

It's a Two-way Street: Informing Irish Pre-  
sessional EAP Programs with a Needs  
Analysis of Irish Higher Education

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16962was kind of the image that he used was finding your way through the web of knowledge  
16963ehm you know this interests you then that leads you to something else and you you map  
16964out your own distinctive map of the landscape of knowledge not that you have a huge  
16965overview and you understand everything you have to be able to situate it within broader  
16966things but really that you kind of specialize ehm and so [pause] I I think in many cases I'd  
16967be happy enough if I felt that students were sitting and retaining the ideas you know  
16968grappling with them and going [pause] yeah that clicks with me I get that  
16969R: and so what happens inside of the classroom in terms of teaching style and interaction  
16970you kind of touched on it a little bit but would it be primarily PowerPoints um classroom  
16971discussion discussion between you and the students etc.

16972David: yeah I try to again it depends on the um the size of the group really matters also the  
16973even just the format of the room sometimes so I I still [exhale] I think [pause] like  
16974everybody I have kind of an obsession with covering the material you know you want to do  
16975it ehm interactive teaching activities they take up time and you do have to kind of do a a  
16976cost-benefit analysis on it and you say so you've got a lovely engaging activity [pause] that  
16977takes 15 or 20 minutes [pause] that really only gets one point @across you know yeah it  
16978was good it was engaging they seem to enjoy it and so on and yet and now @@you know  
16979this much behind so when I can which is typically with the master's students I do try to  
16980make it interactive I do absolutely use PowerPoints and I tend to use them mostly as  
16981prompts so they're almost like my lecture notes ehm but I do go back in every single year I  
16982put put a lot of work into um uh I I rarely just take off the hook what I did last year cuz I'm  
16983never happy so I I look at them again and I change I take bits out and I put bits in or I try  
16984to make them more attractive to look up so they've gradually got over the years more  
16985attractive I think ehm and I do try to have points in there where there is some sort of  
16986reflection discussion points interactivity of some sort ehm because you do gradually  
16987become aware that nobody no matter how interested they are in the topic can focus for very  
16988long if they're just sitting passively listening ehm and uh so I have small group um  
16989workshops I have plenary discussion and one thing I've ex- I've experimented with a little  
16990bit um is using um what do they call it it's turning-point software which is kind of  
16991classroom polling [pause] you can either use clickers

16992R: oh okay yeah like so a voting system

16993David: voting system yeah exactly or it can be quizzes you know you can either ask yes/no  
16994questions or multiple-choice questions or opinion questions uh so you might remember at  
16995the beginning of [module] I tried to get people reflecting on their own beliefs and  
16996experiences about [topic] and saying so I give them a series of kind of provocative

16997 questions do you think you can learn [topic] purely through books for example or whatever  
16998 it might be so that's the kind of thing where you could use this kind of polling system it's  
16999 still a little bit clunky I I think I need more practice in using it myself I've only used it a  
17000 couple of times um so I'm not confident enough with the system to really incorporate it but  
17001 I like that in principle because that does give you greater efficiency it does mean that  
17002 people are reflecting they're doing something they have to think and instead of just having  
17003 a show of hands where everybody has to own up you know ehm and where it could be  
17004 difficult in any case to kind of find patterns you can actually get your bar charts in real  
17005 time on the screen and say well that's interesting we can see here that the vast majority of  
17006 you picked the middle option whatever it is eh so in principle that is a very efficient way of  
17007 incorporating kind of interactivity um uh but I I haven't quite done enough of it yet  
17008 >well anyway so it's it's< a mix I mean I certainly do lecture um and I'm happy enough to  
17009 to lecture in ways as long as people don't actually start falling asleep @@ but I do I do  
17010 believe in lectures I mean I I I think that you know I listen to lectures on YouTube in my  
17011 spare time kind of you know while I'm doing other things um I think listening to somebody  
17012 who knows what they're talking about and is enthusiastic about what they're talking about  
17013 can be a great experience it can be entertaining it can be it can be a learning experience so  
17014 I'm not totally down on lectures ehm and I but but definitely I do try to mix it up and I've  
17015 tried to do that more and more over the years because I've seen other people teaching and  
17016 the way they incorporate very simple little activities that still kind of break up the  
17017 monotony of just one person talking

17018 R: right and so what um okay well let's switch from your modules now to what do you  
17019 require from your research students

17020 David: for my research students uhm [pause] [click] my research students have always  
17021 been quite a mixed bunch in this and so I I don't I don't have that may I I don't know who  
17022 else you'll be talking to but the kind of the culture of of PhDs and how do you work with  
17023 PhD's can be very different from especially I think the STEM area where there's kind of a  
17024 lab structure where your research students are part of your research team team and they're  
17025 all working on your research and they're all funded to do this ehm and they are you refer to  
17026 them as your lab in my lab we're doing this and so on and I I always got very envious when  
17027 I hear that @@ cuz I think I don't have a lab I have a little office and uh I have individual  
17028 students working on very different things and they've all kind of volunteered I haven't  
17029 recruited them uh [click] so what I expect from them in terms of um [pause] I mean the  
17030 days are gone when you used to send them away and say you know you're gonna spend the  
17031 first year reading around and you mightn't @see @them @for @a @year that was before

17032my time I've never done that uh but that used to be the the received wisdom was you know  
17033you'd spend a year reading around then and you'd get you know you'd get students  
17034spending seven eight years on their on their PhD's [click] um so [pause] what I would like  
17035to see from them fairly early on is what you have to see from them early on is a plan for  
17036the research uh a realistic plan for the research they need to get their research ethics  
17037permission in pretty quickly and start gathering the data fairly quickly ehm and uh it  
17038varies you know from one student to the next how far along they are in their ideas before  
17039they start um and then and then you reach a point where you want to start seeing drafts and  
17040quite often that comes quite late in the process but I think it'd be better if it came earlier  
17041earlier in the process and the way I work with drafts would be the same with MPhil  
17042students doing dissertations who I'm supervising [pause] ehm my policy is I'll give you  
17043feedback I'll give you feedback on one draft like if I I if I keep getting drafts back and forth  
17044then it could go on forever um I don't always completely stick to that and especially with  
17045PhD students you might cut them more slack um there's there's more at stake um but if  
17046you're supervising six seven eight MPhil dissertation students you you couldn't be looking  
17047at them and each of them there's five chapters um then it's strictly you know feedback on  
17048one chapter each ehm what I'm looking obviously at PhD level you're looking for the  
17049critical engagement again you're looking for um structure uh but you're also looking for  
17050clarity uh I think that's I may not have stressed that enough in all work what you what you  
17051want uh what I always say to students is when you're when you're writing if there's only  
17052one very general principle it should be clarity to be clear be clear as you can don't aim for  
17053an academic register I think a lot of what is academic register is clarity in fact if you if you  
17054try to be as precise and clear as you can then you probably end up something that looks  
17055academic really um but I don't know how useful that advice really is to be honest anyway  
17056that's the question of what I'm expecting in terms of the writing in terms of input uhm  
17057[pause] I probably kind of assume that they're off working away you know in between  
17058meetings I might meet them [pause] once or twice a month ehm I think I need to I've had a  
17059batch of PhD students that have just finished up and I've got I think just one currently  
17060about to come in and I think with him I went to a workshop on supervision recently and um  
17061I'll review those of the slides @@from that session@ uh so I've got the ideas about how I  
17062can um structure things better to so I could be happier that things are moving along  
17063because you do sometimes as a I remember as a PhD student feeling guilty and trying to  
17064avoid my um PhD supervisor because I'd you know long periods would go where I felt I  
17065had accomplish nothing um but as a supervisor you can actually feel the same you know  
17066not prodding this person along enough could go off the rails if I'm not careful uhm eh and

17067so on ehm so I think uh at least a monthly progress meeting is is probably important  
17068another thing that I'd like to do more of that I've never really done is involving the student  
17069in my own work and I've pretty well never done that uhm and I I think it's useful for the  
17070student I mean I've got I've got a thing about exploitation you know I don't want to exploit  
17071students I don't want to give students uh work uh especially if they're not funded you know  
17072if I'm providing them with funding fair enough but uh in most cases I'm not uh and so I I  
17073don't feel I can get them to be doing work for for free but on the other hand to give them an  
17074insight into the way you know the professional academic work uh world works is surely a  
17075good thing uhm and so it's probably depriving them of things not to involve them in you  
17076know reading through drafts of mine or reviewing you cannot with student work not so  
17077much um but there's all sorts of things that you potentially could get students involved in  
17078uh so I'd like to do a little bit more of that and I think that would be part of the experience  
17079and it would make for a richer experience for the student [pause] does that

17080R: yep absolutely and so in general what do you think students need to succeed at

17081[institution 1]

17082David: at both levels and undergraduate and //postgraduate

17083R: yes

17084David: because they're really they're very different| in in ways um it depends as well what  
17085you mean by succeed to come out with a degree [pause] you you could probably you can  
17086probably do that on the basis of relatively minimal input uhm and a and a basic level of  
17087you know academic achievement you know achievement to academia is about so if success  
17088is just getting coming out with a degree at undergraduate level um I think I think kind of a  
17089there's some sort of a minimum of understanding and goodwill and attempt to you know at  
17090least do the basics would probably get you get you out with a with a degree um at MPhil  
17091level [long pause] kind of likewise they they you would kind of have to to get it you'd have  
17092to score at least two two in all of your assignments so to score a two two in all of your  
17093assignments and put in an acceptable dissertation I I don't think you could realistically do  
17094that without a a degree of commitment um so commitment in terms of turning up in  
17095lectures and really giving the assignments your your best shot um I think what you what  
17096you need is understanding just show that you know the minimum line you'd need say for a  
17097master's student and the same would probably be true at undergraduate level for me to give  
17098a passing grade or a two two and again so an MPhil is to see that there is a fundamental  
17099understanding of what this is about that you've you have done some reading and you've  
17100understood the issues [pause] but it might still be a bit fuzzy and vague and unclear but you  
17101have learned something from this and okay then you're then you're through um at PhD

17102level you can't get away with anything like that that vague um but to re- succeed in a more  
17103ambitious sense of doing well you know kind of two one or first degree high two one or  
17104first degree or or um of course our masters are unclassified but and distinctions are  
17105relatively rare uh but there you need to have initiative kind of intellectual initiative  
17106curiosity uhh critical engagement um so you know that your brain is actually interacting  
17107with the materials a level beyond just processing it and understanding and getting it  
17108making connections being able to make connections with with broader things ehm across  
17109subjects you know kind of seeing bigger how things fit together so not just in this module  
17110but how that relates to this other module what does [topic] have to do with [topic] you  
17111know we learned [topic] in one module um but [topic] in another how do those two  
17112concepts relate to each other are they compatible are they incompatible [pause] are you  
17113learning anything bigger than that about life I mean I I think if you learn pragmatics for  
17114example@ you actually learned something about how people think and how they interact  
17115with each other in all sorts of ordinary ways and grander ways different ways and I think it  
17116tells you something about society um if any of that comes out in your work then you'll be  
17117doing extremely well um but I think that's something that you know larger implications an  
17118indication that you that you can see the larger implications of what you're learning about  
17119um is is important for success and I think if you have that >and sometimes the thing is that  
17120doesn't kick< in until later because I know some of the things that I did as an  
17121undergraduate at the time I didn't get them I kind of didn't get the point even as a master's  
17122student I was doing [discipline] for example I didn't really get [topic] I was happy with  
17123[topic] I was happy with [topic] [topic] [topic] the same I don't and now I love the two of  
17124those [topics] at some point that kind of clicked with me I went I get it I see why this is  
17125worth thinking about and why there really are problems here and that there are different  
17126ways of thinking about them and tackling them and so on and I can't understand how  
17127everybody doesn't doesn't love them you know@ but you know sometimes these things  
17128have to ferment a bit in your mind for maybe for years so um I'm not too hard at at the  
17129undergraduate level I think a lot of people come in to undergraduate degrees not really  
17130having a clue what they're in for of what universities are I I got through my undergraduate  
17131degree I think without even knowing what an academic journal was and we weren't  
17132referred to them it's partly just cuz of the subjects I was doing were probably more focused  
17133on books then on journal articles but you know um I I I think undergraduate studies I  
17134would cut people a lot of slack um I I think a lot of the weight of real learning has shifted  
17135from I think in a way undergraduate learning I I I don't to be too pessimistic about it but to  
17136some extent it is kind of a rite of passage I think you get a lot of people who do an

17137undergraduate degree and then start to that gives them a basis for saying what I really want  
17138to do or what I really like to not or the ideas that I'm that I'm interested in pursuing are in  
17139this other area or the profession or the occupation or whatever it is ehm and it gives them  
17140some sort of clarity to to make further decisions about further education or training or the  
17141jobs they want to go into or whatever ehm so you know not everybody wants to be an  
17142academic uhm and not everybody should be and uh uh [pause] I think it's a mistake to  
17143teach people as though and it's something that academics can easily fall into because when  
17144you're evaluating your research students' work or your peers' work in articles that they're  
17145you know if you're reviewing articles for journals that kind of thing [pause] you're  
17146applying professional academic standards but it's not right to let those those kinds of  
17147standards bleed into undergraduate work for people who are you know being exposed to  
17148academic life for the first time uhm I think it's an easy enough to lose sight of what it was  
17149like to be an undergraduate and what your priorities were and your expectations and your  
17150understandings and so on [pause] so um a PhD level success really does mean that you  
17151have to master a particular area and that you're able to do a piece of of of research that  
17152reads meets certain professional standards but even there I think you have to have a certain  
17153modesty because the thing that scares a lot of PD students is the is this phrase that you  
17154have to make something like a tangible or an appreciable contribution to knowledge and  
17155you know people immediately think Einstein uh you know but it's not that appreciable is  
17156actually a relatively low low bar but you do have to have done something new that stands  
17157up to scrutiny that is actually a contribution it might be of interest to a tiny tiny little  
17158number of @people but those people would look at it and say okay that's something they  
17159might reject it as well but still that they could thought they would recognize that this as a  
17160piece of serious research whatever its limitations it's nonetheless a piece of serious  
17161research and this is person who a person who could go on to in principle be a professional  
17162researcher in some level [pause] so that's what success would be at that level to be a you  
17163know a really successful PhD it needs to be something that is um that does break ground it  
17164won't be recognized as breaking ground by a large number of people but actually in  
17165academia as well hard work and productivity is nearly as important and maybe as  
17166important um so it's not just the quality of the ideas but you know [pause] how much stuff  
17167you get out there and the networks that you build and that kind of thing that's also  
17168extremely important and if you have one without the other then that might put limits on  
17169how you how far you'll progress

17170R: right and so how much of a factor do you think language plays in academic success



17171 David: uhhh aaa huge amount at least in our areas uh kind of humanities and social  
17172 sciences uh hugely in other areas I guess not necessarily as much because um they're very  
17173 prescribed forms um you know lab reports or that kind of thing or in maths it'll be kind of  
17174 might be very minimal the amount of language that you have to have to use um but it  
17175 matters for your communication with other students with your lectures with your are we  
17176 talking about studies now are we talking prof- the academic world in general  
17177 R: um studies yeah so in so your undergrad and your post-grad students  
17178 David: yeah yeah it matters a lot it matters a lot and as I said you you do try to separate  
17179 out matters of presentation say okay the writing has problems but the ideas are good  
17180 but that's often difficult to do because the ideas are coming at you through the through the  
17181 medium of language and the language shapes shapes the ideas ehm [pause] and especially  
17182 written language I think there are plenty of people who are excellent communicators in in  
17183 speech and you would never think of saying they're illiterate or that they're you know  
17184 anything like that they're they're great communicators in speech um but they don't but  
17185 they're not good writers and the one thing just doesn't necessarily translate into the other so  
17186 obviously you know literacy and especially academic literacy is a huge research area I I  
17187 guess isn't news to you um but but I think the ability to express yourself clearly on  
17188 paper um is is one of the huge attributes of a successful academic and [pause] it you know  
17189 [pause] it puts you as a as a not just an academic but a student um and it puts you in a bad  
17190 mood @when @you're @marking I've got like all of these assignments facing me that I  
17191 have to start marking practically as soon as you @go out the door and you love coming  
17192 across one that's well written because you can read it quickly and smoothly and you don't  
17193 get bogged down in kind of editing details and the ones that are poorly written you're  
17194 trying to disentangle them and you're trying to identify what is the problem here I know  
17195 there's a problem but what is the problem ehm so especially being able to express yourself  
17196 well in writing I think is massively important and it's going to uh be an impediment to you  
17197 and then put a ceiling on the marks that you can attain if you don't have that ehm it's  
17198 obviously important then as well in terms of communications with your with people in  
17199 groups if your working in groups with your lecturer um and so on but but I think above all  
17200 being able to express yourself in writing is cuz that's ultimately what you what you get  
17201 judged on um but then being able to understand the material that you read being able to  
17202 understand lectures and so on that's obviously key as well but it doesn't get directly  
17203 assessed [pause] you assess it through what gets written so I think the ability to to write  
17204 clearly if you can also write compellingly and entertainingly then then that's obviously a

17205huge bonus but really you kind of after a few years of doing this you abandoned @hopes of  
17206seeing much@ entertaining uh writing @@

17207R: and would you find differences between home students and international students um in  
17208terms of everything that you've been talking about really

17209David: um y-yes um and it's sometimes it's language so obviously some international  
17210students are native speakers of English so that that isn't necessarily the same problem or  
17211they have the same problems as other native speakers of English maybe from from home  
17212from Ireland ehm [pause] uh for uh for students whose first language isn't English [pause]  
17213sometimes they're not accustomed to writing essays that's just not part of the way their  
17214education system works so in Italy I think for example there isn't a whole lot of writing  
17215done and um so that's it's not just that they have to express themselves in English uh maybe  
17216at length on maybe conceptually difficult matters all that is bad enough but also it's not  
17217something that they're used to doing even in their native language at home [pause] or if  
17218they do write maybe it's in a a different form maybe it's brief reports or or something rather  
17219than a lengthy assignment um so they do have much greater challenges [pause] in the case  
17220of the master's um I do relax my expectations for undergraduate visiting students because  
17221number one they're undergraduate number two most of them are non-native speakers of  
17222English and I just cut them a whole lot of slack um so I I strictly speaking you're not  
17223supposed to apply different standards uh to different groups in the same classroom but you  
17224do it's on- I I do and um I think that's only sensible uh it seems to me it's it's a huge  
17225challenge to them it must be quite onerous and I think if they give it a serious effort then  
17226fine I think I have over the years seen more plagiarism among visiting students than than  
17227among home students as it were and uh I think that probably reflects the just how hard they  
17228find it you know I think in some cases out of desperation or just have a conviction right  
17229from the start that I'll never be able to do this they resort to you know using other people's  
17230work but I've also with regard to plagiarism over the years I've concluded that it really is  
17231true that some people just don't understand what it is [pause] they just they honestly don't  
17232know what is fair and what isn't fair [pause] they ju- they they don't um and I've I've  
17233always been inclined to think look it's obvious you know you're cheating or you're not  
17234cheating you're trying to deceive me or you're not trying to deceive me ehm but I I don't  
17235think it's as simple as that actually it's just it's too common it's happened too many times  
17236I'm still not very forgiving@ of it you know but and you can't be I mean there are  
17237regulations about it but I think I'm kind of less shocked about it or something now [pause]  
17238uhm but I think that's [pause] it's not it's not that so I think there are cultural differences in  
17239what's what's acceptable with regard to using other sources and so on there's

17240misunderstandings about how a quotation works and so on eh and there's this perpetual  
17241problems that they don't know how to paraphrase you know because if you're paraphrasing  
17242and you don't speak this language very well you don't have a great command of it ehm and  
17243you're reading professionally published academic literature and what I'm supposed to  
17244summarize that in my own words as a non-native speaker how can I pos- that's hard  
17245enough for native students native speaker students ehm what I try to get across to them is  
17246that you you shouldn't be paraphrasing sentences you'd be paraphrasing entire arguments  
17247you know paraphrase is a short summary of something ehm you know so you take like an  
17248entire chapter an entire section at the least a a paragraph that's what you paraphrase and  
17249then that question of you know using other words kind of goes out the window you know if  
17250you're paraphrasing a sentence if you really need this sentence then fine then quote it ehm  
17251those are the things that I kind of struggle with and I over the years you try to think how do  
17252I get this across [pause] to um people maybe I should do research on it @@ leave that to  
17253you um so yeah visiting students it's it's very difficult for them yeah I think at every level I  
17254think trying to follow along in lectures is difficult for them I'm sure trying to take notes at  
17255the same time is is difficult ehm try to understand the sources and then try to express  
17256yourself it's it has to be difficult especially if they're non-native speakers um visiting native  
17257speaker students you can have the cultural differences as well so sometimes American  
17258students for example have a different approach to voice as it were um you know they  
17259sometimes I've crossed American students who [pause] tend to write something that is in a  
17260style that for me is too personal you know it's more like a creative you know self-  
17261expression and stuff rather than critical engagement with evidence ehm so that can be a  
17262that could be a problem but I'd I'd see that as a kind of a cultural difference  
17263R: right and so what other factors do you think impacts academic success so not  
17264necessarily language and not even necessarily within the university but in general  
17265David: academic success in general like success in the education system overall  
17266R: yeah  
17267David: well I mean [long pause] I I'm kind of reluctant to use the word intelligence because  
17268I do believe that there are different kinds of [pause] intelligence but let's let's call it  
17269academic cognitive ability maybe that's just a weaselly way of saying @intelligence but  
17270you know I I know plenty of people who are I would say is massively intelligent smart  
17271people in all sorts of ways who wouldn't necessarily thrive or have thrived in the education  
17272system [pause] and they they do absolutely fine when they get out of it not just fine you  
17273know they thrive and I think many of our political leaders are like that I think take a lot of  
17274our political leaders and put them back through school and college and stuff they wouldn't

17275necessarily cover themselves in glory so there's a particular kind of an academic way of  
17276looking at things ehm which partly has to do with curiosity [pause] ehh and I think it has to  
17277do is I was engaging with other people um b- if you extend the idea of engaging with other  
17278people to engaging with other minds which means engaging with other ideas so even if  
17279you're a mathematician uhh you know looking at somebody's proof or their hypothesis or  
17280whatever it might be uh that might seem like extremely impersonal where you don't need  
17281any social skills at all but nonetheless you're trying to make sense of where is this thing  
17282going what how does this work what's the logic of this other thing out there is this other  
17283thing uhh that has been produced by a human and what the sense can I make of it and  
17284where is it right and where is it where is it wrong where is it change so it's kind of a an  
17285intellectual openness I think [pause] in theory should be something that uh >but I also  
17286think< and I think this is where I@ fall down is um kind of ambition drive organization all  
17287of those kind of things they can carry you a very long way and and ehm and they are  
17288important it's not just that you know it's easy to say ah well you know so and so is really  
17289ambitious and so oh they can have their uhm no it's important you know I think I think if  
17290you really want to do justice to your ideas and this is again looking at third level and  
17291especially research ehm then you have to have those kind of attributes as well but those  
17292kind of attributes will also see you through you know various levels of school as well if  
17293you're organized and disciplined and that is partly a question of engagement too it's just  
17294saying there is this other agenda out there this school wants me to do this for whatever  
17295reason maybe I can't see maybe I'm only eight years old and I can't see the big picture but  
17296they want me to do this and engage with it I'll meet it on its own terms and make a good-  
17297faith effort to to deal with it um I think that's kind of what you need if you go in with a  
17298very cynical attitude of I'm just gonna get through this [pause] then you're not going to get  
17299as much out of it and it'll it'll fail you eventually you might get a certain distance with that  
17300attitude I think engaging with it in good faith you know doesn't mean you have to like  
17301everything doesn't mean you have to find every single lecture interesting ehm but it does  
17302mean that you think well they're teaching me this for a reason @somebody @finds this  
17303interesting let me see if I can find what's interesting in it and and do what I can with it and  
17304maybe be open to reassessing it later on and seeing maybe seeing that there was a point to  
17305it or not or saying no I thought about it I don't think there was any point to that at all so a  
17306kind of determination and an open minded engagement I think those are those are those are  
17307important factors

17308R: okay and it's now kind of focusing in on international students um are you aware of any  
17309support offered to international students in your department or the wider college

17310David: [inhale] in our department not so mu- we're a funny department in that we don't  
17311currently have our own undergraduate degree we participate in a in a another degree this is  
17312if by department you just mean [department] as opposed to her sister departments in the  
17313school uhm so do we have anything specifically for we have modules that are aimed at  
17314them so we have we offer [modules] so those are modules that are specifically designed for  
17315them and they're quite popular [click] but actually as support [pause] no I don't think so I  
17316can't think of anything within the department but supports outside ehm I think the global  
17317office does does things you know kind of the social supports and [pause] you know social  
17318activities that that kind of thing um but also support with dealing with Irish administration  
17319and so on visas and that sort of thing um then what do we what we offer in terms of  
17320language support uh well I mean [center] uhm is is the big it's a big development there  
17321which is something that we've been saying for years that's you know the university needs  
17322because for years there was nothing offered to foreign students uhm at any level just about  
17323nothing and it just didn't make sense academically it didn't make sense from the point of  
17324view of duty of care to these students and it didn't make sense from the point of view of  
17325competing in a global marketplace whose increasingly every competitor at university  
17326which would be in Ireland and the UK especially for us they had these supports they had  
17327you know pre-service and in-service language support and we had nothing so we were  
17328constantly saying we should be offering this and at one point the university went down this  
17329line of the of um of uh of contracting an outside provider I think that did not work at all  
17330and we said this w-we're experts we this is what we do is our bread and butter we teach  
17331about this we research about it and so on and there's all sorts of synergies and I was you  
17332know I think that argument was eventually taken on board and [center] kind of comes out  
17333of that so there's the pre-service and the in-service modules offered by by [center] they're  
17334the major language support that I'm aware of that's that's offered yeah

17335R: okay and so all of the support that you've mentioned do you think that it's adequate for  
17336the international students

17337David: [inhale] I really don't know to be honest because I it's not something that I I guess I  
17338have less to do with international students uhm then I do with most other well I mean in the  
17339case of international MPhil students I suppose I would and they probably predominate on  
17340the MPhils uhm undergraduates not so much I'd I'd only only well I'm actually the visiting  
17341student coordinator so I see them and I sign them up for their modules but then after um  
17342unless I happened to be teaching them I don't have a great deal to do with them and I  
17343wouldn't have the opportunity to have conversations with them where I get into that depth  
17344of establishing whether they're receiving enough support or not I think nowadays they do

17345 have a tutor some of them seem to and some of them seem not too and I don't quite know  
17346 what the logic is [pause] um but then they probably don't haven't absorb the point of the  
17347 tutorial system to the same extent even if they do have them they they they haven't been  
17348 acculturated into that system as much as the the uhm Irish [institution 1] students the home  
17349 [institution 1] students have so they may not know how to exploit that or what they can be  
17350 used for but I'm not even sure about that to be honest about uh tutorial support uhm I think  
17351 they should have it because they probably need it they run into the same difficulties as  
17352 everybody else um a-another sort of source to support those probably things like clubs and  
17353 societies uhm [pause] and each other and and and I know those aren't formal support  
17354 structures uhm but but they could be you know I mean if visiting students join the archery  
17355 club or drama society or anything else and they're going to get to know other people and  
17356 it's going to enrich their experience so that helps with social supports uhm but I suspect the  
17357 main social support is each other and they do they sit together the the visiting students tend  
17358 to sit together in class you don't notice them especially fraternizing with the with the home  
17359 students uh and this is all entirely understandable and predictable and I wouldn't blame  
17360 anybody for it uhm and it's not necessarily a whole you know you you want people to have  
17361 a more international experience when they're when they're here and they probably want out  
17362 themselves ehm but it they really have to be proactive to make it happen because it's very  
17363 easy to find yourself lost at sea lonely and you kind of fall into each other's arms into the  
17364 arms of other people who are in the same situation the same experiences and I remember  
17365 feeling like that myself in my own year abroad in Germany I went there full of hope and  
17366 glory but after you know a few weeks I found it really difficult to get to know people in  
17367 some kind of a student orientation session I met a whole bunch of people and that was it  
17368 for the rest of the year I hung out with them with other other non-German students I met  
17369 some German people as well but I certainly wasn't really integrated into the student body  
17370 as much as I would have wanted to uhm so that's I think the the real support that they'll  
17371 getting is probably the housemates other visiting students and so on

17372 R: mm-hmm and so you say that you have more experience with international students in  
17373 your postgrad courses would you say that the support that they're receiving is adequate

17374 David: ehm at at post-grad level they would get better support they'll have a supervisor for  
17375 one thing and so that gives them one person that they're seeing on a much more regular  
17376 basis so that by its nature is going to give and also um so ou- the postgrad visiting students  
17377 have much more of a stake and there's there's much less of a distinction I mean there is a  
17378 distinction a visible distinction in when you're teaching an MPhil class between the visiting  
17379 students they're on a different page of the attendance list for example so when we're taking

17380attendance take the MPhils first then you turn the page and it's the visiting students and it's  
17381just all sorts of small ways it's evident that there are a kind of these two cohorts ehm the  
17382MPhil students will typically already know each they'll have met each other the the  
17383visiting students haven't and they've and umh so but then the international students who  
17384are doing the MPhil there isn't that partition there isn't that distinction I I don't think you  
17385find Irish students gravitating to other Irish students and visiting students or sorry  
17386international students getting together I I think that it's it's much more you know  
17387R: integrated

17388David: integrated yeah yeah ehm the extent to which there's support for them you know  
17389there's the the the course coordinators there's the supervisor I think individual lecturers are  
17390fairly approachable but we tend to have a more personal um um relationship with with  
17391MPhil students cuz we probably see them more often it'll vary from one lecturer to another  
17392but um um so there's more [pause] I think you've just got more approachability and there's  
17393less barriers between lecturers and students between one student to another in terms of  
17394formal support again there's [center] um [center] does teach does offer it's available to  
17395R: yeah

17396David: um so there's that there's also the um or there used to be a post graduate advisor but  
17397I think the last in the tut- senior tutor's office but I think the last one left and I'm not sure  
17398she's been replaced [pause] so that was an attempt to make um something like a tutor  
17399available to postgrad students but I don't think hm I'm not sure if that's still going and it's  
17400not explicitly you know specifically for international students

17401R: okay and are you aware of the type of preparation your international students currently  
17402participate in before they come to [institution 1]

17403David: well for the for the MPhils I used to be quite aware of and we used to have a a great  
17404system in advance of the MPhil orientation the international students would get together I  
17405think the non-native speakers they'd get a week I think it was just one week of intent- for  
17406free um intensive uh English language support that was great they got to know each other  
17407that that helped a lot I think with it with with the settling in process and so on in any way  
17408they almost had an advantage socially relative to the other native speaker MPhils because  
17409they had already established relationships before the course began [click] so that used to be  
17410great what there is now I mean again I'm aware of the MPhil orientation from having been  
17411coordinator um so there's that and I'm pretty sure global does something but what exactly  
17412they do I don't know

17413R: yeah are you aware of any preparation that they may do say in their home country or  
17414outside of [institution 1]

17415David: uhm no I guess Era- I'm Erasmus coordinator for for here but again it really boils  
17416down to just signing them up for modules that they want to do here and we don't send  
17417students out ehm I would guess that Erasmus coordinators in their home institutions uh  
17418probably give them some tips and so on you'd like to think that they might get to talk to  
17419other students who have been to at least Ireland if not [institution 1] but I really haven't  
17420thought about it much no or very little

17421R: and um are you aware of the type of entry assessment that international students take  
17422before being accepted to the University

17423David: ehheh nope nope I think that's just a straight no I don't know @@@

17424R: okay

17425David: this is a you're think you're thinking of visiting students or international

17426R: uh visiting and also the international ones in on your MPhil

17427David: oh the MPhil well I mean I know exactly what's involved in evaluating an MPhil  
17428application uhm which is the same for for everybody so I know about the IELTS  
17429requirements and so on ehm for undergrad so I really have no clue no @I @don't @no  
17430@@@

17431R: okay okay so talking about IELTS so kind of shifting towards MPhil's how do you feel  
17432about this entry assessment

17433David: um [pause] it's it's pretty rough and ready and we don't have I think we've  
17434introduced now for [discipline] a band require a minimum band requirement so that it's 6.5  
17435overall is still the the criterion score but ehm I think they can't have less than [pause] 6 is it  
17436or a 5.5 maybe in each of the in each individual band or something I can't quite remember  
17437now um [click] but but they but for largely across the other MPhils it's it's just 6.5 and you  
17438can get a 6.5 with like even a 5 I think you could dip as low as a 5 I think it's still  
17439mathematically possible

17440R: yeah maybe in one band

17441David: yeah um and you could anyway but you can certainly you certainly do see people  
17442coming in with a 5.5 and that might set off alarm bells you know in one band that might set  
17443off alarm bells but it can't be the basis for rejecting somebody you're not allowed to reject  
17444somebody on that basis ehm and you can see great discrepancies in between say receptive  
17445and productive skills so people are scoring high for reading and listening and actually not  
17446that great for writing and speaking uh [pause] and that can worry you um I think it's better  
17447than nothing I'm not sure how well I believe in very fine tuned assessments uhm [pause]  
17448we used it way back in prehistory we used to interview every single MPhil applicant so we  
17449met them all and in those days there were probably not that many international students



17450 anyway but then if you know if you had somebody who clearly struggled with English in  
17451 an interview but then they might you know I guess I can't remember it happening but you  
17452 might then have excluded so something like it you know face to face oral assessment might  
17453 be helpful because you do sometimes get students who [pause] with whom communicate is  
17454 really difficult you know they've got in they've got their 6.5 but when you're having a  
17455 supervision with them or you're talking them through the assignment or something you're  
17456 you gradually become aware that you're being met with the incomprehension that they that  
17457 they're probably trying to hide you know that they're they're not willing to say I'm not  
17458 getting it can you please try to explain that to me in a different way [pause] ehh so [pause]  
17459 it's it's rough-and-ready I mean I think if if you haven't got a 6.5 IELTS certainly it would  
17460 be problematic but the opposite isn't true having a 6.5 is not a guarantee that you're going  
17461 to find this easy well I mean I suppose nobody says it's gonna be easy but I think some  
17462 people outright struggle with their written expression and with everything with everything  
17463 with all four um so it's then you know put you put it up to 7 [pause] it would probably  
17464 make a difference but you'll be losing a lot of students then and you know and  
17465 unfortunately student numbers are an issue we you know you're under pressure to bring in  
17466 student numbers courses can get closed outright if you don't uh so a six point five is maybe  
17467 a reasonable compromise between those those two but it's it's not it's not meaningless  
17468 [pause] but it certainly doesn't mean that you're not going to be admitting students who are  
17469 going to have difficulty

17470 R: and so what type of preparation should international students undertake before studying  
17471 at [institution 1] so what would you like to see say like in courses that take place over the  
17472 summer or to help students prepare

17473 David: [inhale] umm du-du-du let me see now to prepare if you're coming to again are we  
17474 talking about the international students in general or visiting student

17475 R: yeah in general

17476 David: in general so across the board um I think reading is probably the best the best thing  
17477 to do I mean if we're just talking about [pause] informal like what they do in their own  
17478 time or what kind of

17479 R: um let's do informal first and then I'll ask you about formal

17480 David: okay so informally I think um reading and listening actually the receptive things are  
17481 very useful uh um so for example reading [pause] newspapers for example from the uh  
17482 from the country that they're going to uh it's something again@ I should do some research  
17483 on but um I think if I wanted to keep up my own Spanish for example something that  
17484 would be worth doing would be reading a Spanish article from el Pais every day on a topic

17485that I already know about so not some obscure corruption scandal in Andalusia but  
17486something about the latest Trump @@@ issue or something you know something that I  
17487know about so that you know that weight is taken off and I can focus on the language and  
17488understand exactly what the language says ehm and so and I think that that can help and  
17489likewise a similar approach for listening and of course you can do that on the internet a  
17490great deal ehm but also uh if you could get access to some of the texts not very deep you  
17491know not not a huge commitment so they're gonna spend the whole summer reading entire  
17492articles but if they got you know if they could read the abstracts even from half a dozen  
17493articles covering the the the spread of modules that they're going to do something like that  
17494might help them get them into the right frame and try to start understanding now what the  
17495issues are gonna be uhm yeah so informally they might be some of the things that that that  
17496students could do that it's also really important that they understand the course that they're  
17497getting into ehm and you know um um sometimes you think that students haven't really  
17498read very far and they we put all of this information up I know it's quite dense but it's  
17499comprehensible ehm I try to uh so so especially for MPhil students that they know I'm  
17500gonna do three modules in the first term and in three modules in the second term and  
17501they're gonna be um assessed in the following way and these are the ones that I'm going to  
17502be doing so on these are typical texts and so on all all of those things

17503R: and what about a more formal program what would you like to see taught or done in a  
17504formal program

17505David: uh in a formal program I would like to see academic writing uh so actually  
17506something very like what we used to do with it was [name] who used to teach it and uhh  
17507other people taught it at various times and in fact I think what they used to do was was  
17508very complete you know that they they introduced people to Dublin they helped helped  
17509them with visa issues and that kind of thing but they also um they would have them doing  
17510kind of academic exercises of you know small academic exercises so I think it would need  
17511to be quite complete um so not just a kind of a technical thing of here's how you format a  
17512paper but um [pause] you know here's what you can expect here's here's what things are  
17513gonna be like and I think try to get them into the right mindset so that they of engagement  
17514of trying to you know trying to engage with the society that they're coming into you you  
17515know the small scale of the class and the course and the university and also they larger  
17516society so I think something something that's really quite holistic like that would be very  
17517useful but it would need to in-include the four skills from an academic perspective as  
17518well um but but I'd very much like to see it as something that builds a community [pause]  
17519uh but also encourages them to be outward looking and then that has follow-through so

17520that they can go back and say I'm having this difficulty or that difficulty whether it's an  
17521academic difficulty or social difficulties there's kind of support built-in I guess something  
17522like that is what so it's really holistic and with follow through um and that is generally  
17523supportive with practical issues as well I think that's what I'd like to see  
17524R: alright and what do you hope as a lecturer that your international students leave  
17525[institution 1] feeling and taking away from their studies  
17526David: I would like them to come away feeling that they had been a part of the community  
17527that they weren't just an appendage so they weren't just a hanger-on or briefly tolerated  
17528visitor [pause] uhm and that they got something academically uh you know obviously in  
17529terms of what they're actually taught but also that they saw something um of a different  
17530academic culture different ways of doing things that they got an insight into that and that  
17531they felt some sort of an affinity with it so that they went away feeling you know Ireland is  
17532a place that I had some fun and I would like to go back to I think those things um I mean  
17533all of the other academic things still apply obviously you know you want them to to to  
17534reach their potential and so on but I think um you know an encounter with people who are  
17535different and and and think differently and behave differently and have different  
17536expectations and attitudes values and and a kind of an open encounter and that they felt  
17537that they were welcomed you know that they felt that they weren't in any way pigeon-holed  
17538I mean I think Irish people uhm are often felt to be friendly but [pause] not very deep in  
17539you know in in a sense you know that you can get you can fall into conversation with an  
17540Irish person this is all it's all stereotypes but and you can fall into conversation fairly easily  
17541with them but to actually form a friendship that will last is more difficult uhm but that's  
17542maybe just things are and there's a lot of individual difference in that anyway so I'd I'd like  
17543them to go away with those kind of positive feelings but also something that they can that  
17544they can learn from not just about Ireland but about communicating with and living with  
17545other cultures generally in a sense of the way we do things the way I'm used to is not the  
17546only way of doing things there are other ways um so a kind of a humility with respect to  
17547yourself and a sort of a de-center in a way so that you're not [pause] you you realize that  
17548it's not that I'm at the center I'm the norm and everything else diverges from me and my  
17549culture and my society and my family to different degrees uh to the people who are wildly  
17550exotic to people who are more like us and so on but just a realization that it's more like a  
17551network there's no there's no center so I happen to come from this node but here's people  
17552over there in this other node that see things differently a kind of openness  
17553R: and do you think that they do come away with these types of feelings

17554David: eh I have no way of knowing eh I'd say some of them do yes but but there's there's  
 17555um a huge individual difference and it is entirely possible to encounter another culture and  
 17556come away with your stereotypes confirmed and with a you know with a even more secure  
 17557in your own @superiority in in different ways than you have before um so [pause] you  
 17558probably can't guarantee these things but we've got to think about ways of you know  
 17559fostering preparing people for intercultural encounters and reflecting on them and so on I  
 17560think to be grandiose the world needs an awful lot of @that I think there's a lot of people  
 17561retreating into their own culture and rejecting everything outsiders as being wrong or evil  
 17562or threatening and an unwillingness to to enter into open good-faith dialogue where you  
 17563don't have to give up everything you believe in but you can listen to the other person  
 17564R: okay so that's the last question that I have for you but are there any questions that you  
 17565wish I had asked that I didn't ask

17566David: well let me think um [long pause] I don't think so but I'll tell you what if I do think  
 17567of anything um because it'll probably come back you know as I'm thinking about this to  
 17568making I will you know e-mail you or something if you're happy with that  
 17569R: yeah that's perfect yeah definitely happy with that brilliant thank you

17570

17571

**Finn**

17572

17573R: so first are you teaching any modules at the moment

17574Finn: yeah @a @lot

17575R: @okay alright can you tell me about kind of the work that's required of your  
 17576students for the modules

17577Finn: ehmm I've said the kind I teach undergrad post-grad ehm and across a range of  
 17578programs all my modules are most of them are theory based some- some of them might be  
 17579practice but the the basic requirement is reading. which they find very difficult. the the  
 17580amount required of them which is a challenge

17581R: and can you identify why it's a challenge

17582Finn: ehm it's a challenge for two reasons ehm and many many more one if they've  
 17583recently got here from school ehm they don't have a reading what I would call a  
 17584healthy successful reading strategy @ eh two ehm they haven't they're not fully formed? to  
 17585read critically? and that was sometimes ap- applied to postgraduate students ehm I don't  
 17586know it might be a language issue but even if there isn't people don't have a heavy ability  
 17587to put 20 minutes on on on a subject and to me that's the most important skill of going to  
 17588college @ can you sit down for uh read for 25 minutes [pause] think about what you've

17589read move on [pause] they have to write they do they have to do assignments work  
17590sometimes might have to do exams ehm assignments we usually take them through in  
17591tutorials and stuff like that show them the marking scheme beforehand and I often use eh  
17592they have to email me about their topic [pause] a couple of weeks before the assignment is  
17593due and that starts a dialogue but it means it gets them thinking about what I what I  
17594actually have to do an @assignment I need to get it in on time and what is my topic how  
17595am I going to write

17596R: and then you'll give feedback and you can ask questions

17597Finn: yes back- back and forth back and forth yeah

17598R: okay um and so the assignments uhm so obviously it'll be different for undergraduate  
17599postgraduate but are they generally given the question or the topic or is this something that  
17600they need to kind of form from reading

17601Finn: it uh they're usually given a a se- maybe more than one choice? Ehm undergrad  
17602would be more likely to be given the topic. ehm but there could be a selection within the  
17603topic so for example one assignment I teach it's really a [topic] module and the students  
17604have to pick two [topic] to compare and contrast [pause] so they get to pick the [topic] and  
17605decide what it is and at post-grad level sometimes I have another subject where the the  
17606students have to do an [topic] analysis of a [discipline-specific object] they get to pick the  
17607[discipline-specific object] so there's a lot of stuff like that

17608R: okay yeah so it's semi structured but they have a lot of freedom as well

17609Finn: yeah yeah

17610R: okay uh and do you have research students that you supervise

17611Finn: yeah ehm we they would be more the second term but yes we I would have and  
17612generally you'd have maybe three four five you wouldn't have more than that [pause] ehm  
17613they will be doing a dissertation component of a master's you pick your supervisor to- I  
17614have quite a lot now because I take the research methods class [pause] where they're  
17615putting together proposals @huh so there's about forty people in that class who are  
17616currently working on oh my god what is it proposal what is a literature review what is a  
17617research question @

17618R: right right and then they would all kind of be coming to you for //questions

17619Finn: yeah| we make th- we have a three pronged approach what do you call it the  
17620formative assessment? so in a couple weeks they'll they'll turn up and make a presentation  
17621using PowerPoint [pause] about what their idea is maybe two three minutes and then  
17622questions and then about two weeks after that they hand up a literature review [pause] and  
17623then they get both pieces of work back and in January they hand up a prop- a proposal

17624which will have the literature review in it and then when their dissertation class starts in the  
17625second term they get given back the proposal corrected [pause] so they technically have  
17626three or four goes [pause] at the idea [pause] so sometimes people might change  
17627completely [pause] between their first proposal and what they actually do in the in the  
17628dissertation but usually it's something [pause] something similar what the original idea  
17629was

17630R: okay alright and um and so what would you as a supervisor what kind of work or  
17631expectations would you have for your research students

17632Finn: well I expect them to be rigorous and I expect them to be questioning I expect them  
17633to it's a word I it's a sense cliché they're very [pause] #parrot like or lecture like I want  
17634them to immerse themselves in the topic [pause] and why did they understand @whatever  
17635@that @means and I'm not sure. they need to devote a lot of time but also thinking time  
17636[pause] they need to wake up and think oh that was really good idea [pause] I could use  
17637that. [pause] oh ok I never saw that really that I could use that [pause] but immerse  
17638themselves would be key they need to immer- any student needs to [pause] there's a  
17639Confucian word #shangming that means be the thing you claim to be and I would say to  
17640the @students some days we have days where we're not really students @ and we have  
17641days where we're not really lecturers but ultimately you should have more days where you  
17642are #shangming than you're not [pause] and you should know yourself when are and you  
17643aren't @

17644R: and so inside of the classroom when you're giving the modules what's the general  
17645structure is it a lot of PowerPoints lectures group discussion

17646Finn: well I [exhale] one of the benefits of being up the food chain is I don't get tutorials  
17647[pause] so a lot of my stuff would be lectures I try and use the Socratic method [pause] but  
17648a lot of times I'm like have you ever watched Ferris Bueller's Day Off?

17649R: yeah I have yeah

17650Finn: and there's the economic lecture

17651R: yes

17652Finn: and is there anybody anybody I'm often that person but I do do it by question I pose  
17653questions I pose my PowerPoints slides wouldn't have a lot of text on them [pause] it'd be a  
17654lot of pictures and one statement question mark [pause] whatever [pause] so I kind of  
17655answer the questions a lot of times >sometimes students< will discuss things depends on  
17656the dynamic of the class last year I had a master's class and they were like [inhale] they'r-  
17657they talked a lot this year's ones are still a bit quieter [pause] they they tend to come into  
17658their own eventually

17659R: yeah I was gonna say do you notice the difference between term one and term two or  
17660the beginning of a term versus the end of the term

17661Finn: yeah there can be significant differences and uhm people >undergrad they< generally  
17662go quiet as they go through [pause] so the first term they're all happy to be there second  
17663time they're like really? [long pause] you get a little bit of a bump the third term because  
17664they're back for a second year second year is the hardest year of an undergrad because  
17665you're [pause] the doubts the really is this gonna be me [pause] you want to do the students  
17666want to do better but maybe they're not executing their study strategy @effectively? @  
17667[pause] eh and yeah and then third year they just wanna be out [pause] with as little effort  
17668as possible they know what they have to do [pause] whatever so yeah yeah second term is  
17669always a downtime and as they go through the semesters it tends to be less they don't want  
17670to interact as much >unless they're super engaged< and super- every now and again you  
17671have two or three [pause] really good people >but they won't talk< in front of the rest of  
17672class because it doesn't become the thing to do [pause] but you they'll send you emails I'm  
17673gonna stop and talk to you oh I read this thing #unt you know

17674R: so they won't do inside of the class but they'll //kind of reach out privately

17675Finn: less so less so yeah| yeah um and um [pause] a lot of our stuff is about [topic] theory  
17676a lot of stuff I would talk about is theory [pause] and I'm I'm jus- cont- not continually  
17677shocked but people don't know a lot of stuff [pause] or they didn't want to admit [pause]  
17678they don't know a lot of stuff I have [topic] students that are in their third year of a [topic]  
17679degree and I would say have you seen this [discipline-specific object]. no. @ so you know  
17680[pause] and you're like really? But this is what you're gonna do [pause] surely you should  
17681have wha- you should be that nerdy person who ju- kind of go no that was [discipline-  
17682specific knowledge] but they're fewer than you @might @think

17683R: and for postgraduates so you said the undergraduates kind of go quiet as it goes on now  
17684the postgraduates is it opposite the //same

17685Finn: no the| second term they tend to be a bit quieter [pause] because it's all [pause] our  
17686maybe our post-grad has a lot of assignment work so when you get in February you've  
17687actually done a lot you've had five subjects you've written at least an assignment possibly  
17688two or three in each of them [pause] so that's like what um 15 bits of work maybe 16  
17689[pause] and an exam [pause] and suddenly you're about to do it all again and the enormity  
17690of that [pause] begins to weigh on them [pause] and you have to do a dissertation this  
17691@summer

17692R: and so the the examinations can you describe kind of what those would entail

17693Finn: yeah ehm my ones would be traditional of Universities you'd find in Ireland or  
17694Britain three-hour exam [pause] four questions or you know eight topics seven topics do  
17695four I I hav- since we started the faculty here we've always had a no surprises [pause] ethos  
17696in exams so one of the courses I teach has eight topics it has eight questions [pause] you  
17697pick four [pause] so the student can display their knowledge rather than be tested did they  
17698know something was gonna come up [pause] but it comes back to my earlier point [pause]  
17699read. [pause] think.

17700R: right okay um and so the how long typically would the written assessments be so if they  
17701had to write an essay

17702Finn: well it goes up as they go through the years and go- about eight about ten years ago  
17703we got all the humanities people to sit together and go the length of an essay in first year  
17704should be @ the length of an essay in second year should be because some people are  
17705getting asked to write huge essays and um we were kind of like yeah um 1500 to 1800  
17706words in first year's fine 2000 to 2300 in second year's fine and 2500 to 2800 in third  
17707year's fine shouldn't have to write it's easier to write now because you have [pause] your  
17708digital sources and type and you can type and stuff like that so [pause] but still they're not  
17709asking to write a dissertation [pause] and postgrads it'd be 2000 words plus all the way  
17710through four for essay type work that I would do

17711R: and how long is their dissertation

17712Finn: it's ehm [click click] ten thousand words ehm they can do dissertation by practice  
17713[pause] so as well so you never know how the class is going to split [pause] so they the  
17714dissertation by practice they still have to have a literature review but it's more research  
17715about the project rather than it being research about a theory or [long pause] seems slightly  
17716different but they have to produce a big finished product like a [discipline-specific objects]  
17717or I had one student who produced a [discipline-specific object] actually yeah once or  
17718twice

17719R: oh that's cool

17720Finn: yeah yeah it is cuz it means when they're leaving then they go go look here's my  
17721[discipline-specific object] here's my [discipline-specific object]

17722R: right so they have an actual you know depending on their aim they //have a portfolio

17723Finn: yeah what would you what do they call it the the the nerdy people an| artifact @

17724R: yes ah yeah that's true and so how would you assess academic success

17725Finn: ehm I suppose high marks the marks come from an engagement critical thinking  
17726deep deep thinking about the topic [pause] or the you know and if it was about practice or  
17727they've actually maybe I'll give you an example we had student a few years ago who who



17728did a [discipline-specific object] about homosexuality and they used but it would be called  
17729a snowballing technique which is that if you know one person they're going to introduce  
17730you to another person to another person so they were they were had great access to an  
17731insider group [pause] but well all they really had at the end of it was they weren't creative  
17732editing [pause] the thing and they weren't great at analyzing where did people say the same  
17733thing [pause] so the the approach was kind of wrong and they couldn't understand why  
17734they didn't get a first why they got a low mark but they hadn't really engaged and go he  
17735said the same thing as him and he said the same things her [long pause] and um it could  
17736have been great orally as a as a [discipline-specific object] to it could have been great you  
17737know five stories the first time I told someone I was gay or there was another person who's  
17738doing a a [discipline-specific object] about transitioning [pause] which I didn't know an  
17739awful lot about the time but again it was more that they were they never got past the fact  
17740well I discovered just this great group but they didn't delve into the subject matter [long  
17741pause] it was more like look what I found rather than look what I found look and look what  
17742I fe- look like what I think about what I found so I always want them to show me they've  
17743they've thought about things they've engaged with it they've been critical of it that [pause]  
17744you know doesn't often @happen but it should ideally it should people should think and be  
17745critical and read a lot normally they just want to read @enough @ [long pause] yeah yeah I  
17746think a lot of us are like that sometimes when we're in college

17747R: yeah depends yeah so basically when you're when you're marking assignments or  
17748dissertations you're really looking for engagement and criticality

17749Finn: yeah I have a feedback form I put on the back of the assignments and I always show  
17750it to them before I go through with them and I don't allocate percentages [long pause] and I  
17751think I might have to this year it'll be the first year so the first one is that presentation and  
17752structure what I call housekeeping [pause] right is there a bibliography is there an  
17753introduction is there a beginning is there gaps between the paragraphs [pause] is there a  
17754structure that's the first thing and second bit is knowledge of the topic so can they show  
17755they've engaged with the materials [pause] that were presented to them maybe the class we  
17756have a virtual learning environment Moodle [pause] and so how to use have- have they  
17757read stuff and clicked through it did it have an analysis [pause] that's the third thing and  
17758then forth is there evidence of independent reading [pause] and research and that's what  
17759gets you a first right [pause] so if you hit the first two you get a pass if you get a good  
17760analysis you get an honors mark if you @can @show @me I found schmuck and schmuck  
17761who wrote about this and you never mentioned that's the first yeah I do leave things out off  
17762book lists [pause] to see will the students find their way to the [pause] so people kind of go

17763I found this great book and I go really yeah and I'll say I copied that from a- when I was in  
17764undergrad there was a lecturer who did that

17765R: okay yeah so purposefully leaving something //out

17766Finn: yeah|

17767R: to see who's really kind of

17768Finn: yeah to see who will find who will follow the crumbs to try the crumbs

17769R: yeah okay alright um so you said that this year is kind of the first year that you might  
17770have to give percentages

17771Finn: yeah that's just because our regulations are changing [pause] and we and well we  
17772deal with uh QQI which I gather with the new Education Act that's passed all the colleges  
17773are gonna have to deal with [QQI] on some basis or another and ehm so they [pause] where  
17774we would have presented a module outline and module learning outcomes the sample  
17775assessment now they want to see if there's an exam they want to see the sample exam and  
17776they want to see the marking scheme [pause] for the thing so it's not enough to have a  
17777marking scheme you have to have some allocation of [long pause] marks

17778R: and how can I get what your feelings about that are and the feelings about how //they

17779Finn: I think| it's a mistake

17780R: yeah //and why

17781Finn I think it's a mistake| ehm I think there should be a marking scheme and it should be  
17782transparent and it should be up on on your Moodle [pause] ehm putting percentages about  
17783it [pause] ehm it it'll it'll do I think it might [pause] it'll help the middle students and the  
17784poor students students but it won't help the outperform students 'cuz people start begin to  
17785grade grope about you know we're gonna get extra marks for there [pause] you know and I  
17786think sometimes especially in theory in academia you should be able to mark something on  
17787the totality [long pause] of what it was [pause] and I could look at an exam question and  
17788look at an essay [pause] and I'll know within the first paragraph what mark it's gonna get  
17789and I'll read to the end to see was I @wrong [pause] but I can look at stuff and kind of go  
17790yeah it's pretty good that's going to be and sometimes they fall away [pause] but often you  
17791know [pause] just by the way it looks [pause] what it's gonna be @

17792R: so in general you've touched on this a bit but in general what do students need in order  
17793to succeed

17794Finn: ehm well they need to [pause] nee- well students need they need to well the resources  
17795be there the classes to happen on time the teachers to make things clear to them give them  
17796outlines tell them when their assignments are due to have tutorials to [pause] help them  
17797catch up if they've questions be ready to engage with them on email which is a big big

17798change because that didn't happen when I was in college so there's a lot of they have to be  
17799the the student has to be able to get an answer to an email or a query even within 24-48  
17800hours [pause] wh- what their thing is they but they also might in our case might need  
17801resources like we have [labs] and eh labs and stuff like that so one thing is a big thing here  
17802is there's nearly 24/7 access to labs [pause] so because the students they don't operate in a  
17803linear way the way that other people might and they do want to finish an assignment at  
17804night and I get emails at two o'clock three o'clock in the morning [pause] obviously I'm not  
17805gonna answer them at @two o'clock @three o'clock @ but but but they they they they do  
17806do email you atypical times so it's obviously something there happened to them at that time  
17807in the morning they've been up to two o'clock they're reading stuff and thinking what did  
17808this mean [long pause] whatever they've e-mailed you and gone to bed so it should they've  
17809a right to an answer [pause] pretty pretty quick to you or whatever but uh they also need to  
17810be in a situation [pause] in a more holistic way where they're not working too much? they  
17811have time to give to their study? where they're not or they have accommodation that's  
17812suitable they have a place to study and that's not our responsibility [pause] but I would be  
17813cognizant of students when you're when you're looking at them thinking you look a bit  
17814tired today @ [long pause] what were you working at what were you how many hours  
17815where insi- inside here and stuff like that okay so I think that's think that's it  
17816R: and um so in general what weaknesses would you say that students tend to have or  
17817difficulties in gaining academic success  
17818Finn: yeah they're not great at organizing their time and they tend to leave things off  
17819they're like ordinary humans really they put things off you know I'd say a general rule the  
17820thing that you thought that you didn't want to read is the bit that you should be and the bit  
17821you think oh I love reading this you need to stop and read something else @@ ehm I  
17822sometimes tell them the story that you know when I was in college and I was getting close  
17823to my exams I was reading stuff thinking you know I've got three days left to the exam  
17824'cuz we had a very exam based [pause] you know assessment f- method I'd think this is  
17825really interesting I should have given myself more time I really like this and I say to them  
17826do you ever have that feeling? [pause] and they say oh yeah and I say well yeah you should  
17827give yourself more time so the next time that happens you need to say three weeks out four  
17828weeks out so they'r- not they also have a squirrel mind what I call the squirrel mind that  
17829you're you're doing one thing which but you start thinking about another and that first 20  
17830minutes we do look look we do have we have a big module in first year thinking learning  
17831writing it's going to be called [pause] next time or thinking learning creating so it's about  
17832how to study how we teach them a lot of our students wouldn't know how to footnote stuff

17833or do Harvard referencing so we go through that with them >what I love most about<  
17834thinking critically this idea about you know what what when you read that article what  
17835we're the main points of it what did people say what did you think about peopl- what  
17836people said whether they agree whether they disagree can you think of an example in the  
17837outside world or the the theory in that article holds and in [discipline] that should be huge  
17838[pause] but they do what they do @ but sometimes they're not great at making the link  
17839between the theory and the practice [pause] but ehm so yes study skills really and that that  
17840ability to just calm the mind for 20 minutes half an hour and we do I think so many  
17841lecturers would talk to them about that is it the Pompeo method where you you know yeah  
17842time yourself 25 minutes get up do something come back and put ehm I don't I don't know  
17843how successful that is as a thing but we do tell them and we do [pause] I end every class by  
17844saying look at this stuff you should read this this is on Moodle read.

17845R: right so so those study skills are actually going to be embedded in the curriculum now  
17846with a new module

17847Finn: yeah they've always been embedded in some way but it's like you know we do  
17848induction and then about eight or nine years ago people went well the induction shouldn't  
17849just be a day it should be a semester [pause] and it is [long pause] and then we're talking  
17850about extending it again [pause] so we had to have tutorials where that they to to them it's  
17851just a tutorial but the lecturers they're thinking you've an assignment due in three weeks  
17852have you ever thought about structuring an @essay [pause] uhm you have an exam in three  
17853weeks so have you ever thought about you know way of doing an exam question is to do  
17854write the first paragraph [pause] practice writing first paragraphs stuff like that and you  
17855know 'cuz I've be- my student are like how long should an exam question be [long pause]  
17856and you kind of go really? [pause] you're asking that you've come through school and  
17857we've some [pause] I realized a couple of years ago we had students from Kentucky and  
17858that and it was the first time I did an exit interview really within with em students from the  
17859United States and I was shocked because they hadn't written long assignments [long pause]  
17860and so I thought they would find it easy whereas they were finding it really @hard [pause]  
17861ehm so yeah we put a bit more thinking we try to flag things up but you end up like parents  
17862is that bit of when parents are talking all you can hear is yip yip yip

17863R: and can I asked who who's going to be teaching that course will it be the same lecturers  
17864that are here will it be like a language specialist as well

17865Finn: it's evolved it's it's one full-time lecturer and then two part-time ones and we're  
17866actually gonna bring we have a version of it in the [discipline] degree and we've a version  
17867of it in our we don't have it quite yet in our [discipline] degree so the next time around

17868we're also gonna bring all the students together for 4-6 weeks [pause] and say look you are  
17869all about in the same [broad discipline] business @ [pause] and so therefore you should  
17870meet th- you're gonna [discipline profession] they're gonna [discipline profession] you're  
17871gonna [discipline profession] ehm and then we break them up because there's things that  
17872[professionals] need to learn that are different from la- [profession] people and the general  
17873[profession] people so ehm then they'll then they'll split up so for example one of the big  
17874things that [professionals] do is they have to learn in the first term they write have your  
17875first go at writing what we call a [professional] statement so what is their purpose what is  
17876their [discipline] commercial purpose and they might change it again and again [pause] but  
17877they have to read something and look at something and think about it in order to write a  
17878[professional] statement [long pause] so when you when you go to their [discipline  
17879presentation] it's those those couple of lines underneath the name

17880R: yeah and so they're actually getting training from an expert in the fields about how //to  
17881do that

17882Finn: yeah well we would have a lot of practitioners here in in the faculty and there's  
17883maybe I think four or five full time lecturing staff six full time lecturing staff and then  
17884there could be forty to fifty practitioners in any term [pause] so it's quite a lot of [pause]  
17885people who come in they can kind of go yeah they they clearly do the thing [pause] ehm  
17886but then the language thing we are only beginning to to embrace [pause] we do do support  
17887classes and things and eh English for academic purposes has began to become more more  
17888prevalent [pause] ehm and because the way way our faculty is set up um ehm language  
17889issues wouldn't be as big of a thing as there might be in other faculties because you need a  
17890higher level proficiency in English that doesn't necessarily mean people [pause] come with  
17891a super proficiency [pause] so we have to assess that and then put in supports as they go  
17892along

17893R: right um so kind of going to that is are you aware of the type of preparation that  
17894international students would have taken before coming to [institution 5]

17895Finn: ehh more so now because in my particular [pause] situation we do a thing called  
17896APL's which is the accreditation of prior learning so I would- a lot of them would come  
17897across my desk okay that this person is a second-year where would they come or whatever  
17898so you can you can we need to see course outlines we need to see what level that their  
17899college is at and we need to see subjects they've done so you have that knowledge of the  
17900student ehm depends where the- you you begin to get a lot of you know knowledge on the  
17901job so you begin begin to know what American students are like you begin to know what  
17902Nigerian students are like what students from India are like how they're different from

17903students from Pakistan I- the North American [pause] students are fascinating because  
17904there's a line across America and they're very different one side of it from what they are the  
17905other and the ones from the south they're really good they turn up on time they're quiet and  
17906#fast they do all the things they're supposed to do yeah they mightn't be the greatness  
17907students in the world but they're trying and we've students from some northern states  
17908[pause] and it's their first time away from home [pause] and they just fall off the bus  
17909[pause] ehm we have to be very aware of that when they when they when they come here  
17910especially if they come from a state where that you can't consume alcohol till you're 21 and  
17911then they come @here it's a different world and it's usually boys [pause] who can't [pause]  
17912put a break [pause] you know but they might have come from different colleges you know  
17913we've we've only realized in the last three years I'd say? that a lot of colleges would have  
17914pop quizzes you would not have such a thing here [pause] there will be no marks coming  
17915for it the students are shocked [pause] that those Kentucky students I talked talked about  
17916they were when they realized there's no [pause] pop quizzes they were like oh great and  
17917they'll relax and then someone goes wow 60% of our marks are going for one assignment  
17918and then they began to really [pause] shit themselves but [pause] wow the house is on fire  
17919@ and then they began to ask a lot of questions and we never thought about that it would  
17920be natural for us to here to have an assignment based com- module 10 percent 30 percent  
1792160 [pause] that would not be unheard of but we've realized now that some international  
17922students when they see that they're like oh my God [pause] and it's weird because if it was  
17923an exam it wouldn't phase them as much [pause] if for example 60% of the the but the  
17924notion that some big essay or some big [discipline] media thing the product they made was  
17925was gonna count for that thing like oh my God how will I [pause] but there's a lot of  
17926formative steps

17927R: right to kind of prepare //them

17928Finn: along along| the way but but when you when you're looking at the outline and this is  
1792960% I never [pause] conceptualized that that would be a challenge [pause] whereas for  
17930some students it is so [pause] so yeah it de- depends where they're where they're from  
17931[pause] and we've bigger knowledge now of our students [pause] where students are are  
17932from how they approach their studies and and now all that would be I'm the go-to really  
17933within the faculty we do do an annual program review and sometimes we do look at  
17934nationality and that would happen maybe [pause] every three or four years we'd kinda go  
17935yeah we'd a lot of Nigerian students through how did they do [pause] a lot of German  
17936students through [pause] how did they do and then sometimes we would share that  
17937afterwards because [pause] every program will have a program director and it's their job to

17938do the review so they would they would afterwards mig- might might we meet we have a  
17939meeting before every eh [pause] every semester [pause] and we're trying to everybody to  
17940come all of the part time lectures and we'd say look we have a lot of students coming this  
17941term from such a such a place and you have to remember they don't like doing whatever  
17942they need to be guided through this way they we're gonna have a tutor for them they need  
17943to go through the tutor this is the tutor here you to the point person @ they're gonna be  
17944your contact you need to get make sure that they because that tutor might be the person  
17945who takes them through the assignment on a language basis [long pause] alright? so we  
17946have we have a person in the faculty here >even with postgrads< who sits down with  
17947people who can kind go yeah how would you do that assignment and [pause] and so it's up  
17948for example we've a few people from Brazil so Portuguese would be their language and  
17949there's something about them that they need things to be explained more very very clearly  
17950as a group I have found there's about eight or nine of them and each one of them they're  
17951good [pause] but well they won't do anything until they're one hundred percent sure  
17952[pause] and you're like start reading >what if we read the wrong thing<

17953R: and you're like just read

17954Finn: yeah just just read the stuff and you know co- e-mail me and then they get your e-  
17955mail I'm reading this do you think that's a good idea and I'll be like yes but you don't want  
17956to be over prescriptive because then they'll come back and go well you told me to read this  
17957this and this [pause] and I didn't get a high mark and you're like okay that's not I said it's  
17958it's a halfway house but students they come come from different learning cultures too as  
17959well and that can have an impact and we're getting more knowledgeable about that but they  
17960change all they change all the time we might get people from a new college [pause] and  
17961they have a particular way of doing things in that college like we've students from France  
17962from Paris actually and it really depends on the college how they how they perform and  
17963what they're like and one college is a great college for [discipline] for what they do [pause]  
17964but they wouldn't be the most strict [pause] group the people they are very creative very  
17965[pause] but sometimes their marks are not great [long pause] but they it wouldn't be an  
17966issue with them there's another college [pause] and then they would sit there they were  
17967doing classes on Saturdays [pause]

17968R: so it really varies not even by country but //by institution

17969Finn: yeah and that was a super-duper place and then get a few people from [institution]  
17970which is the number one Parisian thing and they were a completely mixed bag [pause]  
17971some of them are uh they're very good I'm like oh my God yeah you are cream of the the  
17972cream then other people are kind of really? how @@

17973R: how did you get there? @

17974Finn: @how did you manage to get here on time because you're not showing that anywhere  
17975else in your work but um yeah but um so we we but again it's not a good idea to generalize  
17976about cultures or places or whatever and even though sometimes you might [pause] but um  
17977yeah but what it is it is the college really sometimes people are here because they know  
17978this is their shot they're gonna get they want to do really well and have you know goals and  
17979stuff like that an American student this term was like I have goals I was like wow [pause]  
17980and then they began to tell me what their goals were and I said you know good I don't  
17981need- you know? [pause] but in a way it was good because they were they came in clear  
17982every day they know what they wanted to do they would at the end of every day sit down  
17983and go well how did I get any closer to [long pause] to the goal yeah or whatever if all  
17984students have that level of [pause] involvement they mightn't need lectures [pause] you  
17985know?

17986R: and so linguistically um are you aware of the type of entry assessment //that

17987Finn: yeah|

17988R: they have to take

17989Finn: yeah we have an IELTS 6.5 to come onto undergrad and seven for the post-grad and  
17990[pause] [sigh] I don't know how the- what the test is or how they're tested I know it has a  
17991conversational element and a written element and a comprehension element and sometimes  
17992people might come and say to you oh you know the student did really great on one  
17993particular element [pause] but will you have will you meet them so we often do that to  
17994students who are borderline we meet them [pause] and then [pause] so my criteria is well  
17995can they understand what you're saying? Can they answer a question promptly it shows  
17996they comprehended it and can they talk about spontaneously about where they are from  
17997[pause] so you might ask them something about the politics of the place or whatever and  
17998see what they say ehm sometimes we've asked students to write an article for us [pause]  
17999//so

18000R: just to see a sample|

18001Finn: yeah so can you write me five hundred words before the end of the day on that topic  
18002[pause] and e-mail me [pause] and we would we would do that sometimes if we were  
18003dubious about a person say look write something first write something first write whatever  
18004and then when they come once you know they're in then so then the international office  
18005would tell us how many students we are we have and then we'd have to decide sometimes  
18006they might dec- it's like [pause] we have special needs students and we decide how to  
18007allocate supports to them and what supports are available so it's not unlike that [pause] in



18008terms of we need this support we need that support [pause] mostly it's a tutor to take them  
18009through assignments [pause] that would be what would happen most of the time

18010R: so based on your experience so you would it seems like you're quite involved in  
18011knowing kind of the linguistic preparation and you know what kind of score they come in  
18012having um how would you feel about that score kind of reflecting how they actually do in  
18013the university when they get here

18014Finn: that it is that it becomes a reflection of how they're how they do?

18015R: yeah or like how do you feel about it //mostly

18016Finn: it mostly it mostly| is it ehm see sometimes people [pause] are we like that's another  
18017thing @ I would say to them I'd say get your phone out and I'd show them the journal dot  
18018i.e. and I'd show them the guardian dot dot com dot UK and say put this on your phone and  
18019read it every day [pause] stop reading the other stuff and it comes back to that an  
18020immersion thing because if you're here you're here you're not in or over your phone you  
18021need to need to be this other place read its news and read it ge- get a few different sources  
18022and stuff like that and read stuff as good as [pause] the New York Times or whatever  
18023[pause] and uh so they have to but em it generally is sometimes the students that do really  
18024well on the they come in with their IELTS is really high and they're not so good

18025R: yeah so it's still kind of a case-by-case

18026Finn: yeah but but it generally isn't a bad [pause] guide I- I'd say I say in a way one I th-  
18027the person I share this office with now is from another faculty and so it's [discipline] and  
18028stuff like that you can really see [pause] people struggle cuz they're on the five point five  
18029whatever [pause] and they could do some modules really well and others

18030R: not as

18031Finn: yeah and then you can see them all when they get to an elective they're all trying to  
18032pick the elective they think is the easiest for them rather [pause] than any knowledge or  
18033beneficiary thing at at the end of it or whatever but um gen- generally is I would say it's it's  
18034dependent on the student's ability to mix [long pause] and speak English while they're here  
18035and write take their notes in English [pause] cuz you do get students we've had a good few  
18036Germans who are really good who write their essay in German and then translate it [pause]  
18037and you're like the t- great but don't don't do that [pause] you need to write it in English  
18038and then correct it and correct it but wr- write in English [long pause] and um on and that  
18039was last year I realized students were doing that and I was like really? [long pause] that is  
18040gonna take a lot of time [pause] but they didn't want any mistakes

18041R: right but it was still causing issues there

18042Finn: yeah

18043R: so what kind of preparation do you think that international students should take before  
18044coming to [institution 5]

18045Finn: ehmm independently?

