



Female Voices in the Third Space

*Researching Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in South-North
Collaborative Online International Learning/Virtual Exchange*

Marina Orsini-Jones, Lynette Jacobs, Kyria Finardi, Katherine Wimpenny

**Collaborative
Online
International
Learning as a
Postdigital
Connected,
Embodied,
Relational &
(Socio) Material
Third Space:
Female Voices
*GLEA Seminar***

Research Centre
Global Learning

Coventry
University 

UFS


UFS

 The
British
Academy

Outline

- The beginning
- Project focus
- COIL as a postdigital Third Space
- Edited RQs
- Findings
- New conceptualisation
- Next steps

Addressing call: HERD's 2025 Special Issue, "Reimagining Higher Education Learning Spaces: Assembling Theory, Methods, and Practice", Stephen Marshall, Samuel Elington and Jill Dickinson eds



COIL definition (Leask 2020, p. 188)

"online learning in an international setting, with interactive involvement of students and faculty from different international and intercultural backgrounds in and outside the classroom"



The 'Postdigital Condition' (Wang and Canarajah, 2024, p.1) in the COIL Third Space

“a condition where the virtual and physical mediate each other to form layered and hybridized spaces that transcend the online/offline distinction”

COIL Third Space as a fluid postdigital space, where participants are not anchored to “places”, but interact in a dynamic “new space” which can trigger unexpected epistemological and ontological shifts (Orsini-Jones, et al., 2025, in press)



Why 'Third Space'

- Challenging
- Transformational
- Fluid
- 'Otherwise'

Bhabha (1994): *interstices between colliding cultures, a liminal space which gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognizable, a new area of negotiation of meaning*

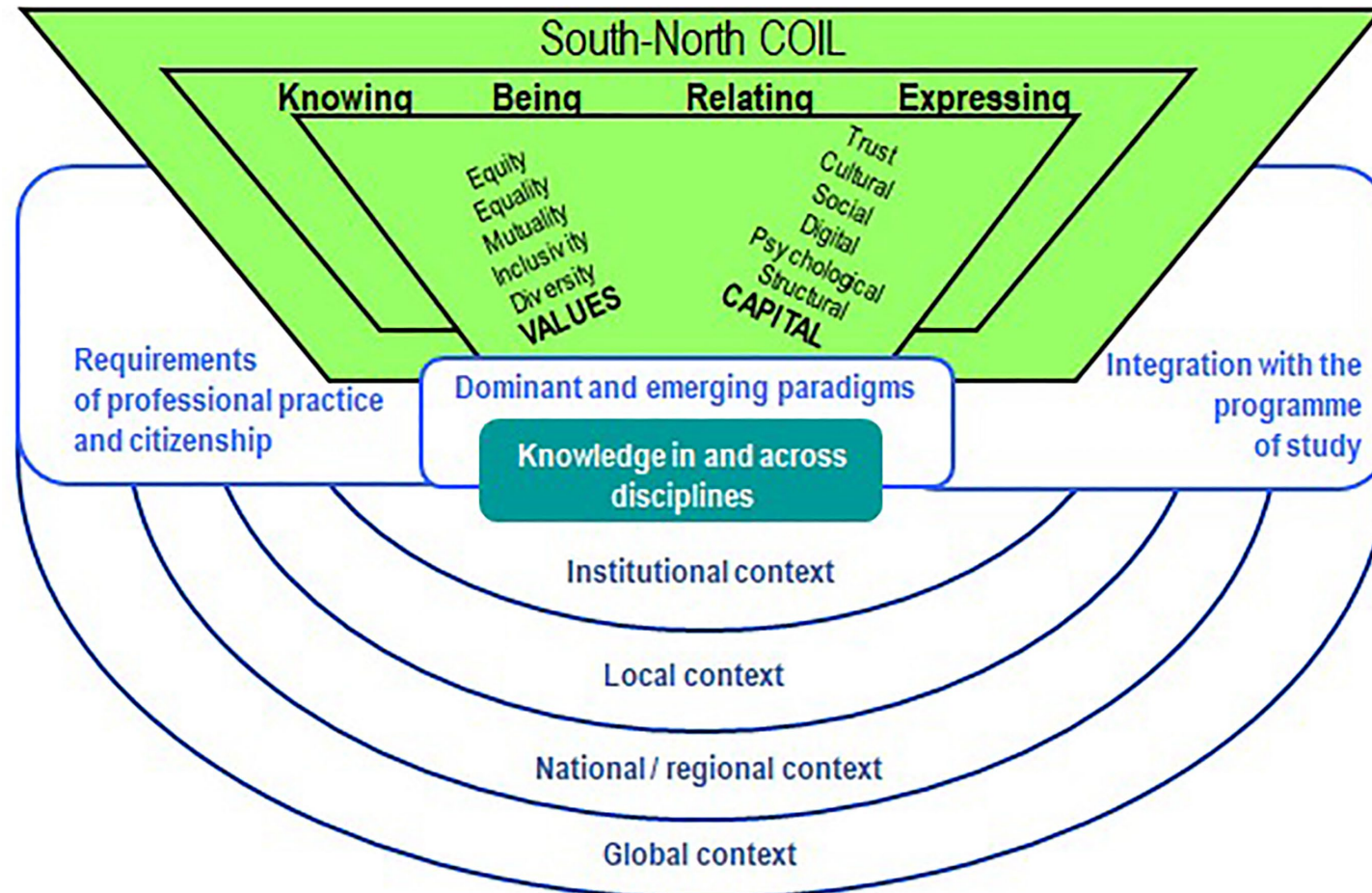


Postdigital Third Space how?

- 1) connected (providing inclusive and adaptive environments in which learning can take place)
- 2) embodied (shaped by the physical and virtual (inter)actions of individuals and groups)
- 3) relational [as realised through meaningful (inter)relationships that foster mattering, belonging, wellbeing, and community, amidst different cultures and contexts]
- 4) (socio)material (as mutually shaped by technology and contexts which are mediated by educators and learners).



