Decolonisation for International students?

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Background

Understanding my positionality

International students

Rational

Decolonisation

International students are always out of frame despite the population.

- EDI is only for Home Students, and there seems to be a blind spot
- Half of the students are international, but are not included in the process
- Similar challenges occurred each year
- The framework of Decolonisation allows for a critical examination of how knowledge, power, and legitimacy are organised
- conscious choice not to take actions unless you identify the issue

Equality
Diversity
Inclusion
in ground level

Positionality of international students

Research Design
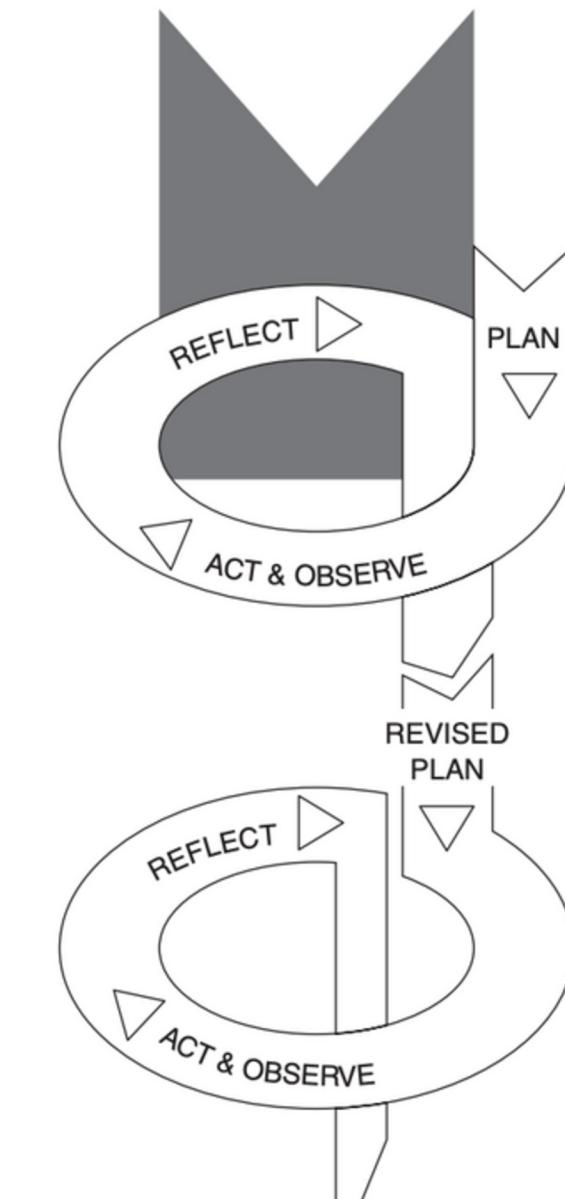
FIGURE 1.1 *Kemmis and McTaggart's action research spiral*

MY

action Research cycle.

Define Question

Review Reflect

Redesign my interaction attitude in class.

