

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

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3097Constance: hmmm academic success because @@@I not success @@@@ how to  
3098link [pause] uhhhh practice it uhhhhh [long pause] read more articles and learn the uh  
3099learn the good sentence and good words and remember it?  
3100R: okay and why do you say that you're not a success  
3101Constance: [sharp inhale] uhhhh the most important is is English @@@@  
3102R: @ alright and what else can you tell me what has been difficult about coming to Ireland  
3103Constance: uhhhmmm [long pause] uhh about the academic or the  
3104R: everything  
3105Constance: everything uhhh difficult to come here IELTS test  
3106R: okay the IELTS test  
3107Constance: yes yeah the IELTS um if we want to come here you have to six point six point  
3108five and [long pause] I remember the first time I had I had this exam I just get a score for  
3109five point five @ and so I because it's far away from the score I need so I just to I had a I  
3110had a class about the IELTS and the teachers um uh every every day I recited I recited the  
3111articles the re- I recited the articles the essays the teachers think is very good I recite them  
3112and remember that every day so in my at the IELTS test I just to write the article I have  
3113remind and also also spoken and also the spoken [long pause] no no the spoken test  
3114speaking the speaking test because the IELTS test will have the list of the question uh so  
3115before the test uh the teachers will the teachers will ask me to prepare and remember all  
3116their question and their answers about their question [pause] so IELTS test is this way to  
3117pass it  
3118R: it's just remember remember and then okay  
3119Constance: @ yeah yeah  
3120R: and how many times did you take the IELTS just two  
3121Constance: no! @@@ [holds up four fingers]  
3122R: four time in how much time  
3123Constance: huh?  
3124R: in how many months  
3125Constance: okay [whispers] six months  
3126R: so four times in six months  
3127Constance: yeah @@@  
3128R: and and you went from a five point five to six point five just by remembering  
3129Constance: yeah @@@@ yeah @@@@  
3130R: well done @  
3131Constance: nooo @@@@

3132R: @@@ why do you say no @@

3133Constance: this were crazy and uhm like the listening and the speaking uh like the listening

3134have the IELTS test book uhhh my assignment just to listen all day and and and uh

3135remember the word is also it's very are always in their exam and we have a book about

3136your past exam of the IELTS and they and the many many people and the many teachers

3137will collect collect them we will need to remember them [click]

3138R: okay so it's a law of just practice practice practice remember remember remember

3139memorize and then on the test here you go okay

3140Constance: yeah! @@@

3141R: okay @ and do you think that IELTS prepared you for [institution 1]

3142Constance: [shakes head]

3143R: yeah you think the IELTS did a good job preparing for [institution 1]

3144Constance: it's good job?

3145R: well how similar is IELTS and [institution 1]

3146Constance: uhhhhh huh? is no no it is it's helpful it's hard to link collection collection them

3147together I think yeah

3148R: yeah it's hard to connect them

3149Constance: yeah

3150R: yeah why do you say that

3151Constance: uhhhh in my memory I was just [long pause] uh if I if I can if I pass the IELTS

3152I can enter the the school so IELTS just assignment just assignment for me @ but um

3153[institution 1] um it's a good opportunity for me to practice my academic study and

3154practice my English yeah

3155R: so it's different they're very different

3156Constance: yeah

3157R: yeah how how are they different

3158Constance: uh IELTS is not IELTS is unuseful for me

3159R: okay how so

3160Constance: @@ because we just to remember them but if we um [long pause] it's not a

3161practical thing for us uh [pause] just like me uh if I pass the IELTS exam but like okay

3162spoken spoken language not good also @

3163R: okay and what else has been difficult about coming to Ireland difficult

3164Constance: mmm difficult [click] ummmm [long pause] prepare my English

3165R: prepare your English did you take classes before coming to Ireland or

3166Constance: [long pause] oh class [pause] oh my my bachelor study

3167R: um well no did you take any sort of summer class or English for academic purposes

3168before starting

3169Constance: uh IELTS class

3170R: just IELTS course

3171Constance: yeah yeah yeah because the [pause] the first the most imp- the most >no no

3172no< if I want to enter [institution 1] the first one I did to do it pass IELTS I just like these

3173R: yeah so all of your focus was okay just pass IELTS

3174Constance: yeah

3175R: I want to go to [institution 1]

3176Constance: yeah

3177R: okay alright and when you got to Ireland what did you find difficult

3178Constance: [long pause]

3179R: so when you arrived to Ireland what was difficult this could be academics you said your

3180house is an hour away things like that

3181Constance: was difficult uuuhhh [long pause] uh hu hu write essay wait no write write the

3182report okay and uh it's difficult for us to communicate with [pause] other people yeah I

3183don't know why uh we also uh if we have class we just to the [nationality] sit together and

3184the [nationality] sit together it's very difficult for us to communicate with them

3185R: okay yeah so it's very separate

3186Constance: yeah maybe it's a different culture and [pause] uh it's hard for us to

3187communicate with them

3188R: yeah yeah okay alright and what has been easy in Ireland

3189Constance: as for me it's easy for me to suit this envi- evni- environment because in my

3190university I also travel in many many places I think it's a good way for me to to live in here

3191while cookery I can I can I can [pause] cook my food by myself and also do something by

3192myself I think I'm independent person

3193R: yeah okay so it's been very easy to be independent yeah and very good to be

3194independent

3195Constance: it's good independent

3196R: okay for you it has been yeah

3197Constance: yeah

3198R: okay good I'm so what what type of preparation should international students take

3199before coming to [institution 1]

3200Constance: in my bachelors in my in my university

3201R: um yes or after University yeah so what should people do before coming to [institution  
3202 1] to make [institution 1] easier

3203Constance: [sharp inhale] I don't know @@@ uhh [long pause] I want to tell you a truth

3204[pause] I don't have I don't have any presentation before@

3205R: you haven't had any presentations before

3206Constance: yeah

3207R: okay and now you have to give presentations

3208Constance: no also because my my courses don't have the presentation just to just to listen

3209to lectures oh we- I we we don't have this opportunities practice it and now I find some job

3210and uh uh [long pause] uh I find some jobs and maybe I will get some interview

3211opportunities [click] I it's very hard for me to show myself and prepare my presentation

3212because I don't have the practice before

3213R: okay okay yeah so when you go to look for jobs you think it will be very difficult to

3214present yourself

3215Constance: yeah

3216R: as well as you are yeah

3217Constance: yeah ahhh

3218R: okay um what do you think could make that easier

3219Constance: hmmm with me

3220R: yes

3221Constance: hmmmmm @@@ I don't know @@@ pass @@@@ pass this course @@@

3222skip it

3223R: @ ok that's ok I'm so if you could give advice to your professors to help international

3224students yeah what would that advice be what would you tell them

3225Constance: hmm [long pause] the contents is the content about your advices um no no the

3226advice the content what aspect

3227R: it's about what can professors do better to help international students

3228Constance: mmmmm [long pause] [click] [pause] give more times to communicate with

3229students in their lessons and uh maybe after the class the students we can send email and to

3230ask them the the homework and the thing we we don't realize and the lecturers need to

3231answer us

3232R: okay did they not answer

3233Constance: my [subject] teacher said @@@ he didn't answer any our question

3234R: really

3235Constance: yeah

3236R: why

3237Constance: huh

3238R: why

3239Constance: whyyy [long pause] oh because this classes oh the lecture finished this classes  
3240in one week

3241R: okay so you only have them for one week

3242Constance: yeah one week every day we have the class and one week to finish it so just

3243finish it we will need to prepare the exam so oh he- didn't answer us any question relate to  
3244us relate to practice bank bank practice bank test learn by ourself

3245R: so you have to learn all by yourself

3246Constance: yeah so sad

3247R: okay how do you feel about that

3248Constance: @@@@ uhhhhh aweee so sad @@ practice and remember the remember

3249remember the the example of the test bank and fine and Google in the internet and how to

3250use it how to practice a maybe a thing is good for me to practice in my exam

3251R: okay okay and so you wish that professors would answer questions

3252Constance: yeah

3253R: yeah okay right um and if you could give advice to future students so students who want

3254to come to [institution 1] what would you tell them

3255Constance: anything is okay

3256R: yeah yeah anything

3257Constance: uhhhh the most important is practice the English @@@ if well we if we

3258haven't practice English is difficult to uh learn your courses and communicate with others

3259and second second what's more uh I would tell them to bring some heavy coats

3260R: @@ because it's too cold here

3261Constance: yeah it's very cold and uh there [pause] I can find some [pause] I can find some

3262very [pause] heavy coats in shopping center

3263R: okay yeah so bring heavy coats and learn English so those are the two things you would

3264tell them

3265Constance: wait the second- th- the another things is bring a h- w- hot bottle

3266R: okay yeah a hot-water bottle yeah

3267Constance: yeah yeah hot water-bottle in here in hear I I didn't find any hot water bottle in

3268here it just it no can I it looks like a hot water but actually it can't you can't keep the warm

3269of the water

3270R: right right yeah

3271Constance: why @@@@

3272R: @@@ I don't know

3273Constance: @@@@ why @@@ I bought a hot bottle water from from the #unt

3274R: yeah

3275Constance: yeah from the shopping center here here and it looks like I can you can keep

3276the it can keep the heat in but actually it can't work @@@

3277R: oh no @@ okay is there anything else that you would tell them

3278Constance: to bring @@@ bring hot water bottle @@@ and bring everything

3279R: okay bring everything @@@

3280Constance: @@@@ yeah so the Christmas I will I will go back home @@ I will t- I

3281would take everything @@@ from home @@

3282R: @@@ so you'll go with an empty suitcase and bring everything back

3283Constance: @@@ yeah yeah my roommates and I have made a plan to bring what we need

3284to bring

3285R: right are you living with other [language] students

3286Constance: yeah yeah

3287R: yeah did you know them before coming

3288Constance: yeah yeah we find a house together

3289R: oh nice oh that's very nice

3290Constance: yeah

3291R: has that helped does it does it help you to live with people that you know

3292Constance: uhh oh yeah it's very convenient to uh because my roommates are is the same

3293subject for as for me so we can communicate the assignment and go to the class together

3294yeah

3295R: okay that's very good yeah good um if if [institution 1] were to create a summer

3296program for international students what should that program be like what should they teach

3297Constance: yeah like IELTS

3298R: like IELTS

3299Constance: yeah bec- uhhh [long pause] this year this year they didn't offer IELTS lesson

3300R: no they didn't

3301Constance: yeah be- we uh if we I come here at this year but my first score my first score

3302of IELTS is five point five at that time I want to uh give up to to to I want to give up

3303toooooo pass it I want to come here to have their IELTS summer [pause] I asked summer

3304in summer program but actually it didn't it didn't hold about that so I tried four times to

3305pass it @



3306R: @ okay and so if if [institution 1] instead of IELTS if they had a different test what  
3307should that test be like

3308Constance: mmmmm like IELTS

3309R: yeah

3310Constance: mmmm [pause] it can increase the spoken language test but [click] [long  
3311pause] but and and this test uh if in if a if create if we created this this test we need to pass  
3312it to come here

3313R: yes

3314Constance: wow yeah [long pause] if we creator more opportunity uh more contents about  
3315their spoken language I think is very hard for [language] to do that @ and and [pause] we  
3316many people don't pass this is exam to come here @

3317

3318R: so if if [institution 1] had a three month or an eight-week summer program and at the  
3319end you took a test and that has counted as IELTS so then you didn't have to take IELTS  
3320only eight weeks here and then a test and then [institution 1] what should those eight weeks  
3321look like what should you learn in those eight weeks

3322Constance: [gasp] mmmm [long pause] oh this way can uh I think this way will be more  
3323practical uhhh as I say [pause] IELST just remember it @ and practice it remember and  
3324remember the essay and remembered the the listening and the writing part [pause] it's not  
3325practical for us to use in our daily life in our uni- university study with to I think remember  
3326is not a good way for us to to to learn all well we need to have the actual actual and useful  
3327ability to um to write essay and how to know the how to know your work is more beautiful  
3328and your sentence how to write is more good so hmmm [pause] maybe like that we will it's  
3329very benefit for students write essay and write and write a report

3330R: okay so write reports and write essays and so have content like during the year in  
3331[institution 1] like same same things so essays reports what would you have liked to learn  
3332before coming to [institution 1]

3333Constance: [click]

3334R: what would you have wanted to learn before coming to [institution 1] like if you if you  
3335could have come to the summer program what would you wish the class taught

3336Constance: ummmm [long pause] I I suppose I give us some opportunity to uhh presenta-  
3337maybe at least it it's necessary to create some presentation for us to show our self uh it's  
3338aspect it's good for us to find job and communicate with others and it can teach us some  
3339local sentence and how to write a formal essays by use the beautiful words in our stud- in  
3340our in our study we just to remember some word #unt and what's more and then I think it's

3341not informal to use in article yeah because I learned the EAP courses in in here um the  
3342teacher [name] say it's not formal to use in essay is that right  
3343R: yes  
3344Constance: but [long pause] in our you know in my in primary and high school sturdy we  
3345also write an essay #unt after [long pause] the contest #unt #unt what the first one is that  
3346were small and in besides and blah blah and the last but not least okay just an article like  
3347that  
3348R: yeah no it's different and so what kind of support does [institution 1] offer for  
3349international students you've said English for academic purposes yeah and what else does  
3350[institution 1] have for international students  
3351Constance: hmmm hmhmhmhm [long pause] I think [long pause] library @@@ support  
3352[long pause] ah the Sports Center  
3353R: okay do you use it  
3354Constance: no @  
3355R: @ me either and what should [institution 1] have  
3356Constance: give us more opportunity to [pause] practice the courses oh if we have the  
3357chance to uh if there's school give us the oh if the school cooperate with some company  
3358that can give us give us chance to practice our knowledge in our intern I think it's better to  
3359practice it  
3360R: mm-hmm okay all right it's a more practical yeah  
3361Constance: yeah if we learn the [topic] knowledge we just write the essay and write an  
3362exam I think oh if we we have work in the future or it's not useful  
3363R: mmm okay yeah and so they should have like an internship or something  
3364Constance: yeah  
3365R: um so that is all of the questions that I have for you is there anything else that you want  
3366to say or express  
3367Constance: @how to practice my English @ improve my English @@@@ how to  
3368improve my English thank you  
3369R: @ use it just like this talking talking talking  
3370Constance: okay I can't find anyone to talk to me  
3371R: why not  
3372Constance: uh-huh well I always I always talk with my [nationality] roommates and my  
3373[language] classmates and Indian if we talk with them uhh maybe they [click] also to to  
3374study and live together and we have the different group the different life environment so  
3375umm it's hard for us to [pause] play with them

3376R: yeah yeah and so that could be something do you think that [institution 1] could try and  
3377provide ways to help

3378Constance: yeah yeah

3379R: what would help like what would what would you want to help yeah

3380Constance: yeah you can open some club that we can communicate together and practice  
3381my English

3382R: yeah okay yeah is there anything else that you would want to say anything else that you  
3383want to express or say

3384Constance: no@@@

3385R: okay alright thank you so much

3386

3387

**Estí**

3388

3389R: yeah so first can you tell me what your strengths are academically so what are you good  
3390at

3391Estí: uhh academically hmm [pause] I think one of my stronger characteristics is my  
3392determination like if I set a goal I'm going to work towards that goal and um [click] I will  
3393not know probably will not change uhm during you know working towards achieving that  
3394and that relates to my other strength that I I think a lot before doing things so before th-  
3395making a decision I think a lot I am very very thorough at examining all possibilities and  
3396once I set the goal I work towards you know that and I don't think of what if and you know  
3397what they make if I made a huge mistake I mean obviously all people do that and I will do  
3398that as well but not so much as to affect you know my does that make sense

3399R: yeah like you don't dwell on things if you have a goal in your mind it's just okay I need  
3400to get there

3401Estí: yeah yeah yeah yeah [pause] does that cover the question let me know what you think

3402R: no no it's good and um what would you say that your difficulties are academically

3403Estí: um is that the question for the current institution or a general one

3404R: um if the answer is different both

3405Estí: okay yeah so a general one is that I tend to [long pause] procrastinate [long pause]  
3406ummm yeah I do that uhm [pause] [click] I don't like [long pause] let me get my thoughts  
3407together [pause] yes I think that if I set the goal to have something ready by Thursday I  
3408might st- I mean even if I'm able to start working it one week before maybe I will not do  
3409that and then spend the whole weekend without any sleep you know you know there too  
3410I'm not going to change the goal I'm going to arrive there but I think that especially the last

3411two years I started procrastinating more than I used to and the other the other thing in the  
3412current institution is that because I'm not working on my first language yeah I think that's  
3413that's an obstacle sometimes oh it does not it's not that it does not allow me to do things but  
3414uhm I realize that it takes more time to do things you know

3415R: right and so what would your strengths be in terms of English

3416Estí: strengths [long pause] uhm [long pause] strengths I don't know what to say I cannot  
3417think of any strength uhm I suppose [pause] that I try I always try to get better [long pause]  
3418I try to use the new words that I learn try to repeat them by writing down I have a  
3419vocabulary and phrase you know notebook that I but I take notes they say on this is a  
3420phrase to say that you know that I didn't know I write it down down there to use it I also  
3421try to fix my accent [long pause] yeah that's it

3422R: what would your difficulties be in terms of English

3423Estí: umm [long pause] the accent @ and that ever since I moved believe it or not ever  
3424since I moved into an English-speaking country I think that my English [pause] uhm  
3425deteriorate

3426R: really how so

3427Estí: I don't know I'm surprised I think I could @ speak better English @ when I was back  
3428in my country than I do here and I that- no the way that I speak now does not do my  
3429English classes and my teacher back in my country justice @ I don't know maybe it's the  
3430immersion in this environment that kinds of inhibits me to be relaxed and to you know be  
3431communicative uhm without thinking constantly what other people would think of my  
3432English skills I don't know maybe it's the academic environment that does that uhm to  
3433whatever everybody thinks is their weakest spot that it brings out your fears @ of not being  
3434good enough I don't I don't know but yeah

3435R: yeah so do you find yourself like you said being stressed out about what other people  
3436think of your English here more so than in [country]

3437Estí: yeah

3438R: is it

3439Estí: of course

3440R: is it constant or is it just kind of

3441Estí: no no no no it's not constant and there are people that compliment my English uhm  
3442and there are you know and there are international students that have the same difficulty so  
3443it's not only me [pause] so also some people are more used to dealing with people from  
3444other countries speaking English as their second language uhm than others [long pause]  
3445more some people are more judgmental than others because of their personality and that's

3446okay if it's not this it's going to be something else know what I mean uhm but it comes and  
3447goes no it's not constant no

3448R: but it definitely affects like confidence and that

3449Estí: of course of course yes and yeah and it's because the academic environment it's also  
3450the place that we try to socialize and to make friends and we spend all of our days then um  
3451sometimes I also for you but nobody here is going to really know who I am because we're  
3452not able to speak in my like I mean I'm a different a slightly different person in my own  
3453language and a slightly different person when you speak English you know so yeah

3454R: and it's so um can you tell me about the work that's required of you as a PhD student so  
3455what you actually have to do on a day-to-day basis

3456Estí: [exhale] lots of things things

3457R: @@ that look of fear

3458Estí: @@yeah let me think if I can [pause] put that into words so um do you mean in terms  
3459of my PhD or or or as a PhD student

3460R: as a PhD student

3461Estí: so first of all I have to work to make money to do work not related to my PhD [long  
3462pause] to survive you know second um I have to work on the PhD do you want me to  
3463elaborate on that

3464R: yeah

3465Estí: so there is reading and writing and reading critically comparing sources uh know how  
3466to search for things and evaluate if the source is available or know the level of value that it  
3467has for my research do you want details

3468R: yeah yeah yeah

3469Estí: uhm [pause] this is the work that this is a desktop work then there is work with people  
3470so there is this part where you have to grow skills in networking in presenting and  
3471promoting your research and that is not something that you do like um like a scheduled  
3472activity you have to learn how to do that [pause] every minute that you stand in to this the  
3473campus I'd say because never know who you're going to meet uhm [pause] and you have  
3474to be always prepared to present briefly your research in an interesting way and to have  
3475your ears and eyes open for people that do something that could be of interest and the and  
3476you know create networking and coworker possibilities for you and that is something that I  
3477never did before [pause] umm that that does that answer your question so there are there  
3478are three different categories of work every day for a PhD student and maybe I'm  
3479forgetting maybe I'm forgetting something right now there whole administration that you  
3480have to deal with yeah

3481R: okay and did you take any modules here

3482Estí: yes I did take the research methods modules that we have within the [school] and it's  
3483also compulsory for all first-year PhD students

3484R: okay and in that class what did you have to do

3485Estí: [long pause] it was mostly presenting and discussing um it was not run by one one  
3486lecturer um we had three or four different people doing the module it was basically  
3487presenting discussing comparing different research methodologies how to use them and  
3488when to use them ummm in [discipline] research some people were more traditional so  
3489they presented we took notes that was it some people involved some activities uh to make  
3490it more interesting [pause] but to me it was a little bit boring hmm should I tell you this

3491R: yeah why like why like why was it boring

3492Estí: I won't be identified

3493R: no no no like I won't even say the school like I basically in the interviews if anyone say  
3494a module name a professor name name of a company name of a school I just kind of edited  
3495out I just say name of school

3496Estí: okay so [pause] I realized after the first so this module was was mostly so once per  
3497month it was not once per week maybe that's why it was so long uhm I I realized that we're  
3498returning to the very very basics that for me were very basic things that um in order to to  
3499graduate in my bachelor in my undergraduate they were considered common ground but  
3500here they were not and I realized that they were not considered already known because in  
3501the PhD in our school [pause] maybe I was the only person that my background was in  
3502[discipline] so my undergraduate was in [discipline] and my postgraduate was in  
3503[discipline] while other people were coming from a range of disciplines and it was normal  
3504for them that they never did a consistent module of [discipline] research methods before  
3505now this is different because but in my country my home in univer- all the universities in  
3506[country] you cannot go to the PhD level in [discipline] without having at least the  
3507undergraduate or the postgraduate in [discipline] you know it's more restricted than the  
3508paths that you you can take here in Ireland and I think the UK and States it's more broad  
3509you you're a lot more free to to change your path and I was not used to that so arriving here  
3510I thought that all these people are people like me they at least have one degree it's a bit like  
3511specific in [discipline] that's not the case and that is why and that's actually good for the  
3512school that they didn't treat those people like like that because they were not and they  
3513needed this background but for me [pause] [click] you know

3514R: it's kind of a waste of time if you know it

3515Estí: yes

3516R: and you could have maybe taken a different module

3517Estí: yes yeah definitely

3518R: mm-hmm and did you have any assessment for this module

3519Estí: no ah yes no we did at the end of the the module we had to create a poster and present  
3520a poster like as what we would do in the conference so yeah

3521R: okay and was that like on your PhD project or was it a different

3522Estí: not on our PhD project oh actually as the module as time went by in the module all of  
3523us we were saying our methodologies and our philosophies of the research so every month  
3524we could relate a little bit more to what was being said you know so

3525R: alright yeah okay let's see so how would you currently evaluate your academic success

3526so far so how do you feel that you're doing in [institution 1]

3527Estí: [long pause] on a scale from 1 to 10 @

3528R: yeah we'll do 1 to 10

3529Estí: do 1 to 10 [long pause] well I tried to [pause] value my effort and say that I am happy

3530with where I am because I've tried a lot maybe it's not where I planned to be but still I

3531worked very hard to get here [long pause] I would say six or seven [long pause] I feel that

3532I'm a little bit behind then where I thought in the beginning of the PhD that I I should be at

3533the beginning of the second year but there has been so many changes due to factors that

3534you cannot possibly imagine of when you do your proposal @@ so one way yeah yeah

3535medium let's say it's

3536R: medium like so so

3537Estí: yeah although so so in terms of I don't know but I'm not like I feel that it should I feel

3538it it should be like that does that make sense you know I'm not disappointed with myself

3539maybe I don't feel it's my fault that I'm not where I thought I'd be you know or it's [pause]

3540one third my fault and 2/3 of factors that I cannot control @ does that make sense

3541R: mm-hmm yeah and how would you say that your professors assess academic success so

3542what are they looking for

3543Estí: they were looking for [long pause] I think they are looking for originality so not

3544things that we've heard and read over and over and over again you know [pause] hmmm

3545[long pause] and publishable material @

3546R: yeah and so how would your professors or do they communicate their expectations

3547Estí: [long pause] hmmm [long pause] I don't know how do they do that I'm trying to think

3548[long pause] I think they well I don't have a lot of professors I'm thinking of the professors

3549of the module I think they are pretty clear about what it would be good for an early career

3550researcher to do [pause] and like kind of like a piece of advice yeah

3551R: and so your supervisor is like how would your supervisor communicate what they  
3552expect

3553Estí: ummm my supervisor actually is very good at not being umm [long pause] not  
3554imposing things on me um once per two months we sit down and we look at the at the  
3555timeline that we last did two months ago and we say okay where are we now have we done  
3556what we needed to do what do we need to do next [click] so it's kind of co-constructing  
3557where do we want to go um but what did you ask me how he communicates his  
3558expectations

3559R: expectations so how do you know that okay I'm gonna hand in this chapter to him how  
3560do you know or what do you think he's looking for in that chapter for in the work  
3561Estí: he definitely looks for clear arguments [long pause] and critical thinking so he doesn't  
3562look for very elaborate uh theoretical academic style but that actually has no ess- essence I  
3563think he's looking for essence if that makes sense

3564R: yeah

3565Estí: and that's what I'm trying to do [pause] yeah and because I sometimes you know I've  
3566told him as well that writing in English slows me down and sometimes I stop and worry  
3567too much about the comma that I can spend two hours googling uh grammar rules and you  
3568know I'm terrified of making a mistake about the comma or a word he said don't worry  
3569about the commas write like the content is important to catch when you know to catch your  
3570um how can I say that first we're going to look at the content and then the commas and  
3571everything we can work together but your thoughts is what you know needs to be put on  
3572paper first that helps take the pressure off [pause] sometimes

3573R: right and so in general what do you think students need in order to succeed at  
3574[institution 1]

3575Estí: PhD students

3576R: all students well let's do PhD first since that's

3577Estí: I have zero experience with undergraduates [long pause] so I I can only imagine that  
3578they would need the same things but I don't really know about their problems PhD students  
3579need [pause] um substantial support that is support from the people that are there to  
3580support them their supervisors the the people in the academic registry@ eh the people in  
3581the administration in their schools because [institution 1] has a problem with that @

3582R: can you expand on that @

3583Estí: well I think through my experience but also my discussions with fellow PhD students  
3584every week at least five people have a problem with administration that they take a lot of  
3585their time off in order to solve and a lot of times it's not solved properly and that has



3586become an everyday reality and that is not okay [pause] I consider myself I began to  
3587consider myself lucky that I don't have problems with my supervisor and that there is one  
3588specific lady the administration in our school that they always I always now go to her  
3589because she's very helpful but that's not the solution pick the one that you know is helpful  
3590and go to them all the time no you know what I mean but that's not the way things should  
3591work [pause] there are my students this year that have not been registered yet [pause] and  
3592this this creates a whole different problem that students are trying to solve and they spend a  
3593lot of time in order to solve it and in the end it it's not their problem to solve you know  
3594[pause] so there is this part of male organized have structures that can really support the  
3595student [pause] well financial help is very critical very critical I already know three  
3596students that dropped out because of financial problems and I've only begun my second  
3597year in [institution 1] and you know I can I can feel it too that if I wouldn't have to work  
3598[pause] it would be so much better [long pause] uhm yeah I think that's it am I forgetting  
3599something very crucial [long pause] no I think yeah support and financial support so  
3600support in general @

3601R: right and did you do your masters here

3602Estí: no

3603R: no okay so then how much of a factor does language play in academic success

3604Estí: [long pause] [exhale] it's a major factor uh I would say uh it's a major factor but  
3605[pause] it can be overcome you know it's not something that should inhibit people from  
3606trying if you want to get better you can get better uhm [pause] yeah but it definitely [pause]  
3607sometimes I think that there are people that are very lucky if English is their first language  
3608and sometimes I think that I would be a much more [pause] good like a much better PhD  
3609student if I wrote my PhD in [language] of course that is there's absolutely no uh reason for  
3610thinking that [pause] because if I wrote my PhD in [language] nobody would be able to  
3611read it outside of [country] then we'll go to another discussion about the the the privilege of  
3612doing academic work English and this immeasurable impact on networking and all of that  
3613yeah but I think that maybe it takes more effort but it's not impossible to actually umm  
3614succeeded and there are many academic that English you know there are in English-  
3615speaking institutions and English was not their first language yeah that does not mean that  
3616[pause] nothing should be done about it because some people can overcome that by  
3617themselves @ but it should not be something that would stop people from trying you know  
3618yeah

3619R: and so what other factors influence academic success

3620Estí: [long pause] money @ well of course [pause] if your fees are paid if your  
3621accommodation is paid if your day-to-day expenses are paid it's not certain that you will  
3622succeed but of course it's easier it's easier it takes a lot of pressure off and you can get more  
3623focused or you can use the time in order to do your research properly so yeah that is for me  
3624that is a big factor also emotional support from your you know network of support friends  
3625and family people that feel isolated obviously [pause] I know that I'm generalizing now but  
3626I feel like you know for the majority of people it's it's a big factor to have people that  
3627support them around them mmm to have a strong motive to not become demotivated so  
3628that obviously relates to the previous ones yeah

3629R: so now I'm gonna switch to kind of um entry tools and preparation before you came to  
3630[institution 1] so did you have any linguistic or academic separation before attending  
3631[institution 1]

3632Estí: no

3633R: okay and did you have to take a standardized exam like IELTS TOEFL etc.

3634Estí: no

3635R: okay can I ask why not

3636Estí: because he already had a certificate of proficiency in English [pause] and they didn't  
3637want me to take a standardized one that would be more recent because when I when I took  
3638the exam for this certificate standardized tests were not as common as today it was before  
36392010

3640R: okay and so what was that exam like was it

3641Estí: that it was a uhm there was a reading part a speaking part a listening part and a use of  
3642grammar part

3643R: was it Cambridge

3644Estí: yeah Cambridge Michigan

3645R: okay okay so you took this in high school or

3646Estí: yeah

3647R: okay and you have any opinions or feelings on that exam or other standardized exams  
3648that are currently used

3649Estí: uhm before uh they let me know that I don't need to take the IELTS or the other one I  
3650started studying on my own about the IELTS [pause] I found it pretty easy you know it's  
3651[pause] it's standardized and that means that if you learn ten ways of saying that and with  
3652like knowing the test is more important than knowing English@ in some ways and you can  
3653learn a paragraph by heart in order to explain uh a statistic table [long pause] you know  
3654other person that have taken language exams in three different languages that is French

3655 English and German my my skills of taking a language test I consider them to to be really  
3656 good because by studying specific things in order to succeed in the exam we get to succeed  
3657 in the exam but not in what the exam “prepares” you for and I'm I'm doing this

3658 R: yeah the quotations marks

3659 Estí: yes yeah for example in the exam for uh I al- I also have a high certificate in French  
3660 so officially I am capable of teaching French [pause] but I'm not and I know that I'm not  
3661 right now maybe if I moved to France for five years after that I don't know but no um and  
3662 in taking the exam I knew that in the writing part I had to use one form of this I don't know  
3663 how to say it in English

3664 R: but a certain grammar form

3665 Estí: yes yeah so I knew I have learned my heart twenty forms of these 20 types of these 20  
3666 types of this and I would use like I would check the boxes that's not really you know  
3667 learning the language but I knew that and my goal was to acquire@ the certificate and I did  
3668 that because that's what you're paying for at the moment you know and that what is going  
3669 [click] to look that's what you're going to put in your CV but [pause] so the test is one thing  
3670 and I failed the IELTS in a sense because a lot of people sit exam in order to start their  
3671 master degree so it's something that has to be done and they treat it that way uhm and they  
3672 and they treat it that way and it shouldn't be treated that way and the test I don't know is it  
3673 the same for everybody

3674 R: [shakes head]

3675 Estí: well maybe it shouldn't you know we come from different linguistics background  
3676 [click] you see that every [nationality] person that I know will make the same mistakes in  
3677 English because we think in [language] and we translate it in English so we tend to do the  
3678 same mistakes maybe I'm talking too much now what did you ask me what how I feel

3679 R: yeah that's but that's a very good explanation because my next question is going to be  
3680 like how do you feel that like that exam that you took or the IELTS how adequately does it  
3681 prepare you for life and [institution 1]

3682 Estí: it doesn't it's the ticket to come to [institution 1] [long pause] maybe prepares you I  
3683 don't know maybe I shouldn't be so you know rejecting@ everything now maybe it does  
3684 prepare you in some ways or at the level that it's not enough [pause] umm [pause] yeah  
3685 maybe I'm being too harsh now I feel I don't [pause] maybe it's an easy way to evaluate  
3686 and put people in categories [pause] place them like it's easy to to to control it's easy to you  
3687 know it's standardized it's what standardized tests are for it's the the same discussion in  
3688 every field that there're standardized tests related to to students [click] it's measurable it's  
3689 easy it's easy to apply in different settings but that blocks depth and one one reason why

3690we take those tests okay maybe you can take the test not to use it immediately but if you  
3691take it in order to move to another country you're going to give more depth than that in  
3692order to you know for the test to be meaningful does that make sense

3693R: and so that leads me to um what type of preparation should international students do  
3694before coming to [institution 1]

3695Estí: [long pause] I had a very good English teacher really good um she acknowledged the  
3696the harsh reality of these exams and she would try to you know at the same time we were  
3697preparing for the exam I would read a lot of books in English uhm yes she would she  
3698would try to approach the language from the more meaningful point of view more  
3699wholesome like it's a living thing it's a culture you know it's much more than tenses and  
3700grammar that you have to learn by heart of course there is like how can we do that I don't  
3701know language teachers could should be better okay that's not a very helpful thing to say I  
3702mean it's true but that's cannot be a suggestion uhm what kind of [long pause] I don't know  
3703if I don't know

3704R: that's fine

3705Estí: um maybe [institution 1] should be more prepared about international students about  
3706[institution 1] @@ I don't know

3707R: @ that was going to be my next set of questions actually @ if you could give advice to  
3708professors and faculty in dealing with international students what would that advice be

3709Estí: prepare [institution 1] to accept international students but not only by accepting the  
3710large number of international students uhm by creating a culture of internationalization in  
3711the institution and that means [pause] mutual respect mutual cultural respect not bringing  
3712people in and have the assumption that you have to this is the way we do things here you  
3713have to find a way to adapt as soon as possible it's a two-way street in order to work  
3714[pause] language courses [pause] um [long pause] yeah but I think that they are available  
3715but that is that's a good one and I know people that have attended them and found them  
3716helpful [pause] and um creating an atmosphere of internationalization also among the Irish  
3717students so it's not like it should be at every level the board and the staff faculties the staff  
3718the people in the staff and the student body [long pause] yeah and [pause] one good way to  
3719to connect with the difficulties that international students go through is to become an  
3720international student yourself so all those programs of mobility I found out because I was I  
3721participated in one of them I was in France and then I went back to my home University  
3722yeah placing yourself in in other people's shoes really works you start to see things that  
3723you were not able to see as a member of the dominant culture [pause] so these programs of

3724mobility maybe they should be more promoted I don't know but because not everybody  
3725can go abroad and come back and be suddenly yeah no work has to be done here as well  
3726R: yeah and so if you could give advice to an organization like [institution 1] who are  
3727creating a program to prepare students for university study what would that advice be  
3728Estí: which kind of students  
3729R: um well mostly international students  
3730Estí: to prepare them for  
3731R: [institution 1] so say like they were developing like a summer program so what what  
3732advice would you give them when they're creating that program like what do they need  
3733what should they include  
3734Estí: they should former international students experiences [pause] yeah they should ask  
3735them and listen to them and see what the problems they faced what they were like [pause]  
3736yeah  
3737R: and if you could give advice to future students or students who are looking to come to  
3738[institution 1] what would that advice be  
3739Estí: [long pause] it would be probably ehm [pause] to take advantage of everything the  
3740[institution 1] has to offer [pause] and actually [pause] be very proactive about finding out  
3741because there are many things but they are out there but nobody really tells you about them  
3742maybe connect with other students share a lot help each other out and yeah  
3743R: and so you've mentioned some things in terms of support for students like you've  
3744mentioned the language classes but are you aware of any other support in your department  
3745or the wider University offered to international students  
3746Estí: there is the global room uhhh there is yeah the language classes the global room the  
3747international students um um [pause]  
3748R: the [students union]  
3749Estí: yes and in my in my school now there there is a specific member of staff for looking  
3750after international students [pause] uhm they have meetings they had two already I was not  
3751able to go but I will go then um [pause] so there is the [students union] the global room the  
3752classes there is thee there is the society international students society [long pause] what  
3753else and then the same for all students like the career advisory service the counseling  
3754services  
3755R: yeah I mean would you consider the support to be adequate or could it be improved  
3756Estí: [long pause] they are obviously doing a good job [long pause] they could be  
3757improved though I think  
3758R: how so

3759Estí: well [sigh] it doesn't mat- no it doesn't matter you can't put a lot of you know [pause]  
3760support structures but if the culture of the institution does not change maybe if their hands  
3761are tied as well in terms of to to you know to reach their full potential you know [pause] I  
3762strongly believe that it is a matter of culture and it's all new it's been what 20 years of  
3763students started moving around the globe so in one way yeah it's justified [pause] but it can  
3764change and it should change

3765R: okay so that's actually the last question I have for you but are there any questions that  
3766you wish I had asked that I didn't ask

3767Estí: nothing comes to mind now

3768R: okay and is there anything else that you'd like to say or express

3769Estí: [long pause] no

3770R: okay thank you

3771

3772

### Fernanda

3773

3774R: okay um so first could you tell me what your strengths are academically

3775Fernanda: what what I'm doing at the moment?

3776R: well your strengths like what are you good at

3777Fernanda: uh yeah I do like research so I am doing um a master's in [discipline] which  
3778includes [topic] and so on so I kind of like this portion I'm good on this yeah I'd say so

3779R: so like you good at the actual conducting of research

3780Fernanda: yeah uh yeah more than act as a [topic] as a trained one but like I'm better  
3781helping others and developing and research and so on

3782R: okay all right what about any difficulties or weaknesses academically

3783Fernanda: uh language definitely

3784R: language

3785Fernanda: yeah wr- wr- like writing is very difficult uhm it's been since I started studying  
3786English and uhm much more when I think that I need to present a dissertation and so on  
3787say it just I with the assessments I've done until now I just find it very difficult to make  
3788>not make< the ideas clear but [pause] to try to express what I'm thinking [pause] okay so  
3789yeah yeah that's the the worse and eh speaking is also difficult when you think about like  
3790being uh surrounded by people I uhm sometimes struggle with that as well

3791R: okay so in writing making is it basically you have like the ideas in your head and you  
3792just can't find the right words the right right way to say it or why //is it

3793Fernanda: it seems| too simple

3794R: okay

3795Fernanda: okay when- when- whenever I'm reading [pause] I can understand most of the  
3796things if not is a word or another and so on I can understand in the context however when  
3797[pause] I am writing it seems I am a [pause] @child @ [pause] and that's just not for the  
3798level I'm trying for [pause] you know so yeah basically yeah

3799R: okay yeah and so can you tell me about the modules that you're taking what do you  
3800have to you for the modules

3801Fernanda: okay for this semester I'm basically doing um [module] uhm [module] and doing  
3802a [module] and I am doing [module] as well so [module] is more like a legal stuff so  
3803understand the process and so on uh [module] is also the same [pause] but I have a  
3804practical activity as well try to work with companies uhm maybe the- the [module] is just  
3805about training training training and [module] is a module when you just think about solving  
3806problems in companies and for this one I have a [topic] practical exam and also written

3807R: okay yeah and so outside of the classroom is there a lot of reading is there a lot of  
3808preparation for the modules

3809Fernanda: I thought it would be more to be honest yeah I think I I I am studying in  
3810[institution 6] which is a small I mean is not big College in here and they are accepting  
3811loads of immigrants and because of this I can say that I mean I think they try to make your  
3812life easy somehow? and yeah if they give you material we have like [pause] you have  
3813preparation for the classes but it's not [pause] as much as I thought would be uh these  
3814students also don't participate as much I think they don't feel comfortable expressing their  
3815ideas [pause] okay in the first semester I thought it was worse [pause] and now that we  
3816know each other and we know that we are going to have problems expressing ideas we are  
3817we have accents and everything and with we're just developing better but it's still a  
3818problem you know so

3819R: right okay and so you'll have to do a dissertation as well have you started on the  
3820dissertation

3821Fernanda: yeee uhm we had a research mythology uhhhh subject last semester? but we are  
3822dealing with that for next semester because we had like more uh #thoughtful subjects for  
3823this one right so we are not doing and for the feedback we got from them we had structural  
3824problems okay we because [pause] we were always comparing what we presented in our  
3825country to what we have in here and we couldn't'- I know that is research so technically  
3826it's all the same but when you have to think in another language might get you might get  
3827som- we may get confused with that and yeah I think most of the students [pause]  
3828including me we found it quite difficult [pause] so yeah

3829R: yeah so just a structure of conducting research and writing and

3830Fernanda: yeah as as a foreign student I I think we need some [pause] more um [click] we  
3831need @attention or somehow who you know yeah to understand how it works? so uh I'm  
3832always going to the to the seminars and so on in another colleges just get used to what  
3833people are dealing with and how they are approaching subjects and so on because it helps  
3834me to understand better how am I going to do this and this is a [pause] maybe the activity  
3835is not very explored? [pause] y- y you know whenever you have [pause] we have problems  
3836to understand even when you we you s- you speak I think we have problems to understand  
3837and t- s- to show ideas [pause] okay so yeah

3838R: okay and so what is this what is the assessment like for your modules is it mainly  
3839written is a presentations group work

3840Fernanda: okay uhh these semester we have [pause] three written exams [pause] and  
3841[pause] two practical's yes so practical based [topic] you need to do a practical exam and  
3842they just put actors in there and they just act and we try to mediate um forrr commercial is  
3843the same but more like a business uh stuff and for the written exams so we have all the the  
3844readings that we are dealing with but it's more like for commercial is more about directives  
3845legislation constitution so on for workplace you have more uh uh business environment so  
3846we get lots of re- wr- writings for other authors and so on and for [module] is about pro-  
3847pro- it was about procedure so yeah

3848R: okay and are you given the the guidelines and grading criteria before you have to do the  
3849assessments

3850Fernanda: yeah

3851R: okay

3852Fernanda: yeah we always get them [pause] I think bec- because they know we need to  
3853understand how we we are going to approach the exam so we asked that in the first  
3854semester because we didn't have them? and then they prepared for this on

3855R: okay all right and you find them helpful

3856Fernanda: yeah even if for the assessments it's very good because we have a like uhm we  
3857we we really understand in which ones we need to work more to get a better grading so  
3858yeah is great

3859R: okay and how do you feel that you're doing academically now so how would you  
3860evaluate your academic success

3861Fernanda: [sigh] [click] I [pause] I don't know @ I would think about it yeah I [click]  
3862because I'm not 100% sure about the [pause] I'm not really interested in some of the  
3863subjects I'm not doing very well? [pause] okay because I I think whenever you choose a



3864masters. you you need to be aware what you're really doing? which was not my case I was  
3865trying to do a master's related to psychology and counseling and because I did fine arts at  
3866college and I wanted to change [pause] and I worked in museums before in my country  
3867with kids education and so on so I thought it would be good however I couldn't because I  
3868didn't have certain subjects [pause] okay so yeah [click] we all got into @#helping @#the  
3869@#point is like oh or you do a pre-master's and then you start or you find another course  
3870and then I found [discipline] and my research is related to [discipline] [pause] so I can put  
3871them together however I don't have any uhm legal uhm [click] [pause] I @don't @really  
3872have any legal aspects in my @qualification my previous ones so I don't really understand  
3873some procedures if you think about [module] [pause] all. about. Procedures and [module]  
3874so you have is very legal it's almost a court and if you don't have this uhm knowledge you  
3875might get stuck with some and in this sense I have had to work much more for instance in  
3876the readings I couldn't understand the first time ago I got a case law [pause] I couldn't read  
3877the case law. [pause] okay? III I asked my- on- it was one of the lecturers like I can't  
3878understand [pause] and could you go and read with me

3879R: and did they?

