in stage 2, another student seemed to avoid eye contact at particular points during her small group discussion:

> **Excerpt A from seminar observation notes**
> **(Stage two, week four):**
> At the moment Lucy begins to speak, she casts her eyes downwards and fiddles with a pencil and stays like this through all her 20-30 second contribution. Only when she has finished speaking does she look up and face the group.

It is possible that personal safeness was a primary concern to Lucy, even if not consciously, and that facing others may have caused her sufficient stress to derail her cognitive processes (Cozolino, 2013; P. Gilbert, 2005).

Student 9   (S9)

Even S9, who tended to monopolise in the (stage 2 module) history discussions, sometimes felt he could not use inclusive eye contact when he spoke. He explained to his fellow focus group members:

> S9: I tend to peer down when trying to look at students when contributing in the discussion because I feel nervous about something, and if I say something that's inarticulate or doesn't communicate it will make me feel stupid to the rest of the students.[39]

Like other students who avoided eye contact - for example, S14 - S9 was cutting himself off from signals of interest, enquiry or support from other students.   But S9's data supported

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[39] S9, male, stage two, focus group transcript, p1, lines 9-10

Yalom's (1985, p342) assertion that that monopolisers may themselves sometimes be anxious (although Yalom did not investigate eye contact in this regard).

Student 3 (S3)

In the following vignette, S3's data is important because it puts into question the usefulness and appropriacy of the CfP for some students, (despite its apparent adaptability); it helps illuminate why and how that might be.   I conducted a very loosely structured one-to-one interview with S3 in the middle of stage two after I observed her particular behaviour in the CfP seminars; it seemed different from that of other students overall.   For example, in week four of stage 2, I made the following field notes on her.

> ***Excerpt B from seminar observation notes***
> ***(Stage two, week four)***
> When tutor speaks from front of class to call in the discussion outcomes, 3 out of five in one group look at her. When she asks this particular group for their views, one girl (S3) bends her head down and 'shades' her eyes with her hand on her forehead. She keeps her eyes on the tutor; she is bent low (behind the person in front of her) and is physically hiding from the tutor.

From this and other similar observations of her behaviour I asked S3 if she would agree to an interview.   My purpose was to explore her lived experience of seminars, with and without exposure to the CfP, and to find out if the CfP was the cause of her evident discomfort in the CfP seminars. I felt some surprise when she consented at once.

In her interview S3 said:

> If you're in a small group and you do some work I get to know
> people better and so I can talk to them without being all
> nervous.[40]

This seemed more helpful to her than bigger group discussions because she considered

herself to be a very shy person:

> It's just initiating conversation, or just saying something to
> someone. It's just horrible.[41]

And added:

> That's kind of why I came to uni. To try and come out of myself.[42]

S3 talked repeatedly about a seminar she was attending outside of the study that was

managed for more whole group discussion:

> It's just the lecturer everyone's sitting around, around in a
> circle[43] … and you have this hole and everyone sort of stares at
> you, it's really horrible.[44]

An incident had occurred in this seminar that was so much on S3's mind in our interview

that I began to consider that it (or what it represented to her) could be mediating her (non)

use of the CfP in the action research seminars.   The tutor had asked her a question about

the set reading:

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[40]   S3 female, first year, mid stage two, interview transcript, p2, lines 40-42
[41]   S3 female, first year, mid stage two, interview transcript, p4, line 97-98
[42]   S3 female, first year, mid stage two, interview transcript, p6, line 179
[43]   S3 female, first year, mid stage two, one-to-one interview transcript, p2, line 46
[44]   S3 female, first year, mid stage two, one-to-one interview transcript, p2, lines 40-42

..she sort of shouted at everyone. And it's because I couldn't

answer – *me*. And I *had* done the reading; I just didn't know what

to say. And she was like putting a lot of pressure on you, and she

was just like, "Can you tell me?" and I was like "Well, no" and she

went, "Well you haven't read it then," and I went "Well I have."[45]

S3's feedback on her assessed essay - marked by the subject tutor she was hiding from (previous page) - does indicate she was a conscientious reader:

GENERAL COMMENTS   B1/65%
*This essay is based on a careful reading of the three articles. You demonstrate
an excellent grasp of the question and have found good material to support
your discussion. You make some good connections between articles.*

ACTION PLAN
*Have more confidence in your abilities. You are very quiet in seminars but
could clearly contribute much more.*

Her attention seemed to be on survival strategies not just in the seminars she was describing

above but also, apparently, in the action research seminars which were going on in parallel.

The 'biography' of her 'inarticulateness' (McDermott, p38) and "… its point of contact with

ongoing events"   (Ibid.), could be relevant to understanding her non-use of the CfP:

> S3: ...She was shouting at a lot of people in there because they
> hadn't done it and they didn't know. But it's so hard when you do
> know and you just can't speak.[46]

In dealing with these parallel events, S3 appeared to be experiencing the CfP as putting still

more pressure on her because it invited communicative interconnectivity between students

when she wanted to *dis*connect:

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[45]   S3 female, first year, mid stage two, one-to-one interview transcript, p4, line 169

[46]   S3 Female first year, mid stage two, one-to-one, interview transcript, p7, lines 205-206

S3: I managed to avoid talking last time [*in the CfP seminar*].

Everyone else spoke except me. *(Laughs)* I'm worried that I'll get

noticed next time. They'll notice it's my go and they'll go "you didn't

say anything" and they'll pick me up.

Q: What will happen then?

S3: I'll just freeze and… I don't know.

Q: What will happen when you freeze?

S3: I have so much things [sic] going through my head at once, and I

just feel like I'll just look down and won't answer. I'll just wait until

they go away and move on to the next person. *(She drops her head*

so low as she sits on her chair, she seeems almost in a foetal position).

Q: Have you ever considered saying when you put your head down "I

can't answer right now"? *(An available strategy that the whole group*

had agreed in her presence).

S3: Erm, no.[47]

It was possible that the difficulties with shyness that S3 had brought with her to university,

together with her recent experience of other seminars, were inhibiting (or prohibiting) her

use of the CfP. Her priority appeared to be to employ strategies for personal safeness (c.f.

Cozolino, 2013) as illustrated in Excerpt B (observation notes, above). In order to try to

understand in what circumstances S3 might find herself less overwhelmed, feeling safer and

thus perhaps more inclined to use the CfP, I explored the following scenario of small group

work with her:

Q: If other students in your group were as anxious as you or

nearly as anxious as you, would you feel that the seminar

experience was easier and that you could talk more?

S3: Yeah.

---

47   S3 Female interview transcript, p3, lines 69-80

Q: Do you know why?

S3: Erm, (*becomes much more fluent now*) I suppose you can identify with them more, and if I'm with other people that are really nervous, I kind of talk more than them? If they're worse than me? I have met - I *have* met some like that. So I end up talking. It's kind of good in a way to be with other nervous people.

Q: Do you ask them what their opinion is - ?

S3: Erm…. No. *(Pause)* No.[48]

It was not clear why S3 did not elicit from others – a key component of the CfP – when there was no obvious threat entailed for her. I wondered if it was possible that she might be discounting the views of people even less confident than herself because she was stratifying and ranking herself and others in ways that the CfP was meant to be dismantling. It appeared that she was:

S3: If someone's coming up with an intelligent answer, it makes me think I'm not as intelligent as that. And then I can't talk. [49]

This harsh self-ranking recalls my earlier exploration of the differences between self-esteem (Kingston, 2008) and self-compassion (Neff, 2003).   At the same time the theme of eye contact arose several times in her interview. She was particularly sensitive about eye contact, yet without it, as for S14 above, she could not access any non-verbal signals of support to her from around the group which might make her feel safer:

S3: It's just horrible; I don't like people looking at me.   It's just embarrassing- *(Stirs her tea, keeps looking down at it).*

Q: It's embarrassing if people look at you?

---

[48]   S3 Female, first year, mid stage two interview transcript, p10, lines 272-282

[49]   S3, stage two interview transcript, p9, lines 257-258

(She puts her teaspoon down, gaze still lowered).

S3: Yeah that's the thing. I just go red. It's horrible.

Q: Is that just happening in seminars?

S3 : *All* the time.[50]

Overall, the issue of eye contact had been pivotal for her not only in the action research seminars, but in other seminars and outside of seminars too.   At the time of her interview, the CfP appeared not to be enhancing either her learning experience or her social experience. It appeared not to be enhancing her ability to positively mediate the social and learning experience of others. This data was relevant to research question d).

To conclude this section, it was found that a minority of students and one tutor were unable to initiate and/or maintain inclusive eye contact with others – a key component of step one of the CfP.   When students avoided eye contact, such as by using physical objects like a computer (John/Cathy), pencils (Lucy), or notes (S14), signals of support could not be noticed and reciprocated.   Amongst other students though, there was some validation of this behaviour which appeared empathic, for example from S2, a mature, confident student:

S2:   It's very easy when you're with people to be shy and to look down."[51]

Nevertheless, from my observations, some students did not or could not intervene in avoidant eye contact. It involved objects in the physical environment and so was different from what came to be categorised as 'excluding eye contact.'

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50   S3, female, stage two, one-to-one interview transcript, p1, lines 17-24
51   S2 female, stage one, one-to one interview transcript, p2, line 92-93

5.4.2 Excluding eye contact

Excluding eye contact arose if, person A looked only at person B and no other group member, *whenever* person A spoke.   This excluding eye contact appeared to be unconscious on the part of person A, but was a very frequent occurrence in many groups. It was damaging to group cohesion in that it had the effect of setting up an alpha pair. Therefore, it was suggested and agreed during each introduction to the CfP (step 1, Fig 1.1, p4) that if a student was held in the eye contact of another in this way, then breaking eye contact gently to look at others, that is, to channel the speaker's eye contact away to these other group members could restore inclusive eye contact around the group.   Inclusive eye contact was identified in Chapter 3 as a key aspect of compassionate behaviour in group discussions (step one).   However, interrupting excluding eye contact sometimes presented a challenge for participants - tutors as well as students. In an interesting event in a CfP stage 1 piloting seminar, a tutor became trapped in the eye contact of a dominant, female student speaker and held in one to one dialogue with her for a prolonged period while his other students waited for him to resume what he had been saying to them. In his interview later he recalled his discomfort during this situation, but said the idea of using the CfP to break eye contact with her had seemed even more uncomfortable and he had been unable to act:

> T3: …it seems a more, um, not aggressive way, but a more kind
>
> of, um, obvious signal to send which I wasn't quite confident
>
> enough to do. That's me being wimpish.[52]

The wish not to be seen negatively in one person's mind could sometimes overwhelm the need to serve the group's needs. Breaking eye contact with a dominant other did require

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[52]   T3, stage one, one-to-one interview transcript, p3, lines 81-83

much support in the early stages of exposure to the CfP for a number of students until they became more confident with it.

5.4.3 Non-use of Step Two's independent reading

Step 2 of the CfP required students to carry out individual, independent reading on a topic set by the tutor, e.g. from the previous lecture and share their findings with others in discussion groups in the next seminar. As stated in section 4.11.1 in the previous chapter, T4 did not use this part of the CfP but opted for one set text per week for everyone to read.

Sometimes half of the students admitted they had not read the set reading when she asked them each week.   It seriously impaired their capacities to contribute meaningfully to discussions of the texts.   This may be why, at the end of the module, T4 concluded from using only step one of the CfP, that:

> ….once people were lively I then started to think, 'well that
> was brilliant they all said something.' But some of it was
> rubbish.   [It] made me realise that my expectations had
> become very low. [53]

The situation nevertheless gave rise to the following interesting data in relation to S3.   On one occasion, 5 out of 12 attending students had not done the set reading. They cited other more pressing assignment deadlines as the reason.   T4 considered sending the non-readers out of the seminar. The following alternative was tried and my field notes recorded this:

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[53]   T4, stage two tutor, interview transcript, p2, lines 56-57

153

> **Excerpt C: stage two week 7**
>
> 5/12 are non-readers so they are put in 3 pairs and 2 groups of 3. Those who have done the set reading are to present/explain the article to non-readers. T4 says the non-readers must then offer an account of the article. Lucy and S3, as readers, seem now purposeful/ animated in their exposition of the article. The non-readers taking notes with speed and concentration; some questions too.

This incident suggested that Lucy and S3, two of the shyest students in the group, were able to speak when space for them was specifically provided. (Perhaps this also happened for T5's weak students when they were able to pursue their arguments.) This may have helped them to progress others towards task achievement. S3's potential to do this well was seen earlier in her essay feedback.[54]   Thus evidence emerged from this incident (and from additional evidence to be discussed later) that S3 was not entirely disabled from making use of the CfP where it was facilitated and supported by the subject tutor.

 This section has presented the overall evidence for non-use of the CfP, particularly non use of step one of the CfP in relation to question (b).

5.5   Use of the CfP

The section is in response to the following question.

> *Question b.* In what ways is the compassion-pedagogy designed for this study used
> by participants in their seminars?

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[54] This was: 'This essay is based on a careful reading of the three articles. You ….have found good material to support your discussion. You make some good connections between articles.'

It was found that the participants used the compassion pedagogy in many ways. They adapted and developed the CfP strategies of step 1, into an expanded, more nuanced repertoire of strategies for reducing disadvantage to others. The key adaptations were the various actions taken by students to interrupt excluding eye contact. These actions opened up the discussion to all group members so that other adaptations could take effect.

5.5.1 Interrupting excluding eye contact

In the first weeks of cycle 1 stage two, it was the tutor or I who intervened in the sustained excluding eye contact of some students. In such instances, (where my insider facilitator/ outsider observer position merged completely) we prompted, "Where's your eye contact?" or signalled to excluders from a distance, for example with a circular hand motion. In these early weeks of stage two, I noted students' excluding eye contact most often settled (a) on the person sitting directly opposite at the table, or (b) on the person sitting immediately on his/her right. Students tended not to use the channelling strategy that they had discussed and agreed (see 5.4.2).[55] Rather they made different, apparently spontaneous, responses to different instances of excluding eye contact. Nevertheless, students were targeting this negative behaviour as it arose, in resourceful but unthreatening ways as follows.

I noted a student, Lorraine, who was being spoken to continuously and exclusively about the set reading for the week by her friend, Anne, while the two other students in the group were excluded from eye contact. Anne paused to say she was thirsty and leant out of the group to find a bottle of water from her handbag. Lorraine lent immediately towards the other two group members, engaging them both in inclusive eye contact and in discussion of the set

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[55] Initially, I hardly observed any students 'channel' sustained eye contact - that was directed at them - away to include other students in the way that had been discussed and agreed by students.

topic, and when Anne turned back with her drink to the group it was to join in a discussion between three people. The speed and opportunism with which this alternative more inclusive arrangement was set up was noticeable, and it resembled the speed at which John and Cathy interacted once a license to do so arose (when they were introduced).

Another incident demonstrates attention to the CfP by an even less assertive student. Mandy had printed out and put in front of her a copy of the set reading for the week. This article was being commented on at length by a student who held her in sustained, fixed eye contact. Although Mandy did not attempt to channel the eye contact to include the two other students in the group, she slid her annotated print out slowly and unobtrusively to them on her right without breaking eye contact with, or arguably offending, the speaker. This was Mandy's way of signalling she had noticed the disadvantaging *and* wanted to address it.

In stage two, one student said directly to an excluding speaker, with upward intonation: 'Hello?' Generally though, students did not verbally interrupt the speaker and appeared to favour non-verbal signals. For example, I saw a student tip her head sideways to her shoulder in the direction of the speaker to catch her attention. Elsewhere there was a low, close-to-the-body wave at the speaker. There was exaggerated coughing, one female flapped her hand momentarily in the middle of the table to attract the speaker's attention; a male student mimed the use of binoculars. It may be that these interventions would have happened without the CfP (though I had not observed them in non CfP seminars). However, between the fourth and sixth weeks there was a noticeable shift in responses to excluding eye contact, and attendant benefits for group cohesion as will be discussed later. Small but

numerous incidents showed students were addressing excluding eye contact in less obvious

ways than originally agreed, but in ways that were just as effective.   I noted that excluding

students were often taken by surprise by such interventions, as though they had not realised

they were speaking to one person only. Once alerted they amended their eye contact

immediately, indicating a) successful intervention by others to interrupt excluding behaviour,

and b) that they did regard the actioning of inclusivity amongst their peers with some

sensitivity.

 When a student amended his or her behaviour to be more inclusive, those who had moved

from being excluded to being included tended to acknowledge this social event in some way:

students smiled, adjusted their positions in their chairs, or leaned forward slightly. These

responses may have been intended to signal (renewed) attention to the speaker. For

example, I noted a male student, Simon, leaning back on two chair legs (in effect, leaning

out of the discussion) when he and another student were being excluded. He did not make

an intervention himself, but someone else did and the speaker apologised with good

humour. Simon brought his chair back down and to the table at once - as if to be present at

a new start, or to signal closer attention to the speaker under the new terms of engagement.

I noted that when students successfully intervened in excluding eye contact, there was

frequently laughter and good humour. Notably, students seemed less self-consciousness

than when a tutor or I intervened, even if we did so non-verbally.

Overall, it appears a four-step process emerged: exclude, intervene, amend, approve, as

students developed and managed their own emergent compassion pedagogy around

excluding eye contact.   Also, their exposure to the CfP, step 1, appeared to act as a

legitimizing platform to them for enacting their *own* interventions. That is, the interventions

seen above were unprescribed and diverse. This does not suggest a mechanical or contrived

use of the CfP. At the same time, a principle of the pedagogy was that any interventions

were to be non-threatening, and this was adhered to. No threatening interventions were

seen in cycle 1.   This compared favourably with the early suggestions by some students, in

stages one and two, that to directly challenge disadvantaging behaviours verbally would be

helpful.

Students found many more ways to deal compassionately with excluding eye contact in

comparison to avoidant eye contact for which there seemed no effective strategies. Overall

though, students in stage one and in particular, stages two and three, appeared to be paying

attention to achieving inclusive eye contact in their groups.   At the same time, in interviews

and focus groups, no students expressed a critical view of those who apparently needed

more time and practice to achieve inclusive eye contact. Two students raised this in

interviews.   Leahy's (2005) model of validation and Nitsun's (1996) notion of reframing were

recognisable in the ways these two students spoke about it:

> S2: It's understandable if there's one person you're familiar
>
> with, to latch on to that person and to make eye contact with
>
> them, and to speak as if you are only speaking to them."[56]

And:

> S1: It's a coping ability -   because you pick on someone and
>
> then you go, "Right, that's my point of focus to talk to." [57]

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[56]   S2 female, stage one, one-to-one interview transcript, p2, lines 93-94

[57]   S1 UG female, stage one, one-to-one interview transcript, p3, line 92

Other ways of *using* the CfP were so were so directly, arguably inseparably, linked to social and learning experiences, that they are identified below in relation to question (d) in sections 5.6 and 5.7 respectively.

5.6 Effects of use of the CfP on social experience

This section presents evidence responding to the social experience aspect of this question:

> *Question d.* **Does the compassion pedagogy improve student _social_ and learning experience of seminars?**

On the whole, the CfP appeared to have a positive effect on students' social experiences in the seminars. All students except S3 talked about enhanced seminar social experience with the CfP in contrast to non CfP seminars and their accounts aligned with those of all the cycle 1 participant tutors. For example, T4 had found in her pre CfP seminars that to enhance her students' social experience of her seminars she had sometimes felt like a 'performing seal' to make small group discussion work more interactive. She felt the CfP contributed usefully towards changing this social experience for herself and her students:

> T4: …One of the things I learnt … was that you can then get the
> seminar lively, and we did do that; we got them all doing things and
> saying things and working together. That was great. [58]

She felt this had been aided because the CfP had heightened her sensitivity and alertness to signals of the quality of individual students' social experience:

> So many students – and I've become aware of that through
> working with [the action research] - and I've never sort of
> realised this before, are sort of really frightened about saying

something, or they can't say something or they think it's better

not to say something.[59]

Students also appeared to be more sensitive to such situations and proactive in repairing

difficulties like this that they observed. S2 reported how she had used her experience of the

speed meeting part of the CfP to try to change behaviours on another module she was on:

> S2:   We've literally got about 3 lectures left... And really,
>
> we're all still shy amongst each other. ... I went and sat with
>
> them, "Hello, I'm J. What's your name, please?" Because they
>
> didn't know me from Adam.[60]

Arguably, this required courage, not least because, as T3 suggested, in non CfP seminars:

> T3: the dynamics get set very quickly ...After a couple of
>
> weeks it's quite hard to change that dynamic.[61]

S2's actions also suggest an enhancement to her sense of her own social agency and this was

found in much of the cycle 1 interview data:

> S5: I found it [*exposure to the CfP*] quite beneficial, it gave me
>
> the confidence, 'cos I was new here and I didn't know
>
> anyone...there was quite a brunt, especially in poetry [*another*
>
> *module*] when everyone else knew each other.   It gave me the
>
> confidence to speak to them.[62]

In a similar vein, in relation to improved student social as well as learning experience of

seminars, feedback to S13 for her assessed seminar performance was that:

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[59] T4, stage two, interview transcript, p3, lines 105-108

[60] S2 UG female, stage one, one-to-one interview transcript, p3, lines 151-153

[61] T3 male, stage one, one-to-one interview transcript, page 15, lines 426-427

[62] S5 PG female, stage three, joint interview transcript, p5, lines 134-135

Although your demeanour in seminars is naturally quite

reserved, you were fully engaged with the group throughout.

