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Co-creation in a safe space: Listening to the international student voice

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ABSTRACT



This article discusses the methodology of a partnership-based collaborative project between investigators comprising two academics and one educational developer and a diverse group of international students studying at a UK University. The students were recruited to co-design a survey instrument to better understand the lived experiences of their peers across the institution, but prior to doing so engaged in a structured process of weekly engagement to create a safe space where they could feel comfortable to explore their own experiences. This produced a rich characterisation of key elements of being an international student, challenging common narratives of deficit and passivity, as well as a successful ‘students-as-partners’ approach that transcends assessment or curriculum design settings. Thereby, the paper offers a case study for empowering co-creation partnerships with overlooked or marginalised student groups by embracing principles of safe spaces and belonging for participants, thus contributing to an understudied element of co-creation scholarship.

KEYWORDS

Students as partners; co-creation; safe space; sense of belonging

Introduction

The higher education (HE) sector in the UK, much like in other parts of the world, continues to see greater internationalisation. Notwithstanding the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the percentage of international students enrolled in the UK HE institutions has steadily risen from 20% in 2017/18 to 24% in the 2021/22 academic year (HESA, 2019, 2023). London Economics (Cannings et al., 2023) estimates the total benefit to the UK economy from 2021/22 first-year international students over the duration of their studies at £41.9bn, compared to an estimated total costs of £4.4bn. Although there is a recent dip in international student recruitment (Bolton et al., 2024), a public survey commissioned in 2023 found that 64% of respondents believed the UK should host the same or more international students and 62% that international students gave more to the economy than they took out (PublicFirst, 2023).

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This oft-cited economic framing neatly highlights one aspect of international study in the UK which is of considerable importance, but falls radically short of a comprehensive account of either the benefits from or to international students' participation in the sector. This 'cash cows' narrative also feeds into and is sustained by a pervasive deficit narrative where international students are characterised as lacking in comparison to their domestic counterparts. In a systematic review, Lomer et al. (2021) identified that not only do university staff frequently regard international students as passive or deficient but deficit narratives are similarly pervasive in their research on pedagogies with international students, recommending greater attention in the field to the complexities of their experiences.

Although the HE sector is increasingly embracing principles of equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI), a recently published analysis of policy documents of 24 Russell Group UK Universities was critical of the lack of detail in how inclusivity of international students is being addressed (Koutsouris et al., 2022). At the same time, recent research shows three out of four international students in the UK being affected by loneliness (Wawera & McCamley, 2020). Hence, there is a pressing necessity to understand the issues that international students face during their study at UK HEIs (AdvanceHE, 2021; Buckner & Stein, 2020; Glass et al., 2022). Although international students have a high degree of intersectionality as a community and often individually, they are often treated as a single identity (Buckner & Stein, 2020) albeit with some exceptions such as (Glass et al., 2022).

Another challenge faced by international students is the availability of safe space, both within and outside the University campus and on online platforms. As defined by Holley and Steiner, a safe space is an environment within which students can undertake their daily activities without feeling being threatened or harmed physically, emotionally and psychologically (Holley & Steiner, 2005). Since our international students come from diverse cultural, social and political backgrounds, they can find it difficult to express opinions and participate while making a valuable contribution in a discursive context (Mittelmeier, 2021). Thereby, the deficit narrative should not be about international students themselves but about how spaces for discursive conversations need to be redesigned to address their limitations and improve inclusivity. In this context, embracing a safe space approach where international students can discuss their lived experiences and develop a sense of belonging is paramount.

Students as partners

Although student surveys are a good and scalable method to elicit information on sense of belonging and to identify shared challenges that a student community faces (Gillen O'Neel, 2021; Stebleton et al., 2010), the authenticity of the method can be enhanced when survey questions are co-created with students themselves as opposed to being designed in isolation by an educator or an educational institution. Therefore, we are interested in capturing the international student voice through responses to a survey that is co-created with a group of international students. Due to the factors identified above amplifying power imbalances between international students and University staff, meaningful co-creation cannot be enacted in isolated design activities. In this work, we describe our structured process of engaging with international students and how we went about forging a genuine partnership.