3880Fernanda: yeah she did yeah she did yeah so she basically got is like is this your problem  
3881or is everyone thinking in the same way was like everyone's thinking in the same way but  
3882we just we can't @ so we had to go and like really learn how to read? [pause] which was  
3883to- go- I didn't think was important before? but it is. so you you need to like really fasten  
3884your eyes you know you need to understand very fast and get used to the words words that  
3885we were not used to so I had to use dictionary like a lot of the beginning now I already  
3886know but um yeah like I I have a a room to improvement@ I need to work more on this  
3887that's it yeah

3888R: so how do you think that your professors are assessing academic success like what are  
3889they looking for when they're marking or grading

3890Fernanda: so they whenever like we have the the this the assessment they put a list what  
3891they want and yeah they have points for uhhh for language and for how y- you assess the  
3892the question? and we had problems with this as well we couldn't understand what they  
3893were willing to get from that so for instance oh just discuss something like or uh something  
3894like that we didn't know what it meant to be like what do y- wan- what do you want for  
3895that and they had to explain? in that sense because it's not that clear sometimes but we are  
3896basically dealing with law we deal with directives really deal with Constitution so they  
3897want the datas you know [pause] that's what they want and yeah

3898R: yeah so did you guys feel comfortable going to them and saying hey this is not clear

3899Fernanda: yeah all the time. [pause] we never had this problem @because they they were  
3900very I don't know if it's like that in any college because for instance I did one course uhh in  
3901[institution x] uhhh was a jump start for [discipline] and I didn't feel comfortable in there I  
3902was there only no me and another girl you're the only ehmm [pause] @immigrants or or  
3903you know? so I felt very strang- I felt weird there I like I can't answer like I didn't want to  
3904talk I didn't want to ask anything but when you have more [pause] we you identify yourself  
3905with people are- s- around you you just feel more comfortable to ask [pause] I think  
3906[pause] so yeah

3907R: yeah and and the professor's where they are they generally responsive are they generally  
3908like okay let's you know do this or putting aside time to answer questions

3909Fernanda: yeah even if they they are not we have one on- one of the see I don't know if  
3910she's a- I don't know what she @inside @the @college but like she helps us yeah with  
3911@probably @everything @you @know whenever you have a problem you just a message  
3912or email @ and even she helps you so yeah @@

3913R: she's like the person

3914Fernanda: @ yeah yeah and she's young as well so it's easier sometimes because we feel  
3915it's really comfortable is like is our age you know?@ it's like the same world

3916R: so it's like going to a friend who's already done the course and being like um I don't  
3917really understand this

3918Fernanda: exactly exactly that yeah yeah

3919R: all right yeah and so inside of the classroom um what is it like is there a lot of group  
3920work is it mainly the professor talking with the PowerPoint like how is the inside of the  
3921class structured

3922Fernanda: okay for th- for the [pause] practical activities we just train. All the time. so we  
3923don't have PowerPoints or anything like that just let you come with a scenario and in each  
3924prepare this and that's it uhhh but for the three subjects th- the we really do like [long  
3925pause] they don't need to prepare for that so like we do have like a teacher is explaining  
3926material and that's it we can't like we don't have room for like um other activities or like  
3927any practical activities yeah so yeah [pause] and mainly [pause] is that he they are in front  
3928of it just ex- explaining us yeah

3929R: and um so in general what would you say that students need to succeed at your  
3930institution

3931Fernanda: [exhale] it's a very [pause] new course so we're trying to figure out together how  
3932it works [inhale] ehmmm I think uh be- being [click] aware since the beginning what we're  
3933doing there is very important so [inhale] in the fir- like the the first two weeks we have

3934planning for that and what we did and what we are trying to do is always follow what they  
3935were asking for and prepare this so uhmm more than just go to the classes is come with  
3936these different perspectives is a better [pause] coming with so yeah I I think so and [click]  
3937as it is mixed course I think we can always add something sometimes we come with  
3938different arguments and that's very important for the college as well? ehh so I f- I find  
3939they're looking for [pause] [module] at other [module] maybe specifically [module] in here  
3940is very new so we are developing something that [pause] is is is I mean in the UK you have  
3941already but like in here is being developed so everyone is helping and looking for like yeah  
3942R: okay cool

3943Fernanda: I don't know if I answered you or not @

3944R: no no you did no definitely and so you've kind of already touched on this but um how  
3945much of a factor this language play in academic success

3946Fernanda: yeah huge. @ it is problem @ um I [pause] don't know if we are prepared okay  
3947that's it's my from my perspective from my colleagues okay I don't know if ummmm in  
3948other colleges if because I I think we we I did Cambridge okay? most of my colleagues  
3949they didn't do any other exam they did a [pause] a college exam internal exam? [pause] and  
3950[pause] we see the difference. [pause] okay and it's not saying that's better is worse I just  
3951think that whenever you start cuz Cambridge's is very is about structure. so I had to read a  
3952lot so when I came for the first semester and I looked at material I didn't have any  
3953problems like in [long pause] I had prob- I had problems understanding but I didn't have  
3954problem with like the material like in reading [pause] okay because I was doing this with  
3955time [pause] so you get used but like loa- loads of the other students they were not [click]  
3956and we can still see it like even we if we if we try you know whenever we have an  
3957interview we are failing. we don't know how to express ourselves I don't know if accent is  
3958a problem I don't think it is if you [pause] speak okay like if- you understand if you speak  
3959if you can work but like I do think that [pause] we like most of us is still feeling [pause]  
3960inferior because of language yes

3961R: okay and so you said that there's quite a difference between like people who have taken  
3962Cambridge and IELTS versus people who have taken the college exam

3963Fernanda: yeah

3964R: um besides reading what what main differences do you see and also what factors are as  
3965a general group are you guys having difficulties with

3966Fernanda: [inhale] so [pause] it's structuring sentences sentences like very difficult like if  
3967you because you have to write when you're doing those exams you kind of learn how to  
3968structure sentence yeah you know so even if you @forget because you're not doing any

3969more you see you know you know what is the subject know what is a verb you understand  
3970the basics of that and whenever you have to write or wherever you have to speak [pause]  
3971you do it more fluently? which doesn't happen when you just do the course the the internal  
3972exam is is uhm a multiple-choice exam you don't have a writing ehheh you do have a  
3973writing but it's very small writing and even the interview I think that very basic interview  
3974[pause] so you're not assessed in like what really matters for you and you're going to a  
3975masters exam- master's uhm program? [pause] and yeah basically that like listening I didn't  
3976[pause] uh like none of us had problems of listening I think but writing and reading and  
3977speaking is [pause] we're always mixing and everything is just messing everything up it  
3978[pause] can be chaotic @@@

3979R: yeah what other factors do you think play in academic success so that could be things  
3980inside of college outside of college uhm] I can give you examples of if you want

3981Fernanda: yeah please

3982R: um a lot of people will say things like uh having friends in their course or the way the  
3983lecturer speaks um switching content area other people are saying housing finances etc.

3984Fernanda: yeah I think being @curious is very important because [click] [pause] um [click]  
3985you need you need to find your way to see a problem okay and if you're always focusing  
3986just one way or if you are always with the same friends that have the same background as  
3987you you won't see different and this is really related because [pause] you can't create or  
3988you can't develop anything without thinking outside the box and this is like ridiculous to  
3989say @ because I don't believe in outside the box or anything like that but like I do I do  
3990think that you need to have different backgrounds different people around you and be  
3991interested in what's around you and be in contact with culture and [pause] it plays a huge  
3992role in making what academia like uh means to me at least and yeah I think finance is also  
3993a huge problem and I- I- [pause] because most of the students they are with a small budget  
3994[pause] yeah and [click] sometimes I see [pause] they are like doing much more to get into  
3995the same stage as the others so I think yeah yeah those two I think @I @don't @know

3996R: okay alright I'm so now I'm gonna go kind of towards I'm courses that you've done  
3997before this course

3998Fernanda: yeah

3999R: and also the exam so Cambridge that you've taken um what kind of linguistic  
4000preparation did you take before this course

4001Fernanda: before the master's you mean

4002R: yeah before the master's yeah

4003Fernanda: okay so I came here two years ago and I came to do an English course [pause]  
4004uhh and I was planning to go to Netherlands so I needed uh I was willing to do the IELTS  
4005at the beginning [pause] but I didn't find myself with the preparation for that I couldn't it  
4006was not my exam I think every everyone has a different type of mind so the exams need to  
4007be different because of they approach you have in your life so I really found myself with  
4008Cambridge and I prepared for that and I did so I did two courses for I did two English  
4009courses of six months each ehhhh in [Country] before I came here I did one to one uh  
4010classes as well uhhh w- didn't prepare me but helped somehow? I could start like talking  
4011and so on uhm [pause] but I well what I do think helped a lot and it was not a course and  
4012whatnot not an activity and anything like that was talking like was like basically meting  
4013people like around [pause] and getting used to the way they were speaking [pause] okay  
4014and this is not course @obviously but like it helps a lot and that was the I just felt prepared  
4015to do a master's when I could really literally like understand different people from different  
4016countries uh native speakers or not and it's like okay so now I can go [pause] okay and it  
4017took me one year and a half

4018R: okay yeah so it's more about being able to comprehend

4019Fernanda: yeah

4020R: the things around you and make sense of it and be able to add to it

4021Fernanda: exactly but I did different courses as well I mean like I did like @an art course  
4022in here I I went like for for seminars I did this jumpstart which was also like from different  
4023backgrounds and people talking about completely different things? so I could develop I- I-  
4024ideas better you know

4025R: yeah yeah and just for the English quickly where the courses exam preparation or were  
4026they general English or both

4027Fernanda: yes so the first the first one was a general English so I started in intermediate  
4028and I went then I finish in advanced them and I went back I did advanced and then I could  
4029choose between IELTS and Cambridge

4030R: okay

4031Fernanda: so yeah I and then I chose Cambridge and I did like for exam preparation I just  
4032did like four months I think? [pause] and that was

4033R: and that was sufficient and then you pass the exam

4034Fernanda: yeah I mean I didn't get the @what @I @wanted but that's fine I like I passed  
4035the exam @

4036R: right yeah which basically the point of //it so

4037Fernanda: no it's not| @@@@ [pause] I'm joking

4038R: @@@@ for me it would be

4039Fernanda: @@@no it is

4040R: @but um so did you find the English courses to be helpful for your masters or was it

4041really just talking to people and doing the other courses like the arts course and the

4042jumpstart

4043Fernanda: [inhaled] it was [pause] when I arrived I when I [pause] when I arrived I was

4044afraid of speaking [pause] and uh I learned loads of grammar I started in um you know in

4045[English school] yeah yeah so is a good school and you know and that's not one of the best

4046@ones but it is a formal school and they have they really prepare you [long pause] so

4047[pause] my other my friends they were doing like those talking things and cinema or you

4048know I found it stupid and I was like and where is the grammar and ah no one likes

4049grammar yeah but what is the point @ you know you need you to learn you need to

4050understand how the language works because it's the same in your own language you know

4051[pause] so for me it helped [pause] like um the general course the general English course

4052they can be quite boring? I have to say yeah unfortunately much more I I don't think

4053[pause] they are prepared for [pause] those @students @that @are @coming @at @the

4054@moment [pause] we have old students okay we have people coming like I'm 25 but like

4055my class my classrooms I would have like people from like twenty-seven twenty-eight

4056thirty thirty-five forty years old [pause] they don't want to sit and have like a formal class it

4057doesn't work [pause] okay and like even like the activities they don't work [pause] people

4058are like going and pretending they're learning when truly I don't think they are? unless like

4059the the teachers like mine ones they were very proactive [pause] so we could discuss what

4060we wanted and how we wanted to have the- these conducts but obviously I arrived in the

4061intermediate so I didn't arrive from the very beginning [pause] when the classes are basic

4062and from my point of view in my last course I thought about doing a third course and just

4063work with Cambridge but I was like I'm bored now [pause] because y- you already speak

4064and like one of my teachers he said yeah but like when you are at the beginning like yee

4065we- if you come here and you don't know how to say apple and then you learn how to say

4066apple is a huge improvement so every single every single day is a huge improvement

4067however when you're in this level [pause] it's just so small that you don't really know and

4068you can't notice what you're doing so it's like oh I'm not learning anything when you're

4069truly ar- and when you truly are you know so I don't know how it could be developed but I

4070think it needs to okay the wa- way of teaching [pause] for those that are coming now

4071because it's a different type of students not teenagers they [pause] yeah

4072R: yeah so kind of house having more progression for the students it kind of sounds like so  
4073like having a teacher really being able to facilitate the learning even at the higher levels so  
4074they don't feel stuck

4075Fernanda: yeah yeah I think so um you need to be more dynamic somehow and [pause]  
4076need I don't know how because we had this disagreement before with one of my teachers  
4077he was like what do you want so you know because if it's boring what you could do and  
4078we start getting um material from we have Cambridge and then you have the preparation  
4079for teachers or I don't know the name it's CP or something I don't know and they start  
4080giving us those materials but they were like completely high we couldn't understand any  
4081single word but it was perfect because at least we could arrive home was like [gasp] I don't  
4082know this and I don't know that you know and we had [pause] uh a practical activity when  
4083was a book [pause] ehm they have like small seminars [pause] so it's like it is listening and  
4084it's a listening activity so you [pause] you had to learn how to put the ideas in the paper so  
4085uh we had like 10 minutes audio we start like with three minutes audio and we finished  
4086with 10 minutes audio and then we had to do the same with our colleagues so uh [pause]  
4087you know it is is is a type of teaching you are teaching you don't see the professor during  
4088front of your time but you are doing the class as well so you have anot- is another type of  
4089preparation [pause] I think [pause] yeah [pause] I I @loved @that @@

4090R: that sounds really interesting that's a good idea and so do you remember your  
4091experience with Cambridge taking the test

4092Fernanda: oh terrible [pause] chaotic was chaotic because was raining? cats and dogs was  
4093just @cold like and they called me like [Fernanda] are you in the way and I was like yes  
4094because they knew you because was one day before the some some weather thing here in  
4095Ireland you know and I thought they were going to cancel the exam but as people could  
4096arrive and most of these students are coming by by bus together or something like that they  
4097were going to take the exam so was I had lots of pressure @ [pause] you know? and  
4098[pause] uh for this I don't know I was I was quite nervous and [pause] then I start reading  
4099and everything I did until that day didn't work me like didn't help me [pause] okay I got I  
4100knew the- I knew what they're talking about I couldn't read [pause] I got so nervous  
4101because I was expecting that so much got so nervous I couldn't I was like I was looking at  
4102the watch I was trying to figure out how am I going to work with those @ and I couldn't.  
4103[pause] sooo I mean [pause] it was not too bad @ but mmm I did better exams [pause]  
4104when I was preparing and stuff yeah so um I don't know and they were lovely [pause] like  
4105they were to us like they were just helping very friendly but I don't know what happened

4106[pause] so it was about bad experience I I thought about doing it again but I was just so  
4107frustrated I was like I'm not doing now I'm just going to wait @

4108R: right I mean fair enough

4109Fernanda: yeah I just wait a little bit more

4110R: yeah and Cambridge lasts a lifetime as well

4111Fernanda: yes so that's yeah that's a good thing as well yeahh I think so I just I just yeah for  
4112it for the for the speaking exam I also couldn't I I I th-ought I couldn't understand one  
4113question I was like I and I don't know what happened you know and the other guy who was  
4114doing with me he didn't understand as well so he started answer- answering I knew he was  
4115not doing what they were asking for but instead of speaking and asking if was that or not I  
4116just answer in the same way he was doing so yeah didn't work

4117R: yeah yeah do you think it was just the pressure of um kind of like a high stake

4118Fernanda: I believe it I think it is oh it was but I I stop- stopped my preparation one month  
4119before my exam [pause] because I had one one exam coming so I went there's like oh the  
4120next exam is in two weeks would you like to take this one or would you prefer taking the  
4121next one and I said I'm taking this one the next one and they said like oh but you know you  
4122need some time blah blah blah but I was like yeah so might be better wait yeah he was like  
4123yeah I'd say that's better waiting [pause] at this first point I was ready [pause] one month  
4124later was not [pause] and I knew I was not so that that that's where the the pressure came  
4125from [pause] because you know so I if I could choose today I would do all the- like all the  
4126preparation until the very end you know have like someone talking to me and correcting  
4127me and prepare me

4128R: yeah just so it's like fresh in your mind

4129Fernanda: yeah

4130R: right when you go in the exam

4131Fernanda: it's because I was doing this one month I was preparing myself but I wasn't it's  
4132not this was not the same. [pause] I yeah I lost the structure I knew I was losing something  
4133@ and then I you know @

4134R: and do you think that that preparation has helped you or that the exam has helped you in  
4135your studies now

4136Fernanda: yes definitely [pause] yeah everything like methodology for reading listening  
4137how to is spelling everything everything everything because it's just a @massive @work  
4138that you need to do [pause] somehow you learn somehow you learn. you see the results

4139R: yeah okay fair enough um so what type of preparation do you think international  
4140students should do before going into a master's program



4141Fernanda: [pause] I I don't think they should do a general English course or anything like  
4142that I would say that first [pause] if you can choose what you're doing you start reading  
4143about it [pause] okay so it is very important to get used to what people are saying and uh  
4144subjects that might be related to what you're j- studying and then yes like a Cambridge  
4145IELTS or whatever you you should do a very good exam preparation [pause] because then  
4146you can apply this [pause] yeah and I think that's the formula at least like for me now I am  
4147thinking about doing another masters [pause] so I am going to I'm looking for an- an  
4148English course a more formal one and more academic one [pause] to help me with that  
4149because I think that's like the most important thing [pause] you need to not you don't need  
4150to know how to speak like in a pub you know you need to speak formally you need to have  
4151structure with what you're saying and have vocab also

4152R: mm-hmm okay and if you could give advice to faculty and professors in your institution  
4153to better support international students what would that advice be

4154Fernanda: push them more

4155R: push them more

4156Fernanda: yeah

4157R: in what way

4158Fernanda: like [pause] say what they're doing wrong okay like umm [pause] I don't know  
4159if this is very bad of me my friends say that's it's not the b- better way [pause] the best way  
4160sorry but I I don't think it is @ I like say that you're doing wrong you know I I need you to  
4161read more I need you to learn more I need you to speak more I mean because [pause] if if  
4162the professors don't do this then outside no one is gonna do [pause] and if you think about  
4163like oh they are they are not from here En- English is not their first language that's not  
4164your problem as a professor [pause] should be them's problem I mean [pause] not that not  
4165your problem I mean it is in certain way but like [pause] don't let them know [pause] you  
4166are concerned about this because whenever they know you're concerned they're going to  
4167use it against you like I taught before students always do this @ so they can't know your  
4168weakness you know and somehow you need to be very strict with us in any you would do  
4169it to any other student so just push them more

4170R: okay and if you could give advice to students who are our future students who are  
4171looking to come to your institution what would that advice be

4172Fernanda: well [pause] research more @ eh I think [pause] yeah research more about  
4173what you're looking for [pause] there's different types of of classmates @I @think and  
4174[pause] I find it very difficult to just have [pause] immigrants in classrooms because they  
4175are seeing the problem from the same point of view [pause] so [pause] try your like if

4176you're paying for course if you're looking for a course try to put yourself in a real situation  
4177where you are not going to have people speaking the same language as you and English is  
4178the only option so you need to communicate because I don't think it works I think it's it's  
4179very good that we have colleagues when we like ninety percent of these students are from  
4180different countries and I I I was in a seminar this week if a guy from Pakistan and who was  
4181explaining us how China and Pakistan are having an agreement for transport and it was  
4182amazing you know but we also need [pause] to see the problem from your point of view  
4183like from Irish people [pause] and we don't have this in my college [pause] so uh I would  
4184look more and yeah

4185R: all right I'm if you could give advice to organizations like language schools who are  
4186preparing international students what would that advice be  
4187Fernanda: they're not going to be prepared @@@ just make them know that they are not  
4188going to be prepared like and that's not like a huge problem as well [pause] okay because  
4189they are going to learn [pause] somehow because oh no yeah yeah you're speaking you are  
4190going to learn [pause] yes you are [pause] that's not what matters at the end [pause] okay  
4191you're going to learn don't freak [pause] I would say that that's the main thing because  
4192[pause] English schools that don't say that they because we need to celebrate every single  
4193improvement [pause] and I understand and I apprec- I like it is real like every single word  
4194you learn and you know how to say it's just so good sometimes I'm with my boyfriend he  
4195say something like what is that again and it's like I just sad this to you just I he was like I  
4196forgot could you start again it's just so good and I don't mind anymore so whenever you  
4197understand that you are @not @going to be prepared [pause] and it's not a big thing just  
4198move on [pause] you will learn

4199R: right okay so are you aware of any support the international students receive from your  
4200college like different types of supports like counseling language Student Union's etc.  
4201Fernanda: yeah we do have because an English school as well so they have a training for  
4202teachers in the afternoon [pause] so you could have classes for free while are they are  
4203training teachers and you have [pause] classes with the teachers are going to be teaching at  
4204schools that's just brilliant because they have a very good body of teachers uh for an  
4205English ehh school anyway but like I don't know [pause] any other activity I mean we have  
4206[name] and she's always in there we can always talk to her we have [pause] uhh one of the  
4207most he's a director as well I don't know I'm terrible with this but [name] is another one he  
4208is very supportive and much more an academic uh if you have an academic problem  
4209[name] is the one you go to find him because he has an expertise in education so we do  
4210have this I am trying to figure out how it's going to work I would answer your uh question

4211 maybe better next year [pause] because what happens is we were supposed to take a master  
4212 that's one academic year so with no break for summertime but we didn't understand this  
4213 when we bought the course had a huge argument and then uhh we had a break so now we  
4214 are going into May next year so now I'm I was supposed to be doing like just my  
4215 dissertation and working it out instead of having subjects [pause] and because of the break  
4216 we didn't and now we are find quite difficult to have support for the research for instance I  
4217 I had a proposal and I thought I thought grand I love what I'm looking and I just kept uh  
4218 reading and preparing material for that support me when I never had like um to do it  
4219 however one of my uhh lecturers just said to me Oh [Fernanda] just forget what you do is  
4220 not going to be a accepted for your course and I was like yeah but I started doing this like  
4221 in February like and I present this in May and now it's the same but like almost December  
4222 so I I am reading since then and I just love this and it's like yeah but that's not going to  
4223 work because of a year so it's better for me to say this now then you get at orientation next  
4224 year and uhh then say oh you can't [pause] you know so I don't know it if we are going to  
4225 have this [pause] support until now we didn't have so yeah

4226 R: okay

4227 Fernanda: okay so we're looking for like I don't know about the dissertation like how it's  
4228 gonna be okay

4229 R: alright so that's still a bit unclear

4230 Fernanda: oh yeah

4231 R: and yeah and so you've been saying that the course is quite new so it just kind of seems  
4232 like you and the professors are trying to figure out how it's gonna work what needs to be  
4233 //done

4234 Fernanda: exactly|

4235 R: timelines level of support etc.

4236 Fernanda: yeah we are like the @trouble @ like uh we are the @trouble in the college @  
4237 like they have first first semester and for first group and they were uhh [pause] better than  
4238 us like because they didn't argue that much@ however we caused all the @troubles the  
4239 @college could@ yeah because we didn't understand and one of the they head director he  
4240 came to us one day and he said it was a misunderstanding I am uhh the academic  
4241 representative I was like well I'm sorry but you need to make clear that there is no  
4242 misunderstanding because [pause] it's easy for us to not understand what you're saying it's  
4243 very easy. so you'll need to make clear absolutely clear you know no #underlines that we  
4244 know what is an academic year what it means how it goes how it doesn't go [pause] so  
4245 yeah so you know like [pause] because it was clear for them

4246R: mm-hmm but not for you guys

4247Fernanda: not for us [pause] so it's a it's a @communication @problem yeah you know

4248R: but not necessarily from your side

4249Fernanda: yes I think both sides were wrong to be honest like we could have been more um

4250open? to what they were saying and they could be more patient explain hm what was said

4251as well? [pause] which didn't happen so now [pause] now we have other problems you

4252know because now we have problems with immigration because they can accept or not

4253they need to provide a letter QQI need to accept the course this is going to be validate

4254again next year so you know one problem just cause so many other problems that you need

4255to deal with so was just so easy to say well let's just make what we are saying that this is an

4256academic year you understand what means

4257R: mm-hmm yeah

4258Fernanda: you know?

4259R: yeah yeah

4260Fernanda: communication @@

4261R: um would you say that because it's interesting that you mentioned well obviously the

4262//GNIB

4263Fernanda: yeah|

4264R: every international student knows about them but it's quite interesting that you you

4265mentioned the //QQI

4266Fernanda: yeah|

4267R: would you say that most international students would know about the QQI and the role

4268that they play in validation

4269Fernanda: no

4270R: no

4271Fernanda: no not at all I think we just [pause] learned about because we had this problem

4272R: okay

4273Fernanda: so um [pause] now that we are having problems with GNIB and everything we

4274like I had a meeting and I was like okay those are the problems we have [pause] because I

4275really don't want to have any miscommunication anymore so yes we have a course that's

4276going to be provided >that's why you need to do that's what we need to present how can I

4277work with that are you going to have a meeting with them okay so just< [pause] tell us

4278what is happening because they don't understand the power they have and [pause] you

4279know yeah they don't they're not interested at all no they don't @@@ yeah so that's it I

4280think

4281R: um so that's actually the questions that I have for you but um are there any questions  
4282that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask

4283Fernanda: hmmm [long pause] I think I know it is very subject- subjective but like [pause]

4284I [pause] I don't know I don't know if you ask- I think you I don't know if I answered it

4285anyway like how do you feel when you have to [pause] approach in ex- exam but like in

4286daily activity with the preparation you had [pause] that would >I think I answered

4287anyway< because I talk a lot @@@

4288R: I mean go ahead and answer it again just to yeah make sure that you have everything

4289else and it's good for data as well

4290Fernanda: okay yeah because [pause] the first thought when I came here was like okay I

4291need to learning English I need to develop my English [pause] but whenever you start

4292studying and it is a general course you learn that is a way of thinking instead of just a way

4293of communicating [pause] and because of this you start thinking a different way from your

4294own language so if- I always say the same like how about the future you know the

4295structure of future you have we have five futures [pause] you know? so for us future is

4296something that is gonna happen. you know? yeah not necessarily in English [pause] so

4297[pause] we what when we come when first comes like first cro- when I first came here was

4298like okay I'm just going to develop English do an English exam then I'm going to do a

4299master and that's gonna be like perfect [pause] and it's not. [pause] and it's just so amazing

4300what we can do with language because of those preparations we are doing here that I wish

4301we knew this before and I wish I don't know if everybody can understand this but it's so

4302important [pause] for a country like Ireland who is receiving so many people to make

4303people understand the power it has [pause] whenever we understand that's not just about

4304communication [pause] it changed the way you think you you think the way you see it

4305change change colors you know change everything [pause] so I felt somehow I still feeling

4306like amazed with the fact that I can [pause] express myself sometimes better? in English in

4307some subjects um I'm better expressing myself in English I don't know how to say things in

4308[language] if you ask me something very formal I don't [pause] you know? and [pause] I

4309feel proud somehow [pause] because of them because of the teachers you had because of

4310because of the Masters Masters develop they've developed me so much subjects like they

4311were amazing I learned how to negotiate in English I don't know how to negotiate

4312[language] [pause] you know? so [pause] is it a continuous learning. process. and that's it

4313@

4314R: and is there anything else you'd like to express

4315Fernanda: Eh I don't no I'm okay @

4316

4317

**Jane**

4318

4319R: okay so first I'd like you to tell me what your strengths are academically

4320Jane: um do you mean terms like writing speaking or //I m-

4321R: just in general|

4322Jane: in general @ um I don't know I guess um I'm pretty organized I usually I never had

4323in uh uh a- an essay an assignment late so [pause] organization for sure and then um I

4324always do my work a hundred percent so I will always try to give my best and work as

4325hard as I can so um @I @don't know if that's what you wanted to hear @

4326R: yeah yeah definitely

4327Jane: @okay

4328R: and um and then in terms of English what would you say your strengths are

4329Jane: um partly the fact that um first of all my school started English pretty early so I'm

4330from [Country] so um my school started school um when I was around seven years? seven

4331years old? and then they also I also had the help of my parents who lived the US before so

4332they were the ones who taught me how to properly speak English and really pushed me

4333forward to learn and write and everything about English

4334R: okay and what would you say your weaknesses academically are so in general first

4335Jane: uh in general umm [long pause] I even if I'm organized I do tend to do kind of last

4336minute-ish in my work so like I would do it like the week before the deadline or something

4337[pause] and um [long pause] in general [long pause] um I think that's probably my biggest

4338weakness actually

4339R: okay then in terms of English what would you say your weakness would be

4340Jane: um I actually don't know any grammar rules so I just go with the flow and what

4341works and that was always my lowest grades in English because I don't know how do you

4342actually do @grammar @

4343R: @okay yeah I probably coming from learning it from //your parents

4344Jane: yeah yeah| I learned how to speak in not really huh I mean it had to write it of course

4345but like more like just go with the flow that's it @

4346R: and so when did you first start learning English

4347Jane: um partly in school so when I was seven uh probably the first uhh >I mean< oh

4348actually I did it a little bit before I think? because my mom was having like English classes

4349at our house with my uh sister so that I have an older sister so her and her classmates were

4350doing English classes with my mom uh with my mom so I was kind of hanging around

4351 when they were doing that I don't think I was like really participating? but I was probably  
4352 learning like a couple of things around

4353R: yeah you were like getting //exposure

4354Jane: yeah yeah| getting exposure to it

4355R: okay so how would you evaluate your current academic success at [institution 1] like do  
4356 you think you're doing well or not

4357Jane: um yeah I'm doing pretty well like a- um I think uh for uh so I'm in the master's

4358 degree at [institution 1] for eh [discipline] and so the first semester I got a 68? I believe?

4359 overall and last year I was an Erasmus student [institution 1] and I was um for one year and

4360 I also got like two point one so I think it's [pause] pretty good @compared @to @what

4361 @I've @seen @around @like @around @[institution 1] so

4362R: yeah okay brilliant and so can you tell me about the route work that's required in your

4363 modules so what do you have to do for your modules

4364Jane: ummm a lot of readings? um usually around three four readings per week per- per

4365 module per week and it's around like thirty forty pages long and then usually you have a

4366 group work and then a individual assignment and then the final exam

4367R: okay um and so you're doing a masters now are you working on a dissertation

4368Jane: uh we just basically started like we had to hand out a proposal? research proposal two

4369 weeks ago so that's the it it's ongoing @

4370R: okay um and what kind of work do you think you'll have to do for that

4371Jane: um [pause] we are already have to do a lot of research about the literature uh around

4372 subjects and um we also had to prepare um methodology um what was it as well uh

4373 philosophy? around the dissertation as well so um afterwards what it will entail would be a

4374 lot more literature review and then also eh quantitative and qualitative studies and the

4375 whole writing @the @dissertation @ @just @have @to @do @it @yeah have to do it at

4376 some point

4377R: @ um and so can you tell me about the skills required for your modules so

4378Jane: um for our modules in general?

4379R: yeah

4380Jane: um okay so probably um a lot of um English level skills because like I know for

4381 other international students it's been a little it's been harder to because they just don't have

4382 the Eng- Eng- level for the English so like they don't understand classes so [pause]

4383 probably a good English level ehm writing skills as well because we do write a lot of

4384 assignments um and a bit of presentation skills like when you have to do oral presentations

4385so you have to know how to present and be clear and organized as well and um [pause]  
4386probably th- yeah it's a lot about writing actually a lot about writing and reading  
4387R: okay and what about as a research student so what general skills do you need for that  
4388Jane: um a lot more organization because since it's spread over a five uh on five? month I  
4389believe or something? so you do have to be a lot more organized um they do insist on  
4390being critical so like um trying to really think about where you're reading the literature and  
4391what you're #thinking you know in reality? And try to get to reanalyze and re-think about  
4392what you're seeing and what it actually means and being critical yeah  
4393R: okay so can you tell me the general structure of your lectures so when you're in the  
4394classroom what happens  
4395Jane: okay so we usually starts with um [pause] with talking about the general subjects of  
4396what we're going to talk about and then we going through kinda like all the readings that  
4397we had to do today so what they were talking about and how it relates to theory and reality  
4398and we usually end up with like a case study or discussion um around the subject of the  
4399day  
4400R: okay so is it more discussion based or is it more like the the professor giving a lecture  
4401Jane: it kind of depends on the classes like the classes that I had last semester were a lot  
4402more about just listen to the teacher and that's it for us the classes that I have this semester  
4403are are a lot more about discussion and um yeah yeah critical thinking etcetera  
4404R: okay right and um you've described the form of assessment but how do your professors  
4405assess academic success so when they're grading what do you think they're looking for  
4406Jane: um [pause] probably the first thing would be uh clear thinking so like make sure that  
4407everything that you explained where there is you know what the the literature would agree  
4408on or a disagree on uh as long as you make sense and you arguments that's the basis of  
4409everything and then um they do mention with the bibliography that has to be really  
4410structured and respect everything umm correct English of course and I think what they say  
4411is that they give a higher mark when they see that you were critical that you were thinking  
4412about what you were writing and not just doing like a pre- basic presentation on it  
4413R: okay and how do your professors communicate those expectations  
4414Jane: [pause] hmm usually through the assignment guidelines so most of the assignments  
4415we have a short PDF saying well that's what I'm expecting the number of words etc. etc.  
4416and they do generally mention well here's why I'm here's what I'm expecting and how you  
4417can get a good grade basically  
4418R: okay and do you feel that those guidelines are helpful are they clear



4419Jane: yeah yeah usually it's really helpful it really helps in terms of like the structure of the  
4420assignments like how do I go around to and so the main correction basically um yeah and  
4421it's you should be very clear very straightforward and there's no usually need to ask for  
4422more precision it can happen like once in a while but it's mostly like on a person-to-person  
4423basis not like a whole group

4424R: mm-hmm okay and so in general what do you feel students need to succeed at  
4425[institution 1]

4426Jane: um definitely good reading skills @ because we do read a lot @ ehh and organization  
4427would probably be the first one because since you have so many readings and you need to  
4428prepare so much an advance for class you have to do it you know you have to you know  
4429deal with your time eh if not you're just gonna get caught up in uh all the work that you  
4430have to do

4431R: okay and how much of a factor do you feel that language plays in academic success

4432Jane: a huge a huge part of the economic success because as I've said um I have seen  
4433people struggle in my class because we're a very international class so we have people  
4434coming from Asia or India or wherever and I know for the >especially for the Chinese  
4435people< that I've seen that they struggle a lot with understanding the teacher or  
4436understanding the guidelines the vocabulary that we use because they simply don't have the  
4437uh use of English back in their countries so yeah they do struggle a lot at the beginning

4438R: and do you feel or have you seen so you said they struggle a lot at the beginning do you  
4439feel that with time they've they're struggling less or //is it

4440Jane: yeah yeah yeah|| definitely throughout the semester you see them improve a lot like  
4441one of my friends she could barely hold the conver- not really uh hold a conversation but  
4442like she had to you know look up on the internet for a lot of translation for words and  
4443nowadays she can just have a normal conversation she doesn't have to look up for a lot of  
4444things and she some of them you can see in the way they write? so like in group  
4445assignments you can see that they improve the way they write and have a structure at the  
4446whole document because we also have the issue of um very different academic approach  
4447when it comes to writing assignments from country to country so some countries are not  
4448used to having to reference in the text and so it's a lot of learning process of how do you  
4449actually quote and reference in an assignment

4450R: okay so I'd be interested since you're doing a lot of group work with a lot of  
4451international people how do you guys go about finding common ground when it comes to  
4452writing one piece of text with a lot of different backgrounds

4453Jane: um how it usually goes we assign different section of the assignments to different  
4454persons like one person's in charge of this and this and this and then um one person is in  
4455charge of editing the whole document at the end so that we can see that it runs smoothly  
4456and that we don't have you know one way of writing in one way in a different way so I like  
4457trying to make everything coherent I guess that's how it works

4458R: okay um all right and what other factors would you say plays into academic success so  
4459this could be other academic factors it could be personal factors etc.

4460Jane: umm [pause] probably if you have other uh responsibilities outside of school so I  
4461know that some people do work or have families in my uh master's degree so some people  
4462have a lo- I guess less time outside of school to deal with all the work that we have to do  
4463so when they do have to take care of everything else it's making a little bit harder for us to  
4464organize if we have to do group works but one person is not available for the next two  
4465weeks or something so that's usually what can #impact #the #work

4466R: um so before you came to [institution 1] did you take any specific linguistic or academic  
4467preparation to prepare you for [institution 1]

4468Jane: no

4469R: okay and did you have to take an entry assessment so something like IELTS or TOEFL

4470Jane: uh I did take the TOEFL when I was in my second year of undergrad and I took the  
4471IELTS eh as well after because I wanted to apply for English university so they want- they  
4472didn't want the TOEFL anymore so we had to do the IELTS

4473R: okay um and so how do you feel about these entry assessments

4474Jane: um I felt like they are kinda complete like they do assess the four different categories  
4475of technically any language so like speaking writing um reading and what is the last one?

4476R: writing //reading

4477Jane: listening|

4478R: yeah

4479Jane: yeah and so I feel like we do um kind of reflect better than all the tests that I've seen  
4480around your level of English like for example in Spanish I had to do the test called the  
4481blots? I think it's also for German or something and that has only had like listening and  
4482reading eh comp- comprehension so no- nothing about speaking or writing and I thought  
4483that was no way close to the level of Spanish that I had

4484R: okay and do you feel that those tests have accurately predicted how you have done in  
4485[institution 1]

4486Jane: um [pause] I don't know if it's related to how well I've done and to be honest like I've  
4487seen some people who had like a pretty high scores and um I'm I'm not sure if they had like

4488so many high grades and you know in exchange because like you can be really good at  
4489English when you take the test but it doesn't mean that you're gonna be really uh you know  
4490strict about your work in university so I think some people to- take the test go to university  
4491abroad but they use the exchange period as a time for holidays so they don't you know  
4492really care about the work at the [pause] universities so to me it's not really linked

4493R: okay um so what type of preparation do you feel that international students should take  
4494before coming to Trinity if they should take anything

4495Jane: definitely I would say have maybe done um classes in English before so that's  
4496something that I know really helped is that my undergrad was in English so every classes  
4497that I took was in English and that means that when I got here I didn't have to struggle with  
4498the fact that I had to listen to you know courses in English for a long period of time or read  
4499for in English for a long period of time like I was already used to it and all of the  
4500vocabulary and all the writing done it was in English so it wasn't I wasn't you know still  
4501struggling trying to translate my thoughts from [language] to English I was already into the  
4502process

4503R: okay so having like content classes //in English

4504Jane: yeah|

4505R: before they //come

4506Jane: yeah yeah yeah| before coming

4507R: okay um so if you could give advice to faculty and professors in how to support and  
4508interact with international students what would that be

4509Jane: um in terms of English? or academic?

4510R: both

4511Jane: both?

4512R: yeah

4513Jane: so like in terms of English I feel like the some do try to say well try to go out with the  
4514people around in your class or like try to engage uh in societies for example um maybe it's  
4515only like the main professor that will try to talk about this not all the professors but they do  
4516try to say well if you engage with English-speaking students you will get better and better  
4517um in terms of academic wise I would say they do uh but what I've seen is that they don't  
4518talk about the differences of the academic process between English-speaking countries and  
4519foreign countries so like we didn't have a class of uh how to reference how to quote how to  
4520anything that's something that I had in the previous exchange outside of [institution 1] like  
4521they had a Center where a any international students could go and say I just want to learn  
4522because I don't want to be accused of plagiarism and I know it exists in [institution 1] like

4523you can take a class uh but it's not something that the teachers talk about it's just about like  
4524a email that we received from the students skills um uh I don't remember the full name uh  
4525it's not something that the teachers really do talk about like they just say oh well you can  
4526go to uh the library website where they explain everything but they don't talk about the  
4527workshop and actually making maybe maybe making it mandatory for international  
4528students to do it

4529R: okay and if you could give advice to organizations so schools including language  
4530schools and universities that are preparing international students to study at [institution 1]  
4531what would that be

4532Jane: [long pause] um [pause] I don't really know because I've never used any  
4533collaboration classes so I don't know what they really do umm maybe you could tell me  
4534what they do

4535R: um well typically they have they have two different things they'll have IELTS  
4536preparation which is probably the more common one where they prepare students to take  
4537the standardized exams to get the correct score to get into University and then we have  
4538English for academic purposes which would be usually summer programs which are  
4539between like four to eight weeks and there they do also focusing on exam prep but also  
4540things like how to write a longer essay etc.