Initial conceptual framework



Wimpenny, K. Finardi, K., Orsini-Jones, M. & Jacobs, L. (2022). Knowing, Being, Relating and Expressing through Global South-North Third Space COIL: Digital Inclusion and Equity in International Higher Education. *Journal of Studies in International Education: Special Issue on Digitalisation*, 26(2), 279-296 - built on Leask B. & Bridge C. (2013). Comparing internationalisation of the curriculum in action across disciplines: theoretical and practical perspectives'. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*.

Values and Capitals

V: The worth and relevance of HE practices to student and staff development, associated with the promotion of education as a social good, emphasising the importance of inclusivity in the teaching, learning, and research missions of institutions (Brusoni et al., 2014)

C: not only as an indication of class and wealth as in the original theorisation by Bourdieu (2006), but as a resource or potential to draw from



Decolonial theory foundations and concept analysis (with a feminist 'twist')

- COIL through a decolonial dialogic Global South-North lens (Andreotti et al., 2018; Guimarães et al, 2019; Stein & Andreotti, 2021)
- Hybrid approach to qualitative Concept Analysis (theory, fieldwork and analysis, Hermanns & Mastel-Smith, 2012)
- Intersectionality



RQs

RQ1: in what ways do the attributes that women articulate regarding their engagement in COIL align to the concepts of the model, especially in relation to the named values and capitals?

RQ2: How do female voices resonate with COIL as a postdigital inclusive Third Space that is connected, embodied, relational and socio-material in view of the values they bring and the capitals they draw from?



Qualitative Concept Analysis

4 step approach (Hermanns & Mastel-Smith, 2012)

- 1) Questioning how the women can identify what makes the capitals and values significant for them, if at all (*the operationalisation of the concept*)
- 2) Investigating what situations, including antecedents and consequences in all their nuances, serve to add meaning and relevance to the concepts (*the tangibleness of the concept*)
- 3) Linking the analysis to any further literature that may support any conceptual ambiguity (*the refinement/extension or additions required to substantiate the concept*)
- 4) Determining implications for further research

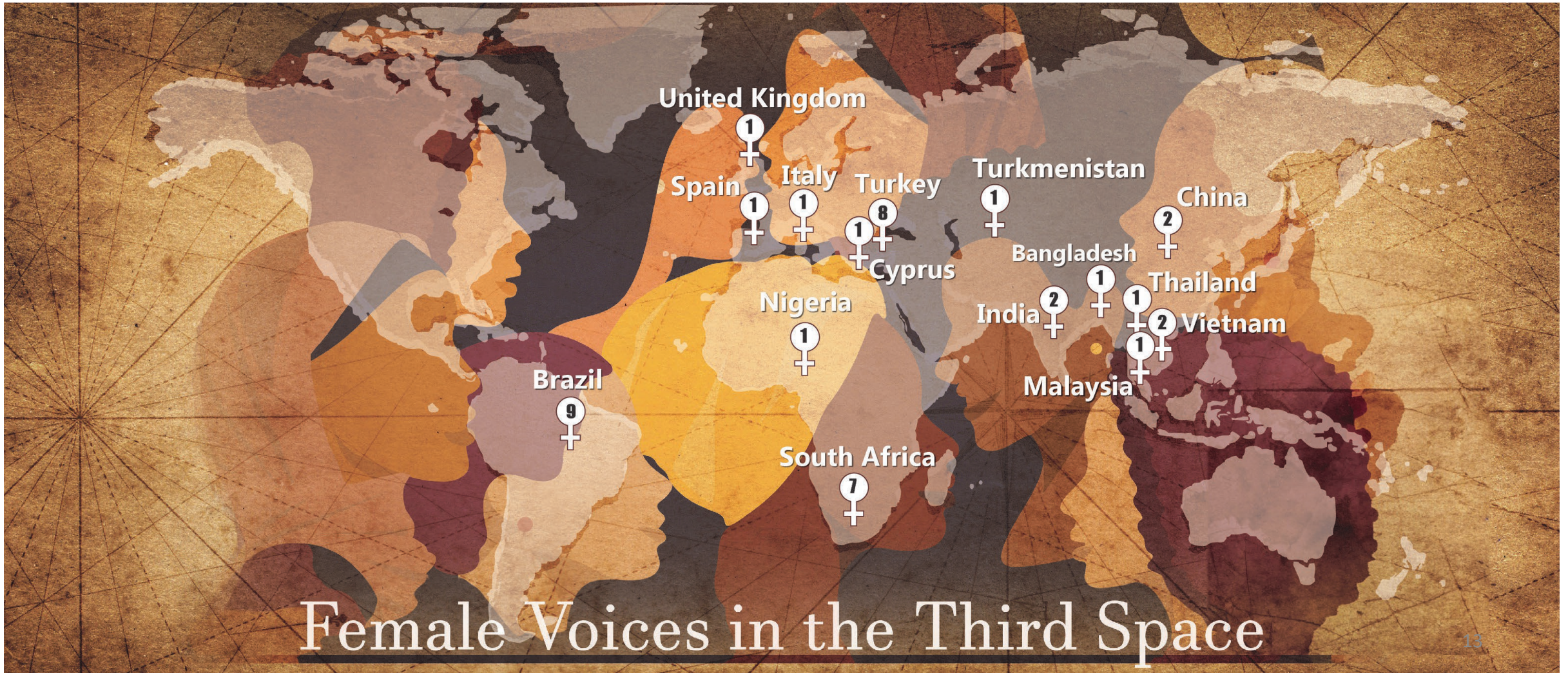


Inquiry

- Ethical approval including gatekeepers' permissions
- 80 participant in total in two cycles, 23-24/24-25 (26 students and 19 staff to date)
- Recruitment via online survey available in the project webpage
- Students: 7 disciplines represented
- 12 different COIL projects represented