From stage two in cycle 1, S9 who had had particular difficulties with eye contact (discussed

above) thanked the students in his focus group for sustaining their contact with him on the

CfP module, because, he said, it had helped him to reciprocate and "looking at you all has

given me much more confidence."[63]

Elsewhere, S1 talked about a change in her feelings of annoyance with monopolisers ("I used

to grit my teeth")[64] :

S1:   But now … I mostly deal with it by waiting for them to

finish their point - 'cause I don't want to cut anyone up.[65]

An outcome of the CfP approach, noted by the external assessor for the stage 3 post

graduate discussion group, was that though the discussion participants were individually

assessed, he had watched the filmed discussion right through:

… without me getting the sense that anyone overly-dominated.[66]

Students also attributed change in other people's behaviours to compassionate practice in

the CfP seminars. In this case, S1 was referring to monopolising behaviours:

S1: I notice that *they've* got a reduction in how they're being

as well.[67]

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[63]   S9 male, stage two, focus group transcript, p1, lines 11-12
[64]   S1, stage one, one-to-one interview transcript, p3, lines 67
[65]   S1, stage one, one-to-one interview transcript, p3, lines 67-68
[66]   External Assessor: Post assessment, stage three, Email communication, p1, lines 20-25
[67]   S1, stage one, one-to-one interview transcript, p3, lines 64-65

There was focus group discussion of the initial difficulties of learning to conduct seminars in

explicitly compassionate ways, but this was thought only part of the process of learning

something new :

> S12:   I think it made us bond. It forced us to cooperate –
>
> S10: - I think it becomes more natural.
>
> Q: Could it be suggested - that it's very contrived?
>
> S10: But so is all learning - really.   (All five students laugh).
>
> S13: But I agree with (S10). I think that it *is* contrived to start off
> with but then, because you're thinking about it and because
> you're aware of it then it just becomes part of how you behave in
> a seminar so - yeah, it's a good way to say it: it becomes natural –
>
> S10: I mean, if you think to all schooling systems, there's
> always frameworks out and you have to work through the
> frameworks and ground yourself in understanding of the
> basics... And the same stands for this, really. Of course
> learning is going to be mechanistic because somebody is
> telling you, "Maybe you should try doing this, this and this."
> But of course that develops among the group and for the
> individual to the point where it becomes a useful, natural
> skill.[68]

After the action research, T2 defined the apparent acculturation of compassionate practice

in seminars as a "kind of self-reflective monitoring of the kind of dynamic of the discussion …

that kind of commentary on what's happening in terms of the quality of the discussion."[69]

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[68] S10 male, S12 female, S13 female: PG focus group transcript, p7, Lines 254-280
[69] T2 male, stage three, one-to-one interview transcript, p3, lines 106-107

162

He felt that body language was key to this because it could not be easily be contrived without detection; it mediated against a mechanical performance of compassion:

> T2: It [*(attention to) body language*] is such a fundamental
>
> thing…. You can do it [*demonstrate compassion in seminars*] like a
>
> robot, but when you start talking body language, suddenly you
>
> can't get away with just [that] because it's self-conscious most of
>
> the time.[70]

As from S10, S12 and S13 above, there was additional evidence that having to monitor their own body language in initially self-conscious ways, was not in itself objected to by students because:

> S1: When you're in a group you need to keep changing the
>
> eye contact.[71]

> S2: When you're in a group of half a dozen you need to be
>
> looking at everyone.[72]

Some students talked about becoming accustomed during the CfP research to the practice of inclusive eye contact until it became instinctive:

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[70] T2 Male, stage three, one-to-one interview transcript, stage three, p4, lines 113-115
[71] S1 Female, 3rd year, stage one interview transcript, p3, line 89
[72] S2 Mature female, 3rd year, stage one interview transcript, p3 lines 96-97

S6: Once you start doing it, it comes more natural to just like,

look at everybody so you're not really thinking about it as

much. It just comes naturally – when you're talking.[73]

S4... [*we*] just sort of look at each other and sort of

acknowledge whether or not someone else has got something

to say. I think it's just sort of like a mutual acknowledgment –

weird isn't it?[74]

S8: I found, like, you were on the spot.   But with people sort of

nodding and encouraging you seemed to be able to speak...[75]

This next account from S4, strongly suggests the importance of *seminar-relevant safeness*

and how she believed that this can be provided for students by fellow students.

S4:   All we had to really think about was that we were helping

each other… if I screwed up completely [S5] would save me and

be like "Oh, well what about this?" … we stalled … we stalled .

We knew we'd help each other.[76]

How closely this kind of dependency on others relies on inclusive eye contact around the

group can be demonstrated by contrasting this kind of account with S14's contrasting data

(see p143).   In terms of his communicative difficulties, both my film analysis and that of the

independent film analyst (the post-doctoral researcher in student group discussions) found

the following in the assessed post graduate discussion. During that discussion, there were

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[73] S6 Female, stage two, 1st years' focus group transcript, p2, lines 30-31
[74] S4 Female, stage three, joint interview transcript, p4, lines 114-116
[75] S8 male, stage two, 1st years' focus group manuscript, p2, lines 45-46
[76] S4 PG female, stage three, joint interview transcript, p6, lines 154-156

extended periods of downward gaze by S14 during the discussion. This had been seen

during his non assessed seminar work too. His attention appeared to be mostly on his

notes. On one occasion, S14 is seen shuffling these for 42 seconds with his gaze fixed on

them.

As for S9 (more successfully) above, S14's fellow students did try to help him. On film, S11 is

nodding with lowered head and sustained eye gaze - signalling her close, attentive listening

to S14. S10 is leaning onto the table towards him, signalling the same close attention

throughout S14's presentation. Crucially though, S14's gaze is fixed downward; and this is

why he appears unaware of these signals of support. He cannot see them.

Where the CfP did appear helpful to students, it was important to distinguish its effects from

those attributable to non CfP factors. One way was to note how students contrasted their

own and/or others' social behaviours under CfP conditions, with social experiences in group

learning outside of the study and without the CfP. There were direct comparisons between

the CfP, step one and the experience of several years of seminars by the post graduates, S4,

S5, S10, S11, S12 S13 and S14.   Here are examples:

> S13: at undergraduate level, um, I often used to get quite
> annoyed…when we got people who were so shy that they wouldn't
> talk, you'd sort of think, "Well, I want to get something out of this,
> so I *will* talk." And ….you realise, "Well no, we're also responsible
> for making sure other people *have* things to say and *want* to talk."[77]

This relates closely to her groups efforts seen on film to support S14.

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[77] S13 PG female, second year/run of stage three, focus group transcript, p9, lines 294-297

165

S4:   In undergraduate there were so many times … I wasn't getting

the most out of the class, and that's such a shame. …if everyone

had [had] the advice and assessments - yeah, assessments on how

to get involved and talk their minds, I think we would have

benefitted. Looking back on my undergrad, I would have *really*

[*laughs*] appreciated people being able to speak up and have

discussion.[78]

There was a great deal of talk amongst cycle 1 participants of behaviours they felt were in

contrast to those experienced in the CfP seminars. For example, over talking (monopolising)

behaviours of others were a key issue for S1, S3, S4, S5, S10, S11, S12 and also for T1 and T3.

S4 considered how some discussion groups she had experienced had not been able think

creatively together when:

… it's just two or three people talking and that's either

because they're taking over, or because people are too shy….

it just wasn't as interesting.[79]

T3 said that before his adoption of the CfP:

Four or five students who don't mind talking out loud …would

just dominate …they get the chance to demonstrate their

knowledge… but they don't actually get much in the way of

discussion with other students.[80]

This is very similar to what Yalom points out about monopolisers in therapy groups (1985,

p372).   In another interview this was said:

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[78] S4 PG female, stage three, joint interview transcript, p5, lines 121-125
[79] S4 UG female, stage three, joint interview transcript, p3, lines 59-60
[80] T3 male, stage one, one to one interview transcript, p2, lines 21-28

S5: *…[they]* tend to monopolise the seminar and you can't quite get

in - unless you're equally forceful.[81]

S3 too said:

> … some people try to talk over you. So you try to say
>
> something, and they'll cut in, so like you're finally getting
>
> something out, and no one hears; they only hear the other
>
> people who talk all the time…They don't know the actual
>
> answer, they just talk and talk and talk.[82]

Corroborating these accounts was another data set: on the seminar behaviour checklists, 'Letting other people talk and talk without interrupting them' was the most commonly ticked behaviour of all (by 12 out of 18 students).

S1 also spoke about students who did not listen to others.   She said "there were people who did kind of monopolise conversations"[83], who would "all of a sudden"[84], say things so unconnected with what others had been discussing that she was sure they had not been listening to other people's contributions. That, she said, "stops the flow of conversation."[85]

Another indication of whether it was the CfP step one that was affecting social experiences of seminars positively or else some other factor(s), was respondents' talk of an institutional responsibility to students to offer or to have offered the CfP as a whole:

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[81] S5 PG female, stage three, one-to-one interview transcript, p5, lines 73-75
[82] S3, UG female, stage two, one to one interview transcript, p9, lines 252-255
[83] S1 female, stage one one-to-one interview transcript, page 2, line 15
[84] S1 female, stage one one-to-one interview transcript, page 2 line 18-19
[85] S1, female, stage one one-to-one interview transcript, page 2 line 19

S10: You use your seminar skills, your discursive skills all the time through undergrad and they really never get analysed in any way - you don't get marked for them and I think it's probably a failing of University.[86]

S14 agreed:

Half - *half* - your time in university is spent in the seminar. And you don't get assessed for that. [87]

Referring to her own time spent in undergraduate seminars, a post graduate, S12, questioned why "we weren't taught any strategies"[88] for that time. S13 thought help could have been given "straightaway"[89] thus "making the University experience more like a collaboration."[90]

The postgraduate external assessor seemed not to represent any objection to these students' views:

This is where it [the CfP] is most valuable, as … best practice is shared…[91]

In the (stage two) focus group, the first years also raised the place of learning about compassionate strategies for group work while at university, that is, throughout their degree programmes and starting as soon as students arrived at university. Therefore 1st years were taking the same views as the post graduates:

S7: Like earlier when we said like do them in the first semester; maybe like build up on them so that the second semester

[86] S10, male, stage three focus group, p1, lines 22-25
[87] S14, male, stage one, focus group transcript, p2, line 40
[88] S12, female, stage three focus group, p6, line 209
[89] S13, female, stage three focus group, p6, line 202
[90] S13, female, stage three focus group, p6, line 203
[91] External assessor, male, emailed responses to researcher questions, p2, lines 49-50

continue to do them. Build up on them just 'cause they were

quite useful in making people talk -

S9: [They] should be continued on throughout our degree on

the second even to the final year - even if we're more

experienced as we will be in the third year than the first year.

These inclusivity skills should persist in order for us to get the

most out of our history degrees - or our different subjects.

S6: Yeah - I agree. [92]

Students in different years initiated talk about transferring the CfP beyond HE, for example,

this third year:

S1: I think it's a skill that can be used in er, work environments.

I mean I'm going into teaching and it's very important to be

able to listen to students and colleagues as well as being able

to get your own point across. So I think that it's not just in the

classroom. It's further along as well.[93]

And this first year:

S8: Well I'm considering becoming a teacher once I finish my degree so I

probably would more than likely use these skills when the class is coming

together like year sevens.[94]

Overall the CfP was actively used by 12 out of the 14 students who were interviewed or

in focus groups in cycle 1. S3 and S14 were exceptions. For them, difficulty with the

CfP was largely associated with initiating, sustaining and/or participating in inclusive

eye contact. For the other 12 students, seminar observations corroborated their

[92] S6, S7, S8, S9 stage two focus group, p9, 288-301
[93] S1 female, stage one one-to-one interview transcript, p1, lines 19-21
[94] S8 stage two focus group, p9, 288-292

claims. In seminars they and the majority of students across the groups that were

observed appeared to make full or partial use of whichever step (1-3: pilot, partial or

full implementation) of the CfP was offered to them.

I return now to my original finding, noted at the beginning of this section: that the

interrelationship between social and learning experiences that emerged from studying

the data related to questions (b) and (d) is so close as to be sometimes inseparable.

Before going on to present the data and evidence that responds to question (d) on the

CfP's effects on learning experience, I offer further evidence to support this finding of

close interrelationship from this stage two focus group student. She stated:

> S7: When you didn't know much or you wasn't sure, if
> someone else in the group kind of explained what they
> thought...you feel like they're actually talking to *you* and it's
> not just like two people…[95]
> … everyone in the group's talking because you look at everyone…[96]

And later:

> S7: you get more points because we're all looking at each
> other trying to prompt each other to talk; I've got their point.[97]

Note: There is considerable overlap in the data here between social and learning

experience; they appear to be enmeshed in the data to the degree that separating

them would alter what the data as a whole indicated.

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[95] S7 female, stage two, 1st years' focus group transcript, p1, lines 17-21
[96] S7 female, stage two, 1st years' focus group transcript, p1, line 30
[97] S7 female, stage two, 1st years' focus group transcript, p1, lines 31-33

As explained above in sections 5.4.1 and 5.4.2 (pp144-152), including others in eye contact was, for some students, the most difficult strategy to master as part of compassionate, socially connected group practice.   This difficulty for, notably, S3, S9, S14, John and Lucy, could not be attributed to their being from culturally, religiously, or nationally diverse backgrounds.   Each of these five was a local, white, British student and had more difficulty with eye contact than, for example, any of the Saudi Arabian women who had attended Global Link. Notably, these five were not unusual cases according to T3:

> T3: The eye contact ... a very good strategy... [is] the most valuable. And yet in the third year it's still the hardest thing for them to do.[98]

For most students, in interviews and focus groups, inclusive eye contact was central to their use of the compassion pedagogy and/or their adaptions of it. This may have been because the exchange of most other signals seemed to depend on it.   Inclusive eye contact was a key factor in the overlap that was found throughout the data, between social and learning experience. This will also be discussed further below.

5.7   Effects of the use of the CfP on learning experience

This section presents evidence on the learning experience aspect of this question:

> *Question d.* **Does the compassion pedagogy improve student social and _learning_ experience of seminars?**

On the whole, the CfP appeared to have a positive effect on students' learning experiences in the seminars, as follows.

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[98]   T3 stage one, one-to-one interview transcript, p3 Lines 87-88

S1 said that since the introduction of the CfP in stage one:

> I have noticed that some people are lot more, um, reflective
> now to what's being said, so their contributions are more –
> because they're listening to other people – their contributions
> are a lot more in depth because it's not just surface
> anymore.[99]

Describing herself as normally "pretty dominant",[100] S1 said that she was using the step one CfP in that:

> S1: …on subjects that I feel very confident about, I've taken a
> step back and not gone rushing in to make, you know, the
> first comment, the first argument against something -
> because other students are coming up with them
> themselves... I can then use their points to kind of
> continue.[101]

S1 was therefore not only reducing her own speaking, but, in effect, trying to sustain the group's thinking processes instead - something she apparently had not been doing before. This supports Yalom's (1985, p378) assertion that to silence the monopoliser is not helpful to the group: "you do not want to hear less …; *you want to hear more*" (Yalom's italics), i.e. to more substance. S1's data is interesting because it suggests how, when students curtail their own speaking sometimes for others to speak, this does not mean they have to down play their own academic ability. This possibility is investigated further in Chapter 6 where the

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[99] S1 3rd year female, stage one, one-to-one interview, p1, lines 28-29,
[100] S1 female, stage one, one-to-one interview transcript, p2, line 37
[101] S1 female, stage one. one-to-one interview transcript, p2, lines 46-48

academic results of 38 seminar-assessed students are examined after their full (3 step) exposure to the CfP.

S10 talked about what the combined communicative/intellectual task was like for him as a lived experience:

> … all on the spot articulation …in a group setting and trying to get
> your ideas across - and they're quite complex ideas when you get
> into MA literature - seems quite hard …. intellectually it was
> equal especially to a 3,000 word essay.[102]

This compares with what T6 (PG Literature) had concluded:

> Finding ways to increase students' interaction with each other -
> you can do that with academic content rather than just social
> content.[103]

This relationship between interaction - where it was inclusive - and co-building academic content in group discussion was suggested in S7's experience of the CfP seminars where she was able to contribute to others' learning:

> It felt much more inclusive … you put your point across as
> well… you could kind of go for it.[104]

T5 reported that students had found researching independently each week as part of their learning experience a challenge, but:

> T5: One of the things that came out of this was that the
> students did put a lot more effort into the discussion … they

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[102] S10, male, stage three, focus group transcript, lines 69-70
[103] T6 female, stage three, post assessment on-to-one interview, p3, lines 60-61
[104] S7 female, stage two, 1st years' focus group transcript, p1, lines 17-21

got the momentum going and they understood what it was all about.[105]

In the first year of stage three, the internal Literature assessor (of S4 and S5) pointed out the CfP's facilitation of learning to think critically not just about academic content but about seminar behavioural practice, as well:

> T2: … that's part of a normal seminar – that you are always trying to make students question their own assumptions.   But applying that to the area of *seminar* skills … it's very worthwhile …it's such a fundamental thing. [106]

After exposure to the CfP, S1 was better able to let others speak rather than 'rush in' herself, but an unexpected outcome for her was that she now sometimes found herself:

> S1: …kind of being able to racket ball a point back at them so that they have to then give a contribution back that is more substantial to what they've made.[107]

When more dominant students spoke less and so took up less of the group's time to hear them, the ideas of those who were normally less forthcoming could also be heard. S7 explains the benefits of this:

> S7: I've got ideas for like essays or just, like, a point on an article that I never would've thought of in a million years but *someone who doesn't talk much in a seminar normally* had said something.[108] [My italics.]

[105]   T5 female, stage three, post assessment one-to-one interview, p2, lines 43-44
[106]   T2 male, stage three, post assessment on-to-one interview, p4 102-104
[107]   S1 female, stage one, 3rd year, one-to-one interview transcript, p3, lines 67-70
[108]   S7 Female, stage two, focus group transcript, p2, lines 31-32

It is worth noting that this was a post module focus group meeting which S3 did not attend but that S7 identified S3 as the person she was referring to. It was S3, by the end of the module, who was providing others with ideas and points. She may have felt unsafe elsewhere but, apparently, she was able reward her CfP group for their efforts at making her, and others, feel more comfortable through mindful behavioural signals. She was able to participate productively in group work.

For further evidence of the effects of use of the CfP on learning I refer the reader back to section 5.2. The purpose of that section was to show how frequently units of data that reflected social experience could equally be interpreted as evidence of learning experience. This was an important finding in itself for the core research question and that was why this was shown.[109]   However, if that data is looked at again, in order to focus only on learning experiences, evidence does emerge of a positive effect from use of the CfP on students' purposeful facilitation of learning amongst each other:

> *Feedback to S13*: ... [you were] questioning another member
> of the group in order to help him develop his reading [and]
> asking for clarification at a key point.
>
> *Feedback to S12:* you are very good at questions which draw
> out responses from others ('Did you notice ...?'; 'What did you
> make of ...?' etc.)
>
> *Feedback to S11:* you remained open, responsive... you
> revived the discussion when it flagged... You asked relevant
> questions...

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[109] 'Can the psychological concept of compassion be embedded into HE seminar pedagogy to produce improved student social and learning experience of task-focused seminar groups?'

> ***Feedback S10:*** You brought a great deal of useful research and
> insight to the table….. You asked direct and relevant questions
> of other members of the group, maintaining the momentum of
> the discussion.

The CfP strategies that S10, above, used to enhance the group's learning was: "excellent signposting, eye contact and verbal clarity" (Feedback to S10).

In contrast, S12 in the same discussion group took up nearly twice her allotted time to present her theoretical perspective to the group and so delayed the group's access to other theories waiting to be heard and discussed. This impingement on her own and the group's opportunities to learn in the time available was reflected in her feedback, and in her marks:

> ***Feedback to S12:*** [There was] a lack of editorial control over your
> material and implicitly a lack of consideration for the group.
> Grade: C / 54%

Taken together, the history undergraduate and the literature post graduate CfP assessments (conducted by T5, and T2 and T6 respectively) demonstrated a consistency, across different subjects and levels, in how tutors observed, identified and assessed students' consideration for each other's learning. This was an important and necessary factor for wider application of the CfP, but it requires much more investigation and trialling than cycles 1 and 2 together could provide.

5.8 Conclusion

A positive response can be made, on the whole, to both questions (b)[110] and (d)[111] in the case of the white local student participants in cycle 1. The reasons are as follows.

1.   As well as students who were observed (e.g. Cathy and John), 9[112] out of the 14 interview/focus group participants indicated that social connectivity and their own and/or others learning experiences were *mediated and enhanced by inclusive eye contact*. That is, initiating and sustaining eye contact with others during group discussion work was, for these students, implicit in productive learning experiences. Further, it was found that, overall, students were able to practise inclusive eye contact even if with delays due to initial hesitation. This was apparent in observations (stage2) over time and was the case in the transcripts of 12 out of 14 interview and focus group participants. S3 and S14 were the two exceptions.

2.   A negative view of over-talkers - monopolisers – in task-focussed discussions was found in the transcripts of 12[113] out of 14 students interviewed. However, over the whole module in stage two, students became adept at interrupting excluding eye contact, including where this involved an individual over talker.   In observations also it was found that monopolisers' responses to such interruptions appeared to be self-conscious, but also immediate and corrective.

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[110] *Question b.* In what ways is the compassion-pedagogy designed for this study used by participants in their seminars?
[111] *Question d.* Does the compassion pedagogy improve student social and learning experience of seminars?
[112] S1, S2, S4, S6, S7, S8, S9, S10 and S11
[113] S1, S2, S6, S7, S8, S9, S4, S5, S10, S11, S12 and S13

3. Two further issues to address in relation to the research questions and arising from cycle 1 were:

   a. whether students used the step one strategies of the CfP in mechanistic ways;

   b. whether they used them strategically to simply benefit themselves short term, with tutor approval, especially during assessment.

