Asian Journal of University Education

Faculty of Education

Prospects of Cosmopolitan Classrooms within a Malaysian University

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines lecturers' practices in adult teaching and learning in University X. We use this analysis to think about better learning for adults in a cosmopolitan world. In our fieldwork, teaching is viewed as "a complex set of relational exchanges between heterogeneous and differentially positioned human subjects" (Luke, 2004, p. 1429), and how these can be fruitfully accommodated in the classrooms by facilitation of understandings of each others' circumstances. We show aspects of universality and shared values that Appiah (2006) advocates in his notion of Cosmopolitanism. We claim that in teaching Malaysian adults, lecturers need to recognise and can build upon the cosmopolitan nature of the pedagogical relationships formed within their classrooms.

Keywords: *cosmopolitan classrooms; university teaching and learning; teaching and learning practices; adult learners; higher education*

INTRODUCTION

Why is real diversity in learning and teaching important – perhaps even more important than as expressed as a simple binary between 'Eastern' or 'Western' ways of learning and teaching? Our approach to answering this question is to take seriously what we all, as human beings have in common – not just what Easterners or Westerners have, or can learn from each other.

Attention to real diversity – not just a binary - requires consideration of what is called 'cosmopolitanism' (Luke (2005) has several references to this in language and literacy scholarship). Cosmopolitanism invites educators to not just acknowledge but to move beyond the parochial and to do so without, at the same time, succumbing to the universalities of (Western) 'globalisation' as a – no, as 'the' - grand narrative for learning. Kwame Anthony Appiah, in his Ethics of Identity (2005), sets out the need for 'cosmopolitan conversations', as follows (2005, pp. 267-8, italics added):

> The roots of the cosmopolitanism I am defending are liberal: and they are responsive to liberalism's insistence on human dignity. It has never been easy to say what this entails….I would insist, again, that the individual whose self-creation is being valued, is not, in the justly censorious sense of the term, individualist. Nothing I have said is inconsistent with the recognition of *the many ways in which we human beings are naturally and inevitably social*. First, because we are incapable of developing on our own, we need human nurture, moral and intellectual education, practice with language, if we are develop into full persons. This is a sociality of mutual dependence. Second, because we desire relationship with others: friends, lovers, parents, children, the wider family, colleagues, and neighbours. This is sociality as an end. And third, because many other things we value – literature and the arts, the whole world of culture; education; money; and in the modern world, food and housing – depend essentially on society for their production. This is instrumental sociality….
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> This picture…acknowledges that identity is at the heart of human life…But the cosmopolitan impulse is central to this

view, too, because it sees a world of cultural and social variety as a precondition for the self-creation that is at the heart of a meaningful human life. Let me be clear. *Cosmopolitanism values human variety for what it makes possible for human agency,* and some kinds of cultural variety constrain more than they enable… But the fundamental idea that every society should respect human dignity and personal autonomy is more basic than the cosmopolitan love of variety; indeed…it is the autonomy that variety enables that is its fundamental justification.

Teaching in diverse ways – for 'variety' – is, then, the way autonomy (choices made in classrooms about worthwhile learning and teaching, in this case) is best advanced.

When students are exposed to diverse ways of learning and teaching, they build their own capacity for self-direction. This growth in autonomy or self-direction is how identities are constructed and re-constructed, in classrooms, *anywhere in the world.* We claim then that cosmopolitanism provides both an epistemic and an ethical basis for the pedagogical innovations now underway in some of our universities and in particular, in one Malaysian university, which is the site of the fieldwork we now report.

This paper is part of a larger project undertaken in a public university in Malaysia. It examines the practices of the lecturers in the teaching and learning of adults who have turned to higher education for training and retraining. It takes seriously and indeed in the data stories below shows, in Appiah's words, "the many ways in which we human beings are naturally and inevitably social" (2005, p. 267).

This sociality plays out in the enacting of the lecturers' professional knowledge, experience and expertise and the demands of teaching and learning that they face that provides rich insights into pedagogical practices that are unique to University X. We then use this analysis to think about lecturers' leadership and teaching styles in creating better educational opportunities for adult learners in a cosmopolitan world.

METHODOLOGY

The project was a multiple-case study that focused on four undergraduate programs and one postgraduate (diploma) program. The five programs are labelled Program A – Accountancy (working part-time learners), Program B – Teaching of English as a Second Language (in-service teachers), Program C – Educational Management (in-service headmasters), Program D – Teaching of English as a Second Language (pre-service teachers), and Program E – Information Management (working part-time learners).