Student participants' nationality: 15 different ones - Age range: 18-55 - 54% on English Language Teaching courses/other courses: architecture, education, business and marketing, law



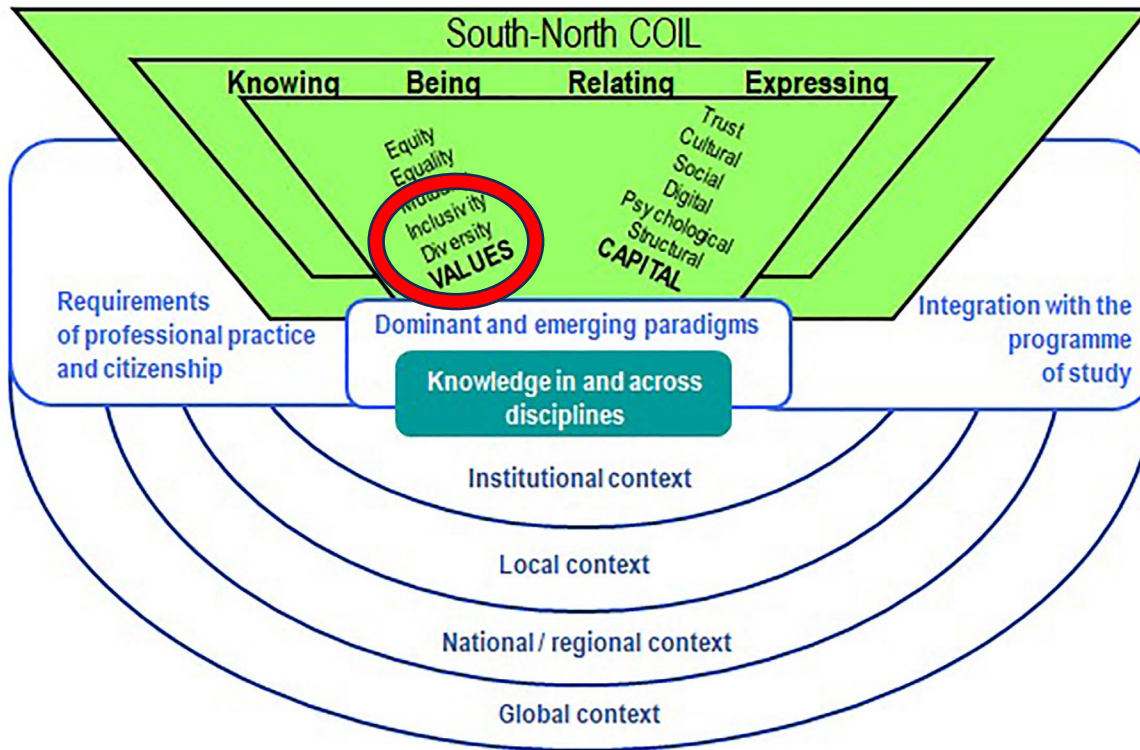


Interim findings

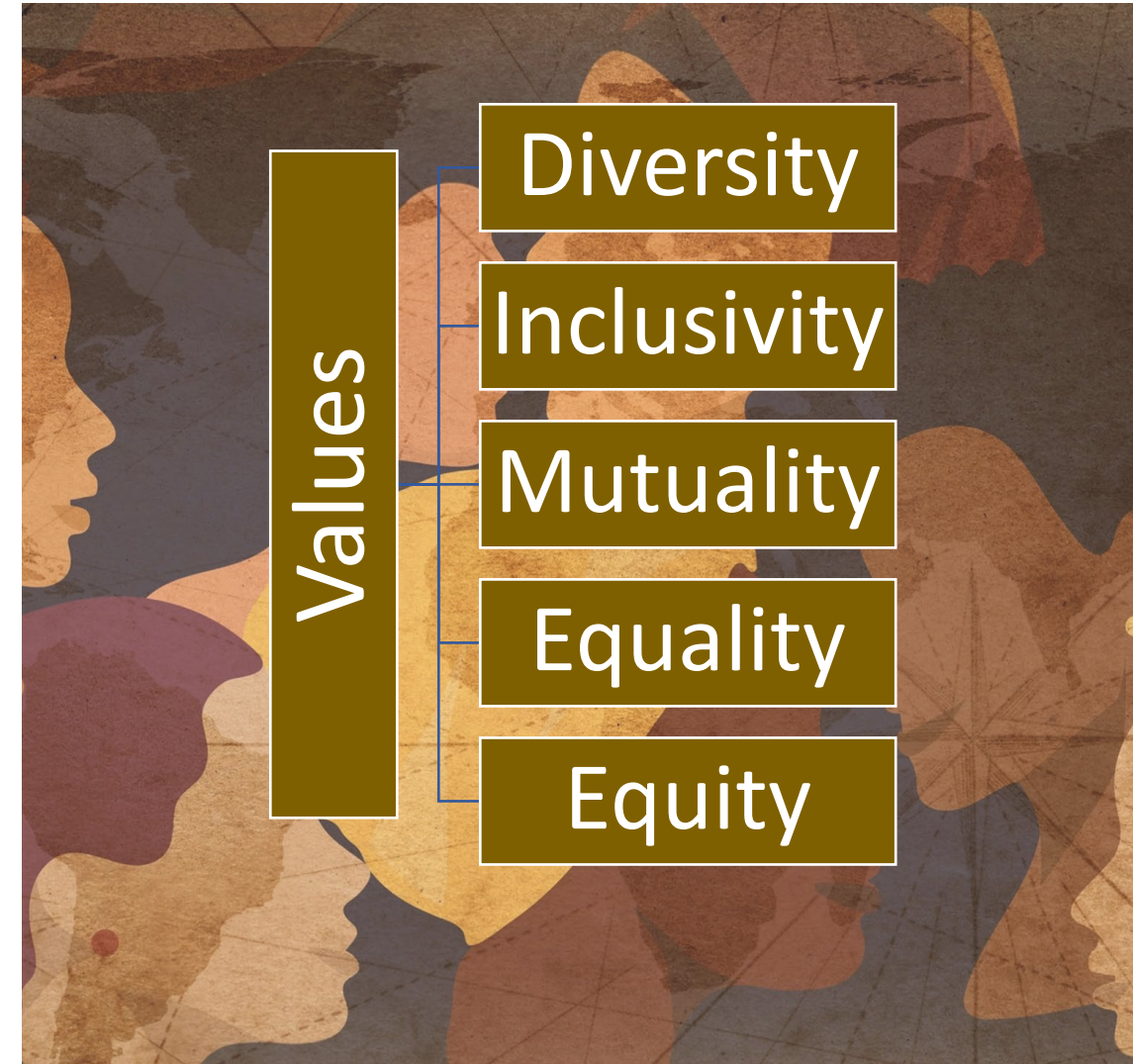
Student Voices



Concept analysis



Wimpenny, et al. (2022) building on Leask & Bridge (2013)