It is worth emphasising that the pedagogical literature has multiple reports on the ‘students-as-partners’ approach; however, these are largely in the context of curriculum or assessment design. A partnership to co-create a survey to elicit information on the student lived experience can encompass different challenges, which would need to be considered in the context of the wider literature. Student–staff partnerships are often characterised by a continuum of varying student autonomy or involvement. For example (Healey et al., 2014), describe this as four stages of student engagement: consultation, involvement, participation and partnership, which ranges from opportunities for students to express opinions and ideas all the way up to a collaboration that involves joint ownership and decision-making over the process and the outcome. Similarly, Bovill & Bulley (2011) propose a ladder model of student participation in curriculum design, where students have more active participation and an increasing influence in decision-making on going up the ladder. Furthermore, the four key principles for pedagogic partnership identified by (Crawford et al., 2015) are discovery, collaboration, engagement and production, where students learn through their own research, learn collaboratively with fellow students and staff, engage actively as a member of a disciplinary community and produce knowledge as opposed to being passive consumers of education.

The central aim of this paper is to articulate the design and evolution of our ‘students-as-partners’ approach by leveraging existing frameworks in the context of an extra-curricular activity (survey design) that explores the nexus between safe spaces, sense of belonging and co-creation. To the best of our knowledge, there is a paucity of such reports in the published literature and by documenting our co-creation process, we believe educators and educational developers can translate this approach to diverse settings to establish compassionate and successful partnerships with students that go beyond curriculum or assessment co-design.

Methodology

The project received ethical approval from the Pedagogic Research in Science, Maths and Engineering (PRISME) committee based in the Faculty of Engineering and Physical Sciences at the University of Leeds (ethical reference MEEC-13-017). Our study adopted a ‘students-as-partners’ approach to co-create an international student survey. To design this survey that would be widely circulated among international students studying at the University of Leeds, a small group of international student interns were hired to participate in a series of focus group meetings with the project investigators that were to conclude with a co-created survey. Our focus group meetings with the students were structured to address the four key principles for pedagogic partnership identified by Crawford et al. (2015) (Figure 1). Initial focus groups focus on establishing a safe space through low barrier and icebreaker activities, as well as sharing personal experiences. As the group became more comfortable discussing key elements of their own experiences, the focus moved to blue sky thinking around surveying their peers before lastly addressing the details of survey design.

Hiring of international student interns

International students studying any engineering programme at the University of Leeds were eligible to apply, provided they had completed at least 1 year of study at Leeds.