Although, arguably, neither approach was right or wrong, and both could be expected to a degree, the evidence which emerged from the unstructured interviews and focus groups suggested:

   ➢ the first scenario occurred but dissipated after initial acculturation to the CfP; and

   ➢ if it did occur it was not commented on in the data.

From the evidence, 13 out of 14 students interviewed or in focus groups substantiated their individual accounts of enhancements to their own or to others' social and/or learning experiences in ways they attributed to peers' use of the CfP strategies. They substantiated these accounts in one or more of the following ways:

   a. They identified and explained changes they had noticed to their own social behaviours.[114]

   b. They explained why they attributed change in other students' behaviours to exposure to the CfP.[115]

   c. They contrasted their own and/or others' social behaviours under CfP conditions, with social experiences in group learning outside of the study and without the CfP.[116]

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[114] S1, S2, S5, S9, S13
[115] S1, S2, S5, S9, S13

178

d. They proposed and articulated an HE institutional responsibility to themselves and to their fellow students. They related this to the compassion focussed strategies for student social and learning experience in current seminars, for the past and/or for the future.[117]

e. In discussion, students modified the suggested CfP strategies originally offered from the background and literature accompanying the study. This made the CfP an emergent practice that was conducted amongst and between students. It was seen on the fly as discussions unfolded, and with some flexibility, but there was consistent adherence to the core principle, as far as could be identified, of noticing or anticipating seminar-related disadvantage to others and attempting to remove or reduce it.

Overall, despite the small sample size, analysis of cycle 1 data suggests that white local students were as subject to communicative difficulties in seminar discussions as international students.   The CfP, so far, appeared to be of some use in addressing the affective states of students that mediated these difficulties.

5.8.1 Limitations of Cycle 1
A.   White, local students

The action research carried out in cycle 1 was limited in its focus to primarily local white students. This had been purposeful because of their conspicuous absence from the Global Link speed meeting events. It suggested that there might be particular interactional styles

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[116] S4, S5, S10, S11,S12, S13, S14
[117] S1, S5, S6, S7, S8, S9, S10, S12, S13, S14

amongst local white students that separated them from other students, a notion supported

in the literature on HE internationalisation.

Once cycle 1 was completed a further reflexive investigation of the literature was carried out,

in preparation for cycle 2, on the attainment gap between white local students, and other

students: local black, local ethnic minority and international students. My attending seminars

and talks on addressing the gap revealed to me my underestimation of its extent, my

misunderstanding of its reasons, and its relationship to my study and its aims.

Briefly, the National Union of Students (2010, p7) state in their report 'Race for Equality' on

the experiences of Black students in further and higher education, that:

> 'Black' is used ...to refer to members of African,
> Arab, Asian and Caribbean communities.

This document reports the findings of the 2009 National Union of Students' research project,

which explored "the experiences of black students" (p4) in higher education, to try to

investigate why " Black students are less likely to be satisfied with their educational experience

and to attain first-class degrees in comparison to their White peers" (p4).

The study was conducted through a literature review, a survey and three focus groups, where

the academic experiences of 938 black students were investigated. It was found that black

students viewed their learning and teaching environments as sometimes negative "with 23 per

cent describing it as 'cliquey', 17 per cent as 'isolating', 8 per cent as 'hostile'. Moreover,

respondents were "often speaking of alienation and exclusion" (p5).   Of particular relevance

to my study was the finding that "Many of these feelings spawned from inside the classroom,

with several respondents describing feeling left out of discussions and debates" (p4).   At the same time, international students, as indicated in the HE internationalisation literature "frequently expressed feelings of isolation and alienation" (p5).   This played a role in their reduced sense of well-being; those who felt excluded explained that this "negatively influenced their motivation and overall desire to attend their course." The report recommends that FE and HE work harder "to promote social cohesion and better integrate their student bodies" (p61).   It states that "social inclusion" and "social cohesion" (p61) "could be achieved by increasing discussion and interactive work within the classroom" (p61). The report emphasises the particular importance of 'integrating' (p61) students. This was particularly pertinent for cycle 2 and its planned work amongst more ethnically diverse student samples than in cycle 1. The report's findings are also relevant to the discussion in Chapter 1 of interculturalism (as distinct from multiculturalism). Thus, from cycle 1, the following areas to investigate were taken forward into cycle 2:

1. Responses to/use of the CfP amongst students of mixed white and other ethnic and national backgrounds which could be different from what was found in cycle 1.   In particular:
    a. The student experience of eye contact as mediating social interconnectivity; and
    b. Student lived experience of degrees of social inclusion and social cohesion, whether lower or higher, with CfP in place for seminars.   This is important because of questions arising from cycle 1 about the degree to which the CfP can support groups' abilities to absorb the apparent *inability* (for longer or shorter periods) by some individual students (c.f. S3, S9, S14) to reciprocate compassion.

An example of this is difficulty with offering or accessing certain signals of inclusivity.

B.   Addressing Question (e)

This question was not fully addressed in cycle 1 of the action research:

> **Question e.   Does the compassion pedagogy improve academic outcomes from seminars?**

The assessor for the post graduate module had been in place for several years; he confirmed that the CfP assessed seminar that replaced the 3,000 essay assignment of previous years had not lowered academic standards on the module in his view.

> This [is an] excellent assessment …a great exercise … [it] produced good results from all of the students.[118]

But this data was not at all adequate to determine in what ways the CfP had impacted academic outcomes, or if at all. It only showed that, apparently, there had been no change for this very small sample module.   The data from T5 was in some ways more helpful but still very limited.   Methodologically, what was needed was at least two data sets of marks that could be compared: one from the CfP final seminar and one from an additional individual assessment, with both being submitted on the same module by the same students. For comparative purposes, both assignments would need to have a category for quality of research and critical thinking assessment. A data sent could then be derived from this category that occurred in both assignments and then these data sets could be compared for each individual student.   The requirement for this kind of investigation to be conducted became increasingly clear by the end of cycle 1 and was taken forward for action in cycle 2.

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[118] External Assessor: Post assessment, stage three, Email communication, p1, lines 20-25

However, of relevance to cycle 2's investigation of academic achievement in seminars under CfP conditions was that the study's host university, namely its Learning and Teaching Institute, reported in 2014 a slightly higher than national average 18% attainment gap for its BME student population.[119] How this could be factored for in cycle 2 results for academic achievement was not yet clear because of an unknown noted in Broeke and Nicholls (2007) findings. This was that, nationally:

> ..after controlling for gender, prior attainment, type of subject, type of HEI, term-time accommodation and age, there is still an unexplained difference [in degree class attainment] between students from ethnic minority communities and students from White (UK and Irish) communities.

5.9   Summary

Cycle 1 responses to the three research questions it was able to address, are presented in Table 5.2 (below)

Table 5.2   Cycle 1 responses to the research questions

Research Questions	Responses
Question b. In what ways is the compassion-pedagogy designed for this study used by participants in their seminars?	Most students who were observed and/or took part in interviewees or focus groups made varied use of the CfP. 1 student who was observed not to use the CfP participated in an interview to help explore whether/how the CfP might not be appropriate for all students.
Question d. Does the compassion pedagogy improve student social and learning experience of seminars?	From the data available, an overall positive response was given for both aspects of this question relating to *social* and *learning* experience.
Question e. Does the compassion pedagogy improve academic outcomes from seminars?	There were difficulties with the methods available to collect data and these were reviewed for amendments to be carried into cycle 2.

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[119] 47% of the university's (circa 25,000) students were BME as reported in 2014 by the university's Teaching and Learning Institute in a presentation to staff. in 2014.

Chapter Six: Findings of Cycle Two conducted in the Business Department of a UK University

6.0 Introduction

Cycle 2 continued the action research into students' use of the CfP and its effects. It addressed all of the research questions with the exception of question (a) which the literature search findings had responded to positively.[120] The research questions addressed by cycle 2 and the data collection tools/sets related to them are shown here in Table 6.1.

Table 6.1   Data tools/sets and research questions

Research Questions	Data Sets
Question b. In what ways is the compassion-pedagogy designed for this study used by participants in their seminars?	1. Students' interview and focus group transcripts (all stages) 2. Seminar observation/field notes (Stages 1, 2 and 3) 3. Film of assessed seminars (Stage 3) 4. Internal assessors' written feedback to individual students (Stage 3)
Question c. Is the compassion pedagogy used differently according to whether students are local or international?	1. Comparison of findings from cycle 1 with findings from cycle 2.
Question d. Does the compassion pedagogy improve student social and learning experience of seminars?	1. Students' interview and focus group transcripts (Stages 1, 2 and 3) 2. Seminar observations/field notes (Stages 1, 2 and 3); 3. Film of assessed seminars (Stage 3); 4. Internal assessors' written feedback to individual students (Stage 3)
Question d. (i) Is there a difference according to whether students are local or international?	1. Comparison of findings from cycle one with findings from cycle two for question d). (All stages).
Question e. Does the compassion pedagogy improve academic outcomes from seminars?	1. Internal assessors' written feedback and grades to individual students (Stage 3); 2. Comparison of marks per individual student participant between: critical thinking in assessed essay, and critical thinking in assessed seminar discussion. (Stage 3)
Question e. (i) Is there a difference according to whether students are local or international?	1. Comparison of marks between white local students, international students and non-white local students: critical thinking in assessed essay, and critical thinking in assessed seminar discussion (Stage 3)

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[120] **Question a.** Why might compassion be an appropriate and useful concept to embed into HE pedagogy for seminars?

From the Methodology chapter, Table 4.3 below shows the participants observed in each stage, and then the interview and focus groups participants.

Table 4.3   Cycle 2 participants by stage and data collection methods

Key: f = female   m = male;   T = tutor[121]   S = student

In-Seminar Observations/field notes					
Stage One *Pilots*		*Stage Two* *One module, no assessment*		*Stage Three* *One module with assessment*	
Students: Numbers subject, level, gender	*No of Tutors*	*Students: Numbers, subject, level, gender*	*No of Tutors*	*Student: Numbers, subject, level , gender, local or international*	*No of Tutors*

16 x Finance & Accounting 2nd years (9f/7m)	1 (f)	21 x Technical Trends in Business 2nd yrs:
		
		(10m/11f)
			1 (T10/m)	Technical Trends in Business:
				     26m/15f:
				     10 black locals, 17 ethnic minority locals, 9 white locals, 5 internationals
					(T10/m)

22 x Tourism 2nd years: (9m/13f)	1 (f)				
17 x Financial Strategies (9f/8m)	T7 (m)				
18 x Market Research (9f/9m)	1 (m)				
73	4	21	1	41	1

Above: Total seminar participants observed: 135 students   +   5 tutors

Interviews and Focus groups Participants					
Stage One *Pilots*		*Stage Two* *A whole module, no assessment*		*Stage Three* *Three modules with assessment*	
Students: level, subject, gender	*Tutors: level, subject, gender*	*Students: level, subject, gender*	*Tutors*	*No of students by subject and level*	*Tutors*
Joint interview: *Financial Strategies:* *2 x PG Internationals* *S15 Nigerian, fS16 Malay m*	*Joint Interview:* *Financial Strategies:* *T7 local white m* *T8 German, f*	*Focus group:* *3 x 2nd yrs* *Technical Trends in Bus* *S17 Local ethnic min, f* *S18 Thai, m* *S19 local, white f*	*Interview* *T10 local, White, m*	*Interviews/Focus groups:* *Technical Trends in Bus* *Focus group 1:* *S20 Ethnic min, local, m* *S21 Thai, f* *S22 Thai, f* *S23 Ethnic min, local, m* *Focus group 2:* *S24 Ethnic min, local, f* *S25 Malaysian, f* *S26 White, local, m* *Joint interview:* *S27 Black, local, m* *S28 Ethnic min, local, f* *Focus group 3:* *S29 Ethnic min, local, m* *S30 Ethnic min, local, m* *S31 Ethnic min, local, m* *S32 Ethnic min, local, m* *S33 Black, local, m* *Interview: S34 French, m*	*Interview* *T10 local, White, m*
Total 2	*2*	*3*	*1*	*15*	*1*

Total seminar participants in focus groups or interviews: 20 students + 3 tutors

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[121] The Market research tutor in stage one was from Sierra Leone. Tutor 8 was German. Otherwise, as for Cycle One, all of the tutors were white and local. (T9 was the Business lecturer who was not an observed or interviewed participant.)

Table 4.1 (p93) in the Methodology chapter, shows what the CfP comprised, and how it was used as a research tool.

For this chapter, I begin as in Chapter 5, with evidence of *objections to*, and some examples of non-use of the CfP. This section is: *Delays and Barriers to use of the CfP* (section 6.1). This negative evidence in both cycles helped the exploration of why and how the CfP might be inappropriate for some students. The reason for placing this evidence first is to support a more critical reading of the much greater amount of positive data that follows.

After section 6.1, I present the first of the, overall, positive evidence in response to the questions, starting with research questions (b) and (c) on what ways the CfP was used by students and whether its use was different according to whether students were local or international. This is section 6.2. For the next questions (d) and d(i),[122] section 6.3 identifies the effects on social experiences that appeared to be attributable to observed and reported ways of using the CfP.   One such effect was related to group cohesion, findings for which were similar to what was found amongst the mainly white local students in cycle 1.   Section 6.4 focuses on participants' learning experiences, also in response to question (d).   Section 6.5 responds to question (e)[123] in relation to the academic performance, under CfP conditions, of the 38 stage three participant students who met the Business department's minimum seminar attendance requirements of 75%.   The results in this section are offered with caution.   The reasons for this will be explained and the reader is referred to the final chapter for a discussion of alternative methods to address the relevant research question – (e). Using the data available, the mean percentage marks for *critical thinking* in

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[122] Question d.   Does the compassion pedagogy improve student social and learning experience of seminars?
         d(i) Is there a difference according to whether students are local or international?
[123] Question e.   Does the compassion pedagogy improve academic outcomes from seminars?
         e(i) Is there a difference according to whether students are local or international?

the essay and also in the CfP seminar (two means) were identified for each of the four student groups - black local, ethnic minority local, white local and international students.   A graph (Fig 6.1) then compares between the two means achieved by each group.

Using SPSS, the results of a Fisher test and a Mann-Whitney test are also discussed.   Table 6.3 then provides a more detailed breakdown of the critical thinking marks per assignment and per individual student, and what this data suggests is also discussed.[124]

Section 6.6 revisits questions c, d(i) and e(i) on possible differences between student categories in relation to use and effects of the CfP. This section problematizes the categorisation of students that was used in this study, even though such categorisation was necessary to explore whether the CfP could work productively with diverse students. After this section, the chapter's conclusion and summary are given.

6.1   Delays and barriers to use of the CfP

The evidence presented below addresses the following question.

> *Question b.* **In what ways is the compassion-pedagogy designed for this study used by participants in their seminars?**

Of the 20 students who took part in interviews or focus groups in cycle 2, three were students who had been observed in seminars to show more non-use of the CfP than their fellow students during seminars. This is why they were selected for interview; in relation to

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[124] All of the assessed seminars were double marked by two business subject teaching staff; the essays were double marked in numbers well beyond the requirements of internal moderation.

my sampling method for the collection of (confirming and) disconfirming data (see, Sampling Methods, section 4.5, p103) these three students' data helped explore whether and why the CfP might not be appropriate for all students. This was consistent with cycle 1 where the same sampling method was used to include S3 in data collection after analysis of observation notes. In cycle 2, these three resistant students were: S16 in stage one, S19 in stage 2 and S20 in stage 3. I discuss their data next, student by student and stage by stage.

In stage one a tutor, T7, raised objections to step one of the CfP after it was introduced to his students in the first seminar on his module. In his post module interview he confirmed he did not use any of the CfP after that introductory seminar, and he gave reasons. One of his students, S16, missed the introductory seminar. Therefore, he was a useful control to compare with other students who had been present. After the module, a student who had been present and S16 were joint-interviewed to explore their experiences of the module's seminars.

T7 and the business lecturer on the module, T9, rejected use of the CfP after its introduction because:

a. They thought the CfP, particularly step one, undermined a professional approach to team work. T9 (who had not attended the introductory seminar) emailed the programme leader (T8) to explain this:

> We want them [*the students*] working as a professional
> team. This is not the same as one would treat a 'family
> member.' [125]

b. T7 thought step one of the CfP, as introduced to his students, might not be relevant to their needs. In his post-module, joint interview with T8 he said:

> T7:   What if students don't want *any* of that?   If they
> don't *want* to sit with, talk to people from other
> countries. 'I'm simply here for an MA.' [126]

Further, he did not think it helpful to move students into new groups each week to experience working with others outside their nationality or ethnic groups and he infers here some attention to Hofstede's notion of distance:

> It's easier not to. …Because of their different rules on
> distance I assume they've chosen not to, for whatever
> reason. [127]

c. T7 was also concerned that the CfP's emphasis on spoken communication did not align with current Business department criteria on what students could be assessed for:

> T7:   [*In]* the Business department's undergraduate
> criteria: there's no reference to speaking. All the
> references, you know, 70%: 1st class degree –
> knowledge, knowledge, knowledge: written
> communication. Everything is written. There's *nothing*
> on oral in there -

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[125]   Extract of email from business lecturer to programme leader: dated 24.10.1

[126]   T7 and T8 stage one, post module, joint interview transcript, p3, lines 90-92

[127]   T7 and T8 stage one, post module, joint interview transcript, p3, lines 93-95

T8:   No, not *explicitly* -

T7:   - which we have to work with. We *have* to work

with these.[128]

Thus, the end-of-module oral assignment was run as the subject tutors had run it in the past.

That is, it was a filmed debate of three students against three students. Students were

assessed individually.   In a joint interview after the assessment, I collected data from a

Nigerian student, S15, who had attended the introduction of the CfP's step one, and from

S16, a Malaysian male, who had not attended. S15 said that during the module, he had tried

to use the CfP strategies suggested to him through the module, particularly with his fellow

female Chinese students who tended to speak little, or else in Chinese. In contrast, S16 said

he had been unaware of the strategies and appeared surprised to hear about them for the

first time in the joint interview.   In other words, S16 was a useful control.   T7 had put each

of these two students in a group of three for the oral assessment at the end of the module.

S15 and S16 had each been placed with two female, Chinese students. Though the oral

assignment was not a CfP step three discussion, it was still based on teams (of three) and it

was still collaborative, filmed, oral work. The Nigerian and the Malaysian shared the same

upper intermediate level of English while all four Chinese team mates had lower levels of

English speaking proficiency.   The group oral assignment was double marked by the two

tutors involved.

On the film of the assessed debate, the Chinese students working with the Malaysian male,

S16, read their presentations entirely from scripts and with downcast eyes. The Malaysian

student was seen confidently taking over the answering of every question that was directed

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[128]   T7 and T8 stage one, post module, joint interview transcript, p1, lines, 58-64

to his Chinese female team mates on their presentations. With the benefit of a studio recording where a number of cameras were working at once from different angles on the speakers, particularly close observation was possible. The Chinese students sat silent and expressionless as they looked at the opposing team throughout the debate. During all of the assessment, S16 signaled to them neither verbal nor non-verbal encouragement to join the debate; his eye contact was exclusively with members of the opposite team on the table. He was dissatisfied with his individual mark for the assessment. It is seen here together with the feedback from both T7 and the Business lecturer (T9) assessing together:

> ***Strengths:*** Presentation was very fluent. Appeared confident in presentation.
> ***Weaknesses:*** Be careful to ensure each member of the group has equal opportunity to speak, especially in answering questions.
> ***Grade: 62%/B-***

In his interview, S16 stated that his two Chinese team members could talk well enough about shopping in class, but in the assessment "they let me down"[129] even though he said "I told them what to say." He said also, "I wasn't satisfied with their efforts", and regarding group cohesion in the exam, he reported "It was not there at all."[130]

I asked him if he had ever encouraged shyer students in class discussion group work when they had attempted to participate:

> S16: No, no, no. The other students will think, 'He's the same as me, so who do [sic] he think he is?'[131]

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[129]   S16 International/Malaysian male, stage one, joint interview with S15, transcript p7, lines 165-66
[130]   S16 International/Malaysian male, stage one, joint interview with S15, transcript p7, lines 170
[131]   S16 International/Malaysian male, stage one, joint interview with S15, transcript p7, lines 65-66

He valued the notion of a 'group leader' (even) with the ranking and hierarchy within the group that this could foster; he described his previous group work in an Australian university, including with a Bruneian student who was selected to be the group leader:

> S16: She was chosen. ...She's a student but... because of she's the
> group leader so when she congratulates me it made me feel
> happy.[132] I think her [sic] as my senior.[133]

In contrast with all this, S15 claimed to have tried to use the CfP following his exposure to step one. The evidence for this from his data is found below in section 6.3.1: *Use of Eye contact.*

In stage two, a white, local female student, S19 showed greater resistance to the CfP than her fellow students. At the end of the module, she agreed to take part in a focus group with her two friends, also on the module (S17 and S18).   These three students were a group of friends who had arrived together after the introduction of the CfP in the first seminar of the module.   S17 was a local ethnic minority female; S18 was an international/Thai male. These two students, perhaps because they had missed the first seminar, appeared to need longer than others to become accustomed to using the CfP, but it was S19, who seemed the most dissatisfied with step one, and with the requirement to work with students other than S17 and S18. From time to time, she made this clear to the group as a whole and in my field notes I recorded examples, verbatim, of her expressions of dissatisfaction, as follows.

   a) In an early module event, when the whole group were discussing the reasons for learning the names of everyone in the group and using them, S19 pointed to five

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[132] S16 International/Malaysian male, stage one, joint interview with S15, transcript p5, lines 123-126
[133] S16 International/Malaysian male, stage one, joint interview with S15, transcript p6, lines 157

people that she did not know, one by one, and for each one called out a made-up name. One of them, a local ethnic minority male that she named 'Mohammed' responded with some sharpness that his name was (*xxxxxx*) and asked her "What you doing *this* for, man?"

b) In a mid-module incident she was sitting with both feet up on the chair in front of her facing a group of students she had not worked with. She talked sideways but directly to the tutor about what this group could have done better after they had fed back their discussion findings to the group.   She chewed gum throughout and was unsmiling. A black male student from another group, who was normally very quiet, asked her if she could make eye contact with everyone, not just the tutor. She said, "Oh sorry, I'll turn my chair around and talk just to you then, shall I?"

c) In week six, S19 made a point to the tutor on data security systems in businesses, and her exchanges with him lasted for the last 12 minutes of the seminar - nearly 25% of the seminar session time. She appeared not to notice the coughing and sighing of other students. Before she left the room she told the subject tutor that the inclusivity focus was unhelpful.