Student Voice

Values

Diversity

Inclusivity

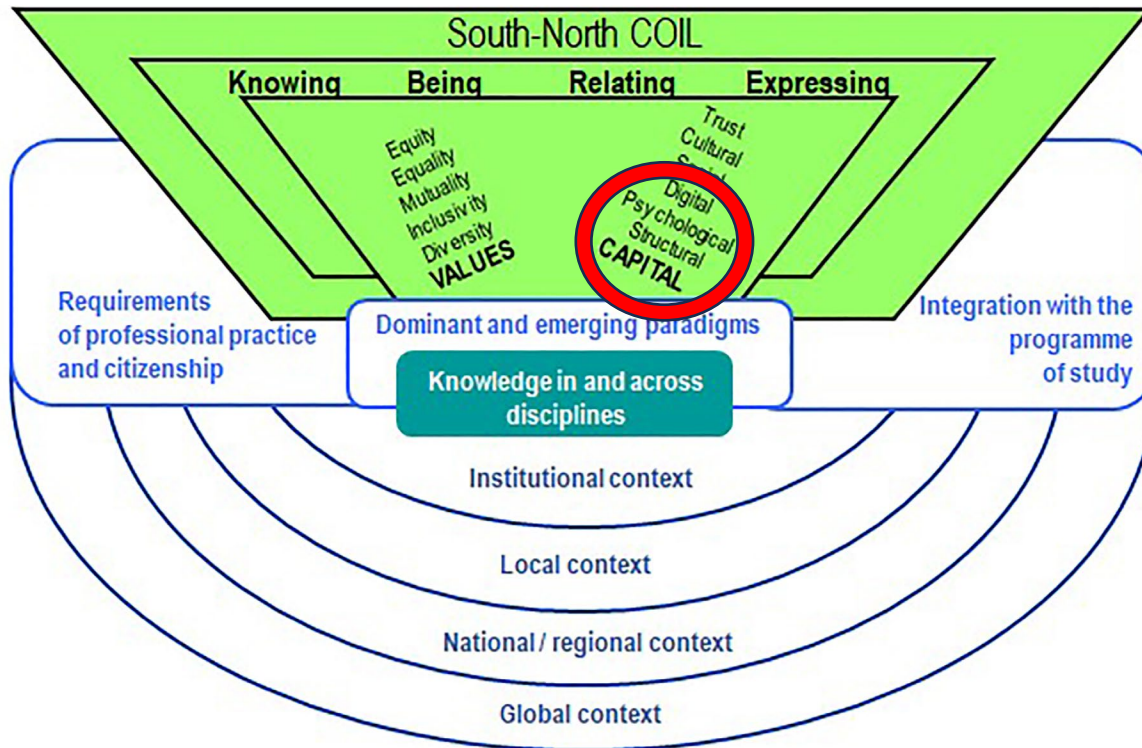
Mutuality

Equality

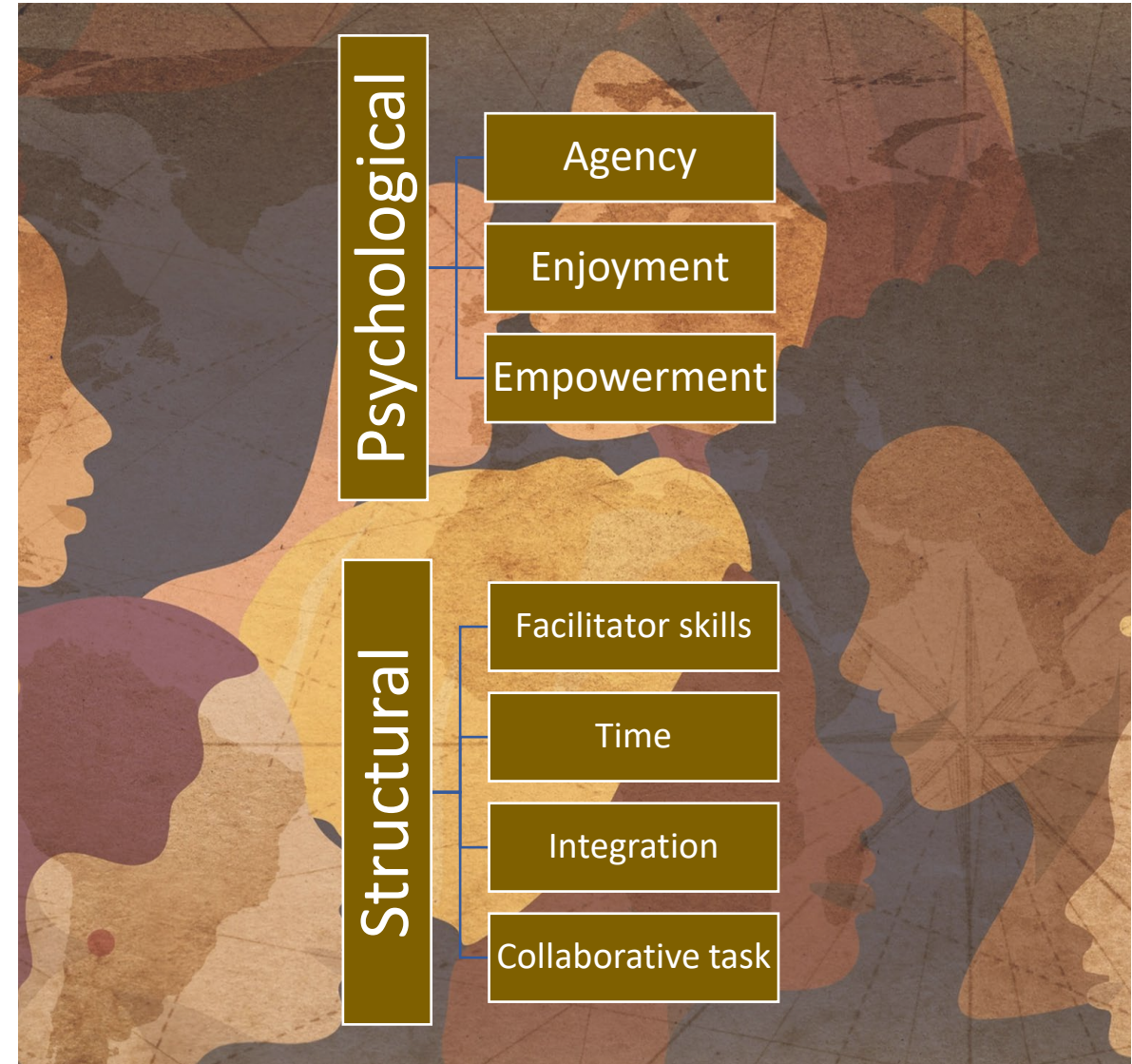
Equity

