

Exploring emotions in international student engagement and learning

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Despite growing recognition of the importance of emotions in education, the role of academic emotions in the learning of international students remains under-researched. This paper introduces key educational psychological, sociocultural and poststructuralist approaches to emotions in educational contexts, and discusses different methodological considerations. Within the context of changing views towards international students, it then reviews the scant literature on international student emotions in learning. Finally, it offers a range of practices to enhance positive academic emotions for international students in Australia, as well as possibilities for further research.

Key Words: emotions, international students, engagement, learning.

1. Introduction

International student wellbeing has recently emerged as a major concern in the higher education sector, with university students (as a collective group) being identified as a high-risk population for psychological stress as compared to the general population (Stallman, 2010). Specifically, in relation to international students, numerous studies over the years have suggested high levels of anxiety, stress, loneliness and the need for belonging (Andrade, 2006; Sawir et al., 2008). While similar transitional challenges may be experienced by both domestic and international students (such as academic pressures, financial issues, changing relationships, and anxiety about the unknown), international students are likely to have additional unique pressures related especially to academic language and culture (Forbes-Mewett & Sawyer, 2016; Prieto-Welch, 2016).

It is also apparent that in order to fully support the success of international students, universities need to consider and respond to the role of emotions in international student engagement and learning. In fact, there has been growing recognition of the importance of emotions in education (see Pekrun & Schutz, 2007, for an overview), as well as ‘affective turns’ in areas such as the study of language learning (Pavlenko, 2013; Prior, 2019). However, while there are numerous references to emotions within the literature on international students (for example, Kettle, 2017; Ryan & Viète, 2009), an explicit focus on emotions in academic learning in this population remains under-researched.

Despite efforts to improve the on-campus experiences of international students, few studies appear to have connected with the growing literature around emotions in education specifically. This paper reviews a range of perspectives on emotions in education, before reviewing the scant literature on international student emotions in learning. The paper argues that research on international student emotions needs to build on research into academic emotions generally, as well as explore the specific and unique sociocultural factors and power relations that can either constrain or enable the emotional engagement of international students. Doing so has the potential to

increase understandings about the feelings that international students have about their study experiences and how these feelings and the contexts in which they occur, in turn shape and are shaped by their engagement in learning.

2. Perspectives on emotions in education

In recent years, the importance of emotions in human behaviour has been increasingly recognised. As Damasio (2003) points out, the separation of body and mind, and emotion and thought, which has dominated Western philosophy and psychology for centuries, is no longer compatible with contemporary understandings of the role of emotions in human cognition and learning. The study of emotions across a range of disciplines, has also led to myriad perspectives on this complex phenomenon. Within the human sciences, there is consensus that emotions are multicomponent systems with elements that include physiologically-based affective processes that are experienced as feelings; mental thoughts that accompany these feelings; motivational impulses to act; motor movements, such as facial expressions that communicate emotions to others; and appraisals that both evaluate and guide emotions (England, 2019; Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2014; Pekrun & Schutz, 2007). However, how emotions are seen to be manifested within individual lives and relationships situated in complex societies differs greatly according to the perspective taken.

Given the broad scope of emotions as a phenomenon and construct, it is not surprising that a wide range of interdisciplinary perspectives have emerged in the field of emotions in education, each with their own focus and approach. Within this interdisciplinary context, some researchers, such as Pekrun and Schutz (2007), have emphasised the importance of integrating perspectives, concepts and methods from a broad variety of disciplines including “the neurosciences, sociology, economics, cultural anthropology, history, and philosophy” (Pekrun & Schutz, 2007, p. 318). Others, like Schutz and Zembylas (2016), stress the importance of acknowledging the ontological, epistemological, methodological and ethical differences across perspectives. This paper focuses on three approaches that appear to be particularly illuminating for an exploration of international student emotions: educational psychological, sociocultural and poststructuralist. Although the differences between these approaches are made apparent in what follows, the purpose is to survey the different insights they afford, rather than to assert one approach over another.

The dominant approach in research on emotion in education involves a range of perspectives that can be referred to as educational psychological perspectives (following Schutz et al., 2009), which generally focus on the academic emotions of individual students in educational settings. Early educational psychological research was focused primarily on negative emotions in narrowly defined contexts, such as anxiety in test-taking (Pekrun & Schutz, 2007), but has since evolved to research a wide range of academic emotions in complex contexts.