During a seminar on the module, she objected to the class about working with students other than S17 and S18:

> **Excerpt A from seminar observation notes**
>
> **(Stage two, week five):**
>
> We don't know if we're on the right track if we're all just talking together. I don't like the moving about to talk with different people. "I want to stay with my friends." She repeats this idea several times. "We've always been alright with that, we've always all been fine in our groups." (presumably on other modules)

In their post module focus group, S17, S18 and S19 talked about their negative feelings about the learning experience in seminars because of the CfP:

> S17: I kind of thought, 'Oh well, hold on we're not really learning about technology in business.' And it just kind of felt we were paying more attention on how to interact with each other rather than learn.[134]

> S19: It felt like the whole time – they all want to speak together.[135]

> S18: I didn't expect that because I was expecting just the tutor and just teaching the class.[136]

They talked also about the social experiences arising from the CfP:

> S17: So the first week, I didn't really like it; I felt it was just like this '*Kumbaya*' kind of thing where you want to join hands... it was a bit intense … just like *know* the person in front of you.[137]

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[134] **S17**, S18, S19 Focus group stage two transcript, p1, line 71-72
[135] S17, S18, **S19** Focus group stage two transcript, p1, line 54
[136] S17, **S18,** S19 Focus group stage two transcript, p1, line 59
[137] **S17,** S18, S19 Focus group stage two transcript, p2, lines 75-78

S19: Well I didn't like when you told us to split up. I was like I'd rather just play with (S17) and (S18); I was like 'I don't want to though; I don't feel like I'm in the first day of secondary school or something.[138]

Then, this white, local student, S19, suggested a factor that contributed to her non-use of the CfP:

…. sometimes when I meet people for the first time I feel I get really shy because I'm used to it from back in the day when I first came to this country. And I was a foreigner as well.   And I didn't know English properly. When I'm by myself I feel worse, so if I was in a seminar and I didn't know anyone then like I feel a bit weirded out…I'll be like 'I don't need to talk to anyone.'[139]

In stage three there appeared to be difficulties with eye contact for S20, a Thai female:

S20: I can find it weird because I'm answer the questions to someone who ask me and does anybody else want to know? [sic] *(S20 and S21, both Thai females, laugh.)* **[140]**

To conclude this section on non-use of the CfP which addresses question (b), S16 was found have not to have been exposed to the initial seminar introducing the CfP and to have adopted behavioural strategies with those working closely with him that may have helped lower their levels of social safeness. Their frequent, sustained down cast gazes on film while they were working with him suggested lower levels of felt safeness than was seen for the

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[138] S17, S18, **S19** Focus group stage two transcript, p2, lines 107-109
[139] S17, S18, **S19**, stage one, focus group transcript, page 2, lines 80-85
[140] S20 Local ethnic minority male, stage three, mid module focus group 1 transcript, p4 Lines 78-82

Chinese females working with S15 who did use the CfP. In stage 2, S19 experienced notably

low levels of felt safeness with the CfP at first, and this was found to derive partly from past

experiences that had affected her greatly and which resonated with cycle 1's, S3 data. In

stage 3, a particular instance of non-use of the CfP was in terms of eye contact which a Thai

student, S20, avoided. That is, she doubted others wanted to hear what she had to say

unless they directly asked her a question during discussion. This cannot be culturally

explained, i.e. by her being a Thai female, because her Thai female colleague adapted

quickly to the CfP's emphasis on inclusive eye contact. On the contrary, S20's data has more

resonance, with that of S3.   This is why, on reflection, though S20 participated in a focus

group, a one-to-one interview may have been more useful.   This concludes the account of

the three students noticed in cycle 2 who appeared to avoid use of the CfP either wholly or

partially. The next section continues the response to question (b).

6.2   Use of the CfP

> ***Question b.*** **In what ways is the compassion-pedagogy designed for this study used by participants in their seminars?**
>
> ***Question c.*** **Is the compassion pedagogy used differently according to whether students are local or international?**

In response to question (b), the evidence, overall, was that students did use the CfP in their

seminars, becoming quickly familiar with it over the first two or three weeks (stages 2 and

3). How they used it will be explored in this section. In response to question (c), no clear

differences could be found between how most students in cycle 2 used the CfP amongst

themselves nor how it was used in cycle 1, except in the areas of independent reading (CfP

step 2).

The cycle 2 student participants, like those in cycle 1, used the CfP in a variety of ways. As in cycle 1, there were adaptations of the CfP for particular events that occurred during discussion interactions, but without deviation from the core principle of compassion: to notice disadvantage or distress and act to reduce it.   In cycle 2, 19 students who had been exposed to the CfP (not S16) took part in interviews or focus groups. Some were conducted during the module and some were conducted immediately afterwards. Outweighing section 6.1's response to question (b), 18 of these 19 students substantiated how and why they were using aspects of the CfP and what they believed they had experienced as outcomes of these actions.[141]   This was a more positive response to question (b) than seen in section 6.1, and is as follows.

Something that there had been no opportunity to observe in cycle 1 was a tendency in cycle 2 for many students to interrupt an article presentation to make comments on it before the speaker had finished presenting it. But the problem was quickly resolved: in both stages 2 and 3, students initially keen to pre-empt discussion in this way responded immediately to reminders of the seminars' compassionate focus – that this could include supporting others to successfully complete their presentations.   However, there was one agreed reason to interrupt a presentation in mid-flow: if the presenter used a word or term that another student could not understand, that group member had a responsibility to the group to interrupt and get a rephrase or explanation – not just for his own understanding but for the whole group's. Only a single word was needed, e.g. 'Sorry?'   However, it was found that students were reluctant to interrupt a presenter and show the group they (and perhaps,

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[141] **NB:** Some students who were interviewed after the assessment talked in the present tense as if they were still on the module. To avoid confusion, all footnotes for quotations will specify whether the student was interviewed mid module or post module, i.e. post assessment.

only they) had not understood something. More problematically, in the first two or three weeks of stages 2 and 3, presenters used challenging terms I thought other students might very likely not understand, but they did not stop to explain them. Sometimes, I was forced to interrupt to check understanding of the whole group. Nearly always, I found that listeners had not all understood. Sometimes no one had understood. Presenters were sometimes visibly taken aback by this. It was suggested it was not compassionate action to allow a speaker to continue under the misconception that he was communicating successfully. He needed the opportunity to know he had lost his group or he could not repair the situation and the quality of the subsequent discussion of his article would be impaired. Groups responded well to this compassionate principle; there was surprise, jokes, apologies, apologies accepted, and so on. A decision was made about what the groups could do, as follows.

As they were presenting, speakers attempted to use inclusive eye contact around the group to help them micro-watch (McDermott, 1988, 2009) for signs of reduced understanding; they would use their judgment to ask: 'Does everyone understand that?' when they used a more challenging word or introduced an article-specific term or concept. Classroom observations indicated four outcomes of this particular strategy over the course of stage 2, but in stage 3 where there was to be an end of module assessment, some or all of the following outcomes were observed in every seminar after it was introduced.

First, many more students did interrupt presentations to request clarifications of difficult terms. Possibly, they felt more entitled to. Notably, they were not only international students (c.f. Chapter 2). Second, inclusive eye contact around the group to check

understanding, forced several students to reduce their reliance on reading parts of their articles, eyes down, instead of explaining it.

Third, sometimes the clarifications sought by students were because the presenter was speaking too fast. This was most often the case with *male*, local ethnic minority speakers of Pakistani origin. But when different students had signaled to them to slow down in 2 or more groups, their efforts to reduce their speed became observably more focused. Notably, tutor advice to slow down was considerably less effective.

Finally, and arguably the most important outcome of all of the above compassion strategies, was that many students did actively check understanding, asking, for example: 'Does everyone know that/understand that?' In addition though, by week four or five, presenters were pre-empting difficulties of understanding in the group. That is, with increasing frequency, it was observed that they were pausing in their presentations to provide explanations of difficult or new, article-specific concepts or terms before they continued. Frequently, at these points the body language of listeners appeared particularly focused on the speaker, in eye gaze and leaning in. From an observer perspective, it appeared the presenters were teaching their colleagues – that they were consciously and deliberately inputting to group knowledge and that they had planned to do this during their reading. Thus, for a few moments, they were assuming the role of expert and, apparently, the group was co-constructing this role for them and endorsing it.

To further explore the use students made of the CfP, starting with evidence that suggested an internalized use - in contrast to use that was automated or mechanical - I now turn to the interview and focus group data.

In stage three, local black student S33 talked about how his own use of the CfP, in steps one and two, were partly mediated by other students' use of it:

> S33: They really wanted to do well in it, so I felt kind of
> pressured so I thought, 'I need to step up. So I really need
> to be involved and participate with what was going on.'[142]

Ethnic minority female, S24, identified that groups of students had met for informal analysis of their respective group management skills after the assessments:

> S24: ...and we were talking about how all the skills that we
> sort of developed, you know the eye contact and the no
> barriers – how effective they were in the assessment.[143]

Five out of 18 interview/focus group students exposed to the CfP explained how they were using the compassionate strategies to enhance communicative effectiveness beyond the action research. S29 wanted to talk about specific examples of how he found them helpful in his part time job as a supervisor in Asda. S31 had used them to draw a particularly shy candidate into a mock group discussion run by IBM in London for recruitment and selection purposes. The IBM staff had commended him in their feedback, telling the interviewees that an ability to bring quieter members of a professional team into a discussion was valued by the company. They looked for this, they said, in their recruitment and selection procedures.

Elsewhere, S24 said:

> I took it to other modules. ...in my presentation skills I was
> getting mid 60s and now I'm getting high 60's. I mean it's only
> a couple of percentages but there's obvious change.[144]

---

[142] S33 Local black male, stage three, post assessment focus group 3 transcript, p1, lines 23-25

[143] S24, Local ethnic minority female, stage three, post assessment focus group 2 transcript p6, lines 174-176

An international student (S25) with native speaker English said in stage 3:

> S25: in one of our modules … you have to group up with
> people of different cultures and most of them don't really
> speak English as their first language. So it was really tough. But
> then, what I learned with this: to keep eye contact and make
> everyone involved - I used those skills to, you know, enhance
> the experience. And yeah, it really helps. The group is getting
> along fine.[145]

Similarly, in stage 2, students described how they were applying the CfP to strengthen group

cohesion, particularly in terms of working towards a more equal spread of participation:

> S19: …if there's a person that talks and doesn't let anyone
> else talk, or if there's people that just want to let other
> people talk, they'll be *obliged* -
>
> S18: - yeah, you're *all* gonna be like kind of, 'Okay, well
> what do *you* think?' , 'Well*,* what do *you* think?'[146]

S26 said in stage three:

> S26: …you're letting more people in, rather than shutting
> certain people out… in the past you may have blocked
> some people out because they find it more difficult to get
> involved.[147]

By the end of stage 2, Thai student, S18 described his use of the CfP's step one in different

terms to his earlier experience of it ("At first it's awkward"[148]) and said, "I think it's a

[144] S24 Ethnic minority female, post assessment focus group 2 transcript, p5, lines 145-149
[145] S25 International/Malaysian female, stage three, post assessment focus group transcript, p10, lines 282-286
[146] S17, S18, S19 Stage two, post module focus group transcript, p1, line 9-12
[147] S26 Local white male, stage three, post assessment focus group 2 transcript, p7, lines 202-204
[148] S18 International/Thai male, stage two, focus group transcript, p2, line62

positive thing now it's all over."[149] It had helped reduce communicative barriers with other students and:

> S18 : …to make friends and…. walk in their skins like, try to see
> what kind of personality they [are] like and … adapt to them so
> you can communicate with them.[150]

As in cycle 1, it was the use of eye contact that emerged particularly clearly in the cycle 2 data. In both cycles, in observed seminars, there were hands waved, tilting heads and coughing to draw eye contact from those demonstrating excluding eye contact. There was not so much evidence of avoidant eye contact in cycle 2 as had been seen in the early stages of stage two in cycle 1. Overall though, as in cycle 1, in cycle 2 the interview and focus group data corroborated what was found in other data sets such as film, and seminar observations.

6.2.1 The use of eye contact

Across different data sets, the theme of eye contact emerged strongly as a core component of the use of the CfP. It was used purposefully:

> S31: You just make sure you don't focus on just one person.[151]

The use of eye contact, and how it enhanced social and/or learning experience, was noted by 14 out of the 19 of the interview and focus group students in cycle 2. The 14 included white, black and ethnic minority local students, and international students:

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[149] S18 International/Thai male, stage two, focus group transcript, p2, line64
[150] S18 International/Thai male, stage two, focus group transcript, p2, lines 112-114
[151] S31 Local ethnic minority male, stage three, post assessment focus group 3 transcript, p12, lines 375

S17: Because when you look at someone and they're smiling

and like nodding along [as you speak to the group], you kind of

think like, "Yeah. *Okay*." [152]

A Female Thai student reflected that:

S22: It's a way to conversate [sic] with others. [153]

Learning how to observe others in the group became important to many students:

S31: We were making eye contact with each other, I did

notice that as well, when we were talking. [154]

S24: We were sort of analysing … I know *I* was.   I was like

watching each other. What's the body language like? How

much is [sic] so many people talking? [155]

This kind of watchfulness highlighted the circularity of action and response from

participants' use of eye contact: to closely observe the group's communicative processes,

and to use that to signal personal, intentioned inclusiveness to others.   In cycle 1,

attentiveness to eye contact was a dominant theme in the transcripts of participants in

every stage.   Also, as in the cycle 1 feedback to the MA literature students, 14 out of 19

interviewees identified eye contact in relation to its simultaneous effects on both social and

learning experience. Its effect was somehow to integrate these two experiences into one:

---

[152] S17 Local minority ethnic female, stage two, focus group,   Lines 312-31

[153] S22 International/Thai female, stage three, mid-module focus group 1, p3, line 90

[154] S31 Local ethnic minority male, stage three, post assessment focus group 3 transcript, p4, line 100-101

[155] S24 Local ethnic minority female, stage three, post assessment focus group 2 transcript, p4, lines 96-97

S31: I think if someone's looking at you when you're

speaking that makes them feel more comfortable and

then they get more space to think instead of thinking,

"He's not listening to me" and then he try [sic] to change

the topic.[156]

This is similar to T5's informal comments to me in cycle 1, that her fellow internal assessor

had noted how students were giving others, including less confident students, 'room to

come in', T5 said. This may be what S31 meant when he said: 'they get more space to

think.'   This can be contrasted with Turner's account of her local students' 'pathologising'

the silences that her international students needed to respond to them.

 It appears that social experience was dependent on (amongst other factors) eye contact

whilst learning experience was dependent on social experience. The following two students

- a local black student and then an international (French) student - strongly suggest this is

the case:

S33: The eye contact helped me 'cause I'm feeling like, 'Okay, if

I'm really, *really* paying attention to what this person is saying -

then I can gather more information and also *respond* to it.[157]

 The French international student said:

S34: It's strange. I think you learn a lot when you just try to

see all the people [*in a discussion group*][158]

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[156] S31 Local ethnic minority male, stage three, post assessment focus group 3, transcript p2, lines 58-60

[157] S33 Local black male, stage three, post assessment focus group 3 transcript, p4, lines 116-119

[158] S34 International/French male, stage three, post assessment one-to-one interview, p1, line 39

As seen in S19's data, above, a particular parallel with the cycle 1 data was to do with the

practice time needed to *become* an agent of inclusivity in the group - through eye contact:

> S24: If I'm being honest, when I was in the tutorial I kind
> of thought, 'What is the sort of relevance of this? I'm
> being told to look at someone when I can't do it.' But
> then after *doing* it – week 2, week 3, week 4, 5, 6 – I was
> kind of 'Okay, I'm getting better at this; I'm seeing a
> difference.'[159]

Overall, even shy students, were willing to persist at acquiring the non-verbal skills needed

to help reduce their communicative barriers with others. International student S15, from

stage one in cycle 2, described how he had carried on with the inclusive eye strategy,

despite rejection of the CfP by both his Business and his English tutor. He thought it helpful

to keep trying to:

> S15: ... look at each other during the group. And like the person
> who's talking should be looking around at every person... I tried
> it, I tried, yeah I tried it ...and I was surprised with the students
> [*Chinese females in his team during the assessment*]. I was like,
> 'Wow. So they actually *can* participate.'[160]

The participation S15 refers to is identified below under Section 6.4.1: *Group cohesion* - an

emergent theme relevant to research question (d), on the CfP's effects on social experience.

S24 understood how eye contact had a kind of social gatekeeper function; it could promote

inclusivity or be used to set up an alpha pair and reduce it:

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[159] S24 Local ethnic minority female, stage three, post assessment focus group 2 transcript, p9, lines 261-264
[160] S15 International/Nigerian, stage one, post module, joint interview transcript, p4, 163-165

> S24:   If you're engaged with one person then you're far less
>
> likely to look around and engage everyone else.[161]

And she was mindful of how, if she had fallen into an alpha pair, her partner in the pair could dismantle its divisive effects on the group's cohesiveness, by directing her eye contact to include other people in the group:

> S24: … if I'm talking to one person and that person looks
>
> away then I'm more likely to look around at the rest of
>
> the group. [162]

As I had observed in cycle 1, as in the data on Cathy and John, she had become aware of the effects of objects in the physical environment - that they could derail eye contact and with it, communicative effectiveness:[163]

> S24…… I do see a change when we have meetings on some of
>
> my modules. If there is something in front of us, if I just quietly
>
> move it to the side… a laptop or a stack of books …I did notice
>
> there was a change in the way the person opposite me was
>
> talking to me. **[164]**

From a different whole seminar group, after the final assessment for which local black student, S33 had achieved his first 1st on any module he had taken, he said of the CfP strategies he and others had used that:

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[161] S24 Local ethnic minority female, stage three, post assessment focus group 2 transcript p4, lines 110-112

[162] S24 Local ethnic minority female, stage three, post assessment focus group 2 transcript p4, lines 109-110

[163] In the first 2-3 weeks of stages 2 and 3, some students brought laptops from which to talk on an article they had found. They were discouraged from this; open laptops in front of them seemed to break up the communicative space of the group and draw their eye contact for sustained periods to the screens while they were speaking.

[164] S24 Local ethnic minority female, stage three, post assessment focus group 2, p5, lines 140-153

S33: those things help you to focus ...[165]So I think if it were all

taken out, I don't know how it would have went – for me

anyway.[166]

6.3 Effects of the use of the CfP on social experience

> **Question d.** Does the compassion pedagogy improve student **social** (and learning)
> **experience** of seminars?
> **d(i)** Is there a difference according to whether students are local or
> international?

In response to question (d), the social experiences appeared to be mediated, overall

positively, by participant's own and/or by others' use of the CfP. This was the same as what

was found in cycle 1 amongst white, local students. Moreover, in response to question d(i),

whether the cycle 2 participants were white local, black local, ethnic minority local, or

international students did not appear to be a factor in the cycle 2 result. In this cycle, 13 out

of the 19 interview and focus group participants who had been exposed to the CfP indicated

an increased sense of group cohesion within their small group and/or the whole group and

their data suggested how they believed this was (at least partly) attributable to the CfP.

For step two (see Table 1.1), membership of discussion groups each week was not decided

by friendship preferences but by what research the students had brought to each seminar:

S23: ...we had the same thing (article) so we split up.[167]

So then I got to know loads of people [and] shared different
views and interests on the subject. Whenever I see them I say
"Hi. How are you?"[168]

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[165] S33 Local black male, stage three, post assessment focus group 3 transcript, p4, lines 101

[166] S33 Local black male, stage three, post assessment focus group 3 transcript, p4, lines 106-107

[167] S23 Local ethnic minority female stage three mid module focus group 1 transcript, p5, line 110

Elsewhere he talked about the use of step one in his mid-module focus group:

> S23:   I'm noticing that everyone's coming closer to each
>
> other. Everyone's talking to each other.[169]

International student, S21 said:

> S21: We're closer … because we get to talk to everyone so we
>
> like know more about them. [170]

S30 in stage three described his experience of step two, each week:

> S30: You have to meet; you have to talk to… contemporaries.
>
> It's harder, but it happens constantly and over a month that
>
> skill becomes really good.[171]

As stated above, S19 was reluctant to sit with other students besides S17 and S18 through a number of weeks in stage one and wanted the tutor to teach to the whole class. But other students were, on the whole working well with the CfP, and on one particular occasion they tried to persuade her to join them with the following comments recorded in my field notes, and they indicated their response to, and use of the CfP was in contrast to S19's:

> ***Excerpt A from seminar observation notes***
> ***(Stage two, week five):***
> "I'm sorry but I don't agree."   "What's the point of just sticking with people you know all the time if you want to get new ideas?"   "We can ask (T10) anything we want anyway."