Your voice matters, so everyone got the chance to speak their mind

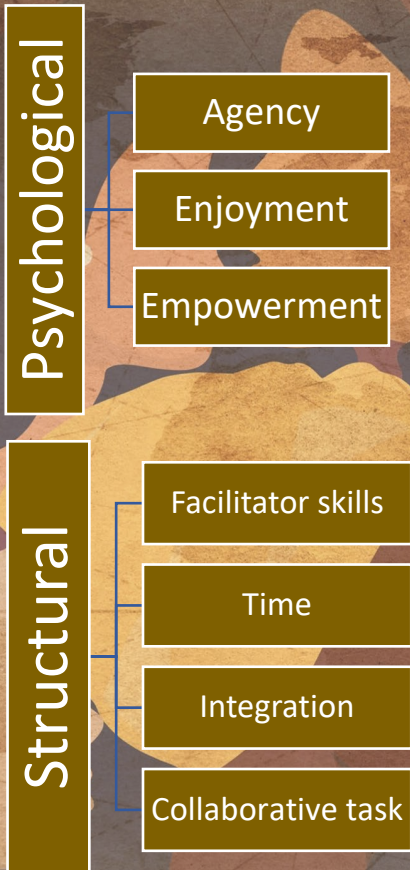
Conceptual analysis



Wimpenny, et al. (2022) building on Leask & Bridge (2013)