18046R: independently or also like courses that kinda stuff

18047Finn: yeah well there's that [pause] there there that like the [foundation year] model is one  
18048method but we have sometimes they come here for summer courses they do summer  
18049language thing now [pause] they in our in terms of our faculty wa- the the the last bridge  
18050we have to really cross is that that there will be a course for them [pause] that would be  
18051[discipline] specific or or discipline specific now we had in the past when we had cohorts  
18052coming with particular cohorts come from Norway and Germany we got them in four  
18053weeks early and them in classes and normally we wanted test their technical ability just to  
18054see where they were but also to kind of go look this is what an essay is like [pause] this is  
18055how we teach a topic here just this this this is how what a reading list looks like [pause] so  
18056we wha- what we would do we'd cherry pick bits from different courses not ones they will  
18057do but ones that the students that they're going into a class with would have done [long  
18058pause] so we teach that topic over two days and say look these four readings this bit of the  
18059website this [pause] whatever ehm that worked works generally okay ehm but I'm not sure  
18060if that's the that's the way if everyone should have to do that because I think what happens  
18061is people have a low English ability and they're told come and do a course [long pause] do  
18062the course before we enter the program I think that's the same all over the state do do the  
18063course and so you're in the city or you might even be in the college so you're finding your  
18064way around places like that but I don't know how much you're learning other than the  
18065[pause] English stuff or whatever you know or what you actually learn [pause] about the  
18066[discipline] world or whatever or even just a simple thing that ability to think critically  
18067especially if you come from a culture that doesn't seem to be [pause] you know a valued  
18068skill [pause] and then you're you're coming somewhere people are suddenly saying well  
18069what do you think is right

18070R: yeah so so if if they were to take summer courses it kind of sounds like you think it  
18071should have an element of content critical thinking familiarity and language all //together

18072Finn: yeah| yeah and that they would learn th- they'd learn the language like if you have to  
18073make a [discipline-specific object] [pause] you have to interview people you have to ask  
18074them questions you have to speak the language ehm [pause] but you also have to be able to  
18075conceptualize and ultimately to cr- you have to be able to con- think you know and I often  
18076say to students you know ehm have you ever had a dream in English?

18077R: mmm how many of them had say yes

18078Finn: very few

18079R: very few okay

18080Finn: very few cuz I say that's the moment cuz I would say you know and I wr- well I'm

18081mostly assessing about your language that's that and so what have you ever dreamt about

18082your your thesis and they say yeah and I say well that's that's because you're immersed in it

18083[pause] and uh like I don't know how many dreams I had about my @viva @@@while @I

18084@was @there

18085R: @@@I'm only in my second year and I'm already having @dreams about my @viva

18086Finn: Oh yeah @and mine actually ended up being really [pause] it was very good actually

18087because they just after a minute when I went in they were like you know you're good you

18088know you have it calm down I was like really? yeah yeah you're it's a few minor things but

18089we'll whatever [pause] but uh yeah you hear horror stories so but anyway but yeah but ehm

18090[pause] yeah I don't know I'm I don't know what's happened to them what their cultural

18091experiences of being here are you know what people are saying to them you know what

18092they about the place and the city between the canals is a multicultural place outside of it

18093isn't [pause] so I don't know what that day-to-day life is like you know being a middle aged

18094middle class male I can do what I want go where I like @in terms of the privileged here

18095I'm at the very top so [pause] I like it's really hard to figure out when you're in the class

18096that someone [pause] you know like I know for example one pretty simple thing a lot of

18097the academic studies of our area [discipline] theories are all rooted in the United States

18098[pause] so sometimes if you're an American student sit in your class you think everything

18099is about having a go at you @ you have to say to know that academia is all about America

18100[pause] cuz that's where it originated from right [pause] Europe is catching up on [pause]

18101the critical [discipline] theories in Europe so but uh I a- I do understand it can seem pretty

18102weird about [pause] people talk about your place or whatever [pause] like this one we've a

18103lot of not not a huge amount of Nigerian students and I've had only two or three a year but

18104there's one particular place in Nigeria we've never got them from [pause] never got the one

18105and it's where there it was a war in Nigeria in the 1960s called Biafran and I've always

18106gone why can we never get any students from this other place because they were the more

18107progressive [pause] liberal wanting to change the world group of people and they lost the

18108war to get independence or whatever but this is the first we have one [pause] in the class

18109and the only reason I know is because the other students ask me well he's

18110R: he's from that

18111Finn: yeah [pause] and I was like [click] it's not really [pause] but most students even the

18112Irish students wouldn't be cognizant at all

18113R: of that kind of differentiation

18114Finn: yeah and that is a problem too because you're meeting the Irish who know nothing  
18115about where you're from like you think about how complex the United States is and most  
18116Irish people their map of it is New York Boston [pause] maybe Orlando [pause] and  
18117occasionally you'll meet someone who's been to California [pause] but yet they'll kind of  
18118go yeah I've been to America [pause] and you're going nooo no you haven't and I actually  
18119remember being in Trinity years ago at a concert and this band were doing the sound check  
18120before and this friend of mine went up and was kind of going oh you know you're from  
18121America and they're like yeah yeah and he says I was in New York and he said son [pause]  
18122New York is not American it's Europe

18123R: yeah that's true actually @

18124Finn: @ and it's only when I went to New York I realized yep that is that is Europe I mean  
18125it's it's @not America America it's not like if you'd have gone a hundred miles in any  
18126direction and you'd hit another America [pause] I remember the first time I was in Jersey I  
18127was going holy. fuck. what is this place. @ and then um wher- then first time I was in in  
18128Boston I was in Harvard whatever and it's like a Jane Austen novel everyone was hoity-  
18129toity and you #speaks #you #measure being introduced to them [pause] and then I went to  
18130South Boston for a bit and I was like oh my God @@@

18131R: yeah it's completely different it's it's //even

18132Finn: how do these| cities live beside each- like

18133R: yeah yeah I mean it's even like where well like we were saying where I'm from is you  
18134know [city] the city is very different from where I grew up which is a 30 minute drive but I  
18135went to school in the city of [city] but then my family's from [state] which is one of the  
18136poorest states so it's kind of

18137Finn: wow yeah yeah the dichotomy of and that that can be hard I think hard for  
18138students they don't understand [pause] they sometimes think that all the students that are  
18139here are wealthy because they must have had resources to get here they never think they  
18140might be trying to escape @ like I would assume a lot of them they're not gonna go back  
18141[pause] they're gonna go somewhere else so the the whole education is just one of the  
18142things that's on their minds [pause] when they rock up here

18143R: and so it kind of sounds like just from what you've been talking about that there's a lot  
18144of support for the students here there's tutors there's EAP //etc.

18145Finn: yeah the EAP| is new now that's only happened this is the first year it's happening  
18146and really it'll be next year [pause] hmm and there'll be more of it ehm and there is there  
18147the tutorial stuff ehm there is [pause] the international office here as an office are pretty

18148good and they have a policy about pastoral care for the students [pause] yeah I think the  
18149big change we've managed [pause] to move the lecturing staff over the last decade away  
18150from thinking that this is a problem [pause] to this is the norm and it's jus- their classes are  
18151going to have international people in them [pause] it's just a different challenge [long  
18152pause] and you need you need to you know we we've like for us probably the biggest thing  
18153is special needs [pause] because in the [discipline] [pause] has because of improvements in  
18154the education system here is the students completing college completing second level who  
18155never would have before and entering college which is brilliant but it means they rock @up  
18156[pause] and so you have a different challenge in the classroom you might have a student  
18157who is disrupting because he's got um Asperger's or is dyslexic or whatever so you have to  
18158accommodate that your accommodating the difference [pause] all the time

18159R: and so would you see much difference between the Irish students and international  
18160students in terms of I guess academic success and the difficulties that they're having or  
18161things like like if you were to get like essays from an Irish student and an international  
18162student are they kind of having the same types of difficulties or different or

18163Finn: emmm [long pause] yeah I think [pause] well [pause] first off I should say maybe the  
18164Irish students when an essay comes due if they're even if they're a weak student they'd give  
18165it a go [pause] and th- which means they're going hand in a really poorly prepared work  
18166[long pause] alright and international students wouldn't. [pause] they would either kinda oh  
18167I'm having problems with with the assignment or they might plagiarize [pause] so the level  
18168of plagiarizing would be higher I would I'd find among international students than Irish  
18169students because they found somewhere else this is this is the way of doing it cuz you see a  
18170really poorly written essay from an Irish @student that you're gonna give 40 or 35 to and  
18171then you get this other essay that to the person didn't write [long pause] and you you have  
18172to we we have this thing here we give it a one because we have to the way our system  
18173works some mark has to be input for it so you can't put in zero

18174R: right so you'd give it a 1%

18175Finn: give it a 1 and that means we're not really sure of the #providence of that the work  
18176presented [pause] and we need to talk to the student about it [pause] and it does happen  
18177with Irish students but it happens more international students or whatever em [pause] but  
18178then it doesn't happen a lot but just slightly more [pause] but but there's something about  
18179Irish people that just ah I'll give it a go [pause] but that other cultures wouldn't have so  
18180American students never do that [pause] they'd never submit something that they hadn't  
18181really thought a lot about and read about their their stuff they might have got something  
18182wrong they mightn't done it that well but they would have given it more thought [pause] uh

18183em the Nordic students we have from Germany and other places they've really put a lot of  
18184thought in into the work maybe way of thinking about it is well I've only ever been asked  
18185by students from [pause] Denmark Sweden Norway or Germany and in one case Latvia  
18186how they would have got a higher mark [pause] and like the French students and Irish  
18187students wouldn't then

18188R: fair enough yeah okay

18189Finn: @@ so that's that is a difference [pause] and it is it does turn heads in the class when  
18190someone kind of goes how could we have done better @ I mean wow that's uh not a  
18191question you hear here often

18192R: yeah okay so I guess for me that's basi- well not actually have one more question so  
18193what do you hope your students leave feeling after finishing their degree or what do you  
18194hope that they've gained from being here

18195Finn: ehmm [pause] well they should have a competency in the thing that they've studied  
18196ehm that would be the big thing but they should be able to think and look at the world  
18197especially for [discipline] it's a big thing to look and see what's happening and want to do  
18198more [discipline] want to be excited about making stuff to doing stuff whether it's a  
18199[discipline-specific objects] or um research or whatever ehm and um ideally they sh- I  
18200hope which is kind of big thing for the last couple of years it's one world it doesn't really  
18201matter where you're from it shouldn't be that big of a deal you we're all here we're all you  
18202know yep

18203R: and do you think that they do leave feeling that and knowing that

18204Finn: a small amount

18205R: a small amount

18206Finn: yeah cuz a lot of them are here they come from societies that are credential driven  
18207same as ours it's about getting a credential [pause] and that's all all that matters really and  
18208um and this is an industry all right so I'm not as much as you might try to be something  
18209super-duper it's it's it's an industry and even like if you think about [institution] being the  
18210gold standard it's still an industry [pause] I was in a first-year class last week two weeks  
18211ago and we were talking about um I don't know how we got onto it utopian socialism was  
18212the topic and we were talking about society and j- rules and this this anarchist Proudhon  
18213and I had said you know? so [pause] you- tal- I said you know facts you ought to know  
18214this is something that came out of this revolution that schools were created to people are  
18215learning but they're also learning how to work @ and how to how to behave or whatever so  
18216if you've had you know twelve years of sitting in rows and stuff you know maybe there'd  
18217be a better way of doing that there and I said well you know that what was it I was talking

18218about a French guy who what was his name #unt made this theory this theory in the in the  
1821919th century you know a third of jobs were pointless [pause] so I was saying what is a  
18220pointless job and I said you know I can walk into a town on a Sunday and this guy is  
18221holding a thing up and I said oh my God is that really someone's job [pause] you know I  
18222said um people who were kind of selling you charity stuff really is that someone's job and  
18223then I said how about lecturers? and they're like oh no and I said look surely you should be  
18224able to read the stuff we'd meet once a month [long pause] have a discussion you'd hand in  
18225your essay [long pause] and they were like [gasp] nooo @ and I said you know that would  
18226be I think a much better way [pause] I could do more research and other stuff and [pause]  
18227but they're it's kind of weird that it had never occurred as a @@ [pause] you know maybe  
18228maybe you don't need all these you should be able to just come in and read the stuff  
18229[pause] answer a few questions write an essay or two but uh but yeah so very few people  
18230think about [pause] a degree or a lot of them want that degree wanna do a masters I want to  
18231go traveling or a lot of people come out of school especially in Ireland and they don't really  
18232know what they want to- like I was like that like #scooby [pause] yeah I fell into things by  
18233accident

18234R: same@

18235Finn: yeah yeah but um I'd like them to have a more noble thing but it's about getting a job  
18236[pause] stages and those things and for some of them it's about wow I learned something  
18237interesting okay and I see the world differently but like I say I don't really understand their  
18238outer experience of living in this city though and what it's like [long pause] and they're  
18239waitressing or they're running taxis or they're cleaning up hotel rooms or whatever it is that  
18240wo- work at [pause] and um yeah so I don't know what they're [pause] what they're real  
18241experience is like do they even like that thing because you meet people who are very  
18242lonely but then you meet people who are a part of big communities and like the Polish  
18243people that have come here have created a community the city and a big network of people  
18244the other people would seem to be by your families it's a family structure doesn't matter  
18245where you're from [pause] so the international experience is very different than student  
18246experiences like a lot of Ir- me- a lot of people who live here they're trying to escape from  
18247their families aren't they@ this is their stage one and being I'm not in school I can come  
18248and go as I want and so there again their experience is a bit different [pause] cuz it's their  
18249first bit of seeing what happens if I do get [pause] a little bit inebriated and I still have to  
18250finish an assignment

18251R: that's all the questions that I have for you was um are there any questions that you wish  
18252I had asked that I didn't ask

18253Finn: ehh [pause] bu-de-duh [long pause] [click] I don't know really ehm cuz all your  
18254questions are about educational experience and and then a lot of them are about education  
18255experience for international students so yeah I don't know it was it- [pause] yes I don't  
18256know really because see I- b- now obviously you want to come out and create something at  
18257thing justify but you don't want to push the bug too far out and say you should be doing the  
18258course@ you should be here for a semester before the you know whatever I don't know if  
18259that's true in an ideal world maybe@ yeah yeah and um yeah so the questions were pretty  
18260good interesting

18261R: Thanks is there anything else that you would like to express add

18262Finn: no no I'm good

18263

18264

**Hanna**

18265

18266R: right so um so first can you tell me a bit about the modules that you would teach so like  
18267do you teach undergrad post-grad both what types of modules like what the subject is etc.

18268Hanna: mm-hmm so I teach a combination of undergraduate and graduate modules in  
18269[discipline] and in [discipline] so [discipline] programs and then class si- sizes range from  
18270[pause] 80 up to 300 and um it would be primarily [discipline] topics primarily [topic] so  
18271they would be learning about [topics] so there's a [practice] component to it as well and um  
18272we have I'd say three quarters of our students are Irish students from anywhere from  
18273Ireland and the others are international mainly from Canada and US as our Graduate  
18274[discipline] but for our undergraduates we have a we have a program where we accept  
18275about a hundred or so Malaysian students and they come to us for 3 years and do  
18276pre[practice] training with us and they have to pass all of their English requirements um  
18277but they do come in at various levels of uh fluency

18278R: yep can you tell me about the work required of your students and your modules so what  
18279do they actually have to do both inside and outside of the class

18280Hanna: sure so they attend lectures they usually attend 22 to 24 hours of lecture per  
18281semester and they also attend [pause] 2 to 6 hours of lab time ehh per week and that lab  
18282could be uh actual [discipline-specific action] or it could be [discipline-specific action] and  
18283correlating that with umm [professional tools] they also do [practice] skills so we would  
18284have them have to work with each other and to do [discipline-specific action] to try and  
18285[discipline-specific action] is whatever just certain [topic] that's on the [topic] they need to  
18286know [topic] and we also have them do specialized [practice] skills they would learn how  
18287to [pause] [discipline-specific action] and things like that so these are the types of things



18288they would do throughout the semester uh [topic] ehm [pause] and in addition to attending  
18289lectures and attending labs and attending [practice] skills they would also be regularly  
18290assessed throughout the semester and normally it would be formative not summative so it  
18291doesn't count for anything but that assessment gives them feedback on their on their uh  
18292performance and it allows them to identify their strengths and weaknesses and but they do  
18293get assessed quite heavily then but because they're [discipline] students they're they're quite  
18294competitive so they'd actually do a pretty good job on um preparing em in addition to that  
18295we may have some sessions booked where they're working in computer labs looking at  
18296[topic] or whatever

18297R: and would they have like writing and reading that they would have to do outside of  
18298class so about how much would you expect them to read outside of class

18299Hanna: right so they're expected to read quite a lot we have several [discipline] textbooks  
18300and [discipline] atlases and the atlases are kind of pictures of where stuff is where the  
18301textbook explains what [topic] is and how it can be [topic] whatever so they have to  
18302process a lot of visual stuff as well as understand [topic] and I would say [long pause] they  
18303probably have less reading these [discipline] students probably have a lot less reading than  
18304uh humanities social science students um but their reading is heavy and specialized um  
18305[pause] and we know that our students aren't reading

18306R: right do you think they aren't reading because of time because of difficulty just because  
18307they don't want to or do you know kind of

18308Hanna: yeah I think that's so I couldn't open a new [institution 2] I've been in Dublin for  
18309seven years and I think I've seen that they're not reading because reading isn't part of their  
18310student culture anymore they don't go to the library they don't know how to go to the  
18311library uh they want everything online and with [discipline] it is quite good for them to do  
18312a lot of learning based on stuff they watch on YouTube or online learning resources digital  
18313[discipline] things like this and they feel that that's enough and it is enough to get them to  
18314pass and be a basic student but the students are really good students you can tell that  
18315they're the ones who are reading yeah so we asked them to do a lot of reading but they  
18316don't do as much as we are wanting them to do ehm we wouldn't have typical assignments  
18317like social science or humanities we would have um we do some uh f-f-for assessment  
18318whether it's during the semester or at the end of the exam at the end of the semester we  
18319would have um we would have them have to build a poster for example they have an A4  
18320size paper and they have to write about [topic] something like this and they have to write  
18321uhh [topic] blah blah blah so it's short paragraphs that are descriptive it's not so much  
18322putting ideas together it's just showing what you know so that's a different type of uhm

18323[pause] learning output um we would have them also do workbooks so they would look at  
18324a [visual] and have to discuss what's wrong and how that came to be so it's a lot of  
18325correlation quick paragraph writing we wouldn't ask for anything structured in their final  
18326exams we do ask for short answers or sometimes we ask for essays and we don't expect  
18327them to format it as if you're writing a proper essay where you've got you know  
18328introduction and you've got your hypotheses then you have a body text then you  
18329summarize it at the end we we don't ask for this we don't expect this and they don't know  
18330how to do it anyways @@

18331R: okay so basically you're looking more at content

18332Hanna: content but the content is really it's not just rote memory some of them do that  
18333[discipline] students are really good at memorizing things they can memorize three or four  
18334pages word-for-word and they just write it all down and that's a special skill in itself ehm  
18335but this doesn't show us how their mind is working it just shows us that they've got a  
18336photographic memory or they just memorize things ehm we're looking for them to  
18337synthesize large amounts of information and we're also looking for them in the essays and  
18338the short answer questions for assessment we are looking for them to tell us what they  
18339know about [topic] and the main problems we have are they don't read the question [pause]  
18340so they just write down anything they think of and they actually haven't addressed what  
18341we've asked them and that's a shocking finding because [discipline] students are very  
18342precise I do feel that they're really failing on the reading they don't understand that verbal  
18343communication and written communication is delicate and you have to [pause] things are  
18344written in a particular way to get information to tease information out and they just see that  
18345they might just see a few key terms they just start writing about it and when we meet with  
18346them and discuss um you know what happened because you failed this and they're like but  
18347I knew everything but you didn't answer the question uh it's a surprise to them so those  
18348nuances of communication and expressing themselves that's what's lacking in our students  
18349yeah

18350R: so would this be the scene with undergrad and post-grad like the modules and  
18351assessments and the problems

18352Hanna: ehm so I haven't actually taught the graduate students for the last two years but in  
18353the five years' experience I've had the graduate students are much more capable ehm the  
18354only difference is they're both doing the same [discipline] degree but the graduate students  
18355have one year less but they already have a bachelor's degree or a master's degree so they  
18356tend to be older and they tend to have already done a formal degree and that is what is  
18357supporting them that's what's carrying them through they have more skills

18358R: more experience

18359Hanna: yeah so they're performing where we would want them to perform because they've  
18360already had experience with it it's the undergrads coming and even in their second third  
18361fourth year they're really struggling it seems that [pause] when they have skills they master  
18362them but unless we teach them new skills they get stuck and we there is no embedded time  
18363to teach them these skills in the curriculum it's like you just need to learn the [discipline] so  
18364that's the big divide between our students those who are able to synthesize information and  
18365actually explain what's in their head versus students who just they give you everything and  
18366it's up to the listener or whoever to tease out the information that they want from them and  
18367that that's that's that's poor language and communication skills I think

18368R: so do you have research students

18369Hanna: we do so in our [discipline] we don't have [pause] we don't have a taught MSC or  
18370taught PhD it's research-based for our own students and they would either be uhm bachelor  
18371and master in [topic] or um master in some type of research or PhDs in some type of  
18372research they would take a few modules that the university requires them to have like soft  
18373skills whatever um but they're primarily being assessed on their uh research project which  
18374they don't design or they don't design themselves and they're expected to develop it ehm  
18375and because we're quite a heavy competitive international research university and research  
18376school school of [discipline] ehm we're requiring them to submit manuscripts and attend uh  
18377conferences to present posters or papers and these students tend to be slightly better at  
18378writing but not that much better they seem to have skills for formal scientific writing but  
18379again lacking the ability to express what they're trying to say yeah

18380R: um so I mean you've kind of touched on this but how do you assess academic success  
18381like what are you looking for when you're assessing the student

18382Hanna: alright so [sigh] it's a bit tricky um because in [discipline] academic success would  
18383mean that they've met the learning objectives because we have these professional bodies  
18384that come and review us and students have to be at a certain uh capacity they have to be  
18385performing at a certain uh level and if they don't we would lose our certification so we're  
18386constantly uh striving to uhm not assist our students intellectually or academically but  
18387we're constantly striving to make sure that they're learning the state-of-the-art [discipline]  
18388and so they're having more and more expectations placed on them to do more and more  
18389evidence-based scientific learning but they don't have the skills to approach that there's no  
18390time in their curriculum so um what was the question again

18391R: so how do you //assess academic

18392Hanna: oh yeah how do I

18393R: and what would you be looking for when you're grading or assessing them  
18394Hanna: right so academic success on paper means they pass um but just passing doesn't  
18395mean you're gonna get a position in the [workplace] so we're looking for those students  
18396who are um A-level students and whether they're doing it because they're memorizing or  
18397whether they do it because they've actually learned the skills to be dynamic and yeah umm  
18398proper learning skills it doesn't matter they just need an A so on paper that's what's  
18399important um but my background would be humanities social science and I'm interested in  
18400students pursuing knowledge for its own sake and developing their skills to be better  
18401[professionals] because how do you communicate to your [client] who may not be an  
18402English speaker who may not be Irish who may not be who may have some learning or  
18403physical disability all these you know cultural differences physiological differences blah or  
18404maybe they're just very old or maybe they're very young maybe they're not educated  
18405whatever how do you explain to them what you're doing and this I think marks you as a  
18406successful academic or not but these are not things that are embedded in our program to  
18407assess they have a professional skills module they have to take but professionalism in  
18408terms of not getting sued not in terms of [professional communication] these things don't  
18409really exist in [discipline] there's no more time for it anymore it's been pushed out of the  
18410curriculum so [pause] I think it's quite different in [discipline] compared to humanities and  
18411social science where our expectations of what is a good academic it's different uh a good  
18412academic means that you've met your learning objectives and you have high scores and  
18413that makes you competitive for your next stage and that's all really that we're looking for in  
18414paper  
18415R: and so that's really again just basically content of being able to produce that content to  
18416reach an A level it's not as much about say like coherence of that content or how you're  
18417expressing that content it's basically if it's there you'll get it if it's not you won't  
18418Hanna: yeah um [pause] it's a bit tricky with with with written work yes it's you won't get  
18419the best grade if you're not expressing it well ehm but a lot of their work wouldn't be  
18420written it would be multiple choice questions or it would be um show me that you can  
18421perform this action this skill yeah um so they're good at performing actions and they're  
18422good at organizing knowledge in an MCQ standard but when it comes to how they would  
18423speak to [clients] they're they're they're the the nu- they're it's a bit the nuances are a bit  
18424lost because they're not used to communicating delicately or they're not used to  
18425communicating efficiently yeah it's a skill that they definitely do learn but unfortunately  
18426not at uni they learn it from trial and error to the dismay of some [clients] who might be  
18427put off or confused or and I don't think it's specific to [discipline] it's not specific to

18428[institution 2] it's just specific to these professional programs whether it's [disciplines]

18429whatever yeah

18430R: mm-hmm okay um so how would you communicate your expectations and assessment

18431requirements to students would it be verbal written both

18432Hanna: both definitely both um through our blackboard system the online system for

18433communicating blah blah blah better modules ehm I've put up I personally put up a module

18434handbook so it describes what the course what the module is about and what their learning

18435objectives are and my expectations about the skills that they should have coming out and

18436it's rare that those skills would include being able to express yourself it's more functional

18437skills

18438R: yeah like you will be able to identify you know [topic]

18439Hanna: yes exactly yeah so those are the learning objectives um they're posted on

18440blackboard in the handbook introduction to the module the first day of class we go through

18441them quickly in a set of prep lectures and for myself for every lecture and every lab that

18442they get umm I give a little paragraph explaining why they're learning what they're

18443learning because I don't feel our students or any students in [pause] um our school non

18444humanities non social science [pause] they're they're not- many of them are not good at

18445putting information together so I have to do it for them um I don't know whether they once

18446it's in front of them it clicks I don't know if [pause] they would get used to thinking about

18447that and saying okay why am I doing this activity I've actually never asked them um some

18448modules they don't get that they just get all the information from the lecture and then it's

18449the end of the lecture and that's it and then they move to lab and they're not able to make

18450those connection >the very very good students< are but the average student and the weak

18451students are not so for all of my sessions whatever they're gonna learn whatever they're

18452gonna learn I have a little paragraph explaining justifying why we're doing this and what

18453they're supposed to get out of it beyond just the learning objectives you know like last

18454week we did this this week we're doing this that's why this is how it comes together yeah

18455yeah so I feel that the students aren't able to do that [pause] and when we ask them to do it

18456they're still like mmm not there yet I don't really see it I do it for them because it just gets

18457them farther

18458R: and again what do you see a difference between post grad and undergrad in terms of

18459being able to make those connections

18460Hanna: [sigh] I think so yeah the post grads work harder and they work better because they

18461already have a first dry run of what it's like to be in a university setting and the post grad

18462students the ones doing [discipline] not our research students they're [pause] more [click]

18463they would be more creative yeah they're able to put connections together and mmmm  
18464they're able to be more creative in terms of problem solving but not so much not so much  
18465more advanced compared to the undergrads for expressing their ideas in terms of our  
18466research students or our masters PhD research students [sigh] again I think because of what  
18467they're topics are they'd be looking into [topic] research or they'll be looking into  
18468identifying [topic] that do this or that it's very technical and there's not a lot of language  
18469skills that go into that it's more methods based so again those aren't the skills they're  
18470honing like our students are phenomenal they're super talented but it's not the skills that  
18471they're honing yeah yeah

18472R: and so in general um what do you think that students need to succeed at [institution 2]  
18473overall

18474Hanna: hmm [long pause] it depends on how you you're working definition of succeed so  
18475in my idea university isn't it's a false perception that students go to university and that  
18476preps them for a job I think I disagree with this I think university expands your mind it  
18477challenges you it gives you new skills new experiences new ideas [pause] it doesn't  
18478guarantee you anything apart from education um so on a [institution 2] level in a university  
18479level [pause] in my opinion as a non [discipline] from a humanities social science  
18480background I think being a successful student means you've learned a lot of stuff and you'll  
18481be a better citizen because of it in terms of dealing with people in terms of having more  
18482refined [pause] more thoughtful um well considered approaches to things to people to your  
18483actions uh and having a few specialized skills I think this is what makes you a successful  
18484university student ehm but then it depends on what school you're in and you're in the  
18485school of philosophy or school of sports science or school of medicine it's different so I  
18486think being a successful [discipline] student means knowing your field very well and being  
18487able to professionally interact with others um and again this English and language skills  
18488[pause] communication skills they're not what's being uhmm learned they pick it up as they  
18489go they don't come ready with it unfortunately they could go much farther but they are  
18490only at that limit I think

18491R: yeah so basically in order to succeed they they basically just need to know their field  
18492and be able to meet the learning objectives and professionally interact with people

18493Hanna: yep yep so our students have a lot of other requirements that they would have to be  
18494volunteering for things they would have to be um participating to get money for charity  
18495they would have to be doing advanced projects advanced research projects in the summer  
18496about [topic] skills they're always doing something 24/7 [pause] 365 days a year they don't  
18497get breaks [pause] and they compete with each other for the best CVs so our students are

18498quite talented they're quite special but uhh language and communication is not it's not one  
18499of their strengths

18500R: okay yeah alright and um so how can you expand or not so if you could say these are  
18501the skills that I want them to learn um or these are the skills that I wish were embedded in  
18502the curriculum what would those skills be

18503Hanna: um in terms of language and communication? just anything

18504R: yep

18505Hanna: hmmm well I think there should be modules on critical thinking and logic and  
18506synthesis of information and um [click] communication I think there should actually be a  
18507module on that um [pause] involving topics that they have to cover anyways but when do  
18508we fill this where do we fit this in because the students are during holidays they're in class  
18509on Saturdays they're in class with us so umm yeah it's not realistic

18510R: to expect it additional work

18511Hanna: yeah absolutely not realistic but how can we incorporate it more and more in to our  
18512modules so they are getting it indirectly [pause] I don't know that's because we're weaning  
18513off of having short answer and uh essay questions in fact we're tend to be going all  
18514multiple choice because of limitations staff to student ratio um [pause] demands on staff  
18515we don't have time so in a way we're when we we're assessing them with essays and short  
18516answer we are asking them to do something that we weren't preparing them to do or asking  
18517them to explain and to [pause] make connections and to clearly articulate things yet they  
18518didn't have training in it we assumed they would get it from their high school and primary  
18519school [pause] but most students won't have those skills coming in so in a way I feel it's  
18520[pause] uhm doing them a disservice because those students who do poorly it's not only  
18521because they don't know the material when you give them an oral exam which happens  
18522very rarely cuz we don't have time to do that they know their material and then when you  
18523ask them to write a paragraph on it they can't articulate it so I think for me in [discipline]  
18524this is the big problem so we're moving away from that primarily logistical reasons  
18525because we don't have staff to be able to do this so it's all going to multiple choice so  
18526they're very good at working out problem solving and correct answers from incorrect  
18527answers ehm but again those multiple choice questions are basic they're not like complex  
18528uhm some multiple-choice questions you can write very basically and some you can write  
18529that it requires a lot of thought processes and a lot of mental calculations ehm this is what  
18530they would get when they're qualifying to be a [professional] in various countries uh that's  
18531not the level of where they're at so we build these basic ones so again we're moving away  
18532from that um so what was sorry I might have gone off topic what was the question

18533R: just what they needed to succeed at [institution 2] and then we started talking about how  
18534they or what skills you would like to see them

18535Hanna: oh right um yeah um I would like them to have a module on how to be a better  
18536communicator and how to synthesize information how to think critically and uh use logic  
18537ehm [pause] I think that's I think that's what I would require it'd be really nice to have they  
18538have their professionalism module but it would be really nice to have [discipline  
18539communication] module but they they they they kind of get that in the [workplace] through  
18540observing [professionals]

18541R: yes so they'll actually have to go like the [practice] part they'll have to go to the  
18542[workplace] and shadow and participate

18543Hanna: mm-hm

18544R: um how are they assessed in that section in the practical part

18545Hanna: um in pre[practice] years in [institution 2] in the practical component they would  
18546be assessed [pause] we don't give them assessment for what they're doing at that moment  
18547they get assessed at the end of the year unless we're doing a continuous assessment that's  
18548formative in which case um at the end of the [functional skill] or at the end of the lab we  
18549would have a piece of paper saying do you understand these three three points if you do  
18550you've met the learning objectives if not you have to go back and think about this

18551R: okay right um so do you actually put them in placement or so like

18552Hanna: oh so where do you go after the three years and what's the next stage

18553R: yeah yeah

18554Hanna: um so once they receive their [object] which is symbolic that they've done their  
18555pre[practice] training they go on placement in the [workplace] and I actually don't know  
18556how that works because I'm not uh the [practice] people in the [workplace] that  
18557[professionals] deal with this ehm let me think [long pause] I'm not sure I'm not sure if  
18558they're assigned based on their abilities or if they're assigned based on where they're  
18559located or if they're assigned based on choice I don't know actually

18560R: and that's where they would kind of learn the [discipline communication] and things  
18561like that

18562Hanna: just by shadowing luckily if they get a good [professional] to learn the good skills  
18563from or a horrible [professional] to learn what they should never do @@ yeah okay so the  
18564last four years when they're in the [workplace] the [professionals] take over in this separate  
18565what we do so I don't get to see the whole process unfortunately

18566R: alright and so how much of a factor do you think language plays an academic success



18567Hanna: oh academic success in terms of nonprofessional programs uh it's really important I  
18568think being able to communicate and read between the lines and all these small nuances I  
18569think it's really important uhh because it doesn't matter what your language skills are if you  
18570can communicate what you're trying to say that's important and ehm but again from a  
18571school of [discipline] perspective it's still really important but because I'm dealing with  
18572[topic] if they can tell me [topic] yeah and and [topic] and what features would cause some  
18573problems in the future that's all they need to communicate so those aren't thoughts though  
18574that's more you know what I'm trying to say it's more

18575R: it's not the way that they communicate it is just if they communicate this

18576Hanna: yeah yeah yeah

18577R: and I'm so kind of switching from the more general side to the more specific to  
18578international but also home students who may be from a different background so  
18579socioeconomic levels or maybe they're Irish but their family is not a native you know it  
18580may be their second third fourth language um English um so what experience do you have  
18581with these international students or students from different backgrounds

18582Hanna: mm-hmm so like I said we have a lot of uh Canadian and American students for  
18583our graduate program primarily because it's too expensive to go to school in Canada and  
18584US um they come over here umm they perform really well their language skills are  
18585excellent all the things I've mentioned critical thinking logical that stuff is excellent they  
18586already have those skills in them since childhood so they only have to tackle learning the  
18587material um in terms of our non-native English speaking students we've had some from  
18588France we have the Malaysian group we have occasionally a few other Southeast Asian  
18589Singapore [pause] Indonesia ehm and we have a few um Middle Eastern students and their  
18590English wouldn't their English skills wouldn't be very strong but they're able to  
18591communicate the thoughts [pause] and it seems that there's a divide if the student is a good  
18592strong student in terms of getting A's and gets those A's because they work hard they're  
18593able to communicate themselves they're able to communicate their thoughts even though  
18594their English isn't good and the students who are kind of weaker students with the same  
18595level of English um it's the same problem that they're not able to communicate their  
18596thoughts but it's not because their English is poor it's because they don't have those skills  
18597R: yeah so you wouldn't say that English proficiency is kind of the determiner between  
18598success

18599Hanna: yeah I think in school of [discipline] English proficiency is um a minimum  
18600requirement these students after their pre[practice] years with us they go back to their  
18601home countries and practice they go home they go back to their home countries learn to be

18602in the [workplace] for 3-4 years and to hone their [practice] skills and so that might be why  
18603we're not so bothered that their English skills are poor but we do have a few foreign  
18604students staying on and doing their [practice] years here in Dublin or here in Ireland they  
18605tend to have quite strong English skills

18606R: so what about home students would you have much experience with home students who  
18607may be from a different background

18608Hanna: home students you mean from Dublin or from Ireland

18609R: Ireland

18610Hanna: yeah yes we definitely have students who are um everyone in their family as a  
18611[profession] and they've all gone to the good schools uh generation after generation and we  
18612also have [sigh] um financially challenged families living in the countryside who come in  
18613and [pause] I think it's an even mix a lot of students coming from the country they would  
18614have [pause] poor skills but a lot of them yeah so it's it's it's there's no pattern those from  
18615the country it could be strong students performing well or weak students performing weak  
18616I don't think there's a divide between your [pause] let me think about this actually better I  
18617think I'm just saying crap now @ [long pause] I think our students who have well-to-do  
18618backgrounds tend to be performing better because they have the background and they've  
18619grown up in a home that is always expecting high standards [pause] but we also have  
18620students who know that they have to be [profession] and they don't have to work hard to  
18621pay for anything and they don't care and they do a poor job so like any student and those  
18622coming from the countryside are coming from a non-scientific or non-well-to-do family or  
18623non-academic family it's the same they're either just poor students or some of them are  
18624brilliant so I don't think there's actually a pattern

18625R: yeah there's not like a socio-economic divide

18626Hanna: I wouldn't say so in the students that I've passed through in the number of years

18627R: okay alright and um are you aware of any support offered to international students in  
18628your department or in the wider [institution 2]

18629Hanna: yeah definitely we have an international office that I believe gives them lots of  
18630information and there's web links and they have induction days and booklets and all this  
18631stuff so they know [pause] probably better than the local students what resources they have  
18632on campus uh and I think there's good support for them in terms of counseling in terms of  
18633um just things they need to do um to get through their immigration or to whatever so yeah I  
18634think there's actually a good support and because you see [institution 2] really is promoting  
18635our sports teams and clubs and things like that there's opportunities for them to to mingle  
18636and to become [pause] to to smoothly transition into the campus culture yeah

18637R: so you would say that support is adequate

18638Hanna: I would think so yeah not being a student here myself um but just seeing what I see  
18639on campus and recognizing my own students in various clubs and activities and looking at  
18640their CVs and seeing what they're involved in yeah I would say so yeah

18641R: and um so are you aware of the type of preparation that your students have before they  
18642come to [institution 2] so are you aware of say um you know their academic preparation or  
18643their linguistic preparation would you know the types of programs they would have done  
18644before coming

18645Hanna: yes so for [discipline] ehm we interview them um so they have to be at certain  
18646standards they have to pass language requirements they have to pass um qualifying exam  
18647standardized exams so on paper they have to have a number of checklist and they would  
18648have to be performing [pause] at a certain level for them to be applicable to apply with us  
18649and um [pause] because it's a three or four year program we also have to ensure that  
18650financially they can do it without working and um a lot of our students are [sigh] [pause] a  
18651lot of our students are meeting the requirements because in Ireland your first degree is free  
18652so if they do poorly in their undergrad [pause] let me think through this now their first  
18653degree is free and undergrad is really expensive in [discipline] so they would pay the  
18654money to do prep before they get into the undergrad and that prep does not include  
18655communication and language skills it includes understanding complex [discipline] things  
18656okay so they do a lot of expensive prep they pay money for courses they take short courses  
18657they do things online they do a lot of prep to get into [discipline] school and to be  
18658performing a certain level but again not yeah sorry I just repeated myself yeah

18659R: yeah and it's with the international students would you be aware of any any programs  
18660that they would have done before so either academic or linguistic

18661Hanna: um [pause] for our international students coming in in direct entry [discipline]  
18662meaning they've qualified for stuff they can come um we see their CVs and they tend to do  
18663a lot of volunteering and sports ehh [pause] they wouldn't necessarily have backgrounds in  
18664cultural courses or language or music because that's not what they need to get into  
18665[discipline] it's science so we don't see a lot of that in fact they may have their own  
18666interests in it I am part of the philosophy Club or something like that

18667R: right yeah so they wouldn't have necessarily taken like foundation year programs or like  
18668English for academic purposes program

18669Hanna: I think they just need to pass the uh what is the standard exam called

18670R: that's gonna be my next question are you aware of it

18671Hanna: I don't know what it's called because our ad-admin people deal with this today  
18672because we have several thousand students applying every year so our admin people go  
18673through all the applications and they just for they prep all that stuff for us so I don't I  
18674should but I don't remember what those things are called but they have to meet the  
18675minimum requirements for blah blah blah

18676R: yeah do you know what the minimum like so IELTS is typically the the main  
18677standardized exam would you know where the cutoff is for [discipline]

18678Hanna: no no because I'm not an admin person sorry

18679R: yeah //and would

18680Hanna: I believe it is a bit higher though

18681R: okay|

18682Hanna: yeah I I'm not confident on that but I believe our cut-offs tend to be slightly higher  
18683than other programs because it's such a competitive and expensive professional program  
18684that's being reviewed by external bodies yeah

18685R: uh would you be involved in the interviews with your //students or is

18686Hanna: yes

18687R: that more admin| as well

18688Hanna: yes no the admin people prep everything and then the academics are interviewing  
18689the students [inhale] direct entry no I don't do this but in I don't know what it's called  
18690actually because again it's acronyms Irish people love acronyms and I never know what  
18691they stand for so um so next week we're we're involved with this so the students who don't  
18692qualify to directly enter [discipline] they may be older they may be from other programs  
18693they may not have had financial support blahblah or they may have gone [professions] and  
18694now they're ready for [discipline] they didn't have the grades initially but they've shown  
18695that's they're capable uh we interviewed those students we need to view those students and  
18696we're we on paper we asked for CV and a cover letter and we see their academic record  
18697and we see all the tests and standardized blah that they have to satisfy ehm so when we're  
18698interviewing them we're trying to find out why they want to do [discipline] if it's well I  
18699have to because my parents told me I have to that's less appealing than I'm already in  
18700[profession] I see how much it contributes blah blah blah blah um so it it's not so  
18701much can they justify it to us it's more we're trying to find out are they gonna be serious  
18702enough to spend that much money and stay with us for four or more years and to know that  
18703they're not getting weekends off and they're not getting holidays or bank holidays off or  
18704yeah [pause] so it's more looking at how hard can they work

18705R: yeah if they're serious enough student

18706Hanna: yeah

18707R: to be able to cope with the workload

18708Hanna: yeah yeah and if they can communicate that to us basically we're satisfied yeah

18709yeah

18710R: okay and um so what type of preparation do you think that students should undertake

18711before studying with you

18712Hanna: [inhale] the ones they're already doing making sure that they're standardized scores

18713are correct or high enough and making sure that they can work hard enough

18714R: would you add anything to the preparation

18715Hanna: of course I would like to add uhh English and commun- proper communication

18716because we see that our students are having to do double time [pause] not just our

18717international non-English mother-tongue students but even our Irish students who have

18718English as their primary language we see that they're struggling not just with the material

18719but they're struggling as they don't have skills to be a student [pause] or to be a student

18720who's expected to perform at a high level [pause] so they don't like what we're talking

18721about earlier they don't understand why they're doing certain learning uh activities they

18722don't know how to put the information together

18723R: okay so more like study skills so critical thinking

18724Hanna: yeah

18725R: um synthesis um you know basic communication for you know [discipline

18726communication] again in your context um would there be anything like cultural that you

18727would want to them to prepare for as well before or kind of like induction of getting used

18728to [institution 2] Dublin blah blah blah

18729Hanna: I guess I kind of assume that the university does that before that >are you speaking

18730international students< or local students as well

18731R: both yeah both

18732Hanna: we kind of assume that the university takes that role but I don't know if they do

18733[pause] I think they offer stuff like that to the international students but not to the local

18734students who maybe for their first time are on a university that is now dubbed the global

18735university of whatever we're called now so we do have a number of international students

18736and international staff and international researchers so it's kind of like a dive in [pause] and

18737swim [pause] type of thing because again it's all about money and logistical support and

18738these are not things we think about it because they're not valued on paper

18739R: yeah and so what do you hope that your students walk away feeling or taking away

18740from the course at the end of the course

18741Hanna: at the end of their de- and the end of their degree

18742R: yeah

18743Hanna: okay so for the taught students for the degree earning students the [discipline]

18744students not our research students for the [discipline] students um [pause] a sense of

18745competency to be competent to that they know the material and that they can approach it in

18746a efficient way uhhm we always have we have this saying that in [discipline] we say it

18747every year when the students are graduating half of what we taught you is right half of

18748what we taught you is wrong because it's such a quickly developing field and now with a

18749lot of global diversity [pause] there's a lot more challenges because [discipline-specific

18750cultural challenges] things like this um and I actually don't know I don't know if [pause] I

18751don't know if well if if there are [pause] plans to incorporate these small things into our our

18752teaching I don't know at least for [topic] we do not because we are strictly [topic and

18753functional skills] blah um but what I do in my modules is I force them to interact and

18754engage with each other this is how I indirectly teach professionalism this is how I

18755indirectly teach communication so I'll group them based on their [lab] table or something

18756you know with the [object] that they're working on and these guys will be together for 12

18757weeks and they have to work as a team um I may have them roleplay some of them are the

18758[clients] some of them are the [professionals] some of them are the admin some of them

18759are the whatever blah uh and they have to interact with each other and in addition to

18760learning [topic and functional skills] so we often uh correct them on their choice of words

18761or on their approach or on their decision making because sometimes >they just want to do

18762everything they want to be the best thing want to have experience doing everything< so

18763you know slow down your role today your role is this don't step over you know so we try

18764and do that that way again it's not language and communication it's more behavior you

18765know yeah

18766R: and would that be in combination with like PowerPoints typical lectures or

18767Hanna: no no there's nothing formal there it's just [pause] an opportunities to embed this

18768and they're not even aware that they're getting this training

18769R: so in terms of your your lecture style so you would have the group work but then would

18770you also lecture

18771Hanna: yeah how I communicate the material just the [topic] material yes so PowerPoint is

18772great because it's [topic] we need to show stuff uh so I do a lot of PowerPoint teaching for

18773my lectures I also incorporate learning videos [topic] videos software where you can

18774digitally [perform functional skills] and I'll say is this the right orientation blah uh I bring

18775up [visuals] so they can they they're supposed to learn their [topic] now can you see it in

18776this image because you're not going to interact with a [client] by [functional skills] you're  
18777going to interact with them by [functional skill] or whatever so it's a lot of active engaged  
18778learning ehm I problem-solve with them in the class as well because I get bored doing a  
1877950-minute lecture and I'll uh get bored of myself talking I know the material so I'd try and  
18780jazz it up a bit I would put a um problem [click] you're a fourth-year [professional] you're  
18781in the [workplace] a [client] comes into du-du-du-du there's no [professionals] on call well  
18782@@@ you've never [functional skill] before but it's your jump in now how would you  
18783assess this [client] and then I just go through the basic [topic] and I say knowing what you  
18784know what could it be what could not it be so they have to do a bit of problem-solving so  
18785in there they enjoy that and they really exceed at those types of things but again I'm not  
18786asking them to articulate complex thoughts it's more like I did this because that thing's  
18787broken you know like yeah um and then the practicals they're even more engaged because  
18788there would be [functional skill] they would be having to I make them do puzzles so I'll put  
18789a bunch of [objects] and they have to build an [object] for example but I've mixed [objects]  
18790so they have to figure out what's what and this gets them to really understand their [topic]  
18791um and again role-playing um like I do a lot of things to make it dynamic and to actively  
18792engage them to the learning process blah blah blah [pause] but again it's not it's  
18793communication and language but it's other skills that they're really honing yeah and I'm  
18794sorry the question you originally asked me I don't think that I  
18795R: I was gonna go back you did but how so how do you or what do you want your students  
18796to feel when they walk away or feel that they've achieved  
18797Hanna: uhh yes I want them to feel a sense of competency they're competent I want them  
18798to feel and be proud of the tremendous workload and and the tremendous sacrifices that  
18799they've done and the tremendous learning curves because emotionally it's taxing and  
18800they're under time pressures and they're under f-family pressures they're under pressure  
18801from us they're over assessed like prop-properly properly probably up until this point I've  
18802been saying of how weak they are in terms of this or this but it's based on the questions  
18803you're asking me so our students are superstars for the most part they are phenomenal they  
18804are one of the girls yesterday she got an award in every section it's just like how could that  
18805be and she's also a volunteer and she's done this and that [pause] how so our students are  
18806really asked to go over above and beyond what a teenager or young adult should be doing  
18807at that level um and so again we can't expect them to be amazing at everything and  
18808[discipline] is all about [pause] [exhale] well I don't know how to summarize these things  
18809quickly it's it's not the same as writing a philosophical piece or writing policy or do you  
18810know what I mean

18811R: yeah it's all about meeting those professional competencies meet those objectives so  
18812Hanna: yeah yeah yeah so I want them to be competent I want them to feel competent and I  
18813want them to be proud of themselves and really uhhh recognize how much they've learned  
18814and I think those are my two definitely um [pause] I want them to be able to go out into  
18815society [long pause] and to perform based on what they've been exposed to [edited for  
18816confidentiality] but um often I feel really proud that I see them that they're doing really  
18817well but I'm disappointed because they've learned all these amazing things and then they  
18818get to the [workplace] and they're expected to be at another level but we haven't prepped  
18819them for it right now so they're not really allowed to [functional skill] @ or [functional  
18820skill] @ for a few years on their own just good but we don't give them the opportunities to  
18821really engage the [professional] are like we're too busy stand in the corner and don't talk  
18822that's kind of how it is in fact ehm so there are at a constant war with here's what you need  
18823to do but we're not really giving you the tools to do it we've given you all the tools to be a  
18824[professional] but now you have to do with [clients] uhhh so in fact you know this is why  
18825language and communication is really important as well as all these other more complex  
18826layers of dealing with different cultures and blah and there's nowhere to fit it in the  
18827curriculum and we just hope that they've learned enough with us to have some skills to be  
18828able to manage to talk to [clients] properly and we don't always see that but it was not  
18829specific to [discipline] it's just a person people thing yeah so yeah those are my two things  
18830I would like them to be um [pause] coming out with

18831R: and it's not the same with research students

18832Hanna: no so like I said we have very few research students and they don't take modules  
18833really they're just primarily doing a PhD or [discipline] degree research and they're doing  
18834high-level research novel methods novel questions uh some of it is exploratory some of is  
18835based on what's missing in the [discipline] literature whatever and the students who are  
18836doing research really to excel in research but they're not [discipline] students they're  
18837research students they're researching aspects of [discipline] but they're happy they want to  
18838be in a lab they're happy in that setting some [discipline] students want to be exposed to  
18839research they do projects with us over the summer and they're they're they perform pretty  
18840poorly in it because they've never been exposed to it and they have no skills so we kind of  
18841get them caught up to speed and they have a sense a flavor of what is research like do they  
18842want to go down that road or not it's rare for [discipline] for student who's successfully  
18843passed [degree] to then do a PhD do you see what I mean so you get your undergrad  
18844R: yeah so you more go into practice rather than research



18845Hanna: yes yeah so it's like can you do two horrendously taxing degrees in your life that're  
18846super expensive very few people will do both so you have your undergraduate in  
18847[discipline] so you can practice but then you need a few years to get a [degree] but then  
18848you have to do three four years do a PhD so it's it's not a pathway that most people take it's  
18849rare and when they do they're phenomenal but there's only a handful of people who do that  
18850so we really focus on you're doing research and we're going to get you taught in terms of  
18851science and research and critical thinking scientifically in scientific writing and being able  
18852to uhhh have certain lab skills special note skills that's very different from teaching  
18853[discipline]

18854R: right yeah and do you have research students that you're supervising at the moment

18855Hanna: yes yeah

18856R: so what do you hope that those students walk away with

18857Hanna: oooo ummm confidence that they have [pause] learned special skills and have  
18858honed their ability to critically think and so my research students I want them to  
18859communicate scientifically which is different than everyday communication and so I want  
18860my students to be able to communicate their research ideas and their research findings and  
18861I want them to have the confidence to do that at any level they're it's very easy to talk to  
18862somebody about research when they know the lingo and when they know when all the  
18863methods mean but if you have to talk to an everyday person about your research we're  
18864really crap at it cuz we stay in our little circles I mean yeah yeah yeah and then somebody's  
18865like what are you doing and they're like they either talk they just say the same thing clearly  
18866the person has no clue what even the topic is or they just do a really bad job of explaining  
18867it and I think that is what it's key for communication in science if you can't tell a six-year-  
18868old what you're doing or an 86 year old what you're doing then you're actually a really poor  
18869scientific uh communicator and this I really drilling to my students they have to do their  
18870communication this way most of my team are non-English speakers I've got a Italians and  
18871I've got Spanish [pause] yeah and I've one Irish my Italians and Spanish the levels range in  
18872terms of their English abilities [pause] but they're very good because they're able to  
18873communicate thoughts in terms of critical thinking and in terms of structure and in terms of  
18874all that and they give me their manuscripts and I just go through them and fix the English  
18875so this is kind of how we work well together um I really train my students to be good  
18876scientists and it doesn't matter what they put on the paper English wise because it's all there  
18877structurally and in content and the English is just something that comes because you have  
18878to present in English your posters have to be in English publications have to be in English

18879your talks have to be in English so this just comes naturally I don't have to work at that

18880they do [pause] so I focus on theeee

18881R: more just the research skills

18882Hanna: yeah

18883R: and would you like to see any sort of preparation for those research students so things

18884that programs that they could take before or during

18885Hanna: yeah yeah and I think they are in most universities basic introduction of basic

18886statistics but I'd like it to be taught properly uhhh they've learned all these things and they

18887know what tests are for so that's st-st-statistical test are for but they don't know how to

18888choose one that suits their works so act- haven't learned it properly so statistics would be

18889nice but that's not critical because they can learn that with me it just takes me time which I

18890don't have but they have to do it to finish their degree and to get papers so it'll be done

18891anyways more so I want them to learn scientific writing because that is really hard to do

18892and that's not something you can learn unless you practice and I think when you come with

18893no skills it takes a lot more a lot more frustrating and it takes me a lot more time to have to

18894teach them uh so I don't want them to have a learning curve of oh I don't know how write

18895scientifically and I don't know how to build my statistics I want them to have the learning

18896curve on develop designing and developing science and knowing how to interpret their

18897results so I'd really like ehm uhm them to have a module for scientific writing and how to

18898actually build a table what's like my students don't know that the legends of figures are at

18899the bottom but that the legends of tables are at the top and they don't know that because

18900they're reading loads of academic papers and they've just never processed it yeah

18901R: yeah and would that be the same with your Irish students and your international students

18902you want them both to take that

18903Hanna: yes

18904R: or is there a difference

18905Hanna: no I feel that my Irish students cannot communicate >for research my research

18906students< not a [discipline] students my Irish students from my experience they cannot

18907communicate their thoughts [pause] the foreign non-English non-native English speakers

18908can and I don't know if that's because English is a technical language and my students are

18909Spanish or um or Italian because that's the collaborations I have and they're a lot more

18910fluent and articulating passion and feelings I don't know if it's culturally or linguistically

18911because of those things or because uhhh the Irish students are not learning to write

18912properly on an everyday writing in English course in their secondary school but the Irish

18913students tend to forget the information there but I spend a lot of time trying to think you've

18914just written this sentence but can you see that I can interpret it this way this way in this  
18915way and they're like no it's fine I'm like but can you see if I interpret it this way it means  
18916this if I interpret this way means this and they say oh yeah I see I wasn't clear but they keep  
18917making the same mistake over and over and it takes them a couple of years whereas my  
18918foreign non-native English speaking students they know that they just can't put the spelling  
18919or the grammar or I know what they're trying to say but they don't have the right English  
18920structure to put it together but it's not ambiguous what they're trying to say

18921R: so the clarity is there it's just the superficial um surface skills that need fixed whereas  
18922with Irish students the clarity isn't there

18923Hanna: correct yes

18924R: even if the grammar is perfect

18925Hanna: yes and here I am speaking about clarity and and even articulate it to you @@@  
18926but that's because I haven't had a day off in four weeks @@ yeah but yeah you know this  
18927is interesting because these are not things I've really articulated outside of my thoughts you  
18928know

18929R: yeah I mean it's not something that I imagine academics are really asked to articulate  
18930very often so yeah

18931Hanna: mm-mm so that is something that I actually noticed it's clear that my Irish students  
18932can't they're not clear and that may be what a lot of them tell me they're like oh but Irish  
18933language is poetic and there's all these roundabouts so when we learn how to speak English  
18934clarity isn't our thing it may be [long pause] so it's not necessarily English it's just clarity  
18935and that might be culture it might not be I don't know

18936R: okay that's interesting that they're kind of blaming the Irish language

18937Hanna: and in some ways I can to see it because not being come I think I told you I'm from  
18938[city] and we would speak [language] and English in the same sentence because English is  
18939technical and [language] is passion so you'd have certain certain things you just you want  
18940to express in [language] because it it makes more sense and so I would go back and forth  
18941lots so I don't have the right English words and I don't have the right [language] for certain  
18942things so I struggle [pause] so I do feel that I don't communicate well and it's my  
18943insecurities my language is my insecurity because I haven't properly learned English and I  
18944haven't properly learned [language] because we would just have a mix and I do see it with  
18945um it is an Irish culture thing that communication [pause] is very circular it's like can you  
18946just give me a direct answer uh and I do think that is part of the language and culture yeah  
18947R: but it's been kind of passed down

18948Hanna: that's just how it is yes Irish people aren't direct they kind of dance around things  
18949and it's nicer and more softer that way whereas other uh foreigners we are always laughing  
18950like can you just tell us the answer I don't care about that just yes or no and Irish people  
18951take forever to get to yes or no and that's that's that's that's a cultural thing but in scientific  
18952writing and in being able to articulate your thoughts and in a short answer essay question  
18953you need clarity yeah

18954R: okay so that's actually the last question that I have for you but are there any questions  
18955that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask

18956Hanna: like me have a think about that because again this is this is foreign to me know um  
18957I was teaching in [discipline] and uh [discipline] some more humanities social science um  
18958before I came here and I would have been more in tune with people perspective thing about  
18959people perspectives and now that I'm in [discipline] it's more about do you know your stuff  
18960or not um so I flip-flopped from one way or together one flip-flopped um [long pause] is  
18961there anything I wish you would have asked me [long pause] concerning linguistic speech  
18962and communication [pause] no just more curiosity about so you're in the school of um  
18963linguistics and communication and you've taught your own modules your own courses and  
18964you've been abroad and this is your field and your specialty it's more curiosity that [pause]  
18965do you think the way that things are going in terms of the government is only funding  
18966education that seems to have a direct output into society like medicine or engineering or IT  
18967or whatever humanities social science are not valued Fine Arts no way um do you feel that  
18968have you seen a trend in at least you know the areas you're looking in that these things are  
18969at risk or these things are not being valued prior to students getting to university or within  
18970the university how so for example if you look at movies over time the way that people  
18971communicate 50 years ago compared to now in movies it's such a difference it's  
18972completely different so people are communicating a very different way and that might be  
18973because digital digital age whatever blah but why are you really looking into this I guess  
18974that's one of the one thing I understood from your paragraph in the PIL form I knew why  
18975but why are you really looking into this

18976R: [cut discussion of general funding and research project at hand]

18977R: yeah yeah thanks a million

18978

18979

**Laurence**

18980

18981R: so actually first I'd like for you to tell me about any type of module that you teach what  
18982is the work required in general in your modules

18983Laurence: okay ehm I teach a preparation for placement module ehm across both the  
18984Masters [discipline] program ehm the [degree program] the undergrad [discipline] program  
18985ehm both professionally accredited ehm [discipline] programs ehm I also teach ehm uh  
18986[topic] ehm to undergrads but the question being ehm to take one module so the  
18987preparation for placement module on the master's program

18988R: right or if it's different between undergrad and master's but what's expected in terms of  
18989reading for their class assessment type taking notes etc.

18990Laurence: okay ehm what the the cla- class is is ehm interactive it's it's learning to learn it's  
18991students go out on placement and the model of learning isn't a classroom model the model  
18992of learning is ehm it that sort of reflective model of learning Kolb's learning cycle ehm  
18993Morrison's reflective supervision frameworks ehm learning tools to draw out experiences  
18994ehm so that when the students go out on placement they won't be just doing but they'd also  
18995be reflecting on the doing and have deeper learning through that so it's equipping them  
18996with resources and tools and methodologies ehm and and and the sort of philosophy of  
18997reflective learning and eh and ehm citing Kolb Marcin Schon S-C-H-O-N and eh who who  
18998who I suppose a lot of [disciplines] have gone to that reflective model of education so  
18999there's there's a lot of use of self ehm increasing one's awareness of self and self not in in  
19000terms of that as a [professional] that's your biggest tool yourself ehm that it is an aware self  
19001ehm not just aware in terms of your own emotional repertoire but aware in terms of your  
19002biography [pause] I am a male I'm a female I am whatever ethnicity I'm older I'm younger  
19003and how that might play out in working with people ehm so that's the sort of teaching that  
19004that which is broadly similar across both programs that I I eh engage in

19005R: okay alright and what is the work required for your research students if you have any so  
19006what would you expect from your research students

19007Laurence: ehm [long pause] now that the the master's program has a a a well first of all  
19008what I'm preparing students with being a professional course as a requirement of the  
19009accrediting body is that they undertake the thousand hours of [practice] practice so that's  
19010what I'm preparing them for [practice] practice and then bringing them in at points during  
19011the practice and visiting them out on practice ehm eh and just checking checking in around  
19012that that that that it's happening that they're using the learning tools that are in a reflective  
19013place ehm and that they're on track ehm in terms of on the master's program additional to  
19014the placements ehm they do undertake a by by research ehm a a dissertation ehm I sup-  
19015yeah supervised as as few of them as possible @@ for literally just workload management  
19016cuz I have the burden of the fieldwork which which ehm has shortened my life@ ehm but  
19017the the research eh like currently I just finished with the Nigerian woman and it was on

19018[topic] then the [topic] and [pause] the Irish experience of that but by such a semi-  
19019structured qualitative research interviewing people who have who have ehm [action] at  
19020what level of preparation they got around [topics] around sort of being enculturated and  
19021and and having contact with the world of the [topic] etc. so that that but it research  
19022supervision would be ehm part of my workload but a small enough part  
19023R: right ehm so when you're supervising a student can you just drive kind of your level of  
19024involvement and guidance and then also what you would expect them to do independently  
19025Laurence: ehm again just to s-s-say in terms of the sort of the the core areas of my work it's  
19026it's quite a a a minor part ehm it's usually a student each year ehm and [long pause] it's  
19027because I haven't a track record in research it's one of the areas I feel vulnerable in as a to  
19028to be allocated a supervisor as supervisor to somebody and I pray that they are ehm  
19029research savvy ehm I pray that their area of interest overlaps with my areas of interest so  
19030that I can bring content and and and sort of maybe lived-experience or read experience in  
19031terms of just the the frameworks or mechanics I suppose what I do ehm is I check in with  
19032them one thing I check in with them is their work style are you last minute dot com or are  
19033you paste organized measured planned and that that relieves me when I hear that they're  
19034not lastminute dot com because I'm not I'm systematic and if somebody's systematic we're  
19035going to be buddies @@@ and if they're going to have me up Tuesday night or  
19036Wednesday night eh before the the submission date I'm already hating them right ehm so I  
19037do tell them that's my th- if that's your style that's my style if that's your style my style is  
19038different because I'm n- and I I just point that out to them ehm and I I suppose what I what  
19039I do think I bring is I do bring ehm eh [pause] approachability I do bring ehm availability  
19040regularity ehm as as supportive as I can be within the limitations of my own research  
19041experience but where I need to ehm reach out to others ehm for second opinions I I I do  
19042and have ehm so that I think on balance I think generally the students who come towards  
19043me are often to do with topics around [topic] because they know I've worked in that area so  
19044a lot like ehm [topic] ehm would be one ehm that sort of people often come as a different  
19045model ehm that would be one topic that's come ehm somebody had access to judges which  
19046is really rare and getting almost judges to reflect on their own [practice] about it all the on  
19047on all the outside logic and rationality you know some of their stories of you know what  
19048they call in [discipline] chivalry justice be maybe harder on male offenders and gentler on  
19049female offenders or another one was you know judges being very straight about attitudes  
19050they have to certain types of people you know and some etc. so so capturing judges'  
19051experiences was an interesting piece and that sort of yeah

19052R: yeah yeah um so what would you say going back to your modules so what is the general  
19053structure so what happens inside of the classroom

19054Laurence: okay ehm [pause] a warm climate ehm [pause] that that matters cuz I think  
19055people they're in better in a warm climate ehm I use what it- it- something when I worked  
19056as [job] I used it in group work is called um you know process illumination I say back to  
19057the class what I think is happening in the class so I'm losing my audience I say to the class  
19058I think I've lost you or I think I've lost a lot of you and that sort of brings them back in and  
19059that usually provokes people to say about the distractions we'd have in another ehm  
19060discipline we'd have an essay in tomorrow and that's etc. ehm so I try ehm keep them with  
19061me ehm through sort of performance skills ehm [long pause] the in terms of what happens I  
19062also try and vary the- wh- each class like by having em a presentation ehm and exercises  
19063maybe also an outside speaker so that for example I'm just trying to think of ehm what I  
19064presented for the Masters recently was for different areas they're going on placement I've  
19065brought in somebody from each of the areas to start to tell their tale about what work looks  
19066like what the expectations might be for a student in this area I brought the students from  
19067the year ahead down to the students from the year below so that they'd say I was there last  
19068year and this particular placement setting and this is what it was like for me these were the  
19069strengths these were the limitations but I try and try and keep variety and I do a lot of ehm  
19070trying to have a level of trust in the classroom that students will like I'm going to an [topic]  
19071setting I am so embarrassed around people with [topic] I don't know where I'd start or I'm  
19072going into a [place] ehm you know I don't really feel empathy for [group] I feel to hell with  
19073them or or my heart is broken every time I'm working in a [place] ehm I see this [group]  
19074and that [group] just neglected so I try and get people's fears and what's happening for  
19075them ehm try to sort of [pause] yeah I'm trying to use their their what's difficult for you and  
19076just is a way to journey into what's difficult for the person that to whom you're going to be  
19077working with because they're in they're coming to you for a service they're coming to you  
19078for support and ehm eh eh so sort of h- h- how- that awkwardness you feel just to use that  
19079as a sort of common connection with the person that they're in difficulties they're in  
19080adversity they need a hand and uh you know just use that to empathize to res-resource  
19081yourself for empathy ehm so it's sort of fairly experiential ehm [pause] yeah and also I  
19082suppose when you say what happens in the class setting the tone right varying varying the  
19083tasks um in the class ehm and also just imparting [pause] lots of information to you know  
19084the statutory framework in this setting or that setting the procedures the agency context  
19085ehm ehm and then that as well is that information ehm a lot of lo- how do you learn in a  
19086practice situation because if you're on this course you're obviously pretty skilled in being in

19087classroom and and this is a different learning process so just how how can we resource you  
19088to be an optimal learner in a practice situation and so a lot of tools and aids around that  
19089different yeah

19090R: yeah when you're presenting things like policy um and more just imparting information  
19091would that be on a PowerPoint would it just be verbal would it be handouts

19092Laurence: PowerPoints probably yeah yeah yeah yeah

19093R: okay and so how would the students be assessed in your modules is it purely on the  
19094placement or do they have any other form of assessment

19095Laurence: they they have a for- for- for- they have to proceed to the next year they have to  
19096pass placement which [pause] that's one of the gatekeeping bits but they also have to write  
19097a sort o- 10,000 words ehm on the placement and that's a difficult exercise because it's they  
19098it has um the the sort of template of it begins with will I call it section A ehm an agency

19099context ehm community context and so both of those require doing a bit of work on  
19100governance structures funding structures rationale for the organization etc. ehm community  
19101context involves sort of in socio-economic indices who lives here what sort of things go on  
19102what are its strengths what are its limitations ehm so and then it goes on to taking the table

19103of workload that they were involved in and then taking two or three cases in depth and  
19104writing up of them in depth and finally then charting their own learning so it has the  
19105personal bit your story and it's it's it's a sort of hybrid exercise in that it's both an academic  
19106piece ehm and it's quite a personal story and I think the challenge for students is trying to

19107link up classroom learning and what happens in practice ehm linking those together ehm  
19108and been able to have a vocabulary for that and have a vocabulary of skills ehm yeah

19109R: yeah and so when you're grading these um the written portion of the assessment what  
19110are you looking for how do you assess academic success in these 10,000-word papers

19111Laurence: hm I I think em [long pause] there's two sort of poles there's some who write  
19112very theoretically [pause] and there's some who tell my story and trying to get the

19113marriage that my story and the theory and the ac- you know the academics so so that's  
19114that's a big piece for me that it isn't just my story ehm I m- I I mean I want to hear about

19115self I want to hear your reflections I want to hear what was hard for you I want to hear  
19116what was uncomfortable for you but I also want you to be able to link that to theory that's

19117why first year they do [modules] so that they understand context and not just individual but  
19118individual in context so I want them to be able to draw those pieces in as well and and that

19119that that's where people [pause] ehm I think score or score less well for me that that that  
19120piece of joining practice and theory and we have we got the reflective piece and the

19121theoretical academic and literature support elements and and then there's other things about



19122just showing their skill in working and being able to ehm and all all the other pieces like  
19123present work well and and I guess we do have a template how we mark and it's you know  
19124weighted like start to 20 percent for for for community agency context their table of  
19125workload maybe 20 percent the two or three cases they have to go into maybe 40 percent  
19126being able to account give an account of their own learning maybe 20 percent and then the  
19127actual marks for presentation are [pause] quite small so therefore somebody who doesn't  
19128capitalize who who uses colloquialism rather than a bit more formal English doesn't get  
19129heavily penalized which could be debated as to the wisdom or otherwise of that ehm yeah  
19130and I I suppose another thing is we our course is the most diverse course in the college ehm  
19131we have ehm [pause] we have 20 percent mature students 70 odd percent school leavers  
19132and then we have a a access access routes and disability access routes and disadvantaged  
19133so so this [pause] there's levels of formal education and levels yeah ehm and that that that  
19134affects how people present their work some people are great practitioners and not not great  
19135at reflecting that in the written word so all of that

19136R: okay and then for the actual placement um you said that you actually go there and  
19137observe and interact with them would there be a formal assessment on their placement  
19138apart from this written piece

19139Laurence: yeah the the supervisor to whom they're allocated ehm has has [pause] a the  
19140accrediting body [name] have of six domains under which ehm the supervisor has to score  
19141the student ehm and ehm n- it's actually I shouldn't say scored it's pass fail it's not it's not a  
19142grade so so the the the the the evaluation framework that the supervisors have is is set  
19143down a- it's national across all [discipline] programs and these domains are meant to be the  
19144sort of core core proficiencies involved in [discipline] ehm they're written in the #terted  
19145ehm Foucault [pause] Foucault is accessible in comparison to the really quality assurance  
19146sorta awful technic-technicisms language yeah and ehm that's how the students are ehm  
19147assessed as pass or fail ready to proceed not yet ready to proceed [pause] it's actually a  
19148pretty difficult experience for students because if you fail an essay it's one thing if you fail  
19149in this it's a very painful experience and people do get hurt around it ehm and just and it's  
19150not an easy call for the supervisor to make either because they've got close to the student  
19151over 14 weeks and they still have to mess them up and costing them money and costing  
19152them maybe another year not an easy call to ask anyone to make but but there you go yeah  
19153R: yeah and so the competencies would it be um do you know that are you able to describe  
19154them

19155Laurence: yeah ehm [pause] before [accrediting body] which is the accrediting body it only  
19156came in in 2014 before that [pause] ehm the what what what was in use in our handbooks

19157for supervisors was ehm agency context which was that the student could navigate his or  
19158her way around the agency context and that was where there was a huge bureaucracy like  
19159[institution 1] like the [organization] like too slow our standalone little voluntary  
19160organization that they understood the procedures the policies the statutes working across  
19161across the different disciplines they got it so that was one one one one piece they had to  
19162another piece was what they called professional accountability that you could manage a  
19163diary plan organize the punctual work with different disciplines represent your discipline  
19164etcetera um stand over your workers ehm the third one was all the human encounter skills  
19165that the person could listen could talk could write could could sort of counsel had some  
19166sort of range of therapeutic skills and the fourth one was self-awareness that the student  
19167could hear difficult feedback could take it on board ehm and were self-aware in terms  
19168personally biographically etc. ehm so they were the four so but [accrediting body] have  
19169come in and have have have have turned into it six with drop-down boxes offering  
19170domains to proficiencies running to micro micro but covering roughly similar ground ehm  
19171eh yeah roughly similar ground ehm you know under communication you've you've you  
19172know a list from writing and and and speaking and working across different platforms  
19173working through interpreters working with people who are mute et cetera et cetera you you  
19174know all all of you human @@

19175R: everything @

19176Laurence: everything yeah it's there yeah yeah yeah

19177R: okay brilliant and um so do the students have access to rubrics and guidelines before  
19178they complete the placement and before they complete the ten thousand words

19179Laurence: [shakes head yes]

19180R: okay is it verbal written etc.