The study involved ten lecturers and three distinct groups of learners, based on their age and experiences. There were two lecturers of each programme, giving a total of ten respondents. They fulfil the criterion of having taught the respective programme for at least two years. The learner spread across Programs A – E included those who:

1.	were entrenched in their profession and looking for opportunities to improve their practice (e.g. in-service headmasters – Program C),

2.	those who were undergoing a career change (e.g. pre-service teachers – Program D), and

3.	those who were looking for better qualifications, thus, potential promotions and better emolument (e.g. in-service teachers and working part-time learners – Programs A & E).

The findings were derived from (individual and group) interviews and classroom observations conducted during a four-month fieldwork timeframe. Interviewing was the main strategy for data collection. Bell (2005) argues that interviews are used to probe ideas and feelings, and particularly useful in providing information that a written response would conceal, and are useful to capture data that are "based on emotions, experiences and feelings" (Denscombe, 2003, p. 165). In the study, interviews were used to gather descriptive data in the respondents' own words so that we could develop insights into how pedagogical practices in University X were enacted. The interviews with the learners were semi-structured and conducted either individually, in pairs or as a group of four. The lecturers were each interviewed individually. The observations took place in the classes of the two lecturers of each programme.

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In this study, observation was used to examine what actually transpired in the classrooms. This is because observation is fundamental to discovering "whether people do what they say they do, or behave in the way they claim to behave" (Bell, 2005, p. 184) and it involves observing what actually occurs as it naturally happens in real-life situations (Denscombe, 2003). The observations were also used as an alternate source of data for cross-checking against the information gathered through the interviews.

The teaching and learning process in each session were video-recorded with consent obtained from the lecturers and the learners. Classroom observation of each lecturer took place at least twice and each observation lasted from one to three periods of lessons (each period lasted for about 50 to 60 minutes). The classroom observation was unstructured, focusing on lecturer-learner interactions deemed significant to the research questions. Data gathered from the interviews with the lecturers were used to inform and/or modify the focus of each classroom observation.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Cosmopolitanism was apparent right from the start. We found that coming from different backgrounds and/or similar experiences, the learners formed relationships with each other within their classrooms in order to meet the academic demands of the programmes. These relationships brought forth different learning outcomes which benefitted as well as challenged both the lecturers and learners. We also outlined particularly meaningful learning opportunities which could further develop these relationships. In these ways, real diversity was shown to emerge in the quality of the interactions between and amongst adult learners in those five Programs in this University and between the learners and their lecturers. How did this occur? The evidence is presented in the following three sections.

Classroom Teaching and Learning Strategies

The findings show a variety of teaching techniques was utilised to ensure learner participation. As the lecturers recognised that adult learners are more mature and have accumulated more life/work experiences, classroom discussion was viewed as an ideal teaching and learning practice

as it encourages learners to help each other and share what they have experienced at work and/or in life with others.

The lecturers emphasised the need to make connections between real-life practice and theoretical knowledge. One strategy was to encourage learners to share their knowledge and experience, which was mainly done through questioning. The learners were generally receptive to this approach. As one headmaster observed:

> *You have seen it yourself when our lecturer quote one sentence and we responded many, many times. But the lecturers are all very kind and they accepted whatever we responded. Among us, we have different views but I liked the way the lecturers entertain us.*

Similarly, the in-service teachers (Program B), as perceived by the lecturers, were able to bring different perspectives into their classes and enrich the school leavers' (mainstream student population) learning experiences. However, in the classes of Programs A, D and E, these activities were not always successful as the lecturers needed to use more prompts which were often met with silence. When this happened, they had to instantaneously modify their teaching strategies, either by providing more examples or elaborating their points.

Another strategy adopted was to relate theories to learners' experiences and encourage them to reflect on the theories in their practice. There is evidence that suggests this technique was fruitful in the headmasters' class (Program C). One headmaster's remark was noteworthy:

> *in University X they teach us how to do it and at the same time how to implement it. […] What happens in our class actually happens in the school as well, the true situation. What they teach us is actually the real thing that we need.*

Nonetheless, some practices were more successful with the headmasters because they shared common goals, problems, and experiences. The group's homogeneity was predetermined, so it was more difficult to replicate with learners from widely-divergent backgrounds.