Student Voice

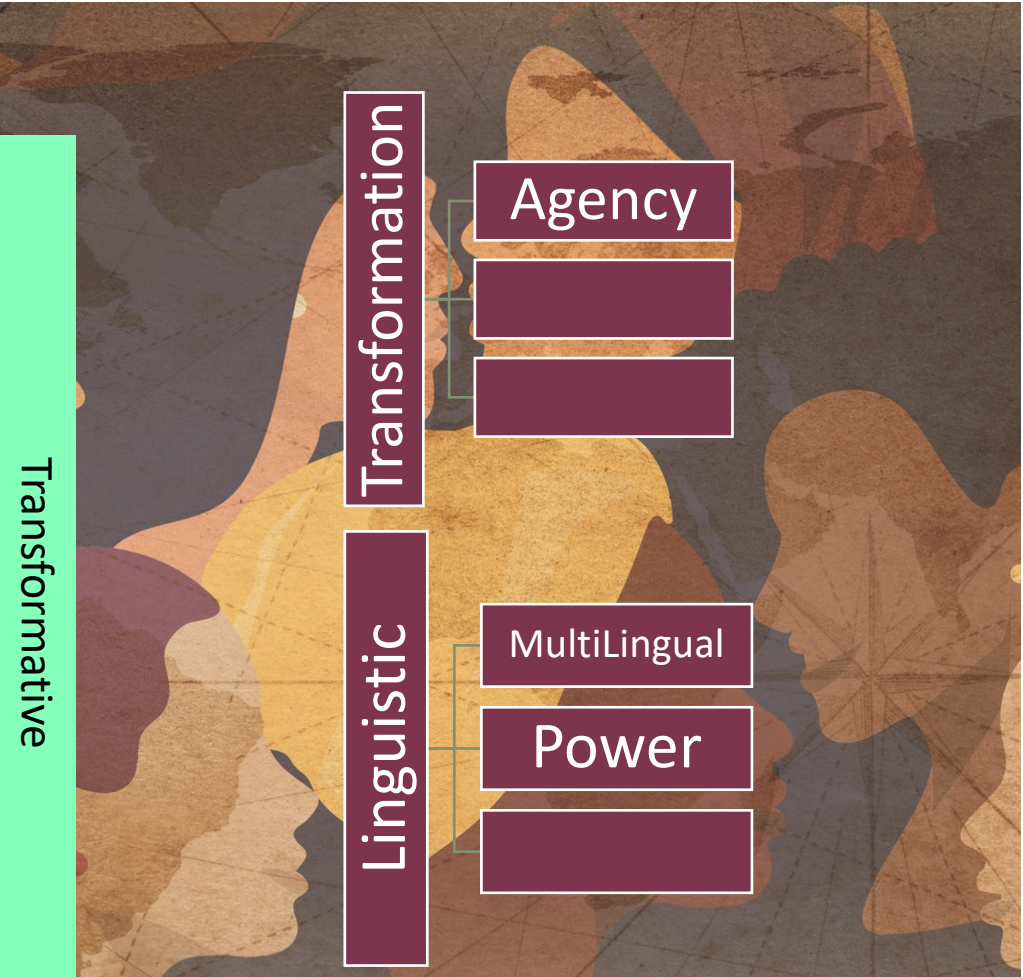
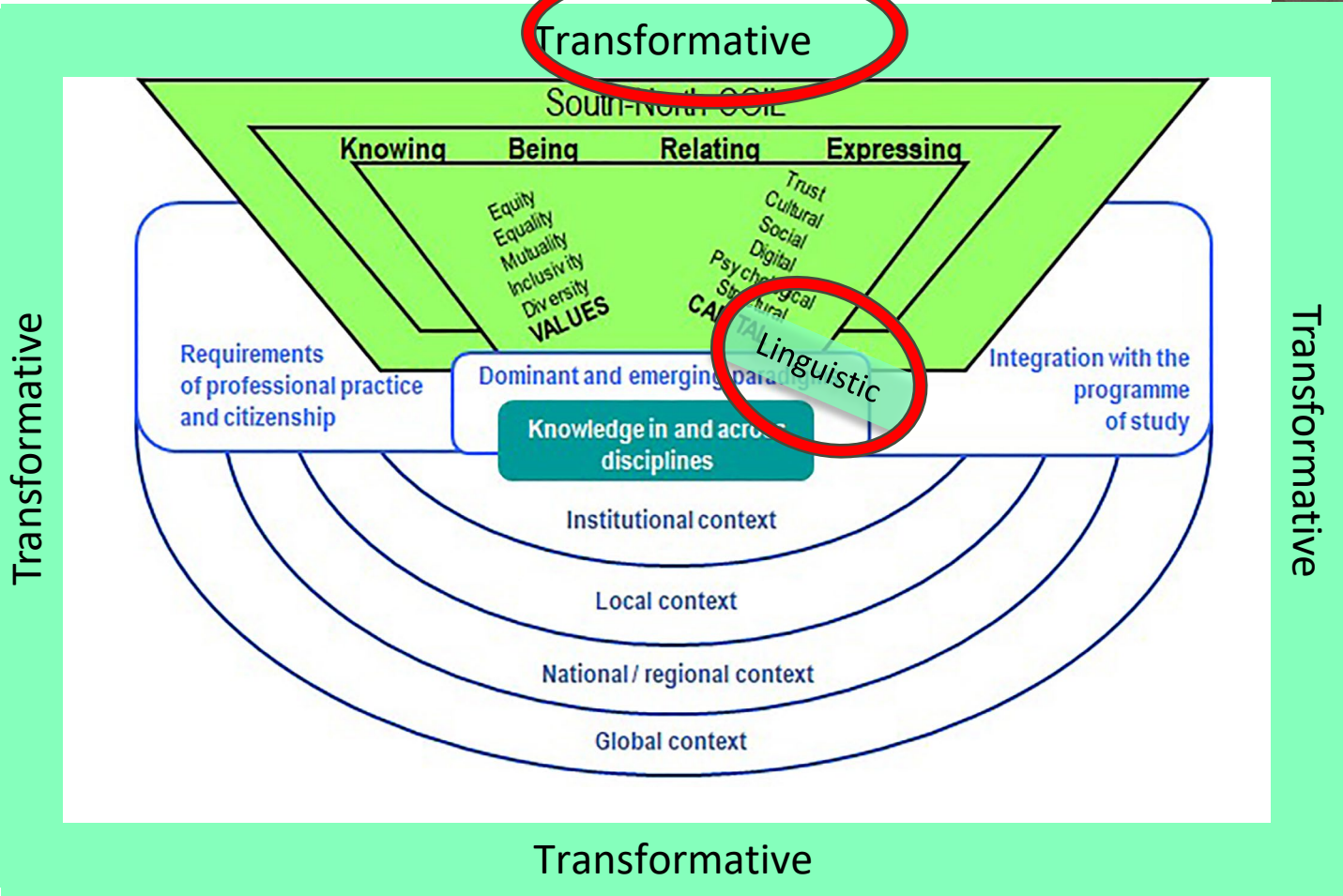


And
fac
op
frie
ba

I think the facilitators create a structure that allowed for balanced contributions from the various participants because we had ample time and opportunity to give and to share our insights