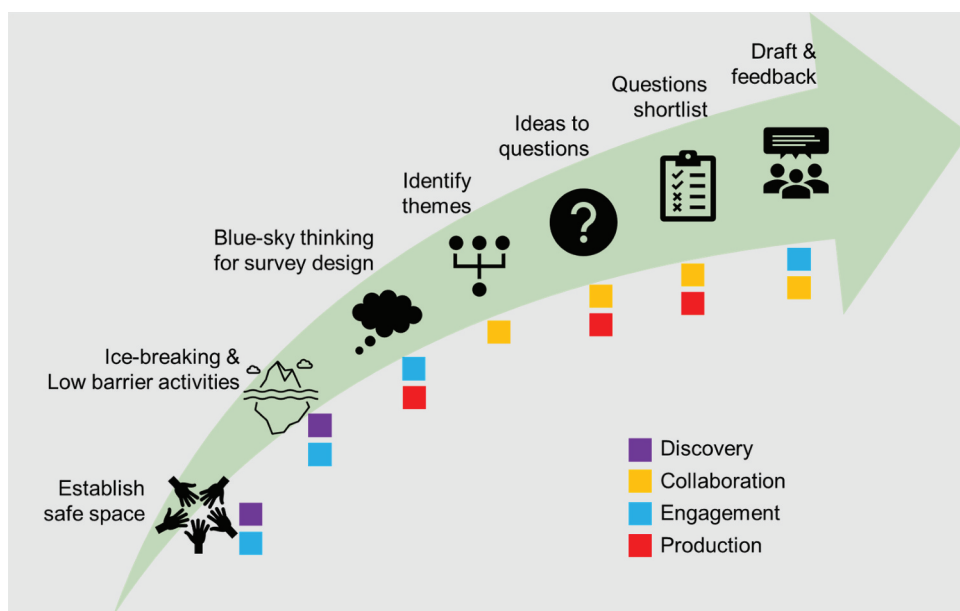


Figure 1. Sequence of activities undertaken in the focus group meetings with the international student interns mapped onto the four principles for pedagogic partnership (Crawford et al., 2015).

The restriction to specific disciplines was made following the relative lack of such studies in the literature involving students majoring in engineering and/or physical sciences. Furthermore, the academic staff involved in this project have an engineering background, providing a degree of commonality with the student participants. Since student interns would need to engage in reflective practice as part of survey co-creation, a restriction of at least 1 year spent at Leeds was in place as an eligibility criterion. Although this ruled out most taught postgraduate students, integrated Master's students – typically in their fourth year of study – were eligible to apply along with undergraduate students.

Students were asked to express interest in this paid opportunity by completing a short form which asked for their name, programme and year of study, nationality or country of origin and a statement on why they were interested in the international student intern role. Although we received a total of 66 applications (including ineligible applicants not satisfying the criteria mentioned above), project funding only allowed hiring up to 8 students. We began shortlisting by anonymising the interests received and considered the following: (i) the statement of interest provided by the applicant and (ii) diversity of the resulting student intern group in terms of programme, year of study and nationality or country of origin. We scrutinised the statement of interest in how well the description aligned with the objectives of our project. The statement of interest was also a means to capture the intersectional perspectives and experiences of international students, since students could motivate their application through a combination of social, cultural, religious and other perspectives. Table 1 presents the shortlist of students that were agreed by the project investigators. All students subsequently accepted the formal offer made to them to join the project as an international student intern.

Table 1. Information of student interns hired for the project.

Student No.	Programme of Study	Year of study	Nationality/Country of origin
1	Chemical & Energy engineering	3	Egypt
2	Mechatronics & Robotics	4	Mexico
3	Medical engineering	2	Kenya
4	Computer science	3	Malaysia
5	Civil & Structural engineering	3	Pakistan
6	Computer science	2	Chile
7	Product design	3	Switzerland/Turkey
8	Computer science with artificial intelligence	4	China

Focus group meetings and students-as-partners

The student interns attended a series of focus group meetings (time commitment of approx. 1.5 hours per week) with the project investigators. The sessions were audio-recorded with the consent of the participants. The participants were informed in advance that all materials they would produce through engaging in focus group sessions would be used anonymously for research and dissemination purposes.

The approach to these meetings drew inspiration from models reported for student partnerships (Bovill & Bulley, 2011; Crawford et al., 2015). While the final tangible deliverable at the end of these focus group discussions was going to be a co-created survey, discussion on survey design was not initiated in the first couple of meetings. We decided to use the first few meetings to establish a safe space, where students felt comfortable sharing and listening to each other's experiences (Figure 1).

After a round of informal introductions, we used several ice-breaking questions, which were designed based on some of the project investigators' past experiences as international students themselves:

- What was a culture shock that you experienced when you arrived in the UK/started your study at Leeds?
- What plans do you have for your career? Where do you want to work? Why? How have your plans changed compared to the day you started University?
- Can you share any incident/activity/moment which has been immensely enjoyable for you in your time at the University of Leeds so far?
- If you could go back in time to the day you arrived in the UK/started your study at Leeds and share a few words of wisdom to your own self, what would that be?

These questions were not designed for collecting qualitative data from participants but rather as an endeavour to initiate conversations around different topics that students would resonate with. As project investigators, we did not scaffold the conversation to reach any pre-conceived destination. We also shared our own anecdotes and experiences, where appropriate, to develop a rapport with the student interns. This approach draws inspiration from the counter-story telling method (Merriweather Hunn et al., 2006; Solorzano & Yosso, 2001), a way to challenge dominant narratives replete with assumptions in critical race theory, applied here to flawed or stereotypical perspectives of international students.