A major contribution of educational psychological perspectives is the insight that multiple factors interact in complex ways in individual emotional experiences in education. This complexity has led to the development of theories that seek to explain these interactions, such as Pekrun’s (2006) control value theory. This theory defines academic emotions as those which are linked to learning, classroom practices and achievement, and investigates the “individual psychological processes embedded in the immediate educational environment such as a student group, class, or lecture” (Pekrun, 2019, p. 1810). The theory differentiates between emotion types across three dimensions – object focus (activity versus outcome emotions), levels of valence (positive or negative), and activation (activating or deactivating) – that affect the ways in which different emotions impact on students’ thinking, motivation, learning behaviours and their achievement (Pekrun, 2006). Under most activity conditions, positive activating emotions such as enjoyment lead to positive learning outcomes, whereas negative deactivating emotions, such as boredom, hinder learning (Pekrun, 2006). However, other interactions, such as activating negative emotions and deactivating positive emotions, are more variable (Pekrun et al., 2017). Task-focused emotions like enjoyment, relaxation, anxiety and boredom can either lead to engagement or disengagement, just as

outcomes-focused emotions like pride, contentment, shame or disappointment can lead to either engagement or disengagement with future tasks. For instance, activating negative emotions such as anxiety or frustration can either detract from learning by unhelpfully refocusing attention, or trigger greater learning investment in order to avoid future failure (Pekrun et al., 2017).

Numerous studies have highlighted the complexity of students' individual experiences of academic emotions and the myriad ways that the various factors intersect with each other to result (or not result) in engagement and learning. Drawing on Pekrun's control value theory, Kahu et al.'s (2015) investigation of the academic emotions of mature age students at an Australian university found that students' emotions connected to engagement in complex ways. For example, they found that anxiety, in combination with factors such as self-efficacy, resulted in differential outcomes among the student participants; where for some, anxiety was motivational, while for others it was paralysing. Ainley's (2007) exploration of the positive emotion of interest found that students who spend a class socialising with each other may be experiencing positive emotions but that this does not necessarily mean any learning is taking place. This illustrates that positive emotions do not necessarily always lead to positive learning outcomes. Other authors have highlighted the multiplicity of emotions in transitional experiences, such as Christie et al. (2008), who conceptualise non-traditional student transition as a 'rollercoaster of emotions' involving feelings of alienation as well as excitement.

Despite these complexities, educational psychological perspectives have also emphasised the importance of positive emotions in education. In contrast to the downward spiral of negative emotions suggested in earlier studies, research based on Fredrickson's (2004) 'broaden and build' theory has found evidence for an upward spiral of positive emotions. According to this theory, the experience of positive emotions helps learners to broaden their thought-action repertoires, which in turn, enables them to build enduring personal resources such as social support, resilience, skills and knowledge. This openness and expansion enhances their wellbeing, which in turn, leads to more frequent positive emotions. Support for Fredrickson's (2004) theory has been found in various contexts relevant to the study of international student emotions, including engagement (Kahu et al., 2015), university learning (Rowe et al., 2015), and language learning (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012; MacIntyre & Vincze, 2017; Oxford, 2015). For example, Kahu et al. (2015) found that "positive emotions have an upward spiralling effect, motivating exploration, broadening people's thought-action repertoires and leading to expansion of the self" (p. 488), with interest and enjoyment leading to perseverance (behavioural engagement) and deeper understanding (cognitive engagement).

To test theories about individual emotions with large numbers of students, educational psychological perspectives have predominantly used quantitative research methodologies. Although a wide range of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies have been used, quantitative approaches have tended to dominate the field so far (Lindblom-Ylänne, 2019). Since quantitative methodologies are well-suited to gathering large data sets analysable through statistical techniques (Walter, 2013), they are useful for testing hypotheses, establishing causality between variables, and making generalisations about emotions in education. Examples of quantitative methods in emotions in education include the development and validation of an Achievement Emotions Questionnaire in various contexts (Pekrun et al., 2011) and experiments to test the hypothesis that positive emotions broaden students thought-action repertoires (Frederickson & Branigan, 2005). However, as Schutz and DeCuir (2002) argue, 'variable-centred' methods can risk generating reductionist and decontextualized interpretations of how emotions are experienced. Furthermore, as Pekrun and Linnenbrink-Garcia (2012) note, how emotions are experienced can vary across cultures and situations and so universal conclusions can be difficult to make. The limitation of educational psychological perspectives to the classroom level has led to calls for exploration of influences beyond the classroom and even the university (Pekrun et al., 2019; Pekrun & Schutz, 2007; Schutz & DeCuir, 2002).

