Dear Melinda,

The following is our letter of reconciliation addressing the key areas of feedback from reviewers A, B, and C.

Thank you,

Dr Briony Supple

Dr Joseph Agbenyega

**Reviewer A:**

The concerns that arise for this reviewer pertain to the methodology. It isn’t clear what follow-up was done to maximize the clarity of the voice of the student. The reader is not always sure of the context of the comments. Four students were mentioned, and two were the focus of the paper, but an explanation of the choice of the two was not mentioned. Also, mention was made that instructors were interviewed, but there is no mention of their input in the article. It would also be helpful to the reader to know about the policy of the university regarding foreign students and students with a disability.

**Author response:**

Information about the larger study deleted as it was felt that this was irrelevant and distracting to the paper itself.

The following was added to page 10 to clarify follow up:

In order to maximize the voice of the student and clarify further information, the interview transcripts were sent to the students. The students were asked to extend ideas, rework comments or delete any areas they wished to have omitted from the data, giving the participants ownership over the information.

**Reviewer A:**

It would also be helpful to the reader to know about the policy of the university regarding foreign students and students with a disability.

**Author response:**

Some links made in earlier paragraphs and this paragraph added on page 3:

One of the key policies for students with a disability at McKenzie University is to provide “an inclusive and flexible environment for students and staff by identifying and removing any remaining systemic barriers to equitable access and participation”. There is no specific policy at Mckenzie University which governs international students with a disability *per se*; the relevant policy pertaining to international students with a disability, in theory, is contained within this Equity and Diversity policy. In practice however, the disability liaison unit does not receive extra funding for service provision to international students with a disability, even though international students pay fees in excess of local students for studying at McKenzie University.

**Reviewer A:**

In general the outline of your discussion questions were not easily identified.

**Author response:**

Questions were added as follows (p. 11)

The questions we sought the answers to through our study were:

What strategies and resources do students experience as supporting or hindering their academic development and achievements? (That is, what are the facilitators and what are the barriers as conceptualized as part of this study?) As practitioners, how can Bourdieu’s theories of capital, habitus and field help us understand these experiences?

**Reviewer A:**

Finally, for a paper that started off to strongly, the discussion comes across as weak. I felt shortchanged for I was looking for a statement that concisely pulled all the threads together – giving a clear picture of these factors (cultural or unmet needs) that the students either overcame or continues to be challenged by. This is the information that professionals who are unfamiliar with these challenges need help to understand in order to begin the process of change. It seems that a closer look at the conversations with the students and their instructors could strengthen this paper.

**Author response:**

The following paragraphs were added to p. 22:

In response to our research questions driving this study, our main finding was in relation to how existing socio-cultural norms in home countries resulted in students feeling unsupported in China and Hong Kong. The juxtaposition of the students’ comments regarding their perceived level of support in Australia against their own notions of disability driven by culture (for example Anna’s words about how *they lock you up* in Hong Kong if you have a mental illness) clearly results in what we see as a positive reflection of their experiences as a student in Australia. In other words, Anna and Mary came to Australia with minimal expectations of how their particular needs would be met due to their respective home-country experiences and the lack of symbolic capital in their own countries.

In terms of moving forward, Anna and Mary did also give some examples of where they felt unsatisfied with how their needs had been met at McKenzie University. Both Mary and Anna were unaware of the existence of policies governing the experiences of students with a disability and McKenzie University, and therefore unaware of their rights under such policies. As practitioners and policy makers it is important to think about the true accessibility of these policies and who is included under these policies – international students with a disability are not technically covered under the current university policy. Making all students aware of their rights under university policy, and such policies being written in clear and easily understandable ways for students who may speak English as a second language, are positive ways of looking towards comprehensive provision for students such as Anna and Mary.

**Reviewer B:**

The manuscript does not demonstrate a clear argument, or at least one that is clear throughout the entire piece. Where in the last submission I attributed this to a need for more data to hold things together; I now see that the paper is attempting to manage a complex issue without a clear roadmap. Consequently, it is easy to get lost and miss important points, or misunderstand how they are linked together.

**Author response**

The article has been strengthened to provide a clear road-map. Insertion of research questions and linking statements throughout to this provides a clear direction to readers. The discussion is also tightly linked to the research questions.

**Reviewer**

On page 6, the manuscript mentions that Mary and Anna have worked at reconstructing their new habitus in alignment with their capital culture, which on first read seems to be a central argument. If this is the primary argument, then it needs to be more nuanced. The statement does not appear to take into consideration the symbolic violence that the two students also encounter. (see also my discussion of symbolic violence below.) The manuscript continues to have clarity problems that mask the important points the authors wish to tackle.