S19 appeared to become more comfortable with working with other students in group work towards the end of the module, first by accepting others into her group (she, S17 and S18)

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[168] S23 Local ethnic minority female, stage three mid module focus 1 group transcript, p5, line 110-111

[169] S23 Local ethnic minority female, stage three mid module focus group transcript, p1, line 10

[170] S21 International/Thai female, stage three, mid module focus group transcript, p1, lines 20-21

[171] S30 Local ethnic minority male, stage three, post assessment focus group transcript 3, p13, lines 430-433

and then by moving to other groups. Thus, in the post module focus group with her, when

S17 said that learning what to do in seminars (step one) to enhance each other's experience

of them was "like this Kumbaya kind of thing"[172] S19 responded with:

No. It was work. It was something you have to get used to.[173]

At the end of this thing, I actually preferred the group work.[174]

This indicated that S19, the most obviously resistant of all students observed during stage

two, had changed her position on the CfP by the end of the module. In this sense, there was

some similarity between her and S3. The end-of-module focus group in cycle 1 in stage two,

had reported S3 to be contributing during CfP seminar discussions, to others' learning, in

ways she had predicted earlier in the module would not be possible for her. Both S3 and S19

had in common that they had each brought low levels of felt personal safeness into the CfP

seminar room and they both appeared to attribute these to situations and/or incidents in

their individual histories (c.f. McDermott, 1988; Foulkes, 1975).   As a result of these, they

seemed to have a particular need for safeness (P. Gilbert, 2005) and thus perhaps needed

more time in the seminars to be assured this was available to them (c.f. Page-Gould et al,

2008) through experiencing other students' use of the CfP.   Of note also is that towards the

end of this module, students from other (non CfP) modules/seminars began to attend the

CfP-run seminars and T10 allowed them to stay. S19 coped well with this.

In relation to facilitating easier connections in the CfP, S24 talked about how she, S26 and

S25 were making plans to go into business together when they graduated. But:

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[172] S17, S18, S19 Focus group stage two transcript, p2, line 75
[173] S17, S18, S19 Focus group stage two transcript, p2, line 77
[174] S17, S18, S19 Focus group stage two transcript, p2, line 94

S24: I mean S26 has been doing my course for a whole year. I'd never noticed him [*or*] even S25. … I'd just sit there…. I would miss some of my tutorials [seminars] because I didn't wanna be there… I didn't know anyone there and I felt like no one would speak to me… in the [CfP] tutorials that we had, it was a whole class: everyone knew each other, everyone was communicating. [175]

Similarly, in a different stage 3 focus group ethnic minority male S23 talked about a seminar discussion in which students had shared their research on Artificial Intelligence:

S23: (*Turning to the others in the focus group.*) You know X? Me and him, we didn't know each other. You know, it just brings people together; it's kind of weird, but it works. [176]

S28, an ethnic minority female who arrived late on to the module because of timetable clashes appears to be describing a CfP-mediated shift from multi to interculturalism:

S28: When I go into seminars I find any other Muslim people there…. Most of the others, I'm probably not gonna talk to them to be honest. [177]

So I was thinking, 'Oh my God. What if no-one talks to me?' But as soon as I got into a group I was fine, I was fine. … I did the research so I was really lucky [sic]. We just got into the discussion and took it from there. It flowed really well. [178]

Related to S28's experience, S30 had found when using the CfP that:

S30: If you never met the person before, they might have different characteristics so if the person can't initiate a

[175] S24 Local ethnic minority female, stage three, post assessment focus group transcript, p8, lines 243-251

[176] S23 Local ethnic minority female, stage three mid module focus group transcript, p1, line 115-117

[177] S28 Local ethnic minority female, stage three, mid module focus group transcript, p5, lines 133-135

[178] S28 Local ethnic minority female, stage three, mid module focus group transcript, p5, lines 110-115

conversation, you have to initiate *for* them and try to help

them continue on communicating.[179]

S29: It makes an entry way for them. It does help them.[180]

S31: ….if you let the teacher do it, there won't be any

progress for the individual. [181]

Another way to help quieter individuals to participate was by not filling silences too quickly

(c.f. Turner, 2002), a key point on the checklist for discussion in the step one seminar. After

the module, white local male student, S26, said:

S26: Obviously language barriers *are* a bit of a problem to

overcome especially for international students: if there's

people that are trying to fill the silence then it's far more

difficult for those individuals, who are quieter, to come in.[182]

In another focus group, local ethnic minority male, S30 cited an example from his group

assessment of the difficulties, not of an international student but of a fellow local ethnic

minority male (English native speaker):

S30: I don't know if you guys noticed but (Y), he found it

harder to communicate, but I think when we pushed him

throughout the oral presentation… he just became, he just

delivered it all out.[183]

6.3.1 Group cohesion

In group discussions, group cohesion refers to an even spread of participation amongst

members of the group that is working together (c.f. Vertegaal et al, 2003; 2003). The

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[179] S30 Local ethnic minority male, stage three, post assessment focus group 3 transcript Page 12, lines 376-379

[180] S30 Local ethnic minority male, stage three, post assessment focus group 3 transcript Page 10, line321

[181] S30 Local ethnic minority male, stage three, post assessment focus group 3 transcript Page 8, lines 254-256

[182] S26 Local white male, stage three, post assessment focus group 2 transcript, p7, lines 204-207

[183] S30 Local ethnic minority male, stage three, post assessment focus group 3 transcript Page 11, lines 354-357

following evidence suggests aspects of the CfP were implicated in promoting group cohesion and also, that group cohesion was a mediating factor in both social and learning experience.

> **Whole group cohesion**

Related to step 2, the 'whole group' apparently included the subject tutor in the view of several students:

> S23: (T10) could just jump in – add in to our discussion, and he could take a listen and say, "Oh *that's* interesting." So he's like a student again. So it's just a room full of students…
>
> S21: Yeah I agree
>
> S22: I feel the same way.
>
> S20: Yeah. Cause he says, 'Yeah, that's interesting - what's the reference?' [184]

This appears to disconfirm the Pitner and Sakamoto (2002) assertion of insurmountable blocks to the egalitarian moment, or critical consciousness as they also refer to it, in practitioner/client relations.

In another focus group, S24 talked about persistent concerns in non CfP seminars that some students could be 'way more advanced than me' or 'I was average.'[185] It appears the CfP had some effect in dismantling some of this anxiety:

> S24: I didn't feel like we were all different levels…we were all on one level.[186]

Similarly, carrying out individual, independent reading in preparation for each seminar could, arguably, encourage feelings of isolation and/or stress during preparation time. S25,

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[184] S20, S21, S22, S23 stage three, mid module focus group transcript, p8-9, lines 222-228
[185] S24 Local ethnic minority female, stage three, post assessment focus group transcript p8, lines 243
[186] S24 Local ethnic minority female, stage three, post assessment focus group transcript p8, lines 244-252

an international student felt that one reason why this did not happen for her was that, "I felt like, 'We're doing this together - not just me alone.' "[187]

> *Small group cohesion*

Similar to S28's realisation above, that though coming late into the seminars and feeling nervous, her first discussion 'flowed really well', other data also related to the theme of 'flow', and suggested group cohesion:

> S30: In presentation you're kind of a robot, whereas in this discussion you're more *fluid*. *[My italics]*[188]

Also notable was the frequency of students' use of the descriptor 'natural', as happened in cycle 1, to describe the use of step one:

> S24: Everything became really natural once you started going, yeah it became really, really natural.[189]

In terms of step two, S30 felt that different group memberships each week had helped him "…get better at initiating, 'cause obviously, you initiate every single week."[190] And, "if you keep doing it, it will be natural."[191]

The notion of being in the zone, which appeared in several transcripts, also became part of this cluster of descriptors during data analysis:

> S29: Our one just flowed to be honest.
>
> Q: 'Just flowed'?
>
> S29: Yeah, yeah, it happened.

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[187] S24 International/Malaysian female, stage three, post assessment focus group transcript p7, lines 196-197

[188] S30 Local ethnic minority male, stage three, post assessment focus group 3 transcript p17, line 589

[189] S24 Local ethnic minority female, stage three, post assessment focus group 2 transcript, p6, line 164

[190] S30 Local ethnic minority male, stage three, post assessment focus group 3 transcript, p13, line 416

[191] S30 Local ethnic minority male, stage three, post assessment focus group 3 transcript, p13, line 433

S32: It came naturally.   Like once you're in there –

S29: - Once you're in the zone (*Laughs*). [192]

Two assessment groups each brought a different and contrasting variable into play which tested this group cohesion.   Although asked not to, one group rehearsed the discussion they intended to have in their examination with the articles they had each prepared. Another group did not.   The two groups make an interesting comparison for the exploration of group cohesion under CfP conditions.

 In one assessment group:

S24:   We didn't practice cause we didn't want to sound too rehearsed; we wanted it to come naturally like it does in our seminars.

S26:   - we felt it would be too awkward and put us too much on the spot even more so to try and think of new things, er, whereas you know, if we were to just play it by ear straight away, without having any practice at all, then it would be more fluid, or I found so – it felt that it was fluid.[193]

In contrast, S33's assessment group met twice in the days leading up to the assessment to 'practice' their discussion. This was partly because of his history, he said, of extreme nervousness at public assessments, and so:

S33: [We] practiced beforehand so, we all knew what we was going to say and when we was going to say it, and how to

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[192] S29, S30, S31, S32 Stage three, post assessment focus group transcript, p6, lines 172-173

[193] S24, S25, S26, stage three, post assessment focus group transcript 2, p4, lines 86-90

respond to certain questions we asked, so that made me feel

at ease a lot more.[194]

However, in the course of the actual assessment, S33's fellow group members abandoned

the arrangements and asked him unrehearsed questions in numbers greater than had been

agreed. This:

> S33:   threw me off guard….And I thought 'Oh, I wasn't prepared
>
> for that.' I was only gonna be asked *one* question.' And they
>
> threw me like a second one and then I think a third one as well!
>
> So that made me crack my brain and I thought, 'Okay, okay, okay.
>
> Let me start thinking. Let me start thinking.' I panicked at first,
>
> um, I - I remember pausing for at least five seconds.[195]

This suggests that while the pre-assessment plan appeared to have been forgotten by his

fellow group members, the mindfulness to allow him time to think was not [c.f. Turner's

(2008) students, pp18-19, above].

At the same time, his colleagues had not kept to the agreed plan of questions:

> Q: I'm wondering what did you say to your team members
>
> after that? Did you feel upset with them or -
>
> S33:   (*Cuts in*) I wasn't angry…. I was just happy to be honest,
>
> 'cause I was actually surprised myself at how we just all came
>
> together.[196]

Thus, whether or not students shared their articles and practised the final discussion before

the assessment appeared to make little difference to these two groups in how they

maintained use of the CfP step one strategies for group cohesion under exam conditions.

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[194] S33, Local black male stage three, post assessment focus group transcript, p1, lines 9-11

[195] S33 Local black male, stage three, post assessment focus group 3 transcript, p2, lines 133-140

[196] S33 Local black male, stage three, post assessment focus group 3 transcript, p2, lines 54-56

In the other seminar class, S29 describes this kind of group cohesion in yet different terms. Here he is also referring to his own assessed seminar group (of which S33 was not a member):

> S29: I felt not as one person but I felt as a person within an entity and the entity was my group… I felt that I was part of the group and I didn't feel like an individual at that point. It didn't make me feel like I'm focused on it. It made me feel like we're *all* focused on it.[197]

Looking at T10's written feedback for this assessed seminar discussion to check whether this apparent group cohesion was what the assessors observed, or whether the assessors saw something different, the written feedback was:

> This group were very interactive… all contributed to the discussion each time… they had a <u>REAL</u> discussion. <u>SUPERB</u> Group Skills.[198]

This contrasts with stage 2, cycle 1 where set reading was given and T4 suggested students were talking 'rubbish'. Therefore the feedback above on group cohesion may be partly attributable to the CfP step 2, which was aimed at supporting students in taking over greater ownership of their own reading and, as a consequence, the directions in which thinking processes unfolded in their seminar discussions.

Concerning a different assessment: where the CfP had been rejected by the teaching staff involved after the first introductory seminar, Nigerian student, S15's experience is also of interest in terms of group cohesion. In his interview he was a communicative and confident individual, but in the film of his assessment he appears very nervous. He claps his hand to

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[197] S29 Local ethnic minority male, stage three, post assessment focus group 3 transcript, p15, Lines 491-494
[198]   See section 6.5 below on academic outcomes with the CfP.

his forehead and stammers when asked a direct question by the other team. His two fellow group members, both Chinese females with weaker English than his (as noted in the feedback to them), are seen helping him throughout the assessment.   They smile at him, prompt him, make suggestions, allow him time to answer, then field questions and points from the opposing team when S15 cannot. This was an individually marked assessment. He said "I think the reason why [they helped him despite their English difficulties], is because I couldn't see what I was doing, what I was saying. They could see."[199] He felt his effort to use (and presumably therefore model) inclusive eye contact with the Chinese students despite their shyness during the seminars, had been "… worth it. A hundred percent."[200]

This theme of group cohesion was linked to eye contact - whether inclusive, avoidant or excluding - as a social act within CfP that affected others (c.f. Vertegaal et al, 2002; 2003).

6.4 Effects of the use of the CfP on the learning experience

Question d.	Does the compassion pedagogy improve student (social and) ***learning experience*** of seminars?
d(i)	Is there a difference according to whether students are local or international?

In response to question (d) above, cycle 2 students' learning experiences were, on the whole, positively mediated apparently by participants' own use of the CfP and/or by its use by other participants. This was a similar result to that of cycle 1 for this question. In response to question d(i) on learning experiences, whether participants were white local,

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[199] S15 International/Nigerian, stage one, post module, joint interview transcript, p6, line 160

[200] S15 International/Nigerian, stage one, post module, joint interview transcript, p1, line 12-14

black local, ethnic minority local, or international students did not appear to be a factor in the result.

The result was not based on data such as this:

> S31: I think it was getting interesting. Time was going a bit too fast.
>
> S32: 'Cause we was actually forced to stop by one of the lecturers.[201]
>
> S33: I actually think we kind of got too excited with the discussion? 'Cause we actually really got into it, really, *really* got into it.[202]

Such data shows keenness, but not that the CfP was adding value to the learning experience. Of more relevance to the question was a variety of data describing students experiences of learning in the CfP seminars and this is as follows.

S23 compared his CfP learning experience with that in other seminars. He felt students had more positive learning experiences amongst themselves in the CfP seminars because, **"you don't have any lecturer ramming information into our brains and *we're* sharing it out."[203]**

Similarly, from another focus group and related also to group cohesion:

> S33: You're sharing the load, so everyone can just help each other out.[204]

During observations of stage 2 seminars, students appeared to work well together with no evidence of the small number of resistances seen in previous stages, and no critical

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[201] S31, S32, Local ethnic minority males, stage three post assessment focus group transcript, p3, lines 184-186
[202] S33 Local black male, stage three, post assessment focus group 3 transcript, p2, lines 53-54
[203] S23 Local ethnic minority male, stage three, post assessment focus group 1 transcript p1, lines 10-12
[204] S33 Local black male, Stage three, post assessment focus group transcript, p5, line 157

incidents to report. By the end of the study, this appeared to have been partly attributable

to the (step three) assessment. S26, a white local student said:

> We're using the skills every week so it wasn't just a case of
>
> just doing it for the assessment or just doing it in the
>
> seminars ….You had a motivation to adopt the skills because
>
> obviously you're gonna need it [sic] in your assessment. But
>
> obviously at the same time you weren't under too much
>
> pressure every week to be perfect. [205]

One notable delay to progress on independent reading skills is that, in the first 1-3 weeks of

the module, more than half of the students were bringing in materials of inappropriate level

from google. When challenged on this, more than half reported not taking in and/or

retaining what they had been shown about researching in their induction the year before. It

appeared they had been relying on google for all their assignments since. I showed them

again how to research in the online university library. This took about 10 minutes and

students then applied this to CfP step 2, each week:

> S25: …. that's really good because you sort of like develop the
>
> ability to learn how to research properly.[206]
>
> S31: I've learned how to use Google Scholar right…. It was interesting
>
> researching up different articles and then sharing it with other group
>
> members.[207]
>
> S20: I've learned there's so much to learn about this subject when
>
> everyone in one group researches …and share [sic] it.[208]

[205] S26 Local white male, stage three, post assessment focus group 2 transcript, p5, lines 129-134

[206] S25 International/Malaysian female, stage three post assessment focus group 3 transcript, p9, lines 256-257

[207] S30 Local ethnic minority male, stage three post assessment focus group 3, p1, lines 25-26

[208] S20 Local ethnic minority male, stage three, mid module focus group 1 transcript Page 1, lines 19-20

The requirement for group discussions of individual, independent reading, obliged non-readers to publicly identify themselves early to those who had read to share. A non-reader would be put in a group of three readers/sharers so that the reading deficit could be accommodated in the seminar group as a whole. Volunteers were allocated to assist any non-reader in difficulty with the library facilities and to do this after the seminar. After 2-3 weeks, nearly all attending students were bringing in notes to present on lecture-relevant, journal level materials they had selected. As the quality of the sources students chose to read improved, discussions extended; students elicited more from each other. Some were producing sometimes more than one article and this promoted further comparative work in discussions. (For an example of this, an excerpt of a transcript from the assessed discussion of focus group students S27, S28, S29 and S30 is available in Appendix IV, p278.[209])

Also noted was that students internationalized the curriculum by sharing country specific knowledge related to their research articles (Appendix IV illustrates this). In effect, this contributed an additional layer of learning through group based integrative thinking. Both as presenters and during the discussions, many students were seen relating their articles to countries from the developed and/or the developing world. Occasionally, this was because one or more of these countries was connected with individual group members, including local students. Schuerholz-Lehr (2007) stresses the need for students to be given the pedagogical means to take the world as their point of reference when they think.

Synthesising themes from what they had read was not always easy at first for all students. Some students talked about this and why the CfP had helped reduce this kind of problem:

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[209] Apparent effects of the CfP on academic outcomes [Question (e)] are addressed under section 6.5.

S30: Say if I have information stored in my mind... so you have the potential but you can't reach it ... you need someone to kick start you...who might turn out to be a friend later on but as a group member when he pushes you it just lets out, it comes out...It comes back ... ideas start flowing. [210]

Similarly:

S23: ...as we do our own research if a group member had something they will input within what I brought and I'll input into what they brought...   You know, if we choose an interesting subject to talk about we could go on and on, we could push it to two, three hours. Cause that's how I felt sometimes, 'cause I really wanted to.[211]

I asked S23:

Q: But isn't this happening in other [non CfP] seminars as well?

S23: ... it's more closed in - you're not sharing your work. You're doing your *own* work. It's all you know. That's the problem with seminars.[212]

This could carry through to assessment of oral group work:

S26: ... it's just a case of everyone trying to scoop up as many grades as they can and normally people feel the only way to do that is by talking a lot and sort of hogging the spotlight. [213]

After the CfP assessment, S23 said:

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[210] S30 Local ethnic minority male, stage three post assessment focus group 3, p10, lines 323-328

[211] S23 Local ethnic minority male, stage three mid module focus group, p1, lines 10-25

[212] S23 Local ethnic minority male, stage three mid module focus group 1 transcript, p5, lines 118-122

[213] S26 Local white male, stage three, focus group transcript, p3 lines 77-78

> S23: Usually when we do group work … you'll always do your own work and that will be that. But this time, even though its 'individual,' you had to. You had no choice but to work with each other. [214]

S27 and S28 talked about students not actively helping each other to learn. As second years, they reported this happened, in their experience:

> S28: Only when it's time to hand something in: when they [*students*] want help…for exams.