Drawing on the literature and the investigators' past experiences as international students, we designed other 'low barrier' activities for students to reflect on their

experiences. This included a word-association task and a journey mapping exercise. These activities were designed to help establish a creative and inclusive environment, in a manner that students felt listened to and empowered. Further details about these activities are presented in the next section.

Following these activities, we started engaging the student interns in survey design. In terms of the ladder of student participation proposed by (Bovill & Bulley, 2011), we operated at the highest steps of student ownership where 'students control decision-making and have substantial influence'. The student interns were made aware of the objective of the project: to design a survey that captures information on the international student experience at the University, which can subsequently inform measures that can be put in place at a programme-, department- and University-level to enhance the student experience. However, as project investigators, we did not specify the themes or questions to be explored within the survey. Hence, the student interns had significant control in deciding what to include in the survey.

Through the ice-breaking and low barrier activities designed for students to reflect on their lived experience, we were able to unlock the 'discovery' element of learning (Figure 1) and formulate their identity as an international student – transcending the identity of their engineering discipline – which was critical for 'engagement' on a task that was to deliver an output targeted to international students cutting across disciplines.

The survey design phase of the focus group discussions began with 'blue sky thinking' to collect student ideas on themes and topics that could be covered in an international student survey (Figure 1). Students wrote their ideas individually on post-its (in order to not influence the others). All post-its were collated on a flipchart by the project investigators but were not classified in any way. The students were subsequently asked to review the full collection of post-its on the flipchart and add any further ideas that came to mind. Following this, the students were asked to categorise the post-its under different themes as they saw fit. Student-staff collaboration was embedded at the stage of converting ideas to potential survey questions. With the student interns having limited expertise in designing surveys, the project investigators provided support on question styles/formats (Likert scale questions, free-text questions, etc.) to help students 'produce' questions. The student interns ran a voting exercise to shortlist the questions to be included for the survey, which was then used by the project investigators to create a draft version. The final focus group meeting was reserved to collect feedback on the survey draft and make any last changes before survey launch.

Results and discussion

We now proceed to present the findings from the focus group meetings with an emphasis on how a genuine co-creation partnership with students was established. In this context, the 'process' of forming this partnership, which eventually evolved into a deeply satisfying experience for the students and staff involved, is as much the 'product' as the student survey that was the targeted deliverable or end-product. Thereby, we will document the process in its entirety, starting from establishing a safe space and culminating in student reflections after the last focus group meeting.

Establishing a safe space

As project investigators, our approach to building a safe space began with a conscious effort to disrupt conventional power dynamics (Dianati & Oberhollenzer, 2020). It was an advantage that some of the project investigators had been international students themselves in the past, allowing for their experiences and vulnerabilities to be shared, but more fundamentally, we explicitly stated our desire to engage in an open conversation where we could listen to and learn from student experiences. Student interns were recruited with the primary objective of co-creating a survey intended to be circulated to the wider international student community at the University of Leeds to elicit a better understanding of their concerns, priorities and sense of belonging.

Unlike the large majority of work published on assessment and curriculum co-creation, the task explored herein poses slightly different challenges, in that survey co-creation of this kind requires a conversation rich in lived experiences as opposed to a purely intellectual or technical conversation. Importantly, this means creating an environment where students feel comfortable in sharing their experiences, which they could then reflect on to build a survey that can capture the experiences of fellow international students. Building this trust requires time and, hence, the first phase of student intern involvement was dedicated to establishing a safe space.

As reported by (Holley & Steiner, 2005), there are four key variables to what constitutes a 'safe classroom' in the eyes of students: the instructor, peers, self and the physical environment. The top characteristics in each of these domains are an open and non-judgemental instructor, respectful peers who listen and follow ground rules, being open-minded and participating in discussions as an individual and seating that is conducive for discussion, respectively. Figure 2 illustrates how each of these aspects were addressed to establish a safe space for our student co-creation partnership.