4541Jane: okay I- I- I know in my undergrad they had um classes for progression for the  
4542TOEFL or the uh uh IELTS um I personally never took this kind of classes but I know  
4543from my friends who took it that they all said that it was kind of useless because it was  
4544basically just very basic exercises and that they felt like it wasn't um hard enough or  
4545like true enough to the reality that wasn't really prepare- >um I mean it's kind of like  
4546saying< well I prepare for a test it's great but it doesn't really relate to the reality of actually  
4547it's- of being in English speaking schools [pause] so it's kind of like the disconnect between  
4548the two so maybe if you try to I think it has to be a lot more about practicing so what you  
4549were saying like doing long essays or presentation in English that would probably help a  
4550lot more than just doing exercises like tick the box or the correct answer or something

4551R: okay and if you could give advice to future international students what would that be  
4552Jane: um [long pause] probably make sure that you have the [pause] English level to go  
4553abroad or [pause] I mean you do learn a lot when you once you're here so I know that it's  
4554very easy to say learn a lot about English when you're in a foreign country when people  
4555don't speak English it's very hard um probably try to do >one thing that really helped me  
4556with English< was reading books in English or watching TV shows in English with first  
4557subtitles or without subtitles afterwards try to really get into hearing English all the time

4558and reading English all the time and try to write a little bit of in English if you can  
4559probably will help

4560R: okay all right and um are you aware of any support the international students receive  
4561from your department or from the wider College

4562Jane: umm [pause] I think I'm not really sure I think the Chinese students uh um I'm not  
4563sure if it's just the Chinese or the others but I've heard about it from the Chinese students  
4564that they did have English classes? I think at the beginning of this semester? also because  
4565we learned that some of them didn't took the TOEFL or didn't have a TOEFL score uh high  
4566enough to technically enter the master's degree but they were you know accepted in the  
4567Master's under the condition that they will take that they will take the TOEFL again in in  
4568December so they had to take English classes in between [institution] classes

4569R: okay I know I know that you're just hearing it from other people but um did they feel  
4570that that support was adequate

4571Jane: [long pause] I didn't really get any feedback some English classes what would I  
4572would say is that I did see that they improved a lot so I don't know if it's from interacting in  
4573classes or outside of classes or if it's from the English classes in particular uh I do see that  
4574they all improved a lot so maybe it's related

4575R: okay right um so that is actually all of the questions that I have for you but are there any  
4576questions that you wish I had asked that I didn't

4577Jane: [long pause] no @ no I don't think so @

4578R: do you have anything that you'd like to add

4579Jane: yeah kind of like what was the the bigger aim? of this interview? like I am really  
4580curious about it

4581R: um so basically what's the bigger aim of the interview is um so this Center runs the  
4582English for academic purposes program at [institution 1] and so we have two different  
4583programs we have a in-session program where two hours a week students can come and  
4584take academic English classes and we have a summer program where it's for eight weeks  
4585and students come and we prepare them for entering [institution 1] so my PhD is  
4586redesigning that curriculum and and then also tracking the students to see how well that  
4587curriculum works so my first step is talking to as many international students as possible to  
4588see what's actually needed and then the curriculum is going to be designed based on that so  
4589all of these interviews are basically seeing what the reality is from the students perspective  
4590and what's actually important to learn and then I'll also be talking with faculty and seeing  
4591what professors think needs to be taught and you know comparing again

4592Jane: okay that was very interesting @ thank you

4593

4594

**Jasmine**

4595

4596R: okay so first I'm do you go here at [institution 1] or a different University

4597Jasmine: no here

4598R: here okay alright cool um so what would your strengths be academically what what like

4599what you're good at

4600Jasmine: yeah now I'm doing a research in the [discipline] and this means in um few words

4601basically and looking for the [topic] and the what's going on in the on the coast of Ireland I

4602mean the research is in Ireland so in the west coast okay

4603R: okay so what are you good at like what what makes you a good student basically

4604Jasmine: that's PhD I don't know well [long pause] it's complicated question @@@ I don't

4605know if I'm good student and I I mean I try to do my best and uh I think especially for a

4606PhD there are several tasks that you h as to cover and it's really dependent on the topic of

4607your PhD I think is really specific it cannot be really generalized because what I notice

4608speaking with other student is this we have pretty different tasks for instance in my PhD I

4609need to be in the lab I need to be in the uh- I mean do like paper research theoretical

4610research and then practical research and in my case I think I feel that it's really complicated

4611to be a good student because you have to be sufficient in all the area and you have to

4612manage the time to do everything and if you have some lack like you're in lab or in

4613methods of studying or in the field it's also so complicated for the supervisors to really

4614supervise you because it's not there [pause] I mean it can be useful in the theory but not in

4615the products not in a the lab not in so there are several things that so just with time I'm still

4616don't feel that I'm good at in time maybe I will improve and I'm trying to cover the my

4617lacks I think the area that I think I still have to something more

4618R: ok and what would you consider those areas that you do need to do something more

4619Jasmine: [click] well what I mean

4620R: yeah like what I'm basically like what difficulties do you have or what weaknesses do

4621you have

4622Jasmine: the difficulty that I have is uhhm umm that I think that is compared to the matter

4623that I because of course each each of us coming from different countries we have kind of

4624preparation and I think in my country that the the students are a little bit more follow and

4625what I understood for instance from [institution 1] >I don't know if it's said general thing<

4626is from [institution 1] or is a general things of Ireland that the students are a little bit give it

4627more free and this positive for some aspect but is negative when especially when the

4628background of the student is completely different with the research that are they are  
4629involved so this means that if you have summed up or I mean not always the the professor  
4630can help you or is always available to help but is that I mean is not personal things at all is  
4631just general things that I notice

4632R: and so in terms of English what would you say that you're good at in English

4633Jasmine: well this is another @@ I am thinking @ maybe in this speaking and in the  
4634understanding I arrived to the level that is yes quite good but in the writing especially is  
4635very complicated uhhh because the writing I mean especially for Latin language so we  
4636are trying to keep the sentence really long I just did my confirmation and first of all the  
4637supervisor is Portuguese so he was looking my writing and say yeah I understand what you  
4638mean just because I'm Portuguese I have the same kind of [pause] thinking so but then if  
4639you try to think in with an English mind and try to see what you mean and it's exactly it  
4640you you cannot understand nothing and then I did this exercise say I what I'm fucking  
4641write doesn't make an in English doesn't make any sense it does so but I don't know it  
4642maybe you know for sure you know there is a course that there would be in the next  
4643semester for international students and and academic English I don't know if it will be you  
4644will be involved

4645R: yeah

4646Jasmine: uh I decided to participate because and especially now I'm in the second year of  
4647PhD so yeah I I I should start writing some paper I have enough data to do something so  
4648but then writing a paper is high high standards this so

4649R: yeah and so you're gonna take the course

4650Jasmine: yeah I will try it yeah

4651R: um so all right so you kind of covered a little bit about um as a research student what  
4652you are required to do have you taken any modules or any lectures here

4653Jasmine: ummmm I did statistics last year but then I did that complete the exam because I  
4654was so busy with the field work and then I got time to to do the exam and in [institution 1]  
4655they are quite strict oh you you do the exam exactly w-w-when they say otherwise you lost  
4656it >I didn't I didn't< know it okay I say ok I'll do it September and they say no you can't  
4657that's fine I mean anyway it was useful because I learned something I mean I don't really  
4658need statistic like I mean in my in I don't know if and for the other PhD is different but for  
4659mine I don't need uhm other credits from courses so if I want to do them then I'm free

4660R: ok but otherwise but it's not a requirement

4661Jasmine: no

4662R: okay alright and um so in that module that you did take what was the class like was it  
4663mainly the professor giving a lecture was there any practical component

4664Jasmine: yeah both yeah it was uhm uhm long course it was not a course actually it was not  
4665a module but three module that was like like um it's the one of this called certificate yeah  
4666yeah and so in the first module it was like general theory and then the second and the third  
4667module it was also practice so so we did both theory exercise and lab lab work with ehm  
4668lab of statistics

4669R: hmm okay all right these um so what would you say that your supervisor expects of you  
4670how would he assess academic success or she

4671Jasmine: hmmm [long pause] well he expect that I'm showing some results at some point  
4672and I keep going with the research and doing [sigh] now he's quite happy about @@@ the  
4673the way I'm I'm proceeding umm [long pause] what do you want to know exactly

4674R: just like um well that's a good good as well uh like when you give him a chapter yeah  
4675what is he looking for how does he know if it's a good chapter

4676Jasmine: hm [long pause] well it's quite it's good to to he reviewed everything in an  
4677accurate way and it- first of all because I'm international I notice that is looking for English  
4678and [long pause] English and then the contents I mean the first things is the English and the  
4679second things is the is the content and actually I'm glad that I'm internationally in this point  
4680of view because he has to be so focused on language he more focus on content I say this  
4681because when he corrects something from someone who is Irish he overlooked a little bit  
4682too much and then I notice that Irish people then they have more issues in the content just  
4683an observation I don't know if it's true or not but I think because he's so worried about the  
4684way I'm I'm express myself then of course if there is some mistake in in the content in the  
4685theory he notice better so I think is

4686R: it's kind of an advantage in some way @

4687Jasmine: yeah @@

4688R: okay I mean I can see that um so how does your supervisor how does he communicate  
4689his expectations to you so how would you know //what

4690Jasmine: @@ I don't know| @@@ this man @ this man is really complicated @@@ I  
4691mean I have to try to guess because he is really fog if he say that is a learning process and I  
4692yet to arrive to the right conclusion by myself but the point is sometimes I'm asking for  
4693advice and after a while I learned that his answer I don't have to take his answer as true but  
4694maybe the answer is a joke and he want to me something different [sigh] so yeah it is not  
4695easy because sometimes [pause] yeah it's not clear at all in everything also small things  
4696also maybe I tell him oh I did this because I thought that you think oh no no I never do



4697 whatever you want I don't have you don't have to do in this way but you show me that you  
4698 prefer in this way no it's the way you think that I'm prefer I mean it is not clear but I think  
4699 is that maybe the personal behavior on him that is not clear yeah so knowing the  
4700 expectation that he has @

4701 R: okay you just have to guess

4702 Jasmine: try to get and try to to do that them if it's wrong is wrong @@

4703 R: okay so in general what do students need in order to succeed at [institution 1]

4704 Jasmine: uhm [pause] well from my small experience until now until the confirmation I  
4705 think the requirements are quite high and you have to show that you really know what you  
4706 are doing and you have to convince people [long pause] but not convincing people just  
4707 with a words because there are people that are just going around and try to be really secure  
4708 and really proud of themselves but is not enough and I really appreciate it because this  
4709 means sometimes I compare myself I say okay my English is not so good so when I'm also  
4710 women talking about my research I cannot be great as an Irish because I think in if in  
4711 [country] I have to present some topic in [language] of course I can use the best words and  
4712 be really how to say like [long pause] pompous I don't know if you should show  
4713 something they're really great in the best way using the best word because my vocabulary  
4714 in English is not at that level I always think of an Irish person is better so they can  
4715 convince the professor better but then what I appreciate that it's not like that because  
4716 especially in science they want to know if you understand what you are doing maybe if you  
4717 know your research if you if you're aware about the method about the field or whatever and  
4718 so I think this expectation high so it was really difficult in terms of um [pause] yeah  
4719 convince them that my research is good but not in terms of language

4720 R: right okay and um so speaking of language how much of a factor does language play in  
4721 academic success

4722 Jasmine: [sigh] I think that's quite important uhm [long pause] well first of all in an  
4723 understanding of the paper sometimes especially with complicated paper with topic that  
4724 you are not really in uhm then the English is another obstacle of course also also if you  
4725 know the language but the man keeps tired I remember when I started I was really tired all  
4726 day and headaches and hearing especially Irish that is not @@@ really clear @@@@ so  
4727 it's really um you have to become much more concentrated than normal because it's not  
4728 something a language that is your mother that you just acquired without also if you're  
4729 looking outside of the window and look at the stars and then in the meantime you acquire  
4730 the information but in English in a really really clear English more or less I acquired  
4731 information but in especially with Irish people miss [pause] so yes so the language is [long

4732[pause] important too and with the supervisor is better because he's Portuguese so I don't  
4733have this yeah his English is quite clear

4734R: okay and so what other factors would you say influences academic success

4735Jasmine: [long pause] hmm [pause] well hm I can give an example for instance eh being in  
4736a gr- a good group and environment in terms of people in terms of environment like  
4737building I had a an issues at the beginning because uh I mean at the beginning until few  
4738months ago @@ because I was in a Anatomy building I don't know if you know where it is  
4739and it's really empty yes there is no one inside it's like ghost building so for an intern-  
4740especially for an international person that is coming here Dublin is just enough complicate  
4741itself with accommodation and whatever and then spend the whole day in an office alone  
4742it's so sad it's really really sad and then you see oh some people say oh but you are alone  
4743so you will be concentrated no I mean it's worse @@@ I've been depressed @ it's different  
4744because you don't know no one and then is really complic- is there are two factor the fact  
4745that is you are PhD student you're busy and then the other fact that this a city you're living  
4746in a city and the city they are more complicated I mean I'm coming from [city] so I know  
4747when you are in a small city is easier to get friends or know someone ok maybe tomorrow  
4748we can have a coffee again but then in a city you know someone from another department  
4749then it that person is busy there is no chance to meet that person again so I complain for  
4750this and now I'm in another department so with people around so I think that make friends  
4751rather be around other PhD student share your new works and issues is important too  
4752[pause] and then based of course in terms of more practical things like instrumentation  
4753having the lab that are working or suitable instrument to analyze your data what I didn't  
4754have it at the beginning so I mean

4755R: okay that's my next question is gonna say okay do you have that here so

4756Jasmine: uhm no it was yeah this is another difference that I noticed from this one is from  
4757Ireland to [country] for instance because I know [country] so well in [country] a professor  
4758apply for project if he knows the project and if he has the instrument to do the project in  
4759Ireland the professor apply for project because they get money @ they don't care about  
4760what's going on later on it's not his their problem is the problem of the PhD

4761R: okay so it's kind of like alright bring on the PhD there you go figure it out

4762Jasmine: yeah and in some case uh uh it's nothing don't w- don't work doesn't work in this  
4763way because now I I find a way to analyze half of my parameters then the professor I mean  
4764it's not bad I mean he try to figure out what to do and now we have an agreement with  
4765French so I will get other data from there but the point is if you're not if the supervisor is  
4766not completely aware about something when you apply then also if you sort in terms of

4767logistic then you don't sort up in terms of money because then you have to be some aware  
4768about money because you applied for project you can ask for more money and you didn't  
4769so it's just because it's not because there were not money because there are some big like  
4770[organizations and research councils] they have a lot of money if you have a good project  
4771you won the project probably if you ask for five thousand euro more no one complain it  
4772you know it just because you didn't because you were not aware but the prob- of course  
4773them you cannot tell this to the professor because they say oh what you say I mean of  
4774course it's confident @ @ @

4775R: yeah yeah

4776Jasmine: @ @ of course of course you don't know who he is @ but I mean I didn't notice  
4777this issues only with my prof- I mean sometimes it's also the opposite they ask you for uhm  
4778a large amount of money and they then for the specific project they didn't need it uh it's  
4779just a way to work here

4780R: okay alright I'm so going kind of to talk about any entry tools that you had to take so  
4781standardized exams English classes etc. did you take any linguistic preparation before  
4782coming to [institution 1] like English courses IELTS preparation

4783Jasmine: I did uhm I went in [England] for six months during the master's degree for an  
4784Erasmus placement and there I took the that was IELTS

4785R: okay yeah did you take a course for that or did you just take the exam

4786Jasmine: I take the course but I I not I don't like the English course

4787R: okay why not

4788Jasmine: ehmm I always find that that are not useful for my case because uhm just once I  
4789did a good training English course it was in [city] in England and I enjoyed the method of  
4790this professor because we were a class with different people and he tried to understand the  
4791level of each person try to create group with the same level and um make conversation  
4792between us and it was a good method to improve especially at the beginning then most of  
4793the course are the class are too mix it with two different level and if the level of the others  
4794is too low you don't under- you don't improve and if it's too high you don't understand so  
4795@ @ yeah so I often had this issue also then IELTS exercise I noticed that is not really that  
4796you can do it in in the class is more practice yourself because there is something I mean an  
4797understanding writing >maybe it was useful for the writing< because then I I wrote several  
4798sheet and then I sent to the professor that correct and is good had a proper correction  
4799because if I did the same with colleagues also English speakers but maybe they don't care  
4800and just yeah yeah it's fine but it's not fine because then the IELTS requirements are not  
4801really easy to

4802R: right and what kinds of what do you think about IELTS do you remember your  
4803experience taking it any feelings around it

4804R: mmm-hmm I did the is for academic because there are two so I did that one because I  
4805was looking for PhD uhm [long pause] well I think it was not easy @@ because I mean  
4806[exhale] well maybe it's what the exam has to do because it's uh for academics so it's  
4807supposed [pause] to be like I mean if some writing it were really we are like talking about  
4808the [discipline-specific exam topic] in in the if you don't know I mean you should invent  
4809something and show that you have capacity but maybe someone knows the English but  
4810doesn't have the capacity @@@ so it's a bit weird and also then the speaking it was not in  
4811academic so it was also really weird because it was more normal that if you ask me a  
4812question like what do you think about climate change what do you think about uh I don't  
4813know uhm TV- what TV news something like that but if you tell me what do you think  
4814about a person that is cycling between 1:00 and 2:00 p.m. in the the garden in Phoenix park  
4815>why what what< I mean there's some question see when when you are difficult to an  
4816answer it's not because you don't know English is because the question is so weird the you  
4817like say what so what why are you asking@ me@ that@ so many people have this I  
4818noticed that they have this issues and also my oral I mean at the end I pass it but I I  
4819remember that I received weird questions@@@

4820R: @ it's not necessarily that you didn't have the English it was just the question was so  
4821bizarre that you just didn't have the ideas

4822Jasmine: yeah sometimes@ it's@ just@ like@ whoa@

4823R: right @@ do you think that IELTS prepared you for study at [institution 1]

4824Jasmine: [shakes head] no @@@@

4825R: okay why not

4826Jasmine: well it's so practical way practical things that I mean as long as the the way how I  
4827did it is it was not the exam that prepared me to study here it was more maybe because I  
4828did the master in English it was a kind of base it was a of course in [country] so the  
4829requirement of English it was less but it was an exercise so it's not a small exam that  
4830prepare you it's a long long path I mean after 2 years that you're reading in English you  
4831cannot start a PhD in another language if you don't have a long hmmm what I know this  
4832also from I don't know if you ever spoke with Chinese people sometimes they got the  
4833IELTS but then maybe they just starting write- reading and writing in English and the  
4834communication is really low that just create group and stay by themselves and they are still  
4835doing PhD so I don't I think they can I don't know but I suppose they can be in difficulty  
4836with [pause] especially because they don't interact a lot with other English-speaking

4837R: mm-hmm yeah and so you said that you did your masters in English and that was in  
4838[country] so it was an English medium university or program

4839Jasmine: yes it was just a program in English

4840R: right and so what type of preparation do you think international students should take  
4841before coming to [institution 1] like what should they do to prepare

4842Jasmine: hmmm [cough] [long pause] first oh well this is really really personal uhm I think  
4843that is not enough for being a bachelor because that is not bachelor you call like four years  
4844but you don't have master and for some PhD is a bit complicated because you don't have  
4845any specialization and then the PhD maybe is really focused on one area and so I advise to  
4846a master to to do a PhD before especially if it's really specific at least you during the  
4847master you im- improve in working by yourself without with with less supervision and just  
4848supervise two students from the two undergraduate and [pause] it's weird I really feel that  
4849they are like babies they are still so young and also the age is important so start a PhD  
4850when you are so young is not positive I mean I think the right age is between 25 26 27 I  
4851mean until 30 but not too young also because it has to be it's not only about the the  
4852knowledge so but this one's about how much you are mature and if you're coming from a  
4853different country you should be autonomous and yes be aware that to live alone there are  
4854several things [pause] I mean car I mean driving yes @@@ it's important

4855R: well especially if you're doing lab work on the west coast

4856Jasmine: yeah it's important yes yeah sometimes professors yeah yeah if you have it is  
4857better and if you don't have it it's fine yeah but what it means that then someone asks us to  
4858take this responsibility for you if you don't have it so it's better yeah I think that the good  
4859things in [institution 1] has to be responsible on whole point of view

4860R: okay right so self-responsibility

4861Jasmine: @@@ yes @@@

4862R: okay um so if you could give advice to professor's to better support international  
4863students what would that advice be

4864Jasmine: [long pause] hmm [long pause] well creating uh um [sigh] rules and uhm of the  
4865department and of the [institution 1] because if we are not coming from [institution 1] we  
4866don't know [pause] many things so we should have an introduction from the supervisor or  
4867from someone to the department how is working [institution 1] everything even from the  
4868registration process to the payments to the ehm expenses expenses and the other big issues  
4869I don't know what I notice that we discover everything by ourselves and we have so many  
4870issues [pause] and sometimes yeah I have on a colleague that she did everything in  
4871[institution 1] she knows more so this means that if you have experience in [institution 1]

4872before you know better the system but if you are coming from from another university we  
4873should have an introduction at least about general things the most important this is yeah  
4874this would be helpful @@

4875R: yeah and so you mentioned um well finances and other issues can you kind of expand  
4876on that like what are the other issues and how is it impacting the PhD

4877Jasmine: yeah yeah my huge issues is the expenses uhm [pause] because we have really  
4878big expenses for each field work and the system will assist the to say the people that are  
4879working yeah and the assist they don't are not really helpful they have specific time they  
4880want to be okay I'm available just on Monday from 2:00 to 3:00 so it's not really easy to  
4881deal with these people so the only the solution that basically most of us 90% of us are  
4882doing is doing the payment by ourself using our debit credit card and then claiming back  
4883the money uhhhh the issues is especially scientific subject we have really huge expenses  
4884sometimes like thousand and you know the salary @@isn't so high@@ plus all the stuff of  
4885Dublin accommodation transport and so on so is really uncomfortable sometimes and the  
4886first time especially because now with time I'll try to save some money and opt to be  
4887organized for fieldwork and then say ok I will claim later but at the beginning I have an  
4888uncomfortable situation because I need 600 euro I didn't have it so I was feeling shame I I  
4889know that I was right and then the professor was really kind and he gave me the money but  
4890is stupid the system I mean is uncomfortable that the PhD student needs to go to the  
4891supervisor and ask for money [pause] it was really bad and I mean we have these issues  
4892continuously especially because last time I did a claim of one hundred one thousand two  
4893hundred and I was basically with zero in my bank account and I was expected it arrived on  
4894the next week and the @@@

4895R: it didn't

4896Jasmine: no so and I mean it's normal delays it's not the point of I mean I'm not  
4897complaining about the delay of the system that is completely normal people I mean you do  
4898a claim can take one two three weeks it's not it is wrong not this is wrong that I mean that  
4899you have to do that the beginning so you should find another method because if you trust  
4900me as a PhD you should trust that I use the money in a proper way and you should give me  
4901like a paid card a credit card that I can use for field and also better because we can manage  
4902the money directly we are more aware about what was going on with the money now I  
4903don't have ideas all the time that I know I can't remember all the expenses that I had so I  
4904have to go to supervisor ask him and is really uncomfortable because maybe if I ask too  
4905much he say okay you are anxious but you know it's if you don't know exactly how much  
4906money you left you don't know how to manage the future and you should work

4907R: right right yeah okay and so then if you give advice to future students of [institution 1]

4908 what would that advice be

4909 Jasmine: hmm [long pause] be patient @@

4910R: be patient okay @

4911 Jasmine: @@@ yes @@ I don't know @ be aware that there are many things that don't

4912 work prop-properly that the administration is a mess @@@@ so keep calm @@@ you

4913 will figure out it in some way @@@ but there also I can say also the positive @ that most

4914 of the people are really kind so they try to find a solution but sometimes the the situation

4915 became really funny because also if the people of try the system is so weird with all the

4916 goodness that they have they don't find solution @@@@

4917R: okay so be patient be calm it'll work out but it might take a while

4918 Jasmine: @@@@ yeah @@@@

4919R: okay all right um so then if you could give advice to organizations who are creating like

4920 summer programs to help prepare students for [institution 1] what would that advice be

4921 like what should they teach

4922 Jasmine: hmmm [long pause] I don't know that's complicated [long pause] you mean in

4923 terms of language or

4924R: basically anything yeah

4925 Jasmine: maybe it's I don't know for my maybe it would be enough have an in- in- a good

4926 introduction on the system and not I mean we have a kind of introduction with with the

4927 papers like read these read these that this is the rule but I mean how many of us really read

4928 that piece of shit like that like the books that they give us it's much more nicely if they just

4929 organize like a course of one day two days and they explain exactly and maybe explaining

4930 they also understand which are the lack and wh-what is missing and what is not explained

4931 for instance in in in in all this book is not not mentioned at all the iexpenses so basically

4932 and actually there are some facility that exist right now but no one advice to do for instance

4933 in in yeah oh in the college green they have this course about the iexpenses and they

4934 explain how it work the website and and finally I did it with one of my colleague so we

4935 register with it so but we discover after that we had issues so by my advice is if there is just

4936 a day where someone explained to the new PhD what's going on now how you have to

4937 move I mean what I noticed with my colleague is not only about having an issues or

4938 having maybe something that this is not working as you wish of course the system cannot

4939 work as me wish or him wish or whatever I mean each of us is different and we have

4940 different requirements but the point is [pause] I mean have an idea and not discover the

4941 issues with time it slowly slowly because if you don't know the issues then you have more

4942problem but if you know you are aware and you try to figure out it how to manage but I  
4943don't think it's only a student problem actually most of the professor is I mean the  
4944administration is not clear for anyone @

4945R: yeah okay and so then in terms of English what would you like to see being taught  
4946Jasmine: uh I don't know but I expect I will improve I will gain something good from the  
4947course that I will do uhm I would like to have someone maybe especially in the writing and  
4948explain me why something is wrong because sometimes the professor change the sentence  
4949and I don't understand why I don't understand say yeah but that for me it was more uhm  
4950better it was better than the other way so he just changed it and sometimes mmm if I think  
4951about the past when I was writing in [nationality] it was the same that sometimes people  
4952don't correct because it's wrong but they correct because they think is better how they think  
4953so I want to separate the personal style with a correct English because maybe I I I will  
4954develop a style that is mine and is not wrong so maybe it's when you are write at a certain  
4955level when you want to write a paper and want the professor they're just writing as his wish  
4956also because his way to talk is really complicated @@@ I I want to develop something by  
4957myself with good advice also easy English but I still I mean I need someone that of course  
4958this mother tongue and tell me what is wrong and why

4959R: okay alright and so then are you aware of any support that international students receive  
4960from your department your college etc.

4961Jasmine: uhm department no the coll- I mean I've been here last year for the support uhm it  
4962was like for yeah for PhD student I want to psychologist just on hard my life so I use it

4963R: so you know you're aware of supports and that kind of stuff um and do you think the  
4964two supports are adequate or is there anything that could be done to make it better

4965Jasmine: hmmm in the department has to improve not these this one it was good also other  
4966people other colleagues they find that was great but the department is awful they don't care

4967R: so what could the department do

4968Jasmine: @ hmm if we present some issues I think at least in my department is really  
4969hypocrisy the way how they say oh present it and we try to sort it I present several issues  
4970last year no one give me any feedback and they just don't care I I I feel that when you  
4971present really small issues oh I I like the coffee machine in the kitchen oh tomorrow@ you  
4972have a new coffee machine but then when you present the real issues [pause] they don't  
4973really care I don't know why what I understood in my specific case I think there is some  
4974overlap of department [pause] and sincerely I don't want I don't know and I don't want  
4975understand what's going on there but the point is I the student doesn't have to be involved



4976in these issues so you have to find a way to help the student independent from internal  
4977issues of department @@

4978R: great okay um so that's actually all the questions I have for you but are there any  
4979questions that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask

4980Jasmine: hmm no

4981R: okay and is there anything else that you'd like to express

4982Jasmine: hmm now

4983R: okay thank you

4984

4985

**José**

4986

4987R: okay um so the first thing is uh what would you consider your strengths to be  
4988academically

4989José: my strengths oh [exhale] [pause] I believe first of all like when you talk about my  
4990strengths what I have my best in academic I believe like first of all my base of the  
4991education that I received from my parents from my family okay so they we are two uh  
4992three brothers and one sister so since we were like [pause] fourteen twelve >since we  
4993were< kids they were push us as much as they could to hm they did a lot of thought to give  
4994to us the best education schools and make sure we [pause] could be someone in the future  
4995you know so that's why I believe first of all it's the support that I got from my family and  
4996second because I'm kind of [pause] uhm [long pause] [exhale] uh I have this kind of things  
4997that I need to learn that I need to do something for myself and [pause] even all the  
4998challenge and difficult that I have because I feel sometimes not easy for me to learn things  
4999and there but even though I try to push myself as much as I can and when I start something  
5000I try to finish it [pause] you know like [pause] so that's I believe my strength is kind of my  
5001[pause] the some energy that I have inside myself that say to myself do you can do it so  
5002that would be my strength eh yeah I would say my fam- my support for my family the  
5003culture where I come from plus my my personal things

5004R: perfect and what would you say your difficulties or weaknesses are

5005José: Um [exhale] I just kind of I don't know how to explain it but I mean I try to em I  
5006don't know if I [pause] because like in my past I was when I was 15 years old I start study  
5007[discipline] there I did that for three years and but I never I I wasn't good enough it was  
5008very painful for me to learn the subject and I thought could be just because it's [discipline]  
5009because before I went to the [category] school I said to my dad look I don't want to go  
5010there I want to do [discipline] but I want to do it in another city and even though that time

5011 was the school that my f-f-father thought would be better for us for me my brother my  
 5012 sister and there I when I went to do the test do the assessment test so [pause] to start it I  
 5013 [pause] just decide okay I want it now I don't know why but I really want it [pause] and for  
 5014 three years I felt very uh I wasn't feeling strong enough [pause] for the subject I discovered  
 5015 that I have something brought my brain to learn it I try I push myself as much as I can but  
 5016 even though it's not easy things that I learn [pause] like uhm that's I think my main  
 5017 weakness like I try to get the subject into my h- m- head but I can't I just can't I I learn ehm  
 5018 for if I learn it now I will probably forget tomorrow so when I [pause] I I even all these  
 5019 problems I finish the challenge because I didn't want a fail that was the main point not  
 5020 because I was enjoy it a lot but I said okay I started now I will finish it just because I was  
 5021 feeling like I just don't wanna fail that's it you know like so but I think that's my weakness  
 5022 I don't know if I don't know how to explain if I [pause] if it's some [pause] thing relate to  
 5023 the way that I try to study? If something relate to the subject itself? or if something that's  
 5024 [pause] hm eh more relate to my uh [click] I'd how to say to myself to my body to my  
 5025 brain to the chemical in my body I don't know like [pause] to the chemistry to in my into  
 5026 my brain I don't know but I I say [pause] uh that's my weakness like to get pay attention  
 5027 when I'm studying and keep that with myself you know?

5028R: Right okay and in terms of English what would your strengths be

5029 José: oh when I came to Ireland I couldn't say even how are you it was in 2010 [pause] so  
 5030 it took me like 7 months to start have some communication okay? and I [pause] that time  
 5031 was that painful as well I thought I would never learned it was very difficult and [pause]  
 5032 eh [long pause] I I said like eh [exhale] I think I I never think I'm good enough you  
 5033 know? even I I can I'm able now to have some conversation but I think it's still not the  
 5034 level that I wish to be like uhh maybe with amazing grammar and with some eh amazing  
 5035 eh accent not like so I I I say like I don't know how to point my strength in English but  
 5036 I'm really proud that if I if I if I [pause] think but if I try to see back what how I came to  
 5037 Ireland in 2010 and what I have developed [pause] about the language and to this time I  
 5038 can say yes I'm proud of myself you know? so but I I don't know like my strengths? @I  
 5039 @don't @know [inhale] @I @just think like okay I have a I I have a general English I  
 5040 think I I don't have a specific um something specific like okay uh let's talk about some  
 5041 specific subject so the structure of the language I haven't gone that deep eh deep to learn it?  
 5042 but I mean I can survive I can talk to people you know like

5043R: Okay and what would your weaknesses be in terms of English

5044 José: Isss- eh I think if I think about the past would be and still like I don't feel  
 5045 comfortable [pause] trying to learning so try try to talk to English when there are people

5046around me that I think they can speak better or they will judge me uh and then that's  
5047making me feel very uncomfortable and then I cannot speak so I felt it very bad in a group  
5048interview that I went to a company >especially with [Nationality] people< with other kind  
5049of nationality it's easy to deal with that but when I I I'm with beside [Nationality] they talk  
5050better Eng- they talk really good English they are confident I just won't myself I feel like  
5051ok but I don't speak too much you know but I don't try to speak uh and that's my weakness  
5052I think I don't feel confident with my language and now like

5053R: and so that's interesting that you said it's especially when you're with [Nationality]  
5054people so people from the same country as you

5055José: yes

5056R: why is that so intimidating for you as opposed to other nationalities

5057José: because I f- I would say I think it's something more kind of uhh [pause] culture  
5058because I mean [click] it's not just for English I can see that the time that I've spent in my  
5059country [pause] uh we feel uhm we care too much about everything how people's gonna  
5060think about you it's not just myself but we can see that it it it was the environment there w-  
5061we grow so here it's really cool to go to anywhere with your pajama paj- pajamas if you  
5062don't want to put on some better clothes but in [Country] it's not like that so I feel still feel  
5063this kind of things even if being a long time I can say because I was in [Country] like for  
5064the past six months and I feel it and now like about the judgment what people's gonna think  
5065about you so you try to uhh that's why I think I feel kind of uncomfortable about the  
5066English >it's not just because< I think because it I I I have faced problems like that when  
5067people try I I I really appreciate when people try to correct me? when I'm speaking of  
5068course they know more? like why I'm not why I should not learn with them but some ways  
5069that they put it when I'm talking? they started off they start to make jokings and that way I  
5070think it's kind of I try to protect myself and say ok better don't [inhale] better first see  
5071what's going on around then you can try to talk something but because I faced it many  
5072times you know?

5073R: yeah okay all right that makes sense um so thinking back so you did a bachelor's degree  
5074//here in

5075José: Yes|

5076R: in Ireland um so thinking back to that uh what kind of work did you have to do for your  
5077bachelors like what kind of modules reading etc. did you need to do

5078José: you mean in college? Or what I need to do after college

5079R: in college

5080 José: in college. uhh [pause] basically was like we were study programming like Java  
5081 python and SQL my sequel database so it wasn't it was kind of uhh when I started college  
5082 and the first year was really cool because uhh in 1999 year 2000 between 1999 and 2001 I  
5083 I saw something about programming was C++ [inhale] when I took the challenge to be in  
5084 college here to study technology I thought it'd be very difficult at beginning especially at  
5085 beginning because of the language but it wasn't at the fir- for the first year was so [pause]  
5086 so was something really something really surprise me because when I was studying the  
5087 basics of java the fundament of java I could re- uhh remember [pause] many things that I  
5088 study te- in 19- in 2000 2012 about C++ so it was kind of similar to and there I was I got  
5089 very excited and there I did a really great the first year was really great and uh I could help  
5090 other peoples in my class because I was making so many questions and they said ok this  
5091 guy knows what he's doing so because I was just too excited about it ehhhh [pause] then  
5092 [clears throat] basically for 4 years we were learning Java. programming language and  
5093 some network structure as well so we have different subjects and work to do you know like  
5094 was kind of a lot of labs a lot of practical labs ehhh relate to the subject that we study in the  
5095 week to be upload next week so I was really in for the fi- the first and the second year was  
5096 ok but then from the third year gat- get it it got very difficult and [pause] I don't know I  
5097 just [pause] start to be like crazy and demotivated [pause] I wasn't more >I think because  
5098 was< getting very difficult and then I was feeling ok I'm not really [pause] interesting I'm  
5099 not really interest for this subject anymore? because not because I [pause] >I think  
5100 because< I I they difficult how difficult it was coming and things I didn't know so I was  
5101 tired working plus studying

5102 J: and so why was it difficult in starting in the third year so what made it so difficult  
5103 José: I actually it's I don't know I think the subject itself I think was the third year was we  
5104 were seeing something about Python? the third and fourth year and something was just  
5105 block my brain to learn it you know like so the first year was java was get got I was java g-  
5106 get my attention so from the third year I don't know if I was seeing the class will get  
5107 smaller? and people were just give up the cause because they would think the same? oh it's  
5108 getting difficult but ehhh [pause] I I think it's kind of ummm I'd say not I I would- I  
5109 wouldn- I cannot point just one thing I think like it's kind of related to [clear throat] the  
5110 pressure that we were having about working and I always worked a lot I I I I was very hard  
5111 work like waking up at quarter past five in the morning to be able to work at six then go to  
5112 college then after college go to work again so was kind of ehhh [pause] this kind of  
5113 pressure so I was getting tired with the subject and then ehhh [pause] I think is just the I I  
5114 something that we were expecting like okay the first is the fundamentals then as I had

5115some base before it was okay for me but I didn't do computer before I did electronics so  
5116the demands the main purpose wasn't a programming languag- programming so now was  
5117programming that's why at beginning was okay but afterwards was //ver-

5118R: got difficult|

5119José: exactly yeah but um and I I I miss I there are there is something that my [pause]  
5120family my brothers my friends they know is I'm not really [pause] ehh I think I'm not really  
5121ehhh [click] [tap fingers] [long pause] a maths person so I'm not really a logical person I  
5122mean I'm more kind of uhhh [pause] relate to humans to to to work with people instead just  
5123being behind a computer trying to work out my technol- tech- technical skills so that I  
5124think that's the most tha- that's the main point to feel like uhhh the course not for me the  
5125pressure that they feel all those those problems relate to how to get ready for exams and  
5126you know because basically from the technical skills that I I I don't feel it's for me. like  
5127since I did my first course that I went to to college in business for four years [pause] there  
5128that's what I think that's the main thing that made me feel this course is really difficult

5129R: what were the assessments like did you take like written exams did you write essays  
5130where you giving presentations

5131José: yes uh presentations wr- ehh write- writing exams and labs as well a lot of labs so we  
5132have to develop some codes at home in group and upload it so we we it's like we were  
5133facing challenge like okay we have a problem how can you solve it use programming so  
5134and uhh orders or um [click] all the practical labs like okay let's build a network here let's  
5135work with those suits those #hobbies and ehhh let's make a internal uhh network for this  
5136college for the college we were facing things like that and [pause] it was kind of [pause] it  
5137was more kind of on the third year and the four- basically on the fourth year we were  
5138working to find a project? [pause] so but uh on the third year we had a lot of practical say  
5139labs with python and networks structure network so and [pause] was kind of difficult for  
5140me to [pause] be able to show my technical skills that was difficult you know like not to be  
5141part of a group because usually were spending ehh time in a group so wasn't individual  
5142assignment but to be part of the group was okay but when you have to contribute with  
5143some technical skills there was my problem not about the language because there was there  
5144are [Nationality] ehh in the same group so but uh it's more kind of okay how can I be sure  
5145about my technical skills how can I [pause] make some contribution contribution to the  
5146group you know that was my biggest problem

5147R: okay and um what do you think your professors were looking for when they were  
5148grading so how did they assess academic success

5149José: could you repeat please?

5150R: yeah so how did your professors assess academic success so what were they looking for  
5151when they were giving you a mark

5152José: uhhh I think they were looking for [pause] basically technical skills I think @yeah I  
5153think they were looking for if you were able able like we were working ehh [pause] also if  
5154you can manage your time to be able to upload your assessments on the time so usually  
5155they would give you a week to do it let's say then one day before the deadline they would  
5156say okay guys for those who is still working on this on the assess let's give you three more  
5157days but the mark's not gonna be the same so they were trying to make things work  
5158because they knew they knew it wasn't easy for many of us but uh I can say like the first  
5159class the first year we were like 150 students almost in the class we end up being 17 after  
5160four years so

5161R: wow that many people dropped out?

5162José: mmhm dropped out and some of them of course they just want to get the level seven  
5163so either they got a job before then they couldn't keep the course and then many of them  
5164just said that this course not for me like my best partner she was working with me the first  
5165year she was like >oh my God< how can you understand what this guy says the profess  
5166like I I I could see her panic like she was like help me help me and she stopped in the first  
5167year she says no it's not for me and even though she was working technology before but it's  
5168she study business and so I could see like okay I know what I'm doing here if you  
5169compared to those people who never saw technology before and I've study something but I  
5170was expecting that [pause] as I did a great first year I was expected that the following years  
5171would be like decrease my my uhh how to say my aye my my my my [exhale] [click] my  
5172argg

5173R: Don't worry

5174José: @ my my not level uhhh my [pause] performance was going down you know after  
5175the second year then I said what's wrong? You know [pause] that was funny because I said  
5176to my dad the same thing that I told him in 2000 the first year electronic was fine the  
5177second year I start call him and said Dad I'm gonna cry it's not for me the third year please  
5178it's not for me but I was feeling the pressure because at that time he was paying college he  
5179was paying the school for me it was very expensive and he was doing his best to afford it  
5180this time it was myself was the fact that okay I want to stay in Ireland I see many  
5181opportunities if I finished this college [pause] and uh I it's my money it's my all thought  
5182that I've put on it so and I also the main thing that I told you I always find this kind of  
5183pressure okay how if I fail how I'm gonna be afterwards you know I feel this kind of I put

5184it myself this kind of pressure okay you cannot fail you cannot fail you know like that's  
5185crazy

5186R: Okay so you kind of said that you could only think what um what your professors  
5187expected of you did they give you guidelines did they give you kind of assessments or like  
5188rubrics about how they were going to grade

5189José: yes a lot they they always put the grade the the the guidelines saying okay we are  
5190gonna mark eh twenty percent for this th- th- this ehh [pause] topic 30 percent for technical  
5191for the code itself and 40 percent for the the the functionality if you solve the problem so  
5192we knew before and they all give me all the supports and they were very nice really open  
5193for conversations and all the support that we need we found with >actually my< my class  
5194my people who ehhh stay our class was a very lucky one we got very good teachers  
5195between 2013 and 2017

5196R: okay all right brilliant um so in general what would you say that students need to  
5197succeed in your program or at the college that you went to

5198José: first of all I think [pause] like you have to be sure what do you want the first thing  
5199like [pause] as I told you I have I didn't tell you but I started college because was  
5200something that I could afford [pause] was something that we have this pressure from the  
5201visa in Ireland so we we ehh the other thing that I thought okay [pause] it's can open doors  
5202I can get opportunities because technology's totally on the top of the list about jobs in  
5203Ireland and that because behind all the things was my [pause] goal was my wish was like  
5204okay I would love to stay in Ireland after seven years I was almost I was four years here  
5205actually because I did three years in English [pause] then on the third the fourth year said I  
5206should start a college or I should just move on and go to another place but that time said no  
5207look I like it let's try to do the college and the first year I thought was the great ehh the  
5208great uhhm [click] the great decision that I took I said okay that was the best decision I  
5209know that now I can see that I'm enjoying the course and they can see just to stay here in  
5210the country make my life setup job you know think about something in the future [pause]  
5211but uhh I think when you decide to do it you when you even there are something that you  
5212really want you have to make sure if you are uhh if you really wanna pass through all those  
5213pains that you are the way to to to to get eh to bring the eh to to try to get in your life so  
5214that was the problem because like okay my my goal was to stay in Ireland set myself in the  
5215country but for that I had at that time I didn't have choice I said okay what I should do to  
5216stay in Ireland I have just a technology I have to try to find a way to get a sponsor visa  
5217[pause] study technology get a job so it was painful because I knew [pause] from a past  
5218experience that technology not for me [click] I mean it's not not for me but I mean I knew

5219that was something that I was comfortable doing then I said okay love of technology  
5220no [pause] ehh my experience in [Country] after my college my my school in technology  
5221was working as a technician for six months in an internship and there I felt the pain I felt  
5222like oh that's horrible being behind a desk trying to fix things and you get so crazy because  
5223you can I I get crazy because I said why it works like that I don't know and try to figure out  
5224but I don't know doesn't come to my brain why to work like that then my Dad was saying  
5225to me [José] go to do business go to do business stop your #rage technology I mean you  
5226have [click] we are in a city where we have 150 companies technology companies it's kind  
5227of 30,000 people live the city so if you do business those companies will n- always need  
5228someone to work in the uh sales or in uh HR and those copies are technology basics ehm  
5229[click] they are technology companies so you have a technology course which is gonna  
5230give you more chance when you have to go for an interview with other candidates so he  
5231was totally right you know I got my business and I was enjoying three and a half years  
5232before I came here in a technology company but I was on sales and even though they were  
5233requirement was you need to know something about technology you know so I think when  
5234when you when the students and as I saw in my college here when you when you most of  
5235the students when you start 150 people they I think most of then they were with the same  
5236[pause] things at me okay I'm doing that because I don't have many choice [pause] because  
5237of my visa so let's do it but they didn't know how painful would be to get on the goal that  
5238they were expecting so they didn't just technology just because they love it they just  
5239because of or other things so they felt they couldn't finish the course I know so I think that  
5240so that's I think when you go to an academic studies when you go to do something you  
5241must be sure that okay is your goal really important for you to pass all the things we're  
5242gonna face or could you do something different and maybe to achieve the same goal that  
5243you want? You know so that's the point you know?

5244R: um so in general what do students need in order to achieve academic success or to do  
5245well at your college

5246José: well if you earn if you mean if you are meaning like uhh regard umm [click]  
5247regarding to knowledge? I didn't understand exactly the question

5248R: yeah well knowledge so whatever you consider to be success so either what do they  
5249need in order to graduate or what do they need in order to graduate and have a good  
5250experience

5251José: well I'd like first of all I believe you you of course you have to achieve the minimum  
5252uhh score that it's expecting for you to pass to get approved in your exams but I don't think  
5253it's just that it's enough to succeed you need to learn things you need to get as much as you



5254can from the course from the subjects and you have to identify what's is what's what so you  
5255have to identify what's your excuse and what which path right because I did I T so we have  
5256many choice many paths on the way that you can choose I wanna walk with it's true  
5257infrastructure or as a developer or just with BA plus I T so we have to identify while you  
5258are really good enough and you are happy enough doing comfortable doing to succeed at  
5259least in a professional way you know I believe but of course you have to get proved but  
5260you get the minimum score marks to achieve to pass in your exams you know

5261R: okay and so how much of a factor does language play in academic success

5262José: sorry how //much?

5263R: how much| so how important is language in academic success

5264José: language?

5265R: yeah

5266José: like in Ireland I would say when you are abroad doing your English college I'd say  
5267it's 100 percent important is the first thing at least for myself I you don't try to be in a  
5268classroom if I cannot at least understand I don't know I can try to point out like 80% what  
5269my lectures I'll say because the rest of that I can try at least to get support from my  
5270classmates? and try to do some research by myself you know I used to record a class when  
5271I was when I was in college so I totally believe it's the main thing for so if you want to do a  
5272foreign [pause] course or if you are in your country of course gonna be easy you know but  
5273language a clear communication and that's the base for for the learning process

5274R: yeah and so what other factors impacts academic success and that could be things inside  
5275of the college and outside

5276José: outside. yeah I think you must be very you have to have a very I don't know if that's  
5277the word stable life? I mean you have to be very relaxed and focused while you were doing  
5278college for that reason you cannot have any other issues outside college that you are gonna  
5279bring to college like friends program or if you are share house housemates problems or if  
5280you are working and probably failed work that can be a- a- a- that can block yourself when  
5281you are in college pay attention what you were doing know like so I believe that's very  
5282important and also if you are doing some course I believe if you have chance like >oh  
5283sorry< like I had in [Country] eh hh when I was studying business was working the same  
5284time so I was putting practice everything that I was uhh learning in the class so I believe if  
5285you have chance during the course to get some to apply what you are doing in a real life?  
5286professional life? it's totally a plus it's of course it's gonna help you a lot and also I believe  
5287that's the m- one of the main keys for succeed

5288R: all right so before you started doing your course um did you have any linguistic  
5289preparation before attending the college

5290José: yeah actually when I came to Dublin I had I I just gotta speak li- a little English like I  
5291had no English at all @like @ so I did it three years the first year I went to in school which  
5292was general English there I got like 80 something like 89 percent of attendance which was  
5293kind of really good for for for me the second year I was working a lot so my attendance  
5294was really low like maybe 65 percent and I didn't [pause] ehh I didn't spend a lot of time  
5295studying or language because I was I was more I was more ehhmm I was more interested  
5296to learn in the job like try to communicate with people without care about the grammar or  
5297any mistakes relate to that then on the third year when I decide okay maybe for from the  
5298fourth yeah I'm gonna go to college I need to be in a class I need to learn it because  
5299probably I will have some English test as a assessment test to get in college so I went to a  
5300class which for me as I as I learned on my second year how to communicate with people  
5301with my job I on the third year I felt completely much better in the class English class  
5302because I knew what I was doing there I could ask so many so much more to the lecturer  
5303and it was really good spend time there which which helped me a lot to to go to college

5304R: okay and so that third year was that also General // English?