It was difficult to employ similar strategies with the pre-service teachers (Program D) who lacked teaching experience. Nevertheless, task-based exercises were used to allow them to practise their skills based on given rules and principles. In Program E, with working adults studying Accountancy, we saw a slightly different approach. Although the lecturers admitted that the students had more experience compared to the school leavers, they were rarely encouraged to express their opinions and/ or share their experiences. More often than not, their responses followed the lecturer's prompts instead of personal accounts of their practices and/ or experiences. They were not challenged to examine how their learning experiences had affected them and the way they worked.

Group work was often introduced early, which allowed learners to get used to the idea of working as a group. Three examples of group work are highlighted here.

The first example is the field trip organised by the headmasters. The lecturer carefully thought of it, monitored its progress and consciously placed herself as a facilitator. For the learners, the trip had been a collective effort, with each individual working on specific tasks. They relied on each other and each other's judgements on how to best execute their plan. Because the trip was a success, both parties appreciated its educational values.

The second example is the learners' project in Program E. Unlike the headmasters' field trip, the group project was a major part of the course (100% coursework). The learners had to develop a simulated system and produce weekly progress reports, a manual and a final report. As they had some prior knowledge and experience of the subject matter, the approach was well received. Furthermore, the project gave them greater autonomy to direct their learning and the flexibility of time. The learners had also shown the ability to work as a team with minimal supervision. However, they were not as engaged as the in-service headmasters because their participation was constrained by full-time work and family commitments.

The third example is the group presentation in one of the Program A classes. The learners were asked to do a presentation on a topic in the syllabus. Despite being able to present the topics, they were not able to answer the lecturers' questions on what they had presented. The lecturer's

remark, "sometimes they do not understand what they are presenting; they just read from the slides" suggests that learning which was planned to be learner-centred failed to engage them in learning. As a result, the lecturer had to provide the necessary information which led to a concentration of teacher-centred method.

The findings also showed that presentation was a common teaching and learning strategy. The effective use of student presentations; however, depended very much on the learners' group dynamics, and how the presented content was exploited to facilitate further understanding. In the headmasters' class, a robust information-sharing atmosphere was created when a few participants contributed their ideas during a presentation. This suggests learning occurred at both personal (the presenter presenting her ideas and individual audience listening to her) and collective levels (mutual sharing between the presenter and audience). More interestingly, learning here was both embedded and explicit. Learning was 'doing' the presentation and the discussion, while understanding could be distinctly gauged from the ideas contributed.

Nevertheless, there were instances in which presentations failed to facilitate learning. In Program D classes, the pre-service teachers were preoccupied with fulfilling the assessment requirements. Like the Program A presenters, they relied heavily on their prepared texts/slides. The audience, on the other hand, was less interested to listen and understand what was presented. Although there were instances of lecturer intervention, learning if any, was minimal, isolated and individualistic.

Overuse of presentations can bore learners and diminish its effectiveness as a teaching and learning tool. In situations where presentations are part of the assessments, lecturers need to monitor learners' reactions and intervene accordingly. There is evidence to suggest that lecturers' intervention during presentations helped learners to learn in a more meaningful manner. In one class of Program C, the class' attention was redirected to the presentation when the lecturer asked questions. The presentation then turned into a discussion in which the presenter and the audience tried to provide appropriate answers to the questions. Evidently, lecturers hold the responsibility and leadership for the quality of learning in their classrooms.

As there were different assessment types, different aspects of learning were therefore emphasised. In project-based assessments, like the field trip and system development (project), the lecturers' focus was on facilitating and providing timely guidance. In courses which had final examinations, they were concerned about the learners passing the subjects as we are reminded by a remark:

> *At the end of the day it's not me going for the exam, [it is] the students [who are] going to the exam and the way some of them are doing the test makes me worried.*

Therefore, it is not surprising to find instances in which the lecturers provided tips to answer questions or possible topics in the final examinations. Some went further, as admitted by one, "(I do) analysis of past year's questions so that they can focus on which topics to be emphasised during the exam." We argue that the emphasis on examinations could lead to superficial, short-term learning which could hinder learners' professional development. In fact, this was supported by the learners who were undergoing a career change. As one suggested, "Project papers, case studies, problem-based tasks, and observations in schools instead of final examinations… would be more helpful".