The focus group meetings were held in small board meeting rooms or flat-floored seminar rooms, which facilitated discussions in a round-table setting. While prompts or activities were prepared to initiate conversations, these were treated as flexible guides, with emphasis being placed on empowering students to steer the conversation. This was done by encouraging students to share their experiences/thoughts as an extension to what might have previously been said by another student as opposed to asking each student to answer a well-defined question formulated by the project investigators. Albeit a less-structured approach, this strengthens the need for participants to be respectful listeners.

Our success in establishing a safe space was evident in the comments that students provided after the last focus group meeting, where not only did the importance of being 'open-minded' come through but also the application of the concept of a safe space for other underrepresented groups:

Amazing job for conducting this research and being open-minded to our views and prompting great questions.

I have learned from this opportunity that I want to be involved in creating a space for other co-creative workshops and uplifting the voices of underrepresented people and creating change at the grassroots level.

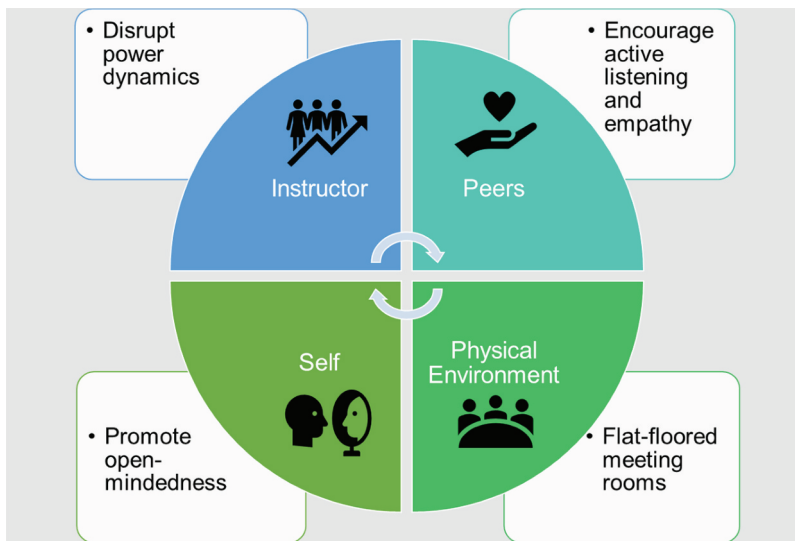


Figure 2. Elements of establishing a safe space (Holley & Steiner, 2005).

Low barrier activities

Multiple easy-to-engage activities were used at the focus groups to help with ice-breaking and prime the students for what they might think about when eventually designing the survey. The first of these was a word-association exercise. Each student was given seven cards with the following words: Food, Culture, Friends, Travel, Lectures, Exams, Job/Placement. They were asked to think about what first comes to mind when looking at each of those words and share if it was a positive, neutral or negative impression.

'Friends' and 'Culture' emerged as the two themes where most participants associated positive experiences (Figure 3). On the other hand, there was considerable disappointment about the difficulty in finding jobs or placement opportunities as an international student (Figure 3). When articulating their experiences under the theme of 'Culture', students mostly touched on certain aspects of the UK culture and how they connected/interacted with these aspects. This discussion was a testimony to these students retaining their individualistic cultural identity while commenting on another culture – a key factor in fostering a sense of belonging – and not merely seeking to 'integrate' into a country's culture by abandoning their respective identities (Yao, 2015). Although most of the student participants classified 'Culture' as a positive association, this is not to be interpreted as them experiencing little or no cultural barriers. We should also consider the degree of convolution that a word like 'Culture' entails – for example, the distinction between university culture and a society's or UK's culture more broadly. Previous research in this area has identified language and cultural barriers for international students in Northern Ireland (Cena et al., 2021). Interestingly, there was not a single word or theme that had exclusively positive or negative associations (Figure 3).