5305José: General| English but I was more excited because uhh when I finished my first year I  
5306stopped on the pre-intermediate on the second year was kind of a waste time because I was  
5307more kind of okay let's do it in practice and the third year I finished uhh [exhale] advanced  
5308advanced I think it was advanced so yeah

5309R: brilliant um and so you said that that really helped you to go to college so do you feel  
5310that those three years really prepared you for college

5311José: well if you think about like my first school was amazing I when I was in [Country] I  
5312was planning very careful okay I don't want any [Nationality] in this in the class I don't  
5313want to talk in even [Language] if you don't know English I don't want it for me then I  
5314spent much more more eh more spend more money than at the average because I was  
5315looking for very good eh #unt and a really good English school without any [Nationality]  
5316and I found it so and then I decide to go to stay in a Irish family as well to avoid  
5317[Nationality] people around [pause] which was really painful everything was a nightmare  
5318because I didn't know even how to say I'm hungry please give me food then [click] I would  
5319say it was a huge challenge and I don't think was the best choice because I'd say it was  
5320great choice for someone who are speak at least in a pre-intermediate level but even that I  
5321wasn't even in that le- in this level so. [pause] then I moved out to live with [Nationality] to  
5322get some support do everything you open a bank account doing my stuff so I think like

5323eehm I I wasn't happy enough with my choices to go to college because like the English  
5324test that I did in college was uhhh just uh a test that was applied by by by the college but I  
5325would love to take a challenge to do IELTS I'm trying that's all my list for for maybe  
5326before the first semester of next year because I'd love to see like actually I did one of these  
5327tests when I was trying to get uhhh a ahh scholarship to do some free course liking IT  
5328Tallaght the Institute of IT in Tallaght so I did and I was kind of surprised with the score  
5329that I got in the listening I think was better or grammar some of them I got enough score to  
5330get it but the other one I didn't but it wasn't that bad so I would love to get a chance to do  
5331the IELTS orrr somewhat similar to that to see which level of English I am at the moment  
5332you know like? so but I think the school helped in my case but maybe if I tried some other  
5333college like Trinity college or DBS maybe I wouldn't have the chance to be there you  
5334know my my college was easy on this

5335R: and so the exam that you had to take to get into college it was administered by the  
5336college

5337José: yes

5338R: um can you tell me more about that exam

5339José: well it was four years ago five years ago but it was I remember was kind of big a lot  
5340of papers was more related to grammar and these kind of things and then we just had a  
5341very informal [pause] speaking with the [pause] [snap] the coordinator of the course and  
5342we uhh had to ha- to wait for the minimum score to get a place there so >I don't know if<  
5343we mm honestly I don't know with the college was small I don't know if they were  
5344approving emm if everybody was approved or you know. I don't know we never had  
5345access to those things they just say okay you were approved but of course you could see in  
5346the class even it was a small college I can say to you like it was a really nice college like  
5347the things that we were studying the level of the professors that we had and we had cases  
5348like in my class uhhh a friend who on the third year he decided to go [Institution x] which  
5349was kind of okay that has a better standard than our college but when he was there he said  
5350no serious trust me stay there because it's really good the professors they are giving to us  
5351all the support the subjects the way that they are teaching it's really good so don't try to  
5352change it's not worth you know so and then we could see like we can measure that with the  
5353suc- succeed guys and with the succe- succeed of my classmates I've seen many of them  
5354working for companies they are really happy they are good doing what they know what to  
5355do and it all relates to the college you know like they wouldn't have those chances if they  
5356were not in class

5357R: all right yeah and um so what type of preparation would you suggest that international  
5358students take before going into college

5359José: well I woul- I would suggest that like first try to be confident with as you are  
5360international try to be confident with the language that's the first thing that you can [pause]  
5361following in the course easily and asking much more questions gonna [pause] which which  
5362is going to help you to learn faster and I think you should of course read about the scope of  
5363the course like the old subj- eh what you are gonna have for the first year the second the  
5364third what w- what are going to be the challenge try to do some research r- r- uh a small  
5365research relate to those subjects at least you see while you can how if you like re- uh eh re-  
5366regarding [click] what what what's your feelings about the course and also try to at @least  
5367spend time outside college study as much as you can you know like uh even if [click]  
5368especially if you are not really very if you are not feeling the course is easy if uh if you are  
5369having troubles many difficult like try to try to start research it get support from your  
5370classmates who knows better who know more than you you know like then I think all those  
5371things gonna help you at least [pause] keep the mind on the track @ @you @know @like

5372R: @ what do you wish that you had known before you started college

5373José: hmm here actually as I told you like I went to college my first goal was okay that's  
5374would be a great chance to set myself in Ireland and remain the country and get some  
5375opportunities when the course done you know at least to uhhhm make my dreams true  
5376and you know so I I think I knew in my case as I came from as I'm coming from uhh some  
5377technical backgrounds which was related to everything that I was doing plus my work  
5378experience was related I don't think I was kind of confused orrr with any doubt about the  
5379course but ehm as I told you would be easy if my goal instead just say to my instead saying  
5380like okay I want to stay in Ireland [pause] would be easier for me if I knew like okay I'm  
5381really good enough and I'm really my skills match with the course that I'm choosing now  
5382you know what I mean so it would be really really helpful if I was more if I was honest  
5383with myself about what I was doing you know like so but as I told you I never thought  
5384ehhh okay as my I always I think I I I I follow something that my Dad said to me when I  
5385was doing when I was starting elect- electronic and telecommunication when I was fifteen  
5386in the beginning I said to him look I don't think I want to do it I want to do computer  
5387computer computer I want to do computer in another school I through the school and he  
5388said to me no look you won't do it you will you are going to do electronic and  
5389telecommunication [pause] and there [long pause] I was said to him that look I don't think I  
5390will be able to work as a technician like that but I am interested for computers so I should  
5391do something more like that and no no no you'll go to that college okay and he said to me

5392 something that's true [José] look it doesn't mean you are doing this course you are gonna  
5393 work as a technician but this is gonna open many doors for you today you don't work just  
5394 because you are it's like you can be like my brother my brother's engineer but he works in  
5395 sales [pause] so. when he said that to me or something like that's true because I mean when  
5396 I finish the course I will be 18 I will gonna start my first job I'm gonna go for a group  
5397 interview or interview with other candidates when I say what I have done that's a plus even  
5398 they are not looking for something specific but that's a plus it shows to the employer tha- to  
5399 the employee to the employer that you have been doing something that you have ehh that  
5400 you are interested at least to learn things or you know face challenge that's it so and my  
5401 Dad was right because of course the first course gave me a lot of chance to to start my  
5402 professional life and when I try to do the college here I knew like [click] ehh of course it's  
5403 something that I want ehh for for to achieve my goals but I knew was something that was  
5404 related with everything that I have done for the past 10 years like at least working plus  
5405 business plus plus electronic so I wasn't expecting finish college saying okay I'm gonna be  
5406 a great developer I but I was expecting finish college and say look I'm gonna go for an  
5407 interview even if I okay I I I I'm gonna work in a sales department with technology but it's  
5408 a sales I'm gonna work in an HR you know what I mean? so I was expected at least to say I  
5409 don't need to do a college just to work a specific with that if I want to work with something  
5410 more specific I can do a short course for six months learn some tool like let's learning ehhh  
5411 Cisco how the moldings work okay I just pay some college some short cost for few months  
5412 to learn h- specific how the equipment works you know what I mean so I wasn't expecting  
5413 that in my course that's why I think I knew enough about what I was doing the choice that I  
5414 was taking I was comfortable with that you know?

5415 R: um okay so I'm going to switch to kind of I think it's a fun part I'm but if you could give  
5416 advice to faculty and professors to help better support international students what would  
5417 that advice be

5418 José: uhmm [clears throat] well [long pause] I think we we we had kind of really good  
5419 support from the lectures they were like let's say about the language they were really open  
5420 to speak slow and the and the try to use the accent that everyone could understand and  
5421 uhhh I actually I don't remember the trouble about the language even we were 150 people  
5422 in the class at the beginning I don't remember anybody having trouble to ask the lectures  
5423 sorry I don't understand your English or I don't remember this kind of thing so I think they  
5424 were kind of well prepared for international students maybe because they have been this  
5425 this in this situation for many years so I don't think you I can point something specifically  
5426 but um eh [exhale] like I don't think I think it was everyone who was in the class they

5427knew English they were here at least for three years most of them like so I don't think we  
5428had some I have something to help [pause] to to give you right now about this support for  
5429international students yeah

5430R: um would you give them advice on just supporting students in general or do you think  
5431that they just were very good at giving support in general as well

5432José: well like [long pause] all the time when I needed eh they were something that they  
5433did was really cool I think was eh they provided as everybody was having trouble uh  
5434with eh Java programming in the first year they start doing some extra lab extra labs no  
5435extra class support class on during the weekends

5436R: Oh nice

5437José: yes so but was crazy because we were 150 people and then only ten people would  
5438attend in that I was attending all the year like especially the first year was attending as  
5439much as I could and eh that was really helpful because like you were during the week you  
5440were with you were they were giving a lot of labs to be done for the next so the next weeks  
5441and I knew like was really difficult to to to write the code and that was really helpful to be  
5442the support class for that but what was the issue the the the problem was eh they were  
5443asking students why they were not attending if everyone was having trouble with the the  
5444the program language programming language and they said eh because they were  
5445studying Monday to Friday and weekends most of them are working so that was a problem  
5446that the college could sort it out they were trying the best for that no I can't outside extra  
5447help everybody was charging the students to do something in the end of that time the  
5448deadline that we had so I as I was wo- as I wasn't working weekends for me was easy I was  
5449there I could finish my labs and upload it on the time so I think they were give kind of for  
5450the for the subject we would have a lot of support they would try the best I'm really glad  
5451for the lecturers that we have that we had so it was really cool

5452R: That's good to hear @

5453José: @yeah

5454R: so if you had advice to say organizations might be universities it might be language  
5455schools that are designing summer programs to help prepare students for college what  
5456would that advice be or what should be taught

5457José: well like for you mean students in general? or international students?

5458R: Um //both

5459José: both| yeah

5460R: well if it's different than I'd like to here for international students and then students in  
5461general

5462 José: mmhm [long pause] well like uhh I think like uh in the college that I went of course  
5463 we it's not big like as Trinity but we we see like these like open days in Trinity that you  
5464 have chance to go there and talk with people from the department where you were  
5465 interested on so I think this kind of thing is really cool when you are deciding if you are  
5466 attend the college or not if you which course you are gonna attend if you if you have  
5467 chance to open uhh many workshops for for ehh this this kind of uh this new students who  
5468 are coming to your college and doing something like that to bring them to clarify what they  
5469 want for the professional life would be great you know if they can get at least some  
5470 previous a brief or what they expect see during the course if they attend it so I think  
5471 workshops things like that would be very helpful you know like and [clear throat] even  
5472 bring some uhh some companies who are related to to employee employers relate to what  
5473 you are gonna study to talk during this workshop to show to the students and give to them  
5474 some motivation to say look when you finish we have jobs [pause] you know? show cases  
5475 of people who has done the college eh attend the course and how they are at the moment in  
5476 the markets you know? things like that would be really mot- motivation for new students I  
5477 think you know

5478 R: okay alright um anything else any other advice then?

5479 José: yeah when you ask like which kind of advice could I give to lectures or to to to to the  
5480 coordinate like I know I think in Trinity they have it a bigger college it's more eh but for  
5481 my college we small colleges in Ireland are like the one that I went eh it's kind of more  
5482 difficult to when I were in [Country] doing electronic I remembered for the three years in  
5483 the end of each year we had opportunity to visit very eh eh err I don't think if it's not the  
5484 word but you help me ehh a relevant or uhh very high standard companies okay? so in the  
5485 end of the each year they they were they have a lot of partnerships in [Country] and we  
5486 even we were traveling far away to other cities to see like uh I went to the Institute of the  
5487 eh eh eh scientists Institute for the uh eh I don't know the space engineer in [Country] so you  
5488 see how they put this satellite sound in space this kind of thing so the for for each year like  
5489 was kind of okay the first year these companies suit those that used to like with not a lot of  
5490 knowledge over the course but then every year they will get more ehh [click] and in  
5491 different levels you'd be available to visit companies which would suit you for the subjects  
5492 that we were watching for the years you know in in the end of the course you would with a  
5493 lot of idea okay I can try to apply for this company this company this company that got my  
5494 attention you know so things like that could be really good thing to do in Ireland as well  
5495 you know?

5496R: yeah brilliant would you have any advice for future students of your college or like  
5497students who are looking to go to college in Ireland

5498José: [pause] yeah like [exhale] [pause] umm honestly @ I think I said @everything about  
5499like @language about motivation and maybe the more important is like I've been thinking  
5500a lot about this kind of things like the ehh past weeks the past day like ehh when you  
5501choose a college ehheh or uhh when you are uhh thinking what's happened to me is that like  
5502think about a professional career something like that ehh try to choose something try to  
5503think about the job which is gonna make you happy something that's gonna make you  
5504happy at least my case like before even money or everything that you are gonna I I uh like  
5505is what I want to find is something like okay I want to find a job that I see my value in this  
5506job that I may make some difference in people's life and plus the money is just the coin-  
5507coi- it's just a consequence uhheh it's just something that actually consequence that is  
5508coming from all the thought that I've put uhh that I'm putting on that so like just choose  
5509something that you are really [pause] comfortable doing you it and you know it's going to  
5510be for you you know like so and you see like because there is nothing better than you see  
5511thee see the results of something that you don- that have done you know so

5512R: yeah okay um so you've kind of touched on this by saying that they were offering  
5513support classes during the weekend but are you aware of any support that your college  
5514gave either at a department level or a college level for students

5515José: What do you mean like uhh department level college level

5516R: well it could be things like language classes counseling career services etc. etc.

5517José: yeah like we have uhh they did something really nice I'm a really close to her actually  
5518today I was going to see her ehh a career adviser uhh for actually for I think now all the  
5519students can attend the workshops and get some support from her and she starts you send a  
5520lot of opportunity for internship working and even apply straight with her just some of  
5521opportunities she just say okay give me your CV then I will they will contact you for an  
5522interview I got interview through her so ehh I think this kind of thing is really valuable like  
5523uh when you are finish your course you are international you are in Ireland you need  
5524someone she's Irish she works for QQI so you need someone who are who has a very who  
5525has a strong network and can put you in touch with those people because as you are  
5526international you have problems relate to your visa relate to language maybe you are not in  
5527the front of the queue so you need someone who can ehh employers can trust and give you  
5528the chance at least to reach the interview you know so I think those partnerships are really  
5529important and also if your college give you the chance to do a module like okay ehh the six



5530like the last six months you are gonna be in a workplace that'll be great no like at least you  
5531knew that you are gonna have a chance to apply what you have study

5532R: okay brilliant um so that would be pretty much the questions that I have for you but are  
5533there any questions that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask

5534José: No I think we have spoke around everything like and relate to international students  
5535college language @ yeah I think I've spoke everything that I was that I think about and like  
5536and um we aren't as I told you like this year has not been a very easier year for me so I'm  
5537still trying to find myself in all the situations uh things didn't work out as I was  
5538expecting the end of my college but it's some things outside college outside outside college  
5539was that I wasn't expecting soooo I'm trying [pause] to at least find some path now like the  
5540uhh course that I told you that I'm gonna do on Friday it's about resilience and some-  
5541something like that you know so yeah like I think it's kind of it's never too late to start do  
5542something

5543R: I'm I mean just this is just now me being curious um but so you finished your course  
5544what last year?

5545José: November last

5546R: November last year. yeah. and so you've been looking for jobs and doing interviews

5547José: no I did an interview on last year before I got my graduate which was in November  
5548because I finished the course the course was done in June July they don't have a summer  
5549break but ehm [pause] ehh I went to [Country] in March May eh February I was in a  
5550hospital so March I was in the hospital so I completely imposs- eh no chance for me to do  
5551anything from March and so this year for me was a short year actually no so that's why I  
5552like now as I came came back to Ireland that I'm gonna try to see how that's why need meet  
5553my career adviser to see how I'm gonna [pause] explain this gap that I've done since my  
5554my [pause] graduation and the time that I'm back to Ireland you know so yeah to restart  
5555doing something here so I'm just trying to do some extra course on [website] as [Institution  
55561] has paid that for us to at least update start doing things like that you know?

5557R: yeah and so so you just said that [Institution 1] is is paying for the courses etc. or

5558José: for [website]? yes. on [website] and you get a certificate at the end of the course I  
5559was trying to do things relate to my CV my graduation things that could be a plus and  
5560what's useful as well for they have some recommendation for you when you like I work in  
5561[Institution 1] as a cleaner I was trying to see maybe in the future it can get some internal  
5562opportunity sometimes they just release internal opportunities for it staffs you know? so  
5563but uh [pause] I don't know like as we are near to Christmas now and I'm going to  
5564[Country] eh when I back have you have I think a better idea if I should back to study

5565again doing something short or something more specifically or if I should try to get a  
5566straight work you know find some something like that but uh I'm trying to work out it  
5567R: yeah but well so it sounds like so you're working with [Institution 1] and [Institution 3]  
5568is still um helping you kind of like update your skills //etc.

5569José: yeah like

5570R: how| like how um because now you have okay the college that you did your your  
5571studies with and now you're working for a different educational institution who's still you  
5572know investing in you um so do you feel supported by both colleges

5573José: yeah that's I say like I'm still going to my college to speak with the career adviser  
5574because I feel like very comfortable with her she gave me a great support when I was  
5575building my LinkedIn my CV I was attending her workshops and in [Institution 1] I tried to  
5576get as much as I can from the intranet for things that as a staff for four years there I have so  
5577I go to library now I just discovered that all those course the training the free train- the  
5578train on [website] is free for staffs I'm gonna take the umm staff development course now  
5579this Friday so I try I remember like when I was in college and I got a job in [Institution 1]  
5580three four years ago and I knew some about uhh I knew things about those staff  
5581development course and they apply for that like three years ago I was so excited so that  
5582time and but it it costs for the department if you don't attend it's for free but if you don't go  
5583it was gonna cost I remember three years ago they just let me choose one right I apply for  
5584three cause they just let me no just just one because I don't think they knew me at that time  
5585so and I think it's great for staff like even because my department they don't give you a lot  
5586of information about it so you can see I don't know if because we are cleaners? but we  
5587don't or because we I I I think because people they just don't have interest on that I've seen  
5588interests like the new cleaners they are from everywhere like especially [Nationality] and  
5589now those people they have interests should try to grow to do something else to get a  
5590knowledge but they [Institution 1] the cleaners that have been there for a long time  
5591fourteen fifteen years old ehh Irish they just don't care they don't talk about it I mean not  
5592they don't care maybe they don't need it anymore they in their life it's their choice so I  
5593when I was in [Institution 1] I discovered everything by myself like I want to create an  
5594email and uhh access the intranet check what what I have what they have for us you know  
5595everything so and uhh that's good because I've seen as a staff we have a great things and I  
5596did an interview for a Master's in [Institution 1] three years ago so yeah I I I was trying  
5597much used as much as I could as a staff you know like I said okay let's see because I knew  
5598if if I got it if I if I got that Master's in [Institution 1] I would have a very great discount to

5599study there you know that was my second goal when I was I said okay I finish college and  
5600go straight to a Master's in [Institution 1] so

5601R: okay that's brilliant you like yeah cuz I didn't know all of that uh

5602José: yeah we have but my department we are very it's very restrict like we don't have this  
5603kind of information because they don't talk [pause] about it you know like they just don't  
5604maybe they think they are cleaners they don't want it but they forget because like  
5605sometimes you are a cleaner because you are [pause] not from here and that's the  
5606opportunity that you have even though like I've tried to change my my my my way to  
5607think about because like [pause] uhh this was a great job this is a great job and I really  
5608happy doing what I've done and a there was a job there gave me a lot of opportunities I  
5609mean about the time that I was working then time to go to college then everything was  
5610close to each other I could you know I could manage my time very well so and but there  
5611are other things that that some say I was just trying to see the job at before it's something  
5612like to pay the bills which I don't want to see it in this way anymore I I I can see actually  
5613like how important is this job for life because is something that we are doing because we  
5614we are #produced you know like it's something like we are trying to fix a problem that we  
5615are creating >you know what I mean< so that's I'm saying I'm trying to uhh think a lot  
5616about everything in life and @ that's something really [long pause] nice

5617R: Ah that's nice do you have anything else you would like to express

5618José: No I think that's everything @

5619

5620

### June

5621

5622R: okay um so first can you tell me what your strengths are academically so what are you  
5623good at

5624June: ohh that's an interesting question I think they don't know I'm quite good at well I'm  
5625I'm a [job] so what my work entails is to take a text and to try to understand it not through  
5626not only to other text but also to other disciplines so for instance now I'm trying to explain  
5627a concept using anthropology um so I think that my comparative skills are quite strong but  
5628[pause] I always fancy myself to be like a detective when I read a text or a novel and I  
5629think there is always something behind the text that has remained unexplored so I like to  
5630try to find out the new things that can be said about it and I think that generally I am quite  
5631good at that as well [pause] other things I don't know there are things that I would like to  
5632improve like leadership skills and being able to um work in a team better [pause] but no I  
5633think that the first two things are what I'm good at >I hope so< I don't know

5634R: and why do you say that you'd like to work in a team better

5635June: um I haven't done that a lot I've always being afraid of uh failing sooo most of the  
5636time I wouldn't participate in activities with other people just because I thought there is too  
5637much responsibility I'm not I wouldn't be capable of bringing the project to completion uh I  
5638tend to be quite shy and also [long pause] I become very paranoid I want people to like me  
5639but I'm never quite sure whether they like me or not so these kind of keeps me away from  
5640trying to engage with other people

5641R: right okay I so is there anything else that you would say um do you have difficulties  
5642with academically beyond what you've just described

5643June: umm well I don't [pause] no I don't think I have many difficulties language was a big  
5644uuh problem for me [pause] because I arrived here when I was 19 and my English was  
5645school English and I understood nothing absolutely nothing but I wanted to have this  
5646experience and I always wanted to study [discipline] and Irish as well so I knew that I had  
5647to become proficient in the language [pause] and when I enrolled in university I was  
5648surrounded by Irish students and I did try to participate and engage but I always had the  
5649sense that people could not understand me uh [pause] so that was a very big it was even  
5650cause of shame for me not being able to use the correct words I felt stupid [pause] and then  
5651progressively you know writing essays giving presentations in class you got better and  
5652better and better >I think you< there is a time when you reach a plateau [pause] and you're  
5653you're stuck with that level of English and you think I can do better I can do better and then  
5654when you get out of that plateau you don't even realize you just wake up one day and  
5655you're like oh I can speak better English than what I was able last year

5656R: yeah so did you start out doing undergraduate here

5657June: yeah

5658R: and so you've gone straight through undergraduate master's PhD

5659June: um I had a problem in getting into undergraduate in public universities [pause] just  
5660because there they go through the CAO so you need to send all the documentation through  
5661this big >I don't even know what it< is is a sort of institution and then you write your  
5662choices of University and according to the points you have you get into one course or the  
5663other and I tried twice [pause] but they couldn't quite calculate or convert my my points  
5664from the [country] uh system to the Irish system so my CAO came back blank both times it  
5665was very discouraging so I started in [institution 4] [pause] and I didn't have any problem  
5666because they just I just apply it and they accepted me and then after one year because I had  
5667good marks I tried to go to [institution 2] or [institution 1] and again the same problem  
5668[pause] emerged and they actually weren't like nobody told me you cannot jump from one

5669 private university to a public ehh you need to just start everything all over again they told  
5670 me after I had applied to the CAO so still I wasted 80 euros was 80 at the time just for this  
5671 R: right @ and so eventually did the CEO or did it go through or how did you end up  
5672 June: uh [institution 4] they because it's a private university you still have to get through  
5673 CAO [pause] but they have a larger intake okay so your your actual score is not that  
5674 important they will take you in and then it depends how you do during your first year uh if  
5675 you do well you pass to second year if you don't you won't  
5676 R: okay alright alright and so in terms of language now what would you say your strengths  
5677 are in terms of English  
5678 June: I love to be articulated I love to learn new words [pause] I become very nervous and  
5679 I have to speak in front of a large crowd uhm I think everybody has that @ but when you  
5680 don't when English is not your first language you are obsessed about making mistakes at  
5681 least I am obsessed with that and people judging you for making those mistakes [pause]  
5682 you also become very perceptive to other people making mistakes [long pause] so yeah  
5683 likely my strength is the curiosity about the language and trying to improve it every day  
5684 um and the weakness is the paranoia of not doing well  
5685 R: okay I'm it so since you're kind of in this situation where you've gone through all of  
5686 your um post-secondary education here in Ireland um can you describe to me what some of  
5687 your modules were like um so what did you have to do for your modules  
5688 June: in undergrad  
5689 R: um undergrad and masters and PhD if you've had  
5690 June: I didn't have any module for my PhD yet I'm going to do it through the [academy] so  
5691 at least it's something  
5692 R: oh really yeah  
5693 June: is it good  
5694 R: um @@  
5695 June: @@@ it's confidential remember @@  
5696 R: @@@ I know @@ well um to be honest it I I did the first introduction and it was the  
5697 three-week module I didn't find it to be particularly useful but it was easy enough to pass  
5698 like everyone passed I'm it's only three weeks so like it was better than taking 12 weeks I'm  
5699 thought and the assignments wasn't really that much  
5700 June: that's that's very good  
5701 R: so yeah @@@  
5702 June: well I would like to do it primarily because I want to jump into industry  
5703 R: yeah yeah and that it might help um I've heard that the leadership one is very good

5704June: the one in Belfast

5705R: yeah I've heard that's very very good so good

5706June: I really want to do that yeah so modules

5707R: yeah modules

5708June: um in my undergrad it was usually we had [long pause] I think we >okay I'm trying

5709to think about my first year< so we had three days a week six hours a day so and that went

5710two modules a day so six modules the first semester and I suppose six five or six modules

5711the second semester and it was like this every year now the modules I took um um

5712[discipline] so they were quite diverse one from the other even though it was all related to

5713the arts [long pause] uh the assessment it really depended on the module most of the time it

5714was two essays one in midterm and one at the end of the term or one essay and an exam we

5715did not have exams during Christmas we only had exam at the end of the academic year

5716and then one presentation per module usually 10-15 minutes with a PowerPoint [long

5717pause] and exam wise maybe was three or four exams at the end of the year and that's it

5718[pause] and then of course the final thesis

5719R: right and so the exams for the exams were they like essay questions where they multiple

5720choice

5721June: um no they were open question soooo they would ask you for instance okay how did

5722how did um [topic] revolutionized the technique used in um in [discipline] afterwards and

5723then you would have to answer you would have >like you didn't have< a maximum words

5724or a minimum you could just keep writing [long pause] yeah was pretty straightforward

5725they would prep you out up just before you you would see the exams and the questions

5726were more or less similar to the one of the years before so there was nothing

5727R: okay so you could kind of prepare

5728June: yeah they would I've I've never never had a lecture like I'm going to have a question

5729that it's just completely new it would vary in the way they were put or in the details they

5730would want you to talk about but you would know you with a big chunks of history or

5731some particular novels you would really have to dig into to prepare after the exam

5732R: okay and was that the same for the master's then

5733June: I have to say the master wasn't as challenging as my undergrad um we had eight

5734hours a week so four classes a week well three classes and then there was the Monday

5735class which was more like they would teach you how to write an essay which I found

5736pretty useless [pause] uh not just because I already knew how to do it but also because you

5737wouldn't focus really on how to write an essay so a lot of my >there was one Irish person<

5738in that course and we were 12 in the class um and everybody who is not from an Anglo-

5739 Irish uh University system was actively struggling with writing essays and preparing  
5740 presentations presentation was a little bit better but essays was a disaster and that course is  
5741 getting worse and worse cuz last year it was hugely problematic they were not they were  
5742 not prepared for that type of task and the only feedback they would get back was you know  
5743 read some essays around and do more research you wouldn't have constructive feedback so  
5744 I I don't know how many ended up passing I remember in the first semester only two  
5745 passed and everybody else was class of 17 everybody else was in serious trouble [pause]  
5746 and then I've heard from them well they have they have various problems one of these was  
5747 they were trying to get in touch with their supervisor to ask how to maximize their research  
5748 and the supervisor would get back at them saying it's your job [long pause] now I  
5749 fortunately did not have that problem and my supervisor was someone who would leave  
5750 you a lot of space [pause] you could whatever you wanted just submit at the deadline and  
5751 that was fine and I like to have that space but I understand some people might have  
5752 problems and struggle

5753 R: so let's see um so inside of the lectures and modules what what was the format was  
5754 there a lot of group discussion was mainly the professor with the PowerPoint discussing  
5755 etc.

5756 June: I had the bit of a mix um my film classes where mostly watching it it was spent over  
5757 three hours so we could watch an entire movie and then the lecturer would give a little bit  
5758 of feedback on something some particular things you might have want to look at and then  
5759 we had a class discussion now the feedback or the presentation was either at the beginning  
5760 or at the end of the movie preferably at the beginning but I I always thought he didn't want  
5761 to spoil the movie too much umm every other class was like I had more class discussions  
5762 during my masters but in [institution 4] they never really had a problem in letting us speak  
5763 and share our ideas they would more than having someone would ask a question they  
5764 would sort of answer it straight away as other people it was a small class we were six so it  
5765 was interesting to see other people perception or angles and they weren't that shy in sharing  
5766 um we had other classes which were not theoretical at all for instance when we had class  
5767 on how to project like how to create an approach I don't know how to say uh we had to  
5768 [create a discipline-specific project] so we had a class on um [discipline-specific] writing  
5769 and that was mostly about watching short videos about short movies just to give us an idea  
5770 what uh what we had to create and then test our story and talk about our story with others  
5771 and then submit at the end of it it [discipline-specific writing] [pause] another class was  
5772 about [discipline-specific project] so we would have to fund it go on [discipline-specific  
5773 projects] all of these practical things and the last one was the editing class so we would use

5774I think it was pro something [discipline-specific software] I completely forgot it's been a  
5775long time ago but yeah was all about editing and maximize our the way we wanted to  
5776[pause] narrate the story from a visual perspective

5777R: okay that sounds really interesting

5778June: yeah I must say [institution 4] as a school I was very satisfied with the way they  
5779carried out things because it's a [institution] at the end of the day so a lot of things are  
5780carried out with business in mind you make a movie but is not just an artistic creation you  
5781need to think about your audience think about how to fund it and do it [pause] so I and I  
5782really like that approach

5783R: and how does that differ from here or do you know are you able to kind of compare

5784June: well um here is much more it's much more theoretical it's less thinking about the  
5785future is more thinking about the now it's like they they were very different courses but  
5786even the [topic] courses they were much more practical they would actually teach you to  
5787think critically and to ask yourself answ- to ask yourself answer @ to ask yourself  
5788important questions and try to answer them yourself or look up for an answer here was  
5789more like yes you have a group discussion but the answers seem to be there already we  
5790want you to say something specific uh rather than just go out and come up with innovative  
5791creative answers >or even accept< the fact that there might be no right answer

5792R: right so now as a as a PhD student how would you evaluate your academic success so  
5793how do you think you're doing at the moment

5794June: I think I'm doing well um I didn't expect to get to this point when I started when I  
5795started I just thought it was going to be very easy peasy and I had a project I knew how to  
5796carry it out and then the more I went on the more I realized that perhaps starting with a  
5797[pause] preconception wasn't the best way and I opened myself up to uncertainty [pause] I  
5798started thinking is it's really as I said before it is really important to get a question like to  
5799get an answer to this question that is the only answer possible [pause] and I answer no it's  
5800not that important the important thing is to create the path so that maybe in the future other  
5801people will be able to answer that question but at least I create a good a good question to  
5802start with and my project is very theoretical um I took I'm taking a film which is the one of  
5803[topic] which is quite popular it's been quite popular in the last 20 years the people seems  
5804to get stuck in one place um so I'm trying to stop this fixation and obsession for that place  
5805and steer the problem around and see what what comes out of it there is there is a lot of  
5806resistance to that innovative ideas are not they don't they're not liked that much as they  
5807required thinking

5808R: and resistance in what way like from who from where



5809June: I had these for instance during my confirmation um [long pause] it wasn't a disaster  
5810was just very mentally exhausting I was I stayed in two hours trying to defend my idea uh  
5811and my idea is very interdisciplinary and because I am a [job] I feel comfortable in that  
5812environment but my examiner is someone who would prefer specialization [pause] and of  
5813course when you don't see eye to eye um I think it's important to still keep the dialogue  
5814professional [pause] but probably he felt a bit uh destabilized by someone who would not  
5815accept the current affair we can say or the general state of things so we did we did have a  
5816bit of an issue there he was very surprised when I told him that actually there are  
5817[discipline] departments around the world and I will not be out of work even if I do not  
5818rely on some [topic]

5819R: I mean so the end result of that confirmation report did you end up convincing him

5820June: he passed me he passed me @ so I they didn't he didn't tell me the result at the end so  
5821I just didn't know what was going to be >in fairness< I did I did agree with him at the end  
5822you wanted me to use a particular writer and because I was tired I was like yeah sure will  
5823do that okay and then of course I I didn't do it it's important to keep you you are a  
5824researcher you need to know you need to know what's the best approach and maybe it's a  
5825wrong approach and you can discuss that but I knew that this was a very wrong approach

5826R: right and so in terms of and so you face that resistance and you're still kind of  
5827continuing to resist that and are you still facing resistance from people in terms of your  
5828topic and your questions

5829June: mmmm well first of all resistance is not always negative ehm it pushes you to ask  
5830yourself okay if this is like if my subject is going to be a problem at the end of the day how  
5831can I find a way around it not to make it a problem eh it's a challenge so I did uh maybe  
5832you know I am just saying the confirmation was a disaster and that I hate my internal  
5833examiner but in reality it just motivated me motivated me more but there is resistance a lot  
5834of people in my field because they've been stuck on that particular author and on certain  
5835generalization to come across someone who does not comply with the status quo [pause]  
5836it's a bit problematic uh it challenges you to face the unknown and to face uncertainty I  
5837would like to like here in the [research institute] because virtually nobody is uh working on  
5838the same project it's much easier to get my ideas across and to get constructive input [long  
5839pause] but um in my in my school I'm not saying everybody my school it's just some  
5840people they they don't only resist to this type of project they resist to the idea that you can  
5841carry out an interdisciplinary um project and when when you're seriously focused on  
5842specialization everything that has to do with [topic] is either not understood or  
5843misunderstood or resisted um I'm not sane interdisciplinarity is better than specialization

5844they're both good and valid [long pause] but I prefer interdisciplinarity is it's more  
5845interesting

5846R: right and your supervisor than with your supervisor be quite supportive or would they  
5847kind of point out kind of challenges that you might face or like how does your supervisor  
5848respond

5849June: well I have two I used to have one and then I just decided that maybe another one  
5850was needed after the confirmation @ just because during the confirmation my supervisor  
5851did take the side of the examiner [pause] and it became apparent that even though he's  
5852interested in what I'm doing he just does not understand it the way I want so I found  
5853someone else and this second supervisor does see more eye-to-eye with me [pause] um so  
5854yeah um I'm not saying he my first supervisor is not supportive [pause] or is not interested  
5855it's just that he has other things to do [long pause] it happens the the thing I like about him  
5856is that he does give me a lot of free freedom is never very strict with deadlines he always  
5857says if I need more time to think things through I can do it [pause] and I really like that  
5858[pause] I like to be an independent researcher then of course he must give me some  
5859deadlines and then I kind of collapse into my oh my god I spent the last three months just  
5860researching and not writing and then I you write you know yourself you write ten thousand  
5861words in four days [long pause] but it's part of the game

5862R: yeah okay alright and um and so what do you think your supervisors or your professors  
5863expect of you like what are their expectations and how do they evaluate academic success

5864June: well I don't know because I never really cared about what they thought @@ I've I've  
5865gone into this theory very headstrong is like my idea it's my idea I want to carry it out to  
5866the end even if it's wrong and generally it's been it's been liked [pause] um but I don't think  
5867like I never actually asked myself how am I how my supervisors regard it's a it's a bit  
5868superfluous I would be more interesting in my peers so when I talk about my research with  
5869one of you guys if I see that you are really interested in that that excites me much more and  
5870validates me [pause] but my supervisors mm not really

5871R: okay and so outside as an undergrad and a masters what do you think the professors  
5872were looking for in terms of academic success like how were they were evaluating your  
5873exams your essays your presentations

5874June: mm well in my undergrad I was I was lucky because all my professors were smart uh  
5875people who really loved what they were doing the things they prized the most was  
5876creativity and thinking outside the box again it was a [institution] so certain things like  
5877innovation ability to carry out your own research not being afraid to express your idea  
5878were valued qualities here [long pause] I would for some of my lectures was the same they

5879 wanted to see creativity they wanted to see something new they didn't just want you to  
5880 compare two texts that have been compared several times before you think they wanted  
5881 fresh ideas [pause] but not all of them I did I did a project on um on um I called it gaeltopia  
5882 it was about um seeing Western Ireland so the Gaeltacht as a sort of ghetto but also a  
5883 utopia this a turn of the [unt] I don't know how to pronounce it like [long pause] the turn of  
5884 the turn of the 20th century

5885 R: yeah yeah

5886 June: it's easier when it's written it's a French word as well @

5887 R: I don't actually know what it is @

5888 June: but yes so that was a bit of a daring either and it wasn't really appreciated so I was  
5889 just like oh well

5890 R: yeah like did you end up getting a good mark or was it just they were like no

5891 June: well they killed me in their comments but I still managed to get a 60 which I suppose  
5892 is a good mark

5893 R: yeah I mean yes it's what it's a two-two

5894 June: yeah it's not a 40 I mean I would have been much more like ooooo if they had just  
5895 barely passed me but you know the thing that irritates me the most is not the low mark is  
5896 when you read the comments and it's clear that you didn't get the idea I wanted to to  
5897 express >which maybe is my fault< could be a language problem or it could be the fact that  
5898 I was just like seriously I wrote that essay in three days I deserved that mark [long pause]  
5899 but when I read the comment I just want the person to really to show that they read it they  
5900 understood it but they still want to point out that it's not a valid hypothesis

5901 R: yeah and do you remember the comments on that essay

5902 June: umm they were really different [sigh] so one of them was two lines just saying uh  
5903 that uh I still have that essay [pause] I just hol- held it closed just remind me that failure is  
5904 okay but one was like a very it was the kind of a comment I don't understand your point  
5905 that was the message the second one was every single page she picked out something that  
5906 was not historically or grammatically correct and she would just point to that [pause] for  
5907 every page and that's it [pause] so what I thought maybe I was just trying to convince  
5908 myself was okay they clearly did not get the idea but instead of but it was more of a  
5909 sensation I don't get where she wants to go instead of saying okay does she have a point or  
5910 she clearly does not have a point was more sort of I need to justify my mark being low or  
5911 being >it's not low< but like being like that's rather than giving constructive criticism also  
5912 I must say that I missed most of the classes because I found it very boring and so maybe  
5913 there was retaliation and I fully accept it

5914R: okay alright that's interesting um so I guess in general what would you say students  
5915need in order to succeed at [institution 1]  
5916June: at [institution 1] @@@  
5917R: yeah at [institution 1] @  
5918June: @ well they need a lot @@@ I think they need more [pause] [click] they need to be  
5919[pause] let me think about this [pause] they don't need to be coddled but they don't need to  
5920be ignored either everybody wants to be valued and feel part of of a community that  
5921respect them and and think that they are important [pause] so they need to be given  
5922responsibilities >within the limits of course< but they also need to feel that [pause] those  
5923are responsibilities are not given to them just because they're given to them because it's  
5924part of their training and because what you want to get out of them is an excellent scholar  
5925not just scholar uh more training and not just training on um on um how to write better  
5926literature reviews or how to create a Photoshop presentation or how to write a poster um  
5927but also how to become better leaders how to work in a team um how to find confidence in  
5928what you're doing and not constantly being afraid of of failing [pause] the fear of failure  
5929should be addressed [pause] um the balance between your personal life and your career  
5930within [institution 1] should be discussed [pause] um there is a thing about mental illness  
5931as well which is not taking into consideration enough I mean how many times we come  
5932across an article that says that we are the one who are most vulnerable to this [long pause]  
5933but is anybody doing something about it? [pause] is your their sup- is your supervisor take  
5934into consideration that you're a human being and you are going through some tough shit in  
5935life [pause] and you don't know until you get to know that person but I mean you might  
5936think this person is completely normal their life is amazing and then you get to talk to them  
5937and they tell you you know I have this problem [pause] so you need to make supervisor  
5938more aware that [pause] they need to take care of their PhD students not just because they  
5939are PhD students but because they're human beings and they are your future in academia if  
5940you prepare a good student that does not that does not just reflect on the student it reflects  
5941on you so devote more time to them engage with them on a personal level [pause] I think  
5942what I find hilarious is that a lot of supervisors they're like oh I'm not the kind of parent  
5943and they don't want to do parenting who said that you have to parent you need to be a  
5944mentor [pause] and you need to see the distinction [pause] and of course like [pause] you  
5945can say I don't want to take care of you on a personal level but if in the moment when you  
5946decide you want to take on a PhD student you need to you need to treat them well you need  
5947to listen to them to their problem and you need to have empathy and intelligent and  
5948emotional intelligence to connect with them [pause] because if you do that and it's

5949 something that would take very very little from them okay it's it's part of your schedule you  
5950 don't have to see them every week but when you see them it has to be quality time [pause]  
5951 that will give them a lot more confidence that will teach them that it's okay to feel a certain  
5952 way there is nothing wrong and this time will pass and you will find yourself in a better  
5953 position in the future that if you miss a deadline is not the end of the world if you don't  
5954 know a skill you can always uh learn it and you're here to learn you're not here to be the  
5955 best uh early career researchers that ever was that's not the point of a PhD the point of a  
5956 PhD is you need to train so in in the future you can do these things independently but for  
5957 now we'll do this together so good mentoring is what would facilitate things a lot and as I  
5958 said it's a small thing it can be having a cup of coffee together every now and then and just  
5959 instead of talking about work talking about how you're doing do you need anything uh do  
5960 you need to talk about anything do you need me to address you to someone who could help  
5961 you who could help you perfection in some skill or could help you may be talking  
5962 somethings through uhm it can be like not missing meetings or not rescheduling meeting  
5963 continuously because then the person start thinking okay I have to meet with my supervisor  
5964 and they are constantly scheduling [pause] do they really care about me or they just have to  
5965 do this [pause] um correct things properly and not just half of it [pause] which is another  
5966 thing that make you think you're valued instead of not being valued so all these small little  
5967 things and encourage your student make them think positively uh teach them how they can  
5968 turn a bad thought into a positive thought uh a challenge into an opportunity [pause] if you  
5969 do this you don't need a lot of cushion a lot of mentoring because that person will finally  
5970 reach uh a point when they can find the answer themselves when they need you a little bit  
5971 less [pause] it's not a bad thing because they're able to walk with their feet but if you don't  
5972 teach them how to walk you cannot expect them to do it themselves so I think these are  
5973 some things that they need

5974 R: how much of a factor do you think language is in academic success

5975 June: mmm when I say from the perspective of someone who's extremely paranoid about  
5976 my language skills um I'd say it's quite important at at our level [pause] lower levels  
5977 [pause] yes but not as much lower levels you just need to convey an idea or even like you  
5978 have let's say when you're in undergrad the only thing you need to do is prepare an essay  
5979 and for that you can have a proofreader which you're covered and for presentation you just  
5980 need to write a five minute presentation learn it by heart and deliver it that's what I was  
5981 doing most of the times because I knew that otherwise I would end up in a loop especially  
5982 during presentation when I would repeat myself because I was nervous [pause] and I didn't  
5983 have mastery of the language at the PhD level is more important there is a stigma on