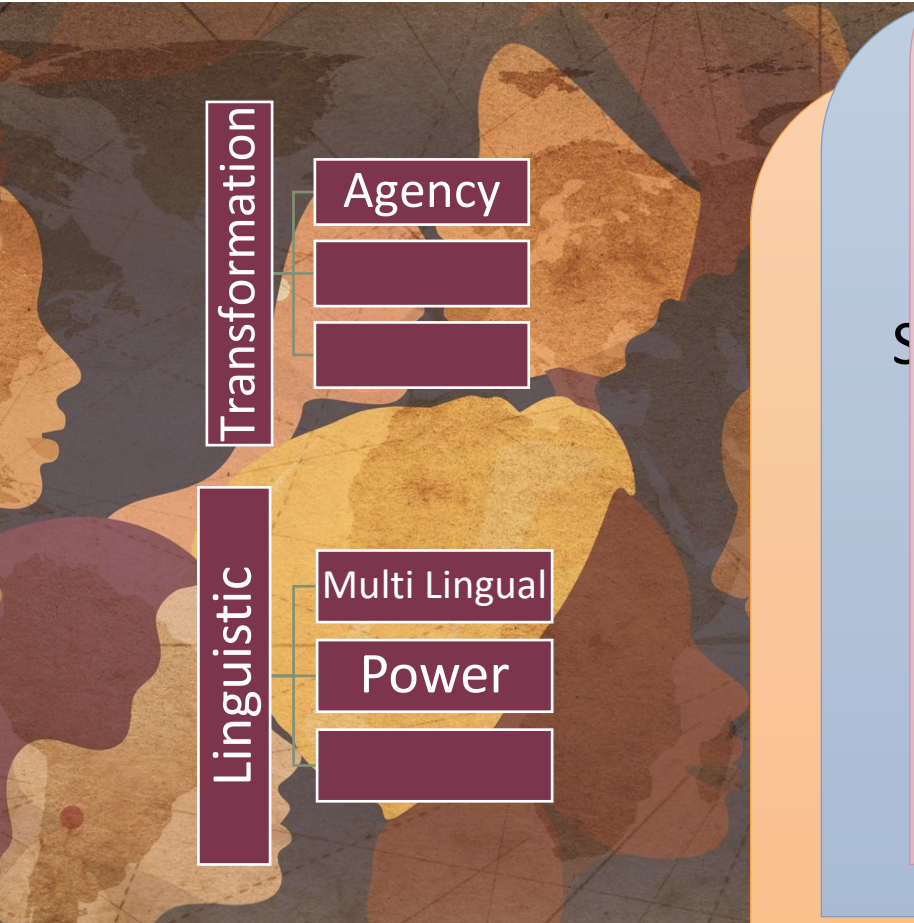
What I also felt was very inclusive for me was the fact that the facilitators almost participated hand in hand with us, because for some of us it was a first experience. It was almost as if they were like right there beside us, taking our hand and leading us into this unfamiliar space, if you want

Emerging concepts from student voices



Wimpenny, et al. (2022) building on Leask & Bridge (2013)

Student Voice



I mean, you can always try, you know, speaking English with anyone. It's okay. I mean, you have your own accent and it's okay. So yeah, it was very, you know, encouraging for someone like me, international student that you can try it with anyone. You have nothing to be, you know, embarrassed about or you don't have to hesitate

'Old' and **emerging** values and capitals and emerging (E) possibilities/themes

(V): V1 Equity, V2 Equality, V3 Mutuality, V4 Inclusivity, V5 Diversity

(C): C1 Trust, C2 Cultural, C3 Social, C4 Digital, C5 Psychological, 6 Structural. Two extra capitals also emerged: C7 **Linguistic** and C8 **Agency/Autonomy**.

(E): E1. Empowering; E2. Innovation/Innovative; E3. Transformative; E4. Challenging/challenges.



E3Transformative/C7Linguistic: example

In the beginning when I learned that we would interact with international students from Coventry in the COIL I panicked. But then, as the COIL progressed and I realised that most of them were international students who, like me, spoke English as a foreign language, I felt more confident... and in the end of the project I was already very confident in my capacity to speak to other people in English! As a teacher, this transformed my way of seeing myself and now I can tell my students that they can do it too! (BR5)



E4 Challenging/Challenges

Accessibility/Timing:

BR3- autistic spectrum disorder (ASD):

academic staff managing COIL projects should make use of features such as captions in synchronous online sessions and scaffold the COIL experience with other resources (e.g. prior distribution of relevant texts and materials before the live sessions) to prevent information overload, as neurodivergent students can find the COIL experience overwhelming otherwise

Awareness of structural capital (C7), psychological capital (C5), and the necessity of academic staff facilitating COIL to have heightened awareness of the intersectional needs of learners

Considerations of how 'space' directly impacts on students' ability to take part in the virtual (inter)actions as individuals and as group members.



But also positive: (socio)material (as mutually shaped by technology and contexts which are mediated by educators and learners)

COIL [...] transforms the traditional classroom into a global space.[...] it serves as a central hub, where diverse learners interact, share perspectives and collectively contribute to a shared pool of knowledge (UK5, addressing V5 – diversity - too).

Muslim participants felt they could remove their hijabs and speak freely in the Breakout Rooms (BR2)

As a mother I felt safe and able to breastfeed my baby while also knowledge-sharing on ELT (BR1)

[+ ice-breaker objects to represent the COIL experience brought to the interview: e.g. a Globe, a poem, a passport, a drawing of different women, a picture provided by the Chinese partner, the drawing of different types of apples]