Another activity used at the focus groups was journey mapping. Students were asked to reflect on their journey as an international student thus far and draw a journey map or a roller coaster ride depicting their highs and lows. This process

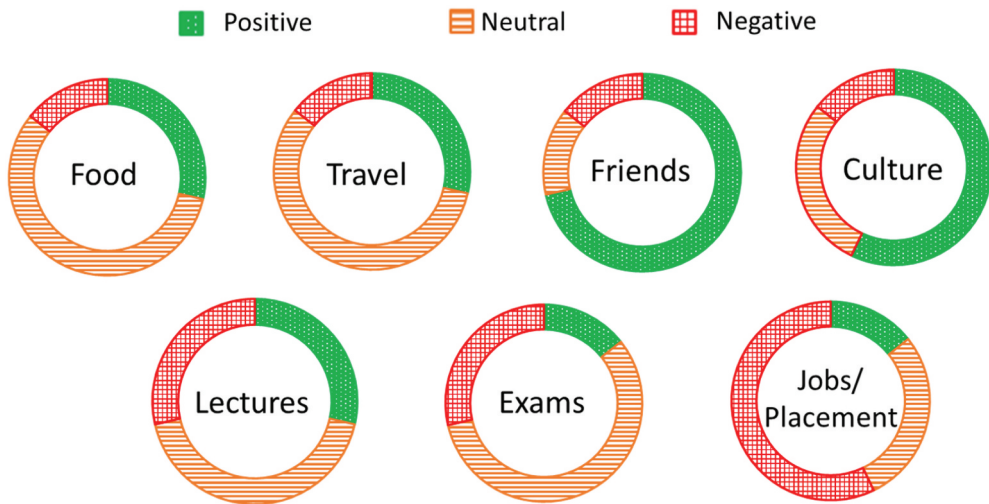


Figure 3. Doughnut charts showing the share of positive (green dotted), negative (red grid) and neutral (amber stripes) responses to each of the themes explored in the word-association exercise.

can yield valuable insights to reshape the student experience (Rains, 2017) and was used here primarily to engage students in reflective practice, which would be useful when eventually designing survey questions. There were several similarities in the individually drawn maps. The first peak was often associated with a sense of ‘freedom’ and ‘pleasure’ associated with new experiences and relationships. Reasons for the first trough, however, were more varied. Some focussed specifically on academic aspects, while others reflected on more broader life issues like homesickness. The rebound was typically associated with a sense of acclimatisation, in both academic and social aspects, and where drawn, the second trough was mostly related to academic workload and difficulties in job applications.

The student participants expressed willingness to see what their peers had drawn, and many of the above-discussed similarities were also identified by the students themselves. This once again contributed to increasing the sense of community within the student group as despite their diverse lived experiences, they realised shared experiences in their journeys. This reflective exercise helped us transition to starting the design of the survey.

Survey design

After briefing the students about the objective of the survey, the first step was to engage them in ‘blue sky thinking’. At this stage, students were asked to work on the basis that ‘no idea is a bad idea’ and were asked to identify all questions that they would consider to fall under the remit of the study. They were explicitly told not to worry about the quality of the questions/ideas or about an idea not being fully formed. This was first done individually by students followed by a ‘collaborative’ effort among themselves to categorise their questions/ideas for the survey into five themes: Academic, Social, Money, Mental health and a ‘General’ category, which was for aspects that did not fall in any of the other themes.

Table 2 presents the students' ideas (as formulated in their own words) categorised in their respective self-selected themes. Reviewing these student ideas, we observe a strong overlap with the aspects covered in the journey mapping exercise described earlier. **Table 2** surfaces important student perspectives of these themes – for example, employability and accommodation are classified under money, and the academic theme is not solely focussed on assessments and related support, but also has a call for greater international inclusivity in the academic content being taught.

To narrow down to a small selection of questions for the survey, students were asked to reflect on two things: the length of an ideal survey – what would ensure they complete a survey and not abandon it in between; secondly, the focus of the survey they wanted – do they want to explore all the themes identified during brainstorming or probe a couple of themes in greater detail. In response to this, students opined that they wanted to explore all themes and suggested running a poll to decide on which questions are included in the survey. **Table A1** in the appendix presents a shortlist of questions that were carried forward to the final round of survey design.