In fact, a range of sociocultural perspectives on emotions have explored the ways in which wider sociocultural influences determine the expression of individual emotions in learning. One influential model is Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological framework (Douglas Fir Group, 2016; Pekrun & Schutz, 2007; Schutz et al., 2007), which views learning as an ongoing process that occurs within "a complex social-historical contextual web" (Schutz et al., 2007, p. 225), with levels nested within one another, from the micro level of individual interactions to the macro level of ideological structures within cultures and societies. Significantly, each level "exists only through constant interaction with the others, such that each gives shape to and is shaped by the next" (Douglas Fir Group, 2016, p. 25). At the micro level, students draw on "neurological mechanisms and cognitive and emotional capacities" to interact with peers and teachers (Douglas Fir Group, 2016, p. 24). These interactions are nested within a meso level (including schools and universities and other institutions and communities), which greatly influences the kinds of interactions that occur:

Importantly, the institutions and communities at the meso level are powerfully characterized by pervasive social conditions (e.g., economic, cultural, religious, political), which affect the possibility and nature of persons creating social identities in terms of investment, agency, and power. Together, these institutions, communities, conditions, and possible identities provide or restrict access to particular types of social experiences (Douglas Fir Group, 2016, p. 24).

Finally, this mesosystem is itself nested within a macrosystem, which includes larger society-level ideologies, beliefs and values. Ratner (2007) argues that such higher-level factors shape emotions to the extent that "cultural emotions are the basic form of human emotions" (p. 103). Rather than assuming that 'basic emotions' such as anxiety and interest will naturally occur, Ratner argues that the form, content and expression of emotions is always culturally determined; therefore, the way these emotions are felt and expressed may differ greatly across different cultures.

While sociocultural perspectives articulate the existence of interactions across sociocultural levels and the cultural differences that result, they may not articulate the power relations that constrain or enable these interactions to occur. However, a range of poststructuralist sociopolitical perspectives on emotions in education have more explicitly explored the ways in which emotions are implicated in issues of agency, power, and identity. Within these perspectives, classrooms are viewed as political spaces in which sociohistoric norms determine how emotions are conceived and how they are expressed (Ahmed, 2014; Benesch, 2019; Zembylas, 2005; Zembylas, 2007a). The focus of this perspective is to highlight the historical and current forces impinging on the contexts in which individuals are acting, how these forces shape their experiences, and how emotions mediate the power relations between the subject and other actors in the particular social context (Ahmed, 2014; Zembylas, 2012). What emotions 'do', especially in contexts of unequal power relations, is more important than what they 'are'. According to Ahmed (2014), "emotions are not 'in' either the individual or the social but produce the very surfaces and boundaries that allow the individual and the social to be delineated as if they are objects" (p. 10). This conception of emotions is especially pertinent in research contexts involving marginalised or minority groups who are interacting with others in contexts where substantial differences in power relations are evident.

Poststructuralist approaches are not only concerned with the limitations brought by power relations, but also the openings they enable. Following both Spinoza and Deleuze, Zembylas (2007b, 2007c, 2007d) develops such a view of emotions in terms of *affects* and *becomings*. Deleuze and Guattari (1988, p. xvi) explain the concept of *affect*, which they draw from Spinoza, as the ways in which bodies affect one another - their 'ability to affect and be affected' - that either diminish or expand their capacities through an open-ended process of becoming. The concept of *becoming* concerns the way in which bodies mutually evolve in unpredictable ways, as each "changes its

nature as it expands its connections” (Deleuze & Guattari 1988, p. 8). According to Deleuze, the important question for Spinoza is “what can a body do, of what affects is it capable?” (as cited in Deleuze & Parnet 1987, p. 60), but this capacity is always dependent on interactions with other bodies. Therefore, an important question about all of the interactions in education, is “what connections they do (or do not) permit, what enables teachers and students to feel, to desire, to have disappointments and fulfilments” (Zembylas, 2007b, p. 28). Hence, also the importance of creating the space for affective connections that enable both desire and freedom.

Poststructuralist approaches reject the premise that there is one universal objective reality that can be uncovered through controlled research, that emotions reside within the body and mind of the individual, and that they exist in the real world as a universal reality (Schutz & Zembylas, 2016). There is no single ‘truth’ of academic emotions that can be measured and concluded, and knowledge is subject to change and bound up in the meanings that people attach to the concepts being explored within particular social, cultural and political contexts (Schutz & DeCuir, 2002). In terms of research on emotions, sociocultural and poststructuralist approaches stress that there can be multiple truths constructed (as opposed to ‘discovered’) about emotional phenomena. They therefore focus less on emotions ‘within’ students, and more on the co-construction of meaning between particular people in situated contexts, who are also affected by their own histories and by local, national and international discourses.