5984 people who do not have a high level in English especially in English > other languages are <  
5985 much more forgiving English in academia not that much so [pause] a lot of the time when  
5986 someone is not proficient [pause] or cannot express themselves you don't have the patience  
5987 of listening to them or you you don't think that they have your same intellectual  
5988 capabilities and that's a big problem because of course English is sort of a lingua franca but  
5989 is not the only language you need to give people time to adapt to actually master's students  
5990 in in the [school] the master's students are not selected for uh linguistic capability? they're  
5991 selected because they need numbers and especially foreign student Asian students you  
5992 would have a class at least half the Asian because they they pay non-EU fees and that goes  
5993 into the school account or the faculty account so the more you can get in the better but are  
5994 this students really prepared for the type of duties they have in the year or are you just are  
5995 they just cash cows and a lot of the time you do think that their used only for their money I  
5996 met some of the people the Asian students that were in my class years later and now they  
5997 have a mastery of the language they are doing themselves PhDs or other masters but it's  
5998 just sad when you see that someone is introduced into a course [pause] we just read the  
5999 with in mind just the fact that he brings in money

6000 R: and what other factors would you say impact and academic success and that could be  
6001 things inside of [institution 1] outside of [institution 1]

6002 June: um at the PhD level or a master level

6003 R: um talk about both yeah

6004 June: um it really depends what you're doing um when I was in [institution 4] we used to  
6005 have field trips so when we had to write a review for for a movie [institution 4] would pay  
6006 for us to go see this movie in the IFI I think this [pause] is not if the experience is nice but  
6007 the fact that your university is paying for you makes you think ok they care about me you  
6008 know they care about the fact that I'm getting trained [pause] here is just more like ok I'm  
6009 in and out of the lecture um I don't really care what was going on the important is that is  
6010 that I come in deliver my speech and I get paid for it and in [discipline] is a bigger and  
6011 bigger problem every year because you don't have umm let's see um you don't have a  
6012 linked motif uh you just have individual lectures but they're comparative in essence but  
6013 they don't really teach you how to do it yourself it's quite confusing so maybe at a master  
6014 level before you start the course just think it through because majority of courses in the  
6015 [school] apart from [degree topic] they are not up to a good level and these reflects bad on  
6016 the school it reflects bad on me because I graduated from the course so if people start  
6017 saying oh these course was was really bad um like the feedbacks were non-existent uh I  
6018 didn't learn anything then it does reflect negatively on me it shouldn't happen [pause] so

6019yeah and I would also remove all the [academic training department] thing from the  
6020human- for the Humanities because they they don't cater for us they cater for business and  
6021Sciences but they get you in just because of they don't want discrimination to happen but  
6022you took it I don't know if you took any of those classes

6023R: no I didn't

6024June: uh don't it uh they are they are three hours long and they are usually on how to write  
6025your CV how to write a literature review but you do get the sense that they're not for you  
6026the area for someone is going to have a brilliant future in front of them in the industry but  
6027if you are from the humanities they're sort of like huh you're there we have to do it because  
6028otherwise people from the humanities would say that [academic training department] is  
6029discriminating but we don't really care about you

6030R: ok so what factors say outside of [institution 1] would impacts academic success if  
6031there's any

6032June: sorry can I just go back to the previous question um I also think that the school  
6033should take charge of making some courses compulsory the teaching course for first year  
6034should be compulsory now we have proposed it at the la- at one of the last school meetings  
6035and it seems like every time you propose something which would be beneficial for PhD  
6036students people are like oh that's going to take too much time we don't have time to  
6037organize it or we don't want to organize it [pause] uh but there should be certain things  
6038PhD students should go through as in terms of training [pause] and it should be  
6039compulsory so that you're sure that everybody has the same opportunity when they start  
6040from the first year [long abuse] so what what was the other question

6041R: um so what things outside of [institution 1] do you think impacts academic success

6042June: [sigh] [pause] I think whatever is going on in your life [sigh] I think it would be will  
6043be [pause] it would be wrong to think that a person does not have shit if you pardon the  
6044French uh going on in their life um the majority of time we don't see that but we don't want  
6045to see that [pause] but even small little things can impact hugely on how you do research  
6046>we're talking about in PhD terms< [pause] if you're not willing to take that into  
6047consideration and offer help then a person myself with a very small problem and that  
6048problem could become huge um [pause] I had [pause] had this problem last year because  
6049my house where I lived before was sold and I was completely broke so the only way I  
6050could remain in [institution 1] and study here was to live in a hostel [pause] eh and that is  
6051you know it's not an easy choice but is an essential choice because I knew if I went back to  
6052[country] for one year I would be miss out on so many chances I wouldn't have had the  
6053opportunity to be in the [research institute] or to have a job in library and I wanted to do

6054these things but of course money was a big problem uh so I did that for one year it did  
6055bring a lot of good things in my life  
6056R: you lived in a hostel for one year  
6057June: in 65 hostels because I changed twice a week I needed to save money @@@ [sharp  
6058inhale] you know it was bad [emotional inflection] [long pause] but the alternative was  
6059R: go back  
6060June: go back I just didn't have any any extra cash [inhale] I try to see it as an opportunity  
6061>I think I handled it bad at the beginning< of the year like crying in the shower of the  
6062hostel every night but probably was just shock of the change and the fact that I was  
6063completely alone in Ireland didn't know anybody from the [research institute] didn't have  
6064any other PhD students who I could consider my friends my first year in PhD was very  
6065lonely but then you got better I met my boyfriend um I won a sort of hardship for being  
6066that poor [pause] so I think if you're willing to take on uh [pause] brave choices and you  
6067see them in a positive light that will help you not only to overcome it but also to get some  
6068benefits from it now this one is a small thing in comparison to what other people are going  
6069through [pause] um but you know [pause] when I did this uh I didn't like the only people  
6070who really cared where the people from the [research institute] uh my supervisor didn't  
6071care [pause] it's not that he didn't care he was just like oh cool you're doing that okay uh  
6072[pause] I hope that he told that because he thinks I'm a very independent individual and I  
6073wouldn't just have um collapsed under the pressure of having to do that but still you know  
6074you want someone to worry about you uh even just to ask you if everything is okay  
6075because if you don't do [pause] the small little thing could become huge in the future [long  
6076pause] there is a big problem between let's talk about generations now because it's an  
6077important issue that to be addressed the previous generation of scholars and our professors  
6078they don't think like we do know some them do but [pause] they they lived through a  
6079period well my right in your research was not like now when they didn't have to do the  
6080same things that we have to do now and when a lot of societal and cultural issues were not  
6081issues [pause] so for instance the mental health issue it's not perceived the same way from  
6082them than the way we perceive it and you can see there is a big gap they so they need to be  
6083more aware of certain things which is not mean it does not mean that they have to parent us  
6084of spoon feed us it just means that they need to understand that we're in a vulnerable  
6085position and we need help [pause] and sometimes just asking how you how you agh how  
6086are you or to ask if you want to talk about things can make a huge difference [pause] how  
6087many PhD students drop their their supervisor because their supervisor is not up to the  
6088level to actually help them [pause] and how diffic- like I I have the idea that the school



6089 makes this very difficult it's sort of shame thing to do as if you really have to support your  
6090 PhD supervisor even though they are not doing the same with you this is something that  
6091 should change >hopefully in the future< because like if someone is not able to supervise  
6092 they're not able to supervise they have other skills but supervision is not one of them and  
6093 you should take that into consideration and prohibit them from taking PhD students  
6094 because then you end up with >and I've seen like< when you enter the PhD community  
6095 you see everything you see people who have bad supervisors and then they go to the  
6096 counseling service and they they uh this thing about antidepressant is [long pause] like I  
6097 don't I don't understand it I think that I have one of the girls who just recently finished the  
6098 PhD she had some trouble sleeping and that's what she was prescribed

6099 R: really

6100 June: yes and you know she she had a very rough last year not saying she didn't [pause] but  
6101 I think that before you get yourself into that world of medication [pause] if this were  
6102 sleeping problem you should really see someone who helps in a more natural way and you  
6103 should have a supervisor who is aware of your problem and tries to instead of say like this  
6104 is not my problem just go to the counseling service I don't care if you take these things it's  
6105 you know it's not my problem someone who says can we talk about this before and  
6106 maybe just find another way for you to [pause] feel better [pause] I'm not saying that some  
6107 medications are not needed I'm saying for sleeping problems maybe not

6108 R: yeah antidepressants might not be the best solution for sleeping problem when

6109 June: and I know there is someone else who's been prescribed the same thing for just being  
6110 stressed they didn't take it didn't end up taking it but they have a prescription for that  
6111 [pause] I mean so like it has to be a medication that really helps not like something that  
6112 might sort of help [pause] and probably this this sleeping problem was partly due to  
6113 bad bad supervision bad supervision creates way more stress than it's supposed to >I don't  
6114 know< I'm kind of going around the question

6115 R: that's totally fine it's yeah I mean it's it's semi structured for a reason because things are  
6116 supposed to kind of just come out and we talk about it yeah um also well my research  
6117 doesn't just focus on language eh I'm basically taking it from an angle of you can't really  
6118 separate things from other things so yeah so don't worry

6119 June: if you want if you want me to just talk about language

6120 R: no I don't let you just talk about language I want you just talk about whatever you want  
6121 to talk about so yeah I'll cut you off if I think you're going too far off um so kind of going  
6122 back to back to when you first came to Ireland when you were 19 did you have to take any  
6123 standardized language exams to prove your level to get into University

6124June: yes so the ones that are required that were required were the Cambridge certificate of  
6125English either um an A in the advanced or C in the proficiency [pause] there was an IELTS  
6126maybe a six point five on the IELTS test and then in the TOEFL it was I don't know I took  
6127the Cambridge one

6128R: okay alright and do you have any feelings about the Cambridge one do you remember  
6129taking it

6130June: oh my god it was terrible [pause] it was like seriously my brain was completely fried

6131I took the advance in I arrived in August I took the advance in December which like I I  
6132was thrown into the advanced level of my I I took an English course they didn't have any  
6133space in the intermediate so they just put me in the advanced and I had no idea what was  
6134going on I seriously could not >no but that was helpful< because I couldn't speak I didn't  
6135know any of the words but having people around that would continuously speak and  
6136interact with me in different languages was very helpful challenging but very helpful and  
6137then I I start preparing the advance it was a three-month course and meanwhile actually I  
6138didn't start working then um so I took the advance and I passed with C and then I started  
6139working and I realized that my language improvement got like my language got better  
6140better and better just because I was interacting with a variety of people every day and I  
6141really needed to convey messages repeat the menu uh deal with problems so then I decided  
6142to take the proficiency but I wanted to make sure that I could also that I had a Plan B so I  
6143took the proficiency and the advance together [pause] and the funny thing is that I passed  
6144both of them with C and the advance I got C instead of B because my language assessment  
6145was really low and in the proficiency I got sixty which is the pass mark because my  
6146language skills they were considered really high that was the only thing that saved me and  
6147I found it hilarious because I took them one day apart from the other so how could my  
6148language be so low one day and so high on the other day it doesn't make any sense

6149R: right and were you taking it was just general English or was an exam preparation

6150June: uhm it's general English they usually what's they it's been such a long time @@

6151what they do is you have one part is about filling gaps you have some words that are >they  
6152are not even used< in colloquial English like in lieu of uh or some

6153R: but like not only the exam but um the classes that you were taking the course  
6154June: oh um

6155R: general was it marketed as general

6156June: no they were classes that were specifically done for the advanced or high proficiency  
6157the like it was the same language school they just got enough people to do the advanced  
6158course and then those people did the proficiency course as well [pause] so yeah it was

6159 mostly doing exercises we had our own book to prepare for the exam and because these  
6160 exams were timed you would have to follow certain guidelines there are certain things that  
6161 are going to pop up then we were trained to know what to expect it's a bit unfair because  
6162 people who just take the exam without knowing that there are certain tricks are at a  
6163 disadvantage

6164 R: right and do you think that the exam and the exam or the courses do you think that they  
6165 prepared you for academic study in Ireland

6166 June: I think so yeah um [pause] I think that my first year in [institution 4] was a  
6167 particularly bad one @@ in terms of language [long pause] just because they didn't know  
6168 like I really wanted to participate I was so excited that I was finally doing the course  
6169 they've always dreamt of doing because I was dreaming to do it here in [institution 1] but  
6170 it's a different story [pause] but I was excited I wanted to talk [pause] and there was  
6171 something that stopped me even now sometimes when I look for a word I cannot find it or  
6172 I had to repeat myself or and I hate that it makes me feel so insecure [click] but back then  
6173 maybe I wasn't that conscious that my English was bad @@ so I lived in blissful ignorance  
6174 but it did that it did help me out and our we had the one teacher he was always very nice  
6175 very supportive encouraging us all the time [pause] and that made the difference we want  
6176 someone who makes you feel it's okay if you make mistakes we all do and that you're  
6177 preparing an exam you're not preparing the rest of your life [pause] so yeah

6178 R: and um let's see where am I here and what type of preparation would suggest  
6179 international students do before coming to study at [institution 1]

6180 June: they need to do more language assessment um [long pause] I understand is expensive  
6181 um and I'm not saying they have to do a course but they need to know that in the moment  
6182 when they start a course in [institution 1] the level of language required is at least upper  
6183 intermediate if >not every subject< I cannot speak for the sciences I suppose if you are  
6184 good scientists you don't need strong language skills you need to be able to work in a lab  
6185 uh proficiently but if you're studying literature or history or English you need to have a  
6186 high level of language not- you don't have to be the best uh speaker in the world but you  
6187 need to be aware that you you have to make it you have to make yourself understood by  
6188 other people he has a work a little bit on your accent if your accent is very strong just try to  
6189 slow down [pause] and you need to have basic grammar [long pause] because you're  
6190 missing out you're missing out on conversations with your with your classmates with your  
6191 peers that are valuable [pause] these conversations might give you idea for an essay they  
6192 may give you idea for a PhD in the future or they might help you find your perfect career  
6193 but if you don't have the language skill what you're going to end up doing is sticking up

6194with people who speak your own language and avoid the moments when when you have to  
6195engage with the rest of the group you miss out so yeah they need to be more strict with  
6196language assessment ideally someone could come here in Ireland a few months before and  
6197while they're doing the English course there are so many English schools around here they  
6198also have the opportunities to start engaging with native speakers after I I I believe after six  
6199months your language skills from zero are at least at an intermediate upper intermediate  
6200R: and so coming back to [institution 1] here so if you could give advice to faculty in  
6201helping and supporting international students what would that advice be so this is advice to  
6202the professors

6203June: hmmm [pause] you need to be aware of the differences and of the problems that  
6204not speaking a language brings with it many times we we don't think about the emotional  
6205state of a person who does not speak our language we just say oh they should study more  
6206[pause] in truth it's more difficult than it seems like I like everybody in here or like in  
6207[institution 1] who is not a native speaker but speaks good English have started from zero  
6208so everybody can understand the difficulty of trying to um become fluent speakers [long  
6209pause] but a lot of professors because this is their first language they don't speak another  
6210language they don't understand uh the problems it brings with it [long pause] so more  
6211awareness more attention as well you cannot grad- like this is my personal opinion then of  
6212course you can but you cannot grade the essay of a non-native speaker the same way you  
6213grade the essay of the essay of someone who has spoken the language for their entire life  
6214you need to be sensitive to the difficulties of the first [pause] in comparison to the second  
6215if a non-native speaker makes the grammar mistake you need to point it out but I think you  
6216should be harsher on the person who speaks that language natively is but it's the same for  
6217every language I mean if you teach an Irish student [language] you cannot grade them  
6218super harshly just because they don't speak the language fluently you need to give them  
6219time to get acquainted to get familiar with the expressions idioms small things like in  
6220English you will be putting the S at the end of third person verbs [pause] which something  
6221that [nationality] people have a hard time um learning so you need to be sensitive also to  
6222[long pause] what to the problems the different languages have with [#unt] and never take  
6223it for granted maybe they could have a training course on language sens- sensitivity  
6224sensitivity sensibility?

6225R: sensitivity and would the advice um I guess more generally would you have any more  
6226general advice or for professors and dealing with students in general not necessarily just  
6227international

6228June: [pause] yeah treat them more like human beings @ uh use them as a resource  
6229because they are a resource maybe it's just my impression I always think they look at us as  
6230if we were stupid uh useless uh non-um incapable of being inside a community would not  
6231with me very unwanted >I'm speaking for my school< and for the PhD students in our  
6232school [pause] they [pause] well first of all we always had a problem with trying to get all  
6233PhD students together because they wouldn't give us the names of all the PhD students  
6234which makes sense if you think that they don't want you to create a group that might raise  
6235issues and every time you do raise issues there is a lot of resistance there they don't want to  
6236change old structures and think about the future [pause] it's a face I mean what they will  
6237retire and we will be in power then we'll probably have other problems with the next  
6238generation but I think embracing embracing a generation of new researchers as sources of  
6239[pause] like as resources it doesn't hurt [pause] give them more responsibility teaching was  
6240I mean if you have a problem with the master why don't you take your PhD students who  
6241might be interesting in recreating the course and give them these responsibilities ok for this  
6242year you're going to work in a team and you're trying to look at the problems of these  
6243master course and try to come up with innovative solutions this is very good for your CV if  
6244you are a PhD student [pause] it's good for the master course [pause] because the PhD  
6245students has more time than you do and it's like okay the problems are this this this this  
6246and the solutions that we propose are this this this this this but no PhD students are used to  
6247filling gaps of lectures you don't want to teach um they are and that's that's @ about it @ at  
6248least of PhDs that I know in our school but you could use them to do so much more [pause]  
6249um the [research institute] is a good it's a place where you get the majority of your  
6250opportunities from my point of view [pause] because otherwise I would I wouldn't have  
6251had any opportunity at all the only opportunity I got from my school was to review a book  
6252and that's it no conferences no articles um and you are kept in severe isolation in there um  
6253you are not stimulated in meeting your colleagues and sharing ideas and talk about yourself  
6254[pause] so if you don't if you keep all of your PhD students separate the of course they  
6255don't create community uh they are not aware of their rights as student which is a positive  
6256thing for you especially in places where regulations are not followed to the letter or where  
6257some problems could become a pain if someone brings it up [long pause] but you are not  
6258helping you or your students in entering a discourse in being comfortable talking about  
6259their topic with with their peers [pause] so

6260R: and if you could give advice to future students of //[institution 1]

6261June: don't come|

6262R: @

6263 June: no I'm serious don't. do. it. Here. [pause] I know it sounds very harsh but first of all  
6264 funding is really scarce uh if you want to get yourself into a PhD without funding either  
6265 you know and you're 100% convinced that this is an investment for your future life and all  
6266 of that money will come back to you but you must be certain or don't do it if you don't  
6267 have funding [pause] I would rather go out have an honest job for few years think about  
6268 your research and be passionate about your research so that when you enter your program  
6269 you really know where you're going and you want to go there um and also you with the  
6270 covert partially at least [pause] also perhaps starting a PhD when you're really young is not  
6271 a great idea you're not you're not fully formed [pause] um you're not mature enough to  
6272 [pause] battle against some of the challenges and if you don't have a network that is there  
6273 to support you uh like you see a lot of time students drop out or they lose interest for what  
6274 they're doing and it's a pity [pause] nobody should be left behind so network maturity um  
6275 passion for what you're doing [long pause] and don't rely too much on the fact that  
6276 [institution 1] has a reputation because that reputation might be gone in the next few years  
6277 just go in a university that's represent you better wherever you can find a supervisor who  
6278 cares about you [long pause] [institution 2] is really good so

6279 R: I've also heard as well @@

6280 June: @@@@ you see I think fundings it's something that can be solved but bad  
6281 supervision is something that we create more and more and more problems you better have  
6282 a good supervisor because a good supervisor knowing that you don't have fundings will  
6283 give you alternatives but a bad supervisor they just will not care I know I seem to complain  
6284 a lot about supervisions and people in the school [pause] but um [long pause] it's my  
6285 impression that things are going that way and it's not a good impression [pause] I have also  
6286 met supervisors of other students in how to are amazing in the [school] seems to really care  
6287 about their students they meet every week they have actual meetings of PhD students from  
6288 the same school everyyyy one or two weeks where they have coffee together they have  
6289 biscuits they can talk about the like they can have an exchange of how the week was this is  
6290 something that should be fostered every school but of course the [school] probably is able  
6291 to do it because they deal with [topic] so they know all the tricks [pause] but why not take  
6292 um why not um look at other schools and the way they approach certain problems and try  
6293 to learn something [pause] it could be a solution to a lot of problems but of course you  
6294 need to find someone who is willing to take the time to do that

6295 R: um so if you could give advice to say [institution 1] were to develop a program like a  
6296 summer program for students to come to prepare for their studies what would your advice  
6297 be to the organizers of my program like what should it include what should they teach

6298June: these are these are international students right

6299R: um yeah typically that's what it would start out to be

6300June: and would you cater to a specific level of language or not

6301R: um so well I'll tell you what what has been approved and what I would like so what has

6302been approved it's a pre-sessional program for students who have a six or a five point five

6303um IELTS and never to get to a six point five but instead of taking IELTS at the end they

6304would take our //assessment

6305June: IELTS is a very bad assessment

6306R: like we| would develop a different assessment so that's what's been approved what I

6307would like to see is it open to anyone including native speakers to help acquaint people

6308with [institution 1] expectations language etc. etc.

6309June: um I think having your own um assessment is very good because the IELTS I just

6310don't like it [pause] especially the part where you have to talk about technical things it

6311makes no sense it makes sense if you are specializing in that but if you specialize in

6312something completely different does it help you to know how to call uh a part of that

6313machine no it doesn't so that's why I decided to take the Cambridge it is only language and

6314everybody has the same possibility you don't need to be specialized in something you just

6315need to know good English so I like the idea of of your own assessment um maybe to make

6316student comfortable have let them having presentation in front of a public so that they start

6317um being able to learn how to convey an idea without being nervous and of course this

6318takes practice but it's a summer program so you would have three months um teach them

6319how to create a project from scratch and how to work in team ummm then [pause] can be

6320about projects I think would be the best project that has as a focus language so things that

6321you have to write like write it on a poster things um that you have to present so of course

6322you have a series of presentations [pause] so that you can make them feel comfortable

6323when they're going to do it later on you need to teach them to have a discussion so a lot of

6324the time is as simple as saying okay this is how you structure your argument during a

6325discussion this is your idea this is what another person could say and this is how you can

6326reiterate your idea [pause] a second time to pass it through or how you accept someone else

6327opinion [pause] debate so putting someone under pressure and having to push them to to

6328think and speak at the same time very quickly [pause] and think you need to get them out

6329there if you keep them in the same environment they will try to stick with people who

6330speak their own language it's normal everybody does if you get them out there and you get

6331them to interact with people whose first language is English they will be forced to learn um

6332so yeah I think this could be of use

6333R: so the last question I have for you is are you aware of any support provided for  
6334international students either ask your department level or at the wider college level  
6335June: there is a global room the global room has something to do with international  
6336students no?  
6337R: well yeah  
6338June: I'm not sure because I'm not uh I don't hang around >like that's not true< I hang  
6339around with a lot of international students I don't see them as international because once  
6340they are in the [research institute] the differences are really they they are minimal you don't  
6341meet someone who has serious problems with the language and when you teach your  
6342classes most of these students are Irish or they have English as the first language so the  
6343interactions with them is not is not difficult and in case there is a linguistic interaction you  
6344know that this is not their first language so they [pause] so you try to simplify everything  
6345but apart from that I actually don't know of any support that is available [pause] societies  
6346probably? society would would give you that support [pause] but again it is true let's say  
6347you speak French you go to the French society it's your brain telling you we're scared  
6348because everybody here is speaking a foreign language we need to be with people who can  
6349speak our own language so in a sense yes you go into a community they understand you  
6350and appreciate you and makes you feel valued and not alone but it does affect negative  
6351negatively on your on your language [pause] you can create like some sort of bodies but in  
6352experience take one person who does not speak language give them one person who's  
6353native and they don't speak the same language but that would help the person >even  
6354passive learning< itself I see with my boyfriend he's level is he's not at my level but being  
6355together I can see he picks up words words that di- I didn't mean to teach him but does start  
6356using them in the way he speaks [pause] or if he does not understand something he ask me  
6357so finding boyfriend is also very useful @@ I'm not joking @ when I arrived here my first  
6358boyfriend was my English teacher and that helped me so much [long pause] well @ you  
6359can have a speed-dating event @@@ meet an Irish @@ why not  
6360R: people would go to that they would actually go to that @@  
6361June: I mean if you think about it if you're foreign you're super exotic here in Ireland I  
6362mean if your skin is one tone one tone darker you're exotic um and it's good for you  
6363because you can meet someone who's a lovely person and thus help you learn a language  
6364why not you can bring it to a step further if someone wants to stay here in Europe they can  
6365get married with the person @@ there you go  
6366R: you've got all things covered @@  
6367June: @@ yes speed dating is the way to go



6368R: so yeah so that's all the questions that I have for you but um are there any questions you  
6369wish I had asked that I didn't ask

6370June: mmmm well I didn't really like I didn't know what to expect I just thought you were  
6371going to ask me about my experience as an international student [pause] I'm happy it went  
6372like this I know I complained a lot I just think certain things should be addressed [long  
6373pause] I I always worry that maybe I didn't get the idea across properly that maybe there  
6374were some things that >one thing that I would appreciate< is if people when I started  
6375speaking would stop me if they don't understand where I'm going a lot of time we're very  
6376polite we listen to a person and I do the same I listen to someone and I have no idea what  
6377they're saying but uh I still say yeah yeah you're perfectly right I I wish that someone  
6378would tell me you need to speak more slowly it's very confusing what you're saying you  
6379need to re-elaborate your thought because it would be >it sounds like someone< would  
6380offend me but it would be very helpful for me

6381R: so having probably less afraid to say wait a minute I don't quite understand what you're  
6382saying

6383June: yeah [pause] it depends on the person of course you need to know the person to  
6384know if you can stop them and say what? [pause] and of course the more you know the  
6385person the more you can tell them look I'm just a bit confused can you explain it to me  
6386again [pause] you wouldn't do this with strangers and of course I'm not saying that you  
6387have to correct a person all the time but maybe you'd let them know that they need to to do  
6388something to improve clarity I would want people to tell me

6389R: right well just so you know I understood everything

6390June: okay that's good I'm happy @

6391R: um is there anything else that you'd like to express

6392June: no I just hope to I just hope to see some of the changes carried out [pause] I hope  
6393these summer projects will work well um [pause] especially because it would be beneficial  
6394for my school [long pause] and even make [institution 1] more appealing to international  
6395students knowing that they can take a course of three months before they start their uh their  
6396masters or it's for masters students I suppose

6397R: mainly yeah yeah

6398June: you don't get there aren't many international students at undergraduate level

6399R: no but there's also a year-round program for them a foundation program in [institution]  
6400so they have the option of coming for a full year before entry to undergraduate um so that's  
6401a bit different and that includes content and language and then whereas this with more just  
6402be language so I'd more masters PhD

6403June: I think it's a great idea I think it's much needed and the more people you can get on  
6404board [pause] the more beneficial it will be for for the different masters [school] really  
6405needs that they really really need it you just see that people are quite lost in that course  
6406takes away all the fun of discussing [topic] or exchanging ideas sounds sounds great  
6407R: perfect than you

6408June: great it was it was very long

6409R: no that's a perfect that's great

6410

6411

**Katie**

6412

6413R: all right so my first question for you is what do you think your strengths are

6414academically

6415Katie: Oh Dear um I think a lot of what made my application successful getting into  
6416[institution 1] was um based on experience not necessarily the academics I mean not that  
6417my academics were poor but um I've worked for quite a few years after graduating for my  
6418undergrad degree so I think a lot of what I was able to kind of express to them was a lot of  
6419experience that I've had so um academically I guess if I go back far enough um I'm very  
6420analytical so I think I'm able to kind of like read through articles and textbooks and think  
6421really critically and I didn't really have to be taught too much how to do that um cuz I think  
6422that was a huge benefit and it continues to be because obviously like with postgraduate  
6423degree you're being asked to think really critically about the information you presented so  
6424um that's definitely a huge strength I think in the program that I'm in and um then just the  
6425field that I'm in too

6426R: what would any difficulties or weaknesses be in terms of academics

6427Katie: again kind of the same thing @ it's been a while since my undergrad um I graduated  
6428in 2008 so 10 years um and so I think trying to get back into the swing of things and get  
6429back into like the routine of me making sure that I'm really self-disciplined to sit down and  
6430actually study and make sure I go to the library yeah and then just kind of the differences  
6431between the [country] system and the system here is still taking a lot of adjustment one of  
6432the big ones um is you know in undergrad we were expected to buy all our textbooks and  
6433the teachers would you know assign specific things so that they knew that I'm gonna assign  
6434you two course books that are like the core information that we want you to have and then  
6435you can go to the library for supplemental things um but here it's kind of expected that  
6436everything you just get from the library and you don't buy your own books which is fine  
6437and saves me money but um we're finding it like in my course really difficult to to get the

6438 materials that we need and it's always like a competition to see who has the book who can  
6439 get it out next to who's on the next hold and 25 students sharing a single book for one of  
6440 our courses is really really difficult I'm finding so they're just kind of some of those  
6441 differences and expectations and I just got my first grades back for one of my um papers  
6442 that I wrote and so @ just remembering to look at it within the context of how it's graded  
6443 here and not look at the score that I got to be like that's a C you know like that's terrible  
6444 and I don't accept a grade like that but here it's a very good score so that's kind of kind of  
6445 adjusting to the differences

6446 R: yeah I mean can you tell me more about those differences so things like the books and  
6447 not having enough books to go around and the grading scale um and you also touched on  
6448 expectations like what what is quite different

6449 Katie: mm-hmm um well I think it's kind of a general difference between undergrad and  
6450 postgraduate work you're expected to do a lot more on your own um a lot of self-study  
6451 based on what you learn in class which is expected you know I kinda went into the master's  
6452 degree knowing it would be like that um so I don't think that's a major difference between  
6453 the two but definitely just kind of um the supports that are available I think it's easier to  
6454 access them at universities in the [country] and I think that [institution 1] has a ton of um  
6455 you know supports and accessibility things and um groups and societies and things like  
6456 that but so much of it runs during class time for me so like my my course is Monday  
6457 through Thursday pretty much all day in the classroom 10:00 to 6:00 every day um which  
6458 again is kind of expected and fine and I get Friday's off which is great but it really limits  
6459 what I'm able to do and how I'm able to kind of branch out within other interest areas here  
6460 which is kind of disappointing um also really hard to be coming from [country] where I  
6461 would have expected it in my undergrad I did work while I was in school to kind of help  
6462 offset the cost of it um and that's I'm finding really difficult to even like try and find the  
6463 time where I would put it in here um even though a lot of my Irish classmates do but then  
6464 also kind of just how to go about doing that there's not a lot of information about like here's  
6465 how you can like go job searching here are the things you need to get in order before you  
6466 do um and then I also have like some health um things too to try it so trying to navigate  
6467 that system was really difficult and almost made it so I was just thinking I didn't think I  
6468 would be able to come here because of um just how difficult it was to try and figure out  
6469 how I would get things covered or how I'm gonna get a particular medication and so we  
6470 have a global I don't know if she's part of the global room I called her like our global  
6471 liaison as part of the [school] um who is incredible she was so helpful from the moment  
6472 that we um kind of accepted our position in the program like she was emailing all of us I

6473assume everybody but probably mostly just the international students to try and ask about  
6474just anything she should could do to help and she was instrumental in making sure that I  
6475could like tick all the boxes in order to even get on the plane to come over

6476R: that's good to hear then that there's someone

6477Katie: yeah no she's incredible @@

6478R: brilliant yeah and so you the modules are obviously quite long or the days are quite long  
6479can you describe to me like what's required in the modules what is the day-to-day like here

6480Katie: um I think they've changed it recently from what I've heard last year um the classes  
6481were set up a little bit differently um this year they're set up in blocks so every class that I  
6482have is once a week for three hours a day which is really difficult to kind of adjust you it's  
6483a lot of time to sit and listen to the same subject and try to like keep your mind really active  
6484and attentive to like this really important information um then some lectures are really

6485good about breaking up the time and like doing activities and things to kind of keep you  
6486you know engaged um and some of them aren't and so I think it's it's difficult and a couple  
6487of classes that I'm finding more challenging are ones that I know are really important @

6488like I do it a [topic] course and a [topic] course for the [discipline] program and those are  
6489hugely important and so like important to me because I'm not from Ireland so learning that  
6490in the Irish context is really important and both of those I'm finding the lecturers aren't very  
6491dynamic and it's really hard to sit for three hours and listen to something like [topic] @@

6492and you know process it and be able to like absorb everything that I'm being um taught and  
6493so I find that kind of difficult like I said I think that last year they got feedback from the  
6494students where they had it I think a couple of times a week for an hour so a piece and they  
6495didn't like that for some reason and I don't know why @@ because I would prefer that um  
6496but I think it's kind of with the program they do take a lot of feedback from the students  
6497into consideration and I think at the end of um I'm not sure the end of the semester but

6498definitely at the end of the year they try to get as much information from the students about  
6499their experience as possible and kind of adjust things accordingly um which is great and I

6500think I don't know if that's like a common kind of [pause] uh method and [institution 1] if  
6501it's just the [department] @@ which I can totally see um our faculty is really great um

6502really accommodating they're really responsive to the things that we have brought up as as  
6503issues um we had a problem with one of the rooms that they assigned us it was in the  
6504[building] and you know faces that busy street with all those windows and so it would just  
6505be way too loud and none of us could like hear the lecturer and like having the discussions

6506you couldn't hear somebody that's down at the other end of the room um and there were

6507really responsible about like changing things around kind of accommodating what they  
6508could um so I'm trying to remember the question what was it sorry @@

6509R: um just like what the modules are like so is it mainly just lecture based discussion based  
6510do you have any like practice or anything like that

6511Katie: um it's a professional course so the first semester is all lectures and then next  
6512semester starting in January we'll have a professional placement at an agency within  
6513Ireland um and the expectation for the [department] is that we have two in the master's  
6514level um I think there are four in the undergrad and one has to be a [type] placement so  
6515we've already met with the course director about where we'd like to go for next year and I  
6516think I'm gonna try and do my [type] once so that's with like [organization] or with  
6517[population] so um we've had speakers come in from each of these different areas to kind  
6518of explain what it will be like for us when we're on our placements and I think they're  
6519trying really hard to um help us understand like what it's going to entail and how intensive  
6520it will be but also not to make it so intimidating that we you know none of us want to do it  
6521which is really good especially for this type of field for it you know what there's so much  
6522pressure in [discipline] to be really competent right away and um they're doing a good job  
6523of kind of like you're students you are going to be students when you're on this placement  
6524so then we're not gonna just expect you to go out and do an assessment or like go to court  
6525and argue why you think [situation] so

6526R: that's comforting that you won't have to do that @@ immediately

6527Katie: yes @@@ thankfully we'll be able to watch somebody else doing it for the first  
6528time @ so I think that's really good and then obviously in year 2 we would have part of  
6529finishing our dissertations or our thesis and then um kind of the similar style again for a  
6530semester would be teaching and then a second placement in the the last semester as well  
6531and then when we graduate we have um the [government] credential right away so we can  
6532practice as credentialed [job] right away

6533R: okay and um just out of curiosity is that credential is it transferable between countries or  
6534is it mainly Irish

6535Katie: um it's mainly Irish umm the degree it really I mean I don't I can't speak to any  
6536other country um I mean most of the students that are international from our program  
6537would be um [nationality] we have one Canadian and one from Saudi Arabia um and I  
6538haven't talked to those two but what their expectations are about going back um I've looked  
6539into it and it's it's a process definitely with the licensing boards back in [country] they'd  
6540have to recognize my degree first of all and kind of find the equivalencies to make sure  
6541that it matches up with all their standards um [discipline] is definitely I think an older

6542profession in [country] than it is here and so it's more well established and they have more  
6543kind of expectations about what they want from [job] so the the credential is not  
6544transferable but once I get like the degree and that sort of thing kind of um transferred over  
6545with the equivalency then I can apply to be licensed in [country] at the master's level what  
6546I'm finding kind of difficulty difficult is just um in [country] I think there's more variety  
6547with a Masters in [discipline] to kind of specialize in a particular area that they don't have  
6548here in Ireland so like I've kind of always been thinking [specialty] and that's not even it's  
6549not a thing in Ireland like they don't do it at all here so kind of adjusting to what is  
6550available here yeah and um what I could do with it in the long run

6551R: okay all right and um so what are your assignments like for your modules and also for  
6552clinical like what are you actually assessed on

6553Katie: um depending on the course I think the majority of our courses have like a fairly  
6554[pause] I mean to me it doesn't seem like ever large paper due at the end of it and we um  
6555have a couple of courses that only ran for like five weeks um so we had like a group work  
6556course where we had to um create a group intervention and then roleplay in front of the  
6557class so that was part of it and we had to write a paper on the experience at the roleplay and  
6558why we justified doing what we did um and then write an individual assignment to kind of  
6559like correspond to the group project um and I haven't got the results back but not one that  
6560was the first one we turned in and I'm really nervous about it just like the group group @I  
6561@always @kind of just like it's not all entirely me being responsible so I have to like put a  
6562lot of trust in other people and just hope that it goes well the rest of them like I said it's  
6563mostly like a paper at the end of it I think our exams at the end of the year we have one um  
6564exam and it's two courses or two of the um I think I think they're on the same module like  
6565we have four modules and then each one is divided up into four five classes um and so it'll  
6566be two classes within that module for one exam um I mean it's like [topic] and then [topic]  
6567@ or something basically something@ that they can test on@ essentially um and so I'm  
6568not entirely sure how that one will go or like what the and I know it's essay tests they've  
6569already given us an idea of what the questions may be and how to prepared for it but it's  
6570primarily the papers and then getting assessed for the ability to kind of think critically  
6571about the topic and do the readings that they assign but then also like the additional things  
6572and draw on other things and experiences and topical stuff to so and I mean I mean it's  
6573kind of basic what any other course may be but that's primarily what we're being assessed  
6574on

6575R: okay and how would you evaluate your current academic success

6576Katie: well I mean I got my grades yesterday@@ so I think I'm great @ um we did a um  
6577presentation in one of our classes that got graded and um that was a a another group one  
6578and we scored really highly on it which is great and then the paper that I got back also is in  
6579the first class honor whatever that top level is which is really great @@you know like I  
6580saw a 78 and was like oh man that's just terrible to me but you know for here in our system  
6581I'm like that's a really good score and kind of adjusting my response to that number @@  
6582R: yeah was that system explained to you when you first came

6583Katie: [click] not really I knew it would be different um and I had kind of looked up on my  
6584own um we talked about it I think in one of our classes but it's also my peers that we've  
6585talked about it hasn't been like presented by the university or by any of our professors at all  
6586so it's really just we talked about it together and like so I mean am I okay when I see  
6587something in the seventies and they're like no that's great you want that type of score so @  
6588um

6589R: would it have helped if the professor's kind of said this is the grading score this is you  
6590know what is considered good here in etc.