The project investigators then used the shortlist to create a draft version of the survey. No changes were made to the topic of investigation for each question, but minor amendments were made to the format/style of questions to improve consistency. The draft version was then shared with the student participants for feedback at the last focus group meeting. The meeting was also used to collect student opinion on the length of the survey, sequence and accessibility of questions, and a final check for any questions to be removed/added.

With regard to the sequence of questions on the survey, the student interns did not have a strong opinion on the order in which the themes were to be explored but insisted on having questions of the same/similar theme(s) to appear together. Within each theme, they also suggested a preference to have open-ended free text questions at the top followed by multiple choice or Likert-scale questions. Following this feedback session, the project investigators actioned the requested changes and finalised the survey.

Table 2. List of student-formulated ideas/questions categorised according to student self-selected themes.

Theme	Student formulated ideas/questions
Academic	Grading system, Educate on the grading system and how assignments are marked, Time given for assignments – is it enough?, How challenging the course is at the start, How challenging the course is at the end of first year – Any improvement? What caused it?, Support during exam season (study spaces, academic support, wellbeing), Academic support for international students, Lecturers support, International student support, Does the academic content promotes inclusivity, Include international examples more – this is good for both domestic & international students
Social	Cultural clashes, Language barriers, Social integration, Things to look forward to, Night life, Cultural spaces/events, Student Union/Societies, International Student Representative, Making friends – confidence you have with them, Finding second year housemates, How easy is to make international friends – are they helpful?, Buddy groups
Money	Uni fees, Employability opportunities, Budgeting, Transport, Accommodation, Essential things to buy that people forget about, Change in cost of living, Bank accounts, Economic support
Mental health	Weather and winter, Adapting to the different weather and daylight time, Home sickness, Going back home, Safety, Isolation problem with international students?, How does the University supports the mental wellbeing of international students?, Adaptive support for international students, Independent space just for international students
General	First week in Leeds, International views prioritised?, Awareness of services offered by Uni (academic, wellbeing), Challenges you will face

Student reflections

After the conclusion of the last focus group meeting, the student interns were invited to reflect on their experience of working with the project investigators to co-create the survey. These reflections evidence the success of our approach in creating a safe and inclusive space to engage international students in co-creation.

A key feature of our student partnership approach was engaging students with carefully designed activities prior to commencing co-creation. The following quotes underscore the immense value of these activities:

I enjoyed the few sessions at the beginning where we were discussing the different topics and issues international students can have before starting to choose the questions

The exercises we did to identify the problems faced by international students were very eye-opening and helped me reflect on my time here.

Besides priming the participants for what is to come, these activities helped establish a common ground and an inclusive space where everyone's opinion is valued.

It was exciting to hear everyone's point of view and learn from them.

I enjoyed interacting with international students from other countries and hearing their perspectives on studying in the UK when you're from another country.

On the co-creation exercise itself, students felt a sense of accomplishment and purpose from having contributed to a project that would have a positive impact on fellow international students:

It was also a great relief to learn that we all struggle with the same problems, this made me feel less alone! I'm also glad that I participated in a project that aims to help international students at Leeds make their transition here easier.

Taken together, these student quotes illustrate the success of our 'students-as-partners' approach in holistically addressing safe spaces, sense of belonging and co-creation in the context of an extracurricular collaboration.

Conclusions

Establishing a safe space for collaboration where international students can share their lived experiences and a degree of vulnerability is a pre-requisite to empowering them to be active partners in their own educational experiences, where they are listened to and their voices are incorporated into decision-making. The structured process of engagement detailed above, combined with the positive feedback received from participants, demonstrates that whilst the power imbalance between staff and students cannot be removed and should never be disregarded, it is nevertheless not only possible but very achievable to create a safe space that fosters a sense of belonging through co-creation and genuine partnership, and with modest time and financial commitment.