19181Laurence: w-written yeah they have they have they know that this is what the [accrediting  
19182body] six domains ehm and all of the drop-down boxes of proficiencies they know that  
19183they're instructed in that in the classroom this is what your practice teachers

19184R: are looking for

19185Laurence: are looking for exactly ehm and it's not what they like you or not ehm and so  
19186you mightn't be so brother or sister but just get with one another in a professional way so  
19187they know that they know it it's it's evidence-based that there would be observation of their  
19188work samples of their work ehm talking to colleagues about their work in some cases  
19189talking to service users about their work ehm so it'll all be evidence-based and it'll be to  
19190this framework so that's very clear ehm they also know in their written piece there's a very  
19191clear word count a very clear template ehm they know how the marks are weighted this

19192that and the other so yeah that's all that's all clear eh to the students and communicated  
19193very clearly and they have the paper copies or or electronic copies of all those assessment  
19194frameworks yeah

19195R: yeah ehm would you allow time in classroom or individually for questions and  
19196clarification um if the student doesn't quite understand something like would you have an  
19197open discussion in your class of does anyone have any questions on this or would your  
19198door be open to students coming in

19199Laurence: like like if you go into a classroom after a [discipline] class [pause] there's no  
19200there's no straight lines of chairs [pause] that's not the model it's not that sort of model of  
19201teacher to students they tend to sit in circles and it tends to be more informal ehm ehm  
19202yeah and a lot a lot of engagement a lot of engagement and sometimes that's something to  
19203manage because mature students tend to be perhaps more confidence perhaps have more  
19204have had more life experience and more engagement with people in adversity and and tend  
19205so I have to manage them so that the younger students don't get resentful that their voice is  
19206silenced so that their yeah the- so yeah

19207R: so a lot of discussion

19208Laurence: yeah there's a lot of it in the classroom yeah a lot of that yeah yeah yeah

19209R: brilliant um so in general what do you think students need in order to succeed at  
19210[institution 1]

19211Laurence: [inhale] hmm [long pause] let me think p- ehm particularly in my program in  
19212wh-

19213R: um well let's do your program first and then let's just do [institution 1]

19214Laurence: oh okay yeah okay [pause] what I think for [discipline] students is that it's  
19215putting an old head on young shoulders because I did this course a million years ago and  
19216ehm [pause] I think I was [pause] I was @@too @messy @really @@ to be to be too  
19217bothered about anyone else's difficulties right so I was sort of appropriately for my age  
19218caught up with g- g- caught up with myself and growing up and being a messy young man  
19219right so I didn't have much space attention for others so I'm not sure that [pause] and I  
19220wouldn't have been able to articulate that and I knew I had a sort of h-h-humanistic  
19221impulse and sort of for others impulse I knew I had that but but [pause] I noticed so what  
19222am I saying I think I think in terms of coming into a [discipline] course I think ehm [pause]  
19223I'd say it's a very strong experience for a school leaver ehm because it's not an academic  
19224course is not just an intellectual training it's that too but it's very [pause] personally and  
19225professionally developing so that [pause] you become an objective inquiry you become a  
19226subject ehm eh so there's there's a lot asked of people very young ehm and a lot of

19227challenge to people for young and a lot of ehm asked [pause] you know there's a like on  
19228[topic] skills it's not about [topic] out there it starts with yourself and being an aware self  
19229and there's a lot of group work in the class and there's a lot of modules ehm on on the use  
19230of self and ehm @@I @ certainly @ wasn't @ ready for that at that @ age so I'd say that I  
19231hope their eyes are open to what they're coming in to cuz it's a tough personally  
19232emotionally ehm yeah it's it's very challenging I think it's very challenging at every level  
19233personally intellectually ehm emotionally ehm it's quite a lot of self-questioning in it so  
19234that that's what I'd say it's a ehm and I suppose the other thing is that we have a very  
19235diverse intake and and there are things that come with that like mature students have been  
19236long but they're not just they're there they're they might be good practitioners but they  
19237mightn't have had ehm they mightn't be as good essay writers and the academics of  
19238bringing them on as a challenge ehm and because we have probably also and I say diverse  
19239we also have in terms of people who are registered with disability or registered with  
19240counseling service we would have a higher number than most courses and what goes with  
19241that is a lot of a lot of ehm it impacts on the work like deadlines are a problem ehm I think  
19242I've heard we have ehm [pause] you know a really high ratio of of ehm extensions on  
19243written submissions people with learning problems I know the disability service think our  
19244world can disadvantage people with disability ehm with writing disabilities but we've we  
19245we pride ourselves on the diversity we pride ourselves on that ehm adversity is a resource  
19246if you're going to be working with marginalized populations it's a resource so is lack of  
19247adversity@@ a a resource but but yeah it does it does create problems to administration to  
19248yeah and if I'm not going too far wandering too far am I know yeah

19249R: yeah no

19250Laurence: yeah but but yeah they're particular problems just the number of people  
19251registered with disability counseling service who who just can't meet deadlines who need  
19252reasonable accommodations as required by law when they go out on placement whether in  
19253a wheelchair whether ehm a visible or an invisible disability or mental health issue ehm it's  
19254quite a quite a high number of people that we d- work reasonable accommodations for and  
19255[pause] placements are a bit surprised when you bring that off us something that is the  
19256statutory obligation on them to ehm to give more time to somebody because whatever  
19257they've arthritis are they have ehm what whatever ehm [pause] so so what do they need  
19258they need to be aware they need to know what they're coming into they need to have  
19259reasonable stamina because there's there's no real term structure they have terms  
19260placements back in it's a five years squashed into four ehm it's going to be personally  
19261challenging ehm there's going to be work at the end of it which is good because they d-

19262they walk out of here into well paid jobs ehm yeah so that's I don't know if I'm just in a  
19263general sense that' that's our school yeah we're messy chaotic humans @@  
19264R: most of us are @  
19265Laurence: @@good is it uh that wri- writer Schon S-C-H-O-N that I referred to earlier  
19266talked about [discipline] the swampy lowlands and I think it's a good metaphor swampy  
19267lowlands we're working the swampy lowlands yeah  
19268R: yeah and so in terms of [institution 1] in general not necessarily in [discipline] what do  
19269you think students need in order to succeed  
19270Laurence: [inhale] [long pause] ehm what do they need in order to succeed [long pause]  
19271ehm just trying to think of people I know outside this school like two of my four young  
19272people went to college here and one did [discipline] and one did [discipline] and my  
19273daughter did [discipline] [pause] loved it now she always said she never came to  
19274[institution 1] she went to [organization] because she had about six weeks of so many years  
19275on the campus but she got what she wanted and she loved it so that was a very so she yeah  
19276it [pause] it was like a professional training and in an area she was keen on so it was a very  
19277positive experience my other person has a lot of health issues and was very disappointed  
19278[pause] in the quality of teaching in [school] not in [school] but just felt that it was the old  
19279style [pause] person at the top of the room and and was saying of primary secondary  
19280education the worst teaching she ever had was @from @the [discipline] School in  
19281[institution 1] ehm I checked that out with others they said oh yeah if you want to do  
19282[discipline] go to [institution 2] ehm so there that's that's I'm thinking that it's these are just  
19283anecdotal rather than what do you need to succeed when eh y-you need go teaching you  
19284know it's not it's not it's not always there ehm it seemed ehm strangely enough I've a niece  
19285and nephew from the [country] that one did [discipline] here loved every day ev-even  
19286though like my brother is Irish but either this young man's never lived in Ireland before  
19287coming to [institution 1] here and loved it his sister did [discipline] here didn't like it at all  
19288and and and it was for sort of drink reason social life reasons of young people she was a  
19289sort of serious-minded girl and didn't like the sort of party scene or the drink scene and felt  
19290quite isolated and just this is not my sort of place and which was an interesting for me to  
19291hear that and I and I imagine that's reflected by other students who social life is done  
19292differently it's going to the theater and it's not a party drinking [pause] social life so that  
19293that was just ehm I think our students one thing they do say is like they are a very diverse  
19294group and they find it highly entertaining that when they go anywhere they're called  
19295[institution 1] snobs and that entertains them completely ehm because it's that is the brand  
19296of [institution 1] outside of the four walls I think you know and they are on meeting

19297populations that are in awe of the place [pause] resentful of the place angry with the place  
19298not our sort of social scene social landscape it'll never be accessible to us we wouldn't  
19299even you know so they meet that a lot in in sort of the populations they work with ehm  
19300[pause] so what do they need to study here I guess you need to be bright because well  
19301bright it and I know that's a problematic term but to get into [institution 1] tends to be  
19302pretty high points and in the Leaving Cert so you need to be an organized structured  
19303[pause] ehm rote learner I imagine taxes [institution 1] if you come through CAO route  
19304ehm that'd be one thing what do you need to come here ehm yeah you need you'd need that  
19305I think you'd need those sort of good study skills ehm [pause] and and a little bit like the  
19306rugby players there is a sort of sense of well pr- to be the prince and princesses of Ireland  
19307you need to have come through [institution 1] ehm there's a touch of that I think in the  
19308outside now not saying that you know fairly or unfairly but there is I think that's the sort of  
19309brand ehm I guess when you come here you need to keep up that that good study skills  
19310good time management skills ehm [pause] to succeed here yeah funny I'm in such a ghetto  
19311that I don't know what it's like outside my own little ghetto you know yeah except through  
19312nieces or nephews or family connections you know

19313R: yeah but that's a good perspective to bring and to have as well and it's useful to have  
19314that personal insight as well so ehm now especially because of how diverse of a group you  
19315have here in [discipline] um how much of a factor do you think language plays in academic  
19316success

19317Laurence: [long pause] language eh eh yeah

19318R: yeah it could be language in terms of um being well I don't want to lead you too much  
19319but being being a native speaker or having English as your first language it could be  
19320language in terms of having English as one of your languages etc. um so how much of a  
19321factor does that impact academic success

19322Laurence: hm [long pause] ehm [long pause] yeah well I'm thinking I mean that piece that  
19323I'm trying to get out of my head is that learning disability is so present in our in our  
19324program that when when you say by language that's what I think of learning disability  
19325there's quite a high number of people are registered with learning disability and that shows  
19326itself without- quite quite prominently and ehm it is it's been probably ehm [pause] that and  
19327that's ehm for anyone you know with any language related problems this must be a hard  
19328course because it's a very high word eh they produce volumes of work every single year  
19329the students so that that if if written communication is is isn't with a lot of effort for  
19330somebody that doesn't that this is a tough course I would think [discipline] too ehm once  
19331upon a time was all about getting up close and personal with people in adversity and now

19332it's like [discipline] in the sense of it's it's it's a process they call that the defensive practice  
19333defensive [discipline] it's sort of defensive [discipline] it didn't happen if it's not evidenced  
19334in writing so the actual word count in the job eh eh is probably 50% of the time spent on  
19335the job and the time with service users is about half of what it once was on that account so  
19336anyone [pause] with they struggle with language is is is is must be quite a struggle in  
19337[discipline] practice ehm eh with the volumes of writing case notes and understanding  
19338writing in all [pause] platforms contexts court reports which are quite a big piece of  
19339[professional] work now ehm quite you know and knowing the formality of court reports  
19340and the formal terms with to address ehm so so anyone with any disability there's there's a  
19341lot of hurdles in [discipline] training and in the [discipline] practice ehm in terms of it not  
19342in your first language ehm first thing that comes to mind is a geography student told me  
19343this which was helpful [pause] I find like that woman I just supervised her Nigerian accent  
19344I had to really tune in because it was a thick accent and I was saying that to a geography  
19345student that I've worked with somebody from Zimbabwe somebody Malawi they're much  
19346softer accents the lady next door's from Kenya much softer accent ehm and and he told me  
19347interesting that because there's enough Nigerians in Ireland that you can still stay in the  
19348circle of Nigerians that they tend to hold their accents more than other Africans and if that  
19349that seemed to make sense to me because I've I've I've just in oral communication haven't  
19350had a difficulty I'm thinking of somebody who was here a number of years ago who  
19351Zimbabwean and somebody K-Kenyan and somebody Malawian and I didn't have a  
19352problem with having to really strain to understand ehm [long pause] yeah this like I'm  
19353thinking I have a Croatian student ehm on the [discipline] course a few ehm Nigerians but  
19354they've been here a good while but ehm it's it yeah there are there are difficulties I'll tell  
19355you where it arises and um as well as saying all that stuff about them it just sounds like a  
19356big challenge to ask somebody to to be in a job that's so communication based around  
19357orally and written ehm that when I place students in placement [pause] I can hear the tone  
19358in somebody's voice change when I say this person is from Nigeria oh oh oh okay and right  
19359if I say @@ this is probably the reverse of what is often it's a forty year old man oh oh  
19360okay right I was expecting the young white middle class 23 year old female now that isn't  
19361verbalized but that's that's em so [pause] they're general points rather than focused on what  
19362you're asking ehm [name]

19363R: yeah but it would still be you would feel that simply because they're not necessarily  
19364Irish that they might face some roadblocks or some sort of difficulties in terms of  
19365completing the course or interacting with in the placements etcetera

19366Laurence: yeah I think I said I think it like I've heard ehm I think I think so yeah I think so  
19367ehm I think I think it's more of uphill than it is for majority culture Irish students who it has  
19368to be it w-w- working at it working in written communication at a sophisticated level in  
19369something that you weren't always wasn't always your language that sounds to me an  
19370enormous piece to take on ehm and I guess too in terms of oral communication it's it's not  
19371it's not the content it's the whole you know ehm eh just cultural [pause] understandings and  
19372misunderstandings and I know ehm the one student a black woman I was a tutor to was  
19373saying to me [pause] that she didn't easily work with black clients because her authority  
19374was rejected where it wasn't as much by white people because when you're in that job I g- I  
19375get it you're you're in [discipline] and you're involved in assessing whether we can [action]  
19376or not where she was saying in with pe- other black people it's sorry what are you doing in  
19377this role like you're so the that was interesting for me to know that that was it was easy for  
19378her I hadn't realized that but I just found that quite insightful to how these dynamics play  
19379out ehm yeah ehm so I would think yeah enormous difficulties ehm and and maybe getting  
19380easier but but enormous difficulties in terms of just [pause] in practice in written  
19381communication yeah

19382R: mm-hmm and what about okay so we've kind of covered international disability  
19383students and what about those that will come say like they the #richer students or through  
19384the access program etc. would they be impacted by language in any way

19385Laurence: yeah ehm I I I ehm and it's the term language in a meaning in a generic way

19386R: yeah generic use of language communication so it could be communicating with people  
19387on placements while communicating with lecturers communicating with other students it  
19388could be written etc.

19389Laurence: yeah yeah oh yes yes is the answer yeah there would be and I suppose ehm like I  
19390wants to like I think it can be quite a big cultural jump to be if you're if you're from a  
19391family that you used to feel part of the expression queueing for a living and suddenly  
19392you're on the other side of a desk ehm that's a big cultural bridge to have crossed and  
19393owning the authority that goes with that role is really difficult for people who who's aren't  
19394in socialized into it and and so that sort of authority piece of the role and in terms of how it  
19395shows itself in language I I mean shows itself in person and in and in around authority it  
19396shows itself in person in less confidence less ehm it shows itself in language I suppose  
19397colloquialisms ehm bad grammar ehm in the written communication that like I came  
19398@@@there's one that just really amused me hi judge for a court report and signed off  
19399cheers [name] and that's not what you can hand up in the court ehm and ehm yeah so does



19400show itself it does definitely show itself the grammar ehm the colloquialisms ehm the the

19401using authority [pause] um yeah it does show itself yeah yeah

19402R: and would you notice um kind of quite a difference between this group of students and

19403the students who come from a different or come from different country so like the Kenyan

19404or the Croatian would there be so much of a difference in the impact of language on their

19405academic success in the two groups or is it kind of the same [pause] is that clear

19406Laurence: ehm

19407R: like would you find one group is affected or their academic success is affected by

19408language more than the other group

19409Laurence: [long pause] ehm well if I say that the 70-plus percent who come through the

19410CAO and they come in here on 470 points from their leaving cert so they are well schooled

19411in [pause] essay writing so tends not to be terribly problematic even though we don't have

19412a module on writing per se but they they pick it up and run with it ehm they get endless

19413practice over the four years those for whom writing is problematic ehm yeah people with

19414with with it's a disability invisible disability around writing ehm particularly then as well

19415as them would be yeah people who are from disadvantaged backgrounds and and generally

19416the Europeans are non-Irish if say Europeans US on the masters ehm the Europeans tend to

19417have have well I'm thinking of a particular one not a language problem that very maybe

19418internationally schooled in US people schooled you know in English language so that

19419doesn't present itself particularly ehm eh lack of local knowledge might present itself but

19420not just not knowing the sort of eh that all the states agencies etc. just lack of familiarity

19421but that's quickly acquired ehm but yeah those who who who for whom the writing has

19422been problematic have tended to be Nigerians and have tended to be people from

19423disadvantaged backgrounds um yeah yeah

19424R: okay so yeah so are you aware of any support offered to international students and I'm

19425going to include also students from disadvantaged backgrounds in your department or the

19426wider college

19427Laurence: [long pause] I'd have some awareness not not I'd have some awareness rather

19428than a thorough awareness of what's out there yeah yeah some awareness yeah I do hear

19429such a staff meetings about some other colleagues saying I've referred somebody to

19430learning support or I've referred somebody to study skills they slightly all the support

19431services blend in my head to disability learning support ehm ehm counseling service they

19432sort of blend a bit in my head I have a fair bit of contact with disability service of a fair bit

19433of contact with the student health service because everyone wants to know what

19434vaccinations students have had when they go out on @placements everyone wants to know

19435the garda vetting records and the our our part non-traditional students present more  
19436problematically there than other students ehm ehm but yeah are they slightly blend the  
19437other support services slightly blend in my head

19438R: okay and do you think that the support that international non-traditional students receive  
19439is adequate

19440Laurence: again without having the very thorough knowledge I'd hazard to guess and say  
19441it's not adequate I'd hazard to guess it's not because there seems to be [pause] ehm yeah  
19442there seems to be people who are struggling with writing yeah yeah yeah and I I this might  
19443come from a place of ignorance on my part w-w-whether it it it exists b- even what I'm  
19444saying is you know maybe I need to take some agency around and start to refer people  
19445more actively or my colleagues need to because I am tuned in to disability and invisible  
19446disabilities for all sorts of reasons ehm I'm tuned in to vaccinations for all sorts of reasons  
19447I'm tuned in to garda vetting for all sorts of reasons I'm probably really not as on top of  
19448Learning Support as I might be and and and it's yeah yeah

19449R: yeah but just from what you see you would hazard to say probably not

19450Laurence: probably not because I I I don't hear it as widely spoken of as the others I don't  
19451get emails from places in the way I do about oh did you see this person's garda vetting or  
19452this person hasn't got a hepatitis vaccine what you sending them to a [organization] for you  
19453know I've all that comes dancing into my computer

19454R: right the things that are really impacting the placement

19455Laurence: yeah yeah

19456R: um ehm so I would say I'm gonna skip those I don't think that would apply um are you  
19457aware of the type of entry assessment that international students whose language is not  
19458English and those who have not studied at an Irish institution before are you aware of any  
19459English language entry assessment that they have to take before being admitted to  
19460[institution 1]

19461Laurence: barely

19462R: barely ok do you have any opinions or feelings about what you know of that

19463Laurence: I heard a mention of that at a selection meeting in the last fortnight we have um  
19464a 100 people applied for 20 places on our Masters in [discipline] program and ehm [pause]  
19465the somewhere for EU and somewhere for non-EU and it was mentioned about somebody  
19466had to do some English test that so I heard that I had there was a Malawian student ehm  
19467here a number years ago who ehm um not Malawi ehm the place that had the genocide not  
19468Malawi

19469R: Rwanda

19470Laurence: Rwanda yeah Rwanda and she had lots of languages and ehm I remember her  
19471telling me she had gone for some sort of testing and [pause] even after passing the bar  
19472struggled cuz it was about her fourth language and her father had been I think if he wasn't a  
19473president of of Rwanda he was vice president and they were hunted people all over the  
19474world and uhm she had an amazing life history but I remember her saying saying about her  
19475English you know [pause] something about coming here and having to do an English test  
19476so some bare-bare-bare

19477R: bare minimum

19478Laurence: bare minimum yeah yeah entry level awareness on it

19479R: so for Rwanda she said they even though she passed that she still struggled

19480Laurence: yeah

19481R: would that be would you know of cases like that more generally or which you know of  
19482more cases where people have taken it and they've been fine

19483Laurence: no I wouldn't because I think that this is a just a because I uh apart from the  
19484recent internationals on the master's program or people who are on our programs who  
19485aren't Irish born but have been here ten twelve years

19486R: right so they don't need to take

19487Laurence: yeah it hasn't it hasn't arisen much ehm yeah it hasn't arisen much it's it's I'm  
19488thinking it's been with the older African women really cuz or like the young now the young  
19489children of people who arrived in Ireland in the nineties are in college and they went  
19490through the Irish schooling system where like that lady now who I did the Masters which  
19491she I- I'd put her at her mid-40s ehm but she probably only met English I'm her guessing  
19492mid-twenties ehm so she wasn't does fluent as someone was born and schooled here or  
19493born and schooled in an English language country but yeah I'm I'm weak around it alright  
19494yeah

19495R: okay ehm so what type of preparation I'm gonna break this into two questions so first  
19496what type of preparation do you think that international students or students who don't  
19497have English as a first language should take before coming into [institution 1] so say like  
19498during the summer or to prepare academically and linguistically for [institution 1]

19499Laurence: what should they

19500R: yeah what should they do so um if there were like a summer course that they were to  
19501take what should that course focus on to make sure that they will succeed in [institution 1]

19502Laurence: hmm ehm the thought in my head which isn't helpful@ my grandfather was a  
19503veterinary surgeon and he did his course through Latin in Scotland ehm and at the time that  
19504was the language of the universities uh that's a big help the the universities doing their

19505teaching through Latin ehm which made you know the globalization well more more more  
19506possible [pause] yeah [click] I I I haven't had enough a close enough encounter with it but I  
19507would think to be able to like it's certainly for our program you'd need good sophisticated  
19508knowledge of oral and written English to build ehm pass a program like our program  
19509because it's so communication based I mean [discipline] and I think when I say  
19510communication based it's it's so culturally based too because ehm the big piece that we try  
19511to do with students is that sort of what we call sociological imagination that they can they  
19512can set a person in context so that my private pains aren't just my private pains they are the  
19513they are there's there's there's bigger than what I carry that's in context ehm and and that  
19514sort of to be able to figure all that out to be able to write about the sort of all the different  
19515the micro meso and macro context and be able to join them all up you'd n- you'd need to  
19516be pretty good at reading pretty good at writing ehm so I I would think people would need  
19517to be at the same power as an English speaker really to [pause] because otherwise you're  
19518possibly setting somebody up for a hard time for a a a a bad experience ehm if [pause]  
19519yeah I think so I think you'd need to have fluency I think ehm yeah fluency yeah  
19520R: and so if there were the same type of program for non-traditional students so students  
19521through access programs or even um disabilities etc. who may have problems in language  
19522uh what would you hope to see on that kind of course  
19523Laurence: uhm [long pause] let me think I'm doing all this thinking for the first time  
19524R: that's fine take your time@  
19525Laurence: @@  
19526R: I know these are like really difficulty like I never thought about this before  
19527Laurence: @ it is it is a lot of that I've never thought about this before but um [pause] this  
19528is such a [discipline] thing to say it needs to be not stigmatizing it needs to be non-classist  
19529ehm because you know vernacular is fine it's just in the settings [pause] formal record  
19530settings you don't say hi judging you don't say cheers [name] yeah ehm ehm so ehm I  
19531suppose [long pause] so some sort of eh and probably it probably comes up more on the  
19532written communication that that some practice some instruction on on the expectations of  
19533functional writing academic writing and then professional writing in you know in in in the  
19534sort of places that students ehm will have their careers and and will have their placements  
19535that there would be they'd be skilled up around it ehm that they'd be instructed around it  
19536that they'd be supported around it because it's not [pause] it's not beyond anyone you know  
19537it's it's more I think about building a bridge from their good language skills to this is how  
19538the world you're going into sort of how they they express themselves is is that  
19539R: yep yeah can you expand on that more at all so like how would you build that bridge

19540Laurence: okay see I like the idea right President Clinton was your friend by looking  
19541#innocent and a scarf around our friend Hillary last week this day last week in fact and he  
19542said he wanted the American cabinet to look like the American people I like that our  
19543[discipline] course looks like the Irish people in its current presentation ehm so I'm I'm  
19544glad too that because ehm because there's there's some process of identification and some  
19545process of being closer to people's lives and there's all sorts of value in that and [pause] so  
19546but to be effective ehm to navigate all the different agencies and ehm eh people also need I  
19547think f- you know good written communication I I I mean it nearly nearly could be it  
19548nearly could be a module first year or an ongoing module like if it's a drop-in center  
19549somewhere around the college [pause] this issue will will somebody attend where if it's  
19550maybe normalized as the first year ehm module you know an elective or maybe a core  
19551module just on writing skills formal writing functional writing academic writing ehm  
19552professional writing writing for different platforms ehm [pause] yeah it might it just might  
19553diminish people's struggles that they I think they carry on their own is that @

19554R: yeah that's perfect actually there's a lot of comments I'm saving for after the interview

19555Laurence: mmm

19556R: cuz I don't want to be like ahh good um but so this is kind of my my last two questions  
19557actually um so what do you hope that your students walk away with or walk away feeling  
19558when they leave the program

19559Laurence: [inhale] [long pause] I I always I meet first-year students and ask them what  
19560brought them into [discipline] and I'm [pause] struck by how many people have that  
19561impulse to put simply touch people's lives touch [pause] lift burdens off people make a  
19562better world so that sorta seems to bring people into [discipline] and lots of other places but  
19563it does it's a cluster a majority cluster and then some people who didn't get the points for  
19564[discipline] and didn't get them for [discipline] @ that's a yeah so there's that there's that  
19565and everyone all is valid and I welcome them no matter what their journey was I was a  
19566[professional] but [professional] was better paid so that's why I'm here and lots of different  
19567things people say but but that impulse for others are care or humanitarian impulse I hope  
19568that they will feel they have now coming out of the College I hope they'll feel not only do I  
19569want to make a difference actually know how to make a difference I know how to  
19570intervene I know how to be effective I actually do know now how to ehm lift burdens of  
19571people and contribute to people's fulfilment well-being without diminishing the person  
19572without it being charity ehm eh with leaving the person feeling better ehm so I sort of hope  
19573that people come out with understanding context ehm ehm and how to how to actually  
19574affect context in terms of different levels and also had to leave people feeling better in

19575terms of you know ehm counseling skills therapeutic skills ehm and and ehm politically  
19576and bigger structures that they know how to navigate them to use them ehm beneficially  
19577ehm and understand the process of change that small marginal change ehm and bigger  
19578level change and they're confident around at all and that they remain open and that they  
19579remain curious and that they remain learning ehm that they don't stagnate they don't get  
19580routinized they don't get procedurized ehm [pause] and that they live sort of authentic lives  
19581R: yeah and do you think that they walk away with this or can you say  
19582Laurence: I think they they know something's happened they know something's happened  
19583they've had a big experience there they've been rattled ehm I don't think for most  
19584[discipline] students this'll have been a non-adventure and underwhelm I think @ they're  
19585more feel like they've been hit by a truck @@@ and and and ehm or purposefully not not  
19586destructively and ehm I [long pause] and they'd be different for being here ehm and wiser  
19587ehm [long pause] yeah I I I you know I think generally students yeah they're they're  
19588[pause] I'd say if you measured sort of expectations and and and you know satisfactions  
19589and we do evaluate their placement experience and they're generally pleased with what  
19590they get generally pleased with what they get yeah I got a card there ehm I was saying I  
19591told you that I didn't I @@

19592R: your class is gas @@

19593Laurence: @ the the the that's new

19594R: that's being transcribed @

19595Laurence: @@ I hope that's going into next year's the provost teaching awards

19596R: oh it is yeah @@

19597Laurence: it's a new category @@

19598R: @@ so that's actually all the questions that I had for you but is there anything that you  
19599wish I had asked that I didn't ask or anything that you'd like to add anything that you have  
19600been brainstorming that wasn't brought up

19601Laurence: ehm I suppose if I I well one is I had a little energy dip somewhere and then I  
19602came back into it so I'm just acknowledging that I don't know of you noticed but I noticed  
19603no eh no but concentrate [name] ehm that was one thing the other thing is that [long pause]  
19604the reason this hasn't slapped me in the face before is because I've only done my thinking  
19605since [pause] you emailed me ehm is [long pause] in the way that I said all the other things  
19606are higher awareness the vetting the vaccinations the ehm eh disability and you know I'm  
19607attentive to those and have a consciousness about all those ehm [long pause] is probably  
19608the the that we don't have many people who who aren't native English speakers that cuz  
19609otherwise it would have been I think I would have been more alert to and I am through this

19610process I will be more alert to it and I will be better tuned in to like how is it for people like  
19611um this young woman different Croatia but I think she was internationally school she  
19612seems to have very good English but for others who are maybe older who have come you  
19613know i- on to the course having come to Ireland in their 20s rather than their children eh  
19614just just be more attentive to like is there anything we can do to help you with your written  
19615work ehm yeah I think so that's that it's so it's been an awakening process for me and a  
19616consciousness-raising process for me and I'll be more alert to very very small numbers  
19617because it is really very small numbers ehm that that and and and it's interesting making  
19618the contact between people whose English is sort of street English and that that's in your  
19619focus as well as people yeah

19620R: well yeah that's um I'm gonna keep the recorder on for this but because I think it might  
19621produce um but what I was going to say is um Teresa Lillis uhm she is an academic in the  
19622UK that does work with academic literacies and most of her work is based in mature  
19623students um students from lower social class lower economic class non-traditional students  
19624and uhm everything that you were saying not necessarily that hi judge is wrong it's that it's  
19625not correct for that context and a lot of her work focuses on helping students navigate  
19626through that about when they can use the words that they want to why they use certain  
19627words in certain places and what they gain from it and that idea has been transferred over  
19628into English for academic purposes where English for academic purposes is moving away  
19629from just from non-native English speakers and towards being for everyone kind of  
19630acknowledging that everyone has different backgrounds everyone comes from a different  
19631place um even people who go through you know the Irish education system straight  
19632through may not have a good grasp on navigating academia or navigating the culture and  
19633the different institution specific expectations and it's more about helping with that than  
19634saying here's a grammar rule learn it yeah yes it was interesting when you were bringing  
19635that up

19636Laurence: yeah yeah yeah so that is interesting yeah to to sort of the lang- it's almost like  
19637over there this is how they speak when you're part of the court system you know they they  
19638they s- yeah

19639R: yeah yeah so it's like here's the court system this is how they speak and so why do we  
19640modify our speech when we're speaking to them what do we gain from it and then when  
19641we're with um in your context where was someone trying to help them sort their [task] you  
19642know how do we speak with them and why what are we gaining from it so do we go back  
19643into our vernacular to make them feel more comfortable and at ease or do we maintain kind

19644of this formality to establish authority etc. all of that um and helping students figure out  
19645when to do what and why and be able to navigate that

19646Laurence: yeah yeah yeah well that's interesting a nice way of doing it because I was  
19647saying about not stigmatizing and sort of normalizing and that's exactly that it's like I do  
19648this thing with the students just telling a bit about themselves in introduction and and and  
19649just explain to the class everything is valid like whatever people have to say is valid my  
19650life story is your life story is and your life story is and there's no big deal that you're in  
19651reception center for ten years and that you're in in some posh school it doesn't matter like  
19652just let's hear it you know and it's it's versions of that isn't it all all valid all English or all  
19653any language valid but in this situation if you want to be effective that choice of words  
19654would get your further

19655R: [cut for confidentiality]

19656Laurence: and do you know another thing that struck me in this exercise [pause] the ghetto  
19657I live in [long pause] you know

19658R: @ yeah

19659Laurence: this that corridor @

19660R: the corridor this building @

19661Laurence: y-you know like w-what's it like it like walk in [street] I went down to insomnia  
19662near the dental hospital and had a coffee and a sandwich at 12 I'm walking in [street] this is  
19663just so gorgeous absolutely so gorgeous and you know and I I do it six times a year like it  
19664is a ghetto so I don't know how it is for other students often because I know my own [long  
19665pause] family students ehm I know them less well that I used to cuz the numbers have got  
19666bigger but but ehm what the [institution 1] broader experiences like or from what goes on  
19667in in different disciplines like linguistics ehm eh [pause] is sort of new information for me I  
19668mean I just just struck with that sort of ghetto living you know living in your own  
19669discipline and and not not knowing what's happening more broadly in [institution 1] ehm  
19670[pause] so the the the the the the main the themes and the changing eh term structure and  
19671lots of those things slightly pass me by ehm and I'm looking for placements and thinking of  
19672my timetable and you know in a very small life @@

19673R: yeah well it's you know everyone has so much going on that if it doesn't directly impact  
19674something now [pause] then sometimes it's just like okay I'll [pause] okay I'll deal with  
19675that later

19676Laurence: yeah yeah

19677R: right now I need to make sure that I don't send someone who doesn't have a vaccine for  
19678hepatitis to a drug center like



19679Laurence: yeah bad idea

19680R: yeah that's that's more of an important thing that oh we're gonna start two weeks earlier

19681Laurence: yeah yeah it is that it's like this morning I left the house and the postman had

19682just dropped two letters in I said now I haven't a headspace to take in what's in those they

19683can wait it's so that you sort of push things back that aren't aren't pressing and immediate

19684R: yes yeah and also um you were saying having writing courses for first year they do that

19685in the US mandatory writing classes were all students for the whole first year of university

19686it's university writing

19687Laurence: and I think it could be helpful

19688R: I think so too

19689Laurence: yeah I think it would be helpful yeah because it's a it's a very different style of

19690writing I did ask my daughter who did [language discipline] she's away this at the moment

19691but I did ask her last week about meeting you and what was her experience and she said it

19692was third year before I got a handle on [language] like a very good [language] but what

19693what are they looking for like I I was in third year before I got it like nobody no- I could

19694have done with somebody saying we're not a language course or a literature course we're a

19695[language] literature course and so we just assume you [language] [long pause] and and

19696what we need what we want in essays is you know

19697R: this this this this

19698Laurence: yes because because she's smart and bright and very very very good leaving cert

19699ehm having done a very limited house of schooling through ill health but but just it would

19700have you know sometimes these things do make a difference and you just have to figure it

19701out for yourself but it it ehm so that yeah she woulda liked that I think just this is this this

19702would've helped yeah

19703R: yeah yeah

19704Laurence: ehm I think the [discipline] school by contrast is a sort of little loving they all

19705love one another and they're all very informal and accessible and [pause] yeah you can just

19706knock on somebody's door and say what do you what do you want in that essay

19707R: yeah yeah so it's definitely yeah differences in disciplines and departments based on

19708even the nature of the academic work but also the environment

19709Laurence: yeah

19710R: alright do you mind if I transcribe this last little bit that we just

19711Laurence: not no no no not a bit

19712R: okay @@

19713Laurence: no secrets in it

19714R: I just wanted to make sure before I'm gonna turn it off now

19715

19716

**Linda**

19717

19718R: okay so first can you just kind of explain to me what your role is within the school

19719Linda: sure um so my title is um an assistant professor in [discipline] uh but uh in terms of

19720my uh interaction with students and particularly non-English speaking students I'm I'm the

19721director of the masters in [discipline] and yeah so it's one of the more popular master's

19722programs it's relatively new it's we're in our third year um now so I was there from the start

19723I designed the the program from scratch and I've seen the three uh intakes um over the past

19724three years so uh we're getting there this hiccups uh as with all new programs or relatively

19725new programs uh but our numbers are increasing year-on-year I mean we've had we've had

19726no problem of filling the program um we've had to actually cap and close applications

19727early um so um and every year our our targets for want of a better word that we're given by

19728uh I guess the Dean of the Executive Committee is increasing as well so I think uh uh I

19729think one of the contributing factors to why this English competency thing is so important

19730is because of the large class sizes ehm and and when we have large class sizes you have

19731um a relatively large amount of group work and and also any large class sizes um

19732students that may not necessarily have the skills that they they need or be at the standard

19733that they need to be can kind of [pause] disguise uhm themselves and and get through

19734because it's it's not a class of 30 where you know if the student is struggling you can pick

19735them out and you can help them in a class of 75 which I have at the moment uhm they can

19736go on undetected unless it's actually brought to me as an issue so that's where I'm coming

19737from in terms of as being a director for three years I've seen the problem becoming

19738increasingly more problematic ehm because of the growth in one of the reasons is because

19739of the growth in student numbers so yeah the the director of a master's program I've

19740learned a lot in the three years I was new to the role I had only taught pos-post-grad level

19741I'd never managed a program let alone designed one so I'm learning a lot as well but I do

19742know um our students are really liking the program eh but both for non-native speakers of

19743English and native speakers of English ehm English proficiency is a problem all right and

19744it's not a problem that'd I feel we can solve tomorrow but I definitely think there's more

19745there's scope for for improvements there and I think the English language competency

19746building program if that is the correct term eh will be one resource that would be really

19747really welcomed uh not just by myself but by the other directors in the school

19748R: yeah um so can you tell me about the the work that's required of your students

19749Linda: yeah [click] I um so again I don't micromanage every- there's 12 taught modules on  
19750the program and therefore 12 module leaders or lecturers of each of those modules I I I  
19751don't have the time or the wherewithal to micromanage each of those modules and the  
19752content and the assessment but I do take a general overview of when when module leaders  
19753send me in their module descriptors I look at the assessment uh to see what is required of  
19754the students and [pause] yeah more or less I would say 90 to 100 percent of modules are  
19755assessed with by some form of individual written component sorry individual component  
19756and group component and within those there would be a mixture of I know right now in the  
19757program uh there are modules that have your traditional essay uh writing uh or group oral  
19758presentations group written reports uh group debates so there's like an alive motion and  
19759you have to kind of think on your feet and and so that can be tricky al-although a genius  
19760way of assessing and really interesting for students and it's just another skill it's not just  
19761like your pre-prepared oral presentation it's in the moment being able to make an argument  
19762and and justified and I myself I used a reflective journal um as an essay so a totally  
19763different style of writing I said everything you've you've been told to do in terms of  
19764academic writing forget about that leave it at the door so your know there's there is a lot  
19765required of the students we assess them in a variety of different ways but we do think that  
19766adds to their learning obviously um and there's always a pedagogical reason or motion put  
19767forward for why we're assessing that way but there is a a huge scope uh in terms of how we  
19768assess them and the modes of assessment and I think that's a good thing but it also adds  
19769challenges to g- to the students so there they would be the main ones I guess but in every  
19770module I always ensure that there is um [click] there is at least at a bare minimum it would  
19771be a 50/50 split in terms of group work and individual ideally th- the weighting for the  
19772individual components would weigh more than the group work and again that's to  
19773eliminate what I mentioned earlier about kind of hanging on people's coattails and and and  
19774not you can get through by other people's work which again is not fair so we try to  
19775eliminate that by having that breakdown um and it's not it's not perfect it's not a perfect  
19776solution but it but it helps and and then one other um way that I didn't mention is  
19777participation [click] and again I I as our number we've had a major problem in one module  
19778this year and it's nothing really to do with the module itself or the assessment itself it's uh  
19779it's very very difficult tooooo monitor on a daily basis or you know a weekly basis in each  
19780lecture uh 75 students level of participation um and I know that module leaders are very  
19781loath to offer marks just for turning up you know or maybe putting your hand up once and  
19782asking a question asking a question again um for most module leaders today it doesn't  
19783count for part- so students tend to be quite unhappy uh with their participation grades and

19784there are students in the classroom from who I've had personal experience of this cuz they  
19785not only am I director of the program I make sure that I teach them as well so that I get to  
19786know the students um there are students from one end of the semester to the other end of  
19787the semester I won't have heard them speak [pause] and that is despite me trying to probe  
19788them and and you know I I I you know I I I try not to pick on people you know that that  
19789form of method that we tend to use for undergraduates where nobody opens their mouth or  
19790nobody has an opinion because in postgrad classes there will always be somebody who  
19791opinion which is fantastic but it just makes it easier for those people that are whether it's a  
19792confidence thing whether it's a competency thing it's probably a mixture uh for for non-  
19793English speakers or non-native English speakers it's that bit more difficult to put your hand  
19794up and say you know that's my opinion on something because not only are they concerned  
19795about whether their opinion is right or they're concerned about how they're expressing it so  
19796it's really really I understand that's really really difficult so I'm loath now to accept [click]  
19797participation even if it's only ten percent as a mode of assessment in in in a in a program of  
19798that size and with so many students struggling with their English proficiency so I don't  
19799think it's fair um I think it's easy marks for those people that are very competent in  
19800speaking English in front of a a public audience and for those who just are totally uh out of  
19801their depth and I really a- a- for want of a better word scared to to say what they think  
19802because they certainly do have an opinion it's just sometimes it can be just a matter of that  
19803they're not able to communicate it in a way that they want to so that's it's really I find it  
19804unfair so I'm trying to move away from that until we can solve this English proficiency  
19805problem

19806R: yeah um so all of your master's students would need to complete a dissertation is that  
19807right

19808Linda: yes

19809R: could you tell me a little bit about what the dissertation entails what kind of research  
19810they're doing

19811Linda: yeah we give them an option um in the [discipline] school or I think on most  
19812programs there's an option anyway that they can do the traditional academic dissertation  
19813which is your you pick an area of literature you do your review you find a gap you go  
19814ahead and conduct primary research whatever that might be quantitative qualitative you  
19815analyze it and you write up your findings and it's the traditional format but we also give  
19816them the option of doing a live company project ehm which is essentially and the live  
19817company project is is less uhh formatted or less structured I would guess in terms of what  
19818we are looking for them for both forms of of final research project we call it the learning

19819objectives are the same I mean we want them to understand how to identify a prob- a  
19820research problem identify a gap in in our knowledge ehm [click] select an appropriate  
19821methodology to try and address that problem you know all of them mai- the basic skills of  
19822social science research are the same for both but in one it's a hypothetical or or an area of  
19823literature or theory that there is a gap and in the company project it's just a pain point that a  
19824company that they have been able to get access to are experiencing and so they're similar  
19825and they're different ehm but I guess in one the there the academic writing the referencing  
19826and and stuff would probably be that little bit more imperative because they have to do a  
19827complete and a fully developed literature review whereas if they're doing a company  
19828project the lit review the they have to establish or show that they've engaged rel- relevant  
19829literature it doesn't have to be as in-depth as the the uh traditional dissertation would have  
19830to be uhm but for the company project their strategic recommendations and their findings  
19831need to be brought out more and teased out from a practitioner point of view so there's  
19832differences in the writing style I would say and maybe the structure of the final document  
19833but the requirements are the same the work effort that's required is the same and the  
19834learning objectives should be are the same and should be achieved by both so that's that's  
19835really it's a it's a 30 credit component of a 90 credit program so it's quite significant yeah  
19836R: yeah and um and so then can you describe to me the general structure of the lectures so  
19837what happens inside of the classroom

19838Linda: yes okay we moved recently @from we used to have four hour lectures and they  
19839just it was felt by all that it wasn't conducive to a proper learning environment people were  
19840just dozing off um it was very mundane and tedious for the module leaders to try and  
19841capture someone's attention even no matter how interested they're in a subject four hours is  
19842a long time to be listening to people so we've reduced the class time the individual class  
19843time down to three hour to three-hour slots [click] um module leaders again have a bit of  
19844autonomy when it comes to how they deliver within that three hours a lot of a lot of  
19845module leaders including myself we break it up between you know interactive group work  
19846we set them a task we do the traditional lecture style where we kind of dictate to them  
19847content ehm a mix of video a mix of guests speech uh guest speakers and so yeah it's it's a  
19848three hour slot but ehm then within those within that three hours it can be the module  
19849leader giving the lecture or the students actively participating and that active participation  
19850might require speaking in public whether it's a uh debates like I mentioned I know the  
19851debate assessment happens within class time ehm and then in other in other modules uh uh  
19852at least in one class or maybe across the board ehm [click] students will be presenting work  
19853as well so it can be a mixture uh they should we try to make them as interactive as possible

19854but as I said when you've 75 students over three hours it can be difficult for that interaction  
19855to come out but we try our best yea

19856R: and what would the preparation for the students be for lectures would they have  
19857assigned //readings

19858Linda: yeah

19859R: would they have| discussion questions

19860Linda: for most eh I would say [sigh] a safe bet would be to say for all of the modules

19861there's assigned reading and for others there is a lot so that's coming back in some module

19862evaluations that they find the reading a bit overwhelming and I've had to go and had

19863discussions with module leaders and just say is it necessary to have all of those are there

19864the core readings and auxiliary readings that they can do after and we've had these

19865discussions but eh because of just the nature of [discipline] I mean there's some case

19866studies that they may have to have read in advance as well eh but yeah a lot of reading and

19867the reading normally is is required of them in advance of attending lecture so yeah reading

19868really is the main thing that they need to do before they come into the class

19869R: okay um I'm going kind of back to the assessment um would it be normal for them to be

19870given a topic for for the individual written assessments or what they kind of need to come

19871up with their own topic

19872Linda: ummm I I guess it's a it would probably be a mi- a mixture of both maybe more

19873towards them uh being given a a prescribed topic however that topic and how detailed and

19874specific that topic is can vary I mean module leaders can I purposely keep mine broad

19875because I like them to be able to kind of think independently ehm and so some some in

19876some modules they'll be giving a very specific brief uhm and then in others they'll be given

19877kind of a general brief and this and then they need to figure out for themselves what way

19878they want to do it I would say the main uh [pause] assessment that they undertake that is

19879where they decide or have to make a decision on what it is they're going to do is the

19880dissertation they find they're very very uncomfortable with that I find across the board I

19881think they'd rather uh from my experience they'd rather a two-page detailed 50 bullet

19882pointed brief rather than a two sentence or a very clear short paragraph on this is what I

19883would like you to do they don't like unstructured they they prefer the template format of

19884assessment which I I I and probably most other module leaders despise uh and you know a

19885lot of them find it quite difficult to and I don't know whether it's a case that they're coming

19886straight from their undergrad and they're quite uncomfortable with thinking for themselves

19887and and making a decision and just going with it with conviction I don't [pause] a lot of

19888them not all a lot of them are very uncomfortable with deciding their own topics for  
19889assessment if they're asked to do that is what I've found [pause] in general  
19890R: yeah um so then how would you assess academic success  
19891Linda: [click] [sharp inhale] academic success in terms of of the students  
19892R: yeah  
19893Linda: [click] okay yeah like we [exasperated exhale] I would always ask that when  
19894module leaders are de- designing their assessment that they not only relate their module the  
19895the learning outcome the assessment to their module learning outcomes but also to the  
19896program level learning goals which we have I think there's four or five of them I designed  
19897them myself I did a lot of work in in putting them there and what I believed that every  
19898student who has undergone a full time intensive masters in [discipline] should know or  
19899should at least have skills and competence in so those program level learning goals we've  
19900all these terminology here it's quite annoying uh ne- I think module learning objectives  
19901should align with program level learning goals and for me if that if that were to happen and  
19902students felt that through their assessment uh they were ticking boxes on both of those that  
19903would be academic [pause] achievement or a success in my view it's quite difficult to  
19904measure it's it's quite difficult to put a metric on academic success even the term success is  
19905gonna be very different from one student to the other you know getting through the  
19906program in one piece would be success for one student whereas nothing short of a  
19907distinction will be would be you know a failure if they weren't to get that for other students  
19908so again they they set their own expectations for themselves and and some of them are  
19909quite high so I think that's probably again another area where [click] the lack of English  
19910proficiency comes in as a major major kind of bugbear for students particularly those that  
19911are these kind of high achieving um quite you know self-demanding they put a lot of  
19912demands on themselves and they say and they're able to show me they show me their set of  
19913results and they say here's the my suite of modules here's my results I'm a consistent first-  
19914class student in these two modules the group assessment component was weighted quite  
19915high and my average grade was dragged down because I had to do the work of four people  
19916ehm purely because they they they couldn't uh communicate with me or they couldn't they  
19917weren't able to write down and it really it doesn't tend to get personal like in terms of their  
19918criticism of those that can't speak English is it's out of frustration for what how it's  
19919impacting their achievements and that seems very selfish but I can kind of understand  
19920where they're coming from and the frustration and also is that they I know that a lot of the  
19921non-native English speakers on the program are highly intelligent they meet our other entry  
19922criteria tenfold but not being able to communicate that level of knowledge that they have is

19923where the problem is so I guess [pause] yeah [sigh] I I I I can't really answer that question  
19924about you know is that what's that one thing how students measure their own you know  
19925academic success it's different for everybody  
19926R: right yeah and so um for yourself personally if if and when you do get those  
19927assessments from students and you're marking them what are you really looking for what  
19928differentiates say first from a second class  
19929Linda: okay yeah I guess I'm looking for what I what what I what I really and I make it  
19930very very clear to students I really don't want them to regurgitate [pause] what I've told  
19931them or even what they read in a journal article okay if it's an entire summary of a journal  
19932article [pause] great you read the article and you and you can remember it what I want to  
19933see is their interpretation of the content so really [pause] and it's why I kind of use the I use  
19934the reflective journal form of assessments so that they had to after every class they had one  
19935free class where they could choose that they didn't want to p-submit an entry ehm but they  
19936have for the others they had to and I simply ask them to tell me what they believed was  
19937their most salient learning and they hated it at the start they hat- they absolutely hated it  
19938they came to me with emails saying do you think that this was my most salient learning  
19939and I had to turn out and say look at that question that you've asked me I can't possibly tell  
19940you what your most salient learning was so I think being introspective and [pause] looking  
19941inward and saying what did I take from that so not not forming an argument that they think  
19942I want to hear you know the wording was excellent and the theory that was presented was  
19943brilliant and it's really if that's the case that's fine but you need to tell me why you know so  
19944I'm looking for critical thinking I'm looking for independence of thought and I'm looking  
19945for interpretation of material as opposed to description of material so [pause] a lot of  
19946students that can write well like English is their first language and they can write  
19947exceptionally well in an academic style and are so flabbergasted when they don't get the  
19948grade that they think they deserve because they to them they've presented a perfect or near  
19949perfect description of the module content or summary of a core reading eh or combination  
19950of core readings uh and they're shocked when I say that's not what I was looking for so I  
19951guess there is probably the biggest discrepancy ehm I think maybe at undergrad even at  
19952second level their ability to to to um synthesize and and remember material is an important  
19953skill to learn but I think that a master's-level in particular they have to go far beyond that  
19954because they're gonna be asked to think on their own feet when they go into the real world  
19955so that's what I try and look for it's there it's that independence of thought is is which is  
19956difficult to get across an assessment I know that but ideally if we're living in an ideal world  
19957that's what I'd be looking for from students



19958R: okay brilliant um so would students have access to rubrics guidelines uh handbooks that  
19959would describe assessment and what's expected before completing

19960Linda: yes so uh every every module has an attached um module descriptor okay so within  
19961that it's the how the module relates to their overall program eh the learning outcomes of as  
19962as I said that for that module the assessment break down most module leaders will then  
19963have a separate [cough] uh more detailed breakdown of the of the assessment brief ehm  
19964[click] and uh what I would expect in an assessment brief is that students are told um what  
19965on what criteria they're being assessed or what the module leader is looking for etc. etc.  
19966and that and again students demand that and I wh- I wh- and they expected it and they  
19967demand it if it's not there they will ask for it ehm I guess the timing could be a little bit  
19968better I mean [pause] we're such a big program as I said there's twelve taught modules  
19969[pause] we don't have the p- we're growing the [discipline] school is growing and the full  
19970time staff numbers are growing but not quick enough to match the student numbers so a lot  
19971of our module leaders are adjuncts okay or external professors from other universities that  
19972fly in and fly home and so they're not and a lot of them are given the nature of [discipline]  
19973as a discipline ehm a lot of them are just ex- you know industry experts consultants and  
19974and they're not really used to the way of life of of a university and an educational  
19975institution so they get kind of a bit conflustered or whatever it might be with all of our red  
19976tape and our you know you have to design your assessment like this and and  
19977micromanaging all of those adjuncts and all those kind of non non academics as well is  
19978quite difficult so I what I'm saying is the level the level of detail that students are provided  
19979in terms of rubrics in terms of assessment criteria in terms of a breakdown of what they're  
19980looking what the module leaders are looking for varies across each module depending on  
19981the lecturer's style depending on again whether they're an academic a non-academic  
19982whether they're a full-time member here who are used to what we expect or not so there's a  
19983lot of variation which is not it's not ideal for students but I don't see around about I don't  
19984have 12 full-time staff members in all of the areas on my program here in the [discipline]  
19985school so I have to go elsewhere

19986R: right right okay and so this is gonna be quite a general question but in general what do  
19987you feel that students need in order to succeed at [institution 1]

19988Linda: uhh to succeed

19989R: well in your program

19990Linda: in the program

19991R: yeah

19992 Linda: yeah okay I think they need I think the number one uhh skill that they will need is  
19993 uhhh [exasperated sigh] self-discipline or self-motivation I mean [pause] they can turn up  
19994 to class and they can submit their work ehm but if they're not I mean no one is monitoring  
19995 them really um we take attendance um but I mean turning up to class and paying attention  
19996 in class are two very very different things so they have to have a desire and a hard work  
19997 ethic to get through I tell all of the students prospective students on open days people that  
19998 inquire via email that aren't haven't even applied yet I'm very open and frank that this is a  
19999 full-time these are the words I use a full time intense program and so I let like they should  
20000 be very aware of that and if they're not they're definitely made aware of it in orientation  
20001 week where kind of we tell them the importance of that whole aspect of self-determination  
20002 self-motivation to work hard for a short relatively short period of time so that you can reap  
20003 the rewards that w- that's what we say ehm so I do that's one thing that they need um they  
20004 they definitely need to be able to speak the language and again and that's not just because  
20005 of the nature of the conversation we're having it's it's definitely a necessity I mean the  
20006 majority of students that come here from overseas are looking to stay here at least stay the  
20007 UK or stay in Europe and [pause] they may um have found a way and I don't mean this in  
20008 any negative way I can understand why they're doing it as I said earlier ehm they may have  
20009 found a way to kind of loophole the system in terms of meeting our entry requirements to  
20010 get by without having the actual standard of English needed they'll be sussed out in two  
20011 minutes in the real world when they're asked to send an internal memo or an email and  
20012 they can't they can't do that which is quite basic um skill and my heart goes out to them if  
20013 [pause] on one or two occasions students have been called out and they've been put in very  
20014 very uncomfortable situations for example an oral viva of their dissertation and they didn't  
20015 understand a single word that was asked of them and it was just horrifying for the student  
20016 involved for the panel that were there and this student had managed to get through an  
20017 entire two semesters on our program undetected that that she wasn't able to speak a word  
20018 of English essentially so you know I hate when that happens and I I think our entry  
20019 requirements need to be [pause] more more strict and but for the benefit of those students  
20020 mainly you know it's no skin off my back if they pay the- uh except that I can't sleep at  
20021 night sometimes I bring the problem home I mean I'm saying we're taking their money and  
20022 they don't get through they don't get their masters they they may leave with the post  
20023 graduate diploma which is not what they want it doesn't happen all the time it's a very very  
20024 few occasions but it does happen so something isn't working but I also think there's a  
20025 responsibility on students who are applying to an English-speaking program who have  
20026 been told by our recruitment officers who are trained and you know well versed in telling

20027students the requirements that will be asked of them on the program that if they still decide  
20028knowing themselves that they don't have the English that they should have and they still  
20029apply there is a level of responsibility that they have to take themselves as well so it's a  
20030balance I think I think we need to get better at screening candidates who may struggle or  
20031may suffer or may get lost on the program and be able to fish them out before if they're on  
20032the program we need to fish them out early so that we can help them and provide them for  
20033with additional resources for instance the re-resources that you guys provide um but but if  
20034they aren't already on the program and we think that they would struggle severely then we  
20035shouldn't accept them just from on a moral standpoint just yeah moral and ethical grounds  
20036but also just in in their benefit it's not it's not worth their money traveling here and the  
20037expense of it and then they're not able to get through so I did- can't even remember the  
20038question you asked me I diverged and I @@@@ so sorry

20039R: that's fine no no it's fine it's completely related and it also kind of flows into the next  
20040question where I was gonna say how much of a factor does language

20041Linda: okay okay yeah

20042R: so I guess you you've talked a lot about the language um can you so you've you've  
20043spoken a lot about oral language so they're not able to express themselves are not able to  
20044talk to people are there other aspects of the language you would really identify or

20045Linda: yeah I guess I mean ugh [sigh] th- that there's a difference uh between being able to  
20046detect when a student because a lot of I don't really look uh I don't look at their name and I  
20047don't look at I look at the assessment in front of me and I'm almost immediately as you as  
20048you know and yourself you're probably able to do as well you're able to tell straight off the  
20049bat when uh this is somebody from Europe where English is not their first language or  
20050someone from Asia or someone from India where English is is not the first language in in  
20051terms of writing ehm [click] and there are some grammatical mistakes there are some typos  
20052there are some you know just some minor errors throughout the document okay I would I  
20053would I would assume that most module leaders take that into consideration I know I  
20054certainly do ehm it's it's a different it's a totally different matter when the English writing is  
20055so poor that I'm not able to to to even decipher what the student is even attempting to say  
20056and there have been cases of that so [pause] I know that there's a qualitative difference  
20057between that student student A and student B who struggled a little bit in terms of it's not  
20058[pause] pitch perfect [pause] in terms of their writing and those that are really really  
20059struggling that have probably used a direct translator to get their assignment in ehm and it  
20060makes them no sense and I have to read it three four times to try and decipher something so  
20061when I get those unfortunate cases of of student B they have I do have to fail them because

20062their wri- their writing competency is well below not only what it will be expected of an  
20063undergrad student but of a master's student and so there are cases where their uh based on  
20064their written performance they have they have failed um components but then I'll give you  
20065for instance this this year so in semester one there was a student like that who's so so  
20066dedicated and always sat in the front row um and was very eager to learn but I could- like  
20067that I struggled for days and days and I couldn't understand what they were trying to say  
20068and I had to bring her in and I just we just had to have a discussion and she said I'm seeing  
20069an an English writer person @ I assumed she was seeing somebody who was helping her  
20070improve her English writing skills and so she failed that component uh and then as always  
20071they're giving a chance to sit a supplemental and she submitted a supplemental assignment  
20072and her wr- English writing had drastically improved now it was still below par but I was  
20073able to understand what she was trying to say but that was only because she had the  
20074professional help I assume she paid for it she didn't mention anything about [institution 1]  
20075and I told her there were resources available um and so yeah there's a bit so it's not just oral  
20076it's writing but the it the reason why I'm probably harping on about the oral communication  
20077side of things in the English-speaking side of things is that in group work [pause] so even  
20078even in in group discussions I've had students sit to my office crying not the na- not not the  
20079non-English speaking the English speaking students crying saying we are using Google  
20080Translate in our meetings where we are typing in in our language turning the laptop around  
20081and they're typing they're- that is no way to communicate in a and they're they're baffled  
20082and they're asking me questions about how is this poor individual that is really really  
20083intelligent but cannot tell us what he or she thinks is doing on the program and I don't have  
20084an answer for them my answer is that I'm fighting to get the criteria entry requirements  
20085higher or increased just to benefit everybody so it's really I don't like when I hear those  
20086stories ehm and and and from it from a personal perspective but also if we're talking from a  
20087[discipline] point of view you know reputational damage word-of-mouth is worth gold and  
20088if we're in our third year now and we're sending people out of here with master's degrees  
20089and then they enter a job let's say in Dublin and in their first day they're found out that they  
20090can't contribute in a meeting or they can't I mean that's going to come back and and bite the  
20091not only the school's but the college's reputation so I think [pause] English proficiency  
20092both oral and written is critical and I don't think we're reaching those highs that we should  
20093be so oh which is very broad statement I know for the most part most people are fine but  
20094it's the few that are causing the issues >for themselves and for others< on the program  
20095that's why I think it's really important

20096R: right and what other factors would you say play into academic success and this would  
20097be things both inside and outside of the academic world

20098Linda: yeah I guess ehm [long pause] when you're a master's student particularly straight  
20099from undergraduate there's a level of making that [pause] conceptual leap let's say or it's a  
20100from being an undergrad student to an adult that's responsible for your own learning and I  
20101sti- think that whole you know they need to learn and they probably learn it quickly but in  
20102in a tough way that that hand-holding system that they're probably used to at undergrad  
20103level is not here we don't have it we don't have the resources to we don't think that it's a  
20104great way to treat master's students who are adults you know where we handhold them and  
20105we tell them everything that they need to do and how they need to do it and when they  
20106need to do by and if they don't do it you know that we'll be looking over their shoulder and  
20107that's all removed in an in an in a click for so- in an instant for some students so I find that  
20108kind of the leap o- in maturity or you know the leap from being a student to an adult who's  
20109studying um is is a big one for a lot of them to take so we do kind of cool things on the  
20110program and I know the feedback has been astoundingly positive where we bring in  
20111professional actors ehm who who specialized in in translating the skills of a professional  
20112actor from on the stage into the classroom or into the corporate environment and the  
20113students have loved it and it's not your typical here's how to make a great presentation and  
20114they do a slide show and then they have to take that and make a presentation like that's wh-  
20115that's just what we could do that but what the professional actors bring is something totally  
20116different I'm not privy to what goes on but they uh it's an interactive workshop they're  
20117leaping around jumping around the place and it's it's confidence-building it's knowing how  
20118to read the audience it's knowing how to build on your strengths and you know negate your  
20119weaknesses so it's kind of what we would describe as soft skills but they're not soft at all  
20120they're really really critical and I think things like that that we can bring into the program  
20121which we're getting better at year on year we're getting better at bringing the non-academic  
20122non-graded pieces on to the program now. [pause] the the feedback [pause] so let's for  
20123instance this year we had one session in the orientation week students are all bright-eyed  
20124bushy-tailed haven't been bogged down with all of their content and workload and all of  
20125that stuff and it was a huge resounding success we had a follow-up then at this very  
20126beginning of this semester and out of the 40 people that it was a voluntary non-mandatory  
20127thing and of the 40 people that had signed up and committed to going I think 15 people  
20128turned up so you know they have to again it's a we're offering these things too a- and  
20129interestingly enough it was a lot of non ehm non-native English speakers a lot of our Asian  
20130eh Asian students a lot of our Indian students so I'm thinking confidence-building is is

20131huge for them and I think that goes back to a cultural thing you know ehm and so they are  
20132they loved it but uh now none of our and like a huge proportion of students did not opt take  
20133any of the help that was being offered to them and help that was coming at a great expense  
20134to the school I don't mind spending the budget I I'd happily spend the program budget if it  
20135adds value to the students' experience but I mean we paid to have two deliveries of that  
20136and 15 people turned up so it was a bit disappointing that the students aren't taking a bit of  
20137responsibility in that regard ehm but things like that like things like [pause] icebreakers  
20138ehm confidence-building I'd like to see probably more [pause] stuff happen externally like  
20139away from the college whether it's a field trip whether it's a I don't know a tri- a visit to  
20140another university or in another Eur- close by European city [inhale] but that all comes  
20141down to manpower resources we have the financial resources but we don't have the people  
20142to do I certainly can't organize that so but those type of things kind of [click] opening up  
20143their worldview outside of the classroom I would love to see more I think that's really  
20144really important and again English speaking comes into that and you know um learning to  
20145be confident in their ability to speak English come into it  
20146R: right yeah um okay so this is kind of going towards the entry requirements and we've  
20147touched on this a bit um earlier when we were talking about the IELTS um can you just  
20148kind of reiterate what your feelings about the IELTS are what you know about it um is it  
20149doing a good job predicting academic success etc.  
20150Linda: um to be frank no is the is the answer I don't think it's it's it's it's helping us really in  
20151any way it's the it's the requirement that we use so I I I I get on board with it and I and I  
20152adhere to the criteria entry uh the entry criteria that we have but I don't agree that it's first  
20153of all that it's set at the right level and um beyond that I don't think it's the right assessment  
20154too for trying to predict when if students will not only survive the program but excel on the  
20155program I just I don't and for a lot of the reasons that we discussed earlier on um but even  
20156if we were to take IELTS as well we're stuck with it we have to use it for now I I think the  
20157least we could do is raise the bar I mean I've done some benchmarking exercises with other  
20158universities of the same stature or perceived stature the other world Russell Group  
20159universities and they most of them have seven point zero as their requirement ehm my  
20160external examiner who comes from a university in the UK has repeatedly said he's very  
20161surprised that a university like [institution 1] has set the bar so low for themselves in terms  
20162of what they require in English speakers in English speaking proficiency ehm I've I've for  
20163the past three years of I feel like it's a battle that I've been fighting for three years ehm and  
20164this you guys and your guys involvement now and this idea of a competency building  
20165program is the first [pause] what I would describe as a win on the way to kind of and I

20166mean if that's been three years coming so I don't know whether it's falling on deaf ears I  
20167don't know if [pause] the people that make the decisions about our student numbers and the  
20168criteria that we we ask for probably have never or [pause] very rarely find themselves in  
20169the classroom having to teach these students having to listen to their experiences and how  
20170they're getting on I don't think there are in any way at the coalface and know what's going  
20171on on and why English proficiency is so important I think they may look across the board  
20172at statistics and say on average universities look for 6.5 it means we can throw the net  
20173wider it means we can get more students on seats and it means our revenue model can  
20174grow and I get it I mean I'm working in the discipline I get it by also as I said to you earlier  
20175get- I'm a [profession] by not by profession at all I'm a critical [profession]@ but I get how  
20176[discipline] works and as I said reputational damage word-of-mouth is way more powerful  
20177than I think they understand and we have somebody from the equivalent of Harvard  
20178University in China sitting in the classroom and we have the equivalent of somebody from  
20179Blanchardstown IT nothing wrong with it but there's a huge gap in terms of academic rigor  
20180and quality and they're looking at each other and saying how are you on the program and  
20181how are you on the program and I just think we need to get better at at being able to  
20182identify the the candidates that we know will excel on the you know and and candidates  
20183that won't struggle because as a from a program director point of view I have to try I have  
20184to deal with them when they struggle and it's I I'm not qualified to deal with you know  
20185the pastoral side of things but you know I certainly empathize with them and I hate to see  
20186them finding ourselves in a situation where they're failing or they're they're causing  
20187inadvertently causing major major issues for other people on our program which I know  
20188they don't intend to be doing but they are so yeah it's a difficult kind of situation so IELTS  
20189for me [pause] as a as it is as it stands I think 6.5 is far too low ehm and I also think maybe  
20190if I had a better understanding of it and that falls down to me but as I said ya if the where if  
20191there was an extra three days in the week and an extra ten hours in each day I'd be able to  
20192to do all this but I know that there are a variety of different components in IELTS but I'd  
20193like to see you know a minimum standard in each of those components because what we're  
20194seeing and I know I've dug deep in in some of the applications we're seeing where a  
20195student is getting a five which is a very very low score uh in one component and they're  
20196getting an 8.5 in listening or something one of the components that isn't as important as the  
20197as comprehension or writing or whatever it might be and the the whole overall average  
20198score doesn't work I mean we're seeing students that are getting a 5 in writing which like  
20199they need to get by in the program but their a- their average score is dragged up by some  
20200other component and so that hole that area needs to be looked at in my view and but like I

20201said that what you outlined to me in terms of your eight-week program [pause] for me  
20202that's the ideal situation that would be how we assess students I don't think we're going to  
20203get to a place where we demand or we make mandatory that every students sits an eight-  
20204week course I would love that because I know that that would tenfold affect their positive  
20205experience on the program if they were to do it I know we won't get to that place but I  
20206would like something in the middle maybe you know that where we we just have a better  
20207way of [pause] of giving them that boost that they need and I'm not saying like I mean we  
20208have students on the prog- for instance I find that a lot of our Indian students their English  
20209is almost perfect I mean they've better English than myself I mean I've poor grammar and  
20210I've fallen into the old Irish habits of of speaking poorly um so it's not across I'm not saying  
20211that every student who doesn't grow up speaking English as their first language has poor  
20212English that's not what I'm saying at all and I'm not saying that every Indian student is  
20213amazing or I'm not saying every Asian student is amazing in English or poor in English  
20214I'm not saying I I I hate talking in [pause] kind of sweeping statements or stereotypes but  
20215I'm but anything that I'm saying here is just a built-up my experience over three years yeah  
20216yeah

20217R: right yeah um okay so I guess I'd I'd like to hear more about the type of preparation that  
20218you would like to see international students go through before coming on to your program  
20219Linda: okay yeah I think [sigh] [pause] except for aside from face to face in a room having  
20220a conversation with potential applicants [inhale] it's just it's not feasible um I think ideally  
20221speaking the best scenario would be that we interview all candidates [pause] whether that  
20222be a Skype interview a phone interview or preferably face to face if they are around ehm  
20223that would be the ideal I know what my answer would be if I asked for that it may be you  
20224can do if you can do it yourself that's fine and I can't I just can't the directorship is one  
20225miniature aspect of what I'm supposed to be doing in here in the school in my role I'm a  
20226researcher first I'm a lecturer second I'm supposed to be contributing to the administrative  
20227managerial aspect of school third but that directorship takes up the majority of my time so I  
20228can't give any more time to it unfortunately I think overall actually if we're if we're give me  
20229a blank canvas here overall I think every program should be headed by the director should  
20230be a non-academic uhh managerial full-time position I think there'd be far less problems or  
20231issues they'd have more time to give to the application and recruitment process and all of  
20232that all of these things would make the experience for both staff administrative academic  
20233and students far more pleasurable and enjoyable eh but again I know what my answer will  
20234be if I ask for that soooo yes ideally speaking it the preparation would be ehm that they are  
20235told they're given a date and then we have an interview with them I think you can you



20236could tell so much from a face to face conversation sorry be that virtual or actual face to  
20237face ehm I know sometimes and our recruitment team are great ehm they are really really  
20238dedicated ehm but they are given targets by their superiors and it's these targets that are the  
20239kind of they're that they're the the it's it's polarizing aspect it's where I'm looking for rigor  
20240and quality on the program and an enjoyable experience and there are other people that are  
20241looking for bums on seats which is I know it's I'm being quite frank here but that's where  
20242there's this kind of tug of war really going on ehm I want the school to be successful and  
20243do financially well so that we can funnel that back into into funding more programs and  
20244better resources and all that kind of stuff but at the end of the day I don't want to accept  
20245anybody and anybody eh on the program if they're not going to do well on the program or  
20246if they're if they're going to inhibit or hinder other people doing well in the program ehmm  
20247but yeah that that would be a ideal would be speak- interviewing every candidate but the-  
20248nu- our numbers of applications are just colossal yeah it's not just not a realistic option  
20249unfortunately I know that uh uh it's [name] this year uh [name] he's been doing a great job  
20250he gets to speak to some candidates on the phone ehm and they he can sus quite quickly  
20251you know their level and things like that but it tends to be the people that are confident and  
20252proficient in English that call him and if they aren't they won't so there's you know you you  
20253can understand that makes sense so yeah that would be one and the other would be some  
20254kind of prelim prerequisite module on English proficiency and again what that it looks  
20255exactly like I don't really have the skills or know-how to know exactly it would be you  
20256guys that are the experts in that but I'm happy to kind of contribute to what it might look  
20257like but certainly it would be a blend of conversational [pause] [click] because I think if  
20258they they nail that on the head head regardless of this kind of very formal academic speak  
20259that they might feel they need for their presentations I think if they can master or get to  
20260grips with em being comfortable conversationally talking to their peers ehm because that's  
20261what group work is mainly made up of that I think that would be excellent so  
20262distinguishing between kind of formal communication oral communication and  
20263conversational ehm English would be great ehm all of the things that you kind of  
20264mentioned earlier on like that the idea of getting them to write a topic in a [topic] discipline  
20265specifically maybe [discipline] eh review a journal or so show that they can read and a  
20266journal article that doesn't necessarily have to be purposefully difficult but one that is  
20267representative of the types of readings they'll be asked to to engage in in in their modules  
20268to be given that without prior notice of what that really will be and to be able to read it to  
20269be able to under- show a basic understanding of it and make some interpretation of it again  
20270like that would be excellent emm and then ehm making some form of or-or-oral

20271presentation as well you know all of those kind of things [pause] quite obvious I I would  
20272say they probably are but we don't do it so if we were to have a @formal platform our  
20273capacity to to to test them it's not re- it's not really about testing them it's about getting  
20274them comfortable and preparing them for what's coming down the track and they might get  
20275a feel and say if I am totally out of my depth here maybe I shouldn't be on the program and  
20276maybe this is the time to back out so just by kind of a precursor or a this is what's coming  
20277down the track and you will be assessed on on all of this type of thing ehm I think it would  
20278be it I think that's fair to students I can tell them so much I can tell them that the program is  
20279int- intense and it's full-time and it's you know there's a lot of group work and there's lots  
20280of I do tell them all that but it's not gonna prepare them for the actual reality of it so those  
20281type of things will be great yeah

20282R: okay um so my final question is what do you hope that your students leave feeling after  
20283completing your program

20284Linda: I hope I hope that they leave feeling a little bit exhausted @because then that means  
20285that they fully kind of throw themselves into it because naturally they should feel a little bit  
20286whew pooped for want of a better word but that's not the number one that just shows me  
20287that they've totally given their all to the program um I would like them to be confident  
20288[pause] in themselves uh in who they are and know the type of career they would like to  
20289pave out for themselves um um and and why that is so I would hope that the content and  
20290the modules that they study on the program will open them up to new ideas and new ways  
20291of thinking things that they hadn't thought of before but would also say you know that's not  
20292for me you know so that they'll be confident in how they can leave here and apply not all  
20293of it not everything is going to be relevant for every position that they might may want to  
20294take but I would like to be able to think that it's not something that I've ticked the box and  
20295now I forget everything I've ever learned or talked about in the last 12 months ehm I would  
20296like them to be able to honestly say that they can see applicability in what they've learned  
20297[pause] whether that be in a job that they know they have in going out to look for a career  
20298or a job or whether they're starting up their own business or whatever it might be I think  
20299they I would like to see them confidently be able to apply what they've learnt I guess that  
20300would be the main thing

20301R: yeah and do you feel that they do leave feeling that

20302Linda: we don't I like I have informal talks with them at their graduation but we don't do  
20303any kind of exit interviews or we don't do any kind of this year I think is our first year now  
20304where we will have a program evaluation it's not exactly what I'm looking for I definitely  
20305need to know that I definitely need to know and I I I we have class reps and so we meet

20306with them on I mean I meet with them twice every semester and they tell me what for what  
20307they like and what what they hate and all that so I'm fully aware of where the program is  
20308falling down and where the program can be improved and the module evaluation is just  
20309going to reiterate that you know it'll just they'll they'll mainly take it I guess as an  
20310opportunity to say this is where you're not doing good kind of thing and that's okay and  
20311that's part and parcel of every year ehm even from the module evaluations every module  
20312gets evaluated I make changes based on those so they're definitely heard and listened to but  
20313in terms of whether I feel like we've achieved what we want to achieve take away the  
20314program the content the structure the resources overall I don't get a set I don't know how  
20315they feel when they leave here [pause] I know it might be a sense of joy that the intense  
20316year is finished but I don't know if we have achieved so we don't do that kind of exit  
20317interview with the students and ask them you know do you feel confident in what you  
20318learned and that you can apply it in the real world and if if so why and if if not why not you  
20319know we don't I don't I don't have that I don't have that opportunity to do that so I might in  
20320an informal chat I stay in touch with a lot of the students on LinkedIn and things like that I  
20321asked them for favors they asked me for favors but it's very in an informal capacity we  
20322don't do any kind of formal capturing of [pause] participant you know participants on the  
20323program their their overall experience on the program yeah so it's something we could do  
20324R: right and so are there any questions that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask  
20325Linda: hmm [long pause] no not really I'm just I'm more fascinated to hear like I think  
20326what you guys do is is is brilliant and I think it could really help us I'm kind of sitting here  
20327scratching my head saying if there are people in college that are working in this area we  
20328have a major deficit of expertise in this area why have we not done this collaboration @  
20329before so that's my only kind of it- I'm delighted that you guys may be able to to to step in  
20330and help us in some way and address this problem that's really all that I I I'm sorry if it's  
20331come across that I'm quite negative but it it's not a neg- it's not coming from a negative  
20332place it's coming from a place where want to improve students experience on the program  
20333that's it

20334R: yeah is there anything else you'd like to add

20335Linda: no that's fine

20336

20337

**Matilda**

20338

20339R: okay so the first thing I have to ask is are you teaching modules at the moment as well

20340Matilda: I'm not teaching this semester no

20341R: ok um would you be able to describe the types of modules that happen within your  
20342department

20343Matilda: ok so within the graduate [discipline] school we have seven programs? and they're  
20344all Masters of Science in [pause] [discipline] related areas so there's [Master's program]  
20345there's a [Master's] program and there is a [Master's program] in [discipline] and there's an  
20346a [discipline] master's which is probably a little bit different to the others both in terms of  
20347learner profile and natures of assessment and and language abilities as well to be honest  
20348um and we have a eh cross faculty collaboration at [discipline] we have a [Master's  
20349program]

20350R: okay um the one that you said that is um quite different and learner profile and  
20351assessment how is that different

20352Matilda: ehm so the masters in [discipline] is different because it's I suppose [discipline]  
20353based so the modules are not necessarily >well they do [discipline] modules< but they  
20354would also have a number of [discipline] based modules ehm we have a very strong  
20355partnership with a number of colleges in Asia and particularly within China and we get a  
20356lot of Chinese students who join our undergraduate programs of [discipline] now many of  
20357them choose to stay on and because the program is very much structured in [professional  
20358organization] exemptions ehm [pause] so that class would traditionally be ehm [pause] not  
20359as diverse in terms of nationalities? And ehm ehm [long pause] would have a you know a  
20360greater dominance of people from one country which affects the in-class experience  
20361because [pause] with the best will in the world even the most dedicated students if you're  
20362from China and you're sitting beside all of your friends from China you're going to speak  
20363Chinese. you know unless you're until you're forced to in the class participation eh through  
20364English and so no we've addressed that I think it has become a little bit more diverse in the  
20365last few years we have a lot more students coming from Africa and coming from ehm  
20366[pause] we have a lot more Turkish students Indian students and we have a lot of students  
20367from Nigeria and that that has grown particularly and so there is a greater mix within the  
20368[discipline] master's but I suppose traditionally it would be seen as the [pause] the less  
20369discursive and the more challenging from a language point of view ehm for lecturers to  
20370teach

20371R: ya would with the interaction between those different nationalities is that kind of  
20372encouraged and seen or is it still kind of quite separate within the classroom

20373Matilda: ehm [pause] it's it's definitely encouraged so we have a group work policy in the  
20374faculty which requires groups that are diverse ehm in terms of gender nationality  
20375background culture experience ehm [pause] even when students self-select groups they

20376 have to self-select against those criteria ehm or in some cases lecturers will assign groups  
20377 and then have their criteria of what is required [pause] it can be challenging if you get a  
20378 group if you get a large cohort for example like some intakes you might get a particularly  
20379 high number of students from India ehm [pause] this year for example there was a very  
20380 high rate of visa approval from Africa so with a large cohort of students from Nigeria  
20381 [pause] in a particular class and that takes a little bit more effort in the classroom ehm from  
20382 the lecturer but also myself and the head of faculty will go into classes because I'm not  
20383 teaching this semester but we go into classes and kind of you know move people around  
20384 and have a chat and draw people out and try and get a bit of interaction going ehm but you  
20385 also uh you know they're master's students you have to push a little bit of personal  
20386 responsibility onto them as well so it'd be a big part of our induction ehm you will get out  
20387 what you put in ehm you know so [pause] it's about the start of the year it's making it very  
20388 clear that look the more you engage the more you challenge yourself and push yourself and  
20389 engage in [pause] new experiences work with different types of people ehm the better  
20390 [pause] the graduate you're gonna be so it's not just about the knowledge it's not just about  
20391 the content of your exams it's the entire experience and what you gain from that ehm so we  
20392 would focus a lot on that

20393 R: right and previously when eh the cohorts were mainly Chinese eh do you think that the  
20394 the language kind of negatively affected them in terms of speaking Chinese a lot?