6591Katie: I think it would have um we were given um a handbook for the program but it's like  
6592three hundred and something pages and I started to read it and got like 40 pages in and was  
6593like this is just no so anytime I have a question and they say it's in the handbook I do like a  
6594keyword search and @try to find@ the information that I need cuz it's just it's way too  
6595much and how that's presented and they didn't it's not like they printed it and handed it to  
6596us so you can like physically go look through it it's you know I went and looked it up on  
6597the course website and found it so um I think it would have been helpful to have a little bit  
6598more of an introduction our first day of classes I was kind of expecting that you know like  
6599to meet the professors get the syllabus and kind of talk over the expectations for the year  
6600but it we really got tossed right in like we started our group project the very first day of  
6601class in August so it was really very intimidating situation because we don't know any each  
6602other we don't know you know like the expectation for the class or like really what we're  
6603doing and all of a sudden it's like here's your group project you're gonna turn this in at five  
6604weeks here's your group and get started it was really like we all were just really  
6605overwhelmed that very first day and I think I mean it we were able to adjust pretty quickly  
6606but I think it would have been nice to have you know a day or so of just getting to know  
6607the course and the lecturers things like that

6608R: um and so you've already described a little bit of how you think or how you know that  
6609the professors are grading but how do you think that they're assessing academic success in  
6610general like what are their expectations for you as a student

6611Katie: um definitely a lot of class discussion um especially in the classes where we're not  
6612having a formal assessment they talk a lot about like class participation and um we're  
6613supposed to really be able to engage with the topic and so they not that they asked a ton of  
6614questions but we try to volunteer as much discussion as we can um partially to break up the  
6615class a little bit so it's not just the pressure on the lecturer to just to be talking at us because  
6616that doesn't help them or us um so I think that's that's probably a big part of it um is how  
6617well you're able to kind of critically evaluate what's being presented to you and have a  
6618discussion or present your opinion and talk about it during class um [long pause] yeah I  
6619don't I think that's really I mean in some of the classes that's really the only way that the  
6620professors are gonna know really anything about us individually before we turn in the  
6621paper and even then they may not be able to put us you know with faces to names their  
6622classes not that big I think there's 21 of us now so you know it shouldn't be that [pause] big  
6623but when you only see somebody you know once a week and maybe their lecturer style is  
6624to just stand up front and just really talk at you there's not a lot of individual um attention  
6625that's given

6626R: mm-hmm and are the expectations that they have are they communicated clearly to you  
6627do they verbally say yes is it all just in the handbook is it just kind of

6628Katie: it's pretty much all in the handbook and when we ask questions more specifically  
6629they'll say oh that's in the handbook like one thing that you know for academic writing for  
6630me coming from [country] APA style was really the only method of like citation and  
6631referencing that I used in undergrad part of that you know could have been I was a  
6632[discipline] major in undergrad too so it was very much the style um and I don't know  
6633anything about that Harvard citation style so I've had to learn some of that they're um so  
6634far the professors that we've had have been fairly um neutral about that and kind of just say  
6635like stick to one style or the other you can do APA or Harvard as long as you stick to one  
6636of them um which is really nice because I haven't been @forced @to @change everything  
6637um but I think you know I'll probably run into professors that are a little bit more strict  
6638about sticking with Harvard and I will have to kind of modify things but um overall they'll  
6639say a lot oh that's in the handbook refer to the handbook you should have read that @three  
6640@hundred @page @document @before class@@@

6641R: okay all right and so that's the in general um what do you think students need in order to  
6642succeed at [institution 1]

6643Katie: [click] um speaking as an international student it's a very frustrating experience to  
6644try and get here there's it felt like anyway there's so little communication that's done  
6645interdepartmentally that you know I would have a question and somebody would say um



6646 talk to the academic registry the academic registry would tell me to talk to some other  
6647 department or talk to the [discipline] department or you know we don't do that here talk to  
6648 someone else but never give me who I need to talk to or I go talk to that person they send  
6649 me back to that academic registry it's very disjointed and was a really very frustrating  
6650 experience especially doing it from overseas um the timeline also was not explained to me  
6651 um when I was kind of applying for everything and kind of working on financial aid and  
6652 that sort of thing you know in [country] I would have my financial aid and everything  
6653 straightened out by like April May for the upcoming school year and here they didn't even  
6654 put my application in until July and so that was so frustrating and so um just anxiety  
6655 provoking to have a month to know whether or not I would have my loans approved in  
6656 order to come you know and like to have this whole plan and to have given up on other um  
6657 acceptances at universities in [country] in order to pursue this um and so it was a really  
6658 difficult process and it was very frustrating to go through this so I think there should be I  
6659 don't know just more coordination and more understanding of like all of the different areas  
6660 that need to coordinate to make a student able to come here successfully um and I know I  
6661 think there was I mean some @extenuating @circumstances I don't want to be a total jerk I  
6662 know like the financial office in academic registry um lost an employee like right at the  
6663 time when the applications were getting sent in for financial aid um and so it was you  
6664 know down to one person I think that there should definitely be more than two people at all  
6665 but then it was down to just one um and he did not really seem to have his stuff  
6666 @@together that's really frustrating um and you know and then from from [country] were  
6667 like my primary mode of communication was email because I couldn't really call with the  
6668 time difference and then also just like trying to get a phone number which would even  
6669 work was really @frustrating and like I said I had like a bunch of other things that like  
6670 made the decision to come and um how to get here really difficult with like the health stuff  
6671 and so who I could ask to try and figure out how I would make that happen you know it  
6672 was really limited and um like I said like our global ambassador [name] is fantastic and I  
6673 just can't even imagine if I didn't have her in my department what I would have done I  
6674 definitely wouldn't have gotten here um I probably would have given up after I got  
6675 accepted and just went well I can't get insurance because I have this chronic health  
6676 condition and nobody will accept me so that's not happening @@ you know @ so I think  
6677 there's definitely more that could be done to support international students coming um I  
6678 think the orientation week that they did was way too generic um and it's it's nice to have an  
6679 orientation week and I definitely you know like came here specifically because I was like  
6680 oh an extra week to kind of like get things figured out and ask questions would be

6681 wonderful um but the way that they kind of ran it um was very much how I would imagine  
6682 like an undergrad orientation where like you've never been to university before here's  
6683 where we talked about like nightlife don't get an STD and make sure you're safe like it just  
6684 was way too generic and a way to just not geared towards higher academics I think um and  
6685 I think it would have been really helpful during that week to have like one or two days of  
6686 orientation with your department specifically um you know like have a mixer or something  
6687 where you're gonna be meeting your lectures and your professors and meeting your cohort  
6688 um and your peers at that time rather than like the very first time that you meet them being  
6689 thrown into a group project during class um so I think that would be really helpful um and  
6690 then I think you know and again I think my experience with the [discipline] department is  
6691 probably a lot different than somebody that's coming in for like biology or something  
6692 where maybe the lecturers and the professors aren't quite as like person um centered and  
6693 oriented to um kind of facilitate that experience so [pause] you know my experience may  
6694 be you know better than some and you know potentially worse than others but it just um I  
6695 think it would be helpful to kind of like facilitate the transition a little bit more

6696 R: so um so how much of a factor do you think language plays in academic success

6697 Katie: I mean I think it definitely has a huge component there's a lot of you know really  
6698 funny experiences where the teacher will say something in class and I'll look@ at@ @my  
6699 @peers and just like @what and they'll have to explain it to me or like you know an  
6700 acronym that they know really well here gets thrown out and I just like you know floored  
6701 with it um or just you know the different way that um they define things I think can  
6702 sometimes be difficult to make sure that I'm understanding it that concept correctly I don't  
6703 think it's you know it's definitely not insurmountable for me because I speak this same  
6704 language because I can look to my neighbor and I say hey what really quickly it gets  
6705 resolved um the lecturers are not at all concerned about like different spellings and stuff  
6706 which is one thing that I was like I'm gonna have to learn how to spell everything with u's  
6707 put a u in color and behavior and all these words @@ that they don't belong but they're not  
6708 you know like they're not really worried about it and that's kind of like where the  
6709 referencing style too they're kind of like well pick one and stick to it if you're gonna go  
6710 with the American spelling just stick to it throughout your essay don't you know try and go  
6711 back and forth um which I think again you know might be more lenient in my program  
6712 than in others or you know vice versa um I know with the student that's from Saudi Arabia  
6713 in our class we've talked a few times just kind of about her experience um and she  
6714 definitely finds it more difficult because her native language isn't English and she will talk  
6715 about it sometimes where she's like I think in Arabic in my head like that's like the primary

6716language in my mind then like I have to translate it coming out and speaking so she doesn't  
6717talk a ton in class um which you know I can see is being really detrimental for the lecturers  
6718getting to know her and if what they're grading us on is our contribution during class if  
6719she's being graded you know potentially less than somebody who talks more because you  
6720know it's a little bit more difficult for her to like just even get her thoughts out um in in that  
6721environment so I think um for me personally it's probably not too much of an issue and if it  
6722is in the in the areas where I've noticed it um it gets you know kind of resolved pretty  
6723quickly but I think for somebody who doesn't have English as their native language it can  
6724be a huge barrier

6725R: and um one of their factors do you think play and academic success and and that could  
6726be things you're in [institution 1] and also outside of [institution 1]

6727Katie: um [pause] I think I mean the library hit stuff is incredible that they offer that um I  
6728haven't been able to take advantage of it because they're all during class times um really  
6729rarely they'll have something on the Friday and if it is it's like at 8 in the morning and I'm  
6730not going to get up to go to that my one day off um and so I like I know that there's a lot of  
6731available options um unfortunately just with our program we're not really able to take  
6732advantage of it like even just getting to the mailroom before they close at five o'clock it's  
6733not possible most days and so like everything that I put off during the week has to be done  
6734on Friday right which is frustrating and then um you know I think I think there's a lot that  
6735[institution 1] does to try and make sure that people are successful and part of like the  
6736International new incoming international students Facebook group and so there's a lot if  
6737that gets posted there the GSU is really helpful um the postgraduate advisory service is  
6738really great I definitely went to a couple of grad chats in the very beginning just to kind of  
6739like see what that you know could offer um and thankfully like I've lived overseas before  
6740so it wasn't like traumatic experience to suddenly be here and be away from my families  
6741but that can always be a really difficult transition for people so I think that there are a lot of  
6742opportunities for people to get the support that they need it just takes a lot to try and seek it  
6743out sometimes it's not always as available to um you know different programs possibly or  
6744what you're able to kind of incorporate into your schedule if you don't have kind of a  
6745typical school class schedule where you like you know like an hour every Monday  
6746Wednesday Friday and then the rest of the day you know or like two classes a day or  
6747something like that where they're two hours or something instead of everything being as  
6748blocked as ours

6749R: and I kind of want to go back to what you were saying that you've been working for  
6750quite a while and now you're coming back to academia and kind of what the transition has

6751been like and what you might be finding difficult because of being out out of academia for  
6752so long

6753Katie: um it's been really challenging um to I don't know it's kind of weird is like to go  
6754backwards in my development because I'm like a fully functioning adult I had my own  
6755apartment I had a job you know like I paid my own insurance like I've been living out of  
6756my parents' house for a really long time um to suddenly being back to like I'm living off of  
6757loans I'm living in a dorm I'm sharing my kitchen like just a lot of just um really kind of  
6758interesting challenges to I go backwards and stuff where I'm like I never thought I'd have  
6759to like share my kitchen with more than a couple of people again in my life and now there's  
6760seven of us that share a kitchen and that's kind of horrible um so I think that's that's kind of  
6761been a challenge it's been a challenge um to go back to like the self-discipline of like  
6762making sure that I like really discipline myself like I need to spend a couple of hours doing  
6763reading and I need to go to the library so consistently and getting back into that habit has  
6764been really challenging um having been out so long I think um I've been thinking about  
6765going back to school for probably five years to be honest um and then like you know with  
6766health stuff like that all happened it just didn't happen um the timing wasn't right so um I  
6767think I was kind of preparing for it for a while but if you hadn't been maybe it would be a  
6768lot more difficult um our class is really great in like the demographics and how they're  
6769made up like I don't feel like I'm out of place with my age or that I'm like the only mature  
6770students because there are definitely a few you know like a little bit that are older than me  
6771and quite a few that are younger but um the age spread is pretty wide with the majority  
6772people being in their mid to late 20s anyway so I don't really feel too out of it where I  
6773might if I were in a program where the the channel really is to like go straight after  
6774undergrad into a master's into your doctorate um to get it done as quickly as possible  
6775which I think probably more in like the sciences and things where that's just kind of like  
6776the trajectory um but I think with [discipline] it's it tends to be a more varied group of  
6777people that go back for their master's degree um or higher so it's um I think that kind of  
6778helped the transition a little bit too I think the professors are really understanding and they  
6779really value the experience that we may have had in between um undergrad and now so I  
6780think that's really helpful as well you know like where are some programs having worked  
6781for five years after you get your BA in biology or something doesn't always mean that  
6782you're working in the field doesn't always mean that you're getting experience that's  
6783relevant towards what you want to pursue um particularly if like you want to do research or  
6784something but you were working in on @@ I don't know where @@ lab I don't know  
6785@@ so I think that aspect of it is really beneficial for my particular field that makes it a lot

6786easier um and sometimes a lot better too because I can contribute a lot more to a  
6787conversation um based on you know the years that I worked with a particular population  
6788um that is really great for class discussion and really helps kind of like broaden a subject  
6789area a lot or like putting theory into practice so I think overall it's been both better and  
6790more difficult @ then it could be I mean it definitely could be worse it definitely could be  
6791better um but I think it's so far been a pretty easy transition

6792R: um and out of curiosity how has the transition been from the types of writing and the  
6793types of work that you've had to do in your job versus what you've had to do in your  
6794master's

6795Katie: um it's definitely different I think the type of writing that I would do in workplaces  
6796would be what um we would be doing in our placements next semester so I think it's really  
6797good to have that experience but it's not helpful as far as going back to writing essays um  
6798again and I think you know it would probably would benefit to to be sure that I have  
6799somebody like outside of myself or like my immediate cohort to like re-read through  
6800papers and things before I hand them in to make sure that they're being presented  
6801academically or that they're not um as concise as like a report or something that you would  
6802write for [workplace] or something like that where it really is like straight to the point and  
6803you do bullet points and you don't really expand on things as much um I think in some  
6804ways it was helpful because it definitely helps me write um more concisely I don't use as  
6805much like just kind of fluff @@ as I might in undergrad to try and get to a particular word  
6806count I definitely am like I can cut things out where I need to now because I have have had  
6807that different type of writing style so I think in some ways that's been beneficial in other  
6808ways it's it gives me more anxiety after I turn something in to like I just am not really sure  
6809that I did it right um and again I haven't turned in a ton of papers yet it's only been like 2  
6810and ½ um but you know we'll when I get my grades back @@@ hopefully I'll be OK @

6811R: so if you could give advice to faculty here at [institution 1] in supporting and helping  
6812and dealing with international students what would that advice be

6813Katie: what type of faculty like my department faculty

6814R: yes just from your experience yeah your professors basically

6815Katie: [pause] that's I mean it's kind of hard because I think my my professor is like my  
6816group is doing really well with it they're really responsive and they're really like open to  
6817just talking to us about issues and helping resolve problems which again they're  
6818[discipline] so @@ it's kind of natural um I think [institution 1] at large I would definitely  
6819want to say it is not an easy process it really made me think very negatively about  
6820[institution 1] as a whole for it being an um elite University and the top in Ireland I just

6821 have such a negative opinion about where it's at like my tiny little state school in [state]  
6822 like puts puts it to shame with like the administrative processes and like making it um easy  
6823 and transparent for me to understand like where my money was spent like I was just  
6824 recently told that my accommodation wasn't paid and then I go on my portal and look at it  
6825 and everything the way that it shows looks as though like my account has like a surplus of  
6826 you know a certain amount of money and I just like it I've been fighting with like the  
6827 accounting office and with AR and with my department because part of that was like  
6828 department funding for a scholarship and like I just can't there there was never any like  
6829 here's like an outline of exactly all the fees that you paid here's how you paid it here's how  
6830 your loan dispersal was used here's how your you know funding from your scholarship was  
6831 used like that wasn't even given to me and I don't understand how that even happens  
6832 shouldn't I get like a pretty clear receipt about how thousands of Euros was spent in my  
6833 name and so it just like just really just basic things that I cannot understand how it's still  
6834 functioning the way that it is I don't get it um now I've talked about it with like other  
6835 students as well and like the library system you know it's there's so much information  
6836 about how great this library is and having it be like this repository and it's fantastic and yet  
6837 I can't get a book or I'm competing with 25 students only in my cohort you know the other  
6838 [discipline] students that anybody else who has access to this need it and I can never get a  
6839 book that I need because they have one copy in the library and it's just or you know like a  
6840 certain number of them are eBooks but they're only able to be read on library pcs that  
6841 doesn't benefit me if I'm not you know like thankfully I live on campus so I can like get  
6842 over here pretty quickly but if I'm not living on campus or like the people in my class  
6843 would don't and commute to the university if they don't if they can't get access to the book  
6844 and then they aren't living on campus can't get in to use a PC they're like it's just kind of  
6845 ridiculous um and for it to be you know a very prestigious school I expected a lot better um  
6846 sorry I know I have a lot of negative feedback for like a lot of it for a lot of it some of it has  
6847 been great a lot of it just has been such a struggle and a very unexpected need to do all of  
6848 this and try to figure out how it's all working and not being told clearly it's really  
6849 frustrating

6850 R: yeah and um what advice would you give to future students or students who are looking  
6851 to come to [institution 1]

6852 Katie: [long pause] consider all of your options really clearly um I mean looking back on it  
6853 I think I definitely came here more so for just like the dream of studying in Ireland then for  
6854 what the program can really do for me long-term um [pause] which I mean I'm definitely a  
6855 believer in like you know things happen for the reasons they're supposed to and there's

6856gonna be like a use for being here and I don't regret it at all because I love it um but you  
 6857know I could have done a Masters in [discipline] in a year in [country] for less than what  
 6858I'm paying here with the accommodation and everything and how expensive it is to live in  
 6859Dublin um that I hadn't you know or like that I had looked at but I hadn't given as much  
 6860credence because I was so like I really just want to go um so I think being more [pause]  
 6861able to kind of like get into your head and analyze why you think that you want to go to  
 6862[institution 1] and if you can get just as good of an education and a better experience  
 6863somewhere else consider the possibility I guess

6864R: mm-hmm okay and so that's actually all the questions I do have for you I'm like is there  
 6865anything else that you would like to express

6866Katie: @@@@ gratitude for the people in my program um I really do I mean I do think  
 6867the professors are great and I mean our experience is really good because they are so  
 6868attentive and they're willing to listen to us since I think that has ameliorated a ton of like  
 6869the issues that I have had in frustration so yeah and I don't know the [Department] should  
 6870be like a model if other departments aren't doing as much for their student @@

6871R: alright thank you

6872

6873

### **Katrina**

6874

6875R: I'm first I'd like to know what you think your strengths are academically

6876Katrina: my strengths uhm I think um [pause] it's my knowledge to do networking because  
 6877I'm communicative person so when people as well so I like people and I think this kind of  
 6878characteristics help me to keep in graduate now and I I am doing master's degree in  
 6879[discipline] when I have to study about [topic] and communication is very very important  
 6880and I have a background in [country] in [discipline] organization so it it means help me  
 6881because I like behavior human behavior so these kind of things help help me too much to  
 6882understand about behavior of human so I think this kind of skills help me to to to be like  
 6883[pause] good in my college now

6884R: perfect and what would you say that your difficulties are academically

6885Katrina: uhhh I think it's not about in English I thought at the first moment it was but and  
 6886now I think about disrespect about I I because I meet foreign people and not person  
 6887actually but because all my classes is completely foreign people so they they don't have  
 6888like a respectful for us because we are we are not Irish so I I feel it and everybody feel it as  
 6889well because it's completely different I don't know if the another college because I have a  
 6890lot of contacts with uhm different students but I think there it's completely disorganized so

6891sometimes I feel like a messy you know because they don't answer us and sometimes it's  
6892embarrassed we had uhmmm uh uh uhm sad time when a director of my college we had  
6893complained because they didn't explain us about holidays and it was a one year of course  
6894and they didn't like explained very well for us how works but at the end when you return  
6895af- after holidays they said you are like a kids you know it's like a cake here you we offer it  
6896to you like a cake and now you just want to pick your piece so this is not like right and one  
6897girl of the the the my colleagues like say no with the like shake their hands and head and  
6898he said you are like a kids don't do this behavior in front everybody you know it's not it's  
6899not like something nice to do and ehm it's comp- it's compl- in my opinion is like  
6900completely disrespectful for us and for her as well she cried after because she was felt as  
6901uhm [long pause] weak I think it's not it's not like a English or to study but I think these  
6902means you know I think is it

6903R: yeah so like the disrespect coming from the professors and the people in charge

6904Katrina: yeah yeah

6905R: okay um uhm was this kind of something that you guys felt from the beginning or is it it  
6906kind of develop

6907Katrina: develop

6908R: it developed

6909Katrina: and the beginning was super super nice because the teachers and professors was  
6910and the all the staff was was was open to suggestions and everything but then because we  
6911have like these kind of problems and was a big problem because it's to explain to you when  
6912you when you started they said you have like holidays for three month and everybody like  
6913you had a lot of plans for holidays because you don't plan your holidays in May you know  
6914you plan like in March February something like that and end of the classes they said Oh  
6915unfortunately we they have to we had to give you classes on the holidays everybody was  
6916super super nervous because we booked like a lot of trips like some some people return  
6917home so was completely hard moment situation for us but they explained like you have  
6918this option to study now in summertime or you can study as normal and then you have like  
6919you can completely your dissertation next year until February was it but now they said you  
6920have to study to May so all the visas is to February so we don't have sure they don't have  
6921make sure and we don't have sure as well if the immigration will be allowed to give us we  
6922know is like fifteen month but we don't have sure if the immigration accept it you know if  
6923you have to pay again so there are a lot of [pause] uhh things we should think about it is so  
6924a lot you know it's like expectations and we are not in my country in our country so it's  
6925little bit [pause] challenge to manage it so because of it was disrespectful for us I think so



6926R: uhm talking about the visa just because I know from talking with you before the  
6927interview uh so this past week when you went to the GNIB did they accept the course until  
6928May or

6929Katrina: yes

6930R: they did

6931Katrina: because uhh when I my visa expired last year in September so I I picked a  
6932different a different college but this college it doesn't accept me because of my English so I  
6933didn't got like a great uh evaluation so they said no so uhm but I got the the letter and I got  
6934the visa so I started a new college this year in February they accept my I I I did the all the  
6935exams there blah blah blah and then I start in February so I didn't return to GNIB just for  
6936change it because I was afraid to pay again so you know was hard to take the appointment  
6937there so I thought it's okay I'm studying masters so I just send the the the college the  
6938institution in my head it was okay but when I return now they said like you know you  
6939should like let us let us know about it I was like sorry because I was afraid and they talk  
6940and was okay because I am I'm my my my right to ask it and was okay to May I'm student  
6941//here

6942R: okay okay so they did accept it

6943Katrina: hopefully| yeah yeah but I think hopeful my friends and my colleagues we be okay  
6944to I think so

6945R: I would hope so um all right and so then in terms of English what do you think your  
6946strengths are

6947Katrina: my listen I think I listen very well I can understand everything I can't sometimes I  
6948can't expression as I in my mother language but ehm it's okay it's okay like you can  
6949survive it's not the big challenge you know? so for me it's my listen I can understand  
6950everything [pause] is good

6951R: what would your weaknesses or difficulties be in English

6952Katrina: I think speak sometimes because depends of your emotional was were fluent but  
6953depends if you're super super nervous you you can't like expression yourself as well like in  
6954a discussion or sometimes it never like happened to me but I listen like some student said  
6955oh my teacher said my English is terrible or my accent it's hard to understand but it was  
6956clear I was clear when I started there I say I have a strong accent it's okay and she said the  
6957director said it's okay like I can understand you you can understand me this is the  
6958important thing if you need to study more you have to study more so I thought it's okay I  
6959can change my accent oh could be better so I started to do uhm a teacher? a particular  
6960teacher who helped me a lot I stopped it now because it's @a @lot @of @assignments to

6961do and exams but yes I did it before to to be easy for me actually@ for you@ for listening  
6962to @understand me

6963R: perfect um so can you tell me more about your your master's course now what are the  
6964modules like like what kind of work do you have to do for it

6965Katrina: okay weeee study uh the first semester [topic] theory and practical as well we had  
6966[module] we had research [pause] and methodology and we uhmm had [module] again like  
6967just [module] so like principles these kinds of things like legislation about it it was super  
6968super [pause] okay? @@ in the first semester and now we learned about [module] and the  
6969difference between a commercial [topic] and ehmmm employment workplace and about  
6970[module] as well and the last one was [topic] theory as well two number two

6971R: okay and do you have to do a lot of reading a lot of writings

6972Katrina: yes. A lot actually because I wanted to read but a lot of [pause] colleagues didn't  
6973need it as it I think it depends on the the student I'm I'm curious person so I wanted to  
6974really understand why they think this way so I'm not like accept just it's it so [topic] it's it  
6975no I need to understand who who started to think about it when started to do [topic] who  
6976was the best or who is the better country to do it because we study like about eh European  
6977eh so why why why they use this methodology you know? so I wanted to read more so I  
6978spent my days in library when I'm studying because I like it. they asked it but you know  
6979@many @people don't read as as [pause] as the teacher ask so I like but I like to study  
6980more so I have to read a lot

6981R: okay and when you're inside of the classroom what is that like is the teacher mainly  
6982giving a lecture with the PowerPoint is there a lot of group work

6983Katrina: in the first semester we had a lot of uhmm [click] experiments as they had like a  
6984case and they separate the classes like one outside on- one part outside another part inside  
6985the professor gave us a case and secret case and uh goals as well to negotiate with the  
6986group outside was the same for them as well so we was in a arena? To dispute there and  
6987she checked us in in parts you know so was amazing the first semester for f- was super  
6988super uh nice because we talk English we was the evaluate in English and was super  
6989exciting and the second semester now is completely theory so theoretic so it's heavy so a  
6990lot of things about law and legislation so technically words so so have to study so for me  
6991I'm not don't have degree in law in my country so it's hard @ super@ because a challenge I  
6992have just study more and look after about words because even [language] I don't know so I  
6993have to looking for it in two dictionaries because I don't understand @sometimes @I  
6994@have to ask my friend she's law she's uh lawyer so I asked her what it means it  
6995@because @I @look @for @in @dictionary @and @I @don't @understand and she no

6996it's blah blah blah but now it's more like [click] PowerPoints videos this semester is a little  
6997bit boring than first semester @

6998R: okay so what was or what is the form of assessment for your modules do you have to  
6999write essays exams practicals

7000Katrina: uhmmm yes we have a practicals exams as well for writing so we have four  
7001questions we uhm pick just two and we wr- we have to answer everything? And we have  
7002assignments essay we don't have it but assignments we have a lot like four thousand four  
7003thousand words this this semester was four thousand words the last semester was more the  
7004semester was ok but we had a lot of reading to do so we happy because of it because like  
7005[click] but just one assignment so was perfect for four thousand words

7006R: yeah and so those four thousand-word assignments do they give you the topic or do you  
7007have to //choose

7008Katrina: noo| they gave you the topic so they they gave you but it's different this is a good  
7009thing to do because in [country] I most I compare [country] because the most of my  
7010colleagues is from there so my my classes we have uh forty thir- people so two [pause]  
7011people are from [country]? but they don't go to the classes never just twice [pause] per year  
7012and one is from [country] and another one's from [country] and all the rest is [nationality]  
7013so like always we comparing like it's college and [country] methodologies so. here. the  
7014teacher gave to you uhh theme so you have to looking for a subject and they don't have like  
7015a structure like framework what I have to do you have to think about it in [country] we  
7016receive all the framework so we don't think about the framework he said I know it I need it  
7017it it so all the things you have to do but in my case now I have to think how I wanted the  
7018words on on my paper you know so it's different it's completely different you have to study  
7019more because they don't have like oh these author is better or these books better for you  
7020study no. it's completely different so we don't have idea how is you know how the teacher  
7021wants it's a little bit hard and when you ask them they said this is it I put in Moodle  
7022>because we use like a Moodle internet< but and we put there so is it so just that they don't  
7023explain a lot what do they want I think the culture Irish culture education but in [country]  
7024it's harder than here but they had like more framework that I have to do it's easier there in  
7025this aspect because here >but I at the same time< you have freedom you have free options  
7026to write whatever you want you know so it's uh it's it's different just it not better or worse  
7027it's different

7028R: okay so you you said that in [country] it's harder even though so it's easier because you  
7029have the framework but how is it harder

7030Katrina: it's harder because you have a lot of work to do there a lot of assignments and we  
7031have a lot of e- e- the exams is twice in the semester it's a hard hard and you have more  
7032subjects as well and we have to [clap] read some uhmm subjects before class soo and they  
7033explore more the the college brings like a lot of professionals to explain different points of  
7034view so the teacher usually is a completely academic and sometimes you need something  
7035from from #actually to understand how works in business in real life you know? and we  
7036have a lot of assignments and exams and uhm you have to to to go to the classes because if  
7037you miss any class you are completely disasters so it's really important you know I think  
7038it's harder than here because sometime when you miss the classes it's okay you know you  
7039can read the slides you can it's you can survive you know? It's a little bit harder because of  
7040it

7041R: um and so you said here the professor's kind of give you a theme and they say oh it's on  
7042Moodle um do they give you any other guidelines or grading criteria so do you know what  
7043and how you're going to be graded

7044Katrina: they have they have this is really clear but [pause] they had what did they want as  
7045a criteria as examine your work but sometimes I wanted to discussing about this this  
7046theme so for example my teacher asked @ I have a girl who reading my work before I sent  
7047to to to submitted it in my my website and she said which subject is it [Katrina]? What she  
7048wants to do because this is means it's really really important to you you know if you don't  
7049understand it it's hard I don't know if w- she she can explain for these thematic so I said so  
7050welcome to my life because I I can't understand as well so I do my best so when I asked  
7051about something it's like disgusting about it I don't I don't want like oh you have it to do  
7052this framework no but guys you have like three or four options so we we talked about it  
7053was about [module] and we should to bring like three case is not available it's not like  
7054[click] uhmm I clicked about to to to [module] so she couldn't say uhh guys I wanted to  
7055definition about [topic] so bring to me the advance ad- advantages and disadvantages about  
7056this subjects and then you can bring about [pause] I don't know the cases and you can  
7057explain giving a example this kind of things but not. So was hard to understand what she  
7058wants to to know you know? so so I submit I don't know I don't have idea the last semester  
7059was the same I was good@@ was okay okay so yeah okay

7060R: alright so that leads me to my next question um how would you currently evaluate your  
7061own academic success so how do you feel that you're doing

7062Katrina: [sigh] I feel very very well it's a great for me I think because is a different  
7063language for me I study more I'm sure if it was in [country] or if I do in [language] >no  
7064[language] is a little bit hard for me now< but if I did it like in [language] at some time it's

7065okay I can read like #previews in weekend was okay I know I haven't been study two  
7066weeks to these exams you it's easy subjects if you >it's not easy< not at all because it's  
7067@[topic] @@@ but uhm because is a different area from completely different subject so  
7068I'm a [role] and I study [discipline] so now I study [discipline] so it's completely different a  
7069lot of language so a lot of rules and some subjects you can't like write whatever you want  
7070it's theory so you have to understand the authors so it's hard than than than [country] I  
7071think if I was studying in [country] I used to work more as well as well but here because  
7072completely different all the [topic] so I don't have any idea about how works here so  
7073because of it I'm really really really happy because I was I think 70% on the the general so  
7074was okay for for me you know I didn't I was like accepted in [name] college so I'm really  
7075really happy maybe if I was studying like HR as as my area in [country] to work was okay  
7076you know but these area is completely different so I'm really happy

7077R: okay and so you've touched on this a little bit um but what do you think your professors  
7078look for so how do they assess academic success

7079Katrina: what do you mean like uh

7080R: like when they're grading how do they know that your essay is a first-class honors or a  
7081second class or

7082Katrina: hmm I think the language it's really important they asked about uhhh vocabulary  
7083so this is a disappointed to me because sometimes I use a lot of vocabularies in writing but  
7084I can't [pause] talk the same thing because I think English uhm it's easy to speak but  
7085sometimes you can't change your vocabulary but when you're writing you change all the  
7086time so you have to I think they they check it you know how you you explain your ideas  
7087how your organize your ideas this is really really important how you can express yourself  
7088and your ideas there this is meaning like if you have really good or your medium or you  
7089have like uhm I don't want to read it so I think you are good when you can express yourself  
7090even in the exams as well sometimes I I draw there you know I do like some framework  
7091there or explain I want to be as can you can be like clear you know from your idea it's  
7092important I think so they looking for it some good communication on a paper and a great  
7093vocabularies as well

7094R: okay alright and so in general what do students need to succeed at your college

7095Katrina: hmmm [long pause] I think it's [long pause] I think [pause] university or college  
7096it's a huge opportunity to new different things and when you are different in my case as  
7097well I bring some ideas completely different in my class because we have nurse there nurse  
7098we have artists we have lawyers we have administrator like a business we have a different  
7099knowledge is there so when you when it your professor something really really nice and

7100you have your a different point of the field you know so when a professor bring to me  
7101ummm brings to me uhh information about [topic] in my point of view I will think about  
7102how these [role] manage his or her emotions you know what I mean? I think this way my  
7103friend behind me thought sometimes thinks sometimes how how uhh how the the  
7104regulation or the law supports these professional and another one think about how they pay  
7105about it how do they think about framework of works or blahblahblah so when you bring  
7106your point of view in a class this is amazing this is a great opportunity to grow up together  
7107you know because different points of view I think these opportunities really nice when you  
7108I think this the professor expected as well the participating there so I think this different  
7109because I remember the first semester was everybody was so exciting so when you bring  
7110like the background there of all the Masters was they they had like a background so this is  
7111help us to understand the different points of views so I think it's it

7112R: ok and so how much of a factor do you think language plays in academic success

7113Katrina: hmmm [pause] it's very import it's very very very very important um [pause] but  
7114when you means like when you you you talk about it you mean like the accessible for for  
7115everybody what do you mean

7116R: yeah we'll start with that

7117Katrina: @ uuhm it's interesting I think last week I participated in um representative  
7118classes like different people from different courses in my college we discussing about hmm  
7119things about college and director was there just representative people there so I thought  
7120[pause] was a lot of >all all the students was foreign< people as well so they spoke a  
7121beautiful language better than a mine you know beautiful but everybody had a amazing  
7122language but they don't had courage to started ma- master's degrees because most if you go  
7123to my college [pause] all are Brazilians or Latin Americans like Venezuela Mexican um  
7124Argentina so and most of [pause] Indians and African as well but they don't believe in their  
7125their language you know they had a background in Brazil they had College in Brazil but  
7126they said no I can't do masters and sometimes I thought it's because the language because  
7127their confidence so so so low they don't believe them when I started this college I was  
7128super super devastated because I tried IELTS and and beginning of the year I tried I didn't  
7129prepare myself I was [pause] half I think half five or five something like that or four half  
7130four I can't remember I didn't prepare for it you know to be IELTS to do IELTS you have  
7131to do uhhm prepare before because it's like it's exam so you have to training training  
7132training but I did so I I started my course tryouts for six months and at the I didn't have  
7133courage to do

7134R: why not

7135Katrina: confidence

7136R: so was it because of your //experience

7137Katrina: uh-huh

7138R: in| class or with the first //exam

7139Katrina: yes because| with the first exams nobody like if you think for somebody who was

7140a upper intermediate to get this was okay when I got here four years ago I didn't can't

7141speak anything so was amazed when you go after two years two years and a half when you

7142try IELTS and you get this result it's okay if you train more okay but because of my my

7143colleagues my class was super nice and passes and I thought ohh so my confidence was it's

7144like psychology things you know it's like a behavioral so I thought I can't. so I not able to

7145do it so I spend more 200 euros to try again you know no maybe maybe not so was

7146frustrated so I try another one it's it's not TOEFL it's like hmm on a computer as well

7147R: uhmm Pearson PET

7148Katrina: PET was terrible too @@@@ my grade was terrible I was study so much and

7149my friend said why [Katrina] why you can't get it I say I don't know I think psychology

7150think it maybe I have a problem with it was like because listen my friend works in a home

7151care uhm you know a lot of the [nationality] with these kinds of things and foreign people

7152as well she said she had like a a #scare this last weekend this is confidential so I can talk to

7153you

7154R: yes this is confidential yeah

7155Katrina: so [pause] the guy it's a a a lady when we have she's like disabled so you have to

7156help her and sometimes the nurse goes there to uhm the husband sometimes helped her and

7157for sure she didn't have she didn't she didn't have a good English because she got here

7158eight month ago but she was able to help to change to clean some stuff just if you need to

7159something so the guy said this girl you know this nurse is the worst nurse that I have met

7160her English is terrible for this supervise my friendly is a supervise and she said you know

7161don't talk about it and he was like [pause] super unpolite and rude as well and he said you

7162are terribly her English is terrible as well because you have like a grammar mistakes and he

7163was like I don't want any [nationality] anymore I called the owner of the the company

7164because this is disrespectful bla bla bla and off like [nationality] is terrible for it are terrible

7165so we not accepted more [nationality] here bla bla bla imagine these girl [pause] you know

7166she will finish her first year here eight months imagine this girl now in her English school

7167[pause] and if she see her she was devastated she cried a lot because you come to a

7168different country to learn English and it somebody like who speak this in English and said

7169your language is terrible oh my goodness it's really hard to to survive it you know so to to

7170to I think this is there I think this is the problem when you got here first of all because  
7171everybody wanted to be in Ireland most of people if you go to to a college any college they  
7172will say to you we want to be here because because of the visa so the opportunity to started  
7173to work here it's by visa so I I wanted to stay here I need the visa so you need opportunity  
7174to study because this is the way so they spend a lot of money they sometimes don't  
7175organize their selves because if you put in your paper and first account everything is  
7176cheaper to do master but they thought no because my English not enough they had an  
7177amazing English in my college for graduate you know they spent like college they don't  
7178study like master degree they had amazing language then my friends as well in my my my  
7179class but they don't believe and then because of the money as well they don't organize they  
7180self to so pay it's not a lot of money but if you think I you study three years or four years if  
7181I pay everything now I can do my masters you know just one year and I having more  
7182choices to work and then someone like like me like some company liked it to me but they  
7183strategy so weak for them so I think the confidence for English is really really important I  
7184don't think I know my English is not perfect but you can understand me

7185R: yeah I can understand you

7186Katrina: and I can understand you so I think this is the main you know I know I when I got  
7187here I couldn't speak hi or how are you but I'm I'm I'm really gla- I mean really happy I'm  
7188glad as well to see my my way my story so but I think the confidential [click] sorry they  
7189confidence like so so low I think so

7190R: okay and so you've mentioned quite a few other things in there which leads to my other  
7191question of what other factors impact academic success so you've spoken about jobs and  
7192money and things like that uhm so factors that impact academic success could be inside of  
7193the college and outside of the college

7194Katrina: yeah uhm [pause] my college I can talk about my college my college don't  
7195prepare us for for work you know it's lot of theory as I said before in my old college in  
7196[country] they brings us a lot of the brought a lot of professionals to talk about real life so  
7197if you ask to to all my all my my colleagues they said [pause] no idea how it works here  
7198you know I think I don't know if in undergraduate was the same but I feel they don't  
7199prepare you for a real life [pause] and this is this this this is is a weakness because I know  
7200what I want and I have like a big background in [country] I have been working long time  
7201there so I know how I have to to do after but we are afraid about it so I think is successful  
7202is when you finish your studies and you can or you can have an option to start your PhD  
7203the academic way or business or whatever you want and they don't have any option for us  
7204so they gave is like it is hard it's really hard to say it but I think this they they think they get



7205the idea so they need visa so we gave like any course so [hands wiping] you know doesn't  
 7206matter because they need it we have it so I I do wanna a bread I have a bread so you pay  
 7207for bread it's ok you can eat after that over time like doesn't matter you know you have  
 7208your diploma you have your certificate so now it's your time and I think the institutions  
 7209here [pause] get this idea you know I'm academic person I like to study [pause] for sure I  
 7210wanted to start like my PhD maybe not now because I think I need to work a little bit but I  
 7211have my friend she's complete academic girl and they don't have space to her and a lot of  
 7212friends of mine not friend but colleagues they they they claim to back to to to to home  
 7213because they thought they thought and they think they they don't have opportunity here  
 7214and we have a lot of opportunity in Ireland to work you understand what I mean so I think  
 7215it's it's a challenge for everybody for institution to I have a lot of ideas but it's completely  
 7216hard for me I'm not European so I have to work to survive here so I can't like propose like I  
 7217have a good ideas I have a lot of networking professionals who I can bring to to college to  
 7218here to have like a lot of workshops or mock but I couldn't I can't because I don't have time  
 7219for it I have it to work you know so when the college don't open now I know there is a  
 7220person who can listen us blah blah blah but the life is so so hard so come on they have like  
 7221people for think about it to think about it so why I have to do these work for them you  
 7222know but at the same time I like to study I I want that to the next students have like better  
 7223course than I so that's it

7224R: okay brilliant and so this is gonna be a yes um I was gonna ask if you've had any  
 7225linguistic preparation before attending your master's program which you've said you have  
 7226um can you describe that preparation so can you describe your English language learning  
 7227story in //Ireland

7228Katrina: Oh my gosh @@

7229R: what happened| how was it how did you feel about it how do you feel about it

7230Katrina: so when I chose to come here I was in [country] I didn't have any idea about  
 7231Ireland and we have a lot of influence about America so we thought to to @ the dream is to  
 7232speak as American person when I got there because is a influence it's so so close so near  
 7233the culture is so similar and we got a lot of information from there so this is this is the  
 7234reality you know? we have you know and my sec- but the @visa @you @know for  
 7235Americans for USA is a little bit hard I have a visa just for visit blahblahblah but I don't  
 7236have visa to stay there for more than six months or whatever and it's restrictive options to  
 7237go to USA for au pair I was older that time but I wanted to study I had study in [country]  
 7238but any any any school works for me @@@@ I tried @everything you don't have no idea  
 7239I tried like psychology ehhs schools for you can open your brain and learn different doesn't

7240work I I I I put in my mind I have to live this experience so when I got here I pay I booked  
7241uhh houses of Irish of Irish family was amazing I couldn't speak anything but was good  
7242this family is my friend until now and I started in really good school it was [name] school  
7243and then I went to ummm different schools good as well but it's not a high school because  
7244[language school] is really really good and it's ehm [language school] now is uhh like a  
7245connection with [international language school] this school is the same I think? It's  
7246[international language school] I think [international language school] [pause] bought this  
7247school [language school] it's [name] before but I don't know is like I didn't have money to  
7248pay like a really good school but I paid the medium school and then I start the middle  
7249school is [name] school so first [language school] was amazing so I had amazing teachers  
7250they use it like umm good didactics to st- to to to teach us so was a amazing experience  
7251amazing experience perfect and then moment at at the beginning was and then #was okay  
7252because I had a great school then you like you expected more but come on you don't have  
7253money to pay like the same price and then [language school] was a [pause] how do you say  
7254is a methodology when you speaking now you repeat and speak

7255R: oh I know that one

7256Katrina: Callan Callan method so I had this one because I thought my pronunciation I think  
7257was better was good as well [pause] and then I'm here so in Callan I had three months in  
7258Callan but then I had the IELTS there was good but not [click] super good because it was  
7259like I think twenty people in the room it's like not twenty sometimes was twenty sometimes  
7260was fifteen but it is a lot of questions and short time and because uhm people work a lot so  
7261he gave a lot of homework but nobody like did it so it's hard to work when you are a  
7262teacher like you expected you have a plan and when this plan doesn't work how you can  
7263like works for it so there there were different levels of English in IELTS as well but this  
7264was my my my my story about English was it

7265R: okay and do you feel that all of this preparation prepared you for your masters

7266Katrina: uhm for IELTS was was good because they training a lot to writing and the  
7267vocabulary to writing as well and [pause] to speak because they speak and I answer was  
7268super super good ways so was nice for for it so they prepared very well but I was I mean  
7269because people wasn't the same level it's not the level for English but [click] how do you  
7270say the same expectations you know the same goal so because when you have when you  
7271really want to stay you really want to learn you work a lot but you can you you find like  
7272time to study you know a few people had these behavior but another the most like they  
7273don't care you know they just go there study I have a hard life blah blah blah victimism  
7274you know I'm poor oh I'm Latin American so life so hard at work stay here blah but they

7275treat they travel a lot you know @@@ they drink a lot as well but time to study they don't  
 7276want so they don't don't care about it doesn't matter I'm thinking my background was it  
 7277and I went to church so I didn't understand anything there anything nothing but I stay there  
 7278every Sunday I thought one day I will understand it so every day I went to to to to church  
 7279and then I started to do sport so I had to talk with my gym and then I sta- I I I I'm moved  
 7280in a house when I had like a foreign people like American or German Germany or uhm  
 7281different cultures and now I'm living with a French girl so I had a boyfriend as well it's  
 7282helped a lot

7283R: always does @

7284Katrina: @@@ and was it I think was it

7285R: so it's interesting I think you're actually the first person that has brought up that you  
 7286went to //church

7287Katrina: oooh

7288R: yeah so I'm interested in that experience because you said you understood absolutely  
 7289nothing and now you understand yeah

7290Katrina: uh-huh and it's a good it's a good view because when I got there and all all the  
 7291people went #looking for me like said well how I can improve my English I say looking  
 7292for a church [pause] whatever it is I don't want because I drink a lot I'm guilty blah blah  
 7293blah that's things I say doesn't matter like there [pause] is a place when everybody accept  
 7294you this is the point you know I have for me it's really easy to speak for ten ten people or  
 7295or million people or whatever because of the church I had this background in [country] so I  
 7296thought was a mathematic things if in [country] everybody accepted them so they can  
 7297accept me here if I even I speak like wrong like the wrong way in the grammatically uhh  
 7298mistakes they can understand me they accept me and this family my my my host family  
 7299they said you want to go in a church and say yes I wanna go and I went there was my first  
 7300church and I stay there until now so in my first semester they know about how was hard to  
 7301me to stay in Ireland and I needed to work and all the time asked oh are you looking for a  
 7302work looking for a job looking for a job I didn't know speak like very well but @@@ I  
 7303said I. need. Work. @@@ and they understand so they gave me a a job uhh after 8 month  
 7304here looking for sorry to looking for uhh kids look after kids like a babies was easy was  
 7305hard because because you have to garda vetting here like uhh it's you had you have it to  
 7306write the names of the babies and the the the parents as well [pause] [inhale] spelling. [long  
 7307pause] spelling you know

7308R: the Irish names

7309Katrina: American names is so similar and all the movies you can you know you only  
7310telling you you hear about American names and I have ideas and because in [country]  
7311people like bring a lot of names so we so Ellen Jessica or whatever whatever will William  
7312but mark but when you find Oisín Una or Ea- Eamon so hard to write so spelling was my  
7313first challenge in a church and they had so passion to understand me or to said again or to  
7314write and I bring the paper to my home my brought it I tried to write and memorize the  
7315names you know because how you call the baby [long pause] for name so you have to you  
7316know understand and if we if we speak like wrong way or you had some mistakes thing  
7317they can't understand you at all because is literally words so church for me was essential  
7318and then when they thought [Katrina] your English is good do you want to give like a class  
7319now like you want to be a teacher for four and five years old I say ookkaayy I can do it so I  
7320prepare my class when I went there sometimes I I I I had some mistakes but I always  
7321because of garda vetting always had to work with somebody with you usually was a Irish  
7322or American or Canadian so was easy for me to to grow up these environment so church  
7323was good good question because was a good environment to to learn English and I got  
7324some confidence there too I said if they understand me so @

7325R: okay it is quite interesting because it sounds like it's very central to your story and kind  
7326of becoming a part of the Irish community

7327Katrina: yeahhhh this is me and in my church there are a lot of foreign people but a lot of  
7328Irish so Irish breakfast I participated there I worked in an event as working so I put myself  
7329in challenge it's not hard but it challenge position so I have to stay uhh welcome to  
7330everybody because you have like to welcome thing yeah so how you say for thing like  
7331welcome so you have to say something so I put in in in hard positions to work even I I got  
7332like it couldn't understand anything they they talk but I say mmhm yes yes yes @@@ any  
7333[nationality] so just one [nationality] but that [nationality] just ignore me I'm so grateful for  
7334her because she ignore me so [pause] I had opportunity to to to have like more friends like  
7335Irish friends or different nationality friends

7336R: yeah okay brilliant brilliant okay um let's see going back to well this is actually quite  
7337related I would think um so what type of preparation should international students do  
7338before going into a master's program

7339Katrina: before [long pause] I think IELTS would be great or Cambridge I've never studied  
7340for Cambridge because I thought was super hard @@ it is actually it is but I think uhh  
7341IELTS is the best option I think so that one the P PET it's okay but I think if I try one more  
7342probably I got it you know because it's not so hard IETLS it's a you it's human to  
7343evaluation you to understand you you're I don't know I like it this way I think so it's a good

7344because you work you learn a lot of words academic words there you know what I mean  
 7345like new linking phrases >linking phrases I think yeah< this is so important you know  
 7346when you when you write or you express yourself in academic way so I think Irish sorry  
 7347IELTS @@

7348R: alright brilliant so if you could give advice to faculty in your college to better support  
 7349international students what would that advice be

7350Katrina: [sigh] [long pause] um I think bring more people from for market from real life  
 7351who works [pause] because we don't have idea or they had support or talk about [pause]  
 7352jobs you know I think they are afraid because is not guaranteed to take a job but when they  
 7353sell to you just sell to a a course they said oh they pay very well you can receive but in the  
 7354middle of the course they don't listen about jobs you know they don't talk about it just  
 7355academic things and I know if I have like studying if I if I had here in [institution 6]  
 7356probably I understand because I can understand it because it's completely academic you  
 7357know there are a lot of researches here PhDs masters they want it it's a work it's a work to  
 7358be researches like it's a work a real work like somebody who needs to do it but it like my  
 7359college is not like for research you know they don't want to go to PhD a teacher of mine  
 7360said you don't need to think about your master subjects that just they're easy subjects just to  
 7361finish it you know do you know what I mean you know they don't care about it just take  
 7362your certificate so I think my advice will be bring someone if you don't want like to be  
 7363academic way so bring someone from from from from from real life you know from [job  
 7364examples] who can speak to us like the real life [pause] I think was my advice because it's  
 7365so far the real life for us so far we don't have idea how [job] work here no idea I don't  
 7366know I never I've never met a [job] do you know what I mean like [job] I've never me- I'm  
 7367I'm I'm master's in [discipline] so [click] this is advice @