This is particularly vital in the context of dominant economic and deficit narratives around international students, which fall far short of the nuance and complexity with which those same students conceptualise their own lived experiences and those of their peers, as demonstrated in the findings of this study. The authenticity of the survey questions co-

created in partnership between staff and students greatly increase the likelihood of gathering further data that paves the way for more inclusive and impactful educational practices. The survey designed through this project has subsequently been circulated in multiple departments at the University to which the authors are affiliated. The survey data is being analysed to enhance curriculum design, pastoral care and support services, co- and extra-curricular opportunities amongst other aspects of our educational provision.

(Lomer et al., 2021) identify that 'innovations in critical pedagogies of internationalisation are hampered by disparate literature within which it is difficult to identify clear case studies as guidance for action'. This paper presents a clear and successful case study which could readily be used as such. Specifically, our approach to centralise empathy in co-creation and student partnership has resulted in the following key takeaways: (i) dedicate time and activities for building a safe space prior to co-creation, (ii) design activities that engage students in reflective practice, helping them authentically surface their lived experience, and (iii) clearly articulate and reinforce through action the degree of student ownership in the partnership.

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Appendix

Table A1. Shortlist of student formulated questions decided after the polling exercise.

Theme	Shortlist of student formulated questions
Academic	<p>How supportive do you feel your lecturers are? (scale)</p> <p>How well does the content of lectures promotes inclusion? (scale)</p> <p>How comfortable do you feel approaching lecturers or any academic staff with questions or concerns? (scale)</p> <p>Do you think buddy groups specially design for international students would be beneficial for academic and personal development? If yes, how?</p> <p>Have you encountered challenges related to language differences in understanding academic content?</p> <p>To what extent do you feel that university encourages healthy work-life balance for international students. (scale)</p> <p>Do you think you struggle more(or did in the past) compared to national students? If yes, what helps you to solve this, or do you still feel this?</p> <p>What kind of academic support will you like to get exclusively for international support? (open-ended)</p>
Social	<p>How important was the social aspect of university for you?</p> <p>What forms of social support do you find most helpful while living abroad (eg student groups, community organisations, online communities?)</p> <p>How easy was it for you to adapt to the UK culture?</p> <p>How has your experience been in forming friendships and social networks in your host country? (scale)</p> <p>Were you able to connect with students from your own country? (yes, no, somewhat)</p> <p>Do you feel isolated from your course mates as an international student?</p> <p>Has a language barrier challenged you when joining social groups and/or societies?</p> <p>How aware are you of the events taking place in the University? (scale)</p> <p>Would you be open to university wide cultural events/ holidays?</p> <p>To what extent was finding housemates a challenge for you?</p>
Money	<p>Do you commute to uni? How much time (5min, 15-30min, more than 30min)</p> <p>Is your transport spending a significant amount of your monthly spending? (yes or no)</p> <p>Do you know about the specifics of being an international student looking for placement opportunities? Do you feel uni communicates this effectively?</p> <p>Are you interested in an in-term part time job? (yes, no, maybe)(branching)if yes do you know where and how to get one?</p> <p>Do you think uni prepares international students on how to find a graduate job, what to look out for, how to find sponsorship?</p> <p>Have you faced any unexpected financial challenges related to uni fees?</p> <p>Are you studying on a scholarship? Did this influence your decision to come to University of Leeds?</p> <p>How much does the crisis of cost of living affect you economically? And how does this affect you mentally? (open ended)</p>
Mental health	<p>How often do you feel homesick?</p> <p>How safe do you feel in Leeds? (scale)</p> <p>Do you feel as if your financial situation is impacting your mental health?</p> <p>Do you feel like there is a place where you feel safe/heard? (yes/no) How can the Uni improve/make this available? (open-ended)</p>
General	<p>How many of the following student services are you aware of: list of all students' services</p> <p>Were you made aware of all the services available in the University before arriving?</p> <p>What did you struggle with during your first weeks in Leeds?</p> <p>Was the induction week helpful to welcome you to the Uni and overall Leeds community?</p> <p>How easy and supported were you in moving from your home country to Leeds?</p> <p>Were you given any support in adapting to living in Leeds?</p>