interview

Collect Data

more literature

monitor evaluate

implement changes

understand better small changes in my action.
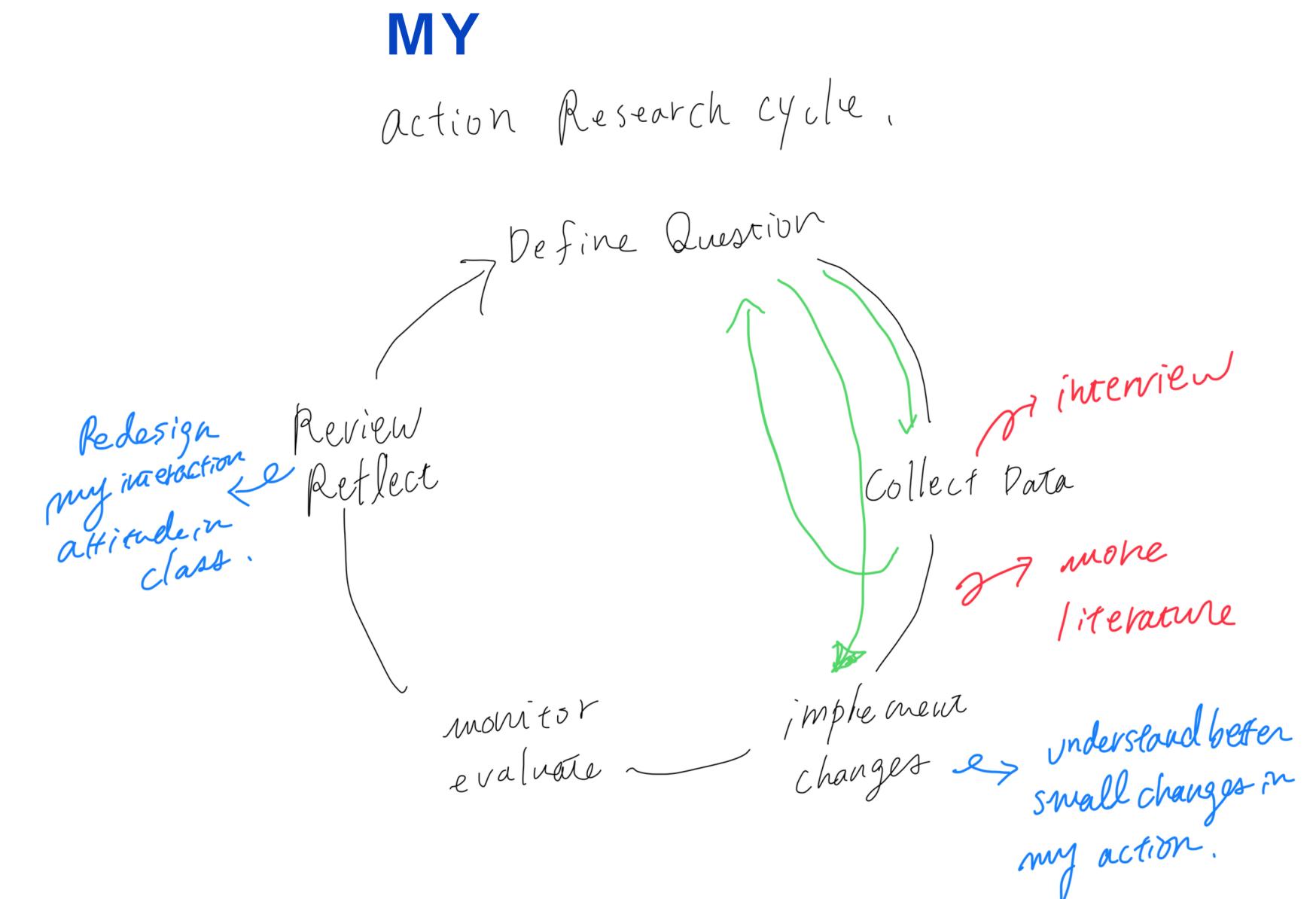
Interview

UNDERSTANDING THE EXPERIENCE OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

PARTICIPANTS
3 International students whose first language is not English in the performance course (MA)
1 member of academic staff who studied the course as an international student.

ETHICS

STRUCTURE

LIMITATIONS

Question Example

- SCHOOL LIFE AS AN INTERNATIONAL STUDENT
- MOTIVATION OF STUDY
- COURSE CONTENT
- CLASSROOM CULTURE
- EXPERIENCE OF INTERNATIONAL MARGINALISED STUDENTS AS A STAFF MEMBER
- CARRICULUM

Data example

DIFFICULT TO DISTINGUISH

HIGHLIGHT 1: GENERAL APPRECIATION OF THE STATEMENT
Students appreciate that the institution's status on diversity matters, but it is not their direct experience.

HIGHLIGHT 2: EXCLUSION
"I was always serious in meetings because I couldn't follow the jokes or conversation. I felt excluded."

HIGHLIGHT 3: CULTURAL BARRIERS
"I sometimes feel invisible, not because of language, but because I don't speak first."
"Students are afraid to ask someone to slow down, because no one else does, and they don't want to be the problem."

HIGHLIGHT 4: STAFF EDUCATION
"Even when Asian students are good, they can go unnoticed if they're quiet or their names are unfamiliar."
"Staff don't know where the capital of China or Korea"

What is Decolonisation

- **SELF-GOVERNING NATION-STATES**
- **ECONOMIC SOVEREIGNTY**
- **PSYCHOLOGICAL SOVEREIGNTY**
- **WARNING OF REPRODUCING
   COLONIAL POWER**

The Wretched of the Earth by Franz Fanon (1961)
Decolonization: A Brief History of the Word by Raymond F. Betts

Decolonisation and University

Mbembe, A. J. (2016) 'Decolonizing the university: New directions', Arts and Humanities in Higher Education
Ahmed, S. (2012) 'Introduction: On Arrival', in On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life.
Chen, K.-H. (2010) Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization.

KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION, ELITIST STRUCTURES, ACCESSIBILITY, CLASSROOM CULTURE, AUTHORITATIVE AND HIERARCHICAL SYSTEMS, AND THE COMMODIFICATION OF EDUCATION, ETC...