To explore student emotions in complex contexts, sociocultural and poststructuralist approaches have tended to use qualitative research methods. Qualitative methodologies are typically best suited to exploring in depth the perceptions of small numbers of people in naturalistic situated contexts, producing in-depth analyses of findings and acknowledging diversity of experience across contexts (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000; Kahu, 2013; Pekrun & Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2014). For example, in-depth interviews with students on how they make sense of their emotional experiences at university can reveal rich insights into the complexities of these experiences. Kahu et al.’s (2015) investigation of the academic emotions of mature age students is a good example of such research in which in-depth interviews reveal both the complex reciprocal influence of student emotions and engagement or disengagement patterns, as well as complex interaction between student and university factors.

3. International student emotions

Before reviewing the scant references to international student emotions in the literature, it is worth considering the broad context in which this research has taken place. Kettle (2017) gives a brief overview of how international students in Australia have been perceived in the literature over the last 30 years or so. These views have reflected, and in turn have influenced, Australian university policies affecting international students and the attitudes and pedagogies of discipline specialist lecturers, as well as academic learning and language support staff regarding students who use English as an Additional Language (EAL). Kettle (2017) uses the metaphor of successive ocean waves arriving on a beach to suggest that a particular view may be dominant during one period of time and may then be subsumed by another view but still contain traces of the earlier views. The dominant view in the first wave, as exemplified by Ballard and Clanchy (1991), was that international university students in Australia lacked academic language and learning skills and needed remediation. The perspective of the second wave was to reject this deficit view and value the different cultures of international students. This view proposed that international students arriving in Australia could adapt to a new context if the implicit assumptions of everyday social practices and behaviours of various cultures were made more explicit, recognised as different but seen as valuable and not deficient. Chalmers and Volet (1997) challenged stereotyped views of ‘Asian’ learners at Australian universities as quiet and shy. They argued that given a supportive context, international students could actively contribute and engage in classes and adapt to the new cultural space. The third wave, influenced by post-structuralist views, focused on the power

relations between educational institutions and students: how institutions impose particular, usually dominant, forms of knowledge and ways of discovering, creating and communicating knowledge on students. In this way, dominant cultures are maintained, while others are marginalised and undervalued. Kettle (2017) proposes that currently a fourth wave is emerging from the literature, focusing on students themselves as the key agents of engagement in their new educational environment. Students cannot resist all the forces of the dominant discourses, but they do have agency and can resist these forces to some extent. The fourth wave places the student at the centre of the research, rather than the institution, the course, or the pedagogy, while still acknowledging the important influences of these elements. Within this historical context, research on international student emotions can be related to different views of the roles emotions have played in their experiences.

While a range of emotions are mentioned in the literature on international students, these tend to be mostly negative and reinforce common views of international students predominantly struggling in their experiences. Corresponding to Kettle's first wave, international students' supposedly 'non-normative' knowledge of English language and mainstream dominant culture has been viewed as deficient (Leki, 2001). Consequently, language proficiency, especially 'linguistic competence', has been reported as a major source of anxiety for many international students, particularly in the initial period after arriving in the host country. For example, Brown (2008) outlines students' feelings of anxiety, shame and inferiority about their linguistic capabilities in both their academic and social environments. Brown and Holloway (2008) found that stress was greatest for international students soon after arriving in the host country at their university when they were facing the combined challenges of an unfamiliar social and academic context, using an unfamiliar language, and suffering from homesickness. Despite great support for Fredrickson's (2004) broaden-and-build theory in the field of language learning and teaching (Dewaele & MacIntyre, 2014; MacIntyre & Gregersen, 2012; MacIntyre & Vincze, 2017; Oxford, 2015), the role of positive emotions seems to be much less frequently addressed in literature specifically related to international students.