> S27: Unless those geeky types. (*Both laugh*).[215]

Interestingly, local black student, S27, appeared unaware of his change of position on what was 'geeky' when he then went back to talking about the CfP seminars:

> S27: I have to meet them and I have to compare - and do a lot of research myself. So I have a lot to contribute.[216]

From stage two, international student S18 reflected on a critical aspect of what students were contributing to the CfP discussions:

> S18: I think it's like we say, creativity? Because each individuals [sic] have their own mind… as a person you do have something unique… it's not trained. I don't know how to explain it. [217]

A black local student suggested how he had experienced this in his CfP seminars:

> S33: you have to think on the spot, so like I say, I learned a lot from that; I learned a lot.[218]

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[214] S23 Local ethnic minority female, stage 3, post assessment focus group, p2, lines 74-75
[215] S27 and S28 local, black male and local ethnic minority female, stage three, Joint interview, p4 lines 94-96
[216] S27 Local black male, stage three, joint interview transcript, p2, lines 43, 44
[217] S18 International/Thai male, stage two focus group transcript, p6, lines 273-275
[218] S33 Local black male, stage three post assessment focus group 3 transcript, p2, lines 49-51

This is similar to the cycle 1 post graduate white local student, S10, who had talked about "all the on the spot articulation"[219] required of students in the CfP seminars.   Other aspects of the pressure placed on students by the CfP sometimes emerged.   In cycle 2, S24 felt her fellow students trusted her as a researcher, but as a component of this she also noted how their attendance to CfP's emphasis on listening to and looking attentively at others when they venture ideas made her feel:

> S24: … like I was being put on the spot…I know people like, are sort of hanging off your words. They're concentrating… staring at you, listening to every single word … taking into account everything …so I know if I lied or I made up some sort of story, they'd believe that was true. [220]

> S32: I think listening is a very integral part of thinking processes[221]….So when I come to an essay, I'm like 'Oh, I remember when [*student x*] said that.' **[222]**

And from stage two on step two:

> S17: that's good because someone might not have the same ideas as me, so when I come to an essay, I'm like, 'Oh, I remember when he said that.'[223]

S28, at first willing only to talk to fellow Muslims, talked about her first seminar discussion on the module; it was with a mature white local student:

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[219] S10 Local white male, stage three, post assessment focus group, p2, line 69 (cycle 1)
[220] S24 Local ethnic minority female, stage three, post assessment focus group transcript, p6, lines 165-171
[221] S32 Local ethnic minority male, stage three, post assessment focus group transcript, p3, line 68
[222] S32 Local ethnic minority male, stage three, post assessment focus group transcript, p3, lines 155 -157
[223]   S17 Local ethnic minority female, stage two, end of module focus group transcript, p2, lines 134-135

One of the ladies was giving examples of her company… it was really knowledgeable; … I took quite a bit from it.[224]

In her focus group, later, an Asian international student said:

S22: Yeah, because the kind of subject that this module teaches sometimes hard to grasp as it's um, a technical stuff.[225]

In lectures, she tended to find that language barriers presented problems for her and:

If you just lost, then you lost everything.[226]

But:

S22: …in the [CfP] seminar we have the examples from other sources [from group members]...we can understand it better than just the theory that (T10) teach us.[227]

Similarly, in his interview, this French student had found:

S34: I could ask questions about topics I did not understand..[228] I know if I have some trouble with a word they *[the CfP students]* are going to help me[229] ….I wanted to ask interesting questions - relevant questions about the texts of

[224]   S28, Local ethnic minority female, mid stage three joint interview, p5, lines 118-119
[225]   S22, International/Thai female, mid stage three focus group transcript, p1, lines 13-14
[226]   S22 International/Thai female, mid stage three focus group transcript, p2, line 54
[227]   S22 International/Thai female, mid stage three focus group transcript, p1, lines 14-15
[228]   S34 International/French male, post assessment one to one interview transcript, p3, line 23
[229]   S34 International/French male, post assessment one to one interview transcript, p3, lines 70-71

the other group members.[230] We all talked together and

shared the maximum of topics …[231]

S23 in his focus group reflected on similar experience:

You wouldn't expect it with a seminar group. Like, the

communication - four people to talk like that.[232]

S26, agreed that the CfP was "completely different"[233] in this way, from his other seminars.

Finally, though eye contact appeared to signal to others that they were socially included in

the group, it was also linked by this black local student and an international student, to

enhanced learning. For example:

S33: The eye contact helped me 'cause I'm feeling like, 'Okay, if

I'm really, really paying attention to what this person is saying -

then I can gather more information and also *respond* to it.[234]

S34: It's strange. I think you learn a lot when you just try to

see [sic] all the people [*in the discussion group*][235]

Cycle 1 and cycle 2 data therefore share similar findings on the role of the CfP in enhancing

learning for some students. No students reported diminishment to their learning

experiences in seminars.   Inclusive eye contact was again, as in cycle 1, implicated in better

integrated learning and thinking processes.

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[230] S34 International/French male, post assessment one to one interview transcript, p1, lines 18-19

[231] S34 International/French male, post assessment one to one interview transcript, p3, lines 52-53

[232] S23 Local ethnic minority male, stage three mid module focus group 1 transcript, p5, lines 119-120

[233] S26 Local white male, stage three, focus group transcript, p3 line 79

[234] S33 Local black male, stage three, post assessment focus group 3 transcript, p4, lines 116-119

[235] S34 International/French male, stage three, post assessment one-to-one interview, p1, line 39

The next section explores the data for possible impacts of the CfP on academic outcomes.

6.5 Effects on academic outcomes (assessed critical thinking)

The data collected in stage three responded to question (e).

> *Question e.* Does the compassion pedagogy improve academic outcomes from
> seminars?
> *e(i)* Is there a difference according to whether students are local or
> international?

To identify any effect of the CfP on academic outcomes the percentage mark in the category of *critical thinking* (CT) - from the module's essay and from the module's final assessed seminar - for each student, were compared. Critical thinking is a higher cognitive process and the literature suggests that for this to occur, people must feel some degree of social safeness (P. Gilbert, 2005; Bates, 2005). From the data available the CfP did appear to have a positive effect on raising academic outcomes in terms of achievement at critical thinking for a number of students.   In this respect, no evidence was found that, if students curtailed their speaking in the assessed seminar to allow others to speak (as was done for S33, see p215), this undermined the demonstration of their own academic ability.   Possible reasons for this can be deduced from S1's data in cycle 1 (pp161, 172, 174). On the other hand, the indications of a positive effect of the CfP on academic outcomes for some students, is suggested with caution.   Therefore, section 6.5.1 will preface my presentation of the evidence available in order to point out the emergent limitations of the methods I used to derive my results.

6.5.1 Limits of methods available to respond to question (e)

The sample module provided two whole seminar groups, run at different times in the week.

Both groups participated in the final stage of cycle 2, but still, taken together, there were

only 38 students in the sample. This small sample and the disproportions in size between

ethnic/national groups within it, was problematic for a useful response to question (e):

- 8 local black students
- 17 local ethnic minority students
- 5 international students
- 8 local white students

 As for any module, it was not possible to control ratios of ethnic groups enrolling on the

module and in any other year these ratios might have been quite different.

With these limitations the following results are presented with caution. The limitations will

be addressed in the concluding chapter where possible alternative methods are suggested.

6.5.2 Analysis of results for question (e)

Table 6.2 below shows the mean percentage marks for critical thinking in the seminar

discussion compared to critical thinking in the essay, for each local and international group.

Table 6.2 Summary of means of percentage marks per assignment

	Cycle 2, Stage 3 Module	
Student Categories	_Essay:_ _Critical thinking_ _% age marks_	_Seminar_ _Critical thinking_ _% age marks_
Black Local	56.25	66.25
Ethnic Minority Local	53.35	65.41
International	67.00	68.50
White Local	70.93	69.62

Differences in the groups' means for the essay were tested with the Fisher test and a null hypothesis (h0) was rejected (p<0.05), indicating the means were statistically significant. When the Fisher test was applied to each group's mean for CT in seminars the p value was p>0.05. That is, the means were not statistically different. Therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.   In other words, taking the results of these tests together, the differences between black local, ethnic minority local, international and white local students' CT marks were statistically different for the essay and so showed an attainment gap.   However, in contrast to the national attainment gap and that of the university, the seminar CT percentage marks showed no statistical difference between the groups.   The critical thinking means (taken from Table 6.2) for each group were plotted (Fig 6.1 below) allowing comparison between CT outcomes, per group, for the essay and then for the seminar.

Figure 6.1   Differences in % marks for critical thinking between ethnic groups for essay and for CfP seminar discussions
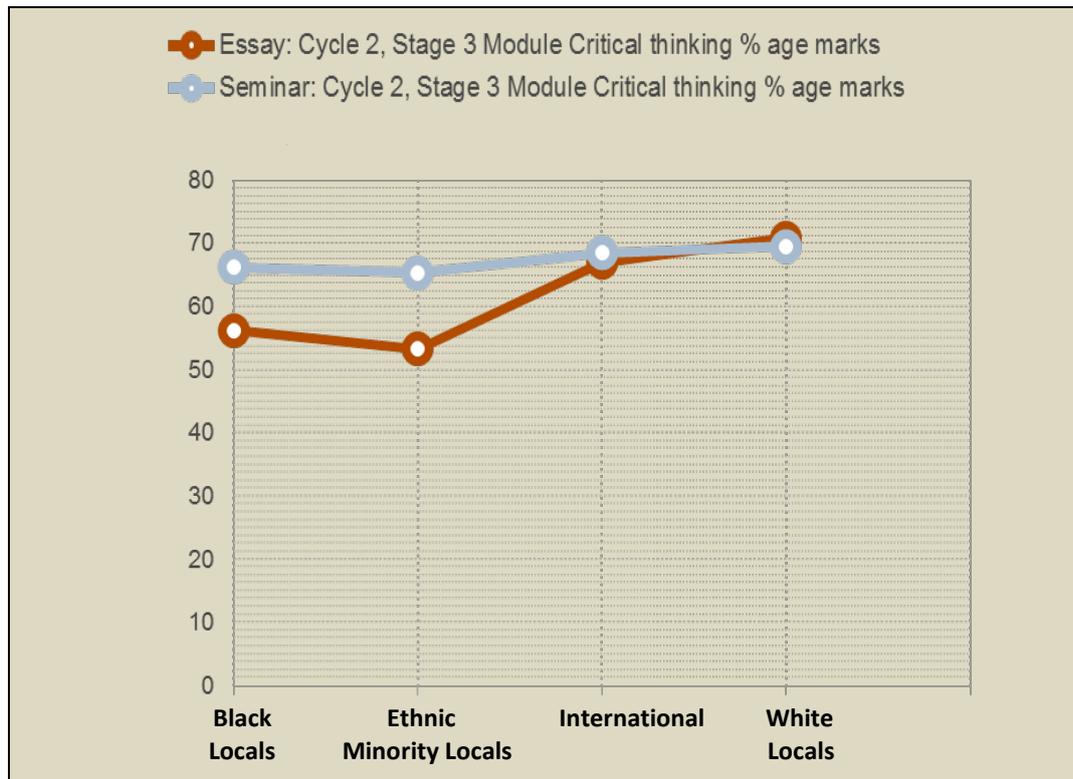
A Mann-Whitney test was applied to further explore the CT attainment means. In this test, the comparison was made between the white students and *all* other students –as a single, BME category that included international students. This replicated the categorisation used by the National Union of Students in its 2010 study of the national (18%) attainment gap. Significant differences were found (p< 0.001) for the BME means for the essay compared to the white students, but for CT in the seminars, there was no significant difference between the BME students and the white students (p=0.195).   Again, these findings for higher cognitive processing by participants under CfP conditions did not confirm the NUS's (2010) research findings on national attainment gaps.   Responding to question e(i),[236] Table 6.3 shows the marks for each student in each of the four groups, with range and spread per group between CT in a) the essay and b) the seminars.

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[236] ***Question e. (i)***   Is there a difference according to whether students are local or international?

Table 6.3   Comparisons per individual student of essay/seminar: critical thinking

Key =   Below the dark blue line, CT marks in the seminar were equal to /or lower than for the essay.

Students' ethnicity and national status	Essay % mark for Critical thinking	Seminar % mark for Critical thinking	Findings of comparison of marks for critical thinking (CT) in the essay versus marks for CT in the final seminar
Local, black 6 out of 8 students up 5%+ on critical thinking marks for seminar compared to essay.	35	65	3 students (1 fail and 2 x 2:2s at critical thinking (CT) in the essays) achieved 2 x 2:1s and a 1st for CT in the assessed seminar. (There were no 3rds for CT in the essay amongst the local black students.) Of 3 other students already at 2:1 for CT in the essay, 2 increased their marks by 5% from essay to seminar, and 1 increased by 10% to a 1[st.] Therefore, 6 out of 8 local black students demonstrated better critical thinking in the seminar than in the essay. Of the remaining 2 students, 1 achieved 75% for CT in both assignments and one moved down 5% from essay to seminar. Overall, this contrasts with the relationship between the CT marks for essay/seminar for the 6 other students.
	50	70	
	50	65	
	60	70	
	60	65	
	60	65	
	75	75	
	60	55	
Local, ethnic minority 11 out of 17 students up 5%+ on critical thinking marks for seminar compared to essay.	30	65	8 students (2 x fails, 4 x 3[rds], 2 x 2:2s for CT in their essays) moved up to 2:1 s or 1st for critical thinking in the seminar. One of these moved from a fail to a first. 2 students moved from 2:1s in the essay for CT to a 1st for CT in the seminar and 1 moved up 5% within the 2:1 range, totalling 11 students for whom critical thinking in their assessed seminar was at a higher level than in their written work, and for most at a notably higher level. Of the remaining 6 students, 2 achieved the same CT mark in the seminar as in the essay while 4 saw a shift down in each case of less than 5% from essay CT mark to the (lower) seminar CT mark.
	37.5	75	
	40	65	
	42.5	65	
	42.5	65	
	47.5	65	
	50	65	
	57.5	62.5	
	60	75	
	60	75	
	60	65	
	57.5	57.5	
	65	65	
	67.5	67	
	67.5	65	
	62	57.5	
	60	57.5	
International 3 out of 5 students up 5%+ on critical thinking marks for seminar compared to essay.	60	65	Although the differences between marks for CT in the essay and in the seminar are less noticeable in this smaller sample of international students, 3 students increased their CT marks from essay to seminar by 5%+, while 2 students saw a shift down of between 2.5 and 5%.
	62.5	70	
	70	75	
	60	57.5	
	82.5	75	
Local, White 1 out of 8 students up 2% on critical thinking marks for seminar compared to essay	70	72	The differences between marks for CT in the essay and in the seminar are quite small. While 1 of the 8 students increased their seminar mark over their essay by 2%, 4 received the same marks, and 3 saw a shift down of between 2.5 and 5%.
	75	75	
	75	75	
	75	75	
	65	65	
	67.5	65	
	70	65	
	70	65	

Table 6.3 above responds to e(i).[237] More than half of the students (21 out of 38 students)

achieved higher marks for critical thinking in their assessed seminars than their essays. The

increases ranged from 10% to 40% for over a third (n=13) of the whole sample. These are

too large and too many to be attributable entirely to non CfP-related factors. Most of the

major upward shifts in CT marks, from essay to seminar, occurred amongst local black and

local ethnic minority students.   In contrast, the table shows that the critical thinking of the

white local students gained little from the CfP. A factor contributing to this could have been

the policy, in the study's host university, of marking all but the most exceptional

assignments within the range of 30-75%.   This is to facilitate closer alignment of marks

allocated by different tutors during moderation processes. It reduces instances of non-

alignment which are problematic to resolve when, as in some universities, tutors are

encouraged to mark across the full range of marks (1-100%). Table 6.3 shows the local,

white students had reached the upper level of marks available to them in their essay critical

thinking.   The host university's policy meant that there were few marks they could gain

beyond this for their CT as participants in the CfP seminars. It could be that the parity

between the critical thinking marks achieved in essays and in seminars by the white local

students might not have been maintained by a marking policy that encouraged marking

from 1-100%.

A possibility for why a notable number of the other students' CT marks improved so

substantially from the essay to the seminar is that they felt safe with each other by the end

of the module and this would have happened anyway, without the CfP. The upward shifts in

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Question e. (i)   Is there a difference according to whether students are local or
international?[237]

so many marks cannot be accounted for in this way because of the many accounts from students of a sense of sustained disconnection from many of their fellow students in non-CfP seminars. In one focus group alone, it was pointed out to me that during their exposure to the CfP, all three students present (one white local, one ethnic minority local and one international) had initiated and nurtured strong friendship connections with each other. They were drawing up plans to start a business together after graduation. [238] Yet, pre-CfP, they said none of them had conversed once with either of the other two throughout all three of their previous semesters of seeing each other in the same seminars. Data on disconnections from fellow students in non CfP seminars has been explored in both findings chapters. Therefore, the number and extent of the upward shifts in marks cannot be attributed to students' felt safeness with each other to think as a (supposedly) natural outcome of attending the same seminars together over time.

Another possible explanation for some of the more notable results in Table 6.3 is that students did better in the seminar just because it was an oral assessment. There are two reasons for seriously questioning this argument. First, T10 expressed surprise on several occasions, to me and colleagues, at how low his academic expectations of his students in seminars had been in the years before his use of the CfP for seminars, compared to what he felt he could now expect in seminars using the CfP.[239] This does not suggest that oral work, in itself, is how most students best show their critical thinking skills.

The other argument that could be rejected is that some students who were less able to show their CT in a written assessment would *therefore* likely have achieved more highly in

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[238] They were planning to set up a business together.
[239] 3 whole seminar groups of T10's participated (Cycle 2, stages 2 and 3 over two years)

seminar discussions anyway, with or without the CfP. Again, it is unlikely that differences as large as some of those that appear in table can be attributed primarily to the difference between a written assignment and an oral one. To substantiate this view, I present assessment data which was kept separate from that of the 38 students above. This is data on an additional 3 students who were enrolled on the participating module, but did not meet their department's standard, minimum seminar attendance requirements of 75%.

The three individuals were a white local male and two black local males. T10 allocated them to an assessment group of their own because they were not responding to his emails or instructions for administrative arrangements for the assessment day, and it was reasonable to consider they might not attend the final assessed seminar. The white local male had not attended any CfP seminars at all, while the 2 local black males had erratic and/ or low attendance. Under these circumstances, T10 thought it unfair to other students to place any of these three with them under examination conditions.   They did attend on the day and were assessed in their group: Group 6.   Nine groups were assessed in total.

As seen below in Table 6.4 two of the three students received a markedly lower percentage mark for their critical thinking in the assessed seminar[240] than they received for critical thinking in their essay.[241]   The other received similar critical thinking percentage marks in both assignments.

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[240]   "Discussion/analysis"

[241]   "Critical perspectives – as in questions posed, arguments offered, analytical and evaluative insights on the student's own research and that contributed by others."

Table 6.4   Comparison of essay/seminar critical thinking for 3 low or non-attenders

Key: *Critical thinking = CT*

Students' ethnicity	% age for CT in Essay	% age mark for CT in Seminar	Comments from individual feedback on the assessed seminars: Two business tutors assessing
2 black local students in Grp 6	37.5	40	"Not very interactive. Note: whole group were somewhat disconnected."
	50	35	"Not 'interested' when others were talking."
1 White local student in group 6	75	55	"Continued immediately after first presenter – no discussion straight after. Read from notes – no eye contact."

The white, local male student, who had come to no CfP seminars, achieved 77% for his essay *overall*, and was a confident speaker in the seminar assessment. The two black students did attend some seminars, but this may not have provided sufficient time to develop the CfP skills that other students talked about - for example S26, a white local male student who had reflected: "We're using the skills every week … because obviously you're gonna need it."[242]

In conclusion of this section, the outcomes of the analysis appear to suggest, notwithstanding the methodological limitations involved, that there was some positive effect from the CfP on the academic outcomes of a substantial number of students in the stage three assessed seminar. The extent of difference between some students' essay and seminar critical thinking marks cannot be attributed only to the difference between an oral

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[242]   S26 Local white male, stage three, post assessment focus group 2 transcript, p5, lines 129-134

and a written assignment.   Rather, as argued in chapter three, the literature indicates that people's problem-solving and cognitive processes are more creative and integrative when they feel safe (Cozolino, 2013; Bates, 2005; Gilbert 2005; Page-Gould, 2008), and this factor was explicitly facilitated by the compassion-focused pedagogy throughout the module. The enhanced academic outcomes achieved by most students in their assessed seminars are likely to be because of this.

The following section returns, from a reflexive perspective, to questions c, d(i) and e(i) below. So far, this chapter has addressed these questions under separate sections – (**c**) in 6.2; **d(i)** in 6.3 and 6.4; **e(i)** in 6.5.   It was stated in those sections that students' data suggested, overall, positive social and learning experiences when using the CfP and, further, that these findings were not dependent on which ethnic or nationality group each student represented.   The following section does not qualify this latter finding. Rather it suggests reasons for it. These reasons are related to intercultural processes as defined and explored by Cantle (2012) and others (see Chapter 2, pp 14-19).

6.6   Categorising students by ethnicity or nationality

Questions c, d(i) and e(i)
  Is there a difference according to whether students are local or international?

As the study progressed, data from 7 out of the 20 cycle 2 students who were interviewed began to suggest the extent of to which they had been, and/or were still, exiting and entering multiple cultures (Cantle, 2012) in "mobile and dynamic" ways (Zapata-Barrero, 2013, p8). That is, in every day enactions of interculturalism, student participants were moving, sometimes unseen, in and out of cultures that were ethnically and/or nationally

different. The following examples of this, which emerged from the data, problematize my method of categorising the students into four groups: white local, black local, ethnic minority local or international and impacts upon the data handling and its analysis, and subsequent responses to the research questions.

Three 'international' students

1. In stage one it emerged that S16, an international (Malaysian) male, had completed a degree in an Australian university. Because of his much longer immersion in the cultural experience of the West, he was unlike many of his fellow international students. They had been in an English speaking country for only one semester by the time of their assessment with him.

2. International student, S25, a Malaysian female, had command of highly articulate native speaker level English. In focus group 3, stage three she revealed that she had spent her school years in the USA.

3. In stage two, Thai male, international student, S18, said he had spent several years of his childhood in an English speaking school in the USA.

- **A black 'local' student**

4. S33 described how, as a child, only Ibo was spoken in his Nigerian home in the UK. He learnt to speak some English from an aunt and then at nursery and school. Thus his exposure to English, how that occurred and when, is identical to the experiences of many students who, for other reasons, are institutionally defined as 'international students.'

- **Two white 'local' students**

  5. In her stage two focus group, S19, a white 'local' student described how she had arrived as a child with her family from South Eastern Europe, a foreigner in this country. She had started school in the UK unable to speak English.

  6. In a stage three focus group, S26 a white 'local' male explained that he had been born and raised in Spain, speaking only Spanish with his British mother and his Spanish father. At the age of six, his parents divorced. His mother brought him back to England where he started school able to speak only Spanish.

All of these 'local' British students shared a common history of making life changing linguistic and cultural adaptations that bear close resemblances to the experiences of many (institutionally-defined) 'international' students.

- **Two 'local' 'ethnic minority' students**

  7. In stage three, a male student with a British regional accent, whom I had believed for a number of reasons to be a local ethnic minority student, revealed that he was originally from Kosovo.