7368R: ok and if you could give advice to organizations um who would usually be either  
 7369colleges or language schools who are designing a summer program to prepare international  
 7370students for master's degrees what should they teach what would that advice be

7371Katrina: wow challenge @ uhhh first of all uhhh how you say I can't under- I know this  
 7372word is Latin but I don't know if I can explain you in my case I like to be you know when  
 7373you teaching kids you have a lot of games you have these kind of things when you have it  
 7374you think for example in my first school my teacher we had like uhm first class about like  
 7375grammar boring but it was super important the second classes my teacher give us a lot of  
 7376vocabularies and games to learn about it I think if I plan a summer preparatory to masters I  
 7377would give the same way I think umm in the morning time talk about IELTS blah blah  
 7378blah but the second turn like a lot of games when you have to think [snap] quickly you

7379 know like or seminars or workshops that students have to do about their subject so you will  
7380 study I don't know master's degree in [pause] HR or IT or whatever because I imagine like  
7381 a lot of different students for different areas so so we have to give me a workshop about  
7382 your area your future uh master degree so please let us how works there like you which  
7383 thesis do you think about it because you don't have a long time to think about thesis so I  
7384 start my master degrees already I I thought about my thesis so I think maybe can stimulate  
7385 they think about it so maybe I I I would be like I I would suggestion this kind of thing so  
7386 theory but as well the opportunities they they bring something for them like in the core  
7387 something like you really important for them because I think it these is the motivation to  
7388 learn it's not just liking [long pause] to just study like Koreans Koreans just repeat all the  
7389 time the same words it's so boring it's so hard but it they enjoyed a lot these classes you  
7390 know because I have a lot of Korean my class when you play there in a game whoa we  
7391 discover like a different [pause] eh ways to different methodology you have to learn  
7392 different things so you can [snapping] memory or memorize some words or things super-  
7393 fast different games so I think I would I would be suggest it

7394 R: ok and if you could give advice to future students so future masters students what would  
7395 that advice be

7396 Katrina: [long pause] I give I think it's give your best you know so even if you're not in  
7397 Trinity College or UCD or this DIT [pause] eh I think the college you're in you are is the  
7398 best because you are there whatever name what you can make your college to the best you  
7399 know so okay like I'm not in Cambridge I'm not in Oxford I'm not in Harvard but I'm here  
7400 so I'll do my best to be the best course for me the best marks for me I think this is the  
7401 advice you know I learned it if you are intern you never work as intern you have it to work  
7402 at director because if you work as intern always people looking at to you as intern you  
7403 know what I mean so if you are the the the the ah my college is not great they think just a  
7404 visa I I I realized it in my college so I saying okay they think it's like it's just for visa it's  
7405 not for me I want to learn I want to learn If I have like this opportunity I want to learn very  
7406 well so I will read more and you understand more I go to events and I talk about it that  
7407 that's it I think to be I'm the best way I'm the best too so I give the best I do the best so

7408 R: yeah exactly yeah yeah so are you aware of any support that international students  
7409 receive from your college your department your professors

7410 Katrina: umm you mean for what like psychology

7411 R: yeah it could be anything from counseling to English to anything

7412Katrina: I know my college has like ummmm um free free free classes for English but I I  
7413never like know about like never like told us or send email about it I know because my  
7414friend knows she she told me once but because the life so [long pause]

7415R: yeah one thing another

7416Katrina: yeah so so like so so fast and the time flow so I never looking for it but  
7417psychology my my my my college they didn't give the support but but I know when  
7418somebody has any problem about psychology things like behavior they had support  
7419because we have a friend of mine I think she was super sick there was sick but they [click]  
7420no no no no this as another college but this college one guy uhmm lost his his brother and  
7421they said you don't need to study this year look after for you so take care yourself for one  
7422year you can pay like a psychology a counselor for you for this year if you don't able to  
7423start this semester you can stay there and then next year you you return you don't need to  
7424pay any more just like this year pay again but do you have this option if you wanted to stay  
7425in Ireland I know it's hard they said it so this is a good behavior but offic- officially if they  
7426don't have the support I know because at least somebody told me it but no no no no no they  
7427don't have like clearly

7428R: like clearly explained this is where to go

7429Katrina: yesss we have somebody can listen to you blah blah blah no no no

7430R: Okay and do you think that they should have it officially do like what kinds of supports  
7431would be important for international students

7432Katrina: I think language is really really important and >but I don't know I think the  
7433language< but I don't know if everybody like want to do it you know because I'm here so I  
7434can do it these exams and exercise or whatever so I can do it I can manage it but I think  
7435offer it because it's a free so free classes and and I have luck because my college is an  
7436English school as well so they can

7437R: have both

7438Katrina: yeah yeah so this is really and hmmm psychologist it's really good it's really good  
7439because the weather doesn't help and you know the suicides is so high here and we have  
7440sad stories about [pause] people last year in my college like people who had cancer another  
7441one like disappear so I think this is psychology >maybe group< you know maybe not just  
7442like that's just for personally but in group maybe could be help maybe I think so

7443R: okay alright so that's all the questions that I have for you but are there any question and  
7444that you wish I had asked that I did not ask

7445Katrina: [long pause] hmmm [long pause] I think is it I think it's good good questions so

7446R: and is there anything else that you would like to express

7447Katrina: thank you very much for listening @ thank you for inviting me I think is really  
7448important to your research I think people what I said I think we need these kind of people  
7449I'm not like real academic person but I really I really appreciate this job because I know  
7450how it's hard to put the empirical life and the academic life you know ehm [pause] in some  
7451way this will help us in future and because [pause] in 10 years Ireland will be completely  
7452different so they criticize sometimes my accent but in few years my accent will be huge  
7453here ya know as the same for Indian but a [nationality] especially for [nationality] there's a  
7454lot of [nationality] a lot so I think uh one teacher of mine he studied in linguistics he said  
7455sometime some rules in English will be change because people use sometimes peoples  
7456@@@

7457R: it's true it is true

7458Katrina: so maybe it change maybe some rules change me I don't know but I this is your  
7459work to try understand how it works and maybe to give umm theory for different students  
7460in the world and because English is very important for example global language it's not the  
7461biggest one but the global language so it's really important so thank you very much thank  
7462you

7463

7464

**Kevin**

7465

7466R: um so first what um do you think your strengths are academically just in general

7467Kevin: uh what do you mean by strengths

7468R: like what are you good at academically things like you're really good at writing papers  
7469you're going on understanding the content at applying

7470Kevin: oh well I should I'm I'm good at uhmm [pause] [topic] [topic] [pause] and [pause]

7471relevant research well I'm working in the relevant field right now [pause] so [pause] that is

7472what I can tell you about my myself

7473R: and what would you say your weaknesses are academically

7474Kevin: [click] ummm [long pause] [click] my weaknesses should beee [long pause] well

7475cannot cannot remember at this moment but the thing is uhhh what I what I understand that

7476I should study more that is that is what I can say

7477R: yeah okay and what do you say your strengths are in terms of English

7478Kevin: ummm [pause] well I I born in an non-English speaking country so it was not as

7479good as as a native speaker but uh by the education in our country education system wasn't

7480it was not that good either and uhh but I developed my English skill by myself and then

7481moved to [pause] other country for pursuing my English uhhh sorry in my bachelor degree



7482and master's degree which which were also in English so actually it's all about practice  
7483how to how do I how I develop my skills

7484R: and what would you say your weaknesses or difficulties are in English still

7485Kevin: still I don't know a lot of words [pause] that are being used so all that I'm when I  
7486have heard any new word I google it [pause] and I try to remember

7487R: Okay brilliant and so can you tell me about the modules that you're taking currently  
7488what kind of work do you have to do for those modules

7489Kevin: uhhh currently I'm taking ummmm a course in [institution 4] which is a higher  
7490diploma in [discipline] and it is a full of programming uh prerequisite for this course is of  
7491course you have to speak good English uh because all the teachers or more majority of the  
7492teachers are native Irish and also uhhh you have to be good in calculations like  
7493mathematics and a little bit of programming so [long pause] I thought that [pause] I have  
7494those prerequisite and um then it'll be better or it will be great for my future carrier if I  
7495pursue this course

7496R: Okay and so are you doing any research along with the modules or is it just module  
7497based

7498Kevin: it is just module based so research will come as final project so at the end time I'm  
7499the middle of this program

7500R: okay alright so alright and that research that you'll have to do like what's the length of it  
7501what do you know the details of this or not

7502Kevin: yet I do not know the details but what I can understand is it should be uh since this  
7503is [discipline] so it would be focused on the numbers from different dimensions ummm  
7504[pause] well for example I can predict or I can work on what could be the housing price in  
7505the next five years or something like that just uhhh you can I can say that predictive  
7506modeling

7507R: okay and so can you tell me the general structure of your lectures and modules so what  
7508happens inside of the class is it mainly a professor with the PowerPoint is it group work is  
7509it on line is it how does it work

7510Kevin: uhh well teacher is giving the instruction on the [pause] PowerPoint and then  
7511ummm then practical in class so so that you don't get stuck when you [pause] uh work on  
7512the CA I mean umm homework or you don't get stuck on the final assignment or  
7513something like that so it is kind of interactive and if you don't understand of course you can  
7514unlock your teacher and teacher'll always explains

7515R: and can you tell me more about the assignments what kind of assignments and exams do  
7516you have

7517Kevin: for example uhh I can I can take an example from my previous assignment that I  
7518had it was on [subject] so teacher gave us uhhh two parts in it one is 80% one is 20% so  
751980% is the technical side [pause] how you build up a database and how do you query the  
7520data whatever you need it [pause] and the 20% was just writing how you execute the  
7521comments let's say [pause] if I want to get this uhh amount of students from this college in  
7522this year then what I have to write down something like that so this is the kind of  
7523instruction how I execute the uhh technical part

7524R: alright so as a combination of practice and writing

7525Kevin: yeah yeah

7526R: Alright perfect and um how would you evaluate your current academic success so are  
7527you doing well are you struggling in the middle do you not know

7528Kevin: well uhh since I'm working as a full-time [pause] uhh employee [pause] and after  
7529the work actually it is really challenging to focus on the [topic] courses so I'm not saying  
7530that I'm struggling that I don't know anything I know of course but [pause] I have really  
7531tired mind to focus on so this if if if you want to say that this is kind of area what I should  
7532say okay this is the area that I am just kind of uhhh [pause] challeng- I sees myself this  
7533challenging that I have to focus more to get it done something like that

7534R: Okay and how do you professors assess academic success like what are they looking for  
7535when they're grading

7536Kevin: [pause] uhh this sort of actually a lot of criteria uhh and based on that they are uhh  
7537[pause] giving the points to the students or grading the paper and [pause] it is diff- differ-  
7538uhh I mean how can I say um the all teachers are unique so all of them have  
7539their own approaches

7540R: and so do they communicate their expectations and the criteria before you start  
7541the assignment or after the assignment or

7542Kevin: yes they do explain and of course um there are a lot of questions from the students  
7543as well like how can I do this [pause] I don't have time or [pause] this is really good tight  
7544to submit and teacher said that okay we can extend it

7545R: Okay so they're quiet flexible

7546Kevin: yeah [pause] well uh teacher know that this program is actually aimed for the  
7547[pause] for the employees [pause] so all of the students are employees so teacher already  
7548know that

7549R: So everyone's working full time and studying full time

7550Kevin: Yeah yeah yeah yeah

7551R: And can you give me some examples of what kinds of expectations they have so what  
7552um what are some examples of the grading criteria

7553Kevin: [pause] uhhh [pause] actually I should say this is varies from course to course or  
7554from teachers to teacher and uhhh [long pause] this is depending on the technical side  
7555rating part and also there are some courses that uhh mmm assignments are based on 100%  
7556uhhh not 100% let's say 50% of the uhh assignment uhh you have to submit uhh some  
7557questions written questions something like that so actually it is very varying from teacher  
7558to teacher

7559R: alright and so um I say in general what do students need in order to succeed at  
7560[institution 4]

7561Kevin: [pause] uhh there are several uhh variables I should say uhh the teacher I have seen  
7562that one teacher I can say that one teacher is giving the CA at the very end of the course  
7563and give just only a few uhh few days to submit it [pause] but on the other hand he or she  
7564should understand that all the students here are employee [pause] they have their um full-  
7565time job they have their family they have their personal time as well [pause] so I should  
7566say teacher have to be teachers have to be flexible [pause] uhh one teacher say that ok if  
7567you submit after one week of the exam I don't mind there is no deadline and there is  
7568another teacher say that like okay there is a deadline if you miss it two points minus each  
7569day [long pause] sooo [pause] [click] >education should be flexible< not that strict so that  
7570you feel comfortable to submit it and [pause] when you say that okay this is so hard I  
7571cannot submit it within time I'll not do it [pause] I can bring an example from [Country]  
7572because I studied in [Country] both of my bachelor and master's degree and I saw that how  
7573flexible teachers were there so it doesn't mean that you can submit you that assignment  
7574after the deadline of course you have to submit it within the dead- deadline uhh given  
7575deadline but teachers were really flexible because they [pause] they give the assignment at  
7576the at the very beginning of the lecture so that you have time three months' time to or one  
7577and a half or two months' time to work on properly and umm yeah something like this so  
7578what I see that if I compare [Country] to Ireland [Country] [long pause] [Country] is more  
7579uhh flexible about these issues but Ireland I do not see that much flexible in everyone and  
7580of course infrastructure I am not saying every institution in Ireland but I can say about the  
7581[institution 4] that I am studying right now and [pause] their computer system actually  
7582sucks frankly speaking because they are using the cheaper one and you know if you buy  
7583something cheaper uhh for cheaper price you will get the quality like that so yeah [long  
7584pause] so this is also one thing that they have to develop

7585R: right and um so how much of a factor does language play in academic success

7586Kevin: of course it's a vital uhhh a vital issue language I can give my example when I  
7587started my bachelor degree in [Country] [pause] for the first semester it was really  
7588challenging because my teachers were native English Native American so it was not that  
7589easy to capture the umm the language umm or the instruction of the lecture though I had  
7590IELTS 6 band score but still it didn't help [pause] but after one semester it definitely  
7591helped me to [pause] understand in the the following semesters so it went fine so I should  
7592say the environment is actually a good factor [pause] I mean whether you can be a @bad or  
7593you @can @get @good yeah

7594R: Right and um so what other factors play in academic success so you've said the  
7595environments and this could be things outside of university inside etc.

7596Kevin: [long pause] uhhh @ [long pause] I should say the flexibility I should I should  
7597focus on flexibility it doesn't necessarily mean that okay uh uhhmm you can submit your  
7598assignment after the deadline no [pause] it's of course everything has to be emm predefined  
7599when to submit and of course it has to be given at the beginning of the lecture [pause] so I  
7600should say the word the flexibility is the most important thing to do the development or for  
7601the success

7602R: Okay did you have any linguistic or academic preparation before studying in [institution  
76034] so you've mentioned IELTS you did umm you've done your bachelor's and master's in  
7604English right? yeah so did you have any sort of preparation before going to [institution 4]  
7605beyond that

7606Kevin: No for the language um I didn't have any preparation after my master's degree for  
7607[institution 4] uhhh why why I didn't type this because I have been working in international  
7608businesses like [institution 4] so [long pause] so these institutions are well English is the  
7609main language doesn't matter where you work but so that's the reason that I I didn't need  
7610any English

7611R: okay and then did um you have to submit a new IELTS to [institution 4]

7612Kevin: no [pause] because they uh can easily see that my instruction uhh of the instruction  
7613of my master's degree was in English so

7614R: so they waved it

7615Kevin: yes yeah

7616R: okay but you were mentioning that in your bachelors uh that you had to take IELTS for  
7617that and that it didn't prepare you for the first term and can you express any other feelings  
7618about the standardized exams

7619Kevin: no actually uh it was not a prerequisite but I I did it by myself it was not required  
7620by the degree program uhh so [pause] but uhh still when I I took that I had six band score

7621and I started the lecture but still I thought that it was not good enough so one thing could  
7622be uhhh uhhh practice I I'm not saying that uhhh [pause] that this is the easy way to learn  
7623or it will accelerate your language skills no is as all over the environment that you were in  
7624R: Okay alright and so what type of preparation should international students take before  
7625going into Irish higher education  
7626Kevin: uhh [pause] from the students perspective I should say of course language is one  
7627thing that otherwise they they they would not able to carry out their ummm [pause]  
7628homeworks in the school because Ireland is English-speaking country so they have to be  
7629well prepared about the English that is what I can say after the financial issues then another  
7630thing that they have to focus on but this is before they come to the Ireland but once they  
7631are uh in Ireland there are some [pause] something some rules some barriers that they  
7632cannot umm [pause] avoid which is kind of bureaucracy I should say so actually it's not  
7633necessarily the students that can avoi- that can remove the barriers but also the Irish  
7634government should focus on this because I lived in [Country] and I see how flexible is this  
7635living there as a student as students we had to pay a very little amount of uh [pause] this  
7636application fee every year though [pause] it is also every year here in Ireland but the thing  
7637is they are paying huge amount of money and they're taking a long time to issue the  
7638residence permit here and of course another uh important issue is of course government of  
7639Ireland has to focus on this as well that uh housing is really bad for the students it is very  
7640expensive the communication is not in good system either so because of the  
7641communication I should say uh that housing is very expensive because you cannot go  
7642anywhere whoever wherever you want for example there are two luas line here which is  
7643tram I should say one is a green one is red and you cannot get into the uhh uh green line  
7644with the red ticket and vice versa >which really< doesn't make any sense so in [Country]  
7645when I lived there I used one card for bus tram train and uh uh [pause] all I mean all kinds  
7646of transportation one card was enough doesn't matter it didn't read in or if there is no  
7647classification this is [travel system] that's it you can go anywhere whenever you return the  
7648reason is at the same time you cannot travel with the luas uh both of the green line and red  
7649line you should go or take one line right? so this is also one thing the government has to  
7650focus to make it comfortable for the international students and of course they are coming  
7651from the other country the weather food people culture everything is different [pause] so if  
7652you think they know they will sort it out actually so you mean that you are not making  
7653your reputation good personally I will not recommend anyone to come to Ireland because it  
7654sucks

7655R: yeah alright and so if you could give advice to faculty so professors in dealing with  
7656international students what would that advice be

7657Kevin: uh the advice would be to uh take the feedback from the international students from  
7658every perspective well uh when I completed some um courses in [institution 4] I got the  
7659uhh [pause] survey [pause] which they say how the teacher has the quality of the teaching  
7660these and that blah blah blah but they never asked for anything else what could be done  
7661better [long pause] they have the some um MCQ type questions you just click click click  
7662and submit that's it this is what it should not be you cannot develop anything I'm not  
7663talking about the universities of course the immigration as well uh they immigration as  
7664well they have to take the feedback from the past applicants that to develop the situation so  
7665this is wanted by the student and the administration should get feedback and they should  
7666give the free space for the students what is going wrong [pause] what is not going right  
7667something like that so that they can develop the situation >of course< it is depending on  
7668them whether they are able or they are interested to solve the situation or not because I I  
7669did I did not see that kind of mindset here

7670R: and if you could give advice too future students who are coming to Ireland and future  
7671international students what advice would that be

7672Kevin: I would say that uhhh just ummm well nowadays everyone almost everyone has the  
7673internet Facebook and email account so [pause] first step I should be search on the Google  
7674how many population are there in that town because of course Ireland is English-speaking  
7675country you're uhh [pause] I mean the jobs are easy [pause] easy here in Ireland to get uhh  
7676whether in non-English speaking countries like I lived in [Country] so it was not easy that  
7677easy so in terms of bring language they're kind of exempted but still they have to  
7678understand what are the circumstances what is the living cost living because the most  
7679important thing one distance is coming from the Africa Asia [pause] but I don't know about  
7680Europe I think umm um most of the European students are subsidized by the by  
7681their own government so I think it's not that problem for them

7682R: all right and are you aware of any support that [institution 4] gives to international  
7683students and that could be financial linguistic academic etc.

7684Kevin: I think there are some supports in in [institution 4] but uh mmm I still I should say  
7685this bureaucratic because I uhh send an email for one of my uhh umm course uhh grade I  
7686said that hey this is what happened and then they just replied that okay you can navigate  
7687the result from this page and go to top right whatever that was not my question actually  
7688[pause] so [pause] and then I say that okay I asked again to another person and he or she  
7689said that [pause] result already published so interestingly the thing is only two students set

7690for that exam I got my result and I asked all of the student did you get your result [pause]  
 7691that students I did no I didn't get any results so what is going on actually no one knows so  
 7692this kind of uhhh bureaucracy should be removed it has it has to be transparent I think this  
 7693is not they are not that transparent they are just kind of [pause] that were more active  
 7694R: okay all right I'm and so that's kind of all the questions that I have for you but is there  
 7695anything that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask  
 7696Kevin: [long pause] ummm [pause] I don't know what kind of uhh uhh support exactly the  
 7697universities or institutions are providing in Ireland but of course they have to understand  
 7698about the international students' perspective because Ireland is could be totally different  
 7699who are coming especially from Asia and Africa so they have to provide some support  
 7700well >that is what I felt< when I came to Ireland for a study so it was not easy to uhhh uhh  
 7701emm integrate with the system so that too I think they have to take more integration  
 7702[pause] policy and the thing is if the immigration system is not good [pause] it doesn't help  
 7703actually [pause] and I have heard a lot of students [pause] sorry so a lot of students moved  
 7704out from Ireland because the immigration didn't allow me to stay they started here they  
 7705work part time based [pause] they contributed to the economy they are not criminal [pause]  
 7706but for the immigration [pause] the went back [pause] to their own country so the thing is  
 7707Ireland lost a potential employee  
 7708R: Right and is there anything else that you would like to express or to say  
 7709Kevin: [long pause] uhh I would say again that the flexibility is the important thing that the  
 7710both of the eh uh [pause] administration and professors should focus on the students not  
 7711not harsh on the students >well they are not harsh I should say< but they have to be  
 7712more understanding to the students uh issues yeah something like that  
 7713R: Alright brilliant thank you

7714

7715

**Kristina**

7716

7717R: okay alright so um this most of the questions are going to be in relation to the master's  
 7718so if you think back yeah to everything in the master's program um what would you say  
 7719your strengths are academically like what are you good at  
 7720Kristina: um well um for the speaking I think is easier and um I to be honest I a bit strong  
 7721upon my writing  
 7722R: okay and um what would your difficulties be then  
 7723Kristina: well another good thing is my re- for reading is good thing I think I could say eh  
 7724in my writing a difficulties eh it is like ehm I have to know more vocabularies and ehm the

7725orders from the some word because it has like exceptions and these type of things and this

7726is my weakest point I think

7727R: mm-hmm so vocabulary

7728Kristina: yeah and then also the grammar structure yeah

7729R: mm-hmm okay under vocabulary would it be more about the context or would it be

7730having a wide range of vocabulary

7731Kristina: both

7732R: both

7733Kristina: yeah both yeah yeah I try to learn more words and this th- but sometimes you

7734know if you don't practice a language that it will forget it

7735R: mm-hmm yeah okay and thinking of your modules um what did you need to do for your

7736modules both inside and outside of the class

7737Kristina: ehm I have to do plenty of reading and ehm for the new words I have to look up

7738and um search for the meaning and try to learn them yeah and it was a good help because it

7739makes me more easy to for understanding um for my writing for speaking also uh for

7740thinking I use phrase from the vocabulary

7741R: mm-hmm and so mainly you had to read for your modules

7742Kristina: eh

7743R: or what else like what was the work required from the modules

7744Kristina: oh reading and also thinking @ and listening yeah yeah

7745R: mm-hmm yeah okay and um as a research student yeah what did you have to do

7746Kristina: I have to research eh new books and new chapters related to the topic that I was

7747doing um @ as you know there is plenty of reading plenty of reading yeah I had to analyze

7748also there and got a lot informations and uh see that uh what the point what w- what I was

7749in agree with such with some researchers #own and with some researchers what I wasn't

7750agree so I had to take a decision in other words yeah

7751R: okay and so for the dissertation did you do data collection or was it more of a literature-

7752based dissertation

7753Kristina: both yeah both yes I had to do plenty of research and all of that yeah

7754R: can you explain that in detail like what did you need to do kind of step by step for your

7755dissertation

7756Kristina: mm well first of all I has to the um literature review and then hand it into the

7757supervisor had to analyze to to see them from my point of view and they um address me

7758what point what was the weakest point and I would point there for the dissertation and then



7759also I had to do plenty research and reading and once I had analyze and um I have to do my  
7760comments about that point of about of what I was reading there you know

7761R: mm-hmm and did you find when you would go to the supervisor and they would give  
7762feedback what was that like what was what was the general feedback how did you kind of  
7763perceive the feedback and apply it

7764Kristina: well eh to be honest that I didn't have an appointment in person face to face with  
7765my supervisor just was through email because she was very busy yeah and I la- I saw I had  
7766a new supervisor for the last three weeks and um yes he was different person I had to face  
7767to him and but I had to restructure my whole assignment the whole dissertation

7768R: oh

7769Kristina: yes @@@ was nice @@@

7770R: okay so you had to restructure //everything

7771Kristina: yes his point of view| yeah because my another supervisor umm she left early so  
7772but I couldn't have a meeting with her yeah it was a bit difficult to be honest because I  
7773couldn't um show my point of view or get any feedback from her just through email it is  
7774not easy to get um feedback yeah

7775R: yeah and when you made the switch from supervisors how did that feel what was that  
7776process like

7777Kristina: uhh I really it was very it was hard for me because the new supervisor had  
7778different point of view so he told me I you have to restructure your whole dissertation but  
7779he was very kind person that he helped me that you have to do that he point me out things  
7780that he has to take out what I have to include and he was meeting me every week for the  
7781last three weeks so it was very nice a good help really yeah it was great to hear his point of  
7782view he advice and yeah yeah yeah

7783R: okay so while it was hard that you had to restructure everything you had guidance

7784Kristina: yes exactly yeah he did that yes because it was three weeks just that so I had to  
7785restructure the whole dissertation

7786R: mm-hmm okay great and I'm so going kind of back to the the lectures um what would  
7787happen inside of the classroom of the lectures was it more the professor giving a lecture  
7788with the PowerPoint was a group discussion things like that

7789Kristina: I I can say that it was uh great because it was a mix so that was um the lecturer  
7790was giving the class on the blackboard that with a PowerPoint and they were also make us  
7791uh to work in groups which is great yeah because we could share our point of view or ideas  
7792or agreements or disagreements you know and discuss that yeah interesting yeah

7793R: okay and what was the form of assessment for your modules

7794Kristina: ehm the form of assessment was mm more uh um it was for writing ass-  
7795assignments writing assignment yeah yeah ah yes and once it was uh yes and we had one  
7796module that we have to visit a language school and then we had to write a report yeah  
7797R: okay yeah and what was the process like when you had to write assignment  
7798Kristina: hm @@ well um it was a lot of work @@ I'm sure of that @ because I had to  
7799select all that eh I had to select the books uh the uhm the researchers and yeah and then I  
7800have to read again and I have to well while I was uh reading I had to keep my notes and  
7801then I have to come back and I had to write assignments and highlight the important point  
7802R: and what did you feel that your professors expected from you so how did they assess  
7803academic success  
7804Kristina: oh that's a good question actually um [pause] I think t- were very helpful and the  
7805expect us that all students should do proper research we had to investigate and we had to  
7806have a full knowledge for the subject that what we were doing for the module I'd say that  
7807and this is the way of making sure that each one of us we had to have knowledge about that  
7808and a lot of knowledge for with more researches #as #they #want #lots of um reference for  
7809#about #the #topics yeah  
7810R: and did they communicate those expectations during the module uh did they give you  
7811guidelines etc.  
7812Kristina: yes they were actually yeah um on the they time that we had the lessons they  
7813were trying to communicate about the topics and to there was a lot of plenty of reading that  
7814we had to do and also in the booklet that we got from the master I think we got plenty of  
7815reference for the books and this this was well structured this way I could say that yeah  
7816R: okay yeah and did you feel that those guidelines were helpful um like did they help  
7817guide you that they were they clearly written  
7818Kristina: yes absolutely yeah it was a big help because when you know already before we  
7819start of course you know what are you going through yeah and what topics are you going  
7820to touching each module yeah  
7821R: okay yeah yeah and during the master's I'm I know this is it was what three years ago  
7822now um so how did you feel that you were doing academically during the masters  
7823Kristina: wow @@ uh well [pause] I was doing good I could say that um I was um putting  
7824all my effort that I could do it but once again I could I must say that I always I feel like that  
7825language barrier it was always there it is not um a j- I can ask I can communicate in  
7826English language about highly academically to be honest it for me it is not easy I struggled  
7827at sometimes yeah  
7828R: yeah could you describe that struggle a bit more

7829Kristina: ehm it is well that the problem it is that uh I don't not I don't use that words often  
7830so when I am going it was my first time I did a master so I when use eh I had to get used to  
7831new words there you know it is why I think I find a little bit difficult there yeah this is  
7832more accommodated to a new words um plus the new environment everything that is  
7833influencing that yeah in the beginning yeah

7834R: yeah and can you expand you said also adjusting to the new environment so what other  
7835factors were influencing your academic success

7836Kristina: ehm well it was that um I did encouragement from the super- supervisor from the  
7837lecturers they were well prepared professors that um that I really this make you more um  
7838interesting to the research in the each each modules

7839R: and so you've touched on this a bit but I'm how much is a factor do you think language  
7840plays in academic success so how important is language to doing well academically  
7841language

7842Kristina: language do you mean

7843R: language like English

7844Kristina: ohhh okay @ um I think it is very it is important because it is the main language  
7845that you have to do well for the rest of the time that you had to do your studies that if you  
7846don't have a language you can't do it or you will just you will struggle there

7847R: yeah and what other factors would impact academic success and that can be inside of  
7848[institution 1] and outside of [institution 1]

7849Kristina: yeah well inside the [institution 1] well [pause] well I could from my friend so I  
7850could see there was a reference that um they were saying for that Chinese girls that were  
7851coming to the le- um the master here in [institution 1] they were saying that they were very  
7852good grammatically but they couldn't understand while the the lecturers when they were  
7853speaking because they 'cause it was a bit fast for them so the adjustment I think to the new  
7854environmental to the new uh social context it was one of them there and uh well from  
7855outside could you repeat again the question please

7856R: yeah um what other factors impact academic success

7857Kristina: okay yes uh well in my case I could say that um I had to work also until  
7858sometime I had to come for I have to do the master yes I think that was a limitation of time  
7859also to do all things and there that yes

7860R: yeah and were you working full-time

7861Kristina: no part-time

7862R: part-time

7863Kristina: part-time I was working there

7864R: and were you working in the same city

7865Kristina: oh no I was working that time in [city]

7866R: okay so you are also commuting back and forth

7867Kristina: yes yeah ah yes yeah the commuting is also another point there yeah it takes time

7868that I always I had to be like two hours before because I uh take a train and then to come to

7869the bus yeah yeah

7870R: okay and how did you find that how did you balance all of that

7871Kristina: @@@ well eh to be honest in the first three weeks it was hard but then I got used

7872to that yeah I got yeah I think went into the routine and then that's fine now I am doing this

7873it's good it's not too yeah yeah yeah yeah @@

7874R: and so in general yeah what do students need to succeed at [institution 1]

7875Kristina: well [pause] I think they need to be committed [pause] to study um if they have

7876any doubt they got to look for help because they they can present different types of issues

7877like ehm missing home their families or this type of things that I'm telling from my exp-

7878experience because I am from a different country yes it can influence a lot of that and you

7879have uh a problem a family problem something it will impact emotionally a lot and then

7880you ca- can't study I feel they should have that um student had to be like a relax about life

7881to be #unt supports yeah

7882R: yeah so they need support they need to be able to know where to go

7883Kristina: absolutely yeah yes yeah in advance they have to know what they're going

7884through before they start because otherwise it just they go to such a course and make a uh

7885shock and then probably they will stop doing but once I think we know that whole

7886structure that it's like you know already your master and know what you're going through

7887is and whatever comes you will would take easily that I think

7888R: mm-hmm yeah and so speaking of supports um were you aware of any support I given

7889to students especially international students in [institution 1]

7890Kristina: ehm yes well I did ehm I think it was uh four weeks ehm English course here

7891before I start the uh master's yes

7892R: okay yeah yeah so there is English support it was there any other general support

7893Kristina: ehm yes I yes I felt uh more su- uh it was a center for uh looking for the supports

7894but to be honest I didn't acknowledge to them but yes I had a they were there are lot of

7895people and it's a smaller organization they can support you there yes but that to be honest I

7896don't have the information about that yeah

7897R: okay alright I'm so going towards your preparation um before coming to [institution 1]

7898hmm so you just mentioned that you took a four week course before coming um here at

7899[institution 1] and then also before we started the interview you were saying that you did a  
7900pre-master's course before coming um so how did you feel about this preparation

7901Kristina: about English from course that I did

7902R: yeah the courses you did the pre-masters and the four weeks course how did you feel  
7903about it

7904Kristina: ohh well when I did a pre master it was a difficult there because it was the first  
7905time that I had to eh be a using the high language the high structures it was it was hard  
7906yeah and then when I did the the Masters um four weeks course uh yes it was it was good  
7907so yes yeah it help you that you connect to that what you're you're coming that to to go to  
7908uh college again and it's a very good course for uh the international students yeah and  
7909you're able to meet few people there before you are going to your classroom there because  
7910I remember that and I did the course and then we met with three girls in the classroom  
7911there yeah yeah it's interesting

7912R: yeah and so did you feel that the the preparation adequately prepared you for the  
7913studies and [institution 1]

7914Kristina: ehm [pause] well I I think it is just well I think so yes uh because was um well I  
7915could say that it depends that you know because was a it was different students they are  
7916going for different fields so normally that we got here was general English that um  
7917learning vocabulary and um um show us how to write an assignment so that it's so yeah

7918R: so it did help was there anything that you felt could be improved

7919Kristina: ehm [pause] yes uh I could say yes because it help us how to write the structure  
7920from assignment and and to have a base of what the structure [institution 1] was looking  
7921that um for expectations for the students it was a advice they could give us on advice on  
7922how we have to write our assignment and the marks for the college what about we are  
7923going to pass or not pass yeah

7924R: yeah so it would it would have been good if they had presented that kind of information  
7925during the summer

7926Kristina: no they did

7927R: they did okay yeah what could they do better

7928Kristina: uhh okay [pause] well we were working in groups together and doing discussions  
7929there yes yeah yes work I think so it is good work groups and contribute each one of ours  
7930for the topic we had to do that

7931R: okay so you were working in groups

7932Kristina: yes yeah

7933R: yeah so what did they not do that they should have done

7934 Kristina: okay @

7935 R: because you've done a master's

7936 Kristina: yeah

7937 R: and so how could the summer program improve okay

7938 Kristina: oh ok yeah @@ well ehm I think it was too short time I think that time it was that

7939 because we had I think at the time we started I think at nine and then yes we finish at two

7940 or three kind of that yeah it was short time I think

7941 R: okay so more hours

7942 Kristina: more yeah I think so yeah okay so @@ depends on the perspective of each

7943 person but um probably that just more ehm more tech- more information about the

7944 University and the help that they can provide maybe that maybe that yes I think so yeah

7945 R: yeah and um so speaking of the entry assessment you also mentioned that you had taken

7946 the IELTS before yeah um do you remember your experience with IELTS

7947 Kristina: mm yes I did twice three times I think @@@

7948 R: okay can you describe that

7949 Kristina: well um it was hard for me because when I came from home that I study English

7950 for two years in a school a private school but uh it was a different reality when I came here

7951 because I couldn't interact in the language and uh it took me a while to get into the

7952 language but uh when I decided to take the IELTS I didn't think it would be very hard it

7953 would be hard so the first time that I took just I without uh prepare myself just to try it so

7954 we have the scores there so I didn't succeed so I think I had knowledge what I had to study

7955 to improve and that and the second time I took a course here in [language school] I think so

7956 I took the call for three months and they were guiding us in the for the um exam but uh it

7957 was not enough to be honest that because normally it is just it was like uh help us to

7958 increase of the vocabulary is but it this was not enough for exam because uh when you

7959 going through the exam it's more analytical thing that you have to do it and you got to have

7960 you um you have to write very fast because you have to write against the time and for your

7961 listening also that this you don't have a chance sometimes it is so fast yeah yeah yeah I

7962 remember did three times I remember like in the second time got five the five point five

7963 and then I was able to deliver the master yeah

7964 R: so why did you decide to do a pre-masters instead of studying more English and going

7965 straight into the masters

7966 Kristina: was a time when I got to [city] that they told me that I had to do the pre-master

7967 before I do the master I was told that I was advised that

7968 R: mm-hmm from [institution 1] or from a different University

7969Kristina: it was in [institution 2] yeah yeah they told me that was I was just beginner here I  
7970didn't have too much information at time there and um they told me that so it's also a bit  
7971shy when you're a beginner and so that I had to study that or were people were fluent in the  
7972language and just you are like you feel like a bit you won't be able to do that work to study  
7973yeah wh- actually was hard when I went to college yeah @ but it was fine after that then I  
7974think so that you adjust to that and it's fine yeah

7975R: yeah so then you took the pre-masters there and what was that like

7976Kristina: oh wow the pre master it was like it was like get the preparing for the IELTS  
7977again but I ex- except it was one subject was remember it was a European cinema that we  
7978had to watch movies and then we had to write uh three assignments yeah it was interesting  
7979subject because because it was it focusing at the beginning of the cinema from France Italy  
7980America and another it was all cinema it was very it was interesting to be honest but uh at  
7981the end we had to write uh assignments there

7982R: yeah so it was dual it prepared you for the IELTS or IELTS type test and then you also  
7983took a content course

7984Kristina: yeah yeah exactly that yeah because it was more about eh hh let me remember  
7985sorry that it was like it more into English that for reading or filling out the gaps of the  
7986books and explain things like that yeah

7987R: okay yeah and then did you go on to a master's program at that University

7988Kristina: no no

7989R: that's when you came to [institution 1] that

7990Kristina: yeah well I came to [institution 1] after maybe seven years eight years a good  
7991while after that

7992R: yeah so what made you decide not to start after the pre-masters

7993Kristina: well ehm economically because I had to work to get money to pay for that fees  
7994there yeah because I support myself yeah yeah yeah so that was it yeah

7995R: okay and do you feel that the pre-masters did a good job preparing you for your  
7996eventual studies in the future

7997Kristina: yes actually yes it was ehm it makes me more uh interested in more do research  
7998about that career that I w- I am following yes

7999R: okay alright brilliant good um okay let's see what type of preparation do you think  
8000international students should do before coming to [institution 1]

8001Kristina: and you mean in the home so once they come when they arrive in the country

8002R: uhm both all @

8003Kristina: @ okay I think so that um they have to study for the language and um research  
8004about the society they are going to go to study for maybe one year or three one or four year  
8005what how many years they have to study they have to research about that and to be ready  
8006that you know to get adjusted to the new environment there in other words how to be-  
8007prepare emotionally there yeah and once they arrived to Ireland um I think that it's a good  
8008help I come- some of them come could come to the English uh lessons that this may help  
8009that to get back to college I think yeah yeah um probably they have to research about what  
8010the un- university can offer for international students you know yeah

8011R: and what do you wish that you had known before coming to [institution 1]

8012Kristina: ummm well @ it's a good question [pause] hmm I think so I knew already before  
8013I came to [institution 1] or I knew what I was going through there yeah yeah

8014R: yeah and do you feel that you knew that because you had done study in Ireland before  
8015and you had been living here or was it because you had researched a lot about [institution  
80161]

8017Kristina: I think so uh a bit of the things I because I had been studying here already I did a  
8018pre master's already and as I tell you I had to write a few short assignments over there in  
8019[institution 2] and I um did also a research before coming to the College and for it on- one  
8020of the reason that I found out about our English course before come back to all the lessons  
8021yeah

8022R: okay and so what advice would you give to future students or students who are looking  
8023to come to [institution 1]

8024Kristina: hm well the advice I could say that [pause] they have to learn the language well  
8025this is very important you know and prepare them self emotionally which is a good thing  
8026because nice people in Ireland @@@ yes and uh be committed to study yes I think they  
8027will enjoy the course what's or whatever they are what study they are going to choose there

8028R: and do you have any specific tips for what to focus on in the language and also how to  
8029prepare themselves emotionally

8030Kristina: oh [long pause] not really no @ sorry no @@

8031R: so then if you give advice to faculty so to professors in supporting international students  
8032what would that be

8033Kristina: I think that they should understand a little bit more than that uh but more than I  
8034think and uh probably they to be honest I I haven't been very close to the lecturers there  
8035but prob- I am sure that if the international students will they will ask for help they will do  
8036it I think I am sure because they are very helpful people to be honest yeah yeah



8037R: yeah and what advice would you have to [institution 1] in better supporting international  
8038students

8039Kristina: I think they have um that for #each um things so that I'm not too informed about  
8040all the courses that they are offering on I I am sure because I have had a few my friends  
8041they have the were um join to few groups I think so they have a lot of things I think that to  
8042be honest the organizations I just thought it is not I am not interested it is because because  
8043of that time I haven't been just looking into more activity they were doing that but I am  
8044sure they are offering a lot of things there yeah

8045R: yeah you just personally didn't have the time because you were commuting and working

8046Kristina: yeah absolutely yeah yes I did also here the for the deaf languages I did also that  
8047and I found one of them before they started the year they have like a little tents there so I  
8048did also for there yes there were a lot of things that were offered in there yeah yeah I think  
8049it's my lack of my short time it's didn't make me to research opportunities there yeah

8050R: yeah okay and if you could give advice to organizations who are developing summer  
8051programs for international students what would that advice be

8052Kristina: well it would be that um well to make mm feel international uh students are  
8053welcome to Ireland and to make to work together and um ask if they need support yeah

8054R: mm-hmm great and alright so those are the questions I have for you but are there any  
8055questions that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask

8056Kristina: hm well hm I think that your questionnaire is full it's a good questions I think that  
8057it clear

8058R: um is there anything else that you would like to express

8059Kristina: not really it's it's fine that yes yeah

8060R: I actually have another question that I just thought of um since it's rather unique that I'm  
8061interviewing someone that finished their studies um how do you feel looking back on your  
8062studies now like when you look back on your studies how do you feel

8063Kristina: oh um do you mean that before [institution 1] or before [institution 2] or when  
8064how long ago

8065R: um well I'd say [institution 1] so like when you look back on your time and [institution  
80661] yeah how do you feel

8067Kristina: yeah how do I feel that I did a good achievement @@@ yeah yeah it was a hard  
8068work but worth it in the end yeah

8069R: so hard work but worth it

8070Kristina: yes exactly yeah yeah yeah I really enjoyed the course like that yeah yeah yeah  
8071it's interesting @

8072R: and so you're still in the field of what you studied you're still you're still now you're  
8073working in that field

8074Kristina: yeah yeah yeah

8075R: um how did the course help you

8076Kristina: yes actually it help me more to local uh opportunities? for work because I um I  
8077finished the university as a [language] teacher and for literature in [country] so I came here  
8078I was always focused on teaching [language] for in schools like I did in [country] I was  
8079thinking of that but it was different when I came here so for the teaching council all I have  
8080to go through and yeah I am still in the process of that so to me to go into the for work in  
8081the public school public school it is not yet possible yeah because I have to I need to  
8082submit a lot of requirements yeah yeah so but um it's fine for the moment yeah yeah but I  
8083will see what's going on yeah

8084R: yeah but the master's helped you kind of achieve certain things

8085Kristina: yes

8086R: like a step closer to being able to work in the schools or

8087Kristina: yes yes yeah exactly that yes actually yes at um the master gave me the  
8088opportunity to do more research I want on what I had to do my work and approach for  
8089more fields in my the work also that #meet I speak like you @@@

8090R: thank you so much

8091

8092

**Laura**

8093

8094R: okay perfect okay so my first question for you is what would you consider to be your  
8095strengths academically

8096Laura: [exhale] good question I think I'm quite hardworking and I'm quite a fan of detailed  
8097work so like I think my strength is that I am also when I'm proofreading something for  
8098example I'd like look at like details and then find like the one missing comma or like  
8099something like that's quiet yeah one of my strengths