Cosmopolitanism can be strongly supported by a common language. English is the medium of instruction in University X. The findings reveal that there were mixed reactions to its use. In the TESL programmes (Programs B and D), using English was a given as the learners were training/retraining to be English teachers. English was primarily used and in fact, some lecturers incidentally reinforced the language in their classrooms. The in-service teachers valued the opportunity to use more English, both within and outside the classrooms. The pre-service teachers, although anxious about using English were concerned about not learning it and about not having more linguistic knowledge. Unlike the other learners, these learners' ability to use English went beyond academic competence as it became an important professional competence (to teach English to secondary school students).

In Program C, the lecturers believed English was a major stumbling block to the headmasters' academic success. They admitted the learners would not be able to understand the materials if they could not understand

English. Although learners' English language ability was not discussed by the lecturers in the other two programs (A and E), some learners revealed that their academic undertaking was compounded by difficulty with English, particularly academic English.

In most cases, the lecturers tried to accommodate the learners' diversity of facility with English by maintaining a bilingual (Malay/English) classroom, which was perceived to be necessary to encourage participation and aid understanding. Although the slides were prepared in English, both English and Malay were used interchangeably to explain concepts and to interact. Often, Malay translation was used to explain unfamiliar concepts. Not surprisingly, most learners preferred to use Malay when articulating their thoughts. In addition, some lecturers even allowed the learners to write their assignments in Malay instead of English if they requested to do so. Although these practices might contradict the institutional policy, they could be used to advocate developing appropriate teaching and learning practices for adult learners.

The learners; however, had different perspectives on the use of English as a medium of instruction. Some learners did not face any problems while some found it difficult to expand their ideas if they did not have enough vocabulary. Nonetheless, those who viewed using English was difficult chose to take it positively. To them, using English was beneficial as it provided them with (perceived) heightened self-esteem and language skill. As such, some learners recommended that the lecturers should use the language all the time and encourage their learners to use it. These findings suggest varying learner needs which have to be carefully considered by the lecturers in the enactment of their lessons. Again, this requires them to be sensitive to the contextuality of their practice and to develop an ongoing capacity to learn from their experiences (Beckett & Hager, 2002).

Lecturers' Professional Practices

The findings suggest the contexts within which the lecturers found themselves required them to seek diverse means of teaching and dealing with the learners. In other words, the lecturers' conceptions of teaching and teaching approaches were constantly modified by their everyday practice. Significantly, these affirm what literature says about how contextuality

influences and shapes the practice of a practitioner (Beckett, 2008; Beckett & Hager, 2002).

The findings reveal that the lecturers had a repertoire of ways to 'do' flexibility, particularly those that concern the teaching/learning activities. Two situations are illustrated here.

The first is a lecturer in Program B who faced a disconcerting situation when the learners came unprepared to class. Although she had planned to review their lesson plans, she gave them extra time during the lesson to complete the task which she had assigned a week earlier. Her flexibility resulted in the learners' learning and sharing their knowledge.

The second is a lecturer in Program E whose subject included several weeks of lectures and the learners' developing a simulated information system for the rest of the semester. In itself, the subject provided the learners with some form of flexibility. Moreover, the lecturer created opportunities for them to discuss their project during the weekly meetings.

Another aspect of flexibility is that it has to be cognisant of whose needs it is serving. One lecturer displayed her flexibility by allowing a learner to be absent from her class; an "academically difficult" decision because of his other life commitments. Her remark, "they bring their life into the classroom and we have to find ways to handle it, to get over or around these issues" showed her understanding of the learners' complex situations. In fact, her adjustment, unlike the one in Program A (see next), was more personal and required sensitivity to individual learners' needs. This is consistent with what Kasworm, Polson and Fishball (2002, p. 27) have suggested:

> *To serve adult learners thoughtfully, educators first need to understand that adult students come from a different place, with different needs, and with concerns that are both similar and different from those of younger students.*

However, it is also important to note that the lecturers' flexibility was enhanced by their positive perception of the learners. This suggests that the lecturers needed to see their flexibility was reciprocally appreciated by the learners by actively engaging in learning.

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There is evidence that suggests the lecturers reflected on the situations they encountered in their everyday practice. They were able to 'read' the learners' actions/reactions and to make instantaneous decisions or 'practical judgements' in situations that were unfolding in their classrooms. Schön's (1983) distinction between reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action provides us with a clearer view of how reflective thinking informs our present and future actions. Both are crucial to a lecturer's practice.