  8. In focus group 2, S24, stated that, throughout her childhood, her parents spoke only Gujerati to her at home and she learned English at school. Meanwhile, if she or her brother spoke English to her parents they would not respond. Later, when they could not understand conversations between their son and daughter, S24 and her brother helped their parents to learn more English.

Clearly such categorisations of students are problematic, not only methodologically but because also they block more potentially helpful solutions to communicative difficulties between students. Working with four ethnic/national categories of participants in this research belied students' multiple identities. This categorisation reinforces the notion of a single identity per person, which resembles a multicultural world view. As teachers, it limits our recognition, and therefore access to the many unseen, interconnecting cultures in which students may meet and recognise others as fundamentally connected to themselves.

At the same time, categorisation of students into the four groups *was* necessary in order to expose the weakness of the model of problematized difference that is adopted by the literature on HE internationalisation (as discussed in Chapter 2). Much of this literature relies on these categories with a lack of reflexivity and, I suggest, this helps construct unproductive aspects of difference that the same literature seeks to reduce. This is partly why the international student is still reified in the HE literature, the issue which was the starting point of my study.

6.7 Conclusion

From the cycle 2 data, an overall positive response was made to question (b) and to both social and learning aspects of (d). These results were very similar to those of cycle 1. The similarities between white local, black local, ethnic minority local and international students can be masked by more obvious formal differences, such as nationality. The response to question (e) was cautiously positive for black local and ethnic minority local students. The sample of international students was particularly small in stage three and so my interpretation of their response as positive is tentative.

Themes emerging from within the data overall in cycle 2 related to students' feelings of responsibility to each other, group cohesion, eye contact, and the overarching concept that linked these together was safeness – for self and others.   This was also similar to cycle 1 findings. These themes emerged in cycle 2 as follows.

1.   7[243] out of 19 students described both their sense of responsibility for the social and/or learning experiences of others, and how they acted on it, for example in terms of the effort put into weekly research (S24) or initiating conversations and helping others continue to communicate (S30).

2. 13[244] of 19 students were aware of an increased sense of group cohesion within their small groups and/or the whole group. This has been defined as the spread of participation (Vertegaal et al, 2002; 2003) and a cluster of terms for interactions emerged in association with this including 'fluid', 'flow' and 'natural'. Tutor feedback also referred to group cohesion as a factor in good academic performance in the timed assessment.

3. As in cycle 1, eye contact was a frequent theme. In cycle 2 it appeared in the transcripts of 14 out of 19 participants in interviews and focus groups (S16 excluded) with students linking this explicitly to enhanced learning as well as enhanced social experience.

   At the same time there were two students in cycle 2 for whom the CfP appeared to be inappropriate to some degree. Setting aside data from S16, because he was unaware of the CfP after missing its single seminar introduction, these two were S21

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[243]   S18, S24, S25, S26, S29, S30, S33

[244]   S15, S18, S20, S23, S24, S25, S26, S28, S29, S30, S31, S32, S33

(a Thai female) and S19 (a white local female). S19's non-use of step one was temporary but bore resemblance to S3's experiences, in cycle 1. These two local white females, one in each cycle, appeared to feel themselves under threat during the CfP seminars and both made it obvious to others that they wished to avoid contact with them.   In cycle 1, S3 did this through overt avoidance of eye contact. In cycle 2, S19 used a number of strategies to distance herself from others. For both students, previous experiences of severe stress in education and amongst peers appeared to be contributing factors to their discomfort with the CfP and the experiences raised and cited by both of them in follow up interviews/focus group. By the end of their respective modules, both students appeared to have made some progress towards integrating themselves socially and/or in terms of their learning with other students. More research is needed to determine whether this would have happened anyway over the course of any module, with or without the CfP.

The second student to have difficulties in cycle 2, S21, was also similar to S3 in cycle one in avoiding eye contact with others from time to time.   This difficulty cannot necessarily be attributed the cultural mores of her Thai origin because her Thai friend did not have such difficulties.

The final chapter follows. It discusses the overall findings of the two cycles taken together in relation to the research questions. It draws conclusions that are qualified by the limitations of the study. I identify some ways that some of these limitations could be addressed methodologically, and as part of this I suggest what additional research could be undertaken to explore and test the study's findings further. From a reflexive basis, I make

suggestions for possible wider application of the CfP.   Finally I summarise the study's

contribution to current theory, practice and HE policy.

6.8   Summary

Cycle 2's responses to the research questions are presented here in Table 6.5.

Table 6.5   Cycle 2 responses to the research questions

Research Questions	Responses
Question b. In what ways is the compassion-pedagogy designed for this study used by participants in their seminars?	Most students who were observed and/or took part in interviewees or focus groups made varied use of the CfP. 3 students who were observed not to use the CfP, wholly or in some particular aspect, participated in interviews or in focus groups to help explore whether/how the CfP might not be appropriate for all students.
Question d. Does the compassion pedagogy improve student social and learning experience of seminars?	From the data available, an overall positive response was given for both aspects of this question relating to *social* and *learning* experience.
Question e. Does the compassion pedagogy improve academic outcomes from seminars?	A cautiously positive response was made to this question. There were difficulties with the methods available to collect data and these were explained and are addressed further in the final chapter.
Questions (c), d(i) and e (i) Is there a difference according to whether students are local or international? These questions relate to how the CfP was used; effects of the CfP, if any, on social and learning experiences of participants; and on academic outcomes, respectively.	In relation to Q.c and Q.d(i), there were no differences found in use of the CfP (Q.c), nor in effects on social and learning experience (Q.d) between ethnic or national groups of participants. The response to question e(i), which relates to academic outcomes, is positive but tentative. For all three questions [(c), (d(i) and e(i)], the categorising of students into ethnic and/or nationality groups has been problematized.

Chapter Seven   Discussion and Conclusions

7.0 Introduction

As stated in Chapter 1, the purpose of this study was to contribute to the limited amount, relevance and cohesion of current theory available to support HE stakeholders endeavouring to lower communicative barriers amongst HE students in discussion-focused group work. This chapter will consider how far that aim was met. I will also propose what the rest of the study contributes towards adjusting some aspects of HE practice and policy. First, Section 7.1 summarises the key findings for each of the research questions in turn, and its subsection, 7.1.1, suggests where further research is needed. Second, section 7.2 identifies the methodological limitations of the study and alternative methods are proposed to address each one.[245]   Section 7.3 discusses the study's contribution to HE theory, practice and policy and finally, Section 7.4 gives a summary account of these contributions.

7.1 Key findings of the study

The core research question was:

Can the psychological concept of compassion be embedded into HE seminar pedagogy to produce for both home and international students:
- improved student social and learning experience of task-focused seminar groups and
- improved academic outcomes?

 The study's available findings indicate that the psychological concept of compassion can be embedded into HE seminar pedagogy and that this produces improved student social and learning experiences in discussion seminars for most students, whether local or

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[245]   Limitations of methods emerging from cycle 1 were addressed in cycle 2.

international. It does appear that, for some students, academic outcomes are also improved, though more research is needed to test this further (see 7.1.2 and 7.2, below).

This main finding is now broken down into a summary of findings for each sub question.

Question (a):	Why might compassion be an appropriate and useful concept to embed into HE pedagogy for seminars?

Theory and scholarship identified as relevant to the design of pedagogy for this study, clearly indicate that embedding the psychological concept of compassion into HE seminar pedagogy, including assessment, has a strong rationale (Chapter 3), is unintrusive on subject material (Chapters 4, 5 and 6), achievable (Chapters 4, 5 and 6) and ethically appropriate (Chapters 3, 5 and 6).

Embedding the psychological concept of compassion into HE seminar pedagogy was also found to be useful. That is, findings from the use, in different combinations, of five sampling methods and seven data collection tools consistently showed that the overwhelming majority of students responded in ways that benefitted their own and other students' social and learning experiences. (See research question (d) below.).

Question (b):	In what ways is the compassion pedagogy designed for this study used by participants in their seminars?

Students adapted and developed the original strategies in complex and nuanced ways. After several weeks students could initiate and sustain continuous flows of compassionate responses to unpredictable moments and events as these unfolded during discussions. These moments and events in human interactions - noted in complexity theory by Law and Urry (2004) and demonstrated by Scott (1990) - had initially presented the possibility of the

CfP strategies being too prescriptive despite the theoretical base for each one of them. However, participants' adaptations of the strategies consistently conformed to the core definition of compassion: to notice disadvantage and reduce it. The opportunity to replace a competitive, individualistic HE model of academic achievement with a more compassionate, co-operative, group-focused one was, on the whole, readily taken up by students. This suggests a fundamental mismatch between some of the institution's values of competitive leadership and those of its main clients: students (see contributions to HE policy in section 7.3.) Students were found to use the CfP as a legitimising platform from which to access and enact compassion. This position was held and sustained by students under live assessment conditions despite the irremovable, potential risks in this of sometimes consciously curtailing their own individual, competitive performances. Also, unexpectedly, it was found that the CfP strategies were being used by some participants beyond the action research study – for example, in job interviews, the work place and on other modules. In all cases of use beyond the study, students identified specific, positive outcomes.

Tutor participants made use of the CfP as a practicable way of promoting and assessing affective, team-based graduate skills that are largely ignored in traditional assessment models. These tutors represented subjects from two disciplines.

Question (c):	Is the compassion pedagogy used differently according to whether students are local or international?

The inclusion of summative assessment/course credits for compassionate behaviours appeared to positively motivate students to attempt compassionate group management, regardless of their ethnic or national status. This could be partly because compassion is a

cross-culturally valued concept (Goetz et al, 2010; Immordino-Yang and Damasio, 2007; Schwartz and Bardi, 2001). Students did not use the compassion pedagogy differently according to whether they were local or international. This finding does not reflect or support the ethnic or national distinctions between students that are made in key texts on fractured, divided student communities (NUS, 2010; Harrison and Peacock, 2010; Turner, 2009; Leask, 2005; Haigh, 2002).   For this study, such distinctions were not only unhelpful and irrelevant; they were also found to be methodologically unreliable. Students (including local students) of supposedly one national or ethnic identity were found to have multiple such identities.

Question (d):   Does the compassion pedagogy improve student social and learning experience of seminars?

In relation to social experiences, most interviewees attributed behavioural changes evidenced in the data to their use and development of the CfP, especially step one. Some argued for the compassion focussed pedagogy to be/to have been introduced into their own current or previous non-CfP seminars.   In cycle 2, students' interculturalisation of discussion group practice and their mobility in and out of the cultures associated with each other's identities (c.f. Cantle, 2012; Zapata-Barrera, 2013) appears to have been a factor in establishing links and convergences with each other. For some students, the CfP seminar interactions became a notably heightened, lived social experience of group cohesion. Where the CfP was not in place there were many contrasting accounts in both cycles.

In relation to learning experiences, students elicited examples, explanations and ideas from each other. They were able to link articles together though comparative thinking (see Appendix IV for an example of this).

Overall, this evidence of optimal learning experience was found to be underpinned by student-led strategies for social cohesion and their success at this facilitated the flow of information and ideas. This frequently evident interrelationship between social and learning experience demonstrated the non-intrusiveness of the CfP into subject content.

Embedding compassion into HE pedagogy is ethical.   Evidence related to both social and learning experiences showed that a shift could be made, by the group, away from the competitive behaviours that students see promoted and practised around them in HE (see Chapter 2). Alternative constructions of others, and ways of being with others, became possible. They were reported by students. They were observed in seminars.

> Question (e):   Does the compassion pedagogy improve academic outcomes from seminars?

CfP did enhance the academic achievement of some students (in comparison to their non-CfP related assessment). On the other hand, this was a small sample; these results may not be replicated in other samples and so they are offered cautiously, pending further research (see Section 7.2, below: Limitations of the methods and possible solutions).

7.1.1 Suggestions for further research

The findings overall strongly suggest the value of further co-research between tutors and students on their psychosocial experiences of interactions in class-based group work, and

further, of their co-designing pedagogies that take account of their findings. First, this could enable the interconnected thinking of tutors and students to address teaching and learning issues from dual stakeholder perspectives. Second, such a partnership could invite conflicting transcripts (c.f. Scott, 1990) to be surfaced, whereas without the partnership, these might remain hidden, and actively undermine the effectiveness of pedagogy aimed at reducing communicative barriers inside learning communities. For example, the agency of tutors in the class room, in relation to their own identities and values, was not closely enough related to the research questions to investigate in depth. Therefore, the types of emotional responses that tutors had to their students' situations in seminars, requires further research.   For some tutors who were not involved in, or did not engage with the CfP, such as T7, it might be that levels of safeness, mediated by low levels of self-compassion (P. Gilbert, 2005; Neff, 2003) are a factor in possible feelings of resignation or powerlessness in the face of poor group cohesion in their seminars. Such feelings may be partly derived from the competitive fractures that seemingly abound in HE learning communities.

7.2   Limitations of the methods and possible solutions

Not all of the limitations of the study can be listed and addressed but the key ones, and alternative methods/solutions for these, are briefly discussed in this section. It should be noted that some of these solutions may carry new methodological and/or ethical challenges.

Limitation 1: The percentage marks for critical thinking in stage three of cycle 2 were not compared to another module where the CfP was not used.

Solution: Cycle 2, stage three, could be carried out again with a larger sample. The two data sets used in the above study – critical thinking marks for essay and critical thinking

marks for seminar – could be compared with two similar data sets from the same module run in a year when the CfP was not applied.

Limitation 2: The samples were relatively small, particularly for the white local students in cycle 2. Larger samples of students are needed per grouping of local students who are black, or ethnic minority, or white, and international students.

Solution: A single, large sample module could be recruited, such as a core health care professions module, on which large and diverse cohorts of around 350-500 students are known to enrol. With a sample of this size, a more mixed methodology would be possible. The findings of the current mainly qualitative study could be used to formulate appropriate, relevant questions for a questionnaire and this could be used for quantitative data collection alongside more qualitative collection tools.

If this participant sample size was not achievable, continued exploration of the CfP (with or without adaptations) could be conducted in consecutive cycles of action research. Over time, enough data would be built up to make more comparisons between groups, levels, departments and subjects

Limitation 3: There was limited investigation of participants for whom the CfP may not have been suitable.

Solution: A closer evaluation of potential unsuitability of the CfP could be carried out through the use of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). Rich data could be collected through in-depth interviews to more closely investigate HE participants' psychosocial responses to CfP and non-CfP conditions in group work communications.

This might indicate how the CfP could be adapted to the needs of some students (or tutors; see next solution.)

Limitation 4: Stage 2/cycle one, and stage 1/cycle 2 both highlighted the role of tutors as gatekeepers for students to the principles of the CfP and this warrants further investigation.

Solution: A programme of several workshops for tutors could be set up for them to collectively explore their reflexive thinking on seminars with and without the CfP. The data collection tools could include diaries and focus groups; IPA would be useful for exploring possible tutor anxieties about, or objections to the CfP or, more generally, with co-management of their seminars with students.[246]

Inherent in these proposed methods would be further important exploration of the extent of irrelevance of participant categorisation, by national or ethnic status, for a study of this kind on co-operative student behaviours.

Next, I identify the contribution of this research to HE theory, and also to encouraging a reconsideration of certain current practices and policies in HE.

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[246] Brocki et al's (2006) review of 52 health psychology studies suggests that many of the researchers did not clearly identify their own underlying philosophical position (or even at all). This work of identifying my philosophical position was addressed for my study in Chapters 2 and 3, using Alvesson and Skoldberg's (2000; 2009) model to support it.

7.3 Contribution to HE theory, practice and policy

The following is a reflexive interpretation of the study's results. It is based on my philosophical and epistemological position as a researcher and this was explained in Chapters 3 and 4.

7.3.1 Contribution to theory

The deficit of a sufficiently relevant theory for managing the dynamics of diversity in the HE class room (Wilhborg, 2009, UNESCO, 2009) has been reduced by this study. This has been done by providing tutors with a theoretical base they can draw on to justify and develop their practice at building compassionate, communicative learning communities, however diverse the membership of these may be. This theoretical base was derived from identifying and drawing on relevant scholarship on the concept of compassion – found mainly within anthropology and group psychotherapy – and applying it in the HE, task-focused group discussion.

Further, the above contribution demonstrates how and why the tendency in other, extant literature (Harrison and Peacock, 2010; Turner, 2002; Haigh, 2002) to reify international students, as in some ways, the victims of a system that advantages local students over them, needs to be treated with caution. This tendency delays recognition of how the social and learning experiences of both local and international students can be deeply undermined by HE's inappropriately applied stratifying and ranking practices (Thornton, 2012), systems (Haigh, 2002) and cultures (P. Gilbert, 2007; Andrews and Wilding, 2004).

Also, having shown in Chapter 3 that the relationship between felt safeness and optimal critical thinking processes is recognised in the psychology literature (P. Gilbert, 2005; Bates, 2005), I have also identified that this has not been explored in any depth, if at all, for seminar or other group work pedagogy in HE. From within the theoretical base that was assembled to address this problem, I use the perspective of social constructionism to argue that students sometimes construct each other during group work in ways that can be threatening to each other. From the point of view of critical theory, this may be the result of inappropriate, unproductive enactments of competitiveness that are (constructed as) highly valued in HE. Thus, in face to face group work, some students pay attention to keeping themselves safe rather than to enhancing their own and/or others' social and learning experiences. To dismantle these inappropriate conditions for learning, new pedagogies, including those that can be co-managed by students and tutors, are needed and my contribution to this is proposed next.

7.3.2 Contribution to practice

First, the CfP can help to develop tutors and students as micro-ethnographic observers of their own and others' discussion group behaviours. Second, it supports the interpretative skills needed by tutors and students to understand what some behaviours may be signalling about affective and other psychosocial states being experienced around them in the seminar room. Third, the theory in particular offers tutors and students a greater degree of insight into why and how these states may be impacting communicative ease, participation and learning in the group. From that point, a fourth contribution of the study is its evidence-based, practical strategies for assisting both tutors and students in reducing the communicative barriers as soon as, or almost as soon as, they notice them.

The study also offers a practicable and evidenced way of *assessing* affective, team-based graduate skills that are largely ignored in traditional assessment models.

7.3.3 Contribution to HE policy

First, this research has identified that HE policy on what students are to be fitted for, both within HE and beyond, requires some adjustment. For example, the discussion seminar can provide good opportunities to prepare students' to be effective, co-operative communicators in group work in university – not necessarily only seminars - and later, in the work place too.[247] Yet, it seems nothing is documented on what students can do in seminars to dismantle anti-group behaviours– monopolising, alpha pairing, not contributing and so on. On the other hand, for individual academic achievement, considerable resources, beginning with degree programme inductions, are directed towards supporting students' academic writing and other study skills. This is at a time when group work is proliferating in UK HE, partly because of the current trend towards its massification.

Second, what is valuable and appropriate to assess in student's academic endeavours, may also be a matter for rethinking and with that, an adjustment of the culture and values underpinning current HE policy.

Relatedly and third, the absence of, explicitly, the concept of compassion in the language of HE policy, and the effect of this on endorsing and maintaining current HE

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[247] There appears to be a mismatch between what employers currently prioritise in their requirements of graduates: to communicate well in diverse teams (as can be seen inside The Times Top One Hundred Graduate Employers, an annual UK league table), and how much HE is able to support that requirement.

values, has ethical consequences. From psychology, P. Gilbert et al (2007, p1) show

what these are in their review of a number of relevant studies. It includes this:

> The World Health Organization has drawn attention to the increasing
> rates of various forms of psychopathology (Murray & Lopex, 1996). This
> is noted particularly in the Western World and in younger cohorts
> (Fombonne, 1999) including students (Andrews & Wilding, 2004) …
> linked to: increases in competitive behaviour, with pressure to strive to
> impress others …a rank-focused social mentality related to heightened
> awareness of winners and losers, concerns with what others think about
> the self, and the need for assertive or submissive behaviour, concern
> with appearances and self-presentations; and fear of rejection if viewed
> by others as inferior. (p1)

Other literature, from education (Chickering, 2010; Kingston, 2008; Turner, 2002; Haigh,

2002; McDermott, 1988) adds to body of evidence that a shift in HE policy away from private

enterprise and towards more co-operative endeavour for academic excellence is overdue.

My study identified one way of implementing a step towards this shift.   Currently, three

departments – Humanities, Business and Computer Science - are using the CfP for

summative, credit bearing purposes in the study's host UK HEI. This sets a precedent:

compassionate behaviours of noticing and reducing disadvantage in group work are now

credit-bearing at HE institutional level towards degree programmes. Moreover, this has the

approval of a UK university's Academic Quality Assurance department and so far, five out of

five UK HE external examiners who were involved in the study, and represent three

disciplines.

From the perspective of critical theory, this shows the potential for further shifts in HE towards rewarding co-operative intellectual practice amongst students.

7.4 **Summary of contribution to HE theory, practice and policy**

This study makes a contribution towards theory, practice and policy because it**:**

➢ **Theory**

1. Demonstrates the lack of accuracy or usefulness of the traditional, reified model of the international student experiencing group work differently from local students. The lived experiences and feelings of diverse students in seminars are similar and shared, not fundamentally different.

2. Has identified, synthesised and appropriately adapted (for HE teaching, learning and assessment) scholarship from across disciplines, on the cross-cultural nature and role of compassion for supporting task-focussed learning communities.

3. Indicates the academic and social benefits of a supportive, compassionate, inclusive seminar environment, in contrast to competitive individualism.

4. Offers new knowledge and understanding of how compassionate behaviours can be developed in HE seminars and assessed using the same criteria for all students, regardless of cultural or linguistic diversity.

5. Indicates that inclusion of summative assessment/course credits for compassionate behaviours can positively motivate students to adopt compassionate management of task-focused discussion group work.