DECENTRALISATION: WESTERN IS NOT UNIVERSAL

DO NOT USE VERY LIGHTLY

Why so many international students in the UK?
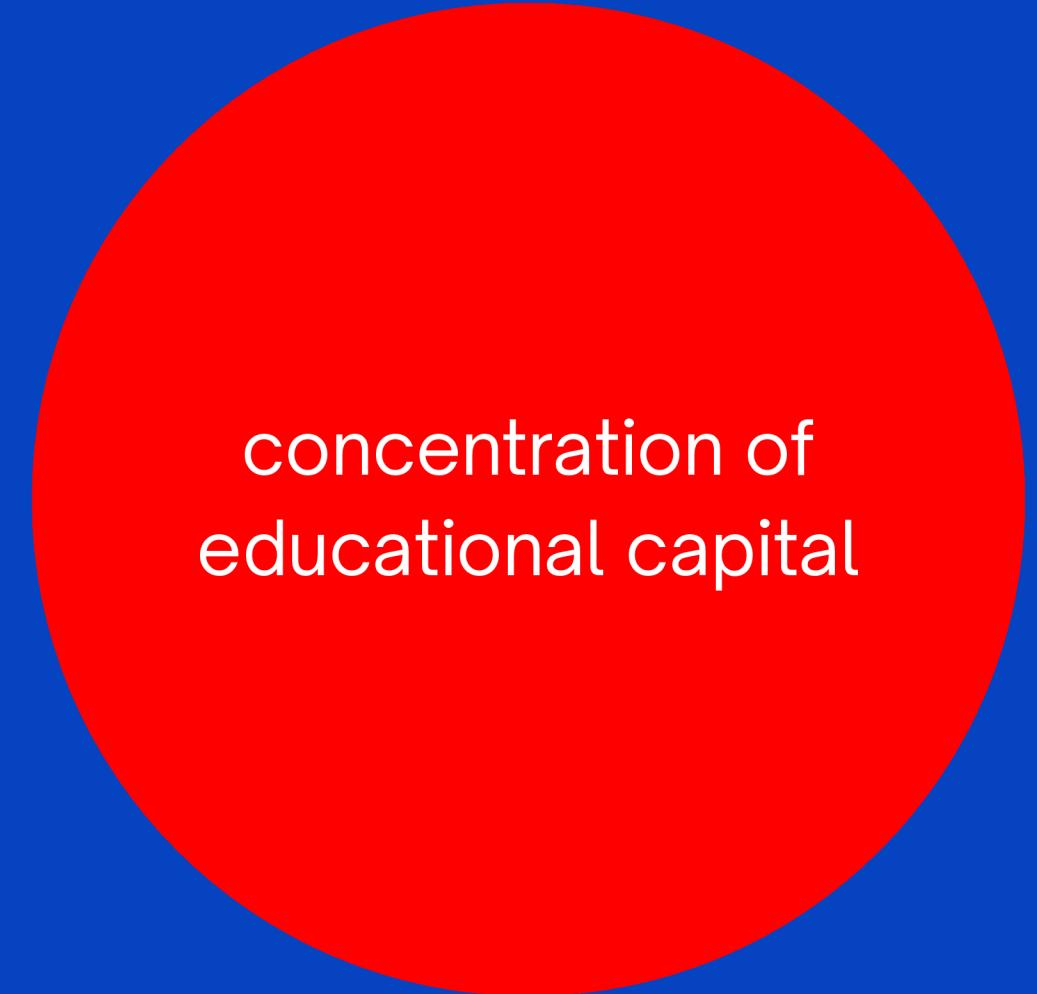
concentration of educational capital

Market Driven Model

- drop in state funding since 2011
- 58% of income is from international students

House of Commons Library (2024) The Post-11 July 2024 general election: A guide to the results. Research Briefing 10037
University of the Arts London (2025) Report and financial statements for the year ended 31 July 2025

re–focus

It is about inclusivity... the bigger framework is Decolonisation, but they are not the same.

- Can International students be meaningfully included in decolonisation discourses within the UK?
- How can institutions become more inclusive of those who study in the UK temporarily?

Key Findings

- **IMPLEMENTATION GAP SEEMS REAL**

- **SMALL ATTENTION MAKES A CHANGE**

- **MINORITY INSIDE MINORITY**

- **BIAS ON INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

- **THE STAFF MEMBER NEEDS MORE GENERAL EDUCATION ON OTHER CULTURES**

- **LAYERS OF CHALLENGES, FROM NEO-CAPITALISM TO THE CLASSROOM**

improvements

- lack of focus
- clear structure
- clear action plan

What's now?

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Method
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Thank you!