In Program A, a lecturer faced what Schön (1983) calls a 'non-routine'. She decided to proceed with scheduled presentations even though only half of the class was present. Four learners presented while two remained in the audience. The session turned out to be an interactive one, with the learners cordially learning from each other. Evidently, the lecturer had made the right judgement, that is, instead of waiting for the rest to come, she had asked the learners to proceed with the presentations. Another 'non routine' or 'hot action' (Beckett, 2008; Beckett & Hager, 2002) was observed in a lecturer's class in Program B. Her learners had not prepared what was asked of them (individual lesson plans). Instead, she asked them to work in groups to produce a lesson plan each. Because of her decision, active learning took place and her objectives were achieved.

A lecturer in Program D decided to continue with a discussion despite noisy disruptions from renovation work. His practical judgement not only saved time but also led to an active sharing of ideas by the learners. Evidently, these lecturers displayed 'in-the-moment' decisions they made as they encountered disruptions to their lessons.

In Schön's (1983) term, their reflection-in-action had informed their current actions. Although their reflective thinking was immediately helpful to the situations unfolding in their classroom, the way they had intellectually judged the situations was also useful in their future practice. In this way, it will add to their repertoire of anticipative actions in the everyday 'hot action' (Beckett, 2008; Beckett & Hager, 2002) of their practice.

A less 'hot' action occurred in another lecturer's class in Program A. After a 45-minute break, he retracted an example. Although needing less immediate attention than the situations above (after a prolonged break), knowing that a future action was needed (to retract), he did what was

necessary (retracted) to aid understanding. In this way, his reflective activity did not only inform his future action (after the break) but also had an effect on the present (in the same lesson).

Added to these practices, there are instances that point to reflection-on-action activities which informed the lecturers' practices. Evidently, after some involvement in teaching the same groups of learners, the lecturers modified their teaching approaches and methods. This finding is consistent with the argument that skills and performances are extensive, diverse, and shaped by the workplace activities, norms and values (Billett, 2001).

Learners' Engagement

All humans are unique and those beyond school age should be regarded as adult learners having a range of necessary experiences which can be useful resources for learning (Merriam & Grace, 2011; Rogers, 2002; Merriam & Caffarella, 1999; Brookfield, 1986; Knowles, 1984). Educators are frequently urged to encourage adult learners to share their experiences and to relate new materials to their experiences (Rogers, 2002) and our findings support this. Cosmopolitanism endorses this variety in which the roles learners play cannot be ignored. Nixon (1996, p. 10, emphasis added) discovered that university teachers viewed learning "not as something that happens to students, but as something that they themselves must make happen".

Learners are agentive; they increasingly want to take responsibility for their learning but as our fieldwork has shown, lecturers need to provide structured and sensitive scaffolding for this individual agency to develop within classroom groupings such as in our five Programs.

The learners' development of agency was enhanced through creative teaching and learning approaches such as the field trip in Program C. They engaged actively in learning when they wanted to construct understanding, share experience and voice learning needs. The real life examples that they brought into the classrooms enriched the learning experiences of other students.

Furthermore, they were receptive to learning from each other and there was a culture of mutuality. However, they were also observed to engage

differently in different pedagogical contexts, from being actively engaged to deciding not to engage in learning. Some learners perceived there were 'right' answers instead of appropriate answers. Interestingly, assessed and non-assessed forms of learning activities affected learners' engagement to varying degrees. For instance, we see them more engaged when doing assessed presentations in contrast to responding to queries which the lecturers posed to gauge their understanding.

The findings also indicate that the pre-service teachers were unable to produce the expected learning outcomes. As one lecturer commented, "They were very passive in class," and "highly dependent on the textbook". Upon this discovery, the lecturers had to adjust their teaching and learning methods, as described earlier. In Program C, the learners perceived the lecturers had adapted to their learning styles. As one learner put it, "Most of the lecturers have learned as well from us how to teach us". This finding suggests that such skills require lengthy involvement with the learners' teaching and learning and conscious decisionality over time.