➢ **Practice**

1. Addresses potentially negative experiences of, and feelings about, HE seminars through identification and adoption of psychologically informed pedagogic strategies that increase safeness through compassionate behaviours.

2. Demonstrates what compassionate acts (that are relevant to task focused group work) look like, and how these can be added to, modified, challenged or changed by the group.

3. Provides evidence of enhanced subject-based academic skills and achievements that are attributable to the CfP.

4. Provides evidence that such assessment and its supporting pedagogic strategies can be transferred between disciplines.

> **HE Policy**

1. Provides evidence that offering summative credit for compassion and inclusivity in seminars can satisfy different external assessors in different disciplines, as well as a UK university's central Academic Quality Assurance.

2. Provides a practicable and evidenced way of promoting and assessing affective, team-based graduate skills that are largely ignored in traditional assessment models.   These types of graduate skills are now prioritized by many employers such as many of those which qualify each year for the Times Top 100 Employers league table.

There are evident fractures in HE learning communities and these are demonstrated by the communicative barriers within them. Since attention to language and cultural differences in the literature are not making sufficient progress towards repair processes, it is time to investigate and work with underlying similarities of student group experiences instead – as this study has done. This research has shown why and how this may offer a more positive outcome to repairing the communicative barriers between diverse students in HE.

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Appendix I   Example templates: Categories (A); and Codes for one category (B) - a sub template

<div align="center">

A.   Categories

</div>

1.0   Students' use of CfP step 1 (*Categories found*)

1.1 Eye contact

1.1.1   Avoidant

Role of the physical environment
Previous negative experiences
Empathic reframing by others

1.1.2   Excluding

Alpha pairs
Adaptations of the CfP strategies
Responses to correction by the group

1.1.3   Inclusive

Learning more
- Focus/concentration ➡ responding (S30/STOM)
- Seeing more = hearing more (S34)
- Feeling listened to/able to speak
- Feelings of responsibility for group learning (S23)

1.1.2.2 Social effects

- Group cohesion
  - Spread of participation
  - **Fluid/flow/natural/zone (see next page)**
  - Sense of equality with tutor/others
  - Synthesising research done
  - Wanting to continue discussions
  - Communicating through eye contact that someone else needs to speak.

***Codes* for one category (B)** - a sub template

Example: Aspects of group cohesion/felt interconnectivity between participants

Example of one treatment of key descriptors/codes for one theme, cross-referenced to example pieces of the data – codes, sometimes clustered, as below - in both cycles on that theme:

Aspects of group cohesion/felt interconnectivity

Cycles 1 and 2   **Cycles 1 and 2**

Key descriptors   **Cluster/nest of codes for**
                                                 key theme descriptors (left)

Fluid/flow/natural/zone   S1 – addressing social distance directly

                                         S2 – allowing others to curtail themselves

                                         S4 – developing ways of non-verbal messaging

                                         S6 – new behaviours becoming 'natural'

                                         S13 – contrivance passes; reframing non-talkers

                                         Cluster of data codes _not_ aligning with cycle 1
                                         and 2's key theme descriptors (left)

                                         S3 – avoiding interconnectivity by avoiding eye
                                                 contact

Fluid/flow/natural/zone   S14 – as above

                                         T2 – disconnecting from whole group in an
                                                 alpha pair

Appendix II - CfP workshops for tutors

Humanities Department: 22 Tutors attending

Business Department: 13 tutors attending

In each target department, tutors teaching different subjects were mixed together on different tables of 4-5. Next, in their groups, tutors compared their experiences of their own and their students' seminar behaviours, both positive and negative. They were invited to consider each other's explanations for these and explore how to work effectively with particular behaviours, their own and their students.   Findings from the literature (Chapter 3) were summarised in a presentation to stimulate the next stage of their discussion.   The step one strategies from the CfP framework (see Fig 1.1, p4) were suggested and explained and tutors evaluated the potential use and/or relevance for these in their own seminars. They considered together which components and stages of the CfP might, in their views, be helpful - or inappropriate - and discussed reasons. They also identified any of these components or others they had already tried and discussed what the effects had been.

 After the workshops, tutors considered whether they wished to be involved in a trial of the CfP for one or more stages. They considered whether this was in the remit of their modules, whether it was likely to be acceptable to their external assessors and above all, if participation in the action research and pedagogical practice involved was likely to benefit their students. For those tutors who did not attend the workshop but were interested in the action research the CfP was explained and discussed in one-to one meetings.

Appendix III   Ethics approval

Ethics Committee Approval Protocol No: BS/R/043 11.

FORM HumLawEd ETHICS

UNIVERSITY OF HERTFORDSHIRE
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES, LAW AND EDUCATION
ETHICS COMMITTEE

Application for approval of a study programme involving human informants

This form should be completed in conformity with the Faculty's Principles for Conducting Research involving Human Informants. It should be used by individual applicants, staff or students, who require protocol approval for work which they themselves intend to carry out in the session 2009 - 20010

1.   Title of programme: Enhancing the teaching and learning experience of the HE
          seminar/tutorial group.

2.   Applicant's name: Theo Gilbert

        Status   (b)   postgraduate
                                                (c)   academic staff

        Scheme of study or award e.g. MSc/PhD, if applicable: PhD

        E-mail address: t.1.gilbert@herts.ac.uk

        Names of supervisors: Prof. Mary Thornton, Education, UH
                                     Dr Paul Roberts, University of York

3.   Chair of Faculty/Departmental Ethics Committee or Chair of Faculty/Departmental
        Research Committee: Dr Tim Parke

4.   ***Research context***

         The literature is very substantial on the difficulties that high numbers of HE students –
        globally - have in developing inclusive learning styles. These are learning styles that not
        only admit diversity but recognise it as vital to building and empowering any real or
        meaningful learning community.   Without these, problematic fragmentation of "group
        work" in HE is described in much detail for many contexts across a very wide range of

disciplines in the literature and at conferences.   In the School of Humanities, some written work has been replaced by filmed final seminars in which marks have been allocated for inclusivity skills.   Students have been prepared for this by embedding requirements - throughout all the preceding seminars of the target module-   to demonstrate such skills. Typically, in seminars each student contributes individual research each week, on a tutor-set topic, to group discussion so that it is not possible to come unprepared to the seminar and rely on other students to have done 'the set reading'. Specifically, students have been supported by bringing to the table for students and their tutors new insights from group psychotherapy that focus very specifically on the most productive management of diverse, learning, task focused groups.   Working with 15 tutors and 70 students it was possible to evaluate the outcomes of this work in Humanities over the last two years in three areas:

- Student-reported experience
- Spread of participation in discussion focussed seminars
- Quality of individual and group academic/intellectual output from the discussions

Findings were that using psychological models of compassion and affiliation building (Goertz et al, 2010; P.Gilbert, 2005; Depue and Morinsky, 2005; Immordino-Yang, 2010) for group thinking, appeared to produce enhanced student levels of satisfaction with the seminar experience in participants' views overall.   Wider spread of participation was reported by students and tutors, and in field notes of observed seminars this was corroborated. Concerns about the possible dumbing down of academic standards as result of the endeavour described here have led to careful and interesting evaluations by assessing tutors and external examiners. In terms of academic quality, it has been decided to continue assessing students for inclusivity skills in final assessed seminars where these are appropriate for the following reasons:

a) External examiners have suggested the work is "innovative and sensitive."   In the case of the PGs for whom this assignment was offered in replacement of a 3,000 word essay for previous cohorts, the quality of the work that was produced was agreed by the external and the assessing tutors to be at least equal to that expected of the MA Lit level 3,000 word essay.

b) Third years students of History have been summatively assessed in a similar way. The assessing tutor, an ex-Oxford University teaching staff member, reports that 5 out of 28 students increased their performance from 2:2 and below in written work, to 2:1 and 1st is their arguments/critical thinking processes within the discussion groups.

This work was given initial Ethics Approval (Protocol: BS/R/043 11. Dated Sept, 2010) and this was then extended to May 2013 (Protocol: BS/08/09.8. Dated Dec 2012).

Research Aims

Initial exploratory, preparatory work was begun in the Business School with good progress in the last two years and this was done with Business School ethics approval. The aim now is to take the next step in the Business School and to introduce the same kind of assessment practice amongst

business students/tutors as has been launched in the School of Humanities. This is based on focus group and interview data analysis findings from initial formative trials in the Business School last year.   The LTI is funding this endeavour specifically for BME students in the Business School at the UH, on condition that Ethics Approval is given/extended by the Business School. **The aim is to promote more student to student validation and eliciting and less dependence on a teacher centred learning experience in seminars and to carry this through into assessment practice where marks are given for theoretically underpinned inclusivity practices.**   This practice will also carry implications for employability as found on the graduate scheme website of PriceCoopers Waterhouse (voted again - by 17,500 graduates in 2012 - the most desirable company to work for in the Times Top 100 employers' survey**).**

5a.   Number of informants i - iv: Approximately 40

6a.   Nature of informants: University students – undergraduates - and their tutors.

7a.   Has confirmation been obtained that the informants required will be available? Yes.

       Dave Paterson -   Module leader :   Modern Trends in Technology
       Mike Herman   - Joint assessor   :   Modern Trends in Technology

8.   Probable duration of investigation:

Two semesters. Semesters A and B - 2012/2013

from (starting date)   Sept, 2012

to (finishing date)   May 2013.

(The dates given here will be monitored by the Faculty Ethics Committee and investigators may need to return to the Committee if the work is not complete within the period initially stated.)
Approval must be sought and granted **before** any investigation involving human informants commences.

9.   Where will the study take place?

On the premises of the University of Hertfordshire.

10.   Describe the procedures to be used. Give sufficient detail for the Committee to be clear what is involved in the programme, continuing on a separate sheet if necessary.

Procedures

i) To investigate, by working within seminars with students and their tutors, the expectations and aspirations of both teaching staff and students of the seminar experience. It will be carried out in the first three weeks of Semester A, 2012, so that any anti-group (Nitsun, 1996) patterns of behaviour in seminars have not become established.

ii) Then, to provide these seminar students with tutor/student negotiated, guided practice in developing their own and others' inclusivity and 'risk-taking' skills for seminar work (using psychological models of compassion and affiliation processes). This will be delivered together with the subject tutor who will lead on academic requirements of the module.

iii) Thereafter, in later seminars on the same module and with the same students, to:

   (a) observe (notes and/or film) in order to attempt to assess how far the students are putting the skills practice to use.

   (b) co-evaluate with students and their tutors the desirability and/or usefulness of the seminar skills help and in what ways such help could be improved. Methods used will be questionnaire based discussions, recorded.

   (c) Recordings will also be made, with students prior consent, of student-led discussions about their assessment experience, immediately after their filmed assessments have taken place. That is, it is proposed that with student consent, when filming has ended and the assessment is over, audio only recording will continue for students who wish to, to remain at the discussion table to discuss together their thoughts and feelings about the assessment experience.

iv) To make transparent to students the marking criteria on which they will be assessed in the TV studio. This criteria has been evaluated so far by two (UH) Business external examiners and by 4 x Business Teaching staff members (UH and one other UK HEI) as facilitating consistency of marking practice amongst assessors.

11. Might the study cause discomfort or distress of a mental or emotional character?
YES
If YES, please indicate its nature and the precautions to be taken.

Student informants may feel anxiety at being observed in their seminars. That said, one of the main purposes of the project is to help students understand how to

reduce for each other – cross culturally -   the stress of being observed and/or perceptions of being judged by others in the seminar environment.

Tutor informants may feel anxiety at being observed in seminars. This will be explored and addressed in initial interviews (for which consent forms will be offered too) where tutor expectations/aspirations for the teaching and learning experience of seminars will be identified and explored.

All informants will be told that the data collected will be kept confidential and may not be passed on to others without their written consent.

12.   If the answer to question 11 was YES:

  i)   is it likely that medical, therapeutic or other aftercare may be needed by informants?
  NO

  ii)   if aftercare is needed, who will provide it?   Students will be given information about the UH Counselling service.

  iii)   have those who will be asked to provide aftercare been informed of the nature of the study?

  YES

  iv)   have such providers confirmed that aftercare can be provided free of charge to informants?
  N/A

13.(a) Will explicit consent need to be obtained from (or on behalf of) the informants?
  YES (Observations and Interviews)

If the answer to question 13 is' YES', it will almost always be necessary to gain explicit consent, and to get a consent form completed and signed by (or on behalf of) all informants. A copy of the consent form should be attached to the application.

  (a)   If it is not proposed not to seek consent from the informants, explain why here. (Attach a separate sheet if necessary).

  Dissemination of study results at conferences

  Permission from participants to include their voices in presentations will be sought in four stages. First, they will be asked individually if they might consider giving permission, in principal, for sound bites to be taken from their interview recordings. For those who respond positively, selected sentences or phrases spoken by them (and illustrative of particular themes emerging from the data) will be transcribed and sent to them in

writing. They will be invited to consider whether they approve the use of these items as sound bites for inclusion in power point slides intended for disseminating findings around the study's main themes. Sound bites will be used only from those participants who respond with written approval. Pseudonyms will be used during presentations. Care will be taken to avoid using any data that reveals personal details about the participant. Care will also be taken to avoid the use of data that is thought could incur the negative evaluation of those who hear it; that is, the researcher will be mindful of protecting participants from such possibility.

(b) How long before they take part in the investigation will informants' consent be sought?

Student Informants This will be negotiated with the subject tutor but not less than one week before observations take place.
Tutor Informants Consent has been acquired for Semester A/B, 2012/2013.

(c) What will informants be told as to the nature of the investigation?

Student informants
At the beginning of the module, a focus group(s) will be asked to describe and explain their experiences so far, of working with familiar/unfamiliar others (students) in group discussions.   What is the students' satisfaction levels overall?   At the end of the module – post-assessment - the same students will be asked to evaluate the theoretically underpinned seminar skills they will have been attempting to embed into their seminar behaviours in readiness for their assignment. Specifically, using grounded theory, students will be asked to contribute their views on the project, its shortcomings and benefits to student experience, group participation spread, and their thinking processes during seminars.
Tutor informants
Initial interviews: The investigation will also seek tutor views of what difficulties for students they observe in their interactions, if any, during group thinking/discussion seminars, and tutors' understandings of why this may be and what strategies, if any, they employ to address these.   This may concern for example at non-readers, non-speakers, or monopolisers.
Observations of control seminar group(s):   The purpose of the investigation will be to observe how students behave – interact; address tasks – in an HE seminar.
Observations of seminar groups that have been offered seminar skills development practice:
The purpose of this part of the investigation is to explore group processes, e.g. the setting up of alpha pairs in groups, non-inclusive eye contact practice, cliquing and so on and how these might be mediated over time by the strategies being investigated in ways that might not have happened anyway over time.

(d) Will informants be given an opportunity to put questions to the investigator, arising from what they have been told?

YES

(e) Will informants' consent be requested: At least one of each of those listed below will be used depending on the informant group and informant group role in the investigation.

- after briefing orally and in writing?
  YES
- after they have been briefed in writing?
  YES
- after oral briefing?
  YES
  - some other way? GIVE DETAILS

14.   If the informant is a minor, or otherwise unable for any reason to give full consent on their own, state whose consent will be obtained (parent and/or guardian and/or head teacher and/or other (to be specified) and how it will be obtained.

N/A

15.(a) Is the investigator receiving any financial or other reward connected with this project?

No

(b) Will anyone else receive any financial or other reward connected with this project?
NO
If YES, give details.

15.   Are personal data of any sort (including name, age, sex, occupation, etc.) to be obtained from or in respect of any of the informants?

YES

If YES,

(b) Give details

Sex and age will be relevant.   Student report of ethnicity will be relevant to a study amongst BME students.   Participants' names will not be used.

(b) Indicate what steps will be taken to prevent the disclosure of personal data beyond the immediate investigative team.

Fictitious names will be used when referring to the data so that all participants may remain anonymous. All audio, video and written data will be kept on a personal computer protected by a password known only to the investigator. The data will be destroyed at the end of the study. Care will be taken throughout the study to ensure that no participant can be identified.

b) Indicate what assurances about the security and non-disclosure of personal data will be given to informants.

Assurances as to security and non-disclosure of personal data will be given verbally and underpinned by written assurance. The latter is included in the consent forms, both of which are attached.

16. Any other relevant matters

18. **DECLARATION BY APPLICANT**

(i) I confirm that, in formulating the above proposal, I have complied with the following ethical code(s).
(SPECIFY HERE THE CODE(S), OTHER THAN THE **DEPARTMENT PRINCIPLES** ALLUDED TO ABOVE, THAT YOU HAVE ADHERED TO IN DESIGNING THE INVESTIGATION.)

(ii)   I undertake to abide by the Ethical Principles of the Business School to the best of my ability in carrying out or supervising this programme.

(iii)   Data relating to identifiable informants will be treated as confidential and not passed on to others without the written consent of the informant. Where the informant is a minor, or is otherwise unable for any reason to give full consent on her/ his own, or to receive full explanation of the nature of the investigation and its risks, *informant* in this context will be understood as referring to the person or persons having responsibility for the actual informant in the investigation (see section 12 above).

(iv)   The nature of the investigation and all possible risks will be fully explained to potential informants. Where the informant is a minor, or is otherwise unable for any reason to give full consent on her / his own, or to receive full explanation of the nature of the investigation and its risks, then *informant* will be understood as referring to the person or persons having responsibility for the actual informant in the investigation (see section 13 above).

(v)   Where appropriate all informants will be informed that they

(a)   are not obliged to take part

and

(b)   may withdraw from the programme at any time without disadvantage, or having to give a reason.

Name of applicant   Theo Gilbert

Signature of applicant   Date: 22/04/13

In the case of an individual applicant this form MUST also be signed by the applicant's supervisor.

20.   **Signature of Chair of Business School Ethics Committee**

I confirm that I am aware of and agree the above proposal.

Name …………………………………………………………………………..

Signature ………………………………………………………………………….

Date ……………………………………………………………………………………

Sample Consent Forms (x 2)

The following form is proposed for the interviews with tutors before the target seminar skills are introduced to their students inside the target module seminars. This form is also proposed for after-module evaluation interviews with both tutors and students on the perceived value of the seminar behavioural strategies.

Declaration: I understand that all of my responses to the following interview questions are for the purposes of this investigation into the understanding of seminars in UK HE and my words will be confidential. If further use of my words in any other capacity is required, my permission will be sought before they are used. I understand that I may discontinue my participation in this interview at any time and that I do not have to give a reason.   Also, without giving a reason, I can decline to answer any of the questions asked.

Signed: …………………………………….   Date: …………………………………….

Print Name: …………………………………   UH Dept: …………………………………

The consent form below is suggested for students and tutors who are to be observed during seminars - both control group(s) and non-control group(s).

Declaration: I understand that all observations of seminars which I attend are for the purposes of this investigation into the understanding of seminars in UK HE and will be confidential. If further use of these observations in any other capacity is required, my permission will be sought before they are used. I understand that I can discontinue my participation in this exercise at any time and that I do not have to give a reason.

Signed: ……………………………………   Date: ……………………………………

Print Name: …………………………………   UH Dept: …………………………………

Evidence of approval of extension of Ethics Committee Approval. New protocol: BS/R/043.11 obtained in Aug, 2012.

RE: Ethics approval to carry on researching please Caroline with Business tutors/students - Windows Internet Explorer

https://legacy.herts.ac.uk/owa/?ae=Item&a=Open&t=IPM.Note&id=RgAAAABTwQ54gBkIQpJUqKlfJS%2f1BwDfYNrtz9vmQaG%2f1VJQ6PA1AA2Tt8pNAADfYNrtz9vmQaG%2f1VJQ6PA1ADh723kWAAAJ

Reply | Reply to All | Forward

RE: Ethics approval to carry on researching please Caroline with Business tutors/students

You replied on 01/08/2012 12:04.

Grillo, Ruth E

Sent: 01 August 2012 11:56

To: Gilbert, Theo

Dear Theo

Caroline Large has approved you ethics application which has now been issued with a Business School protocol number – BS/R/043 11

Kind regards,

Ruth Grillo
School Administration Manager
Hertfordshire Business School

From: Gilbert, Theo
Sent: 26 July 2012 15:53
To: Large, Caroline F
Subject: RE: Ethics approval to carry on researching please Caroline with Business tutors/students

Dear Caroline,

Appendix IV

Sample extract of end-of-module, assessed seminar discussion group (cycle 2, stage 3)

4 x BME Business students, level 5/2nd years second years: Students 27, 28, 29, 30

Discussion topic: RFID = Radio frequency ID

[S27 has been talking about RFID use in Kosovo]

S27 - The smaller countries still haven't picked up on it too much.

S28 - But you say that - 'cause like I think Bangladesh, um, they've also brought out the RFIDs in their retail shops.

S29 - Just wanna touch on what you just mentioned about Bangladesh; obviously I've looked at another article, er, based on Bangladesh. And, er, it was an article, it was the RFID Journal, and the author of it was Bach - Bacheldor, and er, apparently, even though Bangladesh are a third world country, they're bringing RFID systems into their, erm, into their army where they employ RFID technology to track soldiers and visitors entering its capital and they've had -

S27 - It's something that America took really seriously after the bomb – the terrorist attacks and 501, when they – now they've started to use the RFIDs on the carrier things when they – so they track exactly everything that's coming into the country and out of the country so they know that –

S30 - Is that in relation to the shipment? - the, the one point that really does, like, does scare me is the fact that the security on it is not encrypted, for example –

S27 - Oh I heard about this as well –

S28 – Exactly. So I was reading from the article by S. Shawar on the …

[*End of extract*]

Note: a) there was a tendency to interrupt each other in this discussion when the first article presented and b) the speed of speech of all members was rapid.   However, see S29 on p216.