20395 Matilda: yes yeah definitely we also would have had ehm [pause] we would have had  
20396 issues with the standard of the students' English level coming in now we do have pre-  
20397 sessional and we have in-sessional ehm English for Academic Purposes classes but ehm  
20398 [pause] you would have [pause] students who achieve let's say the entry requirement is  
20399 IELTS six for our undergraduate program right now ehm you would have students who  
20400 would you know meet the entry requirements on paper? Ehm @but when they're in the  
20401 classroom >whether< it's [long pause] because they're surrounded by people who are you  
20402 know speaking you speak the same language as them or whether it's a confidence thing or  
20403 whether they've just really really prepped well for the test I sometimes have that suspicion  
20404 that people can you know really ace an @IELTS @test and you can tick all the boxes it's  
20405 very st- you know you get that standardized preparation ehm but that the reality that of  
20406 dynamically living and working and studying in English is very very different ehm so yes  
20407 we would have major issues. and we still would on the undergraduate side in the  
20408 [discipline] degree ehm where lecturers would find it quite demotivating? ehm [pause]  
20409 both from a language level perspective? but also from an engagement perspective ehm  
20410 which are probably related but also cultural in terms of engagement you know the the

20411students who have studied [pause] maybe two years of higher education in China are used  
20412to sitting in a large room listening to the lecture and everything the lecturer says is gospel  
20413and you know it's crack your head open stuff the knowledge in rather than a dynamic  
20414exchange which is what our teaching style would be

20415R: okay and what would the form of assessments be within the department

20416Matilda: so we would have a variety of assessments we would have group work [pause]  
20417ehm typically in a- I- a ma- a student in the master's program here can expect uh group  
20418work in half of their modules? so it could be four five [pause] maybe not six but ehm in  
20419worst case scenario every six assessments in an academic year will be group based ehm  
20420then we would have ehm [pause] assignments which could vary from your standard  
20421discursive essay [pause] which is relatively rare ehm most other the most common other  
20422type is ehm company projects so all of our lecturers ehm every single one are part-time  
20423lecturers? so they're working in industry and they're stepping into the classroom and then  
20424stepping back out into industry so they will bring [pause] clients ehm into the class and  
20425give the students a project based on that client so most of the projects will be action  
20426research based on a real company ehm in the vast majority of cases that real company is  
20427coming in to brief them and also coming in to see the results and interrogate at the final  
20428#unt or whatever

20429R: right okay and what would the outcomes be like would they need to write a report a  
20430presentation

20431Matilda: yep so there would be quite a lot of presentations both group and individual ehm  
20432and there would be ehm written reports for most modules >some are< uh presentation only  
20433ehm but then you would have in most cases you would have say a 3,000 to 4,000 in some  
20434cases [pause] larger sometimes if it's a group of people to 5,000 words uhm report and then  
20435alongside that you give your overview presentation your sum- summary of a presentation  
20436as well

20437R: okay great and what is the general form or structure of the lectures so what happens  
20438inside of the classroom is it a lot of group discussion a lot of you know the lecturer having  
20439the PowerPoint etc.

20440Matilda: hmm ehm it varies again by module so like for example one of our lecturers  
20441[name] has her class today in ehm [topic] and her she doesn't teach for two hours every  
20442week she takes block days so the students are with her for four full Fridays of the semester  
20443and ehm so a lot of that is a flipped classroom experience there's a lot of work to do in  
20444preparation for it in groups and individually reading but also working on cases and  
20445problem solving things and then when they go into the classroom it's a lot of discussion

20446and ehm group interaction [pause] this year we had our largest ever intake of students so  
20447we had a @very successful September intake but it did give us major challenges in terms  
20448of timetabling and also capacity on campus ehm so we would have this semester some  
20449[click] I suppose old school traditional style lectures where ehm [name] for example in  
20450[topic] has a lecture with 120 students sitting it's a big fixed seating @auditorium eh full  
20451of students so that's very traditional lecture he does his PowerPoint [pause] he's discussing  
20452with the class what we've done to try and address the disadvantages? of that particular  
20453approach is we've introduced tutorials [pause] we we've recruited for and got some extra  
20454lecturers in that area to do smaller breakout sessions so you yes you have your big  
20455auditorium once a week for three hours and it's not brilliant it's not ideal but it gets the  
20456knowledge across and then you have the discussion the the discursive options there in the  
20457tutorial groups ehm other classes then I mean every lecturer is different I suppose but very  
20458much the culture in [school] would be very much one of engagement it would be  
20459challenging students but also expecting students to challenge you back to engage with the  
20460material that you put up on Moodle ehm our online learning environment whether it's  
20461required reading or recommended reading that you're bringing you know again this  
20462concept of you. get. out. what. you. put. in. so you're expected to come to class with your  
20463a-game every time you're not there to sit back and listen ehm most of the lecturers would  
20464have done a teaching ehm qualification? not necessary to a very high level but we would  
20465we do like a special purpose awards ehm certificate so it'd be like a thirty credit special  
20466purpose award ehm which is the requirement? ehm others would have done more we've  
20467had people who done their post graduate diploma and some not very many with a master's  
20468in education they tend to be much more ehm much more ehm [click] industry focused so a  
20469lot of their further research and any of them who've done doctorates tend to do another  
20470discipline ehm so [long pause] most of them would have [pause] a very ya open casual  
20471informal in-class approach

20472R: right and so how would you personally assess an academic success of your students  
20473what are you looking for when you're marking and when you're saying this is a successful  
20474student

20475Matilda: okay. ehm [long pause] I suppose I have two views [pause] on that depending on  
20476what I was teaching so when I teach [discipline] is my background so I would lecture to  
20477[topics] all those kind of things ehm I also delivered modules ehm deliver modules and I  
20478still do workshops on kind of research and professional skills? ehm my expectation and  
20479grading actually probably varies very differently when I'm teaching [topic] I would have  
20480obviously my module learning outcomes and I will be assessing [click] ehm ability

20481knowledge eh but also ability in terms of [topic] putting an action plan in place in the case  
20482of a research [topic] research module ehm communication I think is really important I  
20483would always give decent marks in term for presentation and presentation of written work  
20484and presentation of an oral presentation ehm and I would also reward creativity ehm so I  
20485would always have [pause] scope I suppose to reward people who really pushed the  
20486boundaries who go outside the recommended reading and do their own thing and come up  
20487with a really unique way of approaching whatever problem I present them [pause] with  
20488research and professional skills my grading was always much more [pause] simplistic my  
20489my view of it would be [pause] what I what what what I want you to be at the end of this  
20490process [pause] is a step closer to being the type of graduate you need to be to be  
20491successful for your life goals your professional goals so [pause] I might say if >well like I  
20492used to deliver to [discipline]< students and there might be students very weak in English  
20493won't volunteer any information in the class won't contribute ehm and if by the end of the  
20494semester they could open give a five-minute presentation they're going to get graded  
20495[pause] very well [pause] because of the sheer [pause] jump. that they've made or the  
20496progress that they've made personally? ehm and then there might be someone else who you  
20497know is maybe not good on referencing and more structural issues and things like that and  
20498again you know they'd have a piece of work that they'll need to complete by the end of  
20499semester so the grading I think there will be a lot more based on a progress principle?  
20500whereas the other modules will be very much so much of on the module learning  
20501outcomes

20502R: so you said that you you mark a lot on communication how would you define  
20503communication

20504Matilda: ehm I would define communication as how they impart what they've learned to  
20505me the assessor but also to others ehm so I would reward people who can be insightful  
20506[pause] in a very clear plain English kind of way ehm so I like what are the things I always  
20507say to students they don't want to read something like you've swallowed a thesaurus I want  
20508you to >get to the point< I want you to tell me very simply and very clearly what you're  
20509thinking is reference appropriately and tell me why that's your thinking offer a justification  
20510ehm and even if I don't necessarily agree with your decision or you're just- you know once  
20511you've justified why and there's a logical reason and evidence behind your decision you'll  
20512get the marks [pause] ehm so yeah communication would be for me being able to impart  
20513knowledge but also show an internalized [pause] knowledge? so that they [pause] like no  
20514copying and pasting that they've read something [pause] understood it and can explain it in



20515their own words? and offer the justification give the evidence this is where this developed  
20516from

20517R: right okay alright and um do students would they have access to rubrics and guidelines  
20518and expectations communicated in the beginning of the term would they have it before  
20519completing assignments

20520Matilda: yeah so [long pause] in [pause] theory? 100% yes? in reality yes but in variances  
20521across modules so ehm we would give all students a handbook so there's handbooks there  
20522you can take a sample if you want to have a look so it has the module outlines in it and it  
20523has the assignments in it and has their assessment schedule so it says you know this is the  
20524weeks of the semester here's what's due when ehm some lecturers would not submit? a  
20525good assignment brief ehm [pause] so would >like one lecturer this semester< for example  
20526sent me when I asked them for the assignment brief and I sent out the assignment brief  
20527template ehm actually submit it just sent me back a one-liner like a reply to the email as  
20528I'm gonna write the email I realized it was the title of his essay that was just was what he  
20529believed an assignment @brief @was @was @just the title no markings mean or  
20530weighting or module anyway so ehm [pause] it definitely varies and it can end up that  
20531myself or the head of faculty or you know that we end up putting a lot of that stuff [pause]  
20532in [pause] which [long pause] yeah you're making things clearer for the student? but it can  
20533be you know you have to keep checking in to make sure the lecturer is tuned in with  
20534[pause] what they're working towards and what's been communicated to them in the  
20535handbook so it definitely doesn't work perfectly but yes the students will get ehm the  
20536module outline and the assignment brief well in advance and all their due dates uhm from  
20537around week two or three of the semester and usually they wouldn't have an assignment  
20538due any earlier than week seven [pause] ehm ideally I'd like to get out the handbooks in  
20539week one but logistically it's usually week two or three [pause] ehm the rubrics for things  
20540like for so modules are really detailed so some we we use Moodle a lot and grademark and  
20541ehm some of the lecturers do absolutely at the opposite end of the spectrum of the guy I  
20542just described you know one line in an e-mail have amazing rubrics on grademark and give  
20543really detailed feedback us- using that ehm which we are trying to move towards as a  
20544faculty that everybody does it's probably about 70 to 80 percent of lecturers do it correctly  
20545R: okay and so in general what do you think students need to succeed in your programs  
20546Matilda: ehm students need to eh attend? [pause] they need to [pause] take personal  
20547responsibility for their learning? they need to be able to work with others? they need to  
20548[pause] manage their time effectively? and [long pause] probably to be truly successful as  
20549in not just graduate they they need to be passionate about what they're studying and pick

20550up the ball and go ru- you know take something that's thrown out in a class and bring it on  
20551and interrogate that and read about it and think about it ehm and yeah they are the students  
20552that are gonna get a first ehm yeah a lot of self-discipline and drive is needed particularly  
20553when they get to the dissertation stage because it's independent work [pause] you know  
20554often remotely so a lot of our supervision would have been remotely ehm because either at  
20555the international students go home? or ehm and their supervisor is there in Dublin or and  
20556we have a number of supervisors in universities around Europe so they would supervise  
20557our students using Skype zoom and other things

20558R: mmm and so the dissertation how large a project is lasts what's kind of required within  
20559the dissertation

20560Matilda: ehm it's 30 credits ehm [pause] it's typically a sixteen to eighteen week [pause]  
20561process offic- of supervised eh dissertation preparation they do a module on research  
20562methods [pause] first and on completion of research methods they have their proposal done  
20563and they're assigned their supervisor and they go into their dissertation stage so it's  
20564essentially one semester ehm the outcome is kind of an eight ten thousand word  
20565dissertation would be the guideline often times it's [pause] much more so a lot of students  
20566would typically fall between two fifteen to twenty thousand word ehm dissertation [pause]  
20567the dissertation can be academic or can be an action research projects on a company? a lot  
20568of our students would get ehm so for one of the things that has changed and has led to the  
20569increase in numbers that we had this September is that students who graduate with the  
20570level nine program can now get a 1G visa for two years so they can work for two years  
20571ehm on their graduate visa so we've actually seen a lot of students [pause] graduate exit  
20572with the post graduate diploma? [pause] in [discipline] because they've got really good jobs  
20573so they're going to [company] they're going to [company] they're you know they're not just  
20574saying oh I'm gonna go off and work you know in the shop or I'm working in a bar for  
20575when I'm studying like we would have had students in the past these are really high level  
20576good students opting to take this approach and then while they're working they complete  
20577their dissertation as part-time students over one academic year instead of one semester and  
20578a lot of what they would do would be action projects so they would take a problem within  
20579the company they're now working in [pause] and and now do their research on that ehm  
20580but other than that it's it's you know it's what you expect from a dissertation you've your  
20581orals your research questions your methodology your data collection your analysis your  
20582discussion your you know the conclusions and the outcomes and we have a viva for every  
20583single student

20584R: even at the master's level?

20585Matilda: at master's level every single student has a forty-five-minute viva ehm so we put  
20586a lot into our dissertations to ehm to really interrogate them to make sure that they're of a  
20587standard

20588R: right and do they have preparation for the viva? this is just me speaking as a @PhD  
20589student like @ yeah

20590Matilda: ehm yeah they do yeah I'm trying to think there's um we're actually working on  
20591our dissertation page on Moodle to make it more user-friendly ehm but I'm pretty sure that  
20592we have a quick look I think there's a document that we might have up there [long pause  
20593searching Moodle] so this is something this is the new page that [name] our new program  
20594director is just working on ehm [long pause] may actually be on this [long pause scrolling]

20595R: that's a lot of information

20596Matilda: yeah ehm I did see [long pause] maybe it's in the handbook [long pause] now the  
20597viva wouldn't be like a doctoral viva it so it's your supervisor and on- o- one another?  
20598supervisor ehm and they would have submitted already or yes so there's a section there  
20599kind of explaining that do you want me to send it to you

20600R: yeah that'd be brilliant if you could yeah

20601Matilda: that's last year's one but it'll give a-

20602R: yeah it'll give a good idea yeah

20603Matilda: ehm so yeah they get some preparation but really I mean it's not [pause] we will  
20604know in advance if [pause] we'll have reviewed them we'll have looked fo- at like  
20605academic misconduct issues and things like that before they do the viva so we will know if  
20606we're going for a proper interrogation or it's an opportunity to just you know clarify minor  
20607issues within their document and so on ehm so it's not as live or die as it is that at a  
20608doctoral level but it is eh it is rigorous and it is something that I don't know any other  
20609institution that does every s- a viva for every student at a master's level yeah we're quite  
20610proud of it we got a you know kind of think of it as an extra quality mark in terms of the  
20611rigor of the dissertation process

20612R: yeah I mean it sounds brilliant to be able to even if they do go on to a PhD they've had  
20613that experience

20614Matilda: yes

20615R: even for the the real world and having to pitch an idea defend report yeah that kind of  
20616stuff

20617Matilda: and it's nice for them as well like the ones who've done a good @job it is a nice  
20618opportunity I think sometimes you know you get this massive just you know this massive  
20619bound thing and then you're like ah two people have read it or @whatever it might be you

20620 know so it gives you a chance to actually express ehm what all the work that you put in  
20621 over the the preceding months right

20622 R: and would there be revisions after that viva?

20623 Matilda: yeah

20624 R: okay

20625 Matilda: yes there's a form a revisions form usually it will be minor ehm if there are major  
20626 revisions ehm a supervisor might refer them to the faculty and we might actually sit down  
20627 and say look you need to defer we're not going to accept this submission now for their own  
20628 good we try and not >now we do put through fails?< but if we've a student who has  
20629 engaged? and tried and somehow has gotten to the viva stage without being stopped by the  
20630 supervisor we will often intervene and say look I don't think we should accept a  
20631 submission from you now I think we might defer to the next session and then then they  
20632 pick back up with their supervisor and go into the more detailed revisions ehm but yes I  
20633 know every get their feedback sheet or a revision sheet and then after that they go and  
20634 make the changes re-submit [pause] and then get the okay to go get them bound

20635 R: okay ah brilliant cool so I guess now in general what weaknesses would you say that the  
20636 students tend to have

20637 Matilda: that the students tend to have [long pause] ehmm [long pause] [click] a lot of  
20638 weaknesses I'm gonna say are things that we should be helping them with more? So it's  
20639 kind of a weakness on our side as well and that makes sense ehm not understanding  
20640 research [pause] ehm students who [long pause] our students come from so many different  
20641 backgrounds and so many different institutions and so many different countries where the  
20642 education system is different so for example if I get a French student in they will look at  
20643 me like I have ten heads if I tell them they need to reference a document and they're like  
20644 what because it's a lot of it it's just the reflective discursive essay style assessment that  
20645 they're used to from their undergrad [pause] ehm if I look at students from [pause] ehm  
20646 Germany they're crap at exams because they don't do the traditional closed book exams  
20647 probably because we're so @archaic @in @Ireland and the UK we still have those closed  
20648 book exam things ehm you know so they're used to computer-based testing and and so on  
20649 so [pause] it's there's always a variety of different weaknesses which makes it very  
20650 challenging to address ehm to try and catch everybody ehm [long pause] language us-  
20651 [sigh] used to be a weakness it's not it's still a weakness for a coh- a cohort of students but  
20652 it's not as big an issue as it used to be [pause] I think we have gotten better at testing? and  
20653 at our admissions stage ehm we've also gotten better at offering structured programs in  
20654 English for academic purposes that before probably weren't fit for purpose so that's the

20655body of work that's been done in the last two years in the college ehm [long pause]  
20656weaknesses [pause] yeah um ability to kind of take responsibility [pause] the jump from  
20657undergrad to postgrad [pause] some of them really struggle with it you know and they they  
20658come in going oh my God I can't believe I have to do this and I have to do that and nobody  
20659told me this and in some cases their queries you know the concerns are valid so we'll say  
20660well actually do you know what maybe we should improve our communication and that's I  
20661mean some of it is our fault but you know what we should say [pause] these are the  
20662expectations here's your role and your responsibilities here's our role and our  
20663responsibilities to you as a learner ehm but then some of it is you need to stop waiting  
20664know you're grown up you're an adult you should have researched that you should have  
20665looked up the content of the program before you signed up for the bloody program so  
20666there's a balance I think between information provision but also getting the students to be  
20667that post-grad student that more individual responsibility type person

20668R: right so speaking of language how much of a factor does language play in academic  
20669success

20670Matilda: massive. [pause] massive it's um an issue for everybody I think so particularly in  
20671written work [pause] and like we mentioned earlier when we were getting the coffee that  
20672it's not just international students that need to be eh concerned with their language ehm but  
20673all students particularly in in their written work and often we would find that the  
20674international students would perform better in terms of the presentation of their written  
20675work because they're more anxious about it and they spend more time on it and then they're  
20676more systematic in how they you know the grammar the the syntax everything [pause]  
20677whereas an Irish or English native speaker might have an assumption of [pause] sure >it  
20678wouldn't even be it wouldn't even cross their minds< probably you know they just they  
20679think they know what they're doing ehm so I think it is a massive for everybody ehm for all  
20680students for our international students it is more problematic [pause] if you've got a lower  
20681level of English ehm it affects your academic performance it affects your social experience  
20682in college it affects so many aspects of [pause] your your life I suppose if you're trying to  
20683live work study in Ireland and you have issues with English it's gonna really negatively  
20684impact you professionally and personally and @academically and so I think it's a big big  
20685issue

20686R: and what other factors would you say impact academic success and this can be inside  
20687and outside of the college

20688Matilda: outside of the college is huge we've had you know with the housing crisis we  
20689have international students arriving and living in hostels for weeks on end months on end

20690ehm [pause] we have [pause] you know students arriving with unrealistic expectations of  
20691the cost of living [pause] in Dublin and those things [pause] have a massive impact on their  
20692performance because then they're missing class because they're trying to find  
20693accommodation ehm their mental health suffers ehm they start they might find a job and  
20694although you know we tell all students you shouldn't be working more than 20 hours a  
20695week as an absolute maximum when you're studying a full-time masters you know they  
20696they'll take all the hours they can get or they'll work night shifts and then come into class  
20697like a zombie the next morning and then they'll attend classes but they're physically there  
20698and mentally not and they're exhausted and eventually they'll hit a wall like working up to  
20699assignment week now next week is our like our reading week ehm and [pause] it's usually  
20700shortly after that that you start to see cracks appear for some students and it's literally  
20701because they run themselves into a wall between you know the the conflicts of study  
20702financial need to work or stressors like issues with accommodation or or family  
20703>homesickness is a big thing< that we would get as well because our students are largely  
20704international and they're far away from home often for the first time and even at master's  
20705level you know they've often done their undergraduate at home and then come to Ireland  
20706for their post-grad ehm [pause] internally I think yeah we would be under-resourced when  
20707it comes to things like student services [pause] we would have a counselling service  
20708available we would have you know very good pastoral care culture [pause] but in terms of  
20709actual bodies and human resource and like resources behind it the intention is good but the  
20710execution isn't very good so things like our induction needs a huge amount of work ehm  
20711[pause] and then things like that the the student experience have actually got the e-mail's  
20712open there there it's actually uh [click] the board of directors are looking at the student  
20713experience currently in the college from everything from admissions through to the day  
20714that you graduate what is the what are the experiences that learners have [pause] what goes  
20715well or do we do well what we not do well and there's a lot a lot of areas that we have  
20716definitely got to improve on ehm in terms of being clear with students give them eh clear  
20717sign- signposting really of this is where you go if you're struggling with your assignments  
20718[pause] this is where you go if you don't understand how to reference we've a lot of  
20719resources on our website or on Moodle [pause] but just signposting enough for students be  
20720very very clear from day one this is this is how you are going to navigate your way through  
20721your studies here  
20722R: right okay and in terms of so you guys are identifying these areas to improve on in  
20723terms of being under resourced is are these things that you you foresee being able to be  
20724improved without increased //resources

20725Matilda: no they have| to resources are required so [pause] one of the th- that e-mail that's  
20726been circulated this morning is looking at job description for a learner experience manager  
20727ehm so we would have like I said [pause] like we're a private institution so it's a private  
20728business it's not [pause] public sector [pause] ehm so we would've over the last  
20729>particularly the last five years< started to populate student services in different ways? so  
20730ehm like the counselling services now we use an external body but they're very located  
20731nearby and then it actually rolls really efficiently we used to have a full-time counsellor  
20732ehm [pause] on campus and it didn't work [pause] students didn't feel comfortable you  
20733know going into her office was right beside the canteen which well alright

20734R: everyone can kind of see

20735Matilda: yeah yeah it just didn't make sense and eh so the the system now although we  
20736we're using a contractor essentially although we've outsourced essentially actually works  
20737very well and it's very student friendly ehm our [long pause] then we got like just this sum-  
20738la- during the summer we've appointed a a learner support officer so she is working  
20739particularly with students who have learning difficulties so whereas previously it depended  
20740on the faculty and it was a case by case basis you know of what experience tha- a student  
20741say with dyslexia had [pause] so how we would deal with them versus how undergrad  
20742would deal with them how law would deal with them how media studies would deal with  
20743them would vary because they would all have their own processes but now we have a  
20744central person so they submit their report their psychology report and we say okay that's  
20745great here's your [pause] Learning Support Officer arrange an appointment she goes  
20746through their needs she feeds back to the faculty works at the student ehm so that's a really  
20747good initiative that has started just in recent months and is working really well ehm and  
20748then eh [pause] yes we've got these little pockets of things that are happening but what we  
20749need is to bring it together and say look this is the zoomed experience and have someone  
20750have ownership of it from admissions and through to graduation and so you know I said  
20751earlier our induction isn't good because nobody owns it [pause] it's kind of always it's  
20752every year oh shit what're we doing with the @new @students do you know who's doing  
20753@what at the auditorium have we done this wait ehm and it ends up falling between the  
20754cracks so someone who actually has ownership of the learner experience I think is [pause]  
20755needed [pause] so yes there are some resources there [pause] but they need to be there  
20756needs to be a bit joined up thinking they need to work more cooperatively together with  
20757careers guidance all that kind of thing but they're all in pockets around the place and not no  
20758one clear network of this is the student experience or Student Support Services ehm so  
20759yeah it doesn't it has a resor- it has some resources but it needs more

20760R: so you're aware of IELTS and you seem to be aware of you know the cut offline that  
20761they need to //have

20762Matilda: yeah

20763R: to enter| do you have any feelings about the IELTS exam

20764Matilda: so I would have a lim- like a limited knowledge I would deal a lot with

20765international students I would deal with advanced applications for exemption or advanced

20766entry onto programs ehm or I deal with application to the master's programs now in my

20767new roll so I would have to have an awareness of it I have I know the IELTS bands and I

20768would have a very simplistic view in that I knew when I was in the undergrad school our

20769students have to have an IELTS of 6 to get onto the program ehm now that I'm in the

20770Graduate [discipline] school I know they need to have an IELTS of six point five I know

20771that on some programs they accept students at a five point five into first year of an

20772undergraduate with in sessional English support but they have to reach the IELTS six to

20773proceed into second year ehm [pause] so my feelings on it are with very little little

20774knowledge and actually real in-depth knowledge of what it is my feelings on it are the

20775English balance across all the testing are very complicated to understand them to get your

20776head around so if I see a student come in with a TELC or a TOEFL result or the new the

20777CEF? is that what it's called?

20778R: Oh the

20779Matilda: the B2

20780R: the CEFR

20781Matilda: yeah

20782R: it's the Council of Europe

20783Matilda: yes yes [CEFR] yes yep so that's what we have to use now all the time and QQI

20784are saying B2 plus is the entry requirement I haven't been able to get a straight answer

20785about what a B2 plus means in the context of what I know of IELTS if you know what I

20786mean so it's eh most people would say it's a 6.5 but then because we've accepted we always

20787accept IELTS 6 onto our undergrad it's well maybe you can fudge it so that it's 6 [pause] I

20788don't have enough knowledge to understand really what it should be or what it is ehm but I

20789just find it's quite complex and difficult to understand ehm in my experience? I would have

20790students in front of you with an IELTS of six who are fluent [pause] ehm typically from

20791countries like Germany for example and things like that but they have a test for a six it's

20792not seven it's not seven point five it's six on the result and then I would have other students

20793with a six in front of me and I'd be like hm your English isn't great and we probably need

20794extra support even though you meet the entry requirements I'd recommend you go to ehm



20795 English support classes which we can do as a faculty? so we can actually send students to  
20796 English support even if it's not a requirement of their entry to the program ehm so I just  
20797 find it very difficult to really know what it is if I see a six point five I probably have pretty  
20798 good confidence in the student but it seems like in some markets in particular ehm students  
20799 can be very prepped for a test and they can get the grade that they need the IELTS of six or  
20800 whatever ehm and perhaps not it's not a real accurate reflection of their language [pause]  
20801 what better way there is to assess them in a way that we can use universally for entry onto  
20802 academic programs? I don't know but it definitely seems to be a little bit confusing for  
20803 what it is and [pause] inconsistent in terms of the standard of the learner sitting in front of  
20804 you with the particular IELTS score ehm so that would be my experience

20805 R: and so now you mention that the QQI is saying a B2 plus ehm you don't actually know  
20806 what that means uh is that a recent change?

20807 Matilda: yeah it's yeah I think it's in the last >well QQI have changed< a lot in the last kind  
20808 of two //years

20809 R: yeah the went from ACELS to

20810 Matilda: yeah um but even a person that just in terms of the nitty gritty so it used to be if  
20811 you had a programmatic review you had an expert panel come in they would give their  
20812 view on the program the changes you're proposing and they would recommend us or they  
20813 would not recommend or they'd recommend it with [pause] conditions made with the  
20814 recommendations ehm for re-approval and that was good enough so once you got  
20815 recommended by the panel they wrote the report and then it got signed it got rubber-  
20816 stamped if you like by QQI now QQI are adding another layer of evaluation so [pause]  
20817 even if the expert panel have come in [pause] QQI will go through the documents with a  
20818 fine-tooth comb and could you send you three or four different follow-ups looking for  
20819 more information or more detail and one of those that they said the English-language  
20820 requirement has to be B2 plus for all third level programs ehm I don't know how much  
20821 thought they've put into it? I don't know how strong the reasoning is behind that? ehm but I  
20822 know but certainly if that's if the B2 plus is a 6.5 [pause] on the framework I know of  
20823 IELTS ehm it would cause a major problem for our undergraduate programs because we  
20824 have always accepted an IELTS of six

20825 R: okay are you aware the I guess preparation that students would have undertaken before  
20826 coming to [institution 5] so things like preparation for the IELTS exam or EAP

20827 preparation

20828 Matilda: ehm no I wouldn't be >not always< now with some of our partner colleges we  
20829 would have an agreement whereby they must have extra support so on our [discipline]

20830program for example because we get so many students from two particular partners in  
20831China we send lecturers over there [pause] to do ehm academic sessions like some module  
20832content sessions of them through English we'd also send English teachers over there to do  
20833preparatory courses with them so we'd have some knowledge on that level ehm but your  
20834ordinary punter or the vast majority of even our partner students we just look for the test  
20835results we don't look at what has gone in behind that so

20836R: right okay and if you had a say in the preparation so say well you're aware of pre-  
20837sessional courses with EAP if you had a say as to what was taught in the preparation what  
20838would you suggest

20839Matilda: [inhale] so [pause] [exhale] again from a non-expert point of view I don't you  
20840know I don't understand teaching language uhm I don't understand the nuances of it and the  
20841complexities of it ehm but I would think that a lot of it could be study skills preparing  
20842students for third level understanding assignments ehm because a lot of them are used to I  
20843think I mentioned this last week you know they're used to very different testing systems  
20844and assessment methods and so even things like referencing and research and using the  
20845library databases could be really beneficial for them because it teaches them to find the  
20846right information rather than just trying to [pause] teach them [pause] vocabulary or  
20847something like that ehm so it's kind of like you know if you give them out of fish you feed  
20848him for a day if you teach him how to fish you know so even given those skills of how to  
20849improve their language ehm [pause] I think it also needs to >where possible< as I  
20850mentioned before we started recording where possible if it can be discipline related I think  
20851that's really really beneficial ehm we did have a really good system and again we talked  
20852about the [click] kind of longevity of English teachers there was a couple of language  
20853teachers here a few years ago when I was in the undergrad school that I worked really  
20854closely with and I used to give my notes and they wouldn't be teaching my notes but they  
20855would be preparing students in the areas that I'm going to be talking about so when I start  
20856talking with the #unt or promotion and go you know definitions and the definitions they've  
20857seen before it is the words they've seen before ehm [long pause] teaching them skills like  
20858most lecturers have their notes up on Moodle or they give a big infor- notes pack at the  
20859beginning of semester teaching them to or encouraging them to read ahead you know get  
20860the dictionary out and notate things give themselves you know so it's time to to review  
20861ahead of a class rather than trying to review after a class so they get much more value out  
20862of that one hour lecture if they've had a look at the notes beforehand and said God I don't  
20863know what that is and figured out a little >you know a little bit of context< I suppose ehm  
20864that requires motivated students as well of course which which can be a challenge ehm the

20865other thing I'd like to see is that it's fun that it makes them want to engage? we have every  
20866we have students coming in I have students been in constantly at the start of every semester  
20867arguing about attending the English classes they're free they don't have to pay any  
20868additional fee for them though they're obviously to support them and improve them and  
20869help them academically and they come in saying I don't want to go ehm and part of it is  
20870possibly a pride thing they're like oh I'm good enough and I don't need it but a lot of it I  
20871think is that they just don't find the class very exciting or [pause] dynamic or engaging so  
20872trying to encourage a bit of a love [pause] for those classes as well and the people are  
20873looking forward to going to them so I don't know whether that's bringing in you know pop  
20874culture movies music you know things that you would do you know if I was trying to teach  
20875another language to a group of teenagers that's the kind of approach I'd do and I don't think  
20876it changes as we get older I think if it's something fun you'd engage a bit more so maybe  
20877things like that

20878R: yes and so do students express why they don't want to go or is it more just I don't want  
20879to go //I

20880Matilda: eh they say| it it takes up too much time and I want to spend my time better spent  
20881studying or working on my assignments ehm [click] they would say that they are they don't  
20882find the classes beneficial that they're too basic for them? ehm and now we do try in group  
20883we do group them so like on the English language timetables here there will be classes for  
20884the master students so i.e. people who have an IELTS of six but not 6.5 ehm and then  
20885there'd be undergraduate classes for pe- so you know so it is grouped by people by bands  
20886of the IELTS I think? [pause] it's still by bands of IELTS I'm not hundred percent sure but  
20887roughly speaking you know they're in groups where it should be people of a similar ability  
20888ehm but yeah most frequent feedback would be [pause] it's too basic I'm not getting  
20889anything out of it? ehm [pause] and my time would be better spent working on my  
20890academic studies

20891R: right and are the classes credit bearing the support classes

20892Matilda: no so they're purely supports so yeah that's the other thing so while they're not  
20893charged from they also don't get anything for them like they don't get a even certificates or  
20894anything like that no

20895R: okay okay so speaking of that preparation and we touched on this a little bit last time  
20896but would you see much of a difference between the international students and the Irish  
20897students or do you think that both were kind of benefit from some sort of academic  
20898language preparation

20899Matilda: [long pause] ehmmm I think you'd have to package it very well to make it  
20900attractive [pause] for native English speakers ehm because I think otherwise they would  
20901take the same approach of some international students of that's not for me I don't need that  
20902ehm I think they'd definitely benefit from it ehm in terms of grammar [pause]  
20903presentational issues that we talked about last week ehm structure [pause] we have an  
20904initiative in our undergraduate programs ehm called we actually have a credited module in  
20905the first year of our [discipline] programs ehm it's called learning to learn or effective  
20906Learning and development and that is for all students it's 5 ECTS and they all have to do it  
20907ehm and it's study skills what kind of a learner are you study you know studying  
20908techniques research referencing all of those things that students really need ehm it's 100  
20909percent coursework and you have to pass it to pass the stage and to progress ehm and it  
20910was introduced as a retention strategy? so much to try and prevent dropouts in first year in  
20911[discipline] because nationally as you probably know [discipline] has the highest number  
20912dropouts ehm at undergrad ehm [pause] so it started as an initiative for that they get kind of  
20913mentors and tutors and small group sessions ehm and it's worked okay? I wouldn't say it's  
20914amazing or solved all the problems but it's it's a good idea it's a good concept [pause] but  
20915again it comes back to them recognizing the value of it? and first your undergrad students  
20916don't recognize the value of it ehm so they kind of putter along and they might scrape  
20917through they mightn't do the group bit they might do you know and they might scrape out  
20918#unt out their @40% to get through the module but they don't actually get the point of it  
20919they don't guess what it is they need ehm [pause] so they just see something we have to do  
20920rather than actually understanding and if you went to a third year group or final year group  
20921and do sessions similar to that on referencing you know how to write assignment report  
20922writing they soak it up you know they're they're so hungry for it and they really understand  
20923oh my God if I can work this database it's gonna enrich my @studies @so @much more  
20924it's gonna make my assignment so much better ehm and they really get it. So it's a really  
20925it's really I ehm don't have the answer I think it's really difficult to know when and how to  
20926do it >probably it needs< to be something continuous throughout through their studies but  
20927third year's too late. of course. ehm first year. I don't think they get the value of it but they  
20928need to start getting their head around it somehow so maybe how we deliver it or what you  
20929know how we assess it maybe needs to be looked at rather than just seen as another chore  
20930ehm [pause] yeah so yes I think everyone benefits from some sort of academic language  
20931and general academic skills preparation but when and how you deliver is key

20932R: right and going back to when you were saying you were working with some English  
20933teachers very closely and you were giving them your notes and and things like that um how  
20934far in advance do you release reading lists and things like that for each term

20935Matilda: ehm me personally? as a lecturer I would have it generally a few weeks before  
20936semester starts and I'd probably have most of my semester notes put together not all but  
20937certainly the first six weeks okay that would vary greatly from lecturer to lecturer [click]  
20938ehm so [pause] it wouldn't be a guarantee that it would be there [pause] ready to go ehm  
20939some lecturers mightn't issue notes unt- you know they might do them on a week-by-week  
20940basis ehm but [pause] again I think that's a communication thing if lecturers buy into it and  
20941English teachers buy into it and there's early communication then there's no reason why  
20942[long pause] two weeks before semester starts there couldn't be an agreed date that we sit  
20943down and say well look I don't have all my notes ready but here is the kind of contents that  
20944I'm gonna be delivering here's some of the key areas that they seem to struggle with in the  
20945past ehm you know I don't think you have to have all your PowerPoints or whatever you're  
20946using there ready to go but I think you need to have a road map for the semester that you  
20947should be able to communicate to somebody in advance of the semester starting

20948R: and it doesn't vary a lot from year to year about the areas that they have struggled in or  
20949Matilda: oh sorry the areas no no they wouldn't and you'd see the same thing this issues  
20950coming up again and again you see the same modules causing problems year in and year  
20951out sometimes the same lecturers causing problems year in and year out ehm or sometimes  
20952a particular cohort of @students causing problems year in year out so yes I think it's pretty  
20953predictable ehm and identifiable but there'll always be the odd thing that crops up  
20954[pause] like for example this year we had a massive intake ehm much larger numbers than  
20955we expected so we have classes that are much bigger than we had anticipated [pause] so  
20956we did have some students coming in who would have be- have a good language standard  
20957but saying I'm really struggling because there's a hundred people in my room and if I get a  
20958seat at the back can't really hear or if other people are talking in the class it distracts me  
20959and I you know trying to tune in to just focus on what the lecturer is saying or what  
20960somebody contributing to the class is saying so things like that might crop up that you can  
20961plan all you want but something mad might happen like visa approvals this year yeah ehm  
20962but generally I think the issues are pretty predictable

20963R: and the reading lists etc. those don't change too much each //year

20964Matilda: no they don't| really I mean in reality lecturers are told you have to update your  
20965module outline every semester or every academic year ehm but the reality is that what  
20966they're teaching the module learning outcomes don't change ehm the weighting of

20967assessments doesn't change like it'll always be an assignment and a 40% assignment 60%  
20968exam or whatever it is they're fixed ehm for five year cycles of QOI validation and they're  
20969reviewed and updated ehm but yes honestly lectures should be updating their reading  
20970reading lists year to year >but they're not gonna change dramatically with that< [pause]  
20971from a language preparation point of view that it couldn't couldn't be continuously rolled  
20972over

20973R: right let's see alright trying to see what we've talked about and what we haven't talked  
20974about um what do you hope your students leave feeling after completing their degree here  
20975Matilda: I actually talk about this all the time in @class so what I want from students when  
20976they turn or become graduates is not necessarily that they can prattle off what I said in  
20977lecture two or week four in [module] what I want is that they can go into an interview they  
20978can communicate effectively with other people they can work as part of a team that they  
20979can work on their own initiative that they have the ability to find solutions that they can  
20980identify problems and find solutions that they can seek information ehm so research skills  
20981ehm and that that's when they get up and I what I say all the time in classes when you get  
20982up and shake the hand of the president and collect your parchment on graduation day  
20983nobody is getting that award other than you and when you get that award it is a [pause] a  
20984statement of a certain level of gradueness and a certain skill set that we expect you to  
20985have and that employers would expect you to have with that award not necessarily that  
20986you're an expert in [discipline] or whatever yes you'll have certain discipline knowledge  
20987ehm but anyone can read a book and can get that that you have honed your skills in [pause]  
20988professional development areas and also the ability to be a problem solver and they'll be  
20989the big things that I would look for

20990R: okay and do you think that your students walk away feeling that they have  
20991accomplished that

20992Matilda: [click] for [pause] the most part [pause] yes >I would say it's a mix bag< I mean  
20993you can you know when I'm sitting at the podium at graduation you see the pe- students  
20994going by the vast majority I have a big smile on my face and say yeah yeah look they've  
20995gone from here to here and [pause] they've changed as individuals through th- this  
20996experience learning experience [pause] there's always a few that have #unt out scraped  
20997through and group work helped them go over the line or whatever it is and look I think  
20998that's everywhere and you can't avoid that really ehm but I think overall the reputation of  
20999our graduates is in the general sense will be a positive one so I think for the most part yes  
21000those that graduate ehm those that make it through generally have a decent set of those  
21001competencies and skills

21002R: right so that's actually all the questions that I have for you //

21003Matilda: ah

21004R: but| are there any questions you wish I am asked that I didn't ask

21005Matilda: hm eh that's good. ehm [long pause] I don't think so I'm just gonna think about

21006what my major issues or experiences have been [long pause] like I do think our major

21007problems are I think once you get a diverse class [pause] a lot of the problems go away I

21008think language issues persist throughout the program of study for students when there is a a

21009dominance of a particular language in the room other than English ehm [pause] and I think

21010that's a major challenge organizationally to to manage that? to make hard decisions as I

21011said we're a private college so you know do you cap numbers from a particular market?

21012and say well sorry we've already got 20 Chinese in the room and we've got many more and

21013you know and yeah commercially the re- is like it's not gonna happen ehm [long pause] but

21014yeah I think I think that diversity in classroom has the biggest impact because I think if

21015people are in an environment where they're forced to engage through English not to sound

21016so negative forced but you know to be where they can't kind of go back into their shells as

21017such and talk with people ehm in in a different language I think it does force them to

21018improve and even without them necessary realizing ehm [long pause] but yeah no I think

21019you covered [pause] a pretty comprehensive thing yeah yeah

21020R: and is there anything else that you would like to express

21021Matilda: [long pause] No I think I'm good I'm good yeah

21022

21023

**Marta**

21024

21025R: okay um so first would you be able to tell me about your role in the school here

21026Marta: yep happy to do that my name is [name] I'm a program director for the [program]

21027it's a relatively new program and it only started intake two thousand seventeen and

21028eighteen so this is a second a year

21029R: okay and um could you tell me about the different modules that are in the program and

21030the work required for those modules

21031Marta: okay we have a twelve taught modules each of them has um five ECTS and then we

21032have a thirty credits dissertation so for all of the twelve taught modules we require you

21033know teamwork mostly eh from forty to fifty percent so team presentation and uh team

21034report to resolve a [discipline] challenge or issue or problems we also have individual

21035elements mostly you know by essay or exams you know would be around fifty to sixty

21036percent of the uhh final grade so it requires academic writing and literature review or some

21037you know of a [discipline] challenge you know solving [discipline] challenge something  
21038like that

21039R: okay and um on the dissertation could you tell me more about that like the length um  
21040are they given freedom of topic um I know that other schools in the [school] will have kind  
21041of a a strategy or the typical

21042Marta: uh because this program is a fully accredited by professional body called  
21043[professional body] which is the [professional body] so it requires the students to do uh  
21044independent research project we have two offers two types uh for research projects one is  
21045company based project the other one is called research dissertation so both projects need  
21046students who come up with uh you know research idea questions and you design different  
21047methods to suit you know should be suitable for the research questions and the write up the  
21048whole thesis uh twelve thousand words and the only difference between company based  
21049projects and individual research dissertation is the research question generation section  
21050basically in the introduction set so in the introduction if it's company based project which  
21051you know the company comes up with the question for example one company came to us  
21052saying okay I'm doing mentoring scheme but I want somebody to evaluate my mentoring  
21053program oh we have a lot of employees tend not work we want to understand why or we  
21054want to know why you know and how we can motivate our employees so they give  
21055students one topic and then the students have to do the literature review and the design  
21056methods and collect data and you know test the idea and then write about it for the research  
21057dissertation you have to go and to do literature review from a research gap and at master  
21058level they can replicate idea you know which has been published but most of time you  
21059have to be you know replicated in the different contexts anyway you have to get idea from  
21060research um gaps and then you have to you know do literature review about the topic and  
21061then you know these are methods collect data and test the idea write the whole thesis so  
21062both types you know exactly the same in literature review in research methods in data  
21063collection and data analysis uh the discussion everything the same it just the source of the  
21064research question

21065R: okay all right brilliant I'm and so the assessment for them for the taught modules for the  
21066individual written aspect are they typically given the topic or are they do they have to come  
21067up with the topic for that say

21068Marta: depends different lecturers have a different styles and some lectures that give you  
21069know very clear topic just discuss how [topic] you know why [topic] is important let's say  
21070that uh but people can answer that is using different angles and some other lecturers gives  
21071them a [discipline] case and then you analyze the case yourself sometimes this case is fixed



21072so students have to say they you know we have a variety you know as assessment methods  
21073to try to you know give the students critical thinking and you know creative thinking as  
21074well so they have you know they for the 12 modules we use different type of assessment so  
21075some of them that [discipline] case is one topic but some of them you know more broad  
21076you can pick about one topic and you write about it

21077R: okay and could you describe a typically if you can what the general structure of the  
21078lectures and modules are so what happens inside of the classroom and what did the  
21079students have to do in preparation for the lecture

21080Marta: oh this is really kind of broad because we have 12 modules each lecturer is doing  
21081different style we have a you know traditional lecturer talking about a theory and in the in  
21082the class and but most of the classes would be very interactive so we have a part of a  
21083theory part and then we have interaction part you know debates discussions and the case  
21084you know case you know uh discussions and we have seen guest lectures from you know  
21085external industry because we are really applied [discipline] subject and um most of the  
21086lecturers will have at least you know 1/2 or 1/3 of time uh to interact with students that's  
21087for sure and in most modules we also have presentation you know embedded in the  
21088lectures you know so student can present and receive feedback

21089R: ok all right um will the students have assigned reading //preparation

21090Marta: oh oh yeah| you're talk about yeah yeah I didn't answer that yes students have to  
21091read the articles before they go to the class or read the case so that's what they do have a  
21092prepare reading that's for sure

21093R: ok all right brilliant um and so going back to the forms of assessments um how would  
21094the lecturers and how would yourself assess academic success on their assessment

21095Marta: um we have different rubrics basically we have a you know for example one  
21096academic essay [pause] we talk about you know the first one you know we will break them  
21097into different elements let me think of one example would be [module] we have the topic  
21098you know is this topic relevant important timely to be answered and the literature review  
21099addresses the relevant literature up-to-date literature and the important literature and then  
21100we talk about the recommendations are those recommendations feasible workable and also  
21101creative and then we have a critical thinking part have they analyzed the risks or the costs  
21102of the such a solutions recommendations and then we have a professional format in terms  
21103of grammar writing reference blah blah so most of the time would around the few aspects  
21104of the essay

21105R: okay and so what would do you actually teach any of the taught courses

21106Marta: yes

21107R: yes okay so um when you have an assignment in front of you how would you personally  
21108determine oh this is a first class versus a second class what are you looking for

21109Marta: uh we go with the rubrics you know first of all of course the contents has to come  
21110first did this uh student use you know uh has analyzed comprehensive literature you know  
21111on this topic and if this student you know write very clearly about it and you know go back  
21112to my the rubric so I have to stick to all the rubrics the first class would be good excellent  
21113on each of them

21114R: okay and do the students have //access to these rubrics before turning in

21115Marta: oh yes oh yes| they have uh access to the rubrics and they you know they sometimes  
21116send to pre work you know to us and looking for feedback yeah so we can't give them  
21117feedback you know kind of give Y students or a few a lot of feedback and not giving the  
21118others so most of the time you know when students you know emailed me I will give them  
21119feedback look this is not of course not pu- the work but let's say the outlines or something  
21120like that

21121R: right okay all right um so in general what would you say that students need to succeed  
21122in your program

21123Marta: they have to work very hard this is a first thing uh not missing the deadlines for  
21124assignments and clear communication with the lecturers if they miss the deadline for  
21125reasons and as long they do the good preparation they attend the lectures they participate a  
21126discussion you know in the class and then they work with the groups and the very  
21127important thing that you have to work as groups and for 6 taught modules in one semester  
21128they have to work maybe up to six different groups you know it's going to be very busy so  
21129they have to coordinate their time manage their time very well and then the last thing that  
21130they have to create independent study hours you know so those five things are very  
21131important

21132R: okay all right and how much of a factor would you say that language plays in academic  
21133success

21134Marta: how many what

21135R: how how big of a factor do you think languages in academic success

21136Marta: oh okay hmmm in my um program um you know we go along with the College  
21137regulations so only the people who have 6 point 6 point 5 with all of the elements not less  
21138than six point zero so the students come here I think most of the students have no problem  
21139in writing and uh but we have to train them about how to avoid plagiarism language it is  
21140important but I think more important is about their passion their interest in the subjects  
21141language is a tool they can practice to you know to get to use the tool well but I think it

21142that's why I'm saying that language is important but I think their interest their passion and  
21143their work attitude is more important the language

21144R: okay all right and so you kind of answer to this question but what other factors would  
21145you say play in academic success and that could be inside of the college or outside of the  
21146college

21147Marta: ehm because we are doing you know studying [discipline] is really about their  
21148passion about you know human beings you know not only you know seeing human beings  
21149as a resources you know to manage but you know treat human as human beings you know  
21150the personal touch and you know be able to listen be able to communicate to be able to  
21151understand to be able to feel you know how the other people feel those things you know  
21152cannot be taught only through academic but if they want to success in the college or  
21153outside the college the first thing is about being a humble person you know understand  
21154others I think it's a very important factor

21155R: okay and so you seem to have quite a good familiarity with the IELTS in the 6.5 would  
21156you be able to expand on what you think about the IELTS do you think if you have  
21157familiarity with the test do you like it do you not do you find it useful do you think it does  
21158a good job predicting how the student will do

21159Marta: I think it's a very standard you know as far as I know it's because I did that before  
21160myself it's very I think it's very good test you know in terms a very accurate test you know  
21161and in terms of the you know listening the spoken English oral English and writing and  
21162what else listening I think I don't know four elements it does a very good you know for me  
21163I think it's a you know people have higher score let's say people come here with seven zero  
21164you can clearly see the difference of between seven zero and a 6.5 you know so in terms of  
21165that I think is good but on the other hand it might lose some good candidates you know  
21166because I told you you those more important factors you know make them more successful  
21167academically and in the world and the work it's about their attitudes their ehm you know  
21168passion so because of the very strict language limits we might have a loosen some good  
21169candidates good you know h- to have a great potential to become good [job] but not  
21170necessary to have the English language

21171R: right okay all right and would you be familiar with the type of preparation that your  
21172students would have before coming on to the program so that could be language  
21173preparation or academic preparation

21174Marta: because this is a generalist course so it's not necessary they have to be working in  
21175the industry they have to you know have a relevant work experience or they have to  
21176graduate with a [discipline] background so we are providing a generalist course that

21177students with all type of different background can come to the course so they don't need to  
21178do preparation you know unless they are from different you know countries they have to  
21179pass the IELTS other than that I think um they you know they they can come you know  
21180because then we have a preparation uh kind of orientation week for them to tell them what  
21181I expected and in the orientation week they will receive the readings you know for the first  
21182lecture so this is the only thing they need to prepare

21183R: okay brilliant um and so are you aware of support offered to international students  
21184either within your department or the wide College

21185Marta: uh I I wouldn't be very confident in saying yes because in my school we have the  
21186orientation week we are you know more more building it better and better but uh we are  
21187talking about thousands bunches you can't you know face to face individually you know  
21188give them support and uh for the college I'm more familiar with the counselling I'm off-  
21189you know I for the libraries I always assigned my student go to the library you know it's a  
21190how to write how to read how to write and for a language support I know we you know we  
21191have some contacts in the language of school but I think I wouldn't be very confident  
21192what's been there you know what was there for them for the language support

21193R: mm-hmm okay great um and so what would you like to see your students um or what  
21194kind of language preparation would you like to see them have either before they come to  
21195[institution 1] or during [institution 1]

21196Marta: before they come to [institution 1] I feel some of my students got in a big shock  
21197culture shock and um they come in you know with a different English test and but when  
21198they come to Ireland you know the accent can take them you know few weeks to figure out  
21199you know to understand lecturers most of our lecturers are fine they speak not that fast but  
21200even though you know sitting in the lecture for three hours it's it's going to be very tiring  
21201you know and if they have two lectures in the day they're going to be exhausted so before  
21202the come [institution 1] I think it would be nice for them to have some experience in  
21203Ireland you know let's say pre you talk about eight weeks to pre I think it's not only for  
21204them to do the language preparation it's more about cultural adjustments and then you  
21205know they can know okay the lectures is like that you know the lecture that you can go to  
21206lecture because for some countries you have to go to lecture sitting your table but here is  
21207free sitting and and for some country that you cannot ask questions uh without permission  
21208but here they come in and anybody can talk they were shocked so there's a lot of a culture  
21209um adjustments you know maybe in the through the format of the language support during  
21210[institution 1] that we have offers a lot of support you know program director I made them  
21211individually you know and give them each of them for half an hour to know where they

21212come from what the challenges they're facing and um we also have office hours they can  
21213come in all of lecturers can be communicated and through emails so for that I think they  
21214are fine but before you know just the time they arrive and plus the accommodation you  
21215know the challenge they have to find accommodation which seems very impossible now so  
21216I think it's going to be you know the beginning is very challenging

21217R: mm-hmm right and so in the either eight-week or the two-week course that we've been  
21218speaking about um is there anything specific uh that you would like to see taught there any  
21219specific um you've mentioned you know getting used to culture and that kind of stuff so  
21220what would you like to see on those courses

21221Marta: I think the eight weeks of before the orientation would be better because in the  
21222orientation week people have to look for commendation people have to you know get to  
21223know their new classmates and understand the timetable you know systems [institution 1]  
21224systems and then they do a lot of things in the orientation week that they are really  
21225confused so if we have eight weeks you know even four weeks before they can choose you  
21226know eight or four weeks that would be great for them because they come in they leave all  
21227of the trouble you know the challenge that they experience in the two weeks move to four  
21228and then they can be more adjusted to the foundational activities

21229R: right and is there any specific on skills or topics or activities you would like to see on  
21230that four-week or eight-week course

21231Marta: yes and um I know you're going to focus on speaking spoken English and one thing  
21232I think is m- if you can do a lot of a team activities this is the limitation of the IETLS they  
21233you won't see their team activities h- so you know so they don't do a team discussion they  
21234only do individual you know in one-to-one interaction but if you have a team activities and  
21235let them sit and to solve one challenge so there is a lot of communication and a lot of ways  
21236you can persuade others people and there's also a way to present themselves you know sort  
21237of k- you know ability just to say ability to persuade ability to express ability to present  
21238and so those things I would love to see in the eight weeks course

21239R: okay and so typically in your course when they're working in teams is it that they're  
21240working in a team to produce a presentation for the class

21241Marta: yes yes

21242R: okay

21243Marta: and also a team report

21244R: also a team report okay

21245Marta: there's different format you know some teams may say oh you do A I do B you  
21246know then the third person C and the last person D but on another few you know good

21247teams I can I have seen they actually the work really as a team they do have different roles  
21248but they see the project you know as a whole process rather than parts you know so I think  
21249of the team yeah they have to learn how to do the teamwork

21250R: okay brilliant I'm let's see so what do you hope you're this is actually the last question  
21251but um what do you hope your students feel after they've completed the degree how like  
21252what do you want them to feel leaving [institution 1] after completing your program  
21253Marta: mmm this very good question because I don't want to read out to the learning  
21254objective to mode personally as the director level of love that they leave the organization  
21255leave [institution 1] you know they have to have the knowledge they should have learned  
21256in through the course you know basic knowledge advanced knowledge about [discipline]  
21257the challenges that [discipline] is facing and also I want them to leave with great [pause]  
21258bonding with [institution 1] we run a lot of social events with them and you know it's my  
21259role to to to make sure they still feel [institution 1] at their home even they go away they  
21260say oh I I study there you know I had a lot of good memories I think I have the affect with  
21261you know affect with um [institution 1] and the third thing I wanted them go with  
21262professionalism so they're going to a business world with a competition with a lot of  
21263challenges so they have to be confident to be professional and to to to to policy how to say  
21264[pause] to solve the challenge in the real world okay but in a professional way not in an  
21265aggressive way okay and the last thing I want them to have is actually the learning method  
21266they oh you know they just say okay I finished my master I've learned all the things that I  
21267know about [discipline] but actually not you're always a learner wherever you go you  
21268know wherever you are you always you know have a learning method in yourself saying  
21269okay oh that's new I'm really interested I want to know more always you know keep  
21270hungry in learning that's great

21271R: and I um do you think that your students do leave feeling this

21272Marta: uh I uh you know we run a lot of surveys but apart from surveys I keep in touch  
21273with of my only one group graduates last year so I invite them come back for social events  
21274and invite them come back for you know guest speaker or guest lectures and uh I do you  
21275know sometimes you know received a good you know very nice email from I receive email  
21276last just yesterday I think and she said she just got a new job and I'm so proud of her  
21277because she was you know she had a very difficult time in terms of her own health doing a  
21278study and if she was really grateful to the support we offer to her and she sent an email he's  
21279got a very good job but she's really grateful you know what she got from [institution 1] not  
21280learn you know knowledge of but also the support so that's really feel I think they left with  
21281a very good position you know in the workplace a lot of them 96% you know get first job

21282 offering you know you know within the study or you know three months after the study  
21283 and then that's hard data and the second data they keep in touch with us that also the means  
21284 that are really you know bonded with us and uh they are you know very professional uh  
21285 because I have seen a good examples in LinkedIn you know they organize events they  
21286 follow their own interest and the industry interest and one student working [company] got  
21287 nominated as [discipline] rising star so and in terms of learning method I think they are still  
21288 keep learning because of course they have to learn you know at their beginning stage I  
21289 hope that can continue as well

21290 R: brilliant I'm are there any questions that you wish that I had asked you that I didn't ask

21291 Marta: ehh [long pause] I think I don't know if you know the profile of [institution 1]

21292 [discipline] students

21293 R: um a little bit I'd have some contact because I I actually teach the English classes here

21294 so I have some of the students

21295 Marta: undergraduate or postgraduates

21296 R: postgraduates

21297 Marta: okay

21298 R: so but if you could expand more on that

21299 Marta: we're just growing and more and more international you can see from the faculty or  
21300 from the students so this year we have 45 students in the [discipline] program we have 17  
21301 nationalities so I'll just give you some uh [pause] a bit of information on that and you know  
21302 what we are the group I'm really happy with them because they are from different countries  
21303 but they are integrated together really well and this may not be the case for all of the  
21304 programs and so there are some you asked me about the you know what do I want to see  
21305 from the eight weeks I said a team work in terms of work is that you know I talked about  
21306 the skills I want to see you know they are able to present able to convince able to you  
21307 know express but what I also want to see is about their sensitivity to culture difference you  
21308 know are they feel comfortable working with the people from other countries and so this is  
21309 cultural you know sensitivity culture integration I think we should do that very early stage  
21310 it's going to be very good for them because they're going to be assigned to you know six  
21311 groups uh in one semester twelve group uh twelve modules in a whole year so they are  
21312 going to work with people from everywhere and I don't want them to say oh I don't want to  
21313 work that person she's from that country you know I don't want to see that so so that's  
21314 another thing I want to say that you know if the culture integration in the students you  
21315 know it's another skill very important skill to have

21316 R: mm-hmm okay and is there anything else that you'd like to express or say

21317Marta: no I think we have you know talked a lot so I think I'm quite happy if you have any  
21318you know question that you know need more information you catch up me email

21319R: okay brilliant thank you so much

21320

21321

**Nichole**

21322

21323R: okay and so first can you tell me are you teaching any modules or

21324Nichole: yes I do teach I teach uh undergraduate and postgraduate

21325R: okay can you describe the work required of your students in your modules so what are

21326they expected you to do inside of the classroom outside of the classroom and as

21327assessments

21328Nichole: eh well for the module undergraduate we actually don't have many

21329international students who have come in w- you know we have some non-EU students all

21330right >no we have< some EU students but we don't have non-EU but and so for

21331postgraduate eh we do have some and they are required to well attend lectures they're kind

21332of the classes that I teach are shared so there are a large number of students in the lecture

21333so it probably does take more the eh uhh the form of a did- did- didactic lecture ehm but

21334then for that particular module they do a research proposal so they have supervision as well

21335with other facilitators so it's lectures on how to carry out the research you know there'd be

21336questions and answers on that

21337R: mm-hmm okay and do you have any research students so do you supervise research

21338Nichole: yes I do

21339R: and what would you require of your research students what would they need to do

21340Nichole: do you mean specifically for international students

21341R: no just in general yeah

21342Nichole: eh well they have to do a lot of reading obviously they need to attend their

21343lectures in advance if it is eh for lectures uhm I have some PhD students ehm they need to

21344do a lot of reading and a lot of writing and drafts and submit and engage with me I suppose

21345there's a big thing their engagement and that usually isn't an issue in now I've just come

21346from a meeting with an @international @student there actually as it turns out supervision

21347and ehm I think sometimes I suppose it can be it's not to do with their English but

21348sometimes it can be their culture ehm you know he wouldn't I would have spent huge

21349amount of time on feedback for him which I've just given him I met him today to suit him

21350and whatever but he didn't even particularly today thank you he did kind of but for all the

21351work that I've actually put in eh whereas I would've other also international students that



21352 would be so could be just kind of cultural thing which isn't great when you're [pause]  
21353 putting in I can give an awful lot to my students yeah that's just something I've noticed  
21354 R: yeah so it's not necessarily that it might be linguistic differences but it might be there's  
21355 cultural differences //that  
21356 Nichole: yes  
21357 R: might| make hard for both the supervisor on the students in terms of the research  
21358 journey  
21359 Nichole: yes yes now I have to say one thing that I do find difficult is understanding some  
21360 international students and particularly say with that gentleman that I just met which is is  
21361 difficult that I'm there kind of straining to hear and to try and decipher what they're saying  
21362 sometimes and that's realllllyy difficult because you know really trying to create a rapport  
21363 and to get as much from them and to give as much and it can be difficult when you're  
21364 trying to think what are they saying when you can't understand so I do find that an issue  
21365 R: yeah yeah and so can you //describe  
21366 Nichole: I mightn't have answered what you just asked me there  
21367 R: no but but you have you haven't don't worry so can you describe the general structure  
21368 of your lectures and modules so when you walk into the classroom is it more PowerPoint-  
21369 based is there group discussion is it seminars  
21370 Nichole: no because it's lar- if I was in a smaller class it'd be fine but I'm not I'm in a large  
21371 theater of which look 160 students in it so it is a PowerPoint usually however I really I go  
21372 out in front of the podium and I have a cordless mic and I try and engage them what  
21373 questions even with an large audience ehm and I'll try and get some dialogue going which  
21374 can be difficult I know with large groups but I do try to do it and meanwhile though I  
21375 suppose and the who- the whole thing is as well to be on time and all of those things I don't  
21376 know if you're interested in any of that but also about trying to engage them from the  
21377 outset from the time I go in as to a bit of enthusiasm you have to be enthusiastic about your  
21378 subject matter and all of that or it just comes across poorly so that would be a big thing but  
21379 yes generally for those modules that I'm talking about because they're different national  
21380 students along with they're combined and it would be a PowerPoint now I do have others  
21381 with other facilitation and tutorials and things like that but not they wouldn't be for  
21382 international students  
21383 R: okay so would those be um strictly for home students or  
21384 Nichole: no not at all it's only just that's what I teach it's purely we don't have  
21385 undergraduate students  
21386 R: that are international

21387 Nichole: that are international because we can't take them because of our it's a professional  
21388 course

21389 R: right so the structure

21390 Nichole: so it's because of that we can't take them in so they're only on postgraduate

21391 master's programs post graduate diploma or master's programs and then I have uhh one

21392 international PhD student

21393 R: okay brilliant and so can you describe the form of assessment in your postgraduate

21394 modules

21395 Nichole: yeah well I just have one and that's a literature uh that's a research proposal and

21396 first year and it goes on to be a dissertation in second year but I'm the module leader of the

21397 first year research proposal so that's the form of assessment

21398 R: so how do you assess academic success so what are you looking for when you're

21399 grading that research proposal

21400 Nichole: yeah hm eh and this is important because I also have one-to-one supervision as

21401 I've just spoken about for that module so it is on a one to one ehm with those students I'm

21402 looking to know that the first of all that they know their area that they're able to critique it

21403 that they're able to present it back that they're able to let you know to let the reader know

21404 and for it to make sense and sometimes it's the making sense that's problematic

21405 R: mm-hmm can you pin when you're saying makes sense are you able to identify in the

21406 students writing what doesn't make sense or why it doesn't make sense

21407 Nichole: oh yeah oh [sigh] I could have brought you proof only I've just handed it in ehm

21408 @ anyway yes you could read a paragraph and the words could be all jumbled up in the

21409 sentence so they're literally not in the right order [pause] and I actually find I'm editing

21410 because you have to show what's required so what I try to do is edit a paragraph and say

21411 this is how it should be but oftentimes you go on to the next paragraph and it's very

21412 difficult to know what the content is because you're trying to make sense of the sentences

21413 [pause] it's a big problem

21414 R: right and do you feel that um by editing one paragraph and giving them feedback do

21415 you feel that they take on that feedback and they're able to absorb and then apply it to the

21416 rest of the proposal or is it kind of does it stop at that one paragraph

21417 Nichole: you know it actually depends on the students because I have another international

21418 student and I think she's from China she's and she's excellent and I do that with her and she

21419 follows it through she gets it with another student you know he might not get it and

21420 because it could end up coming back again what I did find I was doing and particularly for

21421 international students because they needed it I had to set aside and say I'll correct one draft

21422 give you feedback and then I'll correct I'll review the full proposal or the full thesis be it  
21423 when I have second years at the moment these are first year and eh eh you know I could  
21424 [pause] I wasn't doing that I would give feedback and it would be so bad that they'd send it  
21425 to me again and I'd edit bit more and say now follow-through or you know a little bit here  
21426 and there >because I was trying to make sense of it< and giving a huge amount of time and  
21427 to be honest honest it impinges on my home life actually I shouldn't be admitting this but it  
21428 does because I find it very hard not to give them the help ehm so this year I have said I  
21429 would correct one draft as in review one draft give you feedback and then I would review  
21430 the whole thing okay but even still I actually stayed up >and I'm not trying to be a martyr<  
21431 but I was actually up to one o'clock last night ehm yeah I had spent the weekend doing a  
21432 different chapter then he had sent me another one and ehm I reviewed that I stayed up until  
21433 one o'clock because I was meeting him today and I thought you know what I'll actually  
21434 give him it on a hard copy my comments I usually track changes and insert comments eh  
21435 and then I have a copy of it as well but I did this I printed this out and I did it on a hard  
21436 copy one chapter there for today to get it in ehm but I would find that it it's because of the  
21437 English it is problematic and this definitely adds to the work work the lectures' work load  
21438 and therefore sometimes I would be there like this is all confidential?