The tendency to learn as a group (in the classroom) was more prominent in homogenous groups, like the headmasters (defined by experiences) and the pre-service teachers (defined by lack of experiences). The headmasters answered in a collective manner, almost in a chorus, which is surprising given that they were older and very experienced. However, they were able to respond individually and provide relevant examples to discussions that required them to relate their experiences. With the pre-service teachers, the collective answering indicates that by choosing not to respond individually, they gained some anonymity when faced with theory-laden questions. This anonymity prevented them from 'losing face' or from potential embarrassment when the questions were perceived to warrant 'the right answers'.

The learners liked the idea of sharing their knowledge and experiences. The headmasters, in particular, were very keen to engage in such a manner. In Program B classes, the in-service teachers were willing to contribute to each other's learning, particularly the younger school leavers in understanding the nature of teaching in schools. More interestingly, they also interacted with the lecturers in small group discussions. The pre-service teachers were able to participate actively in discussions that required them to provide

appropriate answers based on their experiences, in which the pressure to offer the 'right' answers was eliminated.

In the classes of Programs A and E, most of the time, the learners remained quiet or murmured their guesses to the lecturers' questions. Because the discussions were curbed by their willingness/ability to participate, the lecturers had to continue by providing examples. Nonetheless, there were instances in which the learners were able to provide valuable input to the lecturers' queries and participate in discussions.

Evidently, there was a culture of mutuality that promoted better understanding and more meaningful learning between the lecturers and adult learners. The adult learners displayed receptivity to sharing knowledge and experiences, and to accepting new ideas that could enhance their professional abilities. These attributes were reinforced by the lecturers' acknowledging and valuing their knowledge and experiences. Furthermore, they valued working in a team, particularly the learners in Program E. They found this arrangement advantageous, as one learner said:

> *If we don't have teamwork, then we cannot do all the assignments that are given to us. If we have teamwork, it is easier for us. Maybe we can divide the project or assignment into two parts, and there is a division of work among us. So we communicate with each other and update each other on what we have done.*

In most classes, when the lecturers asked, "Are there any questions?" or "Do you understand?" the likelihood was that nobody would respond. Nonetheless, the learners were observed to be capable of asking questions or seeking clarification to enhance understanding. Interestingly, in the classes of Program D, the learners displayed confidence and commitment when asking about, and doing assessments. This pattern of engagement, although visible in other classes, was not as prominent. This might indicate the learners perceived assessments as crucial to their academic success. Therefore, it is hardly surprising that they often ignored other non-assessed forms of learning such as active listening during presentations and/or making queries after.

In the part-time programmes, there were instances in which the learners decided not to engage in learning. Given their part-time enrolment, they often had to miss classes due to work related reasons. The findings show that the learners' attendance and punctuality often affected the teaching and learning activities. Moreover, some learners, like those in Program E admitted to finding it unproblematic if they were to miss a few classes. It was hardly surprising therefore to see lack of seriousness in attending classes, as claimed by the lecturers.

More interestingly, the learners displayed different kinds of behaviours in different pedagogical contexts. For instance, during a group presentation in one of Program A classes, we saw some learners displaying lack of sensitivity to what was on going in the class (some were talking, some were texting on their phones). Another interesting display of (non) engagement was when Program E learners, instead of discussing their project, decided to leave when their lecture was cancelled. This is interesting as the lecturer had specifically asked them to remain in the class and discuss their project.

The findings indicate that the patterns of learner engagement vary in different pedagogical contexts. Here, it is worthwhile to emphasise that individuals "exercise their person dependence when deciding which problems they will engage in and the degree of engagement" (Billett, 2006, p. 55). Evidently, although the learners were willing to be instructed and were capable of accomplishing what was required, they exercised their judgements on the depth and nature of their engagement. Nixon (1996) argues learning, conceptualised in the way that learners themselves must make happen, indicates that learner motivation becomes a major pedagogical concern. Therefore, learners must be encouraged to take an active role in learning through more pedagogically effective, interesting and meaningful instructions.

Rogers (2002) argues that adults deliberately construct themselves as a 'student' when pursuing learning intentionally. Essentially, this implies a willingness to work under guidance. A headmaster's remark suggests that this could also be true for the learners in the study:

> *We have to ask them, we have to discuss and sometimes we bring our experience in the school to the discussion, and ask*

our lecturers of their opinion. They have a lot of experience and sometimes their knowledge is useful compared to us because we get our knowledge from experience but they get their knowledge from their study.