Overall positives

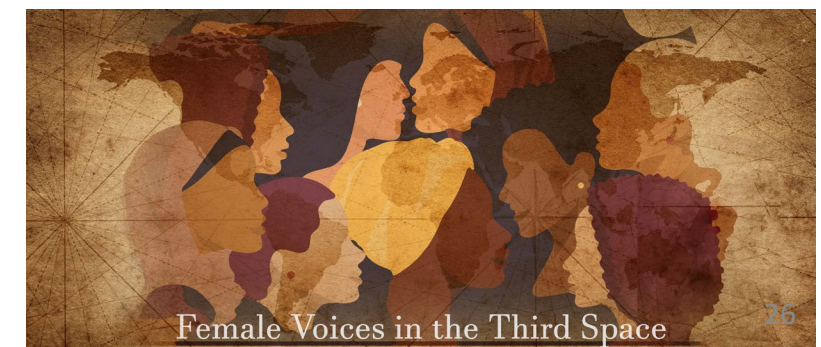
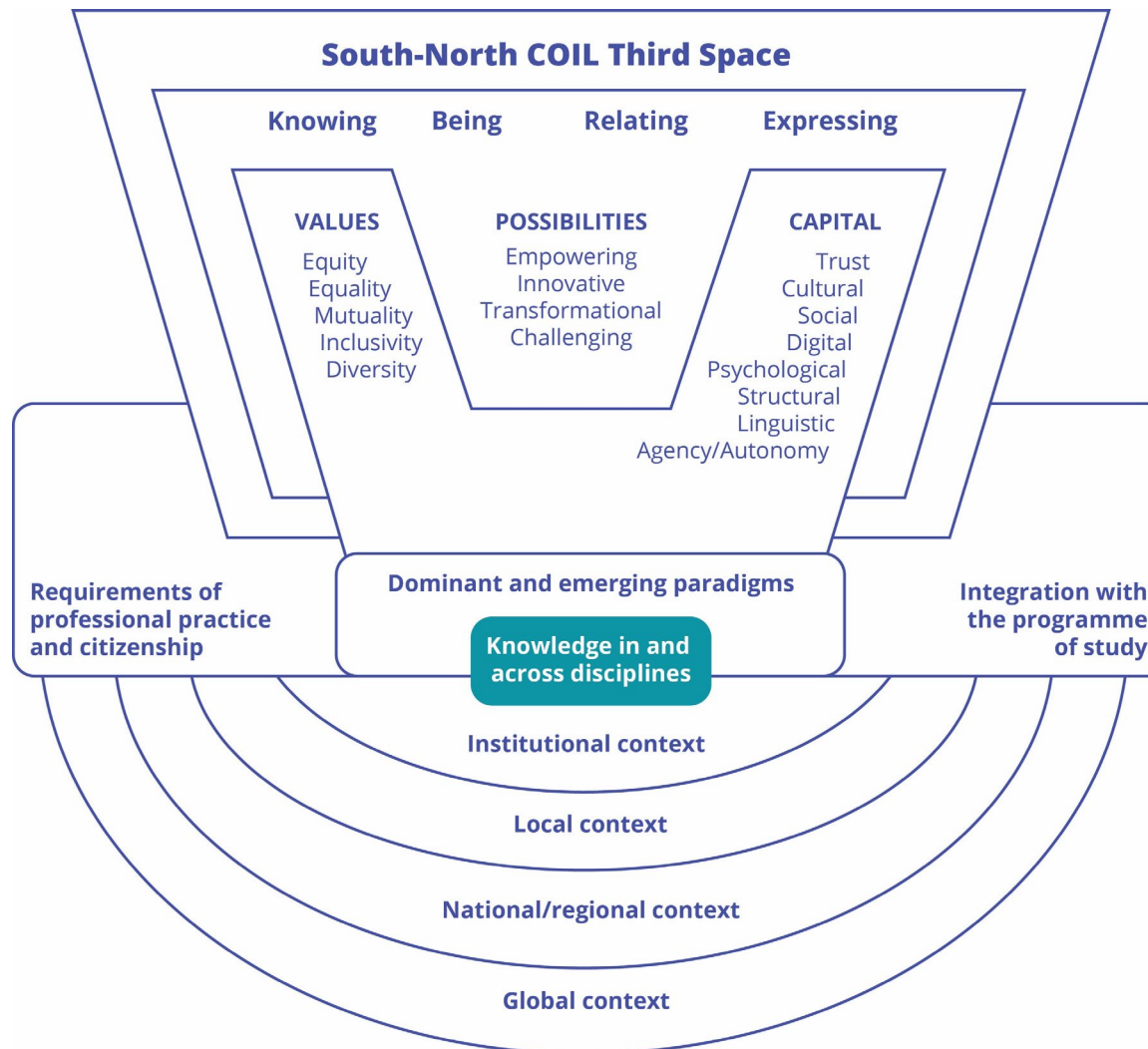
Participants spoke about their relief and joy in being heard and valued
Rather than misunderstood, mis-interpreted, and/or unheard/silenced
in the COIL Third Space

Findings validate COIL can foster the Values and Capitals in our
conceptualisation, but C7 Linguistic and C8 Agency/Autonomy needed
to be added

The 'space' lens (connected, embodied, relational and sociomaterial)
highlighted the new the 'E' possibilities dimension:
empowering, innovative, transformative,
challenging



Edited framework



Future directions

- More interview with students
- More interview with staff
- Comparing staff/students results
- Refining/revisiting of our conceptual framework



Questions?

The
British
Academy

Coventry
University

UFS

UFS



References

- Andreotti, V., Stein, S., Sutherland, A., Pashby, K. L., Susa, R., & Amsler, S. (2018). Mobilising different conversations about global justice in education: toward alternative futures in uncertain times. *Policy & practice: A development education review*, 26, 9-41. Bhabha, H. K. (1994). The location of culture. London: Routledge.
- Guimarães, F. F., Mendes, A. R. M., Rodrigues, L. M., dos Santos Paiva, R. S., & Finardi, K. R. (2019). Internationalization at home, COIL and intercomprehension: for more inclusive activities in the global south. *SFU Educational Review*, 12(3), 90-109.
- Leask, B., & Bridge, C. (2013). Comparing internationalisation of the curriculum in action across disciplines: theoretical and practical perspectives. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 43(1), 79–101.
- Stein, S., & Andreotti, V. (2021). Global citizenship otherwise. In *Conversations on Global Citizenship Education* (pp. 13-36). Routledge.
- Hermanns, M. & Mastel-Smith, B. (2012). Caregiving: A Qualitative Concept Analysis, *The Qualitative Report*, 17 (75) 1-18.
- Hagenmeier, C.C.A. (2021). *Equality in Higher Education Partnerships: Defining the Concept in Divergent Contexts*. PhD Thesis: University of Cape Town, South Africa <https://open.uct.ac.za/handle/11427/35623>
- Orsini-Jones, M. Jacobs, L., Finardi, K. and Wimpenny, K. (forthcoming, in press) Collaborative Online International Learning in a Postdigital Connected, Embodied, Relational & (Socio) Material Third Space: Female Voices. In S. Marshall, S. Elkington & S. Dickinson (Eds.) Special Issue on “Reimagining Higher Education Learning Spaces: Assembling Theory, Methods, and Practice”. *Higher Education Research Development (details TBC)*.
- Wimpenny, K. Finardi, K., Orsini-Jones, M. & Jacobs, L. (2022). Knowing, Being, Relating and Expressing through Global South-North Third Space COIL: Digital Inclusion and Equity in International Higher Education. *Journal of Studies in International Education: Special Issue on Digitalisation*, 26(2), 279-296