21439 R: yes

21440 Nichole: eh but I would be there thinking oh I have another two I have allocate- been  
21441 allocated two international students one if I got one of each you know eh I would  
21442 sometimes think like that however that's not always the case because I have the other  
21443 student that I was telling you about and she is you know she probably maybe her English is  
21444 better but she takes it on board it wouldn't ever have been as bad actually so I'd love to  
21445 know what level some of them come in it at maybe she was at a higher level I don't know

21446 R: how much background information do you know //about

21447 Nichole: nothing|

21448 R: nothing okay

21449 Nichole: nothing really only whatever you ask them you know that's all

21450 R: yeah and so it's it's basically because of the English you're putting so much effort into  
21451 that that you're not able to focus on the content

21452 Nichole: yes I find it difficult and then I go back so I'm looking at the English try to get  
21453 that and then I have to go back and try and get the content and look at the but the thing is  
21454 you know you're there is it academic writing your looking at is it the content and I do think  
21455 there has to be a certain element because it has to be at a certain level [pause] it has to be  
21456 understandable and then so it's not that it's that you're being over fussy about the English

21457but yet this is a master's degree in the it is in the English language so it does have to be at a  
21458certain level but sometimes I question myself and think I am I being too critical and am I  
21459being too difficult and I do but I've had conversations with others and they seem to think  
21460the same [pause] but you know so

21461R: okay and so how would you communicate your expectations and assessment  
21462requirements to the students do you say like post on blackboard exactly what they need to  
21463do for the proposal

21464Nichole: they have a booklet so we design as module leaders we have designed an actual  
21465book list and it's really clear it literally says you know obviously the word count and all of  
21466that but also it says introduction this is where you set the scene you compare it to the  
21467national the international guidelines and all of that that it literally says what you put in your  
21468introduction then it goes on to the next section then it goes on to your search strategy you  
21469know ehm it gives guidance on every single section step by step it gives an approximate  
21470word count ehm for each section they're very good I think they're

21471R: very structured

21472Nichole: very very structured very good guidelines and I say so this is your Bible and I go  
21473through the full guidelines in the lecture with them and I say bring in your guidelines and  
21474look at this and this is literally what you do so it is very structured then they also get  
21475individual supervision as well

21476R: where they can ask questions

21477Nichole: of the supervisor oh totally yeah and eh initially we find at masters level some of  
21478it is over the phone by email the meeting when they need to ehm wouldn't always be face  
21479to face meetings because of they're working ehm yeah but they're work if they're working  
21480they might not be on site so I am inclined to track changes make loads of comments and  
21481then say I'm here to ring uh be on the phone to them ehm arrange a time to go through the  
21482feedback page my page if we haven't met up or like today I was able to say I'm in  
21483[location] today I'll meet with you at 10 o'clock ehm so I spent an hour basically ehm and  
21484gone through given you know the feedback so I would well I tried to give it as structured  
21485as I can and to give as much guidance and say now follow this through if you understand  
21486what I mean sometimes you're not sure they understand what you mean it know depends  
21487again on on the student and how well engaged they are

21488R: okay all right and so in general what do you think that students need to succeed at  
21489[institution 1] so kind of more not even just international students

21490Nichole: I they really need to what do they need to succeed well y- you know I suppose  
21491we're trying to instill in them that to be lifelong learners and it's I think a lot of it is we'll

21492say even for example the research I'll try to instill in them it doesn't matter if you do it  
21493wrong or there's like actually that was one of the comments I made the questionnaire that  
21494he used you know hadn't great psychometric properties I said that's okay don't worry  
21495about that it's about the process you know so you're learning the process you're learning  
21496how to critically appraise and all of that it's so that you can then go out and use these skills  
21497so it's about getting the skill set in that you can use in the future so it's not about just doing  
21498a perfect piece of work it doesn't have to be perfect it's about the learning you know and to  
21499know how to do that you know even to go out and know how do a search even to know  
21500how to get your literature because that's what they need is to be able to do that so it's to get  
21501the skills really and also I think to foster in them to say particularly you know for that  
21502module is you know the the love of research or the love of learning and reading and  
21503updating themselves keeping updated how it can improve their practice but they also want  
21504them to enjoy it you know it's very important that they enjoy the course you know and I  
21505would kind of get something from their personal both personal and professional ehm  
21506development

21507R: right so you would say in order to achieve that that students would need to say be like  
21508have a good set of critical thinking skills be able to be inquisitive things like that  
21509Nichole: hm yeah yeah absolutely ehm definitely ehm critical thinking absolutely and to be  
21510you know to want to learn to be able to read and go through the literature and to extract  
21511what they need and also a part of it is that they are also able then to educate others and that  
21512it just continues on really

21513R: okay brilliant and so we've discussed this a bit but I want to ask you anyway um how  
21514much of a factor do you think that language plays an academic success

21515Nichole: I actually think it does play a big part ehm I do I think that people who are good  
21516writers do well do better actually because ehm marking can be subjective? and I know it is  
21517definitely competency based and we also use a grid or a guideline for the different levels so  
21518and the students would have that I might not have mentioned that but that's very important  
21519so we would have different criterion and I can't tell you what they are but it's you know  
21520like a marking grid so like over like if they've over 70 or 80 percent what what level that  
21521should be be at in each differ- >for you know like critical thinking and analysis< and  
21522synthesis and all that and even with regard to their referencing and supporting their  
21523evidence so they get that as a guideline as well now what was the question

21524R: how much of a factor language plays

21525Nichole: yeah I think it does because I would even see people who are very good ehm I'd  
21526have to work at it myself ehm and I would see how it comes easy to people but I mean

21527[pause] yeah I would have to work even at my sentence structure and all that but I would  
21528like getting it right I feel a great sense of achievements but I do think it's easier I do think  
21529it's easier I think you can showcase more what you've learned but even if you have the  
21530critical analysis and all of that if you can't put it down on paper you're not showing it's not  
21531evidenced to your marker

21532R: right right so just having strong writing skills and being //able to express

21533Nichole: I do hm yeah yeah

21534R: your ideas and your

21535Nichole: and organize them| organize them really as well like not have them all over the  
21536place you know just one topic per paragraph that kind of thing rather than

21537R: just a mind dump onto a piece of paper

21538Nichole: yeah exactly and it does not because you won't get them right even though you  
21539might have all the content down there it's not making sense because it's not following at  
21540least to follow a process really it needs to if you're thinking needs to be logical or you need  
21541to organize it it's just what I think

21542R: and so you mentioned something on that I actually quite like you saying because I feel  
21543the same way that you had to work as well on the writing so what do you feel that language  
21544is not necessarily restricted to international students it might be more //difficult for them  
21545but

21546Nichole: oh yeah absolutely| it applies to all my students actually ehm and some of them  
21547like I had master's student maybe two years ago and oh my god she was a beautiful writer  
21548absolutely beautiful and it was lovely and it was a pleasure reading her work and even  
21549though her critiquing and all the rest critical thinking and analysis and all that might have  
21550been similar to someone else she it was able to it was clearer on the paper and she's a good  
21551writer used and I like simple it's not that I'm looking for ehm you know terminology that  
21552we don't understand it has to be simple and that's what I say to them it's just keep it simple  
21553so that the reader can understand what you're what you're writing about because we don't  
21554have to be you should be able to understand and anyone should be able to read what you're  
21555writing you don't have to have a background in the area it should be because it should be  
21556definitions to identify what you're talking about that's just what yeah

21557R: yeah yeah very helpful so I'm so now I'm kind of going towards //international students

21558Nichole: oh I'm sorry I've been talking about international students so much

21559R: oh don't worry you're giving a lot of valuable information so don't worry uhm so are  
21560you aware of support offer to international students in your department or the wider  
21561College

21562Nichole: I'm not really I know they can come and probably pay for a course in advance of  
21563starting I know there's a foundation program which sounds really good from the graduate  
21564students and I think that sounds fantastic but I'm actually not sure of what other supports  
21565they can get or where I could refer them to for maybe more writing skills or ehm so um not  
21566really

21567R: right okay and so you mentioned the foundation program and also like a course that they  
21568could pay for in advance

21569Nichole: yeah during the summer yeah

21570R: yeah do you have experience with students who have taken those

21571Nichole: no because I think mainly they're for I think mainly undergraduate students might  
21572do them I think and so I have no >also in our department we have only a total of ten<  
21573international students so we don't have many

21574R: okay all right and are you aware of the type of preparation that your international  
21575students currently participate in before coming to [institution 1] so either academically or  
21576language-wise

21577Nichole: I just know they have to have IELTS or an equivalent and that's all I know about  
21578their preparation so I'm actually communicating with a potential PhD students in China  
21579who is repeating her IELTS all the time she even emailed me there at the weekend she has  
21580to keep repeating to try and get them up because she can't apply otherwise so that's my the  
21581only thing I know

21582R: and so how would you feel about these exams would you feel that they're adequately  
21583preparing students do you feel that they're adequately predicting how they will do just any  
21584general feelings that you have about it

21585Nichole: ehm [click] actually I need to say that the international when I say the  
21586international the non-EU student is actually registered as an EU because he has been here  
21587for three years so when I'm talking about him you know he actually so he mightn't have  
21588gone through although he had to have for registration but I don't want this identified  
21589because don't you know yeah but for registration here for [topic] registration they have to  
21590be at a certain level so he would have had to have his IELTS at a certain level before  
21591coming to the country anyway ehm because we've so few international students I'm not  
21592sure how it prepares them as I say I have a PhD student and he's very good he's he's great  
21593and he he works well here and you know a little bit of English issues but not not too much  
21594so I don't probably have enough experience to but [pause] I don't know I wonder should we  
21595raise the bar as to the requirements I do wonder that for the the writing @ ehm because I  
21596think that's at a 6.5 is it I'm not sure

21597R: that's usually standard for for the wider college and then some departments are higher  
21598but

21599Nichole: yeah ok ok

21600R: so and and so what do you feel or what type of preparation would you like to see

21601international students having before coming

21602Nichole: I'd love better academic writing I think that's important when they're doing an

21603academic course they have that their academic writing skills so I don't know what's

21604involved in the taking the test or anything like that or I don't know what the pre the course

21605involves that they take in the summer but I think if they could do academic writing and get

21606that up to a level it would make then it so much easier for them it is like it's all assignment

21607or exam based and they need to be able to put it down on paper [pause] you know to get

21608the the the marks and the grades that that they should get if they're putting in the work like

21609if they're having to work harder at trying to get their English across as well as doing an

21610academic course it's difficult whereas if they were focusing on the English and got that up

21611to a level it would help now I know I'm all talk about writing and not talk about the

21612communication and in class but because my main experiences [click] is in a larger class

21613you know but I would find at least you know they would participate very well and you

21614know there's not as much as much of an issue it can be me trying to understand what

21615they're saying sometimes but could be just the person not the you could have that with an

21616an EU person an Irish person as well that they mumble or you know that you don't

21617understand what they're saying that their diction isn't great so but it might not be an

21618international thing

21619R: mm-hmm and and so what would you hope that international students would feel

21620walking away from [institution 1] after taking your course

21621Nichole: hmm [click] oh I suppose first of all I'd like them to feel that they enjoyed us and

21622they had a good experience because if you don't have a good experience [pause] you know

21623[pause] what it doesn't matter you know you have to have a good experience they have to

21624have been I think it goes down to the very b- they have to go expensive to be treated well

21625they have to be minded and looked after as every student does and I think that's really

21626important because even if someone is struggling if they feel that someone cares and will is

21627looking out for them it does make it easier so I think that's very important so they need to

21628feel that but then they also need to feel that they have achieved you know they have to be

21629kind of happy with the level of what they've achieved now that's not to say that people are

21630disappointed with the results and that's okay but ehm it would be nice for them for the

21631work that they put in that it's acknowledged and reflected I suppose in their grades within



21632their marks and um also that it has instilled [pause] a desire for more you know and the  
21633desire to put those skills in >well see I'm talking a lot about research I suppose< but to put  
21634those skills into practice to now be in the [practice] area and think my goodness look at  
21635that practice or that practice isn't based on evidence so I should look at that and do a  
21636literature search it doesn't mean there has to be all formal they're doing a literature search  
21637to see what's available out there to see about changing policies and practices or doing an  
21638audit on something that it instills the desire for them to make practice better to make life  
21639better to improve [practice] and that this all contributes to their personal development too  
21640that they feel good oh my goodness look what I've achieved look at that this is brilliant and  
21641I'm so proud of myself and I have a good experience you know while I was there  
21642R: and those international students that have gotten through do you think that they come  
21643out feeling that way right

21644Nichole: [click] ehm [long pause] [click] right I know that the student I told y- or what I've  
21645had actually a few international students but they're not international per say but  
21646international living in Ireland not here very long so it's the same issue really and yes some  
21647of them that I've had >I'm not saying it's because of me< have had a good experience and  
21648they have actually come out and I've one girl wrote me and said about how //she

21649R: oh that's so sweet I love that

21650Nichole: yeah yeah I know I know| not it was honestly so nice and about how it instilled  
21651her love of research and she had a great but she was just lovely absolutely fabulous so yes  
21652I've had that now I've also [pause] the experience of not me personally but someone had  
21653told me about the situation where there was an American student and there was issues with  
21654the student's graduation and a lot of issues with academic registry whereby [pause] it it  
21655really ruined the person's experience she didn't end up >was it to do with her graduation<  
21656all there was huge issues that everything went wrong for this student and her supervisor  
21657would be very similar to myself and she'd really go bend over backwards for the student  
21658but there was an awful lot of issues that were to do with college [pause] not trying to put  
21659the blame on someone else

21660R: yeah but something higher that you can't

21661Nichole: yeah there was no yeah and she did not have a good experience like that's one  
21662like I said we have so few [pause] eh but that was one that happened maybe last year or the  
21663year before ehm we don't have so many so it's hard to say but like I'm not sure like say the  
21664guy that I have now that I'm advising at the moment I'm not sure what he will but I said to  
21665him am I pushing you too hard I did say to him today I pushing you too hard ehm you  
21666know because it depends what level he's looking for like I'm just trying to improve his

21667work ehm and to teach him and I say to him look it I put these comments in it's up to you  
21668whether you want to accept them or not but he didn't say to me you know yes you are or no  
21669you're not so I wasn't sure ehm you come away from him not very sure you're not getting  
21670the feedback ehm and I explained to him I'm putting I have to give you as much feedback  
21671as I can in order to help you to see where you can improve and it's up to you now he's  
21672actually a very bright very bright and very good and I'd say he's excellent at his job really  
21673good and very nice but I don't know it could be just a communication thing ehm so when  
21674you say that someone you prefer yeah like and if he actually turned and said yes you're  
21675pushing it too hard and I'm finding this stressful you know I didn't really get anything just  
21676kind of a blank smile you know which probably I take that yes I am pushing him too hard  
21677but so I just said look I'm just giving you the feedback there because this is what I see and  
21678as your supervisor I have to give you ways that I think you can improve it and for you to  
21679learn you know so but I mean it was just all over the place you know but I tried to explain  
21680you know anyway so I don't know what he at the end if he'll turn around and say I had a  
21681good experience [pause] because maybe he just wants to pass but I don't know what a pass  
21682is until I see the full thing so [pause] you know what I'm saying I have to see his full thesis  
21683I have to see his full thesis before I know now I'm just reading individual chapters and this  
21684was his literature review chapter so it's early on ehm but yeah I don't know if he will see I  
21685pushed him too much but I'm just trying my best

21686R: yeah yeah that's all you can do

21687Nichole: yeah it's all you can do and I can't be mad at my- I can't beat myself and I  
21688couldn't give him any more than I'm giving ever see is what mistake many more than I'm  
21689giving you know to be honest yeah

21690R: yeah no and so something that you had said earlier in the interview was that sometimes  
21691it's difficult to have meetings because they may not actually be here and a lot of them are  
21692working and whatnot would that be placement with you guys

21693Nichole: yeah yeah it's purely this is for the part-time students so I know most of the other  
21694international students but I'm talking about you know students in general and when they're  
21695directly working and they're doing the course once a week for the other international  
21696students they're full-time because they have to be for their visas yeah so they might not be  
21697around either because they don't have to go into college everyday but yes you could  
21698certainly meet them so you meet them if they want to meet that's the way I do it but for  
21699those that are working it's more difficult to meet them

21700R: and would you say that those who have jobs or those who might be having issues kind  
21701of in the larger world so with //housing finances etc.

21702Nichole: mmmMMm

21703R: does that| impact their academic success

21704Nichole: yeah yeah like I think it's the same as any mature student I would see those and I

21705would have actually studied mature students at one stage because I was a mature student

21706myself seen how external influences such as finance such as family sick children sick

21707parents sick wives husbands whatever partners and all of that impacts on the time that you

21708have to give you know so it does but if you didn't have those [pause] this is so much

21709@easier but it usually but everyone has their own

21710R: yeah their own

21711Nichole: their own issues or whatever or commitments I suppose

21712R: yeah all right I'm so that's actually all of the questions that I have for you but are there

21713any questions that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask

21714Nichole: no you've actually covered everything ehm no because I just kind of I suppose

21715added in bits that I thought were important even if they were off the point ehm no

21716R: and is there anything else that you'd like to add

21717Nichole: no I don't think so I think I've more or less probably said too much@@@

21718

21719

**Oisín**

21720

21721R: okay first I kind of just want to know if you can explain what the work is required of

21722your students in your modules first so what kind of work do you require them to do or

21723expect them to do even inside and outside

21724Oisín: normally most of the work that's expected is reading-based um on the modules I

21725would teach the the methods would be sort of fairly classically humanities um I think one

21726of the um one of the attractions of teaching postgrad level is that you don't necessarily

21727teach the syllabus in the way that you might do at undergraduate level you tend to get

21728students who are already coming in with the clear idea of the aspect of the course or study

21729that they want to focus on so you're not directing reading you don't get people who are

21730conscripted to the course if you like um they want to dig into particular areas uh that may

21731mean sometimes the reading lists are a little bit daunting to when people see them first

21732because you're trying to suggest to them perhaps at whatever point they want to dive in

21733here is the way to dive but yes they are quite long re-reading lists but the assumption is that

21734they're not mandatory materials this is to give them a sample of the field and allow them to

21735jump in where they want to so it would be a high level of self-directed learning um and

21736very often you know the student will come to do a masters because ultimately they have a

21737PhD somewhere in mind uh [chuckle] either explicitly or implicitly so they're they're  
21738driven by their own uh coherent sense of what the whole thing is about and we therefore  
21739would try to cater to that the the reading I think is is the major requirement made on them  
21740they will usually write an essay usually four thousand word assessment piece uh except for  
21741the module that I'm involved in on research methodology which we would look for a  
21742research portfolio of combining summative and formative and the assessment piece for that  
21743is simply a research proposal [pause] it's in some ways it is the easiest thing to write  
21744because you supply a template and they fill it out you give them the word limits that they  
21745need in each section on the other hand because they've never written anything quite like  
21746that it's not like the conventional essay just longer so I think they experience that as a  
21747difficulty [pause] the final thing that I would be involved in in terms of it's it's @classified as  
21748a module but would be the research dissertation so again a lot of reading a lot of writing  
21749R: okay and so as a research student what do you expect from your students  
21750Oisín: [pause] uhm [long pause] in what sense  
21751R: uhm is it again you would say more reading and writing or would you expect them to be  
21752even more independent than say those students who are taking modules  
21753Oisín: yeah [pause] I think a lot depends on the the nature of the project that they're  
21754working on um some students will be doing very text based analysis I work I work in  
21755[discipline] so a lot of it has to do with text text interpretation um the [pause] in terms of  
21756language most of what I would supervise through would be English but I have a few  
21757people who'd be working with French uhm who would have French as a second language  
21758um [pause] I suppose in terms of [pause] uh the sort of work expectations I would have I  
21759would usually want to meet them quite regularly in their first years as a researcher um I  
21760[pause] usually encourage them if to to just take a closer look at their proposal and rework  
21761that um my my my limited experience of this is that where people run into difficulties as a  
21762research degree student whether it's an M.Ed. or a PhD it's where they don't have clarity  
21763about what they're writing or the purpose of it and that they need to have a clear sense of  
21764the field they're contributing to and then design the project that gets them into that field  
21765and out of it in four years if it's a PhD there has to be an exit strategy there may be a point  
21766at which they will simply m-many pieces of very good research are never finished they're  
21767always just abandoned at a certain point so at what point are they going to have to abandon  
21768it they need to know that um I continue to encourage them to write as soon as they possibly  
21769can I think in the humanities there is a a temptation to believe that [pause] if you just keep  
21770reading someday you will reach the end and then you will know everything uh and this is  
21771rubbish but it's very tempting so I think trying to get them to identify what are the key texts

21772is a crucial element get them to digest those key texts who are the key authors who are the  
21773key theorists and I would usually ask them to provide me with their own #perceived time  
21774version if they're if they're focusing on a particular author I would like them to give me  
21775their principal works in their own words into an abstract and #proceeds so that they have  
21776actually got it in self-digested form when they go to write more about it but I think largely  
21777that is simply to do getting writing writing writing after the first year I would tend to  
21778encourage people to present their work at conferences uh it's a slightly different kind of  
21779work and it can be quite distracting uh they need I know to gut out and show their work  
21780they need to get publications um [pause] it's not always easy to align what they might  
21781usefully give at a conference with what they're currently working on [pause] uhm and  
21782sometimes I think it does help people overcome whatever perfectionism they may have  
21783[pause] that you know they are going to have to get out there and they will have to stand up  
21784and say something for 20 minutes [pause] so I think that's a major part of it um so it's  
21785mainly it is it is library based work for them some people will undertake field work uhh  
21786which is is is is a different kind of activity altogether

21787R: okay um so you've answered a couple of questions in that which is great

21788Oisín: oooooh I'm sorry I'm jumping

21789R: no that's actually brilliant so um so how would you assess academic success so what do  
21790you look for when you're grading or assessing a research project

21791Oisín: ah that's a good one um [pause] one of the first professors I had [pause] told me that  
21792when he was looking for first class [pause] essays he was looking for the word he used was  
21793flexibility that the student would be sufficiently comfortable with the material that you  
21794could see they had the material at their disposal that they were not simply trying to gush  
21795down on paper all that they know they knew and therefore they were slightly more  
21796comfortable with expressing themselves um I think flexibility is something that I look for  
21797uh in research students I think over the course of their writings a certain quality of density  
21798arises that that you can know that there is there is a kind of uhm greater simplicity and  
21799clarity that comes the more people know about stuff uh at the beginning there's a kind of a  
21800haze of clarity and then it just gets horribly complicated and then they're able to move on  
21801to something else I also think that when people are writing theses as what they're arguing  
21802becomes more obvious and clear to them that is communicated in the text texts tend to get  
21803the more you read them the more I think from the students point of view it becomes boring  
21804because it becomes repetitive and you know they're they're stating the boldly obvious but  
21805it's only boldly obvious to them because they've lived with it for three years but I think that  
21806kind of clarity is something that I like to see um yes originality is is an important element

21807in in the humanities I suspect originality is exceptionally hard to come by and people who  
21808claim it are probably mad um it's all been said it's all been done eh but there are there're  
21809different ways of expressing that so yes there is a I think a sense of modest understanding  
21810of how what is distinctive about the approach the student is bringing at proposal level is  
21811good you want to see that you want to see what they've got an idea that they can that they  
21812can use and get into a particular field >I also think it depends< on what the student wants  
21813to use their PhD for you know we we have in invariably people who are writing PhDs at  
21814the end of careers in various forms of work and it's it's this is this is a final digestion that's  
21815quite different I think to somebody who is attempting to collect their passport to an  
21816academic career [pause] and therefore you're looking for slightly different things in a  
21817proposal than you might otherwise do

21818R: and can you describe the general structure of your lectures and your modules so would  
21819it be more PowerPoint-based would it be group discussions etc.

21820Oisín: [click] it depends [pause] um I'm only recently coming around to the use of  
21821PowerPoints and I'm I'm a somewhat reluctant convert um I would have taught at  
21822undergraduate level in uh as part of the course there and very often I find [pause] that I'm  
21823introducing a lot of unfamiliar material [pause] usually to second and third years so it's it's  
21824a combined which is a difficult bridge because third years are indefinitely different in the  
21825processing of information to second years [pause] uhm so I think I probably use the  
21826blackboard a lot more um simply [pause] because information and it's conveyancing is  
21827really quite important uhh they're not in the same level as the MPhil students who are there  
21828who would have done all the reading before you open your mouth um I'm coming around  
21829more to PowerPoint as a way of structuring lectures particularly um with the master's  
21830students um [pause] I suppose I am wary of it of to the extend uh I went to a CAPSL  
21831course at one stage where the person who was providing the inputs at one stage he said if  
21832you want to if you want to lecture well don't use PowerPoint you know we use PowerPoint  
21833for presentations or for public lectures that kids who have PowerPoint at school are  
21834probably going to someday bring a machete if they have to look at it again um but I think  
21835that's that's targeting the bad use of PowerPoint I think it's very useful for giving the flow  
21836of what's happening in the particular lecture and anchoring the topic um what I would like  
21837to see is that however the PowerPoint if I'm using PowerPoint then the printed version  
21838should be a useful resource for revision or structure so that is sort of I look I look at the  
21839PowerPoints with the view of how they will emerge as a potential augmented set of of  
21840notes for people um the numbers in most of the classes I would teach would be quite small  
21841uhm at undergrad level slightly larger um but I would try to have as much discussion as

21842possible I would try I've moved away from seminar presentations um [pause] probably for  
21843I I have to look at that again I think here in the [department] we've had quite a lot of  
21844pressure from visiting students to have the seminars graded uh as part of the assessment  
21845um I'm I'm a little uneasy with what's being looked for there uh I'm happy to grade a paper  
21846that somebody has presented uh I'm not sure that I'm comfortable with grading somebody's  
21847PowerPoint skills or their [pause] department at the lectern or whatever it is is I'm not sure  
21848what is being looked at there um but um I I do like the idea of a seminar but I think if we  
21849can I think an unmarked seminar is sometimes a better way to bring out the best in some of  
21850the students who are just quiet but have something to say [pause] and I have sometimes  
21851relied on getting the right position papers just to get that discussion so that's a single side  
21852of an A4 with thoughts on x y or z

21853R: okay and how would you communicate your expectations and assessment requirements  
21854to the students

21855Oisín: I >I'm not sure if this is a good idea or not< but one of the things that I do is on the  
21856module outline is I simply with the opening the opening@ the opening shot is the the  
21857module outline and the the learning outcomes so those are there upfront and central um I  
21858would usually introduce whatever the assessments are within the first couple of weeks and  
21859will try to in introducing them simply comment on how they are intended to demonstrate  
21860the learning outcomes and I usually leave students free to select or to choose or to propose  
21861another topic for their assessment piece so long as it complies with the learning outcomes  
21862for the module um again one of the most useful things I did at CAPSL was it was a course  
21863where somebody simply suggest that you give the learning outcomes to students in the first  
21864lecture along with the module outline and ask them to come up with assessment topics that  
21865would demonstrate the meeting of the learning outcomes and then those are the essays for  
21866the class but they have actually produced this I've I've done that a couple times um and I  
21867found it very good [pause] it probably requires a [pause] a good dynamic in the class

21868R: and so will you do that is it they're coming up as a class the topics for the whole class or  
21869is it individual

21870Oisín: that would be for the whole class

21871R: okay

21872Oisín: now they'd be divided into small groups to come up with it but yeah

21873R: okay brilliant um I'm so in general what do you feel students need to succeed at

21874[institution 1]

21875Oisín: what do students need to succeed hm is this any level of students or with research

21876students or

21877R: um any level so if if you'd like to go through undergraduate MPhil PhD

21878Oisín: hm yeah [pause] at the undergrad level [pause] I think a lot of students need to be  
21879deprogramed from the leaving certificate [pause] uhm the belief that there are somewhere  
21880is a texts that can be learnt is it's insidious and it's very hard to try and break people from  
21881that habit um [pause] well when I was a first year we had a tutorial with she died recently  
21882held up in her office in [city] in [discipline] she used to dispatch us off to the library and  
21883tell us to bring to find a book on whatever the topic was and then we have to justify why  
21884we had chosen it and it was really an extended lesson in how to choose the appropriate  
21885book for the topic without saying I'm now going to teach you how to choose a book uhm I  
21886think that's an important element but it does I mean it highlights the role which mentoring  
21887to some degree is really quite important that students who've come out of the leaving  
21888certificate unless they've been extremely fortunate they will probably have been taught to  
21889the exam rather than more broadly and therefore um you know the the whole purpose of  
21890self-directed learning is is is just not there it has to be it has to be picked up um there needs  
21891to be ways in which students are taught the dynamics of how to read academic this here is  
21892a primary source you know we now go to the journals to see what they're saying about it  
21893well that kind of very basic stuff um I know some courses do this kind of basic research  
21894stuff basic research schools not everybody does but it's really important um I think also to  
21895succeed I mean it's s- it's very subjective but you do meet students in their first year of  
21896university some of whom have not quite made the adjustment to college um and are really  
21897seeing lecturers and demonstrators as you [pause] know teachers grownups the enemy  
21898generally rather than as gatekeepers to to more knowledge people who will stimulate and  
21899assist how we cope with our curiosity um yeah we've got classes where people are curious  
21900and they know this is they come here to be curious um that's good um [sigh] and I think  
21901that has to be kind of a hunger and ambition on the part of the student as well um it's sad  
21902when you see students who come in who obviously have been doing very well in  
21903secondary school and they suddenly flounder when they're in college um you they've just  
21904been knocked their perch as the top top cat and suddenly they don't know don't know  
21905where they are that's really really hard but um at post-grad level what you need to succeed  
21906[pause] um I think there needs to be a number of things in place uhm [pause] the most  
21907obvious I think this financial security [pause] um that goes hand in hand with the coherent  
21908research project um students who don't have the economic wherewithal to to relax  
21909sufficiently to write [pause] or come together to read so there needs to be some way of  
21910having reliable financial situations people need to be able to understand how they're going  
21911to be financed over a four-year period for a PhD um if you can't have that the anxieties



21912[pause] of home um and people people struggle um in terms of the most most people I  
21913think who are are contemplating a PhD usually bring with high levels of motivation um  
21914[pause] the kinds of support over a four-year period uh vary from student to student but I  
21915think again it's it maybe it's a humanities [pause] issue that a lot of th- and social science to  
21916some extent a lot of the research is solitary that there isn't that climate of research teams uh  
21917there isn't the doing the research and writing it up culture it's an ongoing solitary battle um  
21918and I think a great onus is on departments and schools to to make an an accommodating  
21919place for people who [sigh] by virtue of what they're doing they need to be alone but they  
21920can't just be on their own [pause] so you I would I would lay quite a stress on the more  
21921existential side of it I think good supervision is really useful um the whole point of writing  
21922research is that the student becomes the expert and therefore in many ways the supervisor  
21923if the project is going well they're commenting not so much on content but on form you  
21924know there is a case of in this project given the nature of it you know what does chapter  
21925two have to do [pause] you know to link one and three you know there is a supervision is  
21926not you know admitting somebody from to a lesser level of expertise they have to become  
21927the expert they have to do it um [pause] I am not familiar with too much with working as  
21928part of a supervisory team arrangement um I believe it it is a very good thing but I haven't  
21929tried it yet um I I was extraordinarily lucky I had a supervisor who has come through  
21930Oxford in the 1950s and 60s and believed that the appropriate way to supervise somebody  
21931was to take them for dinner [pause]

21932R: that's brilliant

21933Oisín: which is excellent but this is not the way uh the current PhD factory would allow us  
21934to @@ take everybody to dinner would be rather rather bankrupting um but I think that  
21935that humanizing touch is important um I think students need to find a place in the  
21936discipline I think that's why becoming a part of the conference circuit at an early stage is in  
21937important I I I think to feel oneself amongst peers is a really important part of the process  
21938um you you you know it's almost impossible to feel your way into the discipline without  
21939that so I think yeah drive ambition clarity and financial security

21940R: and in general what would you say what weaknesses do students tend to have when they  
21941come to [institution 1] or when they're doing their studies here

21942Oisín: yeah I've commented on some extent on that I mean I think the ones who enter into  
21943the undergraduate program uh they've never done anything like undergraduate studies I  
21944think uh because I would be teaching in the area of [discipline] very few of them would  
21945have done A level or leaving cert [discipline] which would be the closest thing to it  
21946therefore the nearest disciplines that they would have had some experience of would be

21947 maybe history or English [pause] so you are effectively introducing a a a wholly alien  
21948 discourse to them um well not alien an unusual discourse to them um and in that sense it is  
21949 a bit like learning a language and therefore if they are not [pause] if they're not made aware  
21950 of the extent to which they need to learn how to speak [discipline] and like learning French  
21951 or Irish or anything they simply have to immerse themselves uhm and that is basically  
21952 reading reading reading writing thinking talking um if they don't make that jump and  
21953 nobody can make it for them then they're going to be floundering so I think that is that is  
21954 the difficulty of trying to explain just how much of it it's not a it's not just simply carrying  
21955 on studies that they have done at at at the secondary school [sigh] I think a lot of students  
21956 have um [pause] an assumption that because of their experience of the leaving cert that a  
21957 great deal depends of memory um when the [department] was reviewed prior to entering  
21958 [institution 1] in whatever 2000 the external reviewers pleaded with one one master's  
21959 program at that stage which still included examinations simply to get rid of exams that that  
21960 that regardless of what you ask people will always write down what they know about um  
21961 [pause] I still quite like the idea of an exam I'd like an exam that didn't actually count for  
21962 anything because sometimes the only way you can find out what somebody is thinking or  
21963 sometimes the only way somebody will find out what they themselves are thinking is if  
21964 you give them a pen and a sheet of A4 and say what do you think about X but this is not  
21965 pass or fail this is just to help consolidate the thinking process I I think students have not  
21966 always been helped in how to study I think study skills are appallingly imp- impoverished  
21967 that that that really we sometimes have to sit down and explain how to read how to take  
21968 notes how to write an essay um but very often we've sort of focused on the formalities of  
21969 how to do footnoting and reference but actually it's the very basic how do you write an  
21970 essay what is the point of this what points are you trying to communicate um most students  
21971 are very very unclear on that very unclear on that so I mean I think I would tend to in the  
21972 research methods class we do I would tend to sort of keep emphasizing form over content  
21973 all the time because you know as a result of the leaving cert they have this desire to amass  
21974 as much content as they possibly can and then regurgitate it all over the paper um [pause]  
21975 they just think about what it is that they are doing so I would like to see more uh lectures  
21976 and classes on study skills when I was first year we had quite a lot of week one immersion  
21977 in uh this back in the eighties but it was quite a lot of you know how to write an essay for  
21978 Humanities how to write an essay for social science it was very useful

21979 R: was that here

21980 Oisín: that was here and that was the the lectures were given by by faculty of the

21981 universities were saying if I was grading an essay and they would stick the title of here are

21982the things I would be looking for you know uh that was useful you know if the students  
21983don't want to attend that's fine you know not everybody knows what they're doing and I  
21984think so guidelines around how often you need to read what you should be reading we we  
21985had a nice German man who used to yell at us that we have to read a hundred pages every  
21986day and take notes on them [pause] which you know it's a counsel of perfection [pause] but  
21987you know it was it was good at least we had an expectation which was [pause] frightening  
21988but it was there

21989R: so how much of a factor would you say that language plays in academic success

21990Oisín: uhm it's very considerable I think uhm [long pause] I mean at a very basic level  
21991people have to produce outputs of essays theses reports book reviews and what have you I  
21992think also [pause] I so- some- something depends on the kind of field and and [discipline]  
21993as a discipline partly relies on [pause] quite an explicit engagements with with metaphor  
21994with analogy and with non-literal language um so that's quite a high level of fluency uh  
21995that that is required to capture nuance um so when I mentioned ear- ear- Korean students  
21996who were here you can sometimes see that in the first couple of drafts they're they're  
21997struggling to get the nuance that they know they need but the language skill they have at  
21998the minute is still a little clunky um so I think yes languages is tremendously tremendously  
21999important uhm [pause] now to some extent I mean it is like learning a discipline is like  
22000learning a language the more the more you see it done the better [pause] but does that  
22001mean that we should be assessing them harshly because they are too clunky or too crude in  
22002their language not necessarily um I'm constantly appalled at how the basics of of sort of  
22003decent vocabulary and grammar are sometimes missing in students who are otherwise of a  
22004very high ability um and and sometimes once they're put on the right kind of reading and  
22005writing diet you know they'll come on hugely um but you can see that that their skill level  
22006at the present is working

22007R: okay so kind of switching from a more general view to more looking at international  
22008students what experience you mentioned before we started recording but um what  
22009experience do you have with international students in your department

22010Oisín: this department has a higher than average number of international students uh quite  
22011a large number from the States uh this year we have several from India uhm we have  
22012several from the Italy uhm usually we would have maybe 12 to 15 different nationalities in  
22013the room at orientation so it's quite expansive but undoubtedly I've seen the single biggest  
22014different group from overseas would be from uh the United States uh and therefore the  
22015language issue is other than silly spelling the uh language issue isn't an issue

22016R: okay and what do you feel that international students need to succeed at [institution 1] if  
22017it's different than what you've already described  
22018Oisín: um [pause] I I think there's two things um um [pause] I mean if the student is  
22019coming and and having I'm trying to think of someone who's had really little operational  
22020experience in English um [long pause] [sigh] I'm tempted to say I'd love them to get an  
22021extra year simply because they're now operating in a different cultural linguistic realm uh  
22022and that takes time and it can't be done remotely it has to be done it has to be done here  
22023that's probably an unrealistic uh demand uh I have I tend to think that the the technicalities  
22024of operating through English [pause] are less important than other assumptions that people  
22025might have for example we have a number of students who have come from countries  
22026where [pause] academic [pause] progress relies on showing fidelity to the authorities so  
22027you you read the texts and very largely you've quoted the texts say because the people that  
22028write the texts are authorities and you as a student are not [pause] now the climate in  
22029[institution 1] like many Western universities is that we would like a more questioning and  
22030critical approach to texts and that is a huge jump for somebody who has a different attitude  
22031towards how they demonstrate their grasp of the field so I think that kind of like  
22032intercultural sensitivity is something that really needs to be spelled out to any incoming  
22033student [pause] um because otherwise there will be you know they were run into  
22034difficulties of plagiarism [pause] and they're not necessarily seeking to plagiarize [pause] I  
22035think plagiarism is an issue particularly at graduate-level when I started teaching at this  
22036level it was usually either students who were attempting to demonstrate their their  
22037obedience to the tradition who plagiarized uh and thought of it as a virtue or students who  
22038are terribly weak and frightened of failing and who might plagiarize in in recent years it's  
22039actually been students who are gung-ho for success [pause] who have been the worst  
22040perpetrators of of trying to find ways of of of raising their grades by by using sources now  
22041Turnitin is great uh people will still say oh I don't know how that could have happened uh  
22042but it is nice to have some type of standard against which you can judge things uh but I  
22043think a very basic course of research ethics needs >I mean I I would love the university  
22044wide research ethics approach to not just you know there there are other broader issues of  
22045research ethics but how do you conduct your approach to the sources I think would be very  
22046useful

22047R: okay and are you aware of any support offer to international students in your  
22048department or in the wider university

22049Oisín: yeah we've we've had some of our students have taken the uhm [pause] English for  
22050academic purposes uh and that's been very useful uhm [pause] beyond that for ongoing

22051support we have occasionally um made use of most >I'm not not really< aware of students  
22052where language language ability was the or English language ability was the determining  
22053problem we've had issues where people have had a specific learning difficulty and and  
22054we've made use of the college services there but generally speaking those who are  
22055struggling with the English language we would trying to help at a local level within uh the  
22056department simply because people w-w-with kind of a specialized vocabulary tripping  
22057them up you you can't send them to a general language class to see how they get on [pause]  
22058but I mean I think one of the advantages of being a relatively small department is that you  
22059have a pool of postgrads and others who will do the conversation skills who will you know  
22060sit down and read texts slowly or sometimes you know wh-where necessary we will  
22061ourselves

22062R: and would you have any advice or improvements or suggestions that you would make  
22063for the support that you're aware

22064Oisín: [pause] uhm [pause] that's a very good question [pause] I think I couldn't really  
22065comment on that unless I actually saw what was being offered uhm I know we have  
22066referred students who are incoming to it but what they have done there I don't know

22067R: okay

22068Oisín: that's a good question for me to go and look up now

22069R: @@ that's a good question for me to know and so for your modules of what aspects of  
22070language are probably the most important for international students to master

22071Oisín: uh what do you mean by aspects of language

22072R: um aspects well you've touched on this where reading is very important and also where  
22073you've said technical vocabulary

22074Oisín: yeah

22075R: uhm so things like that would be more technical vocabulary would it be understanding  
22076and comprehending complex ideas

22077Oisín: yeah I mean this uh [pause] there's there's quite a lot that is required of them there's  
22078quite a lot of [pause] conceptual work uh that they would need to be able to handle

22079language in terms of being able to abstract from the concrete and think about things quite

22080**broadly** um there needs to be also quite a a [pause] I think a lot a lot of what we would do

22081here would have a even a sort of small #age historical purview that you are dealing with

22082long long lived traditions and how they've developed so there would need to be some sense

22083of how things change over time including the way in which we talked about and how we

22084examine things that develop over time so the conceptual and the historical are both quite

22085quite demanding I think a fairly sophisticated vocabulary is necessary in order to you know

22086work comfortably with the material uhm [pause] what else do they need I think the other  
22087thing that's important around those kinds of requirements is that because reading [pause] is  
22088quite a key part of it there needs to be time for that to happen you but we can't fill them full  
22089of lectures that they do actually need to to sit down with the lovely book and try and stay  
22090awake as researchers everywhere do um [pause] yeah I think I think the time >and that  
22091again kicks back to< the economic thing if they're rushing from lectures to work in this bar  
22092[long pause] not good

22093R: okay and so are you aware of the type of preparation your international students  
22094currently participate in before coming to [institution 1]

22095Oisín: um if they have been is this particularly linguistic or is this in general

22096R: um in general so kind of more linguistic or academic preparation as well

22097Oisín: um well part of the application process to the university would usually we would get  
22098a sense of what they have been doing at their at their home university and they're usually  
22099invited to make a statement or to present some kind of if if if it's coming into the taught  
22100masters they usually will make a statement if they're coming in for research degree they'll  
22101be making a proposal that usually spells out what they've been doing and how they've been  
22102doing it um usually [pause] I mean we would have quite a lot of contact before students  
22103come in here I'm thinking in particular of the module I'm most involved the course I'm  
22104most involved with is the [topic] so this year is a very small number so it's untypical but  
22105the previous we had about 16 um we'd have been in touch with them all through the  
22106previous year before they arrived in and we would have been you know they would be  
22107probably telling us a little bit about some of the papers they were working on um and we  
22108would be you know we we were intimately involved in sorting out accommodation  
22109whatever they were doing so we'd have good sense of of them in advance of them arriving  
22110and that would be kind of typical um it's not possible with the larger program so [degree]  
22111might have maybe 40 so the staff on that have an idea of who's coming in they will have  
22112vetted their applications and seen that they you know they formally comply with what is  
22113required and the executive officer who looks after that has will have done Trojan work  
22114trying to sort them all out and point them at the right kind of places for [pause] what they  
22115need to know so yeah there's there's good preparation work um [pause] whether it's as good  
22116as it needs to be or whether it could be more streamlined is a different question I think it  
22117tends to be catered to individuals and their questions rather than a pre-programmed [pause]  
22118this is the sort of stuff that we need to communicate or assess

22119R: and so do you feel that the current preparation so things that maybe international  
22120students take on themselves some courses that they might take especially linguistically do  
22121you feel that these adequately prepare the students or help prepare the students  
22122Oisín: yeah I I I mean I'm not I'm not as I said I'm not I'm not really aware of language  
22123being a particular barrier maybe that's because it's masters level um I mean I don't know I  
22124mean I don't know I mean I think uh uh English is extraordinarily hard to avoid um  
22125[pause] no I mean I my my what I'd where I do pick up such things that people in general  
22126haven't got is a good sense of the basic around research writing reading  
22127R: okay so it's more the the study skills and the research skills  
22128Oisín: yeah yeah and being able to connect [pause] yeah there's there is a kind of an  
22129artificiality about a lot of the research skills uh discussion and sometimes people don't  
22130quite connect what they are doing with these kinds of mechanics which might actually  
22131[pause] help us get our idea across I mean there seems to be a mismatch  
22132R: and would you have any ideas on how to make those match better  
22133Oisín: mmm [pause] hm do I [pause] well yeah I suppose I suppose I don't I don't have  
22134anything particularly gripping to say I mean I I've been involved for a while I we we  
22135brought in a research methods class to try and bring some of some clarity to this um one  
22136of the books that we've used I found very helpful and have sort of sent off to various  
22137people who are contemplating doing a PhD um it has a it has a worrying title I think it's  
22138how to survive your dissertation but it's gone to its third edition at least at this stage so it's  
22139so it's doing something right but one of the things that I really liked about it was that the  
22140chapter on [pause] on writing your thesis quite a lot of the books on research methods seem  
22141to think that nobody has a problem writing you know but if you just lined up everything all  
22142you need to do is supply a pair of hands and a keyboard and off you go um [pause] we we  
22143had lots of very good students who [pause] seem to balk as actually putting it together  
22144[pause] they've got all the ingredients they're really good at accumulating but the whole  
22145synthetic effort is is difficult so the chapter on how to write in that particular book is  
22146written by a professional writer [pause] who seems to have a good sense that it's not  
22147always easy [pause] and you know it mightn't it mightn't be a very technocratic piece of  
22148writing uh but it does engage people that yeah it's hard to write [pause] it really is quite  
22149hard to write I I get my research students to try and keep a journal as well as whatever else  
22150they're doing just you know and every couple of days just write what have you been  
22151reading what have you found what's interesting just to try and get them processing into  
22152their own prose of what they're doing [pause] because otherwise it just becomes the  
22153accumulated information it's not it's not the immersion of knowledge so I think journaling

22154[pause] which sounds like we're treating them as people with conditions rather than but  
22155maybe postgraduates are but I think that's something that people need to do because  
22156breaking the breaking into the act of writing is the the crucial thing

22157R: and are you aware of the type of entry assessment that international students so  
22158especially non-native English speakers have to take to be accepted to the University  
22159Oisín: the IELTS yes and other tests yeah in that sense yeah

22160R: yes how do you feel about the entry assessment

22161Oisín: um [pause] hmmm [pause] I I I I'm not necessarily a fan [pause] now I think there's  
22162a balance to be struck [pause] the college cannot possibly be taking money from people  
22163who are not in a position to benefit from their time spent here [pause] um so that my mind  
22164means that the the English competency requirement is uhh is there to help the students I I  
22165think it seems to be usually wielded as a way of protecting the college [pause] um [pause]  
22166one of the things that I've been very happy with in we've had two cases where a student  
22167whose language competency was almost of the desired level uh was that we were allowed  
22168to to enroll them subject to their passing as again I was delighted to see that level of  
22169flexibility um because you know once a student is here and dealing with landlord and the  
22170shop and their classmates it is an awful lot easier [pause] to do the kinds of assessments  
22171that IELTS and the others monitor so I think so long as they're handled with a degree of  
22172flexibility I suspect [pause] >well I don't< see the process for getting in is usually  
22173something where you've built up some kind of rapport with the student that you have a  
22174sense that they actually have a project um they have an idea of what's involved and their  
22175English language competency is one part of that jigsaw and and I think if the other  
22176elements of the jigsaw are in place then that that that would predispose me to look kindly  
22177on anybody who's wobbling a bit on the English [pause] because with with practice comes  
22178huge improvements

22179R: right um and how how would you feel about sort of in-house assessment for that  
22180English language um just as a random throw out there um so because in the UK quite a lots  
22181of universities have been developing in-house assessment rather than the IELTS

22182Oisín: uhmm I suppose it would depend who who devises it and what kind of criteria they  
22183are and how different they would be from the existing testing regimes so I I would have to  
22184see what's what's proposed I mean I wouldn't wouldn't be against it but so long as the  
22185other regimes are being interpreted you know not as a way of [pause] filtering out the @@  
22186you know people you know people you know I might my fear would be somebody who  
22187actually is acceptable really and you can and who's who's you know if we're healthy in



22188other ways you know maybe with the bursary maybe with teaching hours I don't see why

22189we would not help in relation to language

22190R: right brilliant right and so what type of preparation do you feel that international

22191students should undertake before studying at [institution 1]

22192Oisín: what should they what should they undertake before ummm [long pause] I don't

22193know is the honest answer they one of one of the groups that we have coming to us at the

22194minute are are undergraduates from principally from the states who are doing a semester

22195abroad with us which is organized through global relations [pause] and they seem to have a

22196program of activities and immersions that that really work very well I mean I you know I

22197would I would like to see something similar expanded I mean these kids arrive they get

22198their immersion they get a lectures on Ireland Irish life Irish culture maps of Dublin

22199weekend trips to Galway Belfast Waterford Cork [pause] that's lovely isn't it?

22200R: that's great

22201Oisín: that's that's the kind of immersion you need to know that you are yes you're a

22202student yes you're here but we kind of know you're also a little tourist too because you

22203know we assume you're curious >you don't have to do the things< I mean nobody should

22204be forced to go to Cork for the weekend at gunpoint but you know if it's there and it's a

22205nice way of socializing with other people who are in the same boat and who are finding

22206this country terribly odd or terribly wet or terribly cold or all three you know [pause] so I

22207mean I think whatever global relations are doing they're doing it well with that [pause] I

22208don't know about the whole of the whole university are doing because some of them do

22209actually have global relations for the students that are coming so they are quite reasonably

22210programmed in advance and some of the scholarship programs certainly I think Rotary and

22211the Mitchell scholarship schemes certainly would would have some preliminary

22212preparations for them #unt [pause] globe-global they're the people who do stuff that seems

22213to work for the kids who are coming here now that's for undergrads who are coming so

22214maybe maybe it doesn't have to be quite so touristy for postgrads but I think [pause] I'm

22215I'm just very impressed with you know when you're trying to organize something for them

22216they're they're busy going off somewhere else at the weekend it's very good

22217R: that's great

22218Oisín: yeah it is it's very good yeah I mean you know they're not sitting at home in a damp

22219little flat they're off to the Cliffs of Moher or they're down at the pub down in in

22220Ballycastle or something it's good

22221R: really making the most of their time here

22222Oisín: well it's a it's a good experience I mean the idea is that you know it seems to have  
22223got the idea that simply being here is educative [pause] you know and that's good

22224R: exactly um so that's actually all of the questions that I have for you but are there any  
22225questions you wish I had asked that I didn't ask

22226Oisín: [long pause] no I don't think no no it's been very interesting so I mean I how will  
22227your research to make available as a par- or or is it part of a plan to roll something out or is  
22228this about raising questions

22229R: yes it's actually a plan to roll something out and so obviously with the typical you know  
22230publications conferences etc. um so we have the summer English for academic purposes  
22231course right now um which we're taking usually about 15 to 30 students each summer  
22232between 4 to 8 weeks and so there's two pathways right now one is for the IELTS  
22233preparing them to make the IELTS if they have a conditional offer and then we have the  
22234ones who have the unconditional offer and just kind of um they want to prepare more  
22235before actually entering [institution 1] um and we'd like to redesign the curriculum and  
22236actually have a pre-sessional pathway where perhaps instead of taking IELTS they can  
22237come for three months if they have a conditional offer we would offer English language  
22238research English for academic purposes um cultural aspects etc. and then at the end instead  
22239of having to take IELTS again they would have to pass our assessment um and then that  
22240would kind of be the university's way of yeah so that's the dream the ideal goal

22241Oisín: yeah that's great yeah brilliant

22242R: so yeah but we um we didn't want to do it without having research behind it

22243Oisín: yeah yeah yeah I can see that good brilliant that's fantastic alright that's very good  
22244well I I I'll try to watch this space with interest I hope it all pans out

22245R: well brilliant thank you so much

22246Oisín: not at all I hope it's been helpful I don't know what you get out of talking to us  
22247some of us who don't probably don't know what we're doing half the time

22248R: no no it helps quite a bit um [recorder turned off]

22249

22250

**Penelope**

22251

22252R: can you tell me about the work required of our students in your modules

22253Penelope: okay so I teach about f- on eight different modules [pause] at masters and  
22254undergraduate level my master classes involve [topic] practice? modules? And also I teach  
22255a module called [module name] that requires students to [pause] participate in a classic  
22256lecture style experience and at the end of that they submit a four thousand word essay uh

22257[topic] practice modules involve >and you know this already< but they involve students  
22258mostly to carrying out [topic] practice and I give them feedback and the assignment that  
22259they do the end is based on ongoing [pause] practices and reflections [sharp inhale] uhm  
22260and then I teach on undergraduate modules and that requires students to I guess engage in  
22261lectures to submit [pause] essays and also oral presentations

22262R: okay and can you tell me about the work of your research students

22263Penelope: [sharp inhale] my research students so my master's students that @I @

22264R: at the masters and PhDs yeah

22265Penelope: [sigh] [sharp inhale] uh those poor critters @ they [pause] they all have to  
22266submit dissertations of different lengths so master's students are submitting about a 10 to  
2226715,000 word dissertation and PhD students are obviously go way bigger than that uhm it's  
22268requires them to independently research [pause] it requires them to look at the literature in  
22269the area to become experts in their area they need to begin to understand what the  
22270methodology is and the best methodology that could be applied to their research [inhale]  
22271uh it requires them to think independently work independently and to be able to  
22272incorporate the feedback that I give them uhm and master students are also at the same  
22273time carrying out just sort of normal modules as well so they are arguably sort of wearing a  
22274number of different hats whereas PhD students are support to be focused on their  
22275dissertation >but a lot of them< are doing admin as well [pause] like yourself and doing the  
22276normal things things applying for conferences and [pause] uhm I think a lot of them are  
22277als- while doing the PhD looking for jobs and having to work as well and so it's never very  
22278straightforward I think for disser- for research students

22279R: and so can you describe the general structure of your lectures and modules so what  
22280happens inside of the classroom

22281Penelope: it really depends in the module and the class size [pause] on the cohort of  
22282students that I'm dealing with on the learning outcomes so every one of my modules would  
22283look very differently [pause] so for example uhm I teach an undergraduate module called  
22284[module] and that has about 200 students so >and it's in very structured lecture  
22285environment< so they are mostly listening to me uhm work through a PowerPoint >now I'll  
22286have< them do little paired group activities or I'll always start by having them brainstorm  
22287with a question that's kind of big picture that relates to their environment that they can  
22288really it- it's a way way for them to access the material but then after that the next 50  
22289minutes will be me kind of [pause] speaking to the relevant research in that area so it's it's  
22290more of a listening exercise for them than anything [pause] but other modules like  
22291[module] are very much project based so they'll be in groups all of the time they'll have to

22292 have done a reading before the come in they'll have to present on that reading the way that  
22293 I structure the material is through articles or through the big topics and so it's much more  
22294 task based and that's because there's they're a group of nine students a lot of them are  
22295 international? so I don't think I I tried to change the content so that it sort of so that they  
22296 can use their own backgrounds to conceive of why this material t- to make sense of  
22297 materials so and then and then the [topic] practice modules would be different again so I  
22298 really look at the learning outcomes the size of the class the architecture of the classroom  
22299 space to decide on what influences what they do [pause] you know what I mean hm  
22300 R: okay so you've already kind of described the form of assignment and your modules but  
22301 how do you evaluate academic success so what do you look for when you're grading  
22302 Penelope: [pause] well we have [sigh] this [click] [pause] how do I evaluate the academi-  
22303 that [pause] how do I evaluate whether they have achieved the learning outcomes? Or  
22304 broader academic success

22305 R: both

22306 Penelope: okay okay so it's pretty if it's if the assessment is a four thousand word essay  
22307 we have a pretty developed rubric that looks at a couple of different areas so we look at  
22308 structure we look at whether so so h- how ideas are structured we look at the the  
22309 referencing and the academic formatting we look at really at whether the student has gone  
22310 beyond what we expose th- them to in lectures and whether they've [pause] gone in they've  
22311 researched this independently they've developed new new ideas or new pathways of  
22312 thought on t- on the topic so that's really important and there's another one or two criteria  
22313 as well so I'll have that rubric in front of me as I'm grading essays [pause] and that then  
22314 would determine whether this is a one one or a two one or a two two [pause] so it's really  
22315 that b- b- but that's [long pause] I try not to just do a four thousand words summative  
22316 assessment at the end because I don't think very responsive so in other modules like uh if  
22317 in week six I have students do an oral presentation there'd be a different rubric for that and  
22318 so the criteria is quite similar are they building on on it are they coherently putting their  
22319 their thoughts together are they extending beyond the field is the are the ideas that they're  
22320 reporting academic or rooted in academic or th- or like do they have a theoretical basis  
22321 [pause] and are they grounded in literature [pause] so that's really how you see that's what  
22322 you're testing when you're looking at academic skills that's what you want to understand  
22323 that they can develop innovative lines of thought that they can do that in a succinct way  
22324 [pause] uhm and that they understand what you've exposed them to and they've built on  
22325 that themselves it's really a lot about the- their ability to go beyond [pause] what you've  
22326 taught them or to take that theory that you've taught [pause] that you've exposed them to

22327and apply it to different situations [pause] that's I think academic success so that's what  
22328you're focusing on when you're assessing them [pause] okay?

22329R: so how would you evaluate the academic success of your research students

22330Penelope: so master's and PhDs?

22331R: yeah

22332Penelope: mhhm that's a really good question [click] it is it's really through their writing  
22333[pause] so the the only I mean it's through conversations as well [long pause] but it's as  
22334they submit chapters to me [pause] that's where I can get to see [pause] where they're going  
22335to what extent they'r- they're building on something or they're struggling with something  
22336>actually it< happens the whole way throughout I mean I was just chatting to you about a  
22337student who is struggling with her research ethics form I can already see where her  
22338academic [pause] shortcomings are they're linguistic [pause] they are conceptual [pause]  
22339because things that I would see as basic enough for a master's student to be able to  
22340understand she's she's not understanding so the ability to [pause] take on board feedback  
22341and apply independently that's academic so I can see I can see from conversations that I've  
22342had with them so in meetings as well as in their writing I can pretty quickly see evaluate  
22343their success and [pause] the way you try to resolve that then is by giving feedback and  
22344kind of going through drafting processes and so on and but ultimately [pause] the  
22345evaluation comes down to giving a grade at the end and that's what's really tricky do you  
22346know what I mean [pause] it all comes down to that but I suppose that's [pause] maybe it's  
22347the fairest way in terms of you'll have some students who will take your would be exposed  
22348to your feedback once and they'll get and th- they'll apply it and they can go do that  
22349independently and invariably they're the ones that will come out with a two one or or a dis-  
22350or a distinction because they had the ability >for whatever reason< [pause] they got it  
22351[pause] where as other students will struggle and so how do I evaluate that again through  
22352all of those those chats [pause] the meetings and the submission of chapters

22353R: and uhm so do your students have access to rubrics or guidelines before they complete  
22354assignments?

22355Penelope: hm yeah I always try to put the rubric up on blackboard for the students so that  
22356they can see exactly what's expected of them so for like I just did that for my undergrads  
22357[pause] so uhm [pause] who'll be submitting a three thousand word essay and  
22358they're second year students so I still think they're unsure about it so I will upload the sheet  
22359with the rubric that I use so that they can see exactly what ex- expected of them >now  
22360that< can be an advantage or disadvantage I think for most of them it's great but there are  
22361always students who are really adept at [long pause] checking off the boxes but not still

22362 actually saying anything so I know there's some lecturers who would be opposed to that  
22363 but I think transparency is is all that we is is what we do it's what these students deserve I  
22364 think we need to take the mystery out of the assessment for them you know I think we  
22365 should be very clear >and I'll< also talk to them at the end of lectures and what I expect  
22366 what to avoid and [pause] what's a good idea and things like that uhm when I taught in  
22367 [country] we would all I would always give students a sample assignment [pause] so that  
22368 they could see and I would try to do that with my research students so sharing other  
22369 students' methodology chapters or sections or sharing my own work so that they have some  
22370 idea of what to do what this should look like I do that in my research methods class so  
22371 one or two lectures will b- are devoted to me bringing in other dissertations and having  
22372 students analyze them so that there are loads of samp- they are exposed to samples and it's  
22373 not a complete mystery for them [pause] so I do think that's probably a good idea [pause]  
22374 we don't do it now our department doesn't [long pause] kind of allow us to give samples of  
22375 essays to other students because they argue that they could be over influenced by them and  
22376 I see that point uhm [pause] but I do think there's a certain value to it as well  
22377 R: and so you said that you discussed or that you talk about what you expect in the  
22378 classroom do you allow time for students to ask questions and as they're going or is that  
22379 kind of restricted to the classroom  
22380 Penelope: no definitely I mean again it it does it depends on the context there are [pause]  
22381 I'm just thinking about the module that I teach this evening we'll have [pause] in every  
22382 single class somebody will ask a question about the assessment with the nature of my  
22383 teaching style is informal so they know that they can ask questions all all all along the  
22384 reason I don't designate a formal time for them to ask questions it's very much integrated in  
22385 to the relationships that I have with them some will email me for follow-up if they don't  
22386 feel comfortable talking about it uhm and I'll ask in the bigger modules where I feel like  
22387 they're not going to come through enough I'll make sure to leave ten minutes at the end  
22388 where they can just ask I'll tell them that I'm gonna stay back for ten minutes if so if they  
22389 want to come and ask me questions about the assignment they can [pause] and they do  
22390 almost invariably they do so there's a lot of time for for clarification and with a twelve  
22391 week module like [module] I give the second last class I always give over to [pause] to  
22392 focusing on the assignment but also in the way I structure >now that I think about it< when  
22393 I structure my materials [pause] I'll struct- hm I'll try and structure them around the essay  
22394 topics so for [module] there were seven essay titles that they can choose [pause] uh and  
22395 one of them might on [topic] and so I will structure my material for two or three weeks  
22396 around that essay title [pause] so that there again there's no mystery they know I I I say to

22397them if you want to do this essay here are the materials that relate directly to this so they're  
22398I think they're always very tuned in I think they're making decisions very quickly which  
22399essay they want to choose and for that reason then they'll ask questions so kind of the  
22400essay is integrated into the whole module [pause] so that they it isn't like this thing that  
22401hangs out on it's own I think I try to be realistic about the fact that you're not here for the  
22402good of your health you're going to have to write an essay at the end of this and that should  
22403be we'll keep referencing that as we go along

22404R: so do you introduce the assessment in the beginning of the term //or

22405Penelope: oh yeah|

22406R: or do you wait and

22407Penelope: no I mean they'll know [pause] by >in all of the< modules that I coordinate the  
22408essay titles are up from the very beginning [pause] uhh in the syllabi that I would use for  
22409for example [module] they'll know what the assessments are from the very first day and  
22410they'll slowly be working on them through [topic] practices so they're they know they  
22411should know in week one for almost all of my modules exactly what the assessment is and  
22412we'll discuss it at the very beginning and they slowly work away at it [pause] do you know  
22413what I mean [pause] [click] in the bigger ones that there's some that we co-teach they're put  
22414up the essay titles are put up on week three and they can pick one >that can be< a  
22415disadvantage because students will hone in on one essay title and disregard the rest of the  
22416material because they won't see it as relevant so that is problematic for certain [long pause]  
22417that's the disadvantage they'll decide okay I'm going to do that and it doesn't she's not  
22418talking about that today so I won't need to listen [pause] do you know what I mean but  
22419ultimately I think it's more important for students just feel that they know exactly what  
22420they need to do at the very beginning

22421R: and so in general what do students need to succeed at [institution 1]

22422Penelope: hmm [long pause] [sharp inhale] uhhh [pause] that's a broad question I think  
22423you need to be a good independent worker honestly I think we are so [pause] uh  
22424constrained with time as an academic I feel that we are constrained with time [pause] we  
22425have huge workloads huge administrative loads and it means that it isn't the kind of  
22426experience where we have loads of time to give our students and that's the biggest  
22427disadvantage so they have to be [pause] able to take feedback on in fifteen or twenty  
22428minutes [pause] and go away and apply that themselves and maybe that's the only thing for  
22429two months and this is the and so that ability to work [pause] uh independently  
22430is unfortunately and I really do stress that term unfortunately what they they they will  
22431need because they're not going to be handheld at all? um [click] I think you would also >I

22432 would say < you can be very confident in your own abilities which no student really is  
22433 because there isn't a culture of positive reinforcement in [institution 1] it's very different  
22434 from the [country] model or the [continent] model in that realm and so um it tends to quite  
22435 dis- I think it tends to be quite disciplinarian I think it's very hierarchical and students are  
22436 expected to [pause] to take on often arbitrary criticism [pause] and not have much  
22437 recourse for action on that I think I see students especially Irish students but also Chinese  
22438 students almost trembling in their boots in the presence of a lecturer and I I I find that  
22439 really problematic and so to succeed I think you would need huge amount of confidence in  
22440 yourself and autonomy that you're doing a good job because the environment doesn't give  
22441 that to you [long pause] uhm what else do you need I mean [pause] to be successful in  
22442 [institution 1] so that I mean it's and you you do need an intellectual spark there are good  
22443 students [pause] who can follow what you're doing but to really succeed [long pause] the  
22444 ability you you need to have an inquiring mind [pause] and that is what separates a good  
22445 student from a great student the the interest the actual deep level interest in a topic or the  
22446 ability to focus in on something and see capacity to deepen [pause] an understanding of it  
22447 that and that is something that you can't teach actually teach either you can model how it  
22448 can be done or you can model how you did that as a lecturer or how you did that in your  
22449 career but [pause] it's something that I've noticed especially with research students it's  
22450 some- some students have and others just don't you either have intellectual spark or the  
22451 intellectual interest [pause] in unraveling theories or or you don't and you can get by by  
22452 being prescriptive and looking at loads of other [pause] studies and kinda doing what they  
22453 did but the great student [pause] who will really succeed will be able to go will be able to  
22454 navigate that landscape without clinging to a map [pause] so I don't want to call it into  
22455 intuition but it's just intellectual [long pause] uhm an intellectual spark [pause] what else  
22456 do they need I mean you need to be [long pause] I suppose yeah incr- hard working uhm  
22457 but I think that feeds into being an autonomous learner as well [pause] uhm [pause] I don't  
22458 yeah I think that's all I can think of for now I think there's lots of other things people are  
22459 but I think they're the core the core [long pause] I don't know [pause] values that you or or  
22460 attributes that you would need to bring to study in [institution 1]

22461 R: okay so how much of a factor do you think language plays in academic success

22462 Penelope: you mean English language or language in general

22463 R: uhm let's start with language in general first

22464 Penelope: hm I think it's [exhale] I think it's so it's so huge I've noticed when I correct  
22465 essays that students who may be [pause] oookay in terms of grasping the content they  
22466 may be fine but if their language is really developed if they're good at coordinating an



22467arguments or arranging an essay or making it coherent no matter how deep their  
22468understanding of the content actually is if they're good at doing that it creates an immediate  
22469[pause] positive impression and [pause] their life will be made much easier by that there-  
22470there's often been essays or assignments that I've corrected and the student may really  
22471understand the content [pause] they may have to say about it but bec- because their  
22472language [pause] is compromised for whatever reason and I'm not talking about first or  
22473second language speakers here maybe they just don't have a good writing style? or maybe  
22474the English is their second language [pause] if you're struggling to access [pause] their  
22475content then it's a massive barrier and a really damaging barrier I mean that's it's the one  
22476thing that would really affect their success [pause] and that's frustrating because we don't  
22477[pause] teach that we don't teach them essay skills [pause] or we don't teach them linguistic  
22478skills we teach them content but then I think whether we're aware of it or not we we are  
22479grading we are assessing their language skills [pause] which is sound reason if you can't  
22480access the content because they don't have the language then you can't grade them on their  
22481on their understanding of the content if you can't get at it but it's that's under recognized  
22482that we're not we're assessing something that isn't on our rubrics and that we're not  
22483teaching [pause] I suppose sorry but I suppose the presumption is that if they get in in the  
22484first place they should have that language they should be at a level where language isn't a  
22485problem but I know and you know that that isn't the case at all

22486R: so would it be more that um so accessing the content would it be clarity in their writing  
22487and coherence what could you kind of pin down what would be that barrier

22488Penelope: yeahh it's it's a bit of everything it can be this their syntax of-often it's their  
22489sentence ir- ir- irregularities in how they would open up the first paragraph how they link  
22490between paragraphs if it's all over the place and conceptually it's not building from one  
22491concept to the next but it's just firing all around the place so that themes don't interlink  
22492that's really important it's yeah at the beginning they may [pause] I mean ideally they  
22493would provide a road map at the very beginning [pause] or some sort of a quote that shows  
22494where they're coming from how they're approaching this essay uh straight away you can  
22495tell whether they're they're deeply grounded in this topic or if it just kind of opened up a  
22496book and they're kind of imitating or trying to copy and paste other things together and  
22497they don't really understand what they're grappling with and if that happens can you pause  
22498that for a second

22499R: yeah

22500Penelope: you might have to repeat that question for me one more time

22501R: um yeah it's how much of a factor does language play in //ac-

22502 Penelope: okay yeah| so [pause] so so it's huge so what exactly are the problems they  
22503 interlinking of ideas the arrangement of ideas but then often it's within a sentence you  
22504 could be looking at a sentence and there's no full stop and the syntax is all over the place  
22505 and you don't really understand what they're trying to say so it's it can be very [sigh] it it  
22506 can be like an umbrella problem? or it can be specifically within the essay and it's it's really  
22507 you can see immediately where in each case where the student is going wrong it could be  
22508 an no- a native English speaker an Irish student who just can't who hasn't I'd said who  
22509 doesn't understand the content well enough to put their ideas together and that comes  
22510 across in messy abstract language or it can be a student who just doesn't who [pause] for  
22511 whom English isn't a native language and they just can't they don't have the linguistic skills  
22512 the grammatical skills [pause] or their vocabulary is too limited to really express their ideas  
22513 so it really so it can be seen in loooaaads of different realms [pause] and actually it's often  
22514 difficult [pause] no it isn't usually difficult to pinpoint exactly what the problem is you  
22515 usually can see by putting a red line under an example and you can usually see okay here is  
22516 your problem you know your syntax is wrong here or you really need to look at how you  
22517 reference [pause] or how you punctuate or this is not this is an irregularity you don't put  
22518 commas here or this phrase is consistently being used in the wrong context [pause] do you  
22519 know what I mean so by using but the really @ bizarre frustrating thing is [pause] we in  
22520 our Department wh- I I I I'm go- I'll mark essays like that but my understanding is that  
22521 those those markings go to the external examiner and they don't go back to the student so I  
22522 have to end up rewriting all of this into a feedback form but th- e- the student can't see? on  
22523 the feedback form where I'm marking [pause] so that's just a chink in our system [long  
22524 pause] that hasn't been addressed properly so anyway

22525 R: all right and so you're saying that both home students and international students are  
22526 language can actually play a huge //factor

22527 Penelope: in their success yeah

22528 R: yeah| so is there really any difference between the two groups or would you say that it  
22529 plays the same level in in their academics

22530 Penelope: I think it's a spectrum I think it is a spectrum I think [long pause] I can't say that  
22531 systematically uh native speakers are at [pause] an advantage or disadvantage over non-  
22532 native speakers and I do- I I can't say that because I'll think of an undergraduate module  
22533 that I teach [module] and when I look back at the grading I'll notice that my French and  
22534 German Erasmus students [pause] and Polish or European students categorically almost do  
22535 better than Irish students because [pause] they- they're not native English speakers but th-  
22536 they may have a lot of exposure to English texts and they're very good at grasping the ideas

22537their their intellectual vigor is really impressive yeah they're arguing more intellectually or  
22538academically experienced than Irish students so in that regard you can't say oh definitely  
22539one is at a disadvantage to another but within that I can see problems within within other  
22540cohorts so I've a lot of Chinese students and they would systematically struggle with  
22541language [pause] um both oral language and written language [pause] so they would be as  
22542a cohort they would be disadvantaged uhm when compared to native English speakers and  
22543because it's a #grammatical disadvantage or it's a it it's a [click] a structural [pause] issue in  
22544their linguistic competence uhm and again there are always exceptions to that I can think  
22545of a couple of students Chinese students like this year who's who's actually they're spoken  
22546English is fantastic it's really really great it's not problematic at all but I'd see problems  
22547when they're giving presentations or PowerPoint presentations and they'll have mistakes in  
22548their like their punctuation and grammatical mistakes that a native Irish- English speaker  
22549would never [pause] make but but so what I'm really saying is that there are different  
22550linguistic problems for different language communities and they exist for native language  
22551speakers and non-native language speakers and it all exists in a spectrum [pause] do you  
22552know what I mean

22553R: yeah no exactly okay so I'd say what experience do you have with international students  
22554in your department so you've talked about some cohorts but would most of your cohorts be  
22555//international

22556Penelope: yeah

22557R: or would| it be a good mix

22558Penelope: no most of mine actually are I think I'm an unu- in an unusual position in which  
22559most of my students are international students because I teach mostly at masters  
22560level because [department] has a very high proportion of non-EU students um mos- most  
22561of the students are international uh in terms of where they come from? it depends on the  
22562year we always have a h- like I've just been reviewing applications for the masters in  
22563[discipline] and I think I've rev- reviewed about forty so far this year and every one of  
22564those are from China [long pause] so now that may change later on in the year but that is a  
22565good [pause] and like they all won't come but that's a good indicator of where our students  
22566are coming from so a lot from China we have a lot like yourself from the US we've a  
22567couple from Greece and there's always a few from Europe uhm you know yourself Spain it  
22568really just it really does depend but we have a large portion of non-EU students [pause] and  
22569so yeah I would say I'm probably much more exposed than other colleagues I would have  
22570in other schools to international students I would say so

22571R: so are you aware of any support offered to international students either in your  
22572department or in the wider College

22573Penelope: @@@well @I'd @want @to @be @@ so obviously as [role] I'm I'm aware of  
22574the EAP classes and I'm a huge advocate of them I think they make a massive difference  
22575but outside of the EAP I'm not aware of any other support that's available to them I'm  
22576really not I think it's they're they're out on their own [pause] um you can't I can't speak to  
22577the support that they might be getting at the level of their supervisors or their their  
22578academics but being an academic I can imagine that everybody else is in the same position  
22579as I am [pause] in that they're very limited in the support they can actually give them

22580R: right so do you feel that the support that you are aware of is adequate

22581Penelope: [long pause] umm [pause] I think the EAP do a really good job [pause] um but I  
22582think [pause] what I don't think is adequate is [pause] the the entrance level criteria I don't  
22583think that's adequate I don't think a 6.5 in an IELTS is adequate and I I don't think it  
22584reflects what is actually demanded of students I think it completely sets them up for failure  
22585I don't know what the answer is maybe it's making it higher maybe they should come in in  
22586the seven or seven point five um I think that yeah I think that's the major failing

22587R: right so it's the standardized exams more than the supports in the //University

22588Penelope: yeah

22589R: that's not|

22590Penelope: I mean you can't I don't think you can be Utopian about it you're not you're  
22591never going to get a biochemist to stop in the middle of their lecture and do a grammar  
22592lesson they won't do that they don't see thems- they don't see that as their role uhm [long  
22593pause] and it's really hard to do that and I know as academics we're all really devoted to  
22594teaching our content and we feel an obligation to do that and it's really hard to steer away  
22595from that so I don't think that they can do it um I know that we offer a lot of EAP classes I  
22596think we've done a good job of offering a range of them I know that stu- I think we've tried  
22597to be flexible in our approach and we try to be very open and how students can sign up and  
22598we try to make it affor- very affordable in fact kind of free and uhm we try to be pro-  
22599students and we evaluate constantly to make sure that they are happy with the experience  
22600and we're working with constraints loads of constraints uhm I'd love there to be more  
22601[pause] work and more innovation and more supportive teachers and more program  
22602management I'd love there to be more resources I'd love there to be more Easter writing  
22603camps and summer writing camps but uhm [pause] yeah there's lot of restrictions >but I  
22604also that< the classes don't fill up I know that we don't exclude anybody so uhm and  
22605students can sign up for as many kind of classes as they want and they don't do that so I'm

22606 assuming that if what we're supplying with the EAP isn't exceeding [pause] the demand  
22607 isn't exceeding the supplied and I'm assuming we're meeting what the students want >but  
22608 you never< but do you know what I mean do you know what I mean so I would say if  
22609 there's a problem there would be an identifiable problem if the classes that we were  
22610 offering were all completely filled up and there was a waiting list but isn't that but I don't  
22611 know if that's because students aren't aware of them or they're just so stressed out and  
22612 overburdened that they're not taking them because they can't [pause] do another two hour  
22613 class on a Wednesday night because they're exhausted >and I think it's< probably a little  
22614 bit of both

22615 R: so you mentioned the entrance exams so IELTS was the one that you specifically  
22616 mentioned uh can you expand on your feelings about that standardized exam

22617 Penelope: I think again I have to balance this betw- between being Utopian and being  
22618 practical and being and applying my knowledge of standardized assessments so there has  
22619 to be of c- I think it's important to have a baseline entrance requirement we have that for  
22620 leaving cert exams you have to show that you're at a certain level we all know that that will  
22621 only get you so far but that's the level that's that's your baseline so I think that's really  
22622 important if we didn't have that? I think it would be chaos [pause] because it would be very  
22623 very subjective and I do think all order would breakdown [pause] from what I've seen of  
22624 the IELTS I can see some [pause] some strengths in the IELTS I think there's some things  
22625 that aren't bad about it at all but what it doesn't acknowledge is linguistic differentiation  
22626 between disciplines [pause] there are things that an IELTS exam would have a student do  
22627 [pause] a- a- a physics bound student do that are just not relevant and they should get  
22628 through but they're gonna fail IELTS because it's it doesn't make sense for them you know  
22629 it's and it's not it's asking you to develop a skill that you don't need the way that students  
22630 abuse the IELTS exam is really shocking to me there's this kind of Russian roulette thing  
22631 of I'll keep taking IELTS until they get the score and that is you know really laughable so  
22632 if it was me I'd would have something l-you can't limit how many times a student can take  
22633 it but it is being abused [pause] I hate that it's a commercial exams see these are paying to  
22634 take it all of the time so I think ultimately when we're endorsing the IELTS exam  
22635 we're endorsing a private company [pause] uh and I have a problem with that uhm so there  
22636 there are the problems and the deficiencies [pause] but also I see the need for a systematic  
22637 standardized exam that that does create some kind of a baseline so you're not starting off at  
22638 nothing [pause] do you know what you mean

22639 R: so you said that there are some things that it does well can you pinpoint what what it  
22640 does well

22641 Penelope: well I think the reading comprehension is quite okay [pause] uhm I know there  
22642 is a listening exam but the way that it's [pause] examined is going to look at things like the  
22643 pronunciation and intonation and things really quite technical things I know native English  
22644 speakers who've taken IELTS and haven't come out with a native a native English  
22645 language score so um but I think the reading comprehension is okay and I think it's  
22646 [pause] you know it will expose students to you know closed procedures and certain it'll  
22647 test their basic in- the formulaic language structures >it does that quite well< but it doesn't  
22648 test again their ability to think critically any of those skills that I talked about earlier as  
22649 being crucial to [institution 1] it doesn't test any of those [pause] and that's the problem  
22650 with it [long pause] what they do need at the same time they do need to have those basic  
22651 skills before going on to that next level I suppose and I mean we probably get on to say I  
22652 think the ideal formula is what we've been developing in the center which is this idea of  
22653 creating standardized tests that mirror the assessment strategies that we use that mirror those  
22654 skills or that build those skills that you need to succeed in [institution 1] but even to get to  
22655 that point we still need to have an IELTS minimum entry level because we need to know  
22656 that to teach that [pause] they'd have to be able to understand us at some level [pause] do  
22657 you know what I mean so we're still there's no we could never really cut the dependence  
22658 from this assessment so I think you it's you you can only use it as a base as a baseline  
22659 measure that's not enough [pause] I don't think but but you do need it? but it's a baseline  
22660 measure measure but after that loads of other support systems need to be put in place after  
22661 that [pause] to acknowledge that the IELTS does not support those skills that they  
22662 absolutely need for academic success

22663 R: and so are you aware of the type of preparation of your international students currently  
22664 participate in before coming to [institution 1]

22665 Penelope: in terms of English language?

22666 R: um English language or even academic preparation

22667 Penelope: uhm I would only because I do I review students' applications who the students  
22668 who are going into the master's in [discipline] I review their applications so I'll see their  
22669 background degrees I'll see where they've taught [pause] I'll examine their proposals and  
22670 things like that so that will give a sense [pause] in that in that case that would give me a  
22671 sense of what they're doing or where they're coming from but in all the other modules no  
22672 I'll have no idea I've no idea who's sitting in front of me absolutely zero uhm no I really  
22673 don't >and often< I teach an undergraduate class and I don't know know if they're second  
22674 years first years or third years nobody tells me that information they're [category] and  
22675 [general] curriculum so students I could have engineering students in front of me or I could

22676have linguistic students in front I could have anyone and I don't know their backgrounds

22677[pause] yep

22678R: and for those of you that or those of the students that you do know what kind of

22679preparation they've had how do you feel about that preparation

22680Penelope: uhm

22681R: I guess would want to say more linguistically rather than academic

22682Penelope: hmm like it- >I don't know I mean I< don't have a formal way of measuring how

22683I feel like how confident do I feel about their abilities?