On the other hand, some studies of international students, reflecting Kettle's third and fourth waves, have suggested the way in which power relations and the power of discourse have affected international student emotions. Ryan and Viete (2009) discuss from a critical contextual perspective, international students' feelings of vulnerability and powerlessness in not feeling heard by teachers or classmates. They offer an analysis of how language practices can perpetuate particular power relationships to silence or empower certain voices. In this way, it is not the international students' language use in and of itself that results in the negative student emotions, but how it plays out in the social context to certain effects. As described by Freire's (1996) concept of internalised oppression, such power dynamics may cause international students to, over time, believe the prejudices and stereotypes made by the dominant group in ways that produce those feelings of shame and inferiority about the expression of their identity. Associated with this idea is the generative power of discourse and the very real consequences associated for both dominant and marginalised groups, given the capacity of discourse to mediate and shape student experience. For example, if students feel that their university considers them deficient, there is an associated loss of self-esteem and confidence that can impact their transition and engagement experiences (Stagg & Kimmins, 2014). If, then, the research we conduct about international students repeatedly constructs them as victims or as lacking in critical thinking, language and participation skills (for example), the power relationships that are shaped through such a discourse and reproduced through the media, peers, teachers and classroom practices may lead to the very emotions among international students (such as shame, isolation and anxiety) that reciprocally produce those very disengagement behaviours (Ryan & Viete, 2009).

Other studies of international student emotions have explored the ways in which culturally situated feelings can both constrain students and teachers, as well as open up new opportunities. Ahmed's (2014) concept of 'sticky objects' that engender strong and often conflicting emotions in different people has been applied to phenomena such as plagiarism (Prior, 2019), which can lead to both anger in academics and anxiety in students. Ahmed (2014) views emotions as an interface *between* people and particular social phenomena ('sticky objects') in situated social contexts, rather than focusing on emotions as processes *within* individuals. According to Ahmed, an object becomes "sticky with affect through repetition" (Benesch, 2019, p. 531) in the dominant discourses and, in this way, it becomes a generally accepted truth. An example of a 'sticky object', as examined by Benesch (2018), is an American university policy designed to deter 'plagiarism' by English language learners. The policy triggers 'emotion labour' by the English language teachers at the university as they struggle to reconcile their pedagogical principles and positive relationships with their students with the punitive rules of the policy. Consequently, the teachers collectively resist the policy. Through the process of becoming sticky, the plagiarism policy becomes a site of resistance, but ultimately a site of transformation as the collective emotional force of the teachers identify an issue that requires change (Benesch, 2018).

Hochschild's (1983/2012) concepts of 'feeling rules' (implicit rules determining which emotions are allowed to be displayed in a particular context) and 'emotion labour' (the work involved by the subjects to self-regulate to conform to the 'feeling rules'), have also been used as tools to explore how and why emotions arise in particular social contexts. Liu (2016) provides an example through the experiences of a teacher of English as an additional language working in a pre-sessional English language centre at a UK university. The teacher speaks English as an additional language herself. Liu recounts and analyses how the teacher as well as her students grappled with the 'feeling rules' and the 'emotion labour' they experienced in that context. The study focuses on the unspoken power of the 'feeling rules' which had long been established by the more senior staff members of the language centre, and on the struggles of the teacher and the students in conforming to these 'rules' ('emotional labour') since they both were accustomed to different rules in the educational institutions they had grown up with. Exploring 'academic emotions' in this way tends to focus less on the individual and more on how power relations, cultures and histories of all the actors are implicated in a teaching and learning setting and, importantly, how making the implicit explicit, can be transformational for all.

4. Discussion and suggestions for practice and research

Academic emotions have a large impact on international student transition, engagement and learning. Insights into student emotional experiences have the potential to greatly enhance teaching and learning practices, as well as the support and advice given to students about their own responses to learning experiences.

Some of the implications of the perspectives reviewed above for practice and research involving international student emotions include:

1. *Fostering positive emotions*: Educators play an influential role in shaping class conditions in ways that can stimulate (or not stimulate) the experience of positive emotions among students. By focusing on the positives and emphasising growth, practitioners are more able to cultivate the learning contexts that support development more effectively and reject deficit thinking (Ryan & Viete, 2009). This can be facilitated through strategies such as designing interactive lessons that incorporate opportunities for student ownership, creating safe classroom environments, and promoting student-to-student interaction through well-structured collaborative activities (Rowe et al., 2015).
2. *Fostering emotional intelligence*: In conjunction with creating positive learning contexts on a meso to macro level, educators can also help teach emotional regulation skills to students on a micro level. The field of positive psychology offers numerous techniques

that can be easily transferred to a classroom context (Oxford, 2015). This may include discussions or activities on the different types of emotions, how to recognise them when they occur, how emotions can have multiple functions, and ways of responding to different emotions (for example, mitigating harmful levels of stress).