**Author response**

This argument has been expanded. The clarity problems were resolved by stating the research questions prior to the methodology to guide readers to the key arguments in this paper.

**Reviewer**

Where I asked for more discussion about Bourdieu, it now takes up too much space in this manuscript. Its introduction needs to be clear, succinct and simple. It can be referred to throughout the remainder of the study. It is the appropriate conceptual framework, but it runs the risk of becoming the study itself. The manner in which Bourdieu is presented begins to make the students seem like vehicles that help explain the theory, rather than the other way around.

One suggestion here is a simplification of the discussion of Bourdieu (see for example on page 5.) This might help to give the paper sound less abstract, a difficult thing to avoid when using Bourdieu. His theories are still powerful when talking about members of groups who are otherwise treated inappropriately. Making his concepts crystal clear (examples help) will also work to engage a wider array of Journal's readers. Theory is most useful when it can be accessed by those practitioners who might be new to it, (See Barratt 2011 for examples of Bourdieu made accessible).

The manuscript would benefit from more information specific to the two students’ home countries. Reference is made to Asian culture in different places throughout the manuscript, enough so that it would make sense to be more specific in your discussion about the different countries from which the two students come from. Even if it might be done where you mention "Asian" or "Hong Kong" or "China," for example on page 16. (a quick search gave me a couple of examples I listed at the end of this review) The authors argue that the two students were selected because they came from similar backgrounds, yet different (p. 10). Consequently that decision needs to make sense to the reader. The manuscript is moving toward that; but needs further substantiation to make strengthen its argument.

**Author response**

The second research questions attempts to throw more light on Bourdieu’s theory in relation to the experiences of the two students. It is important to answer this research question by providing greater insight into this theory and not just treating it as an appendage.

**Reviewer**

Pp.16-19

The symbolic violence section is powerful. I wonder if it would be even more effective if examples illustrated incidents only related to students’ disabilities; or perhaps in the illustrations where disability was not a direct factor talk about the compounding influence symbolic violence has one someone with a disability. Those examples are certainly important. However, as presented, they felt a bit tangential to those who might not immediately understand the impact of layers. This is an example of where more work needs to be done with regard to melding together the international piece and the disability piece.

In all, it may be that the manuscript could shift direction—declare that it is focusing on new applications of Bourdieu’s theory. That may be where the paper is heading. But that calls for the authors to continue to write this through and make a decision about where they want to leave their mark.

**Author response**

We did not shift the direction of this manuscript but clarify its direction from the onset of the paper. We clearly defined our goals and specify the research questions which add clarity to the arguments made in the paper. The paper has two research questions; one that attempts to understand student experience and the second to use Bourdieu to illuminate these experiences. It is important for us as researchers to balance these in the paper and respond to both questions as much as possible. We have attempted and revised the paper in the way recommended by the reviewer, paying attention to above issues throughout the paper.

**Reviewer**

I did not look over the sources with a fine tooth comb; however this might lead you to some greater insight regarding the background of the two students.

Tse, S., Cheung, E., Kan, A., Ng, R., & Yau, S. (2012). Recovery in Hong Kong: Service user participation in mental health services. International Review of Psychiatry, 24(1), 40-47.

<http://informahealthcare.com/doi/abs/10.3109/09540261.2011.646244>

Wong, C. C., & Mak, W. W. (2013). Differentiating the role of three self-compassion components in buffering cognitive-personality vulnerability to depression among Chinese in Hong Kong. Journal of counseling psychology, 60(1), 162.

<https://webspace.utexas.edu/neffk/pubs/DepressionChina.pdf>

Shek, D. T., & Merrick, J. (2012). Disability research in China: gaps and future directions. Int J Disabil Hum Dev, 11(1), 1-4.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1515/ijdhd.2012.003>

Gilson, C. L., & Dymond, S. K. (2011). Constructions of Disability at a University in Hong Kong: Perspectives of Disabled Students, Staff Members, and Instructors. *Disability Studies Quarterly*, *31*(2).

http://dsq-sds.org/article/view/1589/1557

**Author response**

We have considered these reference sources and incorporated relevant information into the manuscript without changing the original direction of the paper.

**Reviewer C:**

**I suggest that the authors review the spacing between words in the manuscript.**

**Author response**

Spacing has been applied as per requirements for APA 6th edition (double line spacing).