22684R: yeah so would you say that because of preparation that they've undertaken that they

22685have a more likelihood to succeed or do you see them at an advantage as compared to

22686those who haven't undergone preparation

22687Penelope: yeah like okay so and this is probably based on on my own biases but also my

22688experiences having lectured in [continent] and [country] and taught different cohorts of

22689students I'd almost always see my Chinese students at a disadvantage because of the way

22690that they're taught uhm that very structural disciplinarian passive learning approach isn't

22691what we use here at all and so I know that they'll struggle with that style of learning uhm

22692so I'd I'd I'd rare- I'd usually start the term or the year kind of >not shaking my head< but

22693just being aware just feeling sorry for them because I know they'll struggle with that

22694[pause] uhm like I say w- with my what Erasmus students undergraduate Erasmus students

22695I'm usually pretty confident about them [pause] because I think French for example French

22696and European structuralism will mean that they're [inhale] vigorously like trained to to

22697develop and say to develop a line of thought it to- like they really take their academic

22698learning seriously in a way that in Ireland we kind of don't it's still a little bit of a joke and

22699it's kind of I think I think being a colony and being a postcolonial nation where it's still all

22700very new to us and I think to our students and so it's almost like they're playing a role of

22701being student? but the sense of this being really a part of their intellectual identity is still

22702missing [pause] or it's still evolving uhm when I see a mature student in the class I'll

22703generally have more hope because I feel they're- they've got it it deep intrinsic motivation

22704to be there so I'll feel I'll feel like they're they're more prepared than an eighteen-year-old

22705Irish student uhm linguistically as well as everything else [pause] uhm [pause] and then

22706with my American students yeah I'll I'll just know that there will be things that they'll be

22707very well equipped to do like linguistically I find my American students are really

22708confident in orally participation in class really confident in that and they'll usually do fine

22709but I know that there will be cultural factors that they'll really struggle with in Ireland

22710because because we don't we don't do positive reinforcement we don't have time [pause]

22711because we don't have these elite systems of education we don't have to we deal with  
22712massive numbers so we don't have time to handhold or to comfort or to be there in the way  
22713that they would expect and our grading system's much tougher so American students are  
22714used to getting As and we give Cs and that creates problems [pause] so outside the  
22715linguistic realm the la- language is just one area that I'll feel is will affect their preparation  
22716it's their age it's their where they're coming from >whether they're studying< in France or  
22717whether they're studying in China like that and I I'll have a sense of the kind of exposures  
22718they will have had before >which like with my Greek< students I get the sense that they  
22719come from a much more philosophical and theoretical background and so they can't cope  
22720with the rigidity of a methodology chatter [pause] that's really hard for them so they'll  
22721struggle in that regard so I suppose I am aware I suppose I am scanning and I am aware of  
22722where they'll struggle >but there's< not a whole lot I'll actually be able to do about it other  
22723than saying I understand that this is not what you're used to but this what this is the culture  
22724here [pause] this is what is expected this is what you're being graded on and they they're  
22725ability to adapt to that system is also ultimately what will what will determine their  
22726academic success

22727R: so what type of preparation should I guess students undertake before studying at  
22728[institution 1]

22729Penelope: mmm [pause] do a pre-sessional pathway program @ it's fantastic great people  
22730uhmmm [long pause] I don't know I'd sa- I mean I think we've a good job if I think of the  
22731[research institute] and all the podcasts that they put up on their website and there's a lot  
22732more awareness of engaging with the media and things like that so if I was a master's  
22733student or a PhD student coming to [institution 1] for the first time I think I would be  
22734treading through the website and going to the [research institute] and list- listening  
22735podcasts [pause] uhm from the research that's it's emerging from there listening to videos  
22736and see looking at the department that I'm going to and seeing what their research profile is  
22737like maybe looking at papers they've given or conference papers or things like that >like I  
22738think you'd< want to be very motivated to do that but that's probably what I would if I was  
22739[pause] motivated enough to really try to prepare myself I think that's what I'd be doing  
22740uhm [pause] I do believe that [pause] students are coming to an English language  
22741institution like [institution 1] for the first time should take some sort of preparation course  
22742[pause] but I don't think they realize that because I don't think they realize that as soon as  
22743they start they start and they're thrown in with everybody else and no special  
22744accommodation is provided to them I don't they they they're not going to see that from  
22745having applied from China or America they may assume it [pause] but it's not available to



22746them so yeah a good preparation program uhm and and then >but there's only< so much  
22747independent reading you can really do I really think it needs to be scaffold for them all of  
22748the rules all those hidden [pause] rules that I'm talking about that needs to be  
22749explicitly taught to them and I think the only time you could do that is at the beginning  
22750[pause] in a very intensive four or eight through for or eight week program where they're  
22751really given time to absorb it all so they're no [pause] just [pause] lost. [pause] in  
22752September

22753R: and so that's all the questions I //have

22754Penelope: really?

22755R: yeah| but uh are there any questions that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask

22756Penelope: hmm [long pause] uhm just I suppose if I there was a question that  
22757was missing it would be like how do I rate how academics or how international  
22758students feel like how how how what do I think international students feel at the end of  
22759their course of study [long pause] um yeah because that's the question that I carry around  
22760all of the time like how what are they leaving with and that's that kind of burns in my heart  
22761a little bit like how have they >because I have< my own biases about how they feel I feel  
22762like they're the support they probably need I wonder if they leave feeling alienated and  
22763unfulfilled? [long pause] I wonder if they feel leave feel like they've taken a challenge and  
22764succeeded in it I wonder if they leave with any sort of warm feelings about [pause] people  
22765like me that they've encountered along the way or if they leave feeling absolutely like they  
22766wouldn't that it was the worst experience of their life [pause] linguistically and otherwise  
22767[pause] do you know what I mean [pause] and there's no I don't know anyway where we  
22768can measure that like we in a very superficial way we evaluate their [pause] satisfaction  
22769with the module which is tokenistic at best [pause] but that's the question that I would  
22770[pause] I would add to other for you I think that would be and it's very subjective but I  
22771think I would like you to ask that other lecturers how do they feel like they're international  
22772students are leaving at the end of a year or a four year program

22773R: how do you think yours are

22774Penelope: @ yeah I really I really don't know I mean [pause] obviously there's students  
22775who [pause] like I say who are able to navigate all of these challenges and love it and feel  
22776like stronger more developed human beings who who thrive in the struggle but I think  
22777there are others who will just feel despondent because it was too hard [pause] and it was  
22778hard not just because of the academic standard because it was too hard because of the  
22779culture [pause] because of the [pause] the lack of explanation around rules because of  
22780this assumed knowledge and then immediate kind of getting your knuckles rapped because

22781you weren- because you didn't pick up on some sort of a culture rule that was never  
22782explained to you in the first place [long pause] and so I think I do I strongly feel >and it  
22783could be up< to fifty percent are leaving like that and there could be another fifty percent  
22784who didn't have a problem with that but that's honestly where I don't think that eighty-five  
22785percent of my students are leaving feeling like that was amazing [long pause] I don't think  
22786that because I think there is and I think that is to do with the culture [pause] be it the  
22787linguistic cultural the academic culture but really to do with the [long pause] the the  
22788assumed knowledge almost the arrogance of the culture [pause] in which we [pause] it's  
22789very institution specific and there's a sense of outsiders and insiders and maybe a sense of  
22790exclusivity and a sense well if you can't reach this [pause] without me explaining this to  
22791you then you're just not good enough [long pause] and so I think that's ultimately  
22792what crushes students [pause] and I think that's honestly where I think a good [pause]  
22793preparation program that's where where I think the work could be done outside of ex- of  
22794explaining grammatical structures I think un-peeling those cultural expectations and  
22795clarifying those for students so that they're prepared I think that's actually the part that's  
22796what they need [pause] they'll pick up the language stuff probably over time over the year  
22797through EAP but that other stuff needs to be taught [pause] needs to be >and it< needs to  
22798be understood [long pause] I I I think having these conversations where I as an academic  
22799can reflect on what are actually the what is the criteria what my expectations are and then  
22800finding a way to channel that to students because we don't do that [pause] do you know  
22801what I mean

22802R: yeah there anything else you want to say

22803Penelope: no that's all that's all

22804

22805

**Rose**

22806

22807R: okay so first can you tell me about your modules that you teach what's the work that's  
22808required of your students both in the class and outside of class

22809Rose: okay so for any module undergrad?

22810R: all modules yeah

22811Rose: [exhale] okay well it depends on the module but if we take a typical one like let's  
22812say an introduction to [topic] they would need to do some reading they would need to be  
22813engaged I try and make the classes as interactive as possible so while I would put some  
22814PowerPoint notes up on blackboard the goal is that they'll have read them before the class  
22815hahaha and @@ and then when we come to class I can use that as a backdrop for

22816 conversation about that and related subjects but that we're not literally just show and tell  
22817 because that's not going to be very helpful in terms of active learning um so I do [pause]  
22818 sometimes have little impromptu in-class tasks so I'll tell them they can sit on the ground if  
22819 they want that they can you know chat to the person beside them they can have small  
22820 groups where I'm just trying to get them to [pause] work through certain questions or you  
22821 know problems in terms of trying to figure out well you know is that a noun or a verb it  
22822 might be you know or then you know as we progress then something a little bit more  
22823 complex um I get them to do wiki's about particular topics um that's also a way of making  
22824 sure if they can't copy from each other because the each have to pi- so I'll give a list of  
22825 topics and then they can select from that list so there's at least some sense of choice@ not  
22826 much but some um and they have to prepare something and then they have to do like a  
22827 little quiz and they have to prepare a poster exhibits over here at the moment [shows  
22828 posters] um they prepare a poster and my grand plan had been that they would take the  
22829 wiki and they would translate that to [language] but in fact the quality of the submissions  
22830 were so poor@ that I decided in fact that I would give feedback and the requirement would  
22831 be that they resubmit [pause] and would get marked again on the resubmitted new and  
22832 improved wiki's because I thought that would also give an opportunity for a course of  
22833 learning they also have to do an in-class presentation so again there would be a list of  
22834 topics and they get to choose one

22835 R: mm-hmm so with the presentations be in [language] or

22836 Rose: [click] no in second year they're in English but in other modules sort of further up  
22837 the food chain they present in [language] so when they have for their placement modules  
22838 for example um near the end they come in and they have to talk about uh a topic like say  
22839 fitness to practice what does fitness to practice mean for say an [profession] what have  
22840 they learned from being on placement what kind of issues have been seen observed heard  
22841 about and then how does that link in with the academic or codified practices and then they  
22842 deliver that in [language] or they talk about their post-graduation six-month plan or  
22843 medium to longer term plan in [language] so we we do both

22844 R: you do both and are the classes delivered in a mixture of [language] and English as well

22845 Rose: it again it depends so in first and second year um any classes that are delivered  
22846 through [language] have interpretation or in English if there's a [group] student in if they're  
22847 delivered in English well then they would have interpretation to [language] for the [group]  
22848 student in third and fourth year uh if the classes are say outside of the center well then for  
22849 sure there would be interpreting provided but otherwise here uh by third year the students

22850actually have the degree of proficiency required to be able to engage with the subject

22851matter in [language] which is pretty phenomenal

22852R: yeah that's really great

22853Rose: yeah you know so they have modules on ethics delivered in [language]

22854R: oh that's brilliant and would many students have a background of [language] before

22855coming to your program

22856Rose: five to ten percent

22857R: okay so very little

22858Rose: very small yeah and then you know I would say of those maybe five percent would

22859have robust so it's a very small percentage and some of those who have had some

22860[language] teaching prior to coming have a lot of very bad habits because the quality of

22861teaching out there is very mixed there very few trained [language] teachers there are maybe

22862forty in the country

22863R: that's not a lot

22864Rose: yeah so the you know if you go to your average evening class in your average #vc

22865the likelihood is that you're not getting a trained [language] teacher and so there are

22866problems@ @with that @in terms of pedagogy and understanding of the task and what

22867that means for the learner yeah

22868R: and um also just out of curiosity would you have many students who have learned a

22869different type of [language] like [language] and coming to the program

22870Rose: very few very very few

22871R: alright and so can you tell me about the work that's required of your research student so

22872your masters and PhD students

22873Rose: mm-hmm [cough] the usual you know so they would obviously have to be prepared

22874in the first instance to complete the college's requirements so completing their ten ECT's

22875worth of courses um selecting courses that are going to be a good fit uh completing the

22876written worked standard required engaging in one-to-one sessions um but then also for us

22877here in the center we set up monthly post-grad meetings so more group-based because we

22878happen to have maybe five people who are working using the same methodology so that

22879helps uh so that means then if they're also engaging in English or [language] because

22880[name] is one of the supervisors so he sits in on some of those meetings and it's so with an

22881opportunity to to talk about ideas as they're unfolding or to try and troubleshoot ideas or

22882you know figure out where is this going you know so it might be for example we had a

22883student who's um completed all of their interviews they've started coding their data but

22884they were trying to figure out you know well [pause] does this fit together do I have a

22885theory have I been asking the right questions does my data tell me anything and so you  
22886know to have that opportunity as a group to work through that with the student um it's it's  
22887wonderful but it does require then engaged skills you know the potential to co-construct  
22888meaning but also to work with wooly meaning which is tricky because you know even if  
22889you're working in your first language that's tricky stuff because you don't quite know what  
22890it is that you want to say and you don't quite know whether or not you've got the right  
22891grasp of the data that you're dealing with or the idea that you want to convey so if you're  
22892doing that in a second language that's even more difficult

22893R: yeah and so we'll get to English in a bit but um since you're working in a different  
22894language as well for your research students would there be a level of [language]  
22895proficiency or some sort of interview or gatekeeping um

22896Rose: for entry

22897R: for entry

22898Rose: as post grads no because it depends on what the topic is uhm so with the post the  
22899post grads we have at the moment I mean also if you go back to just you know sort of  
22900BICS versus CALP they would all have good >well you know again< there are degrees of  
22901goodness but they would all be able to have basic interpersonal communication but that's  
22902the difference then between bridging that gap and you know now we want to talk about  
22903you know what's the nature of grounded theory or you know was Chomsky right when he  
22904said that there's a general gram- you know how do you do that

22905R: in [language]

22906Rose: in [language] yeah and also you know the fact that with the language having been  
22907suppressed for such a long time that there aren't established lexicon for many of these  
22908concepts so we're also figuring out how do we talk about these in [language] generally as  
22909you know as proficient [users] so we're having to coin new phrases in the language or  
22910borrow them from another sign language potentially

22911R: that's kind of cool

22912Rose: it is@ cool@ no it is@ cool@ um but it adds to the complexity then yeah because  
22913it's like what are we gonna what you know so here's the words in English and here's what it  
22914means so how we can talk about this in [language] and because we then have interpreters  
22915involved too it also means that we have to be mindful of that so there's a great deal of in  
22916some ways that is very good because it can slow down and inform our thinking about what  
22917things mean and it can help us to ensure that we're all on the same page and understanding  
22918what a concept means in fact um but it also means that then there's a great deal of extra

22919work that goes into figuring those things out and negotiating those things and co-  
22920constructing information across linguistic boundaries yeah

22921R: that's so interesting I didn't know that um and so you've kind of touched on this but can  
22922you describe the general structure of your lecture lectures and modules know what happens  
22923in the classroom

22924Rose: okay there so the it would depend again on on whether it's a it's a language class if  
22925it's an academic subject or if it's say an interpreting class so I teach different kinds

22926R: are you able to go through all of them

22927Rose: yeah yes no problem so if it's it's an academic class well then you know there are  
22928points in the year where it has to be chalk and talk um but I really want the student to do  
22929some of that engaging and so like in my class I try very hard to to flip that as much as  
22930possible and to [pause] make them responsible for shared learning and you know so if I get  
22931them to do things well then I try and get them to give me things that I can then upload but I  
22932mean that doesn't that doesn't work as well as it might and I think part of that might be also  
22933that I may not have been using say blackboard as efficiently for some of those #four  
22934environments so you know I know that there are things on my list of to do to try and help  
22935improve some of those things but um as I said earlier like in my classes so in those  
22936academic classes I I I try and make sure that the notes are available in advance that they  
22937have the opportunity to read them in advance um that we then get a chance to talk about  
22938some of those issues that there's time for questions that there is little exercises to do just to  
22939also get them moving because they come in they're tired uhm you know if they're just  
22940going to sit there you can see people who are gonna doze off um [pause] so it works best if  
22941you can try and get them to do something too [pause] that would be those modules I'm  
22942thinking yeah I do the same I teach a research methods module and so you know the  
22943[module] previously was a first-year module now it's a second year module so my  
22944expectation of what the students are able to do and how they should engage is increased  
22945because of that because they also have a knowledge of [language] that's maybe to A2 B1  
22946level um with the research methods module um I expect them to be very proactive we build  
22947in group essays the funny thing is a they hate that group work@ yeah I thought that was  
22948really interesting so

22949R: have they said why

22950Rose: because they feel that they like the ones who speak up and say I hate this it's because  
22951they feel that the the weaker students are not pulling their weight and then they have to do  
22952the hard graft to make it work I mean I try and have really frank conversations with them  
22953about saying you know you know it's not just and here's the exercise but I try and put it

22954into that broader bigger context so I'll say to them you know we're not making you do this  
22955just for the sake of it um we're making you do this because the college says that when you  
22956graduate you're going to be good communicators and communication entails oral  
22957communication for us [language] communication written communication but who you're  
22958writing for you're writing for different target groups so this is why you know a wiki who's  
22959that for and it was really very interesting because the students there what the really bright  
22960students they're really articulate this particular group are are wonderful but they thought oh  
22961wiki means really informal and so the way they were writing it there were no references  
22962there weren't even full sentences um it was patronizing so you know being able to go back  
22963to them and say you know this wasn't good but here's why it wasn't good and you know  
22964who's your audience and sort of working through some of that with them was helpful in in  
22965sort of reframing it saying to them you know in the third year group you know the reason  
22966why we have group work is because when you go out into the real world you're going to  
22967work with other people and there are going to be shirkers and there are going to be times  
22968when you're gonna have to pull your weight more and do things well play to your strengths  
22969you know so you might be really good at doing the writing up and the editing well maybe  
22970somebody else is better at doing the face-to-face bit or the organizing everybody to get  
22971together or you know coding the data bit so build that in play to your strengths and they  
22972might again they might not like it but then they see that there's a purpose that it's not just a  
22973you know I hate that we have to do this can you not do something else and I think I think  
22974it's really helpful to be able to say that to them to say look you know there are deadlines  
22975here's why there's deadlines you know if I'm writing an application for funding there is a  
22976deadline and if you don't meet the deadline you're out doesn't matter how much work you  
22977put in and just because you've worked really hard doesn't mean it's really good so you  
22978know and nobody the other thing I really try to say to them is nobody is born writing say  
22979you know an academic piece of text well it's a learned skill so you have to practice it and  
22980you have to integrate the feedback and I think you know that's why I think that one of the  
22981one of the challenges here in [institution 1] is that there aren't enough opportunities for  
22982those recursive pieces of work and I was really surprised pleasantly surprised at the very  
22983positive feedback that I got from the second year group when I said to them listen why  
22984don't we do the fourth piece of course work as a reiteration of the second piece of  
22985coursework um and they really like they they literally people came up with it I really  
22986appreciate that that was really good that is fantastic and I wish we could do this for some  
22987other modules too so you know that really took it to court but that tells me that they're not  
22988getting enough opportunities to practice writing and they're not getting enough

22989opportunities to build in formative feedback so we give formative feedback but are they  
22990applying formative feedback I don't think so yeah or you know the ones who are really  
22991good they can do that but there's that there's that group like there's a group of people who  
22992are in to say two one two two level and you know that if they actually if you if you had a  
22993way of forcing them you know in inverted commas to do something to demonstrate that  
22994they were implementing pieces they can move up and I think you know when you also  
22995articulate that to them and it's not in the schoolteacher way where you say oh you can do  
22996better than this like that's not it it's about saying I know [pause] that this is just a matter of  
22997not quite knowing how to tweak this but if I tell you how to tweak it and you do this this is  
22998what's gonna happen and then people are suddenly more motivated yeah so you know I  
22999think I think it's also it's about making time for that conversation because if you're teaching  
23000you know you have a curriculum to cover and there's an exam at the end [pause] you have  
23001to be brave and say well actually you know what that's the bigger goal because if you know  
23002how to do this you can read the feckin' slides you can read the papers so there's that bit I  
23003think the other problem is that the students don't read enough they simply don't read  
23004enough they want to have shortcuts they'll read the that's my other problem though with the  
23005you know you get PowerPoints and the weaker students are the ones who want to  
23006regurgitate that or Wikipedia is you know and it's like that's not okay we have academic  
23007papers for a reason and you need to look at them for a reason but you have to again you  
23008know you just say that to them and explain to them that this is the process and explain to I  
23009explain to them also look you know if I'm writing a paper I'll have people who will review  
23010it and they'll give feedback and then I have to implement it so you know don't think that  
23011this is school like if we're doing it here this is real-world stuff too and if you go and work  
23012in in business and you're preparing a report it would be circulated as a draft and it will be  
23013commented on and then you get to a final version so I think we need to build in that  
23014expectation of feedback and implementation I really think that that's very important so that  
23015would be the academic that's a long long answer

23016R: that's fine it's a great answer

23017Rose: you know so there's that but then we have modules where like the language skills so  
23018um actually I don't teach the the [language] modules that would be like [names] um but it's  
23019also with they they're CEFR aligned um and it's about them you know trying to keep it as  
23020authentic as possible and trying to bootstrap learning over time and clearly it works when  
23021people come to visit us from abroad they always say you're doing something special there  
23022because the the capacity of students at the upper end um graduation is better than  
23023comparable institutions abroad and I actually think that the difference is that we have



23024[group] people who are teaching academic subjects so they're getting content based  
23025learning as well as language learning yeah I think that that's that's the fundamental  
23026difference that's that's really really important I think for our students yeah and then in the  
23027interpreting modules we have um again I try and use CEFR aligned text so if we have a  
23028student doing say a simultaneous interpretation say if we pick a TED talk um we'll pull out  
23029the text they've done their interpretation to [language] we'll go through the text and we'll  
23030just mark up on a paragraph by paragraph basis where is this CEFR wise so you know  
23031might be well paragraph 1 introduction A1 great you know but then you can go up to may  
23032be quite complex so to C level descriptions of uh you know say policy change over time  
23033and an increase in numbers relative to another place or time uh so that's complex to handle  
23034in terms of understanding but it's also really complex to handle as a simultaneous  
23035interpreter@ um and so I think that's also useful because it means that the students get to  
23036see how they're coping with work from English into [language] at those levels we can see  
23037then [pause] you know okay you doing really well at the B2 but the C and it's like just a  
23038slim sliver of C level stuff normally but that's knocking you you know and that's again  
23039that's okay because that's where they're at and that's our target is to get them to B2 level  
23040comfortably but with some C level receptive um and then we do the same thing for  
23041[language] you know so we gloss up the [language] text and we mark it out in terms of  
23042okay this is A B whatever and then we write in you know how well you know this was  
23043omitted or this was skewed or that was completely warped or you know oh you're  
23044struggling here or you've lost that

23045R: okay and can you describe the the form of assessment in your modules

23046Rose: ooh lots of different kinds so we have coursework so for these for again like um so  
23047with the [module] they have an in-class presentation they have um this wiki because I  
23048wanted what I wanted to do is I want to build into their consciousness the fact that they're  
23049very privileged they're here they're learning about [languages] formerly they're learning a  
23050[language] formally the majority [group] people don't get that so access to information  
23051about the language should be then shared you know also there are like parents of [group]  
23052kids who are desperately trying to access information and there's a real lack of public  
23053resources so I wanted them to be able to write about little linguistic topics for that audience  
23054uh so plain English rather than patronizing English but still accurate you know and that's a  
23055hard thing to do actually and they struggled with that initially so we'll see what they've  
23056done I've got it over there yet to be marked um what else did they have to do they have to  
23057poster because then I thought well you know what um next year they're going to be doing  
23058research methods and they're gonna have to be able to summarize ideas next year they'll

23059 have to summarize their own ideas their own methodology so here's a way of just priming  
23060 that by getting them to talk about somebody else's ideas and summarizing a paper in a  
23061 poster fashion and it allows them to be a bit creative as well and they've done really nice  
23062 stuff so hold on I'll show you here's one on um can we talk about a morphology of  
23063 [languages]  
23064 R: oh that's nice  
23065 Rose: yeah  
23066 R: is that actually him  
23067 Rose: I think that might be one of their friends  
23068 R: one of their friends  
23069 Rose: yeah yeah one of one of [name]'s friends there  
23070 R: that's actually it's very well laid out  
23071 Rose: it's really nice yeah or like this one  
23072 R: that's very nice  
23073 Rose: yeah so they put in a lot of effort in terms of thinking it through and you know I say  
23074 to them you know you don't have to do this on your own you could talk with each other  
23075 and some of the topics are related so you know if you're doing [pause] gosh if you're doing  
23076 what let me see I had different different groups of like phonemes you know so if you were  
23077 doing the first set of phonemes and I'm doing the second set of phonemes let's talk to one  
23078 another and see if you're number one well maybe you could talk about what a phoneme is  
23079 and then I can refer back to your poster and we can have them as a series you know so or  
23080 you can think about what's your layout like so let's have a similar layout and you're really  
23081 good at layout and I'm really good at referencing so if you help me with the layout I'll help  
23082 you with the referencing so again it's collaborative and they have to talk about it um  
23083 [pause] so there's that bit and then I have the the in-class presentation because I also want  
23084 to hear them talking about ideas that's also come back to the in-class discussion you know I  
23085 want to ask them questions because I want to hear them talking about it using terminology  
23086 properly so you know [pause] trying to get them to understand or to articulate different  
23087 verb types or you know why is that a noun describe it why is that a minimal pair you know  
23088 what are the rules that govern that um how do we talk about time you know because people  
23089 talk about tense like [language] doesn't have tense tense is marked on the verb [languages]  
23090 don't mark tense on the verb so stop using that word to talk about this so you know  
23091 obviously I'm not going to say >stop using that work< but you know yeah you know you  
23092 can it gives me an understanding of where there are better whereas if they're just quiet in  
23093 the class you're never going to know how they're conceptualizing it and how they're trying

23094to articulate it and you want to be able to get in there and make sure that they you're  
23095helping them to articulate it [pause] properly because they're gonna build on that then as  
23096they go forward they need to be able to use that language when they become student  
23097interpreters or teachers um because then in their third and fourth years they're going to do a  
23098lot of self-reflective work so in the interpreting modules the kinds of assessments we have  
23099include portfolio building a lot of self-assessment and then we have final exams so for the  
23100in previous instantiations of the examinations we would have um say an interpretation they  
23101would do an interpretation and then they would do a self-analysis of the interpretation but  
23102our problem was that some of them are really good at doing the analyses but they weren't  
23103very good at the interpretation piece and we didn't want to be giving the marks that was  
23104gonna get them to a pass [pause] if they couldn't do it right so we had to make a decision to  
23105take the you know for some of the final year modules that we would just take we need  
23106them to be able to do the self-assessment we'll make that part of maybe formative  
23107development skills uh and use some of the class time to be really talking about what is it  
23108they're doing can they demonstrate the capacity to identify these things properly so a lot of  
23109again talking about it and writing a little [cough] but then we decided no actually in terms  
23110of fitness to practice we just need to make this a pass/fail type thing so it's performance-  
23111based so uh again because of shifts in the university from old system to #TEP uhm a  
23112process whereby now everybody in the seniorsoph year has to do a research project uh  
23113we've had an interim phase this year where we had to take some of the interpreting  
23114modules' time and space to put in a little research project but that will revert to usual next  
23115year so next year it'll go back to it's just the interpreting test uh and then they'll have a  
23116separate research project that they have to do and I think that that's good too so everybody  
23117has to do a research project so they're learning about research methods um and they're  
23118learning about you know how do they handle an idea that they're grappling with it's their  
23119data set and they have to do the write-up so you know that's good and we also get them for  
23120one of the modules to do a present- in so the research project this year belongs to sim one  
23121simultaneous interpreting one um but in simultaneous interpreting two we have 10% for an  
23122in-class presentation and 90% for a final role played live interpreting assessment um and  
23123for the 10% piece the in-class presentation like sometimes in some years we say okay we're  
23124going to focus this year on healthcare interpreting so everybody has a different task so you  
23125know you've to find out about what do they do in Northern Ireland do they train medical  
23126staff to work with interpreters and somebody else's to find out what's the HSE's current  
23127policy on provision of interpreters somebody else's to find out is there any documentation  
23128so that we have a class based presentation like a mini conference then where everybody's

23129presenting on their findings um but this year what we did was we got everybody to present  
23130on their research projects [pause] so it's like with the second year's where you're you're  
23131getting people to work with data and present to different audiences for different purposes  
23132here they were able to then bring together their work in progress because it wasn't there it  
23133wasn't due for another month or so but they could present work in progress talk about their  
23134methodology talk about any challenges talk about the literature and take feedback but they  
23135then had the opportunity to implement again in a meaningful way right so it's authentic it's  
23136real for them so therefore hopefully that means that it's it's going to be leveraged in some  
23137way yeah and then for the the placement modules um the assessments include site visit um  
23138we get some feedback from placement providers but that's really tricky that's [pause] [sigh]  
23139it's completely subjective@ it's a varies significantly depending on where you're based@  
23140and you know some people are allergic to putting anything on paper you know people are  
23141very slow to want to say anything negative mostly um so you know the validity of that as a  
23142fair assessment is problematic but that's not unique to us that's common across the board  
23143um so for that reason we now do we we do the site assessment which can just simply be an  
23144interview with the student and we'll talk with whoever the person was dealing with them  
23145on on the placement [cough] and then they have um interviews so they have the the review  
23146of maybe you know ethics or ethical issues or fitness to practice issues or and then they  
23147have another one where they have to talk about their own professional development goals  
23148um they also have to write up they they they compile a log of evidence around their  
23149placement what did they see what did they do reflections on the literature reflections on  
23150best practice blah blah blah blah um and they put it all together in a portfolio so so we  
23151we try to have a very varied range of assessment um both formative and and summative  
23152yeah

23153R: and so the master's modules would there be specific [discipline] master's modules

23154Rose: not not yet not yet part of the reason for that is because we've been beyond capacity  
23155with the undergraduate modules there were plans afoot back in 2008 when we set up the  
23156degree we moved from diploma programs to degree programs we were supposed to have  
23157more staff but then the recession hit and all of our funding was cut so we lost 80% of our  
23158funding @@@ but still had to do the degree @@ so @@ so we've we have been really at  
23159full capacity there um so we just you know it didn't make sense to do what we had planned  
23160to do with rolling out some master's modules but we TEP one of the possibilities here is  
23161that that allows us to regroup and to review and to revise and our goal would be that that  
23162would leverage us back enough space so that we can offer a module on the MPhil  
23163programs um you know the other thing that we're looking at again back in 2008 we had

23164been bringing forward a proposal for a master's in [language] and that was to be funded by  
23165the Department of Education and Skills and then they said sorry there's a recession no  
23166money so there are a room like there's there's a lot of interest at the moment in the  
23167aftermath of the [language] act that might bring that back and so we had you know we're  
23168talking about well maybe a version of that maybe something for interpreters but what how  
23169when where would the resources come from um they're all things that still need to be  
23170teased out but there's there are opportunities

23171R: there's scope for it

23172Rose: definitely yeah

23173R: that's brilliant

23174Rose: so that would be really really cool yeah and then we have the PhD students

23175R: right um but you're still taking master students from the MPhil as a supervisor

23176Rose: oh yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah

23177R: alright yeah

23178Rose: yeah yeah yeah I have a wonderful woman at the moment this year who's we went  
23179down to Cork last week [cut for confidentiality] yeah it's like oh my god yes but we went  
23180down and we had an absolutely wonderful time we had wonderful interviewees we had a  
23181chance to brainstorm because [name] who's who's doing the PhD was also there and so  
23182we're taking the data from different viewpoints so he's doing a grounded theory analysis  
23183and then [name]'s going to use the same data but come at it from the discourse analysis  
23184perspective so it's going to give a sort of multiple viewpoints on the same data set

23185R: and kind of verify any findings

23186Rose: absolutely yeah

23187R: brilliant

23188Rose: so she now has a whole ton of data to go transcribe [cut for confidentiality] so that's  
23189great I mean that's the wonderful thing like you know that you get to work with really  
23190enthusiastic motivated people who you just sort of tip them in the right direction they're  
23191like whoop off I go and do this so that's great that's wonderful but still even with those I  
23192mean you can see and even my PhD students you know it's about writing it's about um like  
23193the research ethics process is so stressful for them and it takes a lot of time and I think you  
23194know again supervisors vary from place to place but I I always say I say to the third years I  
23195say to the master's students and I say it to the PhD students [pause] writing the REC that's  
23196that's a road map hmm and you know take time to do that properly and you know as a  
23197supervisor I think if you sit down it doesn't matter if it's gonna take you know six or eight  
23198hours well if you have the time to do it because if you do it properly well then you have the

23199guts of your introductory chapter down you have the guts of your research methods chapter  
23200done yeah and you know you know exactly where you're supposed to be at any point in  
23201time

23202R: I'm be doing XY and Z this is my plan

23203Rose: absolutely you have clarity and that means that you can explain it better to your  
23204participants and that means then that you're in a better place already in terms of thinking  
23205around like okay so what am I doing with this data and how might I deal with it and I find  
23206that as a result of that typically the students who are collecting data tend to have a better  
23207conceptualization of what they're doing with their research than students who don't have to  
23208collect the data

23209R: yeah I agree with that yeah especially after collecting data for both my Master's and  
23210now the PhD it was so helpful to have to go through that process but and so going back to  
23211your um assessments how do you assess academic success so what do you look for when  
23212you're grading or when you're telling a PhD student if they're on the right track

23213Rose: [pause] well it depends on what the kind of assessment is while we we're talking  
23214about RECs actually one of the pieces of assessment for the research methods module is to  
23215complete a draft REC

23216R: that's brilliant

23217Rose: hm they hate it they hate it and they hate me but you know again like just you go  
23218back and say but you need to know about this stuff this is you know this and again being  
23219explicit this comes back to what are the learning outcomes why are you doing research  
23220methods so that you know what's appropriate and you know what's not appropriate and you  
23221demonstrate that you can actually complete this kind of requirement in research um but the  
23222whole co- again groupthink the whole cohort of students wh- this year we have I have a  
23223relatively weak a cohort of third-year students and everybody comments on the fact that  
23224they're a little disengaged as a cohort in contrast to my second-years who are fabulous and  
23225the fourth years who are fabulous and they're all very nice but they're just for some reason  
23226there's like this group men- think mentality despite the fact that we had gone through it all  
23227in class many times despite the fact that on a weekly basis we had talked about particular  
23228aspect not a single one of them submitted a PIL a consent form [pause] yeah letters to  
23229gatekeepers but they all ticked the boxes [pause] you know so I'm sure I said to them I met  
23230with them and I said did you all just talk to each other and go ah yeah we don't need to do  
23231that they went yeah yeah pretty much and I said not one of you asked me not one of you  
23232thought well I'll send an email and like this module in particular you know I think it's also  
23233bad the fact that the module was taught in [first] term but the hand in date for that wasn't

23234until I don't know March so it was like out of sight out of mind and it was less pressing  
23235maybe conceptually for them because they were off out on placements and that was shiny  
23236and new and interesting yeah and I you know so I think some of it is about um the  
23237timeliness of of things but they're also under a lot of pressure of time and so there's the  
23238balance there to be considered too I haven't answered that question at all @ so give me the  
23239question again

23240R: no@ but that's also very useful so on so when they've submitted

23241Rose: oh yeah how am I evaluating how am I evaluating mm yes yeah okay so it depends  
23242so if it's if it's an essay @have they answered the question have they read the literature are  
23243they referencing the literature appropriately um what's the quality of the writing you know  
23244is there critical analysis is it cohesive um are they following instructions you know so  
23245depending on what it is you know if it's a wiki it's like have you have you looked at any  
23246wiki's what's your goal you know have you demonstrated the capacity to think through  
23247who your audience is uh whereas like you know for these posters for the the second years  
23248they clearly have they put in time and effort we built in an editing process to it because  
23249they knew that these were going to go up on the wall for real and that people would be  
23250looking at them um so I think I think that [pause] ensuring that yeah knowing having the  
23251students know what it is that you're looking for is really important so that they can cross-  
23252check if they are so inclined and we have them articulated in our student handbooks and  
23253we have sample rubrics in our student handbooks but do they look at them in advance  
23254some do [pause] but I bet they're the stronger students um for you know more extended  
23255pieces of work [pause] I tell I tell students that when I'm marking something you know  
23256when it's something that's in progress like a PhD or a master's thesis it's for me it's about  
23257it's having a conversation [pause] I say to them you know when I get feedback on my work  
23258you can either see it as a criticism or you can see it as a critical friend something really  
23259helpful I choose to see it as a critical friend because if the person who's reading who  
23260happens to be in my field and is bloody brilliant at what they do doesn't get what I'm trying  
23261to say well then why would we put that out into the world when lots of other people are not  
23262going to get what I'm trying to say so then pointing that out to me now is helpful because it  
23263gives me an opportunity to change it so I try and say that to students look you know if I'm  
23264giving you this feedback please don't panic and it's not a criticism the goal is to try and  
23265help you make it as good as it can be so you can do as well as you can do and if I give you  
23266that feedback and you see it you know that it's honest and you know that that's the  
23267trajectory that we're going in but yeah I try not to do the red pen thing so I normally use  
23268pencil or a black pen and I also try um and point out where I think people are doing really

23269 well so yeah I think you know over- I try I try and make sure that they understand that this  
23270 is a scale it's like riding a bike or learning to swim a thousand meters you know that you  
23271 have to just put the time in and it has to be repeated you have to drill it and you know if  
23272 you're if you're on if you're on a sports team or if you're in the swimming pool you have a  
23273 coach so sometimes you know I use the coaching metaphor so I'm just going to coach you  
23274 here I'm gonna give you feedback and it's not to criticize it's to help you be better um in  
23275 terms of quality with say the interpreting students we do sessions in class so they might  
23276 have so it moves from and it has to move from the teacher being the person who's the one  
23277 who's the holder of knowledge to the student being and the students forming a community  
23278 of practice so that they're able to identify what their strengths and weaknesses are and then  
23279 as a teacher like near the end I'm stepping in only to maybe things that aren't being said  
23280 that I think are really important but not just for everything for every purpose you know um  
23281 and I think you have to also be mindful of where people are at you know so there's this  
23282 cycle so the the beginning of the year it's shiny and new and you want to hold their hands  
23283 um I think you can give more critical feedback sometimes in that period but then once you  
23284 get after Christmas @@@@ they're more stressed and their window tolerance for  
23285 feedback is is maybe a little reduced you know you really have to be mindful of the  
23286 psychology of the of the learner and where they're at and you have to read that and um you  
23287 know touch base with them and moderate your feedback according to where they're at so if  
23288 they're telling you they're having a hard time it's about figuring out are you having a hard  
23289 time with this or is it that you're having a hard time with life so you know in terms of the  
23290 quality of the work might not be a reflection on the quality of the effort that's put in and so  
23291 you know while you're interested in the product I think if you're teaching somebody over a  
23292 period of time say for a masters or a PhD you have to see the product as being just one  
23293 component of that person's life and you know I think it's really important to be able to say  
23294 you know okay so you know there's the the product you can look at the product but the  
23295 person's coming back to you for feedback you have to be reading how they're going to be  
23296 receptive to that and can you know you know do you are they like you know give it to me  
23297 that's fine you know I'm quite happy for you to just please tell me honestly yeah and you  
23298 know I've had people who've been really like no give me more of this I really want it to be  
23299 [pause] I want you to critique and then there there are other people who you do have to be  
23300 more gentle with and you have to you know say okay so you know so this is really good  
23301 but well you would say that everybody you know this is really good but uh you know this  
23302 needs a little bit more work uh I just think you need to be mindful of that



23303R: and so what would you look for it say a PhD student submits a chapter how would you  
23304tell that it's a good chapter like what are you looking for in the chapter

23305Rose: mm-hmm [pause] clarity of thought charity of articulation cohesion [pause] critical  
23306thinking you know not simply descriptive but analytic thinking synthesis [pause] uh  
23307original ideas you know where possible I mean um you know clarity of description of  
23308examples um that they're they're and this is tricky I mean it's tricky even when you're a  
23309very experienced writer uh that you forget sometimes that you haven't articulated some of  
23310the the concepts that need to be articulated more fully because you know it so well so you  
23311know I think it's also about thinking about [pause] has the person demonstrated due  
23312consideration for the reader and you know as a student is progressing sometimes that's all  
23313you're saying to them is like you know that reads very well to think about your external  
23314examiner will the external examiner know that so I'll say you know coming up towards the  
23315end it's like okay now you know now we have a good draft we're going to go back read it  
23316as if you're the external examiner what's the external examiner need to know yeah yeah

23317R: alright and what would you say in general students need to succeed at [institution 1]

23318Rose: ohhh ehhh community yeah I I think [pause] particularly when actually I read an  
23319article this morning there was an article on Twitter some link uh to a study that somebody  
23320had done I think in the US around the community of support that a student needs in order  
23321to [pause] progress they identified different kinds of students you know in terms of those  
23322who have like a family group almost and those who have you know um sort of socializing  
23323buddies and academic buddies and those who are maybe more isolated and they looked at  
23324who's more inclined to succeed and pass and maintain those friendships and I thought that  
23325was very interesting so I think you know I think we see that here too you know that you  
23326see that the students who are engaged who are really participatory at group-level are the  
23327ones who are they're going to be able to hang in there when times get tough eh so I think  
23328that's really really important and can't be underestimated um but I think what else do they  
23329need they need to use the resources that are available [pause] yeah I think [institution 1]  
23330has amazing resources available [pause] part of the time of might be I don't know do  
23331people fully realize what's available and part of the time there may be just reticence to to  
23332draw on those supports but I mean particularly for the undergraduate the fact that every  
23333student gets a college tutor that is a phenomenal asset that is somebody in your corner  
23334who's going to be your advocate all the way through uhm I think it's a shame that there isn't  
23335an equivalent for postgraduates actually because I think uh there is you know the danger  
23336you know if if I know that there have been students who have had supervisors where it  
23337hasn't worked out and then what do you do you know you don't then have somebody else

23338who can advocate for you you have to like what you have to go to your head of school or  
23339your director postgraduate teaching and learning but their their colleague or you've got to  
23340go to the Dean of research and the Dean of postgraduate studies and you think well you  
23341know as a student you'd have to feel very comfortable and confident to do that or have to  
23342be very distressed one would imagine so so I think that's that's a challenge I think that's a  
23343gap in the system and in the college um but it's not just here I know that that's true in other  
23344places too so you know they're kind of the more macro issues but then use use the  
23345resources use the library you know engage with people participate in events like you know  
23346the [research institute] events would be of interest to a lot of people in our school ehm the  
23347the post graduate seminars um you know I think that they're great but I also I think it  
23348would be really nice if there was sort of a common space that post graduates could get to  
23349you know and I think at the postgraduate research event that we ran last September was  
23350really successful we had lots of people came up and said oh my god that was great because  
23351we often feel like we're isolated we feel on our own so you know I think that again that  
23352comes back to the building community and practicing [pause] it's not quite  
23353multidisciplinary but you know across [discipline] and [discipline] boundary conversations  
23354because [pause] they're beneficial to people no matter what it is that they're going to do just  
23355having the opportunity to talk I think really helps I think that that really helps so in fact it's  
23356in many ways I think it's the community piece is as important as the you know you've got  
23357access to a great library and you've got access to a good supervisor I think it's the the  
23358people that really matters

23359R: right yeah okay and so how much of a factor do you think language plays in academic  
23360success

23361Rose: [pause] [click] big part [pause] oh absolutely yeah I I think you know all you've to  
23362do is to have a look at the experience of [group] people in education where [language] well  
23363[languages] were suppressed across the world and as a result their access to education  
23364suffered terribly with the average intelligent [group] person leaving school with a reading  
23365age of 8 to 9 years

23366R: oh wow

23367Rose: so that is you know a a perfect example of what the deprivation of access to  
23368language means in educational contexts if you're talking about students who are coming in  
23369with poor language skills that puts them at a disadvantage you know it may be that the  
23370receptive language skills are good but their potential for participation and for also just you  
23371know highlighting themselves as net contributors in a commu- again in the community  
23372practice um if they're not able to do that effectively well then they're disadvantaging

23373themselves and they may find themselves more isolated and they may not then be as  
23374willing to step up for opportunities you know be that say teaching opportunities or you  
23375know presentation opportunities which then also has consequences downstream potentially  
23376yeah

23377R: right and what other factors would you say play an academic success

23378Rose: [pause] a social support you know where are you coming from um do people think  
23379it's a really good thing for you to be doing this study you know in terms of you know from  
23380family support you're from a working-class family you know you may get a lot of oohhhh  
23381hoity toity going to [institution 1] now are we now ohhh it's far from that that you were  
23382raised you know why would you be doing that would you not go and get a job you know so  
23383a lot of students from working class families and sort of first-generation college-goers they  
23384get that and they have to deal with that uh I think mature students who are women have to  
23385deal with a lot of that too in terms of you know oh are abandoning your family you know  
23386there may be less now but you do tend to see a trend that um relationships come under  
23387pressure when women are returning to education much more so than man I think um  
23388[pause] so there's that social dimension there's the financial pressure the students are under  
23389you know can I find accommodation that's affordable do I have to work full-time in order  
23390to study full-time as well so then there is that narrowing of the time available to engage in  
23391the college community and in the whole experience of study um yeah the the time the  
23392management of expectations what is it that a PhD will bring me or a masters will bring me  
23393what is it that I need to do to get this you know and I think well also going back to the  
23394undergraduates oh you know there are 12 hours of classes therefore that's all the time I  
23395need to give this it's like eh-eh nope @@ yeah so I think you know understanding what  
23396what it is that you're letting yourself in for and the consequences of that are huge but I  
23397think more and more it's a a and also mental health issues of course like people are saying  
23398that the the level of mental health concerns amongst post graduates has increased or is at  
23399least more discussed and I think all of those issues are because of those additional  
23400pressures you know that are coming to bear on people and the concern about work you  
23401know so okay I've got this qualification but I'm not gonna get a job in academia or you  
23402know there are zero hour contracts um so what about job security where am I going to go  
23403from here do you think that working in you know if you get a PhD if I don't work in  
23404academia do I see that as some kind of a failure eh you know how do people talk about the  
23405value of postgraduate qualifications for working in the social sector in private industry and  
23406in valuing that and making sure that people recognize that you know it doesn't matter what  
23407you do with this it's the fact that the PhD isn't so much well of course I mean it makes you

23408a subject specialist but actually it's the transferable skills that you're demonstrating that  
23409you've learned from this as a researcher that you can handle data that you know about  
23410research integrity that you um know about engaging with participants maybe you know or  
23411that you're learning uh scientific methodologies that you can read complex data that you  
23412can write effectively that you can present to different audiences that they're the transferable  
23413skills and that's what many employers are really interested in so you know I think those  
23414conversations about what's your trajectory and why are you doing this are really important  
23415too so the people I think that also may be linked to you know how people feel about  
23416themselves and and where they're going and I think you know imposture syndrome @is  
23417also something that you need to talk to people about and I think you know if somebody's  
23418on their own they may well think you know I'm the only one in the world who feels this  
23419way and you know I shouldn't be doing this or ehh I'm gonna be found out any day now  
23420you know whereas if they have the opportunity to talk together they can all say oh Jesus  
23421you know why am I I feel like a complete fraud and you're able to say well actually it's  
23422okay that's a common phenomenon uh but you know it's a we can also guide you to say  
23423well you don't have to pretend that you know something you don't know in fact what we  
23424need to be able to do is say I have no idea what the answer is to that question but I can find  
23425out yeah you know so it's it's about so it's not just about that I'm doing a PhD on [topic] it's  
23426about I'm a researcher in a community and I have a life@ and I have a trajectory and I need  
23427to think about the the ethics of all of that and I need to think about how do I engage other  
23428researchers and I need to take about what's my contribution but I also need to think about  
23429you know how do I keep sane @@ in all of this

23430R: yeah yeah brilliant and so what experience do you have um I'm trying to think of how  
23431to phrase this of with students who might be say linguistically disadvantaged either they  
23432don't have English as their first language they might um be you know late returners they  
23433might be on access program they might um you know speak of vernacular etc.

23434Rose: yep [long pause] I have found that those students tend to be the students who try  
23435hardest and do best @@ on the whole yeah they're invested and sometimes it's the students  
23436who have maybe sailed through secondary school and got very good grades who think that  
23437they're doing better than they actually are and they put in less effort actually um we've had  
23438students with dyslexia who have handed in word perfect work after time and got first-class  
23439honors all the way and in fact it's like the dyslexic students will be the ones who would  
23440need more confirmation from me that you know actually you're do really well and your  
23441your critical thinking is amazing and on the whole they have been fantastic with I mean the  
23442other thing that we noticed across the board actually is it attendance is so important for

23443undergraduates the ones who don't attended are the ones that don't do well the ones who do  
23444attend are the ones who do better and that's not just about your coming to class so you're  
23445getting but the the content knowledge it's also that you're getting the community and you're  
23446getting that buy-in and you're getting that opportunity to collaborate and so if you are  
23447gonna miss something you know there the other people are gonna look out for you who  
23448you can go to yeah

23449R: yeah and um you've touched on this a bit as well but um are you aware of any support  
23450offered to international students or students who do need help linguistically within your  
23451department or within [institution 1]

23452Rose: that's where the wonderful people in [center] come in @ um with the the preterm  
23453courses and the during term courses so we have referred a few students in that direction  
23454and they found that very very helpful indeed yeah

23455R: and would you have seen kind of a noticeable difference as being a professor of theirs  
23456or a supervisor or would that just be coming more from the students saying that they were  
23457very happy with it

23458Rose: the the well I think it's probably combination of both so the students feel happy with  
23459it they're more consciously aware of certain things therefore they can draw attention to  
23460those things and you can then bring up some of those issues in conversation with them  
23461about their work as it progresses so it allows for a conversation to open up about those  
23462things whereas maybe otherwise before either they're not aware or they're very maybe a bit  
23463embarrassed or fearful about bringing attention to that explicitly yeah

23464R: okay and kind of going towards international students would you be aware of the type  
23465of entry assessments that international students need to take before being admitted to  
23466[institution 1]

23467Rose: I [pause] don't they need to do the the Cambridge exam they they they need to  
23468demonstrate is it a B level capacity

23469R: yeah Cambridge I actually don't know the Cambridge one I know IELTS it would be 6.5  
23470but Cambridge would also satisfy I think it's Cambridge Advanced and which is supposed  
23471to be equivalent yeah would you have any particular feelings on it on these types of  
23472assessments or

23473Rose: [long pause] I have to say that the the international students that I've had have been  
23474exceptional you know even Erasmus students that we have coming in fact one of these  
23475posters is by an Erasmus student who has consistently been top of the class I had four four  
23476Erasmus students in my [module] class this year and they were all absolutely excellent um  
23477I have a master's student who's Italian and you know so I think she has really appreciated

23478some of the input that she's had and we'll see because I haven't had t- have any written  
23479work for which she's been collecting data and dealing with data so we shall see how that  
23480has has helped but it's definitely helped her confidence and I think that's really important  
23481yeah I'm I'm I'm actually I'm trying to think I I think I've been extremely lucky the the  
23482international students I've had have been extremely proficient and extremely organized and  
23483very proactive @ uh in fact my concern would genuinely be some of the homegrown  
23484students who [pause] who don't have like writing course that they're required to do and  
23485even though I'll point them towards for example the college counseling have online uhm  
23486course materials to support learning and academic writing I don't know how many of our  
23487students actually go and take up [pause] those resources so it's about you know the  
23488resources are there are they used in the way that they should be by the people who should  
23489use them I don't know yeah

23490R: so you would have more concerns in terms of writing and that kind of stuff with the  
23491home students than international

23492Rose: the home students yeah in my experience yeah yeah

23493R: yeah and are you aware of the type of preparation that your international students would  
23494have undertaken before coming to [institution 1]

23495Rose: no

23496R: no okay and so what type of pressure preparation do you think the international students  
23497or home students should have before coming to [institution 1]

23498Rose: @@@ wow [inhale] well I suppose because particularly if they're postgrads they  
23499need to be able to write so the you know I think [click] [pause] it's about [pause] ensuring  
23500that they understand what the required standards are and that they can demonstrate  
23501capacity to deal with complex data effectively in written format um I worked in the States  
23502for a year and in the the college that I was at there they had obligatory writing courses and  
23503I think that they worked extremely well I could very much see a difference for the students  
23504who came in [pause] and their trajectory over the life of completing that program um so  
23505those students were required to write maybe 20 pages a week and they got feedback on a  
23506weekly basis and I think you know if you had the resources to invest in something like that  
23507well then you would be doing students a great service because it would help them [pause]  
23508move in the right direction yeah

23509R: okay and is there anything else that you would want some sort of course preparation  
23510course to have

23511Rose: [long pause] I'll have to think about that one yeah

23512R: because I was gonna say like if you could tell us over in the office in your summer  
23513course

23514Rose: could you do this this this yeah [long pause] yeah because yeah you know cuz I'm  
23515thinking you know that the biggest thing is of course because they're gonna write  
23516something is the writing skills and of course that's the most difficult for them to to be  
23517dealing with but I think it's about the the written skills and you know because [pause] the  
23518instances of plagiarism are most likely to occur with international students or second  
23519language users of English so [group] students do this too but they're not doing it  
23520deliberately or with malintent necessarily but it's just because they're struggling with how  
23521do I articulate this in my L2 so you know I would say paraphrasing but understanding the  
23522requirements ethically not to you know not to plagiarize @ and understanding that if you  
23523do copy paste that is plagiarism and that is a problem and you can be kicked out you know  
23524ultimately so uh you know I think that that's the biggest challenge for them but also the  
23525biggest challenge for you @ if you're trying to teach them some of those things um but I  
23526mean other than that it's about confidence in articulating questions and I suppose it's also  
23527about the culture you know the cultural engagement with a supervisor with other students  
23528you know what's appropriate to ask or not uh I have a colleague in the UK who's gay and  
23529he was giving a presentation at a conference and some of I think they gave him flowers  
23530actually and uh a foreign student said to him oh that would be so nice you can give them to  
23531your wife yeah and he actually he was he was telling me he was like I don't quite know  
23532what to do because I'm not out to them and there's cultural issues and maybe you know  
23533this will have an impact on the relationship um but shouldn't he be aware that you know  
23534the cultural norms here are different and maybe it's not wise to assume that this is the case  
23535so just you know packaging that and thinking about you know well how do you engage  
23536people and what's expected and you know do you look for poignancy some of those really  
23537lower level things but they can help make or break relationships and they can help just  
23538smooth out your negotiation through the college journey so it's not the academic piece at  
23539all but it impacts on your academic journey yeah

23540R: okay so that's all the questions that I have for you but are there any questions that you  
23541wish I had asked that I didn't

23542Rose: no they were good questions

23543R: okay um oh wait no actually I did forget a question actually um what do you hope that  
23544your students walk away from when they leave [institution 1] or what do they feel when  
23545they leave [institution 1]

23546Rose: mm-hmm I hope that they feel that the qualification that they have earned has been  
23547well-earned that they feel that they have mastery of the key competencies that we tell them  
23548that they've secured ehm that they understand that the qualification can open doors for  
23549them but that it doesn't mean in of itself @ that they're gonna automatically be you know  
23550selected to to get all the jobs that they want in the world you know that that's not the way it  
23551works um I would hope though you know in terms of going back to what the the  
23552programmatic outcomes would be that they would be able to do things like write an  
23553extended piece of work confidently and that they're able to stand over and that we're able  
23554to stand over it you know that we're not passing people who really aren't able to do this  
23555very well that they're able to stand up confidently and deliver a key message about X Y or  
23556Z is that that they're able to you know represent themselves well and articulately um yeah  
23557you know that they're they're engaged and engaging as a result of the education and that  
23558the education that we're providing while it's focused on key topics but that those  
23559transferable skills are are going to be there that they can then use to their benefit no matter  
23560what they do so you know if you want to go from [discipline] to being an [profession] and  
23561that's okay you know or you know you want to go and you want to do I don't know rocket  
23562science or you know something completely different that's okay and I think that we're  
23563doing something right because we've had graduates go and work in Google than we've had  
23564graduates work in the European Parliament and you know go out into the world and be  
23565very well received so that's that's very positive uh but I'd like to do more of that better so  
23566for the ones who are not maybe performing as well I would really like that there were the  
23567resources available the time available the people available to be able to get them up the ch-  
23568up the chain in some way because like I want them to succeed and I want them to be  
23569confident

23570R: yeah and is there anything else you'd like to add

23571Rose: @@@@ no that's good

23572R: okay brilliant thank you

23573

23574

**Sarah**

23575

23576R: first I'd like if you could just explain to me the work required from your students in your  
23577modules or your program

23578Sarah: um could could I say a little bit about the school the structure uh my role here as  
23579well

23580R: absolutely yeah



23581Sarah: well firstly to say I'm the director of postgraduate teaching and learning as you  
23582know but we have 200 taught master students and we have about 80 PhD students and the  
23583um whole notion we're only not that long in the university we're only 2002 through 21  
23584years old so quite novel really by by other in comparison to other disciplines and  
23585international students are a novelty for us as well so prior #2002 we had a homogenous  
23586Irish population for the most part whatever random sort of person who wasn't Irish and  
23587English speaking so it is very very new to us so the experience that we have that I have  
23588even in relation to people whose language um [click] first language is not English is uh  
23589limited the other thing says was the the the role in the school is broken down into various  
23590personnel that's why I've asked you to interview other people as well because we have a  
23591Director of International Affairs and we have a uhh director who's involved with staff and  
23592student development and people who'd have more close working or understanding of the  
23593requirements of the modules per say so I wouldn't necessarily have that that detail of  
23594requirement of understanding I would say and the other thing that I have that I want to kind  
23595of feed in is that I'm an editor of a journal and I've been reviewing and publishing for a  
23596number of years and I have particular interest in the way people write whose language is  
23597not English first language is not English write you know they have a way of writing that is  
23598I think could be addressed you know so to to answer the question can you describe the  
23599general structure of your lectures

23600R: yeah your modules yes or the program about um in general what students are expected  
23601to accomplish expected to do on their own in the class

23602Sarah: yeah so you mean generally speaking across undergraduate or postgraduate or it all  
23603R: yes

23604Sarah: or my my modules

23605R: um well if you can do the whole program that would be amazing but if you're more  
23606closely related to your own modules that would be completely fine

23607Sarah: @ yeah yeah I better start my own modules so we have a [pause] I suppose we have  
23608a requirement for a fairly high level of independence >well compared to< well in at least in  
23609Irish secondary school we'll say for example the the students in secondary school here  
23610have had an Irish education would be provided a lot of sec- information second level even  
23611down to essays rote learning essays to finish to answer exams so what we would require  
23612kind of a usual level of in- university independence but they struggle with it eh which is for  
23613example firstly each module has a [click] module description and is on the [institution 1]  
23614portal so even that is a jump I'll ask students the first week do you know where module  
23615descriptor is ehm so every module descriptor that is a very clear careful guide for the

23616module at the end of this module you need to know how uh to explain describe the  
23617development of [topic] in the past 15 years or something like that I I so that's one thing  
23618they need need to bu-re- retrieve it locate it understand it and that solution of everything is  
23619if they know what they need to know by the end of the module well then they can actually  
23620study for that and get pass the learning outcomes and when I was I trained as a [profession]  
23621ehm more than 30 years ago and we had a #unt document and it had the learning outcomes  
23622in it and I just weld myself to them and once you did that you got all A's it was easy easy-  
23623peasy but I think students sort of come in listen to lectures go away and just try and take it  
23624in or something or take notes they don't see the full things that are needed so that as guides  
23625so the module descriptor's a guide so we would expect I would expect and encouraged and  
23626tell the students to do this to have all that material available to them the module description  
23627the other thing that they require is the um access to blackboard we put a lot of materials on  
23628blackboard so we'd expect them to be um able to retrieve um articles look at websites  
23629watch DVDs um read study notes um and revise the study class notes from class and they  
23630are all provided on blackboard so they need to be able to navigate and understand  
23631blackboard read the announcements we big expectation that they attend class as well and  
23632listen in class and we try now this can be difficult I suppose think about your non-English  
23633we have large lectures if th- up to three hundred undergraduates now at the moment or will  
23634have and the students there's a lot of lectures and they get quite bored in the lecture so they  
23635try to ask you to to the school committees to try make them little bit more entertaining  
23636don't be reading off the slides so if you do that you lose a certain proportion of class  
23637because you've got students with disability or students whose English is not the first  
23638language so but it's a balance between entertaining and not entertaining but you know  
23639#explaining around and actually keep the things very very simple but everything is it so for  
23640example I suppose imagine somebody with disability or somebody with uh struggling with  
23641English they would be obliged to to attend class first and take their own notes and then go  
23642back if possible and go back over the notes and there but everything on my notes anyway  
23643for certain is needed eh so that's the requirement we would require we'd have each module  
23644description would have a certain amount of readings and we would have a requirement that  
23645the students would read outside of the [click] a rea- reading list read outside of the lecture  
23646notes we struggle ourselves with that because >and it's another sort of whole issue< but um  
23647we tend to put too many books on the reading list now I tried to filter mine down as much  
23648as possible they made me make it insurmountable for students so there's actually that many  
23649I I have a theory myself that actually the academics haven't even read as many books on  
23650that particular subject as they're expecting the poor undergraduates or even postgraduates

23651to read you know so ehm I can imagine I suppose as someone who's struggling now that's  
23652even more difficult so I try my modules to have them filter down to the key books that they  
23653would be expected to read and if they read a little bit with prompts that they would do a bit  
23654better so I suppose a reasonable level of reading um and in terms of the teaching as lecture  
23655we have some small group tutorials and this will be the same for for for masters as well  
23656really um and then the requirements then >I'm just trying to think< of the the we have we  
23657use like a we use grids learning grids ehm we would expect yeah in terms of their expect-  
23658most of what I teach will be essay based like what hasn't been essay based um we've  
23659actually turned into essay based because the exams are even more challenging for these  
23660types of topics but we would expect very much a sort of a logical flow through through  
23661that the argument would start at the beginning even if it's a basic argument of [topic] has  
23662developed professionally in the last 50 years that it starts and then it weaves its way  
23663logically through so there's a logical flowing unambiguous style that it makes sense that  
23664there's a beginning middle and an end and this is where I'm feeding it to my editor  
23665experience as well my biggest issue with all students is that they don't use their own voice  
23666that they are afraid uh want to sound academic and they have this pattern of uh cutting and  
23667pasting from articles so I know I know the- w- like well a lot of students do it because they  
23668lack confidence certainly the students with disability often that they'd they tried themselves  
23669because they've had to work so hard that the- they'd actually often do a little bit better in  
23670fact but certainly students whose English is not the first language they'd go this I taught-  
23671saw two students last week who had failed and in by the end not my words but their own  
23672words their essay was a bitsa they had just taken bits of this bits of that and bits of th- the  
23673thing actually did not make sense so for an English speaking person to present something  
23674that actually is gobbledegook is unthinkable you know @ what what they do is they  
23675actually take the little bits out of the books put them in think they sound clever maybe don't  
23676proofread it maybe last put it in and students who's -w a littl- now I notice a similar thing  
23677with with with but students who don't have English the first language to do a similar thing  
23678for the same reason but I actually see the problem equal with people whether they have  
23679English or not in fact sometimes even worse if they have English you know so but we do  
23680expect it to make sense um to be logical the other thing we do have a lot of I mean it's  
23681marks for not a lot of marks for particularly the lower levels is the presentation referencing  
23682so we'd expect a very high standard of you know attention to detail and again my  
23683experience is that those who pay a lot of attention to detail tend tend to do a whole lot  
23684better you know so even ehm so the more the correct the references even a master so I saw  
23685a master's students recently and those with the the the document that looked more the more