According to Rogers (2002), the basis of this personalised construction is both general (the cultural climate of their social context) and individual (their personal experience of other forms of education). Moreover, the role involves some (temporary) abandonment of autonomy and a willingness to accept direction in order to achieve a (normally self-set) goal.

In Program B, as the in-service teachers were playing a dual role (as learners and experienced teachers who could enhance understanding of teaching English in schools), autonomy was described as having more freedom in deciding when and what to do. As one learner commented, "I expect them to treat us to treat us like autonomous learners, we are totally independent and not to rely too much on them". This autonomy may indicate some form of self-directed learning advanced by Knowles (1975) but the learners did not, as Brookfield (1986, p. 111) puts it, "assume a degree of responsibility for designing their curriculum, negotiating their assessed piece of work, and judging the worth of their efforts". In his study, he found adult learners were uncomfortable with being required to assume this responsibility. Citing Chené (1983), Brookfield (1986, p. 57) asserts that "autonomy is possible only when learners have an awareness of the process of learning, an appreciation of the norms governing the standards and activities in the area explored, and an ability to make critical judgments on the basis of this knowledge." As to be expected, autonomy and even its voluntary but temporary surrender, is a key aspect of a cosmopolitan identity: a willingness to take responsibility for oneself in a fast-moving, social and globalising world.

Interestingly, the findings suggest that the headmasters were able to assert this kind of autonomy. This is hardly surprising as they are experienced teachers and school managers. In the observation, we saw how they actively participated; sharing experiences and expressing opinions. They successfully planned and executed a field trip which they found educationally enriching. They were also able, after discussing with the Coordinator, to change their packed schedules and initiate changes to a Law subject which they found

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difficult and irrelevant in the school context. In these instances, although they consciously positioned themselves as students of University X (abandonment of autonomy and a willingness to accept direction), they were able to affect (assuming responsibility) positive changes to their learning experiences (achieving goals).

Program E learners had a different experience. Like the headmasters, they were willing to work under guidance and able to accept direction, as we have seen in their group discussion. However, there is evidence that suggests they assumed independence which expressed separateness from the course/formal learning. For example, when their lecture was cancelled and they were asked to discuss their project (unsupervised), they unanimously decided to leave. Probably sensing this inclination, the lecturer had previously set some boundaries and reminded them of their responsibilities to the project. In another class, although two learners were able to present what was asked of them (willingness to accept direction), they were late, and were blasé about it. Given this, it is therefore, hardly surprising to find that some lecturers were cautious when dealing with them.

For beginning teachers like the learners in Program D, autonomy can be threatening. Unlike the other learners (Programs A, B, C & E) whose accumulation of life and work experiences could provide them with the ability to take increasing responsibility for their learning, they lacked the ability to diagnose their learning needs, formulate learning goals and evaluate learning outcomes. Therefore, they relied heavily on the lecturers to interpret theories and concepts that could provide them with the found knowledge of becoming teachers. Didactic methods were preferred as they were perceived to provide clarity and understanding through structure, authorised knowledge and application. Only at the end of the programme (during their practical teaching in schools), they discovered their formal learning had been inadequate in preparing them for future work. At this time, it was too late for them to assert autonomy over the direction of their learning.

CONCLUSION

We have shown that cosmopolitanism plays out in detailed pedagogical ways in university classrooms where respect for diversity is uppermost, and where the sociality of learning and teaching is preserved.

In particular, we have shown this diversity and sociality through the following powerful classroom teaching and learning strategies: classroom discussion, relating theories to learners' experiences, giving task-based exercises, group work, lecturers' prompts, field trip, project, group presentation, lecturers' intervention, different assessment types and common language. Similarly there are lecturers' professional practices which contribute to powerful learning: repertoire of ways to 'do' flexibility such as extra time, opportunities for learners to discuss their project and sensitivity to individual learners' needs; making instantaneous decisions or 'practical judgements'. Finally, the quality of the learners' engagement has a large contribution to make to the power of the cosmopolitan classroom: giving real life examples, learning from each other, responding to assessed and non-assessed forms of learning activities, answering in a collective manner, small group discussions, providing examples, capable of asking questions or seeking clarification, attendance and punctuality, work under guidance and assuming independence.

We claim that it will be these sorts of initiatives which will enliven and reshape university pedagogical experiences throughout the world, and that staying with a binary East-West distinction, no matter how extensively it is cross-pollinated, is an insufficient basis for the way lifelong learning and professional formation are best undertaken.

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