3. *Exploring emotions at multiple levels*: More research is needed from a variety of perspectives that conceptualise academic emotions from different angles. Whilst emotions can be thought of as internal biophysiological processes, they are also contextual at many levels (shaped by specific cultures, social environments, identities, politics and histories) (Ahmed, 2014; Prior, 2019). This underscores the need for studying international student emotions at different levels of analysis, in different socio-cultural-temporal contexts, with different people (students and staff) and from different theoretical perspectives to create a richer tapestry of understanding.
4. *Fostering sociocultural awareness*: The rich histories, cultures, linguistic repertoires and individual experiences of multilingual students, teachers and other staff can be explicitly valued by being formally included in the curriculum. The large diversity of implicit cultural conventions in different cultures that accompany linguistic expression can be taught explicitly and discussed openly. These can include how and when to express (or not express) emotions in different contexts, or how to interrupt or question a speaker without causing offence (Swain, 2013).
5. *Transforming power relations*: The rules and dynamics of power relations in educational contexts are rarely made explicit or questioned by students or teachers. Raising awareness of the established 'feeling rules' (Hochschild, 1983/2012) in these contexts has the potential to empower marginalised participants to question these rules and the values underpinning them. Articulating and critically examining implicit rules of conduct can encourage more awareness and acceptance of multiple (especially minority) ways of knowing, feeling, behaving and communicating, and so potentially reduce existing power differentials between participants.
6. *Helping students to navigate sticky objects through adequate ideas*: Inadequate ideas and understandings about 'sticky objects' (Ahmed, 2014) such as plagiarism and critical feedback can lead to negative emotions for international students, such as stress, anxiety, confusion and doubt, and diminish their power to act (Prior, 2019). Connecting with these emotions, as well as helping students to develop adequate ideas about these 'sticky objects', can increase their positive emotions, their capacities and their self-efficacy.
7. *Creating spaces for affects and becomings*: Educators can create spaces for affects and becomings in their teaching by deliberately providing opportunities and designing tasks for international students to express their emotions, both in relation to their interests and ambitions, as well as the passions and conflicts in their lives and their learning (Swain, 2013; Gale & Parker, 2014). Valuing diversity and different ways of knowing and saying, can enable international students to develop their multilingual identities (Ryan & Viete, 2009).

As discussed above, both quantitative and qualitative methodologies have benefits and limitations in relation to researching emotions in education, and therefore a variety of methods should be used to explore international student emotions. Research on international student emotions can build on recent quantitative research into academic emotions, such as Pekrun's (2006) control value theory and tools like the Achievement Emotions Questionnaire (Pekrun et al., 2011). However, since this is a new area of research with unique sociocultural and sociopolitical factors influencing international student emotions, qualitative methodologies are well suited to research exploring the social factors and power relations that are specific to international students. A rich research agenda and educational interventions in this area will be of great benefit to students, teachers and higher education institutions alike.

5. Conclusion

Research into international student emotions needs to embrace the complexity of this multi-faceted phenomenon to advance as a field of study. The experience of academic emotions is complex for all students, and for international students there is an added layer of complexity that may shape these emotions in unique ways. All students experience a broad range of emotions during their studies, both positive and negative, in which multiple interacting factors determine both the emotions that occur in relation to tasks and outcomes, and the impact of these emotions on their engagement and learning. Research into international student emotions needs to fully comprehend these dynamics, without being limited to particular areas of focus, such as negative emotions associated with perceptions of a deficit in skills development.

On the other hand, this research also needs to investigate the distinctive sociocultural and sociopolitical factors involved in international students engaging with new academic cultures, and the reciprocal influences between these emotions and students' learning experiences. The impact of sociocultural differences needs to be explored in terms of emotional engagement, not just in terms of student academic practices and learning styles. Finally, research on international student emotions needs to explore the power relations that international students become entangled in, both in terms of the challenges these bring, as well as opportunities for agency and becoming. These relationships are enmeshed in and revolve around 'sticky objects' like English language proficiency, academic integrity, and the feeling rules that influence how all actors, including international students and their peers, teachers, and domestic students relate with one another. They are also opportunities for greater mutual understanding and growth.

Gaining insights into international student emotions has much to contribute to how we understand and respond to international students' engagement and learning experiences. With so much to explore, we echo calls for a pluralistic approach that is both guided by the emerging broader field of emotions in education and responsive to the specific factors influencing this unique context.

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