23686looks like an elephant feels like an elephant smells like and elephant the more fact a chance  
23687it is an elephant so the more that that thesis looks like three nice paragraphs on a page  
23688excellent referencing the chances are it's actually better work and I actually had to explain  
23689that I don't know why that is you know when I ask the students even in class wh- wh- why  
23690do you I know the essay that comes in with coffee stain in the front and two dog ears and I  
23691say to the class what grade is that it failed I say do you think I failed it because the coffee  
23692stain no no because those who don't pay attention to detail tend to the whole they lose you  
23693know and the opposite then they those who pay attention to detail in general I only ever  
23694saw one thesis that was perfect looking but had failed and it was a student who is a Indian  
23695in fact and she lived in London and I was given her as a master's tutor she'd failed and  
23696what she had done was she was getting a proofreader to proofread her work so she was  
23697actually wasn't even finishing her work she did when I worked with her she wouldn't even  
23698put the full stops in she just said oh I don't need those right now my proofreading will do  
23699them I said please please put in a full stop at the end of your sentences @@ just you know  
23700so this business so she was the only person I saw perfect looking thesis but she'd got about  
2370125 percent for it because when you read between the lines it actually didn't make any sense  
23702you know so um so this business of so yes it w- the structures the structure is basically  
23703modular based eh we'd have quite a lot of content we were actually bound we have a  
23704professional for the [discipline] degree programs anyway at least um and a lot of our  
23705programs we've professional guidelines and standards so we're teaching to a a bunch of  
23706standards um so we incorporate those standards into the into the modules and then we  
23707expect the students at the end to achieve the learning outcomes so we've a module  
23708descriptor we've a range of didactic and online teaching methods we expect engagement uh  
23709and my I we expect to sort of an essay based for master students I work with the masters  
23710students in their research proposal uh for the first year and second year dissertation so a  
23711similar sort of requirement they'd have a module descriptor they're expected to attend  
23712class they're expected to read and the same challenges [pause] they don't read [pause] they  
23713try and click the notes together in some way that you know and they don't use their own  
23714voice so sometimes you'll have something that actually again doesn't make any sense even  
23715at a master's-level again it's just regurgitate it out of the [discipline] board you know so  
23716that's um and the expectations are similar but maybe higher we wouldn't have as many um  
23717points for presentation and referencing at that point they're expected but we would expect  
23718this logical flow and critical analysis this business and what uh really amazes me the more  
23719I teach is actually [pause] eh humans do this naturally you actually very naturally sort of  
23720analyze I say this to the students you know you you walk up Grafton Street and you

23721determine you've got to get a dress for for a wedding and you think you go here you go  
23722there and you think about the cost and you you weigh up and then you're right I'm going  
23723down TK Maxx and getting it there and I'll keep my old shoes like we do this as humans @  
23724and yet sometimes when they come to writing or in our case it's always writing [pause]  
23725they don't trust themselves to do that because #it's #really #unique so I think the biggest  
23726issue I have our biggest expectation is that you where use your own voice read think  
23727interpret write it back down create an argument pr- present the argument support the  
23728argument with the beginning middle and end and a logical flow and the biggest challenge I  
23729have is that students often b- with- without encouragement don't do that because they don't  
23730trust themselves ehm and they have a heavy leaning on academic literature ehm because  
23731they're lacking confidence and their own voice

23732R: and do you have any practical component so would they have placement or  
23733Sarah: yeah yeah the undergraduates have uh 52 weeks uh 36 weeks of placements  
23734placements so in first year the students come in usually at the moment we're changing the  
23735structure next September but they come in September till December in class and then they  
23736would have two months in placement or so and then back to class and two months so over  
23737the three years we have this incremental and they they move from the undergraduate  
23738students move from a situation of a junior so we call it eh assisted and supported and then  
23739we move to kind of independence by year four and then year four we have a eh very large  
23740component of internship um we call it but it's quite working quite closely with a  
23741qualified [profession] and almost becoming a qualified [professional] and you get reach  
23742independence level so by the time you get to the very end of the program they're they're  
23743independent so quite a huge now the ehm master's programs they vary but we do have  
23744[placement] in the modules in in quite a lot of them and sometimes their employed already  
23745by the people by the [employer] and they do on the course they keep their placement other  
23746times they're going to various places so that's a lot of our courses would have a [placement]  
23747component on it

23748R: so in the so the modules are more essay based how would they be evaluated in the  
23749placements

23750Sarah: they would they have what's called a competencies document so that again the  
23751[profession] regulatory board usually in the placement it's a #pressure requirement um it's  
23752not like work experience or anything like that it's a requirement of the EU and also the  
23753[profession] Board of Ireland so they would set down the amount of weeks that are  
23754required a well but also there's sort of a document j- wh- standards and requirements  
23755document it says by the end of program the [professional] should be able to reflect on

23756practice should be able to critically analyze to be able to monitor [discipline specific  
23757practices] and [discipline specific practices] should be able to uh perform [discipline  
23758specific practices] so there's a set of required competencies and we've interpreted those at  
23759a level basis across the the four years of the program um so what they have is like a is a  
23760paper document actually so it's like a document it would have an introduction would have  
23761your competencies and would have place then students usually have an interview at the  
23762very beginning of the placement with the they have an assign- assigned mentor in the  
23763practice not paid but they work with the teaching [place of work] it's called preceptor the  
23764preceptor would meet the student chat them but their learning needs the student'll identify  
23765their particular learning needs and then they would move to the competencies have a  
23766middle interview explaining how they're doing with that and at the final interview sign off  
23767on those competencies so say for example communication would be one main core  
23768competency and are you able to communicate in a professional way maintain  
23769confidentiality etc. eh- eh in first year the expect you to be assisted with that that you're  
23770doing but you're being supported by the the [professional] and the first the the first  
23771placement and then as you go on you can do it under supervision so you're doing it but the  
23772[professional] is kinda at the back watching you or picking up if you if you make any any  
23773errors with that and then like by fourth year then you're expected to communicate you  
23774know in a confidential way and if you don't well then you would be then sort of failing  
23775would be >so actually the competencies< are it's a written document with evidence they  
23776wrote evidence for some of these things submit it to the school and it forms part of the  
23777assessment of the exam board and it's pass/fail it's not getting an actual grade but how they  
23778actually measure that sort of ultimately is visually so they're visually looking to see when  
23779when I'm working with alongside the student I'm seeing are they being pleasant are they  
23780being professional you know or if I hear you know then you know I'm on the bus on the  
23781way home and hear a student talking about a patient well then I report that and that goes so  
23782it's very much um no- it's not subjective but it's very much eh experiential and monitoring  
23783with clear criteria that they can map it back to you know so um [click] yeah  
23784R: okay and and if you're able to what's what kind of feedback are you getting from the  
23785placement so are there any issues that have been identified in terms of the placements  
23786Sarah: you mean around language in particular  
23787R: yeah yeah  
23788Sarah: yeah um that's a much our undergraduate students we don't have um a large number  
23789of international students but we have an unusual cohort insofar as we have a lot of non-  
23790Irish students who would have maybe refugee I we don't know a lot about them they may

23791have refugee status maybe ehm but we've first and second generation Africans for example  
23792uh a lot of Eastern Europeans so students who are not necessarily register- it's an issue  
23793really in terms of college students may not be registered as an international student but still  
23794struggle with English but overall to my knowledge we've never had I mean major issues  
23795with I mean generally speaking we we have the central applications system so people self-  
23796select and I guess in a way [profession] not that there's requirements for [profession] really  
23797but you know there's an expectation that coming on to a program like this with a practical  
23798element that you are supposed to have some type you're determining yourself that you've  
23799got some of those competencies so you're pre-selecting yourself as a good communicator  
23800maybe or pre-selecting yourself as a as a compassionate person or you know and so far in  
23801general that pre-selection remarkably it works because [company] for example they're  
23802doing um and now they're interviewing to test that the students have compassion before  
23803they start so we're actually fortunate the people are self-selecting so but to get back to the  
23804English language we haven't really had as far as I know anyway I mean maybe other  
23805people might have different experiences but I was director of the undergraduate program  
23806for six years and I never came across a language difficulty the difficulties we would have  
23807are in terms of practice but I suppose it all maybe they all feed into one another are um  
23808certain- one of the biggest issues is communication but that generally speaking it's not  
23809about uh because even talking to you there communication is much more than verbal so  
23810even if somebody were say uh uh [click] uh just uh think of being abroad where they can  
23811kind of you might you can communicate some without using any words you know in fact I  
23812worked in London where all the [customers] were German none of the [profession] could  
23813speak to the [clients] in their language absolutely not it was in a [area of work] they were  
23814having a [professional] from a German [work place] and yet we managed the [profession]  
23815managed to explain everything so [profession] is that sort of theater actually now  
23816obviously needs a sort of you need to you need to get the competencies whatever those five  
23817core competencies are and if the [professional] is satisfied but I wouldn't necessarily think  
23818that it would be based on particular words and language or certainly no one has come to  
23819my attention during those years and then also a few years ago that eh struggled with that  
23820ehm and like I say some a lot of our communication happen can happen in a nonverbal  
23821domain but the opposite is that actually when we have a difficulty which is a very small  
23822number that tells us you can see well if a thousand students go to the program when  
23823students have struggled with their competencies may be failed or maybe got not fit to  
23824practice it has been very much focused around their contact communication but not that  
23825they couldn't say pass me the tea cup it was actually that they were rude eh not professional

23826eh aggressive eh not not communication something very important like a [professional  
23827practice] you know uh to a staff [professional] which you wouldn't need a full comp-  
23828competency in English to actually do something like that @ @you @know because you  
23829know so it's more kind of oh what would you call that that ahh you know professional  
23830communication you know it's something that you actually so and the other >so that's very  
23831rare< but actually that's one of them and it's the same in the UK that it's often this sort of fit  
23832for for [profession] in terms of your personal not personality but having good  
23833communication skills so that can but or even that it's a student for oh yeah it-it- that's  
23834where students can run into difficulty but it's around the affective um the the whole  
23835interpersonal domain as opposed to actual language it it can we'll say is be incrementally  
23836and you could have a student um who say in year one who would happen to be shy perhaps  
23837but again we're teaching and they're being mentored and you know that they can develop  
23838in that way so ehm that could be an issue not an issue but that that that certainly needs  
23839support the other group that would come into difficulty generally speaking but also could  
23840affect the communication is people with eh disability we'd have about ten percent of our  
23841students have disabilities so we'd have two big versions of issues of not issues but  
23842challenges one is student dyslexia who've obviously a difficulty writing and all of that  
23843we've over the years we've developed a great relationship the disability services and we  
23844have good reasonable accommodations in place everything is working pretty smoothly in  
23845the initial phase because this whole program is new in 2002 the [place of work] really were  
23846a little bit frightened they didn't really know how how to manage something like that and  
23847the second is people with mental health issues so someone with severe anxiety depression  
23848would find it very difficult can find it very difficult to communicate with people so that's  
23849literally that you are just not speaking um I actually had a student w- uh I gave her great  
23850support@ well@ I uh gave her great support and the disability service helped me as well  
23851she actually failed in fourth year and was almost gonna lose the program and they felt she  
23852was just not communicating the way that they would have liked in the competency you  
23853know she was a very pleasant girl and but actually when it turned out when I spoke to her  
23854and I ended up speaking to people around me well she actually had [cut for confidentiality]  
23855and she actually had it all through but don't I don't want to identify her but em and in fact I  
23856kind of worked out that actually she just had difficulty now then there was no sort of  
23857diagnosis I don't think as such but I managed to get her registered with disability on her  
23858doctor's letter and we spoke to the practice about it but it was just she had a r- a difficulty  
23859kind of expressing and so once that was understood and once she understood at once  
23860disability came in she was able to manage to get through and pass so so the communication



23861as far as my experience anyway ehm has not being around English in particular but but I  
23862suppose worth noting that maybe even some like yourself you're working with these  
23863students it's it's uhm you know you know how would you say you know you need to  
23864communicate you need to express you need the best thing we talk about reflective practice  
23865we we would encourage students now ehm and [professionals] will say that th- no one is  
23866perfect but what you need to try to say is to reflect back in your practice think what I do  
23867what could do better so if you had a student like that maybe you've encouraged not to be  
23868perfect English but be able to say to the the mentor the preceptor can I talk to you you  
23869know about my practice this morning I felt a little nervous speaking to Mrs. Brown I am a  
23870bit nervous about my English well how did you think I went how do you think I can  
23871improve so if you can encourage students I suppose to be reflective and to be open to  
23872communicating about their learning needs I need to communicate more with [clients] and  
23873you know so I think if they can learn to be open about themselves you know as much as  
23874possible ehm and selectively open because um getting back to the disability thing as well I  
23875would have coached students in the past about this they tend to kind of go all out and tell  
23876everybody everything you know typically [professionals] because the- they're like carrying  
23877it no- you know you don't go into the [workplace] and tell them all your personal details  
23878even from a perspective of health and safety but then you go in and say I attempted suicide  
23879or they have to act on that you know so just be @careful you know so I would encourage  
23880them to disclose but carefully disclose ehm ehm their needs and of course don't this sets  
23881them up for failure don't go into it like I can't speak English this is dreadful help me you  
23882know do it very discreetly use this mentorship scheme to say look you know I'm this you  
23883know and within that competency document actually have reflection and very often  
23884students can use it in a very superficial not often but commonly in a superficial way so I  
23885spoke to this [client] this morning I was a bit nervous now I'm better you know but they  
23886could really use so they're expected to do one reflection in each of the six week periods  
23887they could use that reflection for something like their English language you know I mean  
23888I'm English is not my first language I'm a little nervous around dealing with [task] with  
23889regard to this spoke to my #unt that's what #unt is next thing I felt really embarrassed but I  
23890couldn't explain the classroom okay what did I do I spoke to mentor afterwards she gave  
23891me good article she gave me a list of language terms and I was doing fine so if they could  
23892do that reflection and piece to actually help um express their needs and the second thing  
23893yeah I suppose to have the confidence maybe that's that that [profession] communication  
23894[profession] is much more than verbal it's much broader than verbal it's eh eh um well

23895actually [profession] is its own language as well in a way because you get into some

23896[profession] language then as well terms and all of that so it is in that regard

23897R: right and um in general what do you think that students need to succeed at [institution 1]

23898Sarah: yeah that's @a @big @question

23899R: yeah it is @@

23900Sarah: @@@@ lots of things so you mean in English or generally speaking

23901R: not just actually in general yeah

23902Sarah: general um yeah God that's a good question um [click] I would say the biggest thing

23903they need is to engage engage um and for example um I mentioned to you I've seen

23904students I've seen students who failed um this is one of the tips I give them when they're

23905preparing the essay I say still I could not go into a room and write the same essay I've

23906given a first year or write a research proposal that a master's student or write a thesis I

23907couldn't go as you know 25-30 years of writing I couldn't do it in isolation you know it's

23908not just an isolated task the first job I do before I write a paper is engaged with the

23909blackboard materials read all the documents read so I suppose there's two level

23910engagement that- this is for a failed student I suppose but also starting from the beginning

23911of program is that they need to be in the class and this is another big tricky sort of ehm you

23912know it just point uh uh lecturers with me and I brought in an attendance monitoring policy

23913this year not on my own and it wasn't even my own impetus uh but I did actually drive it

23914and champion it eh but a lot of university lecturers are very against that no it's a freedom

23915humans University you can't be in a program without being in the program @ you know

23916okay if you have an online program that's different but we actually have a program where

23917you're supposed to be in class so that's the way that's the teacher pedagogy that's the we so

23918whatever that pedagogy is for the program is you need to engage with it and that's my

23919absolute eh and I have I've two three undergraduate university degrees myself and two of

23920them are from open university so and they're recent my last one was 2014 so I've actually

23921had experience of being in a in an environment like that even I wouldn't be so @ what is

23922the word now but so arrogant as to just suggest I could go off and write an essay about

23923whatever you know engaging without actually engaging in the materials of the open

23924university even down to the most basic thing so I've sat through tutorials where they tell

23925use full sentences use a full stop and I'm like yes okay really great doctor Tim you know

23926@great Dr Tim is like even me with a PhD I wouldn't and writing I have 137 publications

23927I would never ever be arrogant I would always engage and I would always take and lap up

23928absolutely everything that's available so and I think that's an issue the moment not to do

23929anything with the language or anything else actually people are so bombarded with

23930everything in our lives that they're they actually turn a blind eye to all of the you know that  
23931material even at uh engage in the class level you've in the class on Facebook all the time so  
23932they actually can't be on Facebook and listening to the class at the same time so there's  
23933that but or tuning out generally generally and then materials yeah they're all there but tell  
23934me how to write the essay but li- you know it's now I really really force is too strong of a  
23935word but I really encourage the students to engage like but the other side of it too I have a  
23936responsibility to make sure what's on blackboard is is useful concise relevant you know if  
23937the student engages and realizes that we have way too much on there and half isn't useful  
23938and and well then they'll disengage so engagement is is it's very topical it's very important  
23939ehm I suppose being realistic both their about the program and you can't start a  
23940[profession] program say for undergraduate and have a part-time job at Brown and Thomas  
23941as the manager you know this is an intensive program so commitment timewise and being  
23942realistic and I mean some students run into difficulty because they they work and they're  
23943trying to work to pay their parents you know ehh you feel guilty you you know you know  
23944even if the parents have money they'd still feel obliged and then they fail and then they fail  
23945again and then they're obliged to be a success and you know they've wasted the money so  
23946committing yourself to the hours the program requires I think early intervention is a big  
23947thing as well so if a person has eh whatever it might be you know and they are looked into  
23948those happening more and more now say it's a disability that you disclose as quick as you  
23949can see a tutor get input an actual plan in things that you might need so I think my I was a  
23950tut- a personal tutor for ten years and I would have initially it was like a baptism by fire I  
23951didn't know what was hitting me you know I still thought the students were like I was  
23952thirty years ago @@and they're a whole different you know not different but they're not  
23953me you know you always think everybody's like you you know so they're all different  
23954different needs but initially was it was firefighting but once I got used to it I realized a  
23955pattern to this you get people in early you get them to prompt you with what their  
23956particular challenges are and then you put in a plan and say well actually well and there's a  
23957lot of flexibility in the university for the whole cohort of course you need to have the  
23958deadlines and everything else but for someone with difficulty there could be all kinds of  
23959things done from extensions and #unt rules so utilizing those systems sometimes students  
23960don't do it because they're afraid in our particular profession that if they disclose something  
23961whatever it may be that it could go against them in practice but that's not the case and that's  
23962getting better and better uh again our master students have been difficulty with this they  
23963are obliged to work because they're already in the practice and they they're coming in  
23964juggling very senior jobs they're coming in very long distances ehm and the finding

23965engagement very difficult but thinking that they can kind of partly engaged partly engage  
23966and then manage an essay and what we've you know we actually would have quite a lot of  
23967failures you know because people are just not either engaging or committing ehm and I  
23968think beyond that then the engagement with materials reading is a big thing I don't mean  
23969reading 20 books I mean reading even even you know the cover of a book you know som-  
23970some students not some but you know it's actually you know and again because maybe the  
23971internet I mean you can read a book on the internet now but I think my own personal  
23972experience is people are not reading as much as they as they were because they've been  
23973bombarded with so much information so that if they were to get a lecturer's notes and say  
23974pick this out of it and put it into an assignment or exam you may not do that well where as  
23975if you just got one or two texts and tried to interpret them read them and so independent  
23976reading people would be very important even at a very basic level and the big thing  
23977trusting and using your own voice I mean I know it's well it's not maybe not in the sciences  
23978well I don't know I can only speak for my own profession I suppose anyway but there's a  
23979lot of writing in in our um in our um program so being able to use your own voice and put  
23980a logical argument forward that's evidence-based and it does translate very often the  
23981students who are maybe diffic- who are having difficulty but they say things like oh that's  
23982you know ehm that I'm a good practical [profession] you know and I'm just not good at  
23983writing but for me the two go hand in hand because writing is actually presenting a  
23984coherent argument and critically analyzing something and presenting it ehm you need  
23985those skills for practice it's why we're doing the degree so that actually you could say for  
23986example that the [clients] seem to be very bored in the afternoon is there no way we can do  
23987something about this I go off I search the literature I prepare an argument I present it I fight  
23988I I I bring about the change process whatever barriers are there those skills are argument  
23989and those skills it has to be logical I'd often say to the students you wouldn't call your  
23990manager out and just haphazardly talk about what's needed you'd actually put down well  
23991this is the problem this what the literature says about it this is what we need to do this you  
23992know those skills of logical clarity and arguing are critical and what are they [click] they  
23993are critical personal- graduate attributes yeah eh they're critical to to to being a to being a  
23994human I suppose but to being being eh being a [profession] but also being an academic so  
23995ehm yeah thinking critically thinking creatively understanding a- and being able to analyze  
23996and synthesize ehm and that all comes from from eh and I think this business of trusting  
23997your own voice and that's the biggest thing I think with students I mean @they said to me  
23998in third year recently you know it's so different we've been learning academic writing up  
23999until now we don't think we've been doing it quite right we didn't do it this way @@@ at

24000all @@ I said this is the only way the way as you read think interpret write down you you  
24001analyze it it's in here it happens in your brain it's not actually you know but what they've  
24002been doing is taking bits out of books sticking them on the page paraphrasing and then  
24003hoping it all mixes together or something and sometimes they get away with it but as you  
24004go on in the in the course it's harder and harder to get away with that so it's lower level you  
24005know

24006R: and so how much of a factor do you would you say that language plays in academic  
24007success or

24008Sarah: hmm good question um [long pause] now I suppose I'd have to pro- give the pre  
24009#idea that we don't have a large number of international students and I don't have  
24010experience with la- with large numbers of international students so I couldn't say for  
24011certain but my own view on students that I mentioned to you that are in class that are from  
24012other countries and English is not their first language but they are EU students ehm I don't  
24013see the difficulties that I see in my classes anyway at least are the same difficulties that  
24014English language speaking students have it's actually it so I don't see a particular um I  
24015haven't seen a particular challenge that isn't it's not there for someone who's lang- first  
24016language is English um I don't know if that makes sense like the reason I'm talking about  
24017the copying and pasting I mean I've seen it I'm an editor and we have now um plagiarism  
24018protection software in the um journals and some of the and it just doesn't just happen in  
24019non-English speaking countries @ it happens in English-speaking countries too um  
24020copying you know so that it's that's my biggest ehh challenge and it's for people who don't  
24021have English and who do have English you know and I suppose [pause] yeah and I suppose  
24022there's two things in that yeah so in my perspective the challenges around expression are  
24023poor practice I guess rather than actually lack of confidence lack of trust in your own voice  
24024and maybe that other side of the proofreading or whatever that doesn't have to be oneself if  
24025if you know that you are poor English or if you know that you struggle with this that's what  
24026I did myself you know not the struggle but I want to get a higher mark so I asked someone  
24027else to read it you know mostly I know not everything is essays but it we would have a  
24028huge portion of essays and dissertations there's nothing to stop you from having somebody  
24029else to read I mean I had a student actually who failed recently and she's African English  
24030and I I I asked her actually you know you English doesn't seem to be but again that her  
24031issue is not it was I think thirty percent was copied from other texts and she actually ehm  
24032uh did it last minute @the same issues uh by own admission and usually she gets her  
24033neighbor to read it I said look that's what you do for the future you know you know you  
24034don't rush it make sure you get someone else to read it so I'm saying is the the the bits that

24035are not perfect around the English language certainly in essay assignments at least can be  
24036resolved by by other means you know um and I do find I I work with uh colleagues in  
24037another international country I'm encouraging them to actually use the English [pause]  
24038how do I say it now [click] use the turn of phrase some other countries have a turn of  
24039phrase that they don't feel fits with English so they wouldn't you know and in France we  
24040say this and in Portugal we say this just say it put that into your actual paper because that's  
24041what you say or even Google Translate I mean there's so much available now ehm so if  
24042you have a a a a Portuguese paragraph write it down in your essay and google translate and  
24043then put it in y-y-you know that maybe that sounds simplistic but they are actually so  
24044reluctant to to change their own English that they pull out I was working with a group who  
24045don't speak English in another country and we were working on a paper and I said right we  
24046just think about this point the reviewers have come back to us we need to explain this point  
24047and the girl was ah I have a line I have a line here have a line from a book I said @go  
24048@away @with @those @lines @from @the @book you know and I've been sort of  
24049working with them to just you know tell me in your own voice you know tell me in you  
24050know discuss in Italian I'm br- in a l- a lot of these students actually have pretty good  
24051English really I mean they they they'd have school English you know they have it  
24052somewhere you know and so it's unp- unpicking some of that um now what was I telling  
24053you at the beginning

24054R: @ that's fine that it's more you're seeing that what they have difficulties with is the  
24055same as the home students

24056Sarah: yeah

24057R: it's not much different

24058Sarah: no not incredibly different ehm no no and yeah let me se- sometimes I think even  
24059about it but I mean I have quite a few essays from from students who who uh uhm you  
24060know I'm trying to visualize there wasn't a particular trend somebody who w- we have  
24061students who are educated through Irish and I've seen a couple of those as well so people  
24062can have a turn of phrase that's maybe too long-winded or >but again it's something< that  
24063they yeah so I mean maybe expression but it's not something that is particular to people  
24064whose second language ehm I would think one student I did have ehm and again you're  
24065picking it and unpiecing it as as a an issue rather than in telling you necessarily and I got  
24066this person to register with disability bec-because the exams he just need more time and  
24067then that was an issue now I just felt and I got him over the line but literally it was @sort  
24068of hinting to him ah now I think you could register disability I think you've got this  
24069@disorder and he did have um you know and it was so I don't know maybe maybe I'm sort

24070of saying the personal tutor support active personal tutor support is probably you know an  
24071individualized case-by-case basis this person was struggling probably just academically but  
24072was struggling an- and once he got the extra time allotted from disability [snap] flew you  
24073know he just was fine and yeah I can't remember the first language but English wasn't it  
24074but he was good just ex- the stuff he was producing was pretty good he just need a bit more  
24075time you know so um

24076R: so having that also maybe like the self-awareness from the student

24077Sarah: yeah

24078R: but then also the support system in within their department or the wider college being  
24079able to recognize and kind of intervene

24080Sarah: exactly yeah the intervention the the early intervention um and I'm just I'm just  
24081thinking about this @my @hobby @work of reading and interpreting it's probably tricky  
24082for students if if we overload them bombard them and we leave them at the notes and they  
24083try and copy the notes and if for someone whose English is not the first language that must  
24084be even more challenging you know ehm the brighter students can sometimes do a bit less  
24085and do a good get away with and do a good essay the students who are less able or else  
24086maybe don- have other challenges like English might struggle with that so maybe it's about  
24087us putting concise resources and having good >and this is another thing we're not< well  
24088sometimes not great at is actually we're teaching but we're not actually teaching them how  
24089to critically analyze for example we're not teaching them how to be assessed I mean if the  
24090students had their way which I I perfectly understand it we would spend the whole time  
24091talking about the assessment but actually what I don't know is that the assessment should  
24092be in the learning outcomes like say for example at the end of this assessment you need to  
24093write clearly an argument you need to argue you that should be the learning outcome the  
24094learning outcome shouldn't be at the end of this module you need to be able ehm to list the  
24095I don't know how to describe it now but the the what you're expecting from the  
24096assignment if it's reflect it should be the learning outcomes you need to reflect on if it's  
24097critically anal- and I've seen this a lot actually this is a good point I @thought of you  
24098expect them teach 10 hours and then the assignment is critical reflection and I say as an  
24099external examiner as well I say where do you teach the critical reflection I don't think we  
24100don't teach it we expect it so how can you expect something you don't teach so actually  
24101that's some of it as well is actually whatever skills are required in their actual assignments  
24102is actually clearly facilitated in the actual classes that's part of the requirements that should  
24103be part of the teaching and secondly some type of scaffolding and support for students uh  
24104we're a bit of allergic to that sometimes I would provide examples like some of my

24105modules I've written the assignments out myself that's a good tip as well because you can  
24106actually explain to the students how long it takes them you know it takes 20 hours for me  
24107to write an assignment ehm and then you've an example up there some people are not keen  
24108on that but I think it's a great thing like that for a student just just to see what it look- if  
24109someone coming from I would say we'd get lots of students from Africa they haven't seen  
24110something look like quite like this because it looks different over there you know so to see  
24111it ehm to for students to be given the ehm rubric for marking so you say this is what we're  
24112marking on because they're sitting in class thinking oh what is going on what does she  
24113want they often say well wh- what do you what do you want I don't want anything here's  
24114the criteria here's the here's the assignment guideline here's the examples you know so I  
24115think what am I trying to say so part of that support is scaffolding them to be successful in  
24116assessments

24117R: yeah so would you have a tendency um when you're teaching a module personally  
24118would you give the sorry the rubric and whatnot in the first class the first couple of weeks  
24119Sarah: @@good question and in fact I've done both and wh- I'd li- I've had to change my  
24120style I've had to be personally reflective as well I've done my student evaluations ehm I've  
24121started to increase the pass rate in a couple of the modules you know so don't I've done it  
24122like I start front loaded but funny enough the students ehm okay it's two things one is if  
24123you do it first the students so- some portion of the students in the evaluations will say eh it  
24124was too too early and then you do it last and so a certain proportion will say it's too late so  
24125we've we've bunc- we've groups of 230 to 300 so it's difficult to please everybody and  
24126certainly the evaluations you're only getting people who really felt one way or the other  
24127probably secondly how you actually approach that as well uh I would start saying I didn't I  
24128wasn't even aware of this uh but they wrote in the evaluations that I was obsessed with  
24129failure and @@thought it was completely the opposite I mean I I was trying to help I did  
24130improve we've one of our modules with a twenty five percent failure rate and I've got that  
24131up to ninety-nine uh sorry one percent now hardly anyone fails it um so the language you  
24132use with large groups is very important so what I go in now and I say this is a really  
24133successful module ninety-nine point nine percent and they're like whaatt this is crazy @it's  
24134funny it's just psychological so I kind of do but now I do a bit of both so I do the- I don't  
24135mention anything don't even use the word failure but you know unsuccessful you've got to  
24136be very the mood in a big class can change very quickly but be very careful about how you  
24137manage that ehm and yet at the same time the reality say for first years it doesn't even  
24138dawn on them that actually they could fail and then fail again and the mothers would be  
24139and fathers billed for six thousand doesn't it's completely over their head so how do you



24140sneak that in that if you fail this one little module you're going to be trouble so I I I usually  
24141ehm start with a background introduction to eh the module and the assignment and actually  
24142plant it there mention that good success rate ehm and tips for success rather than ways to  
24143avoid failure@@ and then I do another full session then towards the end and I also do a  
24144question and answer session so and I might have a lunchtime optional question and answer  
24145session that they would ask any questions because it's actually it's it's yeah ehm there's a  
24146whole other you know we write assignments whatever eh assignments in particular and the  
24147way students interpret them can sometimes be different and groups can be different you  
24148know they can read into things and all of that so I use that and I bring a student in to get  
24149their experience a past student and that they like that it's very helpful as well ehm does that  
24150@answer the question@

24151R: yes it does

24152Sarah: the rubric yeah the rubric is up on the blackboard for example yeah and I also would  
24153again they need to be it literally we need to even be better we always need to be texting  
24154them and you know for them to look on these th- you know they don't I think it's just so  
24155much going on so in their lives that they often don't see or they don't value and that's  
24156another point that shows up in [discipline] profession is I've come to think is that we've a  
24157very high emphasis on verbal you know the particular areas of the #unt is verbal and  
24158nonverbal it's you know kind of talking to one another and hearing and we would've it's  
24159been documented actually the [professionals] often learn from the master that's what the  
24160consultant would be so we're not a very visual or written profession so these students arrive  
24161from practice everything's gone verbally and visually and they've in the class they want to  
24162know what [name] what do you want but actually it's actually not going to come from me  
24163personally it's got to come from the material so I suppose maybe that dichotomy between  
24164being a practical hands-on professional and actually having to come and wade through you  
24165know like an ac- an administrator almost it's a bit it's a bit challenging for them but yeah  
24166everything is up there for them

24167R: okay um so I'm gonna kind of shift towards now from the general to the international  
24168students and since you don't have too much experience just you know if you don't know  
24169that's fine um so what would you say that um are you aware of any support that's offered to  
24170international students in your department or at the wider College

24171Sarah: umm not I don't think in our department but I am aware of the English language  
24172ehm developments ongoing at the moment in the center of English and I report them  
24173widely to the school the pre-session and the in-session which I think is really fantastic umh  
24174learning support I mean all the students that I mentioned to you that run into difficulties we

24175 would guide them towards the learning supports in [institution 1] generally speaking and  
24176 there's some web really good web uhm you know um a bit of I've said about my own  
24177 experience as a mature person and as I said well educated person I still look at the basics  
24178 you know it's funny and some people just they won't go there with the sort of it has to have  
24179 the beginning you know they're just feeling it's much more complex than that you know so  
24180 we'd encourage people to actually go and seek help I mean counseling is another thing we  
24181 and some of the counselors are educational counselors educational psychologists so if a  
24182 student like that per- the person I mentioned to you that we got extra time for or or the  
24183 other student who've got a couple of would be language is one of the other things I would  
24184 of encourage them to try and make an appointment they're free as well the educational  
24185 psychologist they seem to help sometimes they're overlapping with disability you don't you  
24186 don't know really what what the actual issue is yourself and the personal tutor we've a  
24187 fairly active I mean obviously the college it's one really big thing in the college that we  
24188 have a very active personal tutor as well that's that's another way that that supports and  
24189 you know we would take it very seriously as [profession] as well we're kind of a serious  
24190 bunch so you know we we've that that support so specific to English ehm I don't think  
24191 beyond that

24192 R: okay and so if you could give advice to that support specifically English what would  
24193 that advice be in terms of preparing students for your department

24194 Sarah: yeah I think um like I mentioned earlier on the uh we do have a mature students day  
24195 as well before that might be something but I suppose reassurance that I suppose you're  
24196 building confidence and reassurance if that was possible or even engaging maybe with  
24197 somebody from the school to to to um help them understand what [discipline] practice is  
24198 about I mean one issue we used to have years not years ago but students often come into  
24199 [profession] not often occasionally you know maybe looking at television or whatever not  
24200 realizing the reality of [profession] we weren't good about you know advertising on the  
24201 internet well these are the gory thing we do but the [professional board] a few years ago  
24202 come up with a survey and it was it asked you know even things like [topic] do you do you  
24203 know actually at the end we give you an estimation about whether you're really suitable or  
24204 not which is really useful so the point I'm making is actually if there was some way of  
24205 engaging with ehm you know a concession where someone explains what [profession] is  
24206 about or about the communication in [profession] is about they they might reassure them  
24207 then actually I don't need to have absolutely perfect English in in order to function as and  
24208 now we do have a requirement of course the the English language requirement but beyond  
24209 that if they're insecure about it I suppose that the that the communication is much more

24210than verbal and much more than language secondly then I think um I would I would have  
24211not to labor too much but the academic writing goes beyond the language and the issues  
24212people are having of cutting and pasting is literally I marked essays two two years ago for  
24213somebody else and the first few I came across were brilliant I said my God these are really  
24214good then I got this bunch that were absolutely horrendous I thought what is going on here  
24215then I got to the next bunch and suddenly I realized they're all saying the same thing  
24216exactly the same thing now it was an exam [module] exam they got the question  
24217beforehand I thought hang on how could every one of your students have the same words I  
24218just could not get over it so I dug out my my colleague's notes who wrote my classes and  
24219what had happened was the students have copied the notes now it was a very open title  
24220about something very open you know could have been something you know something  
24221like eh eh you know des- describe you know systems available for people you know [topic]  
24222in Ireland I mean something that could literally be very creative about with all those skills  
24223and yet they have chosen to take the lecturers notes because that's probably what they do  
24224and whatnot and taking actually the word for word out of it plus the references now what I  
24225concluded in the end was the bright students did it really well cuz they were cute enough to  
24226know exactly how to put piece it all together it was pieced together very well in the in the  
24227slides by the way the weaker students just made a really bad job of it so they just took the  
24228words word for word ehm and I also noticed actually the students [pause] even though they  
24229were very good some of them they were capped at 70 so what am I trying to say here if  
24230people continue to take other people's words and now don't trust themselves to use their  
24231own voice and their own brain no interpretation well they will never ever achieve the high  
24232levels and if they're in any risky areas such as not having English as the first language they  
24233will end up very seriously you know out out of the so I think em encouraging [pause] uhh  
24234confidence in writing confidence in your own language confidence in your own language  
24235as well as English so I think example if somebody's writing about a you know um  
24236communication in [profession] I mean or or write it out in in in French you know first  
24237write in French and then translate it back you know the they they just the colleagues I've  
24238been working with internationally they just don't see that as a sort of their actual- I I and in  
24239fact you know what I've @done @recently I've looked at articles in the in another  
24240language the person gave it to me recently and they it showed me and they didn't realize it  
24241was still in the same language hadn't been translated and I was able to determine the  
24242problems with it in a different language that I don't even understand because they cut and  
24243paste from articles I actually knew straight away that they cut and paste I know I've gone  
24244over so what I'm saying is a good essay in your own language is a good essay in English eh

24245if you have a whole sentence you read your you know you well maybe reading is another  
24246thing as well but if you have a whole sentence structure in your head about for example  
24247support for [topic] in a community and you think about it in French or whatever put it  
24248down ehm you know you still can get marks for that or if it's an essay you essay you could  
24249you could try to google translation it or you know I don't I'll be much more encouraging for  
24250example my colleagues who I'm working with who um I've a few colleagues now who  
24251don't don't speak English and I just say well you know what would you say in your  
24252language and sometimes it's beautiful you think that's really nice @@put that down  
24253here@ you know some some academic you know in France we have a word like for  
24254example reflection I mentioned to you um one of the things often mentioned is por-porter  
24255is to carry in French so in French they have word #porter means to carry and your portfolio  
24256is carrying your you know so you can sometimes actually even within your essays bring  
24257your own language into it and say well you know in India we have a word called you know  
24258this in [profession] and it can be very profound you get right up the higher level because  
24259you're thinking you're thinking that this is what [profession] do this is how you  
24260communicate in in India we have a you know the older people you revere them and you  
24261know eh and then we have a certain word there are words other languages that are actually  
24262very let me see um for example um eh eh education in Italian ehh t- ehh what it is it now  
24263uh education [pause] yeah it means to give manners so they'll actually turn around to  
24264people say they're not educated because they don't have manners they're not mannerly in  
24265the restaurant so actually there's a whole discussion about education goes beyond teaching  
24266and learning to actually values and you know so what I'm saying is

24267R: drawing upon their their language resources basically

24268Sarah: yes

24269R: not just saying this is English and I can only use English

24270Sarah: yes yes yeah yeah yeah and even say within our profession that you know a sort of a  
24271style then develops everybody everybody copies the previous you know so that everybody  
24272copies the for example this portfolio portfolio is to carry then someone else says you know  
24273can we not have something different than this you know an-another chap we had [name]  
24274reflection he talks with you swampy lowlands and the amount of students the swampy  
24275lowlands the swampy highlands you know that was his metaphor or whatever similar you  
24276know [pause] you know the point evidence reference and you explain it as best you can in  
24277your own expression how that would be and drawing on not always but I mean [deep  
24278inhale] me and the copy and pasting it's a road to nowhere like it's either to scratch it and I  
24279feel with that group I mentioned you who had copied the the notes that if I we had put

24280those students in a room without any notes they would have performed better that's my gut  
24281feeling that actually had they used that they're English speaking I suppose which might be  
24282a slightly different thing but yeah if you could encourage them to use their own voice and  
24283it's becoming very common in the journals now as well use your voice ehm speak and  
24284draw on their own languages and and be confident as well and seek help

24285R: right and so you mentioned on the language requirement and do are you aware of the  
24286entry of assessment that international students have to take

24287Sarah: yeah, the IELTS 6.5 yeah

24288R: yes and do you have any type of feeling on that requirement on the test on how well it  
24289predicts

24290Sarah: ehmm no I really wouldn't have enough experience with people generally  
24291speaking ehm well I suppose [pause] yeah now I wouldn't have a but I suppose it's a kind  
24292of a standard I I would trust that it's it's sort of a standard requirement but I think actually  
24293when it boils down to it it's probably much more complex than that but I don't know  
24294whether something more sophisticated would um uh [pause] yeah I mean I don't we have a  
24295thought at the moment and one my other colleagues might talk to you about that but you  
24296know that the requirement it may need to be higher I think it's six point five on average we  
24297take but we'd like six point five in each of the actual

24298R: the bands

24299Sarah: the the bands and the [professional body] take it at six point five I think in each of  
24300the bands so I suppose overall what I'm hearing is it may not be actually quite sufficient  
24301um but I don't really have enough experience with it

24302R: okay alright um also a remaining conscious of time but and you've covered quite a bit  
24303and so basically are there any questions that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask

24304Sarah: umm [pause] no I squeezed them all in myself @@

24305R: @@ and is there anything else that you'd like to add

24306Sarah: um [pause] no I think that's it

24307R: brilliant thank you

24308Sarah: thank you so much you

24309

24310

**Ted**

24311

24312R: okay and so my first question is can you tell me about the work required of your  
24313students in your modules so that would be across all of your modules undergrad postgrad

24314 Ted: wow okay so that's a very big question and obviously the workload as such will  
24315 change from module to module from year to year and then of course between undergrad  
24316 and post-grad it's going to be a significant uh difference uh I can speak first of all in my  
24317 capacity as director of postgraduate teaching and learning here in school of [discipline] and  
24318 say that our students all take a structured Ph.D. program so they in their first 18 months uh  
24319 take a number of modules sometimes maybe one just one module [inhale] uh the ECTS  
24320 values for those modules can vary because it again it depends on who's offering the  
24321 modules at five or ten but usually t-ten would be the max for a module um so I have found  
24322 uh both as post-grad level and undergrad level that the ECTS assignments to modules don't  
24323 always reflect the workloads um and this can be an individual matter I mean about you  
24324 know for students because you know you might specify that a module requires a student to  
24325 do a certain number of hours of reading for example but there's nothing stopping a student  
24326 from you know exceeding that or often also doing much less than what is recommended or  
24327 even required so uh workloads vary you know really quite widely I would say between um  
24328 you know among students in terms of how they perceive what is expected of them and this  
24329 happens at undergrad and post-grad levels um but on the whole I think there is some  
24330 balance in terms of how modules are pitched to students um by lecturers at undergrad and  
24331 post-grad levels in terms of what they expect students to do right so if you're looking for  
24332 are you looking for a kind of specific data

24333 R: yeah so like so what would the professor expect in terms of the amount of reading the  
24334 amount of reading the amount of writing etc.

24335 Ted: Gosh I mean again it's such a it's such a difficult question to answer without reflecting  
24336 on particular examples so for example I teach at undergrad level I teach at fresher level and  
24337 at sophister level um in the sophister years I teach um a couple of seminar modules these  
24338 modules um meet uh once a week over the 11 weeks of the term so there's a reading week  
24339 so it's 11 weeks of class contact uh we would meet uh for two hours per week so an hour  
24340 and fifty minutes per week so one one two-hour seminar per week so there's a basic basic  
24341 expectation that students will attend those classes so that's a time commitment on their part  
24342 so that's two hours per week of attendance in class um then for those classes they would  
24343 normally be expected to read a certain amount of material now this could be a novel of you  
24344 know some length 200 300 pages or it might be something much shorter it might be three  
24345 short stories so the amount that they would be expected to read for class can vary um but I  
24346 suppose you're talking about maybe anything between an an hour two hours up to 10 hours  
24347 per week of reading time again that's very subjective it depends on how quickly a student  
24348 can read um they would also be expected to do some um additional reading for every class

24349but on average I would say that I would expect my students at undergrad level to be putting  
24350in around four to six hours of preparation for a two-hour seminar in the week at post-grad  
24351level with MPhil seminars it might be more maybe up to eight hours of you know  
24352preparation time and I think this is reflected by eh to some extent also by the work that I  
24353would put in in preparing for a class I'm not saying that I would ever put in eight hours of  
24354preparation for a class but it's a certain it's a number of hours per week per class that you  
24355would you know do to prepare um for a meeting so it can vary so there's kind of reading  
24356time then kind of secondary reading or you know general preparation time expected of the  
24357students um I guess there are particular times during term when this could increase  
24358when assessments are due or if they're doing a presentation in a given week then the you  
24359know they would have to put in more effort um so this is not a question that can be  
24360answered with a kind of a single number um it depends on undergraduate or postgraduate it  
24361depends on maybe fresher or sophister level um it can depend from the students point of  
24362view in terms of how quickly they can get through the material uh during term it might  
24363increase during the week when say they have to give a presentation um so it varies but um  
24364I like to think that it's it's fair [pause] it's you know depending on the level that they're at  
24365and the difficulty of the material I think that's there's a there's a sense of balance there  
24366R: yeah and so you mentioned that they would be reading see novels or short stories um so  
24367the assigned reading what is the purpose of the reading is it analysis is it theory is it a  
24368mixture

24369Ted: so in [topic] um the purpose of the reading in the first instance is to you know make  
24370sure that students are acquainted with the primary literature that they are here to study so  
24371they're studying [discipline] and in my case their focus is going you know usually going to  
24372be on [topic] so if we're talking about a particular poet it's important that they read a fairly  
24373generous selection of poems and you know that they read those texts in advance of class so  
24374that when we get there uhm we can all begin to discuss you know the material um now of  
24375course this is positive on the idea that these classes I'm talking about are seminars because  
24376there are other kinds of class right so there are lectures and @there are tutorials@ and one  
24377can so in a seminar environment at sophister level for example um you can tell I think  
24378fairly quickly who has read the material and who hasn't equally a post-grad level where  
24379you might have a class of ten students you can tell very quickly who has read the material  
24380and who hasn't but in a lecture of a hundred twenty students even though you have flagged  
24381that this week we're gonna be looking at Whitman or Dickinson next week you can't really  
24382tell who has read the stuff and who hasn't read the stuff so that's it I should have clarified  
24383that there is a different there there may be an expectation there that students will have read

24384material before a lecture but you can never be sure that they've done it for a seminar there  
24385are ways @in @which @you @can @check to see if they've read the material and equally  
24386for tutorials where even there are small groups um it's much easier to tell if they've done  
24387the preparation um does that answer that question

24388R: yes and now for your research students so your masters and your PhD students um  
24389what's the work that would be required in terms of research for them

24390Ted: yeah so this is this is maybe an easier question to answer in some ways because you  
24391know my experience in my experience at least working um with PhD students with  
24392research students you establish or at least I establish um a fairly clear timeline and  
24393schedule at the beginning of the project so you have a sense of what you want I always  
24394have a sense of what I want the student to have read or to have done by a certain date so  
24395that when they come to see me to discuss the work I know they will have done that  
24396preparation so I mean just to give an example um I'm currently supervising a student who  
24397is working on the fiction of [name] contemporary writer and so we can identify very easily  
24398the primary texts that need to be read and the certa- there's a certain amount of secondary  
24399material and so I knew at the start of term that I could say to this student look by the you  
24400know in three months you should have read all of this and looked at all this and then we  
24401meet up we can talk about it so you know there's a it's much easier in a way I think to  
24402direct the um reading um for a for for a PhD student um or at least have a sense of what  
24403they've done you know when you're dealing with a classroom full of people it can be  
24404harder to guarantee that everybody's on the same page as it were you know I often find that  
24405even in uh fresher tutorials that somebody might say well I read half the book and some of  
24406the others are saying well I didn't get a chance to read it at all and somebody else will say  
24407well I read this book and another book you know so it's it is actually much easier to be sure  
24408that the person you're dealing with is on the same page if they're a PhD researcher um  
24409[click] so with MPhil students again when you're supervising their dissertations it's a  
24410similar situation the timeline is much shorter because they might be working on an MPhil  
24411dissertation over a summer period um but it tends to be on a similar model um in terms of  
24412directed reading and directed research um I think sometimes that kind of approach can  
24413work with advanced undergraduate students you know the undergraduates doing  
24414dissertations or sophister students writing extended essays but in the earlier parts of the  
24415undergraduate program especially it can often be difficult to be absolutely sure that  
24416students are doing the required reading um and to be convinced that they've done it well @  
24417it can be a challenge yeah



24418R: and so the dissertations that your students are writing um would it be more of an  
24419analysis a lit review or would they be doing primary research that kind of  
24420R: yeah most of these so I have supervised eleven PhD's at this point um and the majority  
24421of those are what I would call fairly kind of traditional literature PhD's PhDs in the field of  
24422[discipline] um and the first thing that all of those students would have done um would be  
24423to become acquainted really intimately with the primary materials so you know if  
24424somebody's working on a particular poet they will need to go away and read everything  
24425this poet has ever written um and then what social scientists sometimes call the lit review  
24426um kinda can be done in tandem with with that or can be done after that where they would  
24427then having read all of the primary material that's available they would then go and read all  
24428the critical work that has ever been published on a given author and that can be done either  
24429simultaneously or or you know slightly later um I suppose the expectation nowadays is that  
24430when somebody comes in to do a PhD on a given writer or writers that they already have a  
24431really strong sense of the field when they come in and that they kind of hit the ground  
24432running um so again and and the volume of the material that needs to be read can vary I  
24433mean if somebody's doing a multi author study then they're gonna have to look at not only  
24434all of their works but all of the secondary on their works whereas if they're looking at a  
24435single author who's dead I mean a sense of a complete corpus again it's much easier to kind  
24436of rein it in um I would say that for me as a supervisor it's often easier to be dealing with  
24437the latter kind of project because I know that there are no kind of other books to be like I  
24438know one friend for example friend in school for example who's been working PhD now  
24439for about 12 years

24440R: wow

24441Ted: one of- for lots of reasons and well one of the problems is that um the author she's  
24442working on is very much alive and well [name] and she seems to bring out a book every  
24443six months

24444R: and keeps publishing

24445Ted: yeah yeah yeah yeah

24446R: so you have to keep adding it

24447Ted: so it's you keep on adding on and on or even if you don't even if you do say look I'm  
24448only going to look at the books up to 2010 you're always going to be worried that this next  
24449book is gonna just undo your whole argument @@ or you need to add it it's gonna really  
24450change things so it's um I think the doing research in the humanities doing doing doctoral  
24451research in [discipline] can be really challenging for this reason that you really you're  
24452defining your your kind of domain of analysis can be really uh challenging um but it's one

24453of the key things that people need to do early and to draw those parameters and then that  
24454gives you the focus you know yeah I'm possibly rambling a little bit [name] now don't be  
24455afraid to rephrase or ask again so I'm on on target

24456R: yeah no no no this is very useful so um would you be able to describe the general  
24457structure of your lectures and modules so like what happens inside of the classroom

24458Ted: sure sure yeah so again I mean it varies from context to context um you know I teach  
24459junior fresh tutorials junior fresh lecturer lectures senior fresh tutorials and lectures and  
24460then sophister seminars um and MPhil seminars and then the one-on-one supervision that  
24461happens so what happens in in those classes I mean I have to be honest that I'm one of  
24462those teachers who always feels a certain amount of nervousness before class always even  
24463though I've been doing this for 20 years I whether it's just a tutorial or a big lecture with  
24464400 people I always get a bit nervous before them but in terms of preparation I always  
24465have um I won't call it a script but I always have uh text that is gonna lay out you know the  
24466things that I want to deal with so if it's a tutorial for example I will have um a number I  
24467mean you know 50 it might be a 50 minute class which is you know fairly short actually  
24468with with say 10 or 12 students um and I will always have a sense of where I want to start  
24469where I want to end by th- you know where I want to bring the students by the end of that  
24470session um because we will all r- always have an assigned text you have a clear sense of  
24471what material you're going to be working with in the session and what questions need to be  
24472raised so it's often for me a matter of um shaping a discussion around a number of kind of  
24473very clear questions that's how I would structure my tutorials these are classes where  
24474there's conversation between myself and the students and you know one of the things I  
24475really try to facilitate there is conversation between and among the students at sophister  
24476level it's a little bit different because there you often have two hours to play with um so  
24477normally these classes say you know [click] we're meeting on a particular week and we're  
24478looking at a particular writer um normally in those classes I might give a brief kind of mini  
24479lecture at the start to contextualize the author to say you know why we're reading this  
24480author why they are important um for about 20 minutes take a few questions um and then  
24481begin to get a sense of how the class responded to the material for that week um I don't  
24482always do group work but sometimes I find it's useful especially if the text is difficult and I  
24483might break a group a class into maybe five groups of four or four groups of five and give  
24484them maybe ten minutes each just to kind of pull their responses and then we'll take the  
24485responses take a spokesperson from each little group and kind of feed those back into the  
24486general discussion so but but you know I always um go to those tutorials or seminars with  
24487a list of key questions I feel like we need to get through right and it's it's never more than

24488 maybe five things you know um and a similar idea I suppose informs my sense of what  
24489 you can do in a lecture I'm I'm not one of these people who feels you can go into a lecture  
24490 or a seminar and do you know a huge amount of work you know I think it's more important  
24491 to get maybe three four five key points you know across and to be sure that these have  
24492 been understood so in a tutorial or in a seminar you know once once you've you know and  
24493 again these are over over the course of a a term so by the second third week you know the  
24494 group pretty well and I've been very lucky that you know m-m-mostly the kind of class  
24495 dynamic you know is is positive and feels good so students really are I think happy uh to  
24496 to speak you know to talk and participate um and I think we're really lucky here that you  
24497 know our students are good and uh they want to most of them want to talk um so that's my  
24498 kind of way of doing things um in terms of a kind of [click] um you know I've got a  
24499 structured approach to how I teach in that seminar or tutorial environment with a lecture  
24500 where you might have anything from you know 50 to 400 students um I I use a script you  
24501 know I have a lecture written um now over the years again just from giving so many  
24502 lectures um I find that I don't need to just stand there and read it out but I but I need it there  
24503 and it's very clearly structured and it's in fourteen point double-spaced you know so that I  
24504 can see it um and I I need it there I do also use PowerPoint you know to just uh for the  
24505 main points in the lecture so that they have some visuals or some quotations and usually  
24506 then I'll put the PowerPoint and you know a summary of the lecture on blackboard but uh  
24507 so there's that kind of aspect to it as well which is I think the students really really like that  
24508 you know yeah

24509 R: yeah and so in terms of assessment um so what would be the form of assessment for  
24510 your modules

24511 Ted: @again it varies so much um okay so traditionally there have been two main modes  
24512 of assessment used in in the school of [discipline] I mean there's the timed examination so  
24513 uh at the end of in fact up until this year at the end of the academic year students would  
24514 take you know a timed exam so for a five ECTS module they would sit a two hour  
24515 examination where they're expected to answer two questions from among a group of 12  
24516 questions um and then there are also um there have also been three-hour examinations in  
24517 the past but now now it's mainly two hour examinations so exam timed examination based  
24518 on material um I I think that's extremely challenging for students I think uh it's very  
24519 stressful in all kinds of ways I've just come from the exam venue this morning and I've  
24520 another one this afternoon so @I @know @how stressful this can be um and then the other  
24521 be- the exam the traditional exam or examination timed examination then we also um get  
24522 them to do essays right so and again this varies the the length of essays varies from year to

24523 year from from you know from fresher to sophister our fresher students write essays in  
24524 between two and two and a half thousand in length um and sophisters write essays up to  
24525 5,000 words in length I think it is so these these are quite long these papers I mean it's  
24526 almost like the length of a an article that you might submit to a journal right so it's it's a  
24527 proper research paper um but again there's some variation terms of what's required for  
24528 those assessments um so exams essays and then um from quite early on in my career um  
24529 I've been kind of advocating for more diversity in assessment more innovation in  
24530 assessment um so [click] I used to be the um [general] curriculum lecturer in [discipline]  
24531 and way back 15 years ago we um trialed uh journaling is a way of assessment you know  
24532 mode of assessment for our students which they enjoyed um and we allowed a certain  
24533 amount of creativity so the students could you know illustrate their observations and kind  
24534 of do it as a kind of diary format um and include all kinds of materials it was really tough  
24535 to assess them though you know because somebody kind of puts in a really colorful  
24536 detailed journal or scrapbook and it's like well clearly it's maximum effort but what's there  
24537 in terms of comprehension it's kind of hard to evaluate but we have done that and also um I  
24538 used to teach a module on a [topic] which this book came out of it and um the for that  
24539 module the students did uh kind of um a kind of a reflective journal week on week and an  
24540 essay um and you know so that was that was it in a way that was it was easier because it  
24541 was a more focused kind of set of reflections that they offered in their journals so but on  
24542 the whole um essays exams um um and uh then kind of journal journaling I've looked into  
24543 the possibility of some online assessment activities but I've never actually taken them up  
24544 R: right yeah and so how would you assess academic success so when you're looking at  
24545 these essays what are you looking for  
24546 Ted: yeah yeah yeah well um I'm looking for a whole range of things um and again the  
24547 criteria I mean so we the the school of [discipline] has um kind of grade descriptors you  
24548 know so what we're looking for in a first what we're looking for in a two one or what  
24549 we're looking for in a two two and a third um but I would say um in general what we're  
24550 looking for is evidence of [pause] understanding you know comprehension clear  
24551 engagement with the material delivered um uh so evidence that they've engaged with the  
24552 material and that they've understood it right or at least they've made an attempt to  
24553 understand what's going on in a text and so if they can convince you that they've done this  
24554 um convincing engagement with primary material uh convincing engagement with the  
24555 relevant critical materials so the secondary material and the kind of debates around that  
24556 text so they need to convince you that they've actually you know understood the material  
24557 that they've engaged with it and with its critical reception um so that's a key thing but in

24558order for those things to come through in an assessed piece of work they also need to be  
24559able to express themselves well so they need to be able to write clearly uh they need to  
24560know how to create how to structure how to build an essay um that's a really important  
24561skill I think that we uh try to develop with our students all the way from junior fresh  
24562through to um seniors sophister so it's a combination of um understanding and articulation  
24563you know these are maybe for- in general terms these would be two two of the main things  
24564for a student of [discipline] um and then you know it varies between the students who's  
24565getting a two two who has some level of comprehension h- you know shows a very you  
24566know a very basic level of engagement with the text some minimum amount of critical  
24567reflection um there may be problems with expression there may be problems with  
24568scholarly formatting um this is you know the kind of two two low two maybe low two one  
24569essay on the other end of the scale you have very high-performing students who are getting  
24570first class marks in the upper 70s and low 80s and this material would be almost  
24571publishable and I would say often you know the very best of it um I should say I should  
24572have said actually if I could add to what we're talking about different types of assessment  
24573presentations too I've often um um included a component for presentations um in terms of  
24574assessment so part- as part of the assessment that students might do in seminars especially  
24575again with a lecture module that's impossible but with a sophister seminar class? uhm you  
24576know it can be useful I think as well and you get a sense of their engagement a very good  
24577sense of their engagement from those as well as their kind of understanding uhm yeah but I  
24578would say that understanding and comp- uhm expression being able to express the ideas  
24579these are the two key key issues

24580R: yes so how would those expectations be communicated to the students would it be  
24581through like a printout would it be on blackboard verbally in class

24582Ted: uhm so the grade descriptors are given in the handbooks so there's every year has a  
24583handbook there's junior fresh handbook senior fresh handbooks sophister handbook each  
24584MPhil program would have its own handbook and so the grade descriptors um which state  
24585very clearly what we expect from students performing at every level um they would state  
24586what they need to do so that if a student isn't achieving a certain grade we could say look  
24587this is what you need to be doing to achieve that grade uhm and those points would be  
24588fleshed out you know much more clearly there yeah I can actually send you the descriptors  
24589if that's helpful

24590R: yeah that would be great yeah very helpful

24591Ted: yeah yeah

24592R: yeah so do you present the assessment in the class and give time for questions etc. are  
24593they equal to come you know one on one and ask you questions

24594Ted: yes um actually so for our fresh modules the coordinators of the modules circulate the  
24595questions [pause] so the questions are set and the questions are circulated before the end of  
24596the semester usually so they have a chance students have a chance there's usually a window  
24597where students can come and ask questions look for clarification and discuss how they  
24598might approach essays I almost invariably have this with students of mine who will come  
24599and say look I was thinking of doing this question and I was gonna do it in this way this  
24600almost always happens um and especially at sophister level now the only difference I guess  
24601at sophister level is that and some colleagues may do things differently but I always  
24602encourage my students these are third and fourth-year students and I always encourage  
24603them to set their own questions right so this is a real challenge actually um for the students  
24604especially for the juniors officer sophister students because it's the first time that they've  
24605been asked to do this why do I do it this way it's partly because I actually believe that um  
24606[click] what I'm interested in as a researcher and also as a teacher and when I try to  
24607stimulate and you know promote among my students is the idea that you know we're not  
24608here to give answers but rather to get them to ask interesting questions um so I usually  
24609encourage my students at sophister level to set their own questions to come up with good  
24610interesting questions that they might then ask in relation to certain texts and they come to  
24611me with the question for approval we talked about it a little bit usually they'll go away to a  
24612but if they're #biographical research put something together and we'll take it from there  
24613and they can they can usually send like um an outline for the essay I suppose >and this is a  
24614really really challenging thing< for them to do especially as I say in in third year um at the  
24615MPhil level we do both so we set some topics and we also get them to you know suggest  
24616their own questions

24617R: and how long would those essays be the MPhil

24618Ted: umm well okay so for the MPhil that I've been mainly involved with the MPhil in  
24619[topic] we get them to write four 1,500 to 2,000 word essays these are really short um but  
24620we always say well they're getting experience in writing what might be a kind of a book  
24621review let's say or a conference paper like a 20 minute paper is what 2,500 words so they  
24622do those and those essays for those essays the topics are given [pause] and they're really  
24623focused and then for the longer research papers they come up with their own topics they're  
24624five to six thousand words at MPhil [pause] yeah and they write two of those um so there's  
24625such variety actually and when you go from junior fresh to PhD there's such a range of  
24626stuff umm yeah

24627R: yeah and so in general what do you think students need to succeed at [institution 1]  
24628Ted: what do they need to succeed at [institution 1] my goodness there's a big question this  
24629is like this is like a graduate attributes question um so I mean I think they need [pause]  
24630openness um [pause] a willingness to and related to this openness so when som- I'm  
24631talking about openness I mean an intellectual openness is really important um that when a  
24632student comes here at postgraduate level or undergraduate level even I think um to have a  
24633sense that there are fields of inquiry before them there are things to be learned that they  
24634may not have encountered before and that there is no limit to this right so that sense of  
24635openness that sense of #unt expansiveness I think is really important um you know you can  
24636as a teacher as a lecturer as a supervisor you know or as a course director your job is partly  
24637to help that help students then to direct that kind of curiosity but they have to have that  
24638kind of open mindedness that curio- intellectual curiosity from from the beginning I think  
24639that's a really key thing um I think also um our students need to have a sense of ambition  
24640you know which is related it's intellectual ambition but you know they want to know  
24641things they want to use what resources we can offer them um creative resources intellectual  
24642resources you know material resources um to really pursue that ambition I think that that's  
24643um that for me would be important if we have interviews for our students I'd be looking for  
24644intellectual curiosity a sense of ambition a sense of open-mindedness a sense that um of  
24645you know never really being happy with you know yesterday's conclusion always wanting  
24646to push it even further which is maybe also a kind of energy and enthusiasm for for what  
24647we do you know that's that's that's I don- and I think actually that is something that our  
24648students have you know I think they are we're very lucky to have great students here yeah  
24649R: yeah and so how much of a factor would you say in language plays in academic success  
24650Ted: well I mean it's it's a huge factor um not just so I think [long pause] we need to be  
24651able to communicate our ideas right we need to be able to communicate our findings um as  
24652researchers no matter what field we're working I mean even the most esoteric branches of  
24653physics you know you need to be a good communicator in order to deliver your results to  
24654specialist audiences and non-specialist audiences and I think more and more universities  
24655are under pressure to actually make that connection with non-specialist audiences beyond  
24656the walls of the university so I think language is essential language use is key to academic  
24657success you know clarity um in particular just being able to be clear about what what you  
24658have done what you're doing where you want to go in the future um now I think at the  
24659same time so obviously English is our first language it's the language of instruction most  
24660of us work in English I think is hugely important but I think we also need to be aware of  
24661other languages and possibly even begin to pay more attention to the necessity to >as a as a

24662university as an institution< to be more fluent in other languages um global languages I  
24663mean Chinese obviously you know perhaps Spanish you know um so and I think this is  
24664also something that maybe we haven't quite tuned into um and that's that's something I  
24665would also uh support yeah yeah

24666R: yeah and so how would you kind of I guess evaluate your students in terms of language  
24667at the moment

24668Ted: yeah well I can speak I guess primarily here in terms of my role as director of post-  
24669graduate teaching and learning so applications come in from students from all around the  
24670world all the time people interested in doing PhDs here um and y-you know there is a  
24671there's a level that they're expected to achieve in terms of the IELTS score and if they don't  
24672achieve this um they're not going to get um it's not going to come to my desk okay the  
24673registry would already uh flag this as a problem I think at the moment it's six I think is the  
24674uhhh

24675R: yeah it's six uh it's commonly at six point five

24676Ted: six point five yes at six point five that's it yeah so but but so if the student if an  
24677applicant is not achieving this level it's not I don't think it's even going to get to me for  
24678consideration um there are I think though there are other ways I mean you know and it's  
24679not only the students coming from kind of you know non-European non-Anglophone  
24680backgrounds I mean sometimes students coming from Ireland you know the UK the US  
24681might not have the the level of you know communication skills that you would want um  
24682and you can see this so we ask students applying to do PhDs here for a writing sample and  
24683you can often tell very quickly whether somebody has the required kind of communication  
24684level in writing just by looking at the sample um and so it's so the IELTS score of six point  
24685five whether you know especially say for a student from you know from Asia or wherever  
24686um it's not it's not it's not a it's not a an absolute way of determining somebody's ability um  
24687a writing sample can be useful um and also you know maybe on a Skype interview or  
24688something like that if the person is not in the country um I think you kind of do need to  
24689have the face-to-face verification you know for for lots of reasons um but what was the  
24690question again I don't know if I'm answering it

24691R: yeah yeah yeah you have just how how you evaluate

24692Ted: how we evaluate yeah so we don't have a so the school of [discipline] does not have  
24693umm a kind of a separate evaluation mechanism I guess there's a college-wide one which is  
24694posited primarily as far as I can tell on the IELTS score and then secondly then once we  
24695receive an application whether it's through the writing sample or following up with a  
24696Skype interview or uh you know often a referee will say well they're very good but there



24697 were some issues you know so there are a couple of kind of ways in which we can attempt  
24698 to gauge it but I have had experiences where everything seemed fine all seemed okay and  
24699 then somebody arrives and the writing can be poor um but then as we know um it's not I  
24700 mean people don't write how they speak and sometimes somebody is just you know on the  
24701 nuts and bolts of grammar and written expression they can they can be they can need a lot  
24702 of improvement yeah so it's I think it might be impossible actually to find a an absolutely  
24703 flawless system for evaluating this in advance and sometimes you have to work with  
24704 students [click] um in terms of their writing style and ability all the way through yeah  
24705 R: and what do you find much of a difference between international students and home  
24706 students because you mentioned that even Irish UK American students  
24707 Ted: it depends I mean it depends again um so what we call Irish students I mean let's not  
24708 forget that a lot of [institution 1]'s undergraduate population is made up of people from you  
24709 know from all over the world um so and it's often the case that students who've just come  
24710 uh I-Irish students who were born in Cork or Kerry and coming to [institution 1] having  
24711 gone through the Leaving Cert system they're often not better than students from say the  
24712 US or Canada or Germany who you know so it's very hard to say I wouldn't be I would not  
24713 be too quick to suggest that Irish students are all okay they're fine they've come through the  
24714 leaving cert with six hundred points and they're gonna be grand I wouldn't be so sure about  
24715 that [pause] it really there are so many factors at play um we have excellent students from  
24716 India from China from Asia you know excellent students from the United States often  
24717 doing a lot better than students in their classes who might be from Dublin or what-  
24718 whatever so I wouldn't be at all I think it's a case-by-case basis and um background often  
24719 has nothing do with it there are all kinds of ways in which people who are educated you  
24720 know their educational backgrounds family backgrounds um you know they are so various  
24721 so it's very hard to just make a kind of blanket judgment about uh a call you know a call on  
24722 this I mean I as I say I have had students from who have come through the Irish school  
24723 system done the leaving cert done very well got in and they have have problems with  
24724 writing equally I've had students from China who have come here you know and really  
24725 worked hard to get here yeah and and have done @exceptionally @well so it's very hard to  
24726 kind of make a call on this yeah

24727 R: yeah um so I would say are you //aware of

24728 Ted: can I just say| it's almost in a way to say it's in a way this is as if to suggest that all  
24729 students should be doing the pre-sessional @@not just @not just @not just @ you know  
24730 we can't always assume that just because the student is coming from a non-English non-  
24731 Anglophone background in Asia that they need to do the pre-sessional it's often the case

24732actually that a student very high achieving student in the leaving cert 600 points comes in  
24733and doesn't really know how to write an essay at least an essay as it's required by us here in  
24734university yeah that's that's yeah that's been my experience

24735R: and well are you able to identify kind of the so when you're saying that it's a very  
24736apparent very quickly if a student is able to communicate well are you able to identify kind  
24737of the general short fallings of the communication

24738Ted: hmm yes yes [pause] you can identify very quickly you can say to a student look this  
24739is not a complete sentence this is not a paragraph where your paragraphs you know um you  
24740can you know when when there are problems with writing in terms of grammar in terms of  
24741punctuation in terms of structure you can point these things out now that doesn't guarantee  
24742that the student will get the message [pause] and I'm not a language teacher you know I'm a  
24743[topic] scholar and um and can be very challenging then for me uh once I've pointed out  
24744the problem to begin to do the kind of remedial often remedial work that's needed to get  
24745somebody to be able to write well and then so that's a really dif- we don't teach  
24746composition here um I have taught composition in an American University um I thought it  
24747was really excellent I thought it was really really valuable even for students who were  
24748majoring in [discipline] I thought it was great but we don't do it here um I know that a lot  
24749of colleagues would be horrified at the thought of introducing it but I I feel in a way that  
24750composition is something that that all students should do especially when it comes to  
24751writing academic papers which is a different thing from writing kind of impressionistic  
24752prose um so you know I have had many situations where with undergraduate students or  
24753postgraduate students and even PhD students working with me where I've said look there's  
24754a problem with the writing here you're gonna have to improve on this and I have asked  
24755them to go to you know yourselves or to other offices in college other departments in  
24756CAPSL and so on and said look you need to get help with this you need to improve this  
24757you can't and sometimes it has worked you know and it's often it's just a minor stylistic  
24758thing that is just being done incorrectly I just point it out and it's corrected but I have had a  
24759situation where on um at least two occasions were where um I've had you know very good  
24760students full of ideas full of the kind of openness and energy that I talked about earlier  
24761[pause] but they couldn't write yeah and I mean in one case it was a lot of a lot of anxiety a  
24762lot of stress uhm tears and uh the student withdrew in fact because it was clear to me that  
24763he was never going to write a PhD thesis he may have written a wonderful 400 page study  
24764of whoever the writer was @@ [name] um but he was not going to write a PhD and that's  
24765the key isn't it I mean they need to the students need to realize that what here to write is

24766academic [pause] prose critical prose it's not it's not that impressionistic um there's a place  
24767for that but this is not what we're in the business of teaching at least I'm not yeah  
24768R: yeah and so what it means we'll be like say structure and grammar argumentation  
24769coherence  
24770Ted: yeah all-all of those so um well structure is is is structure can be a problem um  
24771structuring an argument um knowing the knowing how important it is to you know to  
24772appreciate the connection between the form of an essay and what it is you're trying to say  
24773in an essay so between the form and the argument if you like the idea of paragraphing for  
24774example which is that's a common one um students not really appreciating the fact that you  
24775know when you begin an an essay that it needs to have an introduction it needs to move  
24776from one stage to the next and that these stages somehow should reflect the development  
24777the elaboration um the kind of trajectory of your argument that the thing needs to have a  
24778conclusion so they need to be this needs to be um spelled out sometimes there can be  
24779problems with with structure but it's it's often also just a question of style you know and  
24780sentence length inappropriate use of punctuation grammar um strange kind of archaisms  
24781creep into the prose um I have a particular problem with students who write whilst and  
24782amongst @@@ you know this is one of the things @@ you don't need this st- @ but you  
24783know so it's often about style um inappropriate use of punctuation um there is some  
24784anxiety often with the use of first-person you know in English prose we used to completely  
24785you know um kind of ban it but but now you have it use sparingly it's okay you know um  
24786but yeah questions of style grammar as well yeah  
24787R: and so you mentioned some support offered to students in terms of academics and  
24788writing etc. um would you say that these supports are //adequate within the university  
24789Ted: no| no absolutely not I mean and I think we do need to invest more in this I mean I  
24790know that there are structures in place and I think that you know the university has come a  
24791long way in the last 20 years I think the development of CAPSL maybe 10 15 years ago or  
24792so was wonderful um and you know the people in in in there [name] and others have been  
24793doing amazing work um but I do think that um uh you know we needed a dedicated Center  
24794and I mean I know that there are peer supports for example as well but we could do more  
24795with that uhm [pause] no I think as a university we should be doing more with this um it's  
24796difficult because it chang- it varies so much from subject to subject to subject you know  
24797the requirements vary so much from subject to subject but I think that most um academics  
24798when they're grading work um they might point out errors but they're not going to really  
24799give the kind of detailed explanations about these problems that students need and even if  
24800they give the kinds of detailed responses that students need there's no guarantee that the

24801students are going to learn from those responses so you know for example if I'm if I mark  
24802an essay and I underlined in red a grammatical error and try and explain why there is an  
24803error there and I sit down with the student and I said look there's a problem here usually  
24804what I do in this kind of situation is I I get them to read it out to me and they can hear the  
24805clunkiness then when they read it out loud and I'm like so do you hear something funny  
24806going on here but then they go off after five minutes and but there's no guarantee that  
24807they've really learned it so I think um it would be great if we could have a better system for  
24808uh being sure that our students are learning from their mistakes no matter how small those  
24809mistakes are um because it does infuriate me often that from year one to year four students  
24810often make the same mistakes year after year even when they've been pointed out to them  
24811[pause] now you might not be able to eliminate this completely but I think if we had a  
24812more structured system in place where we could say the students look you need to attend  
24813this maybe all students you know to pass a module in in junior fresh or senior fresh um  
24814which would be a kind of prerequisite for other kinds of work I don't know what the  
24815answer is but I don't think we have um I don't think we have enough uh in place to help our  
24816students yeah

24817R: and um so focusing kind of more on the international side on this point um are you  
24818aware of the type of preparation that your international students currently undertake before  
24819coming to [institution 1]

24820Ted: uhm unless they spell it out to me in their applications I'm usually not [pause]  
24821massively aware >well I mean< so they'll often say well I've done this program or done  
24822this diploma um in the covering letter they might say that they've done it but I'm not often  
24823aware beyond what they tell me you know and I and apart from you know I mean with  
24824[pause] PhD applicants I'm very interested to look at the CV to see where they're coming  
24825from what grades they have what level they've achieved if they've done a master's how  
24826well that went what their references are like what their writing sample is like that's a really  
24827major piece for me um but beyond those things that come in the application package I'm  
24828usually not um looking for anything more than that

24829R: right okay yeah and so you've talked a little bit about IELTS and the entry assessment at  
24830the University imposes on international students um can you kind of expand on your  
24831feelings about this entry

24832Ted: yeah yeah [sharp inhale] well I think it's important to have an internationally  
24833recognized you know language competence [pause] bar set I wonder if it's low at six point  
24834five? I I'm not sure that all colleagues are clear what that means exactly so I can say to you  
24835well I believe at six point five but I'm not actually sure precisely how one is assessed to

24836 achieve that level so and I would say that goes for most colleagues that they're not they  
24837 don't actually know what that means it's like saying well somebody has to get a first well  
24838 what's that mean um so the reason I wonder if it's the right level is because um I think that  
24839 the level probably it probably vary you know maybe maybe the level of requirement varies  
24840 from discipline to discipline but also because it worries me a little bit that you know some  
24841 students uh international students have come in obviously on that level or higher and there  
24842 are still problems when they get here so it's not a kind of fool safe way of of doing it there  
24843 there have to be other safeguards I think in place yeah yeah

24844 R: yeah and so what type of preparation do you think students should undertake before  
24845 coming to [institution 1]

24846 Ted: what kind of preparation so this assuming now they've been offered a place

24847 R: yeah offered or they're preparing //to apply

24848 Ted: to apply

24849 R: or say| they've gotten a conditional offer or something like that

24850 Ted: yeah okay so there's three different categories there right so if somebody is actually  
24851 applying we um say that we you know they need to have their transcripts ready they need  
24852 to have their references ready the- one of the key things for us is the um the writing sample  
24853 um [pause] you know that there are there may be problems with verification @@@with  
24854 this sometimes I lot depends on where a student is coming from you know if a student is  
24855 coming from Cork um then preparing to come to [institution 1] the challenges are gonna be  
24856 that much you know they're not gonna be as as um kind of difficult as they would be if  
24857 they're coming from you know from from from um Washington or or or Beijing um  
24858 certainly so I think that there are [pause] big you know cultural kind of uh differences say  
24859 between how you know it depends where you're coming from but there are big cultural  
24860 challenges in going to Ireland certainly and coming to [institution 1] itself now what  
24861 should they do to prepare [pause] gosh [pause] it's a really tough question to answer you go  
24862 on kind of on a case-by-case basis and I've dealt with students I've said to them look you  
24863 need to look at this look at this I mean it's very very hard to say I mean one thing I always  
24864 say is it's very expensive here right and you can't be guaranteed umm you know  
24865 accommodation on campus um I think um students who are coming in to do PhDs in  
24866 [discipline] in terms of preparation I mean I do I am pretty frank with them about the  
24867 expense of living here um if they're coming from outside Europe just to kind of kind of  
24868 cultural differences involved um I I I try as well to encourage students to be you know to  
24869 do a certain amount not not not an orientation in advance but to be ready when they get  
24870 here so if they're start going to start a PhD to actually use the summer beforehand to get up

24871to speed so that when they get here they can kind of move pretty quickly um it's a really  
24872difficult question to answer because it it change- l-li- you know it's so different for every  
24873different applicant you know I think um like if there's somebody coming here who is very  
24874comfortably off financially um has travelled a lot before or is able to speak English  
24875fluently has done a master's and got a first-class result in the masters they're probably  
24876gonna just fit right in but if somebody's coming from you know Shanghai has never been  
24877outside China before um their family is helping them financially to get here it's like you  
24878know a big dream come true um it's a huge challenge so how do you begin to prepare  
24879something for that yeah especially when you can't I can't say to them we're gonna put you  
24880up in this wonderful place we're gonna you know give you a stipend you know I I I have  
24881had last year I had one afternoon here I had four Russian students knock on my door in a in  
24882a state because they had they were my tutees so I was uh college tutor for these students  
24883they knocked on my door to say they'd just arrived that early that morning from St.  
24884Petersburg to find that the accommodation they had paid for in advance did not exist  
24885R: ah it was a scam

24886Ted: it was a scam so how do you prepare for somebody for this right now if this was  
24887somebody from I know from from Cork where they can get the train back home um or if  
24888it's somebody from a very you know well-to-do background they can you know make  
24889some calls and check into a hotel and Airbnb or something but these these students were  
24890really distressed so how do you prepare them for this so it really does vary from student to  
24891student in general maybe we can be do maybe maybe I mean wouldn't it be wonderful if if  
24892we could guarantee all of our international postgraduate students accommodation on  
24893campus in their first year or even in their first term while they settle in I think that'd be  
24894amazing but you know it's it's not likely to happen anytime soon um for on the academic  
24895side of things as a director of teaching and learning the best I can do is to make sure that  
24896the student knows what they're getting into reassure them that they got through a very  
24897competitive process that we are really happy for them to be here make sure they're in  
24898contact with your supervisor in advance of arriving as soon as possible when they arrive  
24899meet the supervisor and the supervisor then becomes the first point of contact in terms of  
24900just making sure that they're they're doing okay you know it's a really tough question  
24901@@@

24902R: yeah and so you've kind of mentioned these other factors such as accommodation the  
24903expense in Dublin etc. um how much of a factor does this play on academic success

24904Ted: huge yeah it's huge I mean I I I think it's [pause] very unusual to find a student who is  
24905dealing with stress in those areas to be performing well academically I think it's almost

24906impossible I mean I I I again as director of post-grad I have had meetings with lots of  
24907students who've been struggling financially or in bad accommodation or dealing with  
24908difficult personal circumstances trying to juggle a job with uh research and it's it's always  
24909the same whereas the students who are doing well generally tend not to have to worry  
24910about accommodation they're not worrying about money they're not worrying about these  
24911other things so I think we you know I don't know what we can do [pause] to make things  
24912easier for our students I think actually the most responsible thing is simply to put up you  
24913know to put out there at the point of application that Dublin is expensive being a PhD  
24914student can be solitary and difficult it's very hard to juggle a part-time job with PhD  
24915research um if you don't have funding you need to think twice about whether this is for you  
24916and that's a really hard thing to say because there're great students coming through every  
24917year who wants to PhDs can just about do it without funding but you're always going to be  
24918worried about those students that they're not that I mean you know it might just you know  
24919get too difficult for them um you know I'm coming more and more on to the view that it is  
24920irresponsible to take on students who do not have funding [pause] yeah you know it's it's  
24921very tough very tough I think um yeah uh it's a constant anxiety I think for people you  
24922know you're basically doing a full-time job for nothing yeah yeah @

24923R: yeah so so what do you say those factors are kind of that there are bigger factors in say  
24924language //in terms of academic success

24925Ted: um they're not bigger they're different| no I wouldn't I wouldn't I wouldn't quantify  
24926them um I think that there there are there's a whole you know there there are many  
24927challenges and this is this is one of them so they're kind of contextual circumstantial  
24928problems and challenges um [pause] yeah they're they're just different kinds of challenges  
24929I wouldn't say they're easier or harder and one of the most kind of financially comfortable  
24930students I've ever taught was also one of the most difficult in terms of writing and that guy  
24931actually had to leave but they you know he this was you know an incredibly comfortable  
24932individual

24933R: right so I'm if you could make suggestions for the course for the pre-session course  
24934um what would you like to see on the course

24935Ted: well your focus is on language [pause] and academic writing is that not no

24936R: kind of yeah um I mean I can basically give you a rundown of what does happen um we  
24937focus a lot on //building confidence first of

24938Ted: good good

24939all um reading| writing speaking listening so the major skills but also study skills like  
24940taking notes and whatnot um but also culture so taking them around [institution 1]  
24941introducing them to //Dublin so that  
24942Ted: good good wow wow  
24943R: would be kind of| what our focus is  
24944Ted: yeah yeah yeah that sounds great I didn't realize that it had a kind of context your  
24945component where you know I think it's important that you're doing stuff around  
24946communication but not only in terms of academic communication but just meeting the  
24947locals as it were I think that's really important for them to have a sense of your location and  
24948maybe even to visit the schools where that means so I don't know how many students are  
24949on in a class on average  
24950R: not many we have the whole program usually has about thirty to forty  
24951Ted: yeah so and are they divided up by faculty so there might be some from pharmacy  
24952some from medicine and some from  
24953R: um yes but they're all in the same class okay but generally we have more more business  
24954and science  
24955Ted: I think it would be good so what you're doing already I know is is wonderful and I  
24956know that it's really positive for the students and maybe it would be good to uh you know  
24957introduce them to the schools I don't mean to be bring them along to a school meeting and  
24958say hey everybody this is but maybe to reach out to um certain points of contact in the  
24959schools like myself if they're postgrad or undergrad directors just to come and say hi and  
24960for them to see that there's an arts building this is where they do this and you know to be  
24961aware of each other's uh to be aware to be aware where other things are happening in the  
24962college so they don't feel they're just in pharmacy or they're just in business uhm the fact  
24963that you're bringing them out into the community I think is really good uhm and maybe  
24964even to do more with that would be would be useful um you know maybe even through  
24965[institution 1] access program you know link up with the [institution 1] access program and  
24966I don't know maybe bring them all out to a school or something for an hour just to meet  
24967some kids you know so to get a real sense of the city within which they're gonna be living  
24968for a few years as students um confidence yes absolutely I would hope that at some point  
24969in their pre-sessional they have to stand up in front of the group or with a smaller group  
24970and give a presentation or make a pitch really tough but it has to be done uhm I think uhm  
24971giving them some s- I mean they are probably undergrad and postgrad students so I'm sure  
24972you involve the unions GSU and the Students Union in these meetings if not maybe they  
24973could be involved in some kind of you don't want to become an orientation office either I



24974mean that's not not your only job but I suppose program specific training is really  
24975important so that if somebody does this uhm [pause] you know they're part of the school of  
24976business that they're preparing work that would be really relevant to what they're going  
24977into I think uh that that might make it very challenging for you guys if you have to try and  
24978you know meet lots of different requirements yeah um I'm I'm not aware that our students  
24979have taken the pre-session I mean I hope that they have I do have a couple of  
24980international students at the minute and I wonder if they've did it I have one guy uhm  
24981R: I don't know  
24982Ted: from Lebanon in first year but it's the kind of thing that I think he would have  
24983benefited from yeah  
24984R: yeah no I don't think we've had any school of [discipline] students  
24985Ted: yeah  
24986R: yeah in-session maybe but not the pre-session  
24987Ted: uhm I think the in-session is great that idea and I think that um if that could be offered  
24988as a module as part of the structured Ph.D. program I think that would also be great I'd  
24989recommended then to people coming in  
24990R: that's actually our our application is in so it should be credit bearing next year  
24991Ted: I think that's fantastic and if that is available next year I'll be yeah on one of the first  
24992people to recommend it I think it would be really uh beneficial yeah  
24993R: yeah it should be so I'll put a bug in [name]'s ear to kind of tell everyone once it's  
24994approved um so my last question or my second to last question is um what do you hope  
24995that your students walk away with when they leave [institution 1] so how do you hope that  
24996they feel what do they take with them  
24997Ted: @ they feel good you know um I hope they have you know obviously a sense of  
24998achievement I mean it is a huge sense of achievement even if you're walking away with  
24999you know a degree that you feel you could have done better I think it is still a great  
25000achievement to come through after four years of post-grad or four years of undergrad or  
25001the whole whole thing no I mean a sense of achievement but a sense that you've made a  
25002contribution I suppose at postgrad level uh at postgrad level I think that's the key thing that  
25003I would like my students to walk away with I mean a sense that they have made a  
25004contribution to knowledge that's the key requirement for a PhD as well uhm and so I would  
25005like them to feel confident that they have achieved that and to know that if you get a PhD  
25006from this place you you should be confident about the fact that you have actually made that  
25007contribution so a sense of confidence a sense that you've made a contribution to knowledge  
25008uhm and that this cannot be taken away from you you know I think also um it's important

25009to feel like you're part of a community you know part of you know there's you know the  
25010place has a really rich uhm heritage and that you belong to to this you know that you've  
25011kind of earned your place

25012R: and do you think that students are walking away feeling that way

25013Ted: yes uh I I think the majority of our PhD students do feel that yeah I think so because  
25014it's tough it's really tough and uh if you have done three four or five years here researching  
25015a PhD you've written this thing you've defended it I think afterwards you feel wow I've  
25016I've done this I I'm confident about that now [pause] a few months out of the experience  
25017you might think well I don't have a job @where @is this gonna get me and then a certain  
25018amount of disillusionment might you know begin to creep in and that's understandable uhm  
25019but I think I think the sense of achievement is one that most people feel even when they're  
25020thinking why did I ever do that @@ you know uh I made this you know so

25021R: um so is there any question that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask

25022Ted: [long pause] you asked a lot of questions

25023R: yes I did

25024Ted: and they were and they were all they have all made me think and I suppose um I can't  
25025think of anything offhand uh but I will say that you've given me a lot to think about

25026R: brilliant

25027Ted: and that my answers should be thought of by you as maybe the beginnings of answers  
25028you know so do feel free to get in touch if you want me to go back if you have a transcript  
25029uh you can send it to me yeah I'd say look you h- you gave this answer uh could you be  
25030clear I'd be very happy to clarify it because I thought all the questions were very interesting  
25031and kind of open I'd be happy to follow them up and clarify and be more specific if that's  
25032needed

25033R: brilliant yeah definitely I can do that yeah so is there anything else you want to add

25034Ted: nope that's it that's very good I wish you every success with the research

25035R: thank you

**APPENDIX G: STUDENT INTERVIEW CODING TABLES**

| <b>Code</b>                            | <b>No. of Students</b> | <b>No. of Instances</b> |
|--|------------------------|-------------------------|
| Imagining the University               | 41                     | 2882                    |
| Evaluation of faculty and institutions | 41                     | 462                     |
| Negative                               | 39                     | 321                     |
| Basic course                           | 5                      | 15                      |
| Cash cow mentality                     | 6                      | 9                       |
| Caters to immigrants                   | 3                      | 3                       |
| Disorganized                           | 9                      | 16                      |
| Hands off                              | 13                     | 16                      |
| Inadequate financial support           | 2                      | 2                       |
| Inappropriate English preparation      | 3                      | 4                       |
| Ireland lack of continuous assessment  | 10                     | 15                      |
| Lack of communication                  | 18                     | 32                      |
| Lack of empathy                        | 6                      | 8                       |
| Lack of facilities and infrastructure  | 17                     | 35                      |
| Lack of responsiveness                 | 10                     | 19                      |
| Lack of transparent signposting        | 12                     | 17                      |
| Low retention rate                     | 2                      | 4                       |
| Poor conditions                        | 3                      | 4                       |
| Racism                                 | 5                      | 8                       |
| Supervisory issues                     | 7                      | 13                      |
| Unclear                                | 30                     | 62                      |
| Inflexible                             | 2                      | 2                       |
| Unsupportive                           | 18                     | 37                      |
| Positive                               | 38                     | 141                     |
| Clear expectations                     | 13                     | 13                      |
| Empathy                                | 2                      | 2                       |
| Faculty open to discussion             | 13                     | 16                      |
| Financial support                      | 2                      | 2                       |
| Flexible                               | 5                      | 5                       |
| Good English support                   | 9                      | 9                       |
| Good supervision                       | 11                     | 20                      |
| High quality                           | 4                      | 5                       |
| Prestige and opportunities             | 2                      | 2                       |
| Research institute                     | 2                      | 4                       |
| Responsive                             | 7                      | 8                       |
| Supportive                             | 26                     | 55                      |

|   |    |      |
|---|----|------|
| Expectations, qualities for success, and dominant discourse | 41 | 2420 |
| Faculty expectations or needs                               | 41 | 995  |
| Application of theory                                       | 3  | 3    |
| Autonomy or independence                                    | 15 | 20   |
| Confidence  | 1  | 1    |
| Content knowledge   | 20 | 25   |
| Creativity  | 4  | 5    |
| Criticality   | 23 | 35   |
| Curiosity   | 2  | 2    |
| Digital literacy  | 18 | 30   |
| Coding  | 3  | 9    |
| General   | 5  | 7    |
| VLE   | 12 | 14   |
| Engagement  | 2  | 3    |
| General and unspecified communication                       | 6  | 6    |
| Independence of thought                                     | 10 | 13   |
| Intelligence  | 1  | 1    |
| Justification   | 1  | 1    |
| Listening   | 39 | 121  |
| General   | 1  | 1    |
| Lectures  | 39 | 118  |
| General   | 2  | 2    |
| Guest speakers  | 2  | 2    |
| Interactive lectures  | 33 | 62   |
| Discussion or seminars                                      | 19 | 24   |
| Field work  | 1  | 1    |
| General   | 8  | 8    |
| group work  | 10 | 10   |
| Labs  | 4  | 4    |
| Placement   | 2  | 5    |
| Practicals  | 5  | 6    |
| Tutorial  | 2  | 4    |
| PPT based   | 37 | 52   |
| Understanding lectures                                      | 1  | 1    |
| Understanding peers   | 1  | 1    |
| Oral communication  | 40 | 172  |
| Assessment  | 24 | 42   |
| Conferences   | 6  | 8    |
| Interview   | 1  | 1    |
| Mediation   | 1  | 1    |
| Poster presentation   | 3  | 3    |

|                                   |    |    |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|
| Presentations                     | 18 | 28 |
| Role play                         | 1  | 1  |
| Collaboration                     | 1  | 3  |
| Expression                        | 1  | 1  |
| Group work                        | 13 | 26 |
| Interactive lectures              | 33 | 62 |
| Discussion or seminars            | 19 | 24 |
| Field work                        | 1  | 1  |
| General                           | 8  | 8  |
| group work                        | 10 | 10 |
| Labs                              | 4  | 4  |
| Placement                         | 2  | 5  |
| Practicals                        | 5  | 6  |
| Tutorial                          | 2  | 4  |
| Interviews for dissertation       | 4  | 4  |
| Meetings                          | 13 | 20 |
| Participation                     | 4  | 4  |
| Practical experience              | 6  | 8  |
| With community                    | 2  | 2  |
| Originality                       | 10 | 13 |
| Other assessment and deliverables | 19 | 47 |
| Coding                            | 3  | 4  |
| Course Work                       | 7  | 11 |
| Lab work                          | 4  | 8  |
| MCQ                               | 1  | 1  |
| Practical                         | 2  | 3  |
| Project                           | 5  | 7  |
| Statistics                        | 5  | 10 |
| TED talk                          | 1  | 1  |
| Website                           | 1  | 1  |
| Problem solving                   | 3  | 3  |
| Progress                          | 2  | 2  |
| Reading                           | 30 | 83 |
| Finding and using literature      | 12 | 17 |
| Independent reading               | 2  | 2  |
| Reading for assessment            | 15 | 24 |
| Required reading                  | 26 | 40 |
| Reflection                        | 6  | 6  |
| Research methods                  | 12 | 15 |
| Rote learning                     | 4  | 4  |
| Rubrics and handbooks             | 25 | 33 |

|                                 |    |     |
|---------------------------------|----|-----|
| Study skills                    | 4  | 4   |
| Academic skills                 | 1  | 1   |
| Time management                 | 3  | 3   |
| Vocabulary                      | 4  | 4   |
| Writing                         | 41 | 343 |
| Accuracy                        | 5  | 5   |
| Argument                        | 8  | 11  |
| Assessment and deliverables     | 41 | 237 |
| Case study                      | 1  | 1   |
| Coding instructions and writeup | 1  | 1   |
| Comparative paper               | 1  | 1   |
| CV                              | 1  | 1   |
| Dissertation                    | 30 | 105 |
| Abstract                        | 2  | 2   |
| Aims and objectives             | 4  | 5   |
| By publication                  | 1  | 1   |
| Confirmation                    | 3  | 4   |
| Data analysis                   | 2  | 2   |
| Data collection                 | 4  | 7   |
| Funding application             | 1  | 2   |
| General                         | 24 | 44  |
| Literature review               | 12 | 17  |
| Methodology                     | 7  | 10  |
| Proposal                        | 5  | 5   |
| Transcription                   | 1  | 2   |
| Translation                     | 2  | 2   |
| Viva                            | 1  | 1   |
| With company                    | 1  | 1   |
| Essay                           | 30 | 61  |
| General                         | 3  | 3   |
| Poster                          | 3  | 3   |
| Publication                     | 9  | 18  |
| Reaction paper                  | 2  | 3   |
| Reflection                      | 4  | 4   |
| Report                          | 5  | 6   |
| Research paper                  | 2  | 3   |
| Systematic review               | 2  | 2   |
| Written exams                   | 16 | 25  |
| Clarity and expression of ideas | 13 | 15  |
| Coherence and cohesion          | 4  | 4   |
| Concise                         | 2  | 4   |

|  |    |      |
|--|----|------|
| Data entry                                     | 1  | 1    |
| Grammar  | 3  | 3    |
| Imagining and responding to audience           | 1  | 1    |
| Logic  | 3  | 3    |
| Notetaking                                     | 4  | 4    |
| Objectivity                                    | 2  | 2    |
| Organization                                   | 5  | 5    |
| Presentation                                   | 6  | 6    |
| Proofreading                                   | 4  | 4    |
| References                                     | 12 | 14   |
| Spelling                                       | 2  | 2    |
| Structure                                      | 16 | 19   |
| Style and voice                                | 2  | 2    |
| Synthesis                                      | 1  | 1    |
| Student expectations and needs                 | 41 | 1425 |
| Administration tasks                           | 1  | 1    |
| Autonomy and independence                      | 15 | 30   |
| Collaboration                                  | 3  | 3    |
| Continual learning                             | 3  | 3    |
| Creativity                                     | 1  | 1    |
| Criticality                                    | 12 | 15   |
| Digital literacies                             | 7  | 7    |
| Engagement                                     | 1  | 2    |
| Institutional factors                          | 41 | 593  |
| Facilitation of integration and social life    | 26 | 48   |
| Improved student supports and resources        | 41 | 510  |
| Extra labs or support classes                  | 38 | 181  |
| Content or other skills tutorials              | 8  | 10   |
| EAP  | 36 | 106  |
| Discipline specific preparation                | 29 | 48   |
| General  | 22 | 34   |
| In-sessional EAP                               | 10 | 14   |
| Pre-sessional EAP                              | 7  | 10   |
| Induction                                      | 21 | 43   |
| Pre-arrival support                            | 18 | 22   |
| Financial support                              | 11 | 17   |
| Investment in equipment and materials          | 8  | 12   |
| Responsive lectures, courses, and institutions | 39 | 261  |
| Accessibility                                  | 4  | 5    |
| Clear expectations                             | 19 | 41   |
| Communication                                  | 14 | 27   |

|  |    |     |
|--|----|-----|
| Empathy and understanding                        | 13 | 23  |
| Examples of assessment                           | 6  | 8   |
| Extra time                                       | 5  | 7   |
| Faculty awareness and intervention               | 23 | 43  |
| Good overall environment                         | 5  | 6   |
| Improved courses                                 | 10 | 18  |
| Mentoring and supervision                        | 18 | 34  |
| Ongoing feedback                                 | 14 | 21  |
| Transparency                                     | 18 | 28  |
| Trajectory after graduation and job seeking help | 6  | 9   |
| Wellbeing support                                | 19 | 30  |
| Internationalization at home                     | 17 | 35  |
| Diversity  | 8  | 12  |
| Faculty training                                 | 3  | 3   |
| General  | 12 | 20  |
| Intelligence                                     | 1  | 1   |
| Listening  | 13 | 29  |
| Accents  | 4  | 7   |
| General  | 6  | 8   |
| Lectures   | 8  | 10  |
| PPT for guidance                                 | 2  | 2   |
| Seminar  | 1  | 1   |
| Understanding lectures                           | 6  | 7   |
| To professors                                    | 3  | 4   |
| Oral communication                               | 24 | 65  |
| Conferences                                      | 1  | 2   |
| Debate   | 1  | 1   |
| General  | 7  | 10  |
| General conversation with native speakers        | 3  | 5   |
| Group work                                       | 12 | 15  |
| In class   | 1  | 1   |
| Negotiation                                      | 1  | 1   |
| Networking                                       | 5  | 10  |
| Presentation                                     | 8  | 12  |
| Pronunciation                                    | 1  | 1   |
| Structure discussion argument                    | 2  | 2   |
| With professors                                  | 4  | 5   |
| Originality                                      | 5  | 6   |
| Other and internal factors                       | 40 | 286 |
| Confidence                                       | 15 | 22  |



|   |    |    |
|---|----|----|
| Curiosity                                   | 2  | 3  |
| Empathy                                     | 3  | 3  |
| Financial stability                         | 18 | 22 |
| Focus                                       | 6  | 6  |
| Good overall experience                     | 3  | 3  |
| Housing                                     | 18 | 25 |
| Integration and social life                 | 33 | 86 |
| General                                     | 25 | 48 |
| Intercultural experiences and contact       | 6  | 10 |
| Support from community                      | 9  | 12 |
| Support from peers                          | 12 | 16 |
| Managing expectations                       | 20 | 32 |
| Maturity                                    | 2  | 2  |
| Medical health                              | 1  | 1  |
| Motivation, determination, and goal setting | 20 | 30 |
| Objectivity                                 | 1  | 1  |
| Passion and interest                        | 9  | 12 |
| Patience                                    | 4  | 4  |
| Seeking help                                | 7  | 9  |
| Self-reflection                             | 2  | 3  |
| Wellbeing                                   | 17 | 22 |
| General                                     | 6  | 6  |
| Positive outlook                            | 1  | 1  |
| Resilience                                  | 1  | 1  |
| Stability of life                           | 5  | 5  |
| Work life balance                           | 9  | 9  |
| Practical experience                        | 8  | 10 |
| Previous familiarity with course content    | 11 | 15 |
| Problem solving                             | 2  | 2  |
| Reading                                     | 24 | 48 |
| Discipline specific reading                 | 7  | 7  |
| Finding and using literature                | 7  | 7  |
| General                                     | 11 | 14 |
| Independent reading                         | 4  | 5  |
| Reading strategies                          | 10 | 12 |
| Required reading                            | 3  | 3  |
| Risk taking                                 | 1  | 2  |
| Soft skills                                 | 1  | 2  |
| Study skills                                | 10 | 15 |
| Research skills                             | 5  | 6  |
| Time management                             | 6  | 9  |

|  |    |     |
|--|----|-----|
| Understanding and comprehension of content knowledge | 8  | 9   |
| Understanding expectations                           | 1  | 1   |
| Unspecified general communication or expression      | 38 | 115 |
| Academic language                                    | 21 | 30  |
| Articulation   | 1  | 1   |
| Expression of ideas                                  | 7  | 11  |
| Familiarity or proficiency with language             | 25 | 40  |
| General communication                                | 16 | 27  |
| Local English  | 5  | 6   |
| Vocabulary   | 11 | 14  |
| Writing  | 37 | 150 |
| Argumentation  | 4  | 5   |
| Clarity and expression                               | 10 | 11  |
| Concise  | 2  | 2   |
| General academic writing                             | 24 | 46  |
| Grammar  | 5  | 6   |
| Imagining and responding to audiences                | 2  | 2   |
| Linking phrases                                      | 4  | 4   |
| Logic  | 1  | 1   |
| Paraphrasing and summarizing                         | 4  | 7   |
| Practice with similar genres                         | 19 | 32  |
| Emails   | 3  | 3   |
| Essays   | 6  | 8   |
| General  | 13 | 19  |
| Poster presentation                                  | 1  | 1   |
| Report   | 1  | 1   |
| Proofreading   | 5  | 7   |
| Publications   | 5  | 9   |
| Referencing  | 3  | 3   |
| Spelling   | 1  | 1   |
| Structure  | 8  | 9   |
| Style  | 3  | 4   |
| Synthesis  | 1  | 1   |
| Meaning-making and negotiation                       | 41 | 218 |
| Discussion of expectations                           | 40 | 162 |
| Clear expectations                                   | 13 | 13  |
| Faculty approachable for questions                   | 13 | 16  |
| In class   | 17 | 19  |
| Unclear expectations or expectations not discussed   | 30 | 62  |
| With supervisor                                      | 10 | 14  |
| Rubric, handbooks, or guidelines                     | 25 | 33  |

|  |    |     |
|--|----|-----|
| VLE  | 5  | 5   |
| Opportunities for feedback                 | 26 | 56  |
| From faculty                               | 24 | 46  |
| To faculty                                 | 8  | 10  |
| Ownership and empowerment                  | 41 | 430 |
| Ownership of English                       | 31 | 122 |
| Academic English                           | 6  | 7   |
| English L1                                 | 7  | 9   |
| General                                    | 19 | 31  |
| Previous degree in English                 | 21 | 37  |
| Erasmus                                    | 3  | 3   |
| Work through or teach in English           | 15 | 38  |
| Strengths                                  | 41 | 308 |
| Benefits from language exam                | 17 | 35  |
| Academic reading                           | 5  | 5   |
| Confidence                                 | 1  | 1   |
| Essay writing                              | 4  | 4   |
| Familiarity with language                  | 4  | 4   |
| Fluency                                    | 1  | 1   |
| General English                            | 1  | 1   |
| Grammar                                    | 1  | 1   |
| Identification of strengths and weaknesses | 1  | 1   |
| Methodology for 4 skills                   | 9  | 10  |
| Sentence structure                         | 1  | 1   |
| Structure                                  | 3  | 3   |
| Vocabulary                                 | 3  | 3   |
| Criticality                                | 6  | 6   |
| Culture                                    | 12 | 15  |
| General language                           | 19 | 27  |
| Communication                              | 2  | 2   |
| Comprehension                              | 1  | 3   |
| Emotion and understanding through language | 1  | 1   |
| Expression                                 | 1  | 1   |
| Fluency                                    | 1  | 1   |
| General                                    | 4  | 5   |
| Grammar                                    | 3  | 3   |
| Nuances of language                        | 3  | 3   |
| Vocabulary development                     | 8  | 8   |
| Language not the problem                   | 2  | 3   |
| Listening                                  | 13 | 14  |
| Accents                                    | 1  | 1   |

|  |    |    |
|--|----|----|
| General  | 9  | 9  |
| Understanding                                    | 3  | 3  |
| Understanding some audiences                     | 1  | 1  |
| Personal or internal qualities                   | 32 | 75 |
| Confidence                                       | 19 | 28 |
| Confidence in language                           | 3  | 5  |
| Confidence in subject knowledge                  | 17 | 23 |
| Creativity                                       | 1  | 1  |
| Curiosity  | 2  | 2  |
| Deep thinker                                     | 2  | 2  |
| Engagement                                       | 1  | 1  |
| Humor  | 1  | 1  |
| Independence                                     | 2  | 2  |
| Interest   | 3  | 3  |
| Logic  | 2  | 2  |
| Originality                                      | 2  | 2  |
| Patience   | 1  | 1  |
| Quick learner                                    | 1  | 1  |
| Relate to others                                 | 5  | 7  |
| Self-motivation, determination, and goal setting | 15 | 22 |
| Practical experience                             | 2  | 3  |
| Progress   | 12 | 22 |
| Academic   | 3  | 3  |
| English  | 12 | 19 |
| Reading  | 18 | 20 |
| Discipline specific reading                      | 1  | 1  |
| Finding and using literature                     | 2  | 3  |
| General  | 12 | 13 |
| Speed  | 1  | 1  |
| Strategies                                       | 1  | 1  |
| Understanding vocabulary from context            | 1  | 1  |
| Social support                                   | 7  | 13 |
| Classmates                                       | 5  | 5  |
| Family support                                   | 2  | 5  |
| Friends  | 3  | 3  |
| Speaking   | 15 | 22 |
| Articulation                                     | 2  | 4  |
| Changing accent                                  | 1  | 1  |
| General  | 11 | 12 |
| Group work                                       | 2  | 2  |
| Participation                                    | 1  | 1  |

|  |    |      |
|--|----|------|
| Presentations                                      | 1  | 2    |
| Study and research skills                          | 14 | 20   |
| Data collection                                    | 1  | 1    |
| Lab work   | 1  | 1    |
| Memorization                                       | 1  | 1    |
| Research   | 7  | 10   |
| Time management                                    | 7  | 7    |
| Writing  | 21 | 33   |
| Accuracy   | 1  | 1    |
| argumentation                                      | 1  | 1    |
| Clarity and expression                             | 2  | 2    |
| Cohesion   | 1  | 1    |
| Essay  | 1  | 1    |
| General  | 13 | 16   |
| Literature reviews                                 | 1  | 1    |
| Opportunity for elaboration                        | 1  | 1    |
| Organization                                       | 2  | 3    |
| Proofreading                                       | 1  | 1    |
| Style  | 1  | 1    |
| Synthesis  | 1  | 1    |
| Written exams                                      | 3  | 3    |
| Regulation, rules, and authority                   | 41 | 1357 |
| External authority                                 | 41 | 257  |
| College allowed entry without language requirement | 4  | 5    |
| College internal language exam                     | 4  | 5    |
| English or EAP instruction                         | 35 | 120  |
| Erasmus OLS  | 1  | 2    |
| Exam Prep  | 17 | 21   |
| In Ireland   | 8  | 9    |
| Outside of Ireland                                 | 10 | 12   |
| General English                                    | 13 | 19   |
| In Ireland   | 8  | 10   |
| Outside of Ireland                                 | 8  | 9    |
| In-sessional EAP                                   | 6  | 7    |
| Pre-masters  | 1  | 3    |
| Pre-sessional EAP                                  | 3  | 3    |
| Private classes                                    | 4  | 5    |
| School English                                     | 26 | 60   |
| English L1   | 7  | 9    |
| Erasmus  | 3  | 3    |
| General  | 12 | 14   |

|  |    |     |
|--|----|-----|
| Previous degree in English                   | 21 | 34  |
| Erasmus                                      | 5  | 5   |
| External examiner                            | 2  | 2   |
| External funding body                        | 2  | 5   |
| GNIB   | 3  | 3   |
| Professional accrediting body                | 2  | 4   |
| Proofreaders or external help on assignments | 7  | 8   |
| QQI  | 1  | 1   |
| Standardized language tests                  | 33 | 99  |
| Cambridge                                    | 2  | 3   |
| IELTS  | 25 | 46  |
| IELTS plus something                         | 2  | 3   |
| Mismatch between uni requirements            | 26 | 39  |
| PET  | 1  | 2   |
| TOEFL  | 6  | 9   |
| Faculty expectations or needs                | 41 | 995 |
| Application of theory                        | 3  | 3   |
| Autonomy or independence                     | 15 | 20  |
| Confidence                                   | 1  | 1   |
| Content knowledge                            | 20 | 25  |
| Creativity                                   | 4  | 5   |
| Criticality                                  | 23 | 35  |
| Curiosity                                    | 2  | 2   |
| Digital literacy                             | 18 | 30  |
| Coding                                       | 3  | 9   |
| General                                      | 5  | 7   |
| VLE  | 12 | 14  |
| Engagement                                   | 2  | 3   |
| General and unspecified communication        | 6  | 6   |
| Independence of thought                      | 10 | 13  |
| Intelligence                                 | 1  | 1   |
| Justification                                | 1  | 1   |
| Listening                                    | 39 | 121 |
| General                                      | 1  | 1   |
| Lectures                                     | 39 | 118 |
| General                                      | 2  | 2   |
| Guest speakers                               | 2  | 2   |
| Interactive lectures                         | 33 | 62  |
| Discussion or seminars                       | 19 | 24  |
| Field work                                   | 1  | 1   |
| General                                      | 8  | 8   |

|                                   |    |     |
|-----------------------------------|----|-----|
| group work                        | 10 | 10  |
| Labs                              | 4  | 4   |
| Placement                         | 2  | 5   |
| Practicals                        | 5  | 6   |
| Tutorial                          | 2  | 4   |
| PPT based                         | 37 | 52  |
| Understanding lectures            | 1  | 1   |
| Understanding peers               | 1  | 1   |
| Oral communication                | 40 | 172 |
| Assessment                        | 24 | 42  |
| Conferences                       | 6  | 8   |
| Interview                         | 1  | 1   |
| Mediation                         | 1  | 1   |
| Poster presentation               | 3  | 3   |
| Presentations                     | 18 | 28  |
| Role play                         | 1  | 1   |
| Collaboration                     | 1  | 3   |
| Expression                        | 1  | 1   |
| Group work                        | 13 | 26  |
| Interactive lectures              | 33 | 62  |
| Discussion or seminars            | 19 | 24  |
| Field work                        | 1  | 1   |
| General                           | 8  | 8   |
| group work                        | 10 | 10  |
| Labs                              | 4  | 4   |
| Placement                         | 2  | 5   |
| Practicals                        | 5  | 6   |
| Tutorial                          | 2  | 4   |
| Interviews for dissertation       | 4  | 4   |
| Meetings                          | 13 | 20  |
| Participation                     | 4  | 4   |
| Practical experience              | 6  | 8   |
| With community                    | 2  | 2   |
| Originality                       | 10 | 13  |
| Other assessment and deliverables | 19 | 47  |
| Coding                            | 3  | 4   |
| Course Work                       | 7  | 11  |
| Lab work                          | 4  | 8   |
| MCQ                               | 1  | 1   |
| Practical                         | 2  | 3   |
| Project                           | 5  | 7   |

|                                 |    |     |
|---------------------------------|----|-----|
| Statistics                      | 5  | 10  |
| TED talk                        | 1  | 1   |
| Website                         | 1  | 1   |
| Problem solving                 | 3  | 3   |
| Progress                        | 2  | 2   |
| Reading                         | 30 | 83  |
| Finding and using literature    | 12 | 17  |
| Independent reading             | 2  | 2   |
| Reading for assessment          | 15 | 24  |
| Required reading                | 26 | 40  |
| Reflection                      | 6  | 6   |
| Research methods                | 12 | 15  |
| Rote learning                   | 4  | 4   |
| Rubrics and handbooks           | 25 | 33  |
| Study skills                    | 4  | 4   |
| Academic skills                 | 1  | 1   |
| Time management                 | 3  | 3   |
| Vocabulary                      | 4  | 4   |
| Writing                         | 41 | 343 |
| Accuracy                        | 5  | 5   |
| Argument                        | 8  | 11  |
| Assessment and deliverables     | 41 | 237 |
| Case study                      | 1  | 1   |
| Coding instructions and writeup | 1  | 1   |
| Comparative paper               | 1  | 1   |
| CV                              | 1  | 1   |
| Dissertation                    | 30 | 105 |
| Abstract                        | 2  | 2   |
| Aims and objectives             | 4  | 5   |
| By publication                  | 1  | 1   |
| Confirmation                    | 3  | 4   |
| Data analysis                   | 2  | 2   |
| Data collection                 | 4  | 7   |
| Funding application             | 1  | 2   |
| General                         | 24 | 44  |
| Literature review               | 12 | 17  |
| Methodology                     | 7  | 10  |
| Proposal                        | 5  | 5   |
| Transcription                   | 1  | 2   |
| Translation                     | 2  | 2   |
| Viva                            | 1  | 1   |



|   |    |      |
|---|----|------|
| With company                            | 1  | 1    |
| Essay                                   | 30 | 61   |
| General                                 | 3  | 3    |
| Poster                                  | 3  | 3    |
| Publication                             | 9  | 18   |
| Reaction paper                          | 2  | 3    |
| Reflection                              | 4  | 4    |
| Report                                  | 5  | 6    |
| Research paper                          | 2  | 3    |
| Systematic review                       | 2  | 2    |
| Written exams                           | 16 | 25   |
| Clarity and expression of ideas         | 13 | 15   |
| Coherence and cohesion                  | 4  | 4    |
| Concise                                 | 2  | 4    |
| Data entry                              | 1  | 1    |
| grammar                                 | 3  | 3    |
| Imagining and responding to audience    | 1  | 1    |
| Logic                                   | 3  | 3    |
| Notetaking                              | 4  | 4    |
| Objectivity                             | 2  | 2    |
| Organization                            | 5  | 5    |
| Presentation                            | 6  | 6    |
| Proofreading                            | 4  | 4    |
| References                              | 12 | 14   |
| spelling                                | 2  | 2    |
| Structure                               | 16 | 19   |
| Style and voice                         | 2  | 2    |
| Synthesis                               | 1  | 1    |
| 'NS' yardstick                          | 27 | 105  |
| Holding self or peers to 'NS' yardstick | 25 | 74   |
| Communication with 'NS' yardstick       | 8  | 13   |
| Peers and general mention               | 18 | 27   |
| Self                                    | 16 | 34   |
| 'Inner circle'                          | 8  | 9    |
| Judgement from others                   | 11 | 15   |
| 'NS' vs 'NNS' teachers                  | 6  | 7    |
| Struggle and resistance                 | 41 | 1151 |
| Causes of struggle                      | 41 | 589  |
| Academics                               | 14 | 31   |
| Background of subject content           | 11 | 16   |
| Difficulty of subject content           | 2  | 5    |

|   |    |     |
|---|----|-----|
| Fast pace of research being published               | 1  | 1   |
| Interest in subject content                         | 2  | 3   |
| Late return to academics                            | 2  | 6   |
| Culture   | 33 | 81  |
| Academic culture or setting                         | 28 | 63  |
| Irish culture or adjustment to Irish culture        | 16 | 18  |
| External factors                                    | 30 | 105 |
| Family children                                     | 2  | 4   |
| Finances  | 13 | 24  |
| Housing   | 19 | 27  |
| Immigration   | 4  | 6   |
| Racism  | 5  | 8   |
| Sticking with same language group                   | 4  | 8   |
| Transportation                                      | 5  | 7   |
| Working while studying                              | 13 | 21  |
| Institutional factors                               | 37 | 182 |
| Administration                                      | 14 | 27  |
| Basic course  | 5  | 15  |
| Bureaucracy   | 1  | 2   |
| Cash cow mentality                                  | 6  | 9   |
| Disrespect from faculty                             | 1  | 1   |
| Environment   | 2  | 3   |
| Lack of communication                               | 18 | 32  |
| Lack of ongoing assessment                          | 10 | 15  |
| Lack of training in library systems                 | 2  | 2   |
| Multiple lecturers for one module                   | 3  | 3   |
| Outside factors impacting research                  | 1  | 1   |
| Supervisory issues                                  | 4  | 10  |
| Unclear expectations                                | 30 | 62  |
| Language  | 37 | 157 |
| Academic language                                   | 31 | 75  |
| General   | 4  | 5   |
| Insufficient exposure to accents                    | 2  | 3   |
| Insufficient previous language courses              | 8  | 10  |
| Judgement from others                               | 11 | 15  |
| Mismatch between language exam and uni requirements | 26 | 39  |
| Opportunities to use language                       | 8  | 10  |
| Mental health                                       | 20 | 33  |
| Illness   | 1  | 1   |
| Isolation   | 18 | 25  |
| Stress  | 5  | 7   |

|   |    |     |
|---|----|-----|
| Disagreement or independence from faculty | 2  | 6   |
| Struggle                                  | 41 | 556 |
| Content                                   | 2  | 2   |
| Creativity                                | 1  | 1   |
| Criticality                               | 5  | 7   |
| Data collection                           | 1  | 2   |
| Demotivation                              | 2  | 2   |
| Digital literacies                        | 1  | 1   |
| Discipline specific aspects               | 16 | 28  |
| External factors                          | 28 | 52  |
| General                                   | 4  | 4   |
| Integration and social life               | 20 | 29  |
| Work life balance                         | 11 | 19  |
| Long hours                                | 1  | 2   |
| Volume of work                            | 6  | 9   |
| Finding opportunities                     | 2  | 2   |
| Focus                                     | 1  | 1   |
| Gaining access to materials               | 1  | 2   |
| General language                          | 25 | 40  |
| Accuracy                                  | 4  | 4   |
| Crossover from L1                         | 1  | 1   |
| Expression                                | 1  | 1   |
| Expression while speaking                 | 1  | 1   |
| General                                   | 7  | 7   |
| Grammar                                   | 2  | 2   |
| Late start learning English               | 1  | 1   |
| Local slang                               | 5  | 7   |
| Vocabulary                                | 15 | 16  |
| General struggle                          | 1  | 1   |
| Group work                                | 4  | 6   |
| Independence and autonomy                 | 2  | 2   |
| Leadership skills                         | 1  | 1   |
| Listening                                 | 20 | 35  |
| accent                                    | 15 | 17  |
| following speaker                         | 5  | 7   |
| General                                   | 2  | 2   |
| speed of speaker                          | 9  | 9   |
| Logic                                     | 3  | 3   |
| Maths                                     | 3  | 4   |
| Memorization                              | 2  | 3   |
| Mental health                             | 22 | 49  |

|   |    |     |
|---|----|-----|
| General                                       | 15 | 24  |
| Isolation                                     | 18 | 25  |
| Perfectionism                                 | 1  | 1   |
| Reading                                       | 14 | 27  |
| Amount of reading                             | 6  | 7   |
| Discipline specific readings                  | 6  | 6   |
| General                                       | 1  | 3   |
| Reading strategies                            | 4  | 5   |
| Speed   | 5  | 6   |
| Self-blame and doubt                          | 34 | 120 |
| Confidence                                    | 8  | 13  |
| Confidence in language or communication       | 10 | 12  |
| General                                       | 32 | 88  |
| Lack of progress or meeting self-expectations | 4  | 7   |
| Speaking                                      | 19 | 48  |
| Accent  | 7  | 8   |
| Expression                                    | 3  | 3   |
| General                                       | 6  | 7   |
| Grammar                                       | 2  | 2   |
| Idioms  | 2  | 2   |
| Job interviews                                | 1  | 1   |
| Participation                                 | 3  | 3   |
| Phrasal verbs                                 | 1  | 1   |
| Presentations                                 | 4  | 6   |
| Pronunciation                                 | 2  | 4   |
| Quick thinking                                | 2  | 2   |
| Structure                                     | 2  | 2   |
| Vocabulary                                    | 2  | 2   |
| With a group                                  | 3  | 5   |
| Time management and procrastination           | 11 | 11  |
| Writing                                       | 30 | 105 |
| Academic writing                              | 11 | 16  |
| Argumentation                                 | 1  | 1   |
| Coherence                                     | 2  | 2   |
| Collocations                                  | 2  | 2   |
| Concise                                       | 2  | 2   |
| Exams   | 1  | 2   |
| Expression and clarity                        | 3  | 3   |
| General                                       | 10 | 15  |
| Grammar                                       | 3  | 4   |
| Linking phrases                               | 1  | 1   |

|                                   |    |      |
|-----------------------------------|----|------|
| Literature review                 | 2  | 3    |
| Nuance                            | 1  | 1    |
| Paraphrasing                      | 1  | 1    |
| Phrasal verbs                     | 1  | 1    |
| Planning                          | 3  | 3    |
| Precision                         | 2  | 2    |
| Prepositions                      | 1  | 1    |
| Proofreading                      | 1  | 2    |
| Sentence structure                | 1  | 1    |
| Speed                             | 2  | 4    |
| Spelling                          | 2  | 4    |
| Starting                          | 1  | 2    |
| Structure                         | 8  | 16   |
| Style and voice                   | 4  | 7    |
| Synthesis                         | 2  | 2    |
| Vocabulary                        | 6  | 7    |
| Variation                         | 41 | 1078 |
| Communities of discourse          | 33 | 123  |
| Discipline specific               | 16 | 24   |
| English only                      | 1  | 1    |
| Englishes                         | 19 | 52   |
| Accent                            | 15 | 24   |
| General                           | 13 | 28   |
| Genre                             | 4  | 4    |
| Translanguaging                   | 20 | 42   |
| Culture                           | 32 | 135  |
| Academic culture                  | 30 | 108  |
| General                           | 14 | 19   |
| Language education                | 5  | 8    |
| Degree level                      | 8  | 13   |
| Modules, assessment, and practice | 41 | 482  |
| Choice in assessment              | 14 | 20   |
| Course requirements               | 3  | 4    |
| General mention                   | 1  | 2    |
| Institution specific              | 4  | 7    |
| Lecturers                         | 1  | 2    |
| Expectations                      | 7  | 10   |
| Feedback                          | 2  | 2    |
| Lecturing style                   | 9  | 10   |
| Marking                           | 3  | 3    |
| Lectures                          | 39 | 124  |

|                                   |    |     |
|-----------------------------------|----|-----|
| Guest speakers                    | 2  | 2   |
| Interactive lectures              | 33 | 62  |
| Discussion or seminars            | 19 | 24  |
| Field work                        | 1  | 1   |
| General                           | 8  | 8   |
| group work                        | 10 | 10  |
| Labs                              | 4  | 4   |
| Placement                         | 2  | 5   |
| Practicals                        | 5  | 6   |
| Tutorial                          | 2  | 4   |
| Placement or practice             | 6  | 8   |
| PPT based                         | 37 | 52  |
| Types of assessment               | 41 | 323 |
| Other assessment and deliverables | 19 | 47  |
| Coding                            | 3  | 4   |
| Course Work                       | 7  | 11  |
| Lab work                          | 4  | 8   |
| MCQ                               | 1  | 1   |
| Practical                         | 2  | 3   |
| Project                           | 5  | 7   |
| Statistics                        | 5  | 10  |
| TED talk                          | 1  | 1   |
| Website                           | 1  | 1   |
| Speaking                          | 24 | 42  |
| Conferences                       | 6  | 8   |
| Interview                         | 1  | 1   |
| Mediation                         | 1  | 1   |
| Poster presentation               | 3  | 3   |
| Presentations                     | 18 | 28  |
| Role play                         | 1  | 1   |
| Writing                           | 41 | 234 |
| Case study                        | 1  | 1   |
| Coding instructions and writeup   | 1  | 1   |
| Comparative paper                 | 1  | 1   |
| CV                                | 1  | 1   |
| Dissertation                      | 30 | 105 |
| Abstract                          | 2  | 2   |
| Aims and objectives               | 4  | 5   |
| By publication                    | 1  | 1   |
| Confirmation                      | 3  | 4   |
| Data analysis                     | 2  | 2   |

|                                 |    |     |
|---------------------------------|----|-----|
| Data collection                 | 4  | 7   |
| Funding application             | 1  | 2   |
| General                         | 24 | 44  |
| Literature review               | 12 | 17  |
| Methodology                     | 7  | 10  |
| Proposal                        | 5  | 5   |
| Transcription                   | 1  | 2   |
| Translation                     | 2  | 2   |
| Viva                            | 1  | 1   |
| With company                    | 1  | 1   |
| Essay                           | 30 | 61  |
| Poster                          | 3  | 3   |
| Publication                     | 9  | 18  |
| Reaction paper                  | 2  | 3   |
| Reflection                      | 4  | 4   |
| Report                          | 5  | 6   |
| Research paper                  | 2  | 3   |
| Systematic review               | 2  | 2   |
| Written exams                   | 16 | 25  |
| Roles and Identity              | 41 | 325 |
| Examples and personal anecdotes | 39 | 279 |
| Intern                          | 1  | 1   |
| PhD rep                         | 1  | 1   |
| Professional                    | 12 | 17  |
| Teacher                         | 4  | 4   |
| Worker                          | 12 | 23  |

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**APPENDIX H: FACULTY INTERVIEW CODING TABLE**

| <b>Name</b>                                 | <b>No. of Faculty</b> | <b>No. of Instances</b> |
|---|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Imagining students and student struggle     | 14                    | 904                     |
| 'Causes' of student struggle                | 14                    | 288                     |
| Culture                                     | 13                    | 71                      |
| Country                                     | 13                    | 64                      |
| Academic                                    | 12                    | 35                      |
| Assessment type or experience               | 4                     | 5                       |
| College supports                            | 1                     | 1                       |
| Criticality                                 | 2                     | 2                       |
| Educational system and learning style       | 3                     | 5                       |
| Expectations                                | 5                     | 5                       |
| Lectures                                    | 3                     | 3                       |
| Plagiarism                                  | 4                     | 4                       |
| Reading practices                           | 1                     | 1                       |
| Supervision and feedback                    | 1                     | 2                       |
| Writing style or expression                 | 4                     | 4                       |
| Behavior                                    | 6                     | 7                       |
| General                                     | 5                     | 9                       |
| Generational                                | 1                     | 1                       |
| Technology                                  | 1                     | 1                       |
| Heritage or native language influence       | 2                     | 2                       |
| Intercultural communication and sensitivity | 4                     | 6                       |
| Socioeconomic                               | 1                     | 4                       |
| Institutional                               | 3                     | 5                       |
| Regional                                    | 2                     | 2                       |
| Institutional factors                       | 13                    | 32                      |
| LX and L1 struggle                          | 13                    | 100                     |
| Clarity of research                         | 3                     | 3                       |
| Disability                                  | 4                     | 14                      |
| Jump or differences between degree levels   | 11                    | 47                      |
| Independence                                | 6                     | 10                      |
| NNS better than NS                          | 2                     | 2                       |
| Non-traditional learner                     | 3                     | 6                       |
| Other factors                               | 10                    | 48                      |
| Finances                                    | 5                     | 7                       |
| Housing                                     | 5                     | 7                       |
| Job or need to work                         | 7                     | 11                      |
| Mental health                               | 5                     | 7                       |



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|   |    |     |
|---|----|-----|
| Other circumstances                                 | 4  | 4   |
| Precarity   | 1  | 1   |
| Social  | 4  | 6   |
| Struggle due to language level or communication     | 12 | 37  |
| ES complaint  | 2  | 3   |
| Struggle despite IELTS                              | 7  | 11  |
| Evaluation of students                              | 14 | 287 |
| Ability to adapt                                    | 1  | 1   |
| Ability to answer the question                      | 1  | 1   |
| Ability to apply feedback                           | 3  | 5   |
| Ability to critically read                          | 3  | 3   |
| Ability to express or generally communicate         | 7  | 26  |
| Accent  | 1  | 1   |
| Articulation  | 2  | 4   |
| Practice-setting                                    | 2  | 5   |
| Scientific communication                            | 1  | 2   |
| Ability to find and use literature                  | 3  | 4   |
| Ability to imagine and respond to audience          | 3  | 5   |
| Ability to link theory with application or practice | 2  | 2   |
| Ability to reflect                                  | 4  | 6   |
| Completion of reading                               | 8  | 15  |
| Knowledge of content                                | 1  | 1   |
| Level of ambition                                   | 1  | 1   |
| Level of autonomy or independence                   | 7  | 9   |
| Level of confidence                                 | 6  | 11  |
| Level of creativity                                 | 5  | 5   |
| Level of criticality                                | 7  | 14  |
| Level of curiosity                                  | 1  | 1   |
| Level of engagement                                 | 7  | 12  |
| Level of intelligence or spark                      | 2  | 4   |
| Level of logic                                      | 1  | 1   |
| Level of motivation                                 | 1  | 1   |
| Level of originality or innovation                  | 2  | 2   |
| Level of passion                                    | 1  | 1   |
| Plagiarism  | 7  | 13  |
| Problem solving ability                             | 1  | 3   |
| Procrastination                                     | 2  | 2   |
| Struggle despite IELTS                              | 7  | 11  |
| Synthesis   | 3  | 7   |
| Vocabulary  | 3  | 3   |
| Writing ability                                     | 13 | 117 |

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|   |    |     |
|---|----|-----|
| Argumentation                           | 3  | 5   |
| Clarity                                 | 6  | 11  |
| Cohesion and coherence                  | 3  | 6   |
| Concise                                 | 2  | 3   |
| Evidence                                | 2  | 2   |
| General mention                         | 12 | 48  |
| Grammar and sentence structure          | 8  | 10  |
| Presentation                            | 6  | 6   |
| Proofreading                            | 1  | 2   |
| Spelling                                | 1  | 1   |
| Structure                               | 6  | 8   |
| Technical and scientific communication  | 2  | 5   |
| Voice and style                         | 4  | 10  |
| International or EAL student definition | 14 | 223 |
| Erasmus and EU students                 | 13 | 52  |
| Eastern European                        | 4  | 6   |
| Croatian                                | 1  | 2   |
| Latvian                                 | 1  | 1   |
| Polish                                  | 2  | 2   |
| English                                 | 3  | 3   |
| French                                  | 6  | 9   |
| German                                  | 4  | 8   |
| Greek                                   | 1  | 2   |
| Italian                                 | 5  | 6   |
| Nordic                                  | 1  | 2   |
| Spanish                                 | 3  | 4   |
| Turkish                                 | 1  | 1   |
| General international students          | 11 | 75  |
| NNS                                     | 9  | 25  |
| Visiting students                       | 2  | 14  |
| NNS in Ireland                          | 4  | 6   |
| Non-EU                                  | 12 | 90  |
| African country not specified           | 2  | 5   |
| Asian                                   | 3  | 7   |
| Middle Eastern                          | 1  | 1   |
| Non-EU NNS                              | 9  | 24  |
| Brazilian                               | 2  | 2   |
| Chinese                                 | 6  | 17  |
| Indonesian                              | 1  | 1   |
| Korean                                  | 1  | 1   |
| Lebanese                                | 1  | 1   |

|  |    |     |
|--|----|-----|
| Russian  | 1  | 1   |
| Non-EU NS  | 11 | 47  |
| American (USA)                                     | 8  | 20  |
| Canadian   | 2  | 3   |
| Indian   | 5  | 8   |
| Kenyan   | 1  | 1   |
| Malawian   | 1  | 1   |
| Malaysian  | 1  | 2   |
| Nigerian   | 3  | 7   |
| Pakistani  | 1  | 1   |
| Rwandan  | 1  | 1   |
| Singaporean  | 1  | 1   |
| Zimbabwean   | 1  | 1   |
| Southeast Asian                                    | 1  | 1   |
| Language not an issue                              | 9  | 22  |
| Language not the focus                             | 5  | 14  |
| Neutral or positive mention of widening access     | 8  | 13  |
| Disability   | 1  | 1   |
| Diverse  | 3  | 3   |
| Non-traditional pathways or mature students        | 5  | 5   |
| Socioeconomic factors, class, racism, sexism       | 2  | 2   |
| Previous knowledge of student background           | 14 | 30  |
| Current IELTS cut-off band                         | 14 | 20  |
| Aware  | 12 | 15  |
| Unaware or superficial awareness                   | 3  | 5   |
| Limited awareness                                  | 1  | 1   |
| No awareness                                       | 4  | 4   |
| Only academic                                      | 5  | 5   |
| Student background knowledge of discipline         | 8  | 10  |
| Student experience                                 | 11 | 31  |
| Overall student experience                         | 9  | 15  |
| Practice   | 1  | 2   |
| Student experience of community                    | 8  | 14  |
| Meaning-making and negotiation                     | 14 | 302 |
| Faculty and student negotiation and meaning-making | 14 | 192 |
| Admission  | 1  | 1   |
| Assessment   | 14 | 55  |
| Discussion of expectations                         | 13 | 28  |
| Proofreading                                       | 2  | 3   |
| Student choice or 'stamp' on assessment            | 9  | 24  |
| Classroom setting                                  | 13 | 29  |

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|---|----|------|
| Feedback  | 13 | 48   |
| From students                                   | 11 | 15   |
| To students                                     | 11 | 33   |
| Guide   | 10 | 27   |
| Language and meaning                            | 6  | 14   |
| Placement                                       | 1  | 3    |
| Supervision or meetings                         | 11 | 15   |
| Faculty negotiation and meaning-making          | 13 | 110  |
| Internal meaning-making or negotiation          | 13 | 87   |
| Content and language intertwined                | 10 | 22   |
| Expectations and assessment                     | 11 | 18   |
| Faculty reflection                              | 13 | 40   |
| Language or meaning                             | 5  | 7    |
| Negotiation with outside players                | 8  | 23   |
| Negotiation with college or university          | 4  | 7    |
| Negotiation with government                     | 4  | 5    |
| Negotiation with other faculty                  | 7  | 11   |
| Regulation, rules, and authority                | 14 | 1570 |
| Expectations and dominant discourse             | 14 | 1316 |
| Ability to apply feedback                       | 3  | 5    |
| Academic integrity                              | 11 | 30   |
| Paraphrasing and summarizing                    | 2  | 2    |
| Plagiarism                                      | 9  | 13   |
| Referencing                                     | 9  | 15   |
| Academic or specific vocabulary                 | 4  | 7    |
| Ambition  | 5  | 6    |
| Application of theory                           | 3  | 3    |
| Articulation                                    | 3  | 9    |
| Autonomy or independence                        | 9  | 27   |
| Confidence                                      | 8  | 22   |
| Continual learning                              | 5  | 7    |
| Creativity                                      | 5  | 7    |
| Critical thinking, analysis, and interpretation | 13 | 37   |
| Description of institutional culture            | 5  | 10   |
| Digital literacies                              | 12 | 39   |
| Virtual learning environment and tools          | 12 | 37   |
| Discipline and motivation                       | 6  | 8    |
| Email   | 4  | 6    |
| Engagement                                      | 9  | 31   |
| Evidence  | 6  | 7    |
| Flexibility                                     | 1  | 1    |

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|--|----|-----|
| Functional content-based skills        | 2  | 4   |
| Imagining and responding to audience   | 5  | 12  |
| Intelligence or spark                  | 5  | 7   |
| Listening                              | 14 | 132 |
| Lectures                               | 14 | 121 |
| Attendance                             | 7  | 13  |
| Guest speakers                         | 3  | 4   |
| Interactive lectures                   | 14 | 45  |
| Flipped                                | 3  | 3   |
| Laboratory                             | 2  | 7   |
| Seminar                                | 3  | 6   |
| Tutorial                               | 5  | 9   |
| Placement or practice (2)              | 6  | 21  |
| PPT based                              | 14 | 24  |
| Research methods                       | 7  | 14  |
| Picking up information                 | 2  | 2   |
| Understanding accent                   | 1  | 1   |
| Logic                                  | 5  | 9   |
| Maturity                               | 1  | 1   |
| Networking                             | 1  | 1   |
| Openness or curiosity                  | 9  | 15  |
| Oral communication                     | 14 | 184 |
| Accent                                 | 1  | 1   |
| Conversational English                 | 3  | 3   |
| General                                | 9  | 19  |
| General mention of group work or peers | 4  | 6   |
| Interactive lectures                   | 14 | 45  |
| Flipped                                | 3  | 3   |
| General mention                        | 11 | 20  |
| Laboratory                             | 2  | 7   |
| Seminar                                | 3  | 6   |
| Tutorial                               | 5  | 9   |
| Meetings                               | 10 | 25  |
| Group meetings                         | 1  | 1   |
| One to one session or supervision      | 10 | 24  |
| Placement or practice                  | 6  | 21  |
| Scientific                             | 3  | 3   |
| Speaking or interactive assessment     | 13 | 58  |
| Conference presentations               | 4  | 7   |
| Debate                                 | 1  | 2   |
| Group work                             | 5  | 12  |

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|---|----|-----|
| Interpretation                                      | 1  | 2   |
| Participation                                       | 1  | 3   |
| Placement interview and observation                 | 3  | 4   |
| Presentation  | 9  | 22  |
| Role play   | 2  | 3   |
| Viva  | 2  | 3   |
| With lecturer                                       | 2  | 3   |
| Originality or innovation                           | 8  | 10  |
| Other assessment or deliverables                    | 5  | 6   |
| Evidence based                                      | 3  | 3   |
| Multiple choice questions                           | 1  | 2   |
| Online  | 1  | 1   |
| Passion and interest                                | 4  | 6   |
| Problem solving                                     | 5  | 11  |
| Professionalism                                     | 4  | 7   |
| Progress  | 1  | 1   |
| Reading   | 13 | 118 |
| Critical reading                                    | 3  | 4   |
| Directed reading or research                        | 2  | 4   |
| General mention                                     | 12 | 24  |
| Independent or extra reading                        | 5  | 9   |
| Reading for assessment                              | 12 | 56  |
| Finding and using literature                        | 11 | 24  |
| Required reading                                    | 10 | 21  |
| Reflection  | 7  | 16  |
| Research methods and process                        | 13 | 38  |
| Rigorous  | 1  | 1   |
| Rubric, criteria, and communication of expectations | 14 | 44  |
| Sense of achievement                                | 8  | 9   |
| Sense of community                                  | 7  | 24  |
| Discipline  | 3  | 6   |
| Institutional                                       | 4  | 5   |
| Mixing nationalities or ghettoization               | 3  | 6   |
| Peers   | 4  | 7   |
| Study skills  | 8  | 16  |
| Notetaking  | 4  | 4   |
| Organization and time management                    | 5  | 6   |
| Synthesis   | 5  | 9   |
| Transferable skills                                 | 5  | 8   |
| Understanding and comprehension of content          | 11 | 19  |
| Unspecified general communication or expression     | 6  | 15  |

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|--------------------------------|----|-----|
| Nonverbal communication        | 1  | 3   |
| Writing                        | 14 | 331 |
| Answering the question         | 2  | 2   |
| Argumentation                  | 3  | 6   |
| Clarity                        | 11 | 26  |
| Cohesion and coherence         | 6  | 11  |
| Concise                        | 2  | 5   |
| General mention                | 13 | 65  |
| Grammar and sentence structure | 5  | 8   |
| Presentation                   | 8  | 10  |
| Structure                      | 8  | 11  |
| Technical and scientific       | 2  | 8   |
| Voice and style                | 3  | 10  |
| Writing-focused Assessment     | 14 | 169 |
| Book review                    | 1  | 1   |
| Case study                     | 1  | 1   |
| Company project                | 2  | 2   |
| Coursework                     | 4  | 6   |
| Essay                          | 10 | 29  |
| Journal                        | 3  | 3   |
| Lab report                     | 1  | 1   |
| Literature review              | 5  | 9   |
| Methodology                    | 7  | 14  |
| Placement log                  | 1  | 1   |
| Placement report or reflection | 2  | 3   |
| Portfolio                      | 2  | 3   |
| Poster                         | 2  | 5   |
| Project work                   | 1  | 6   |
| Publications                   | 4  | 7   |
| Reflection                     | 6  | 8   |
| Research project               | 1  | 1   |
| Research proposal              | 4  | 6   |
| Thesis or dissertation         | 14 | 43  |
| Annual report                  | 1  | 2   |
| Chapters                       | 5  | 6   |
| Practice based dissertation    | 4  | 4   |
| Research ethics                | 4  | 6   |
| Timed examination              | 9  | 15  |
| Wiki                           | 1  | 3   |
| Workbook                       | 1  | 1   |
| External authority             | 14 | 204 |

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| CAO or leaving cert                              | 3  | 5   |
| Conferences or other discipline socialization    | 6  | 12  |
| External examiners                               | 7  | 7   |
| Government level authority                       | 4  | 8   |
| Language tests                                   | 12 | 22  |
| College, school, or departmental level authority | 14 | 113 |
| College level                                    | 12 | 37  |
| Business and number driven policies              | 7  | 15  |
| Faculty or school level                          | 10 | 26  |
| Exploitation                                     | 2  | 2   |
| Faculty workload and lack of resources           | 10 | 34  |
| Research ethics                                  | 4  | 6   |
| Partner universities                             | 4  | 8   |
| Professional program                             | 8  | 34  |
| Placement or practice                            | 6  | 16  |
| Professional body guidelines and standards       | 5  | 14  |
| Professional proofreading                        | 2  | 3   |
| Link between 'real world' or practice            | 13 | 38  |
| Trajectory after degree                          | 6  | 11  |
| Student expectations                             | 6  | 12  |
| Variation  | 14 | 780 |
| Communities of discourse                         | 12 | 87  |
| Discipline specific                              | 12 | 43  |
| Englishes  | 9  | 29  |
| Using other languages                            | 7  | 15  |
| Culture  | 13 | 71  |
| Country  | 13 | 64  |
| Academic   | 12 | 35  |
| Assessment type or experience                    | 4  | 5   |
| College supports                                 | 1  | 1   |
| Criticality                                      | 2  | 2   |
| Educational system and learning style            | 3  | 5   |
| Expectations                                     | 5  | 5   |
| Lectures   | 3  | 3   |
| Plagiarism                                       | 4  | 4   |
| Reading practices                                | 1  | 1   |
| Supervision and feedback                         | 1  | 2   |
| Writing style or expression                      | 4  | 4   |
| Behavior   | 6  | 7   |
| General  | 5  | 9   |
| Generational                                     | 1  | 1   |



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| Technology                                   | 1  | 1   |
| Heritage or native language influence        | 2  | 2   |
| Intercultural communication and sensitivity  | 4  | 6   |
| Socioeconomic                                | 1  | 4   |
| Institutional                                | 3  | 5   |
| Regional                                     | 2  | 2   |
| Degree level or program                      | 7  | 17  |
| Evaluation or definition of academic success | 7  | 9   |
| Intake practices                             | 2  | 4   |
| Modules, assessment, and practice            | 14 | 422 |
| Assessment or deliverables                   | 14 | 232 |
| Evidence based                               | 3  | 3   |
| Multiple choice questions                    | 1  | 2   |
| Online                                       | 1  | 1   |
| Speaking or interactive assessment           | 13 | 58  |
| Conference presentations                     | 4  | 7   |
| Debate                                       | 1  | 2   |
| Group work                                   | 5  | 12  |
| Interpretation                               | 1  | 2   |
| Participation                                | 1  | 3   |
| Placement interview and observation          | 3  | 4   |
| Presentation                                 | 9  | 22  |
| Role play                                    | 2  | 3   |
| Viva   | 2  | 3   |
| Writing-focused Assessment                   | 14 | 168 |
| Book review                                  | 1  | 1   |
| Case study                                   | 1  | 1   |
| Company project                              | 2  | 2   |
| Coursework                                   | 4  | 6   |
| Essay  | 10 | 29  |
| Journal                                      | 3  | 3   |
| Lab report                                   | 1  | 1   |
| Literature review                            | 5  | 9   |
| Methodology                                  | 7  | 14  |
| Placement log                                | 1  | 1   |
| Placement report or reflection               | 2  | 3   |
| Portfolio                                    | 2  | 3   |
| Poster                                       | 2  | 5   |
| Project work                                 | 1  | 6   |
| Publications                                 | 4  | 7   |
| Reflection                                   | 6  | 8   |

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| Research project                               | 1  | 1   |
| Research proposal                              | 4  | 6   |
| Thesis or dissertation                         | 14 | 43  |
| Annual report                                  | 1  | 2   |
| Chapters                                       | 5  | 6   |
| Practice based dissertation                    | 4  | 4   |
| Research ethics                                | 4  | 6   |
| Timed examination                              | 9  | 15  |
| Wiki   | 1  | 3   |
| Workbook                                       | 1  | 1   |
| Choice in assessment                           | 8  | 18  |
| Lecturers                                      | 5  | 16  |
| Lectures (2)                                   | 14 | 129 |
| Guest speakers                                 | 3  | 4   |
| Interactive lectures                           | 14 | 45  |
| Flipped  | 3  | 3   |
| Laboratory                                     | 2  | 7   |
| Seminar  | 3  | 6   |
| Tutorial                                       | 5  | 9   |
| Large class size                               | 9  | 21  |
| Placement or practice (2)                      | 6  | 21  |
| PPT based                                      | 14 | 24  |
| Research methods                               | 7  | 14  |
| Role and Identity                              | 14 | 159 |
| Administration                                 | 1  | 1   |
| Course director                                | 5  | 18  |
| Director                                       | 1  | 1   |
| Director of postgraduate teaching and learning | 1  | 2   |
| Director of teaching and learning              | 1  | 3   |
| Director of undergraduate programs             | 1  | 1   |
| Erasmus coordinator                            | 2  | 3   |
| Example or personal experience                 | 14 | 74  |
| External examiner                              | 1  | 1   |
| Head of faculty                                | 1  | 2   |
| Journal editor                                 | 1  | 3   |
| Module coordinator                             | 4  | 5   |
| Non-academic professional                      | 1  | 1   |
| Not a certain role                             | 2  | 5   |
| Not a language teacher or expert               | 4  | 5   |
| Outside of university privilege                | 2  | 3   |
| Partner University                             | 2  | 4   |

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|--------------------------|---|----|
| Personal tutor           | 1 | 1  |
| PI                       | 1 | 1  |
| Placement coordinator    | 1 | 2  |
| Researcher or academic   | 5 | 10 |
| Reviewer of applications | 2 | 3  |
| Student                  | 4 | 10 |
| Struggle despite IELTS   | 7 | 11 |

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