8100R: okay and what would you consider to be your weaknesses academically

8101Laura: hmmm [long pause] sometimes my time management? as I'm so much into details  
8102kind of like losing myself into details and then I'm like [pause] losing time for like the  
8103main main thing

8104R: okay and what would you consider to be your strengths in terms of English

8105Laura: [pause] hmm I'm quite confident using it this so like when I was speaking I'm not  
8106like thinking too much of words and stuff like I have a lot of practice so I'm just yeah I feel

8107quite like normal speaking it's not like with other languages I learned but English is very  
8108[pause] kind of like flowing naturally

8109R: okay and do you think that that's um you said it compared to other languages that you've  
8110learned is it because you've you're using English a lot is it because you've learned it for a  
8111long time or why do you think there's such a difference between using English and other  
8112languages that you've learned

8113Laura: hmm I think combination of both like that's the language I learned the longest so  
8114I'm learning English like I started learning English [pause] almost 15 years ago? round  
8115about and I just in everyday life like in [country] like hearing English songs and sometimes  
8116watch English movies it's very [pause] around you and I also travel a lot and then like  
8117when I travel to like I don't know Spain I don't speak Spanish so then I could make it in  
8118English with other people and like of course here also it's English every day the second  
8119explanation of I've learned it since a long time and I use it the most of all the languages I  
8120learned

8121R: okay cool and what would you say that your weaknesses or difficulties in terms of  
8122English is

8123Laura: I'm thinking to [language] sometimes so sometimes I say sentences or words that  
8124would make sense in [language] but don't make sense in English because it took me like  
8125three years to figure out that kettle is called kettle and not water cooker which would be  
8126like the [language] way of calling it a kettle and then I'm like oh this make totally sense  
8127then others are like no that's just wrong like

8128R: okay @ so it's just kind of like little things where it's almost a translation from  
8129[language] or just a [language] way of saying something

8130Laura: mm yeah it's mostly translating something from [language] and then I guess I  
8131started learning here at [institution 1] of course then I'm like oh I don't know this very  
8132academic words and stuff like that um I mean you can catch up with that and like the more  
8133papers and essays you write the better it also gets

8134R: okay so you're feeling more comfortable with that

8135Laura: yeah

8136R: and how long have you been here

8137Laura: umm sinceee August

8138R: okay are you sorry are you doing a masters or Erasmus

8139Laura: I'm doing the full master program here at the [discipline] school and there's only  
8140one year so it's all very squeezed but it's like full English of course

8141R: mm-hmm right and so can you describe to me the modules that you're doing and the  
8142work that's required for the modules

8143Laura: okay so I'm doing the [discipline] program and we have six modules um all from  
8144like [module topic] up to [module topic] and each module has usually two assignments as  
8145one individual and one group project and the individual ones are mostly either essays or  
8146also um reflective writings which was very new to me here because we don't do this kind  
8147of thing in [country] and the group projects are either presentations or also kind of essay  
8148but I mean kind of put the parts together

8149R: mm-hmm okay and are you expected to do a lot of reading outside of class a lot of  
8150preparation for the actual lecture or is it more just focused on the assessment

8151Laura: mmm well I expected a lot of reading but not as much like I knew it's a Master's  
8152program and as a master you have to like read a lot but then some lecturers just gave us a  
8153whole book to read within a week or something like that so that's more than I expected um  
8154and also the group project took a lot of time cause it's always like we just got to know each  
8155other this semester so we had to gather around and like different cultures different people  
8156um so it just took a lot of time yeah I think the rest is like I mean they they warned us that  
8157the program is rigorous so @@

8158R: okay and and so the assessments the group projects and the individual assignments um  
8159what like what are you required to do do they give you the topic is it up to you to pick the  
8160topic is it something practical is it just go write an essay

8161Laura: it depends on the lecturer most of the time we can pick the topic we get a kind of  
8162like frame like choose a topic within that area but usually we're free to choose any topic  
8163within the area um and then also depending on lecturer someone give us very clear  
8164instruction so like okay write this many words and like the style and whatever and then  
8165other lectures are [pause] very free like for one lecture we could either do a TED talk or a  
8166website or an essay like whatever we kind of wanted to do um but usually get kind of a  
8167frame and you can move within that frame

8168R: okay and so do they give you the guidelines and the rubric before completing your  
8169assessment or is it something that you see afterwards

8170Laura: um they give us the guideline before umm but they also open to changes as we had  
8171so many assignments we also talked to some lecturers whether they can change their um  
8172guidelines and make it for example like push the deadline behind or make it fewer word  
8173count something like that but yeah we usually got it in the even in the very first lecture or  
8174like within the first days or weeks

8175R: okay and was there a lot of opportunity to ask questions and discuss the assessment if  
8176like about the guidelines and you had questions or anything like that

8177Laura: yeah yeah again depending on the lecturer but usually they're quite open for  
8178questions and you can either come to them after the class or just write an email and then  
8179ask them and then yeah they either give you like direct feedback within also a day and  
8180some others are very slow @ but usually they're very open for questions

8181R: okay cool and so inside of the classroom what happens is it mainly a lecture style where  
8182there's like a PowerPoint and the professor is lecturing is it group discussion class  
8183discussion

8184Laura: um like the average class or again depends on lecturer is um mainly the lecturer  
8185presents something but throughout the whole class we can ask questions and give our  
8186opinion um and then some lecturers even take an extra time at the end of the class and say  
8187okay now we have twenty minutes thirty minutes whatsoever time to discuss a certain topic  
8188but usually they kind of present us the topics and the findings and then throughout the class  
8189we can just give input what we think about it

8190R: okay um and so you're in a masters you'll have to do a dissertation do you know what's  
8191required of you in terms of the dissertation

8192Laura: um most of it yes um we just had a dissertation like information session two weeks  
8193ago um and also a dissertation is not completely new because we do dissertations in  
8194[country] as well even for the bachelor um and it is also very similar kind of the  
8195assignments like this is the word count and references and you can do literature view or  
8196interviews and whatever like different kinds of um but of course as soon as I start  
8197researching and stuff I will go into more detail also like read all these um information  
8198papers but generally I know what we are expected to do

8199R: okay and so I know that you don't have any marks or any or you may not have marks  
8200you may have some already

8201Laura: yeah @ I have some @@

8202R: yeah the [discipline] school works a little bit differently since you have multiple  
8203modules throughout but how do you feel that you're doing academically do you think  
8204you're doing well poorly in the middle

8205Laura: mmm I think it's generally ok like some subjects are not as good as I wanted them  
8206to be and others are better than I expected [pause] mmm and it's usually it's usually 60% of  
8207your markets is individual and 40 are the groups um but you're kind of like very dependent  
8208whether you get up into a good or a bad group kind of um I think in general I mean being  
8209at [institution 1] like @I'm @quite @satisfied so far um just have to get over this confusion

8210because the Irish rating system is completely different and then to figure this out oh  
8211seventy here is like really really good right but it sounds not good like 70 out of hundred  
8212you're like oh okay but then they're like oh no but that's really good so that's like a little  
8213confusing but um I mean I didn't get all my grades yet but I think so far I did not bad yeah  
8214R: okay I know what do you think that your professors expect of you so when they're  
8215giving marks what are they looking for

8216Laura: um [pause] I think not of like not every lecture say that particularly but I think they  
8217all use this Bloomberg taxonomy so like think critically and evaluate things not only  
8218describe it but kind of use [pause] like references but then give your own thoughts and  
8219really kind of just create like your own idea about it then really climb up this Bloomberg  
8220taxonomy thing @

8221R: okay and you said some say it directly and some don't um can you go into more detail  
8222about that

8223Laura: like one lecturer like every class you told us okay think about the Bloomberg  
8224taxonomy like a literally every class she was like Oh think about that like by the way  
8225Bloomberg and so on um and others didn't particularly mention this um how do you call it  
8226hmm [long pause] what's the name for that like this kind of model but then within the  
8227module outline in the description they're like Oh learning outcomes should be critically  
8228evaluate this and this or be able to use the knowledge and stuff so in an indirect way they  
8229also refer to this taxonomy

8230R: right um and so in general what would you say that students need in order to succeed at  
8231[institution 1]

8232Laura: in general or at a master's level

8233R: um in general

8234Laura: in general hmmm [long pause] that's a good question I mean like for international  
8235students like some English knowledge @@ um and yeah just the will to work hard yes at  
8236least at the Master's level I don't know how the bachelors are but this is just a lot of work  
8237and like you should be willing to really [pause] go was the library very often @@

8238R: okay so a lot of work a lot of work in the library okay and so you kind of mentioned  
8239language there but how much of a factor does language play in academic success

8240Laura: [pause] a lot I mean of course like an international student for me it's like another  
8241language so it's not my mother language and as I told you already I'm like still thinking  
8242sometimes in a [language] way um but even if it's your mother language I mean there are a  
8243certain like even in [language] there are certain words that you only use in an academic  
8244way and then other words that you should not use in an academic paper um so yeah like

8245 kind of the language you use you know like in your essays or in a presentation can also  
8246 influence your mark quite a lot and um yeah you also have to just understand the readings  
8247 you're reading so [pause] yes as long as you're not like I don't know studying mathematics  
8248 where it's all about numbers it's very very important factor

8249 R: okay and what other factors would you say play an academic success and that could be  
8250 things inside and outside of [institution 1]

8251 Laura: yep umm [pause] also depending on the major but as I have like a [discipline] major  
8252 and it's very much about group projects and stuff um all the social skills are very important  
8253 and also an international program um [pause] yeah like know something about other  
8254 cultures could be important [pause] and umm what else just keeping balance is also very  
8255 important because I like now is all the assignment time and you're kind of losing yourself  
8256 in the library all the time um but they also balance between academic life and personal life  
8257 is also important

8258 R: okay alright and how have you found that balance or have you found that balance yet

8259 Laura: ahhh the last weeks not so much @@ um I think I'm doing quite okay like I joined  
8260 some societies? so then I'm like just like okay now I stop studying but I'm going to a  
8261 society event and um I just like go out of library and like take a walk around the campus  
8262 kind of um but it is hard to find a balance like for me personally because like so much like  
8263 detailed and [pause] do your work um but yeah that's something I have to like do better for  
8264 next semester but um yeah [pause] but the assignments are over now so now I can like  
8265 balance @ yeah now I can like totally balanced all of @@ my personal life @

8266 R: @ right yeah and I'm okay so I'm gonna move kind of more towards your experiences  
8267 with preparation tools and standardized exams so before you came to [institution 1] did  
8268 you have any linguistic preparation for academic language for helping you when you're  
8269 studying in English

8270 Laura: um well as part not only a preparation but as um um a what I have had to do was the  
8271 TOEFL to get into [institution 1] um so like I had to do to get here but it was almost kind  
8272 of a chance to refresh English as I'm haven't like really studied grammar for years I just  
8273 use it but then I was like oh yeah we can I use this word again or like I use this kind of in a  
8274 wrong way because the grammar is this and this and then while I'm studying here I use a  
8275 lot of these how do you call it like sheets with word suggestions so like oh you can like  
8276 umm [pause] umm what's the image word for that [pause] I don't even know the [language]  
8277 word currently like the same meaning but another word kind of thing

8278 R: ah synonym

8279 Laura: synonyms yeah um or these like fancy connection work hence due to like something  
8280 like that so I had like a list with all these fancy academic @words  
8281 R: yeah how did you find these lists was it online did someone give it to you  
8282 Laura: um both like you can just google for these sheets um but then also one lecturer here  
8283 gave us a list for the reflective writing so like phrases you can use for it reflective writing  
8284 because this is something new for like many of us so yeah and both I got them or just  
8285 searched for them  
8286 R: okay and you're finding them quite useful  
8287 Laura: I use them quite a lot yeah because just I mean it is not my I'm not a native speaker  
8288 and then until a certain point I'm like writing and I'm like but now I need like another word  
8289 I'm using approach for 10 times already like I need another word now  
8290 R: right okay and um so did you take any classes to prepare you for the TOEFL exam or  
8291 Laura: no I had um my brother did a TOEFL a few years before me and I just used his old  
8292 book and went through all the [pause] ummm yeah the whole book so every chapter and  
8293 then there were like examples and tests that you could take before  
8294 R: okay and I'm how do you feel about the TOEFL exam  
8295 Laura: hmmm [long pause] I mean it was okay I passed quite good but it was kind of a  
8296 weird situation this is like this is the kind of the American way and then also at the test day  
8297 we weren't even allowed to take like a water bottle on our test so like the test situation  
8298 itself was a little bit weird but I mean the the umm the questions and everything is like  
8299 okay  
8300 R: and do you think that that exam helped to prepare you for [institution 1]  
8301 Laura: [pause] mmm until a certain amount like I think even without the TOEFL I would  
8302 have like do quite the same as I'm doing now but as I say it like just reviewing grammar a  
8303 little bit and just like get it back to your head [pause] was helpful  
8304 R: okay and what type of preparation do you think the international students should take  
8305 before coming to [institution 1]  
8306 Laura: mmm [long pause] do some reading [pause] as you mostly just just speak it or you  
8307 watch a moving in English or listen something but not many people read something in  
8308 English if it's not their native language you know I think that would be the most helpful  
8309 thing to do  
8310 R: okay thank you yeah and I'm what do you wish that you had known before coming to  
8311 [institution 1]  
8312 Laura: [exhale] hmm [long pause] I don't know a lot of things @@ that a leap card wha-  
8313 like I don't know I could've picked up a leap card three days later and then I could have got



8314the new already because I have like the old one the blue one and I have to change it this  
8315week [pause] but like I don't know some small everyday things that they're not like not  
8316very useful or like where to get student discounts and stuff like that but you find out  
8317throughout your studies and then the introduction week is also quite helpful

8318R: yeah I mean can you see more about the kind of everyday things that you wish you had  
8319known before coming

8320Laura: mm yeah kind of every student discount place @@ like sometimes I I walk by  
8321restaurants because I'm like ahh so expensive and then a week later somebody tells me  
8322yeah they do have a student discount I'm like ah I could've gone like a week early already  
8323to that restaurant and um what else [pause] I don't know that's like the most beneficial @@  
8324thing like all these student discount they're probably more but I just cannot think about  
8325more than at the moment

8326R: yeah okay perfect yeah um so this kind of the fun part so if you give advice to faculty  
8327and professors and to help support students better what would that advice be

8328Laura: [pause] [sigh] replace the chairs in the library they're really uncomfortable umm  
8329[long pause] what else [pause] I think a kind of the introduction week was until a certain  
8330amount very helpful but then there were some workshops about things that like we don't  
8331need them yet for example like they already talked about the dissertation in that week I  
8332mean of course it's an important part but you get so much information that you kind of  
8333forget it already and then some other things you don't really get information about for  
8334example we got a library tour but then they were like oh yeah this is like this area and this  
8335area and then I think two weeks ago I was like because we like in [discipline] we use a lot  
8336of online journals so not many physical books but then I really needed a physical book and  
8337then I was like okay how can I get this book off of the shelf because it's like a quite  
8338complicated system as there's so many books here so like the library tour would be more  
8339helpful if they also showed us that they're not only oh yeah here's the [name] building @  
8340umm yeah I think that's kind of like to two two things I think of like the library example  
8341because I spend so much time in the library @@ and I'm not sure whether that's an Irish or  
8342a [institution 1] thing but very often we also got get emails for events a day before the  
8343event like oh by the way tomorrow is a workshop about this and this and then you're like  
8344yeah but I with other plans so I have class or whatever umm so it would be like helpful to  
8345get information about that early on then a day before or like in the morning and then it's  
8346like in the evening @@ it's like but this might be like an Irish thing or [institution 1] I  
8347don't know @@

8348R: yeah um and is there anything that your professors could do say like inside the  
8349classroom to better support international students

8350Laura: I think the professors themselves not really I mean it's not for internationals in  
8351particular but I think for all the other students so for example with one lecturer and we  
8352spend most of the time of the class figuring out what she wants from us um like most of the  
8353lecturers their assignments were very clear but hers was quite confusing so we spend so  
8354much time clarifying just the assignment and couldn't really spend time on the actual class  
8355so um you just communicate your assignments more clear and then also some lecturers  
8356very detailed and really told us oh by the way Times New Roman font 12 or whatever and  
8357others just didn't told us and then we like had to get back to them and like oh like do you  
8358want a particular font or a particular size whatever um so all those like clarification of  
8359those minor things it's like just time-consuming and they just could like from the very  
8360beginning be very clear about kind of everything and they don't have to like ask them  
8361throughout your assignment like oh which font does she want like I don't know I like um  
8362oh and but that's probably a [discipline] school problem the room situation is [pause] really  
8363annoying [pause] so every week they changed the rooms and then we to like search the  
8364rooms again or they were way too small way too big way too warm way too cold um I  
8365think that's probably due to that the building is not finished yet and of what I heard they  
8366took way more students than planned so they planned to take like 30 people but now we  
8367are more than 70 in my class so you know the room situation is also something that should  
8368be addressed

8369R: okay brilliant and if you could give advice to organizations that are creating like  
8370summer programs to prepare international students what advice would that be like what  
8371should be taught

8372Laura: @ soft skills and more soft skills @ yeah of course it depends on on the program  
8373like if it's a summer school for [pause] I don't know sport major then like of course they  
8374don't teach them how to read an academic reference paper or if it's for biological you teach  
8375them more biological stuff but like of course #academic subject but um yes soft skills are  
8376just so important I think of course like as a [discipline] student is even more important but  
8377generally in life [pause] and then like you think kind of oh we are all adults we should  
8378know all this or this or like know how to behave but then you always end up like in a group  
8379and then you can't believe what other people are doing kind of so yes soft skills that's just

8380R: okay can you give some examples or like situations that have come up

8381Laura: [sigh] um I like there was one um person in my group and like I mean it's okay of  
8382course we like we all have other stuff to do out of the class and like the one group project

8383is just one project of 12 assignments out of like another or other stuff so it is  
8384understandable when somebody says hey I'm coming a little bit later or I can't make it or  
8385something but he just wouldn't say anything he just would come like an hour too late or  
8386just didn't come at all to our group meetings like just he never just never said why so we're  
8387always sitting there and we're like will he come will he not come like I don't know and like  
8388he's like 23 or something so like he should know that he should tell people when he's late  
8389or something it was like you know frustrating

8390R: yeah so things just like communication time management all that kind of stuff

8391Laura: communication is also like a very key element yeah

8392R: okay alright and if you could give advice to future students what would that advice be

8393Laura: be patient [pause] and [pause] find a good coffee place @@

8394R: @@@ I agree that's essential

8395Laura: @ yeah um but patience and understanding and empathy also was quite important

8396R: it just patience for everything patience um like is there anything kind of spurring that uh

8397they should have patience they should have understanding empathy

8398Laura: mmmm I think in general like those patience with yourself like sometimes you  
8399cannot be productive every day um then patience with other people as they like I mean  
8400they should tell you that they coming late but then again they have just maybe they have to  
8401work maybe or have some family things going on or whatever um but then just try to  
8402understand other people's situations and before you like start flaming them think about like  
8403oh okay what situation might they be in and then maybe they just like one of my  
8404classmates she just lost her grandmother during the studies and then of course she couldn't  
8405like just do so much and all the patience with the system I think there's [pause] throughout  
8406like the whole world I think every university is like [pause] very [pause] [click] crass it  
8407sounds quite negative but you know there are certain structures and then if you want to get  
8408this particular paper it just takes time even [country] we're like supposed to be very  
8409efficient but then you go to university in [country] [click] not very @ just very like slow  
8410and then you like just just wait for your paper you'll get it take some time but

8411R: right alright and so are you aware of any support that international students receive from  
8412your department or from the wider college

8413Laura: well they have quite a lot like not particularly for internationals but in general like  
8414there's a student to student um peer thing that you can just talk to other students and they  
8415are trying to listen to you as an international student but also as an Irish student you could  
8416go to the global room anytime and also talk to them or sit there and they have like TV  
8417programs in like every language then for graduate students there is I think every Friday a

8418grad chat from two professors and then you also can just go to them and then the GSU has  
8419I think in [location] um also kind of like a chat afternoon we just can come to like just get  
8420your stuff out @ umm yeah that's that's all like the kind of social thing and then you have  
8421of course like library office workshops for academic literature review and how to use  
8422EndNote and like many other things and then we have mmm what else do we have [pause]  
8423I'm thinking of just tons of workshops about everything kind of

8424R: okay and so would you say that the support offered at [institution 1] is adequate or is  
8425there anything that could be improved or added

8426Laura: mmm I think they have quite a lot like I haven't used much of it and I think that's  
8427also another thing that I should do more next semester oh there's also like a career service  
8428and then they can like review your CV umm I think they do offer quite a lot yeah the  
8429Career Service was a little bit drowning at the beginning because um all the [discipline]  
8430students they've very tight deadlines for training jobs so they had all like deadlines already  
8431in October/November so then the Career Service was kind of like reviewing all of their  
8432CV's and then you came like from another major and you were like can you review my CV  
8433and they were like oh but we have to do like all the [discipline] students now so they might  
8434need a little bit more staff for the Career Service but like in general I think it's quite quite  
8435good

8436R: okay alright um so that's actually all the questions that I have for you um but are there  
8437any questions that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask

8438Laura: hmm not at the moment but let me think of a few more seconds [long pause] I think  
8439you did ask that but like a little bit more like external factors a little bit because it's just  
8440about so with the housing situation like I was quite luckily I got something very fast but  
8441other students kind of like hopping from one hostel to another still so like something like  
8442yeah external things can also like influence it quite a lot I think you kind of like a asked  
8443that but not very like housing focused @ I don't know if that's like part of your I mean  
8444main question

8445R: it is um you know other factors that could impact academic success um especially  
8446things that [institution 1] might be able to improve on say by building more housing or  
8447something like that so so you'd consider housing to be something that impacts it and

8448Laura: yes [pff] I think that's like I was quite lucky but then other students had real issues  
8449and then some moved in but then I don't know if you know about that but a lot of students  
8450live in [student housing] and they had a big mold problem and they're just all moved in and  
8451they had to move out again to another place then they fixed all the mold and then they  
8452could move back again so they were like moving in and out in and out in and out and

8453 others just couldn't find anything because it's so expensive and of course when you're like  
8454 when you're studying but then you're like I don't know even know where I sleep like  
8455 tomorrow or next week that's like real stress and I mean I think they're building new  
8456 student accommodation somewhere where is that no on [Street] I think next to the business  
8457 building they're building something um but just not enough you know like that's a real real  
8458 issue in Dublin

8459 R: yeah so is there anything else you would like to express to add

8460 Laura: no I think it's nice

8461 R: right alright thank you

8462

8463

**Lena**

8464

8465 R: all right um so my first question is so what are your strengths academically like what  
8466 are you good at

8467 Lena: umm [pause] in terms of reading for example I tend to read quickly and also  
8468 understand it um easily if I read like the text of course it depends on the on the subject and  
8469 difficulty of the text but I'm really proud that I can quickly read and understand it so I can I  
8470 can spare a lot of time and when I'm preparing for an essay or something like that ummm  
8471 [pause] [click] yeah in speaking um I think I'm a pretty fluent um but of course it's yeah it  
8472 depends on on on on the day and also the subject as well um listening is also also one of  
8473 my strengths and um yeah if you look at the communication skills in general um I think I  
8474 am pretty strong in that as well

8475 R: mm-hmm okay and what would you say your difficulties are then

8476 Lena: umm it's definitely the writing uhmm because [pause] uhm it was a long time ago  
8477 where I did when I did my undergrads or not long time ago four years ago so um I need to  
8478 readjust my mindset about how to write an essay in an academic way and not just  
8479 answering um like an email in a professional way so it's definitely an um issue at the  
8480 moment? umm so yeah I would say the writing [pause] like writing a proper academic uh  
8481 paper

8482 R: and so can you tell me about the modules that you're taking so what do you have to do  
8483 for them what are they like

8484 Lena: yeah so I'm studying masters in [discipline] um so I may have related subjects so  
8485 that's I have nothing to do with [topic] or [topic] or something like that so everything is is  
8486 actually reading and writing papers so I have uh for some of this term I have yeah and I  
8487 have umm [pause] uh yeah I have uhmm [module] I have researching [discipline] so it's

8488 actually a very good subject to prepare for for the dissertation time um I have [module]  
8489 uhm [module] uhm [module] and just general [discipline module] and uh next term I will  
8490 have other other subjects focusing more on on [discipline] uhm and for all uh subjects or  
8491 modules I have on- one individual essay uhm and then a group project which includes a  
8492 presentation and also a report or an essay written um among four or five of us  
8493 R: and are you given the topics for your essays and for the group projects or is it more up  
8494 to you to come up with it

8495 Lena: um well it depends on uhm on each module but it's usually given at least the the  
8496 major frame whether it has to be related to [topic] or there is a statement and we have to  
8497 argue or agree with that using [discipline] prac- practices or focusing on one particular  
8498 practice we would like to focus on

8499 R: and inside of the classroom what generally happens so are your professors lecturing  
8500 with a PowerPoint is their group discussion do you talk about readings etc.

8501 Lena: hmm again it depends but [pause] ehm like for example and I already had uh five  
8502 modules? and [pause] only one was more like focusing on lecturing and just listening and  
8503 all the others are mainly focusing on group work and an- in-class discussion so uh the  
8504 professor's told us to to read everything back at home before lecture and then during a  
8505 lecture we just talk and discuss and work in groups uh working on projects um and so on  
8506 um in you know in [discipline] schools it's more important that we learn how to use  
8507 theories in practice so I think that's the main purpose of that? compared to um humanities  
8508 or arts or something like that

8509 R: okay perfect and do you know much about what's going to be required of you in terms  
8510 of your dissertation and research

8511 Lena: um yes we had a few session about that but I think it's still the- there are some  
8512 somethings which are still unclear but I think so far so good um we started to learn how to  
8513 do to do a literature review and how to do the design and what to focus on which journals  
8514 we have to use what's the preference of the program manager in terms of [pause] journal uh  
8515 rankings and so on

8516 R: okay alright right and okay and so how would you evaluate your current academic  
8517 success how do you feel that you're doing in the course

8518 Lena: um it's very stressful um as I mentioned it was four almost five years ago when I  
8519 finished the my undergrad so for me it's a bit stressful too to get back to to the track and  
8520 um and perform well in aca- in academics but uh so far so good I would say that of course  
8521 I just started to write one of my essays this is the first one I am trying to do um and in  
8522 terms of group project and in class discussion and and and um yeah that's that's fine so far

8523R: and how do your professors assess academic success so what do they look for when  
8524they're grading

8525Lena: umm [pause] they look for a critical ummm thinking or umm yeah something like  
8526this we are not just reading and then copying and then writing but also stating our own  
8527opinion and then are you with with the given article and and so they are so looking for  
8528something new something innovative ummm even though it's really uhh [pause] given  
8529umm given area that we are studying? but still they are looking for something something  
8530extra something innovative and and yeah I would say critical thinking and and reflection  
8531[pause] um that's the main [pause] thing

8532R: and do you have access to the rubrics or guidelines before you complete it an  
8533assignment or like how do the professors communicate their expectations to you

8534Lena: um yeah I think in the first lecture [pause] I think majority of the professor's showed  
8535us the rubrics um and also one of the lecturers umm actually give feedback for our essay  
8536outline um [pause] and and the feedback was given based on the rubrics um so she didn't  
8537give us like specific [pause] uh opinion like this is good or not but just helping you know  
8538through the rubrics and um it actually it it helped some of the with some of the questions  
8539we had

8540R: okay and is there a lot of time for questions like do you have opportunities to ask about  
8541assignments dissertations etc.

8542Lena: um yeah so on the day when the umm the essay or the group project is given we  
8543have a couple questions but also afterwards through the class reps or or or after class we  
8544have the opportunity to discuss

8545R: perfect um and in general what do you think students need in order to succeed at  
8546[institution 1]

8547Lena: hm more time @@ more time definitely and also a bit more preparation for for  
8548academics um of course we have the orientation week but I don't think it's enough to be  
8549honest um I think we would need more time to to get back on track um I was surprised to  
8550see that majority of my classmates are [pause] coming with the same program that's as as I  
8551so they finished undergrad a couple of years back? um and coming from work [pause] we  
8552need we need to we need a like a transition period to get back to to this academic  
8553environment so definitely I think we would need more time before jumping into writing  
8554essays and and and and doing research and so on

8555R: and can you expand on like what that time would include like what would you like to do  
8556in order to prepare

8557Lena: yeah so for example um we had the first lecture on thee [pause] 10th of September  
8558and today is the 22nd of October so within a month we already have to start to work on on  
8559an essay um even even though we never had a lecture on the specific area of [discipline]  
8560um [click] so I would say that at least within the first one and a half month would be nice if  
8561we don't get any assignments or at least nothing umm nothing serious um just do prepare a  
8562bit more [pause] because we cannot really focus on the studies because we have to focus  
8563on the assessment and that's what I'm lacking the focus on the studies and then the  
8564assessment is is another is another part of the term

8565R: right yeah so more time basically just kind of settle in get the //lectures get used to

8566Lena: settle in|

8567R: the expectations and

8568Lena: yeah exactly exactly and just to to practice a bit a bit more and and and widen our  
8569horizons and then and then do the assessment because we don't have written exams this  
8570semester so there is nothing like sitting down and studying we have to read constantly and  
8571and not focus on on a you know you know the day-to-day tasks

8572R: okay and so how much of a factor does language play in academic success

8573Lena: I think if I I think it's a lot umm I can see that native speakers we have a lots of um  
8574students from the US for example I can see that they don't have the same difficulties as we  
8575do like non-native speakers um definitely the writing as I mentioned I'm also struggling  
8576with little bit for them it it's very normal it's very very natural to to to write an essay for  
8577example um [click] the same with in-class discussion? uh [pause] like if someone is not  
8578confident with English then it seems that she or he doesn't know the particular subject or  
8579doesn't have any any any opinion about that it doesn't mean that it's just because um that  
8580given person has some some language barriers or yeah or cultural differences or something  
8581like that

8582R: okay and so what other factors impact academic success and this could be inside or  
8583outside of [institution 1]

8584Lena: hmm definitely personal issues can affect the results [pause] um [pause] yeah I  
8585would say I would say it's more the stress or or or the volume of work we have to do  
8586because if we would have more time we'd focus more on on the on the essays for example  
8587or on the projects so yeah I would say stress and also personal issues and and also yeah the  
8588the work-life balance um we are we aren't able to go to the gym and exercise and and do  
8589all the fun things but then we don't have the time so that also effects effects the the  
8590outcome of the studies



8591R: and so now I'm going to kind of switch to talking about preparation and entry  
8592assessments before you came to [institution 1] um so you said that you were working for  
8593the past four years so did you take any linguistic or academic preparation before coming to  
8594[institution 1]

8595Lena: um I did training b-before my undergrad because I studied in um in [country] in my  
8596undergrad which is not my native country so I needed to take an IELTS before that and  
8597yeah in like the last year of high school so I did preparations in Scotland for two months it  
8598was a specific IELTS preparation course uh it was very intensive and at that time I think I  
8599could score a six point five um so it it helped me uh during during the undergrad because I  
8600had the the English skills to to perform well umm and then after after I started to work I  
8601needed to retake the IELTS um and for that I basically had @two two days of preparation  
8602but again I was working in English so I didn't really need to practice speaking or listening  
8603or reading or something like that um so yeah so coming to [institution 1] I didn't take any  
8604any preparation

8605R: okay and I'm how do you feel about the IELTS any feelings at all

8606Lena: umm I think it's one of the best language tests which gives a a good overall or a good  
8607or overview about the students' performance in English umm [pause] I was working with  
8608other umm language tests in my job and I think IELTS was the one which actually  
8609reflected the students um proficiency well compared to others especially in speaking and  
8610writing umm so I definitely think that IELTS is is one of the one of the best ones

8611R: okay and do you think that the IELTS adequately prepared you for the demands of  
8612studying in English

8613Lena: ummm [pause] I think so umm I cannot really talk about my studies at [institution 1]  
8614because I think I had the language skills way before that but definitely um I experienced  
8615that during undergrad students who came with another like Eng- English test they were a  
8616bit weaker in writing particularly so I think IELTS prepares you well [pause] for the essay  
8617writing and a structuring um long writing and also the the description of graphics and so on  
8618so I think prepares you very well um reading as well um I think the um the difficulty of the  
8619um third reading in IELTS prepares you well for academic um texts umm so yeah  
8620definitely

8621R: okay and so you've touched on this a little bit um but what type of preparation should  
8622international students take before studying at [institution 1]

8623Lena: [click] ummm [pause] oh I think [exhale] like studying it in native environment is is  
8624very essential um [pause] so if someone has opportunity to go to the UK or Ireland to  
8625prepare for the IELTS I think it's the best also [click] learning from native speaker teachers

8626 I think it's it's it's the key umm [click] to practice speaking and not just from a another non-  
8627 native speaker teacher um I have better experience with with that of course um a lot of  
8628 reading um and and also focusing on [pause] the um writing skills as well umm but yeah if  
8629 someone has opportunity then then go abroad for a couple of weeks to to to practice and  
8630 and be in that environment

8631 R: okay so if you could give advice to faculty so advice to your professors in dealing with  
8632 international students what would that advice be

8633 Lena: [pause] umm [pause] teach a bit more [pause] I think we we get uhh a lot of freedom  
8634 in terms of preparation and self-study and I think we are here to learn from [pause] from  
8635 the experts it sounds a bit cliché but I I have the feeling that they just come into class um  
8636 they give half an hour lecture and then we just have to discuss things um personally and  
8637 also some of our other classmates discuss it that they would like to listen a bit more and of  
8638 course there there should be a place and time for in-class discussion but uh definitely  
8639 listening to them a bit more because they are the ones who are the researchers or or  
8640 practitioners um so definitely I would I would recommend that and also as I mentioned  
8641 before give a bit more time and for adjusting and so on

8642 R: okay and if you could give advice to organizations who are preparing international  
8643 students are studying at [institution 1] so say like an organization did open some sort of  
8644 preparation course what would that advice be

8645 Lena: umm [pause] I remember when I was studying in the language school there was a lot  
8646 of repetition so I was there for two months and then um there was a time when I didn't  
8647 really progress with my with my studies um so definitely reduce the repetition a bit more  
8648 and put a bit more pressure on students um I think that's why we are there um um [pause]  
8649 otherwise I think I think um yeah I don't have lots of experience in lots of schools but so  
8650 far um I have only had good experience with them so yeah it was a long time ago but yeah  
8651 @

8652 R: right yeah yeah okay and if you could give advice to future [institution 1] students or  
8653 students who are looking to come to [institution 1] what would that advice be

8654 Lena: [pause] ah that's a very @difficult @question @@@ ummm [long pause] I don't  
8655 know because I think it depends on the each individual what they need um but for for  
8656 students who who have a gap between undergrad and post-grad definitely read academic  
8657 reports or journals or books or something before that um because even though I understand  
8658 a lot and I can read quickly and everything my my brain just needs to adjust to that text so  
8659 um I think reading like a half a year before before joining a course would be would be  
8660 beneficial yeah [pause] yeah @that's @that's @the @only @thing @I @can @think @of

8661R: @@ I was gonna be like what do you wish you had known @

8662Lena: @@that's what I really wish I had done and also um going back to the question what  
8663would I suggest for for the lectures or for the the school for the faculty is giving out the  
8664reading list before. the start is because again we are pressured a lot we have a lot of  
8665pressure on and besides um focusing on the essays and group projects and group meetings  
8666and and dissertation and so on we have to read for every single lecture beforehand and  
8667there's just too much so if we would have umm given opportunity to read some of the  
8668books or some of the journal like articles before coming here I think that would be that  
8669would have been excellent so just going back to this

8670R: yeah yeah yeah that's brilliant yeah actually a few people have mentioned that

8671Lena: yeah exactly

8672R: and yeah I'm always just like ah that's such a good idea

8673Lena: yeah yeah I think some school do that in the UK so they give the reading lists before  
8674like during summer time

8675R: yeah yeah yeah it makes sense

8676Lena: yes

8677R: so are you aware of any support that international students receive from your  
8678department or the wider College

8679Lena: [pause] uhh I think within the [discipline] school we don't really have any support  
8680but within [institution 1] we have the the academic writing support thing? and also some  
8681other other support things so yeah we receive emails from them and so on so yeah yeah I  
8682think we have support yeah sure @@@

8683R: do you have any experience using those

8684Lena: um no no no but would you recommend using it? Or @@@@

8685R: @ well I don't know I'm like yes sure but no because then if you had had experience I  
8686would have been like do you feel like do you think the support is adequate

8687Lena: yeah yeah no no but I might need to use it in the future but um I think like during  
8688postgrads I think we can assist each other among the classmates I think it's another level  
8689than than undergrads [pause] so I think that's why we never we never we are never using  
8690them but I might try it yeah @@@

8691R: and let's see um yeah so that's actually all the questions that I have for you but are there  
8692any questions that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask

8693Lena: umm maybe umm if there is any connection between [pause] uhm like the difficulty  
8694[pause] how can I rephrase that so if there if there is a student coming from let's say from a  
8695Western country? and from a more Eastern country if there is any any [pause] difference

8696between you know like how to handle academic performance yeah I don't know I don't  
8697know what I want to say with that but I don't know if you understand so so if you if you  
8698notice any differences between yeah students were coming from different areas what are  
8699they struggling with is it a difference [pause] problem they are they're experiencing or or  
8700something like that

8701R: would you like to answer that question @@

8702Lena: @@@@ I think I think we do and I was wondering what the school could could  
8703done umm to to solve that issue or at least umm yeah maybe maybe different yeah there  
8704should be different focus there should be different assistance [inhale] I don't know I was  
8705just wondering about that um because I think we cannot really generalize you know like  
8706international students in general because uh I think we have difficulties like different  
8707difficulties um [pause] so I was wondering but what can it can can be done [pause] for that

8708R: and so what kinds of differences have you noticed

8709Lena: umm it's definitely speaking and first of all presentation so there are some students  
8710who never presented before and definitely there should be some some some focus on that's  
8711because we're a [discipline] school and probably when we graduate we have to do  
8712presentations and so on give our ideas um so definitely I think the school should should  
8713focus on that giving giving um some some extra lectures on it or some extra presentation  
8714skills lecture on that umm [pause] yeah that'll be it basically um yeah @

8715R: and is there anything else that you would like to express or to say

8716Lena: um no I don't think so umm [pause] I hope that I could answer the questions well  
8717@@

8718R: absolutely

8719Lena: um but ya no in general I think the the IELTS gives a good preparation for for  
8720academic perf- or for academics and umm but but it's not enough so definitely there should  
8721be some like a like a bridge between between just doing the IELTS and and @jumping into  
8722into into the lectures um so yeah as I said giving more time or or yeah a little bit of time for  
8723for adjustments

8724R: okay perfect

8725Lena: thank you

8726

8727

**Lucy**

8728

8729R: okay so my first question would be what would you describe as your strengths

8730academically

8731Lucy: hmmm [long pause] I want to say humor but it's under an academic skill it's more  
8732something that made me go through academia I would say you know like kind of ability to  
8733take the piss of things but academic talking I would say it's that how I can write very easily  
8734I can write 20 pages in three hours so I mean I can read and write once have all the ideas  
8735like in two days I can write like an entire chapter  
8736R: and what would your difficulties be academically  
8737Lucy: um being how would you say short like wri- like writing 70 pages for a chapter so  
8738yeah being concise and going to the point okay  
8739R: and what would your strengths be in terms of English  
8740Lucy: ummm [long pause] [whisper] good question [pause] I would say vocabulary but at  
8741the same time I don't know all the vocabulary [long pause] I'd say I- hmmm that's a good  
8742question oo that's good question uh so I'm taking time I'm trying to figure out [long pause]  
8743yeah I'd say it's more the vocabulary if I have to compare to the grammar or it'd be more  
8744like the fact that I'm able to read like fast yeah I read fast English to get it pretty fast yeah  
8745R: and what would your difficulties be in terms of English  
8746Lucy: grammar  
8747R: grammar  
8748Lucy: aand translation like my grammar I think in [language] translate in English  
8749sometimes you know makes my sentences a bit weird because it's in [language] it's  
8750completely perfect but when I translate it in English so sometimes that can have some like  
8751weird grammar mistakes  
8752R: and so are you still translating like in your head  
8753Lucy: no no I'm not doing this in a regular basis but sometimes when I was like a very  
8754important document right like for example when I was writing my um lay abstract for the  
8755IRC I had to sound like convincing and in [language] I know I'm convincing in my subject  
8756but in English way less cuz I less voc- like I have way less vocabulary and have less power  
8757to make like a grammar structure that would be very powerful so sometimes like I can  
8758think of the convincing in my head in [language] and then I have to translate them it's not  
8759like the sentence exactly but more the idea  
8760R: right right okay yeah and so can you tell me about the work that's required of you as a  
8761research student  
8762Lucy: the what sorry  
8763R: the work that is required of you as a research student like what do you have to do on a  
8764day to day basis

8765Lucy: well I have to read books that loads of books I have to research second sources  
8766because my my main problem for my author is that they are very recent so there's not that  
8767many sources and those sources are not yet put in libraries properly so you know it's like a  
8768random guy in China wrote an article on that so it's kind of having I mean finding a way to  
8769get access to that instead of paying for like the entire magazine 100 quid [pause] and I  
8770would say also like juggling between time for study and time for having money @ I mean  
8771time for working to raise the money and I think that most the thing that I'm doing every  
8772day because I'm in between the library between teaching and between the [research  
8773institute] studying so every day is kind of like this

8774R: okay and so have you taken any lectures or modules here

8775Lucy: yeah I took some modules by [academic training program] you know for how to  
8776teach how it was there was like thing that in first-year I don't if you did it it was a bit like  
8777in first year you you it was they told you it was mandatory but it was not and it was a  
8778module where at [intuition 1] they explain to you how to do um a review how to use the  
8779library etc. most of it were useless but some of it were good advice and then I took um two  
8780tutorials in the [department] one on [topic] and one on [topic]

8781R: okay so can you tell me more about those modules like what was the work work  
8782required in those modules

8783Lucy: for the first module I was talking to you about it was more like workshops but it run  
8784as a module because wasn't like randomly it was just like every week was every  
8785homework it was a session of two hours and during the two hour they were asking us to do  
8786stuff you know to do like teamwork or etc. like yeah I don't know what do you think is  
8787more important the conclusion or the introduction by pair of two try to have good  
8788argumentation and discuss stuff like this so how would you write a literary review and in  
8789groups you have to know how to present your research to a group that have no clue what  
8790you're doing and you get 30 seconds and then for the other modules the one on [topic] I  
8791had to do three essays but I just wrote to the teacher saying that I'm doing a PhD and I  
8792couldn't do them so she told me that just to do one and same for the one on [topic] they  
8793were kind of I'm I'm very good that looking miserable so people can help me

8794R: okay and it's so inside of those modules um what happened was it's like the teacher is  
8795just giving in PowerPoint was say interaction

8796Lucy: yeah it was actually about directions like the teacher would like for example like  
8797give us the material for the week after I mean like some [reading] to read and well the first  
8798one [topic] the teacher was a bit too lecturing if I may say cuz it was just an hour class and  
8799there was only like 15 minutes for discussion but it the other one was very good um it was

8800like just discussion so you could just not interrupt but the kind of participate all through  
8801expose of the teacher so we had the text and she was explaining to us that some stuff but  
8802we could at any point be like oh yes that would mean this oh this is this or I read about this  
8803so it was very like kind of building up the knowledge together

8804R: okay and so how would you evaluate your current academic success like do you feel  
8805you're doing well you're not so so

8806Lucy: ehhhh [long pause] I have a cynical I have a cynical answer for that

8807R: @ that's fine

8808Lucy: I guess I'm doing well cuz I I st- I'm getting through my nervous breakdowns pretty  
8809easily but um no I think that conference wise and articles wise I'm doing good because I  
8810already have 10 conferences done and 4 articles uh soon to be published because they're  
8811taking their time @ but at the same time I'm just at this point of my research when I'm  
8812realizing that the ideas I had before I completely destroyed them with what I found and I'm  
8813kind of like I have no clue [pause] like if you were to ask me now what's my research  
8814about I would struggle because I'm not sure anymore exactly what [topic] is [pause]  
8815because I looked too much into it you know what I mean so [pause] for me like I did good  
8816as an academic but I'm also at the moment where I'm kind of doubting myself and my  
8817subject

8818R: and so what do your professor or what does your supervisor look for when they are  
8819evaluating your academic success

8820Lucy: uhh [long pause] for her is very important the publications for her that's like the  
8821main thing conferences are good but [pause] she's also pushing me to do loads of  
8822conferences like she's always been the one to be like even if you don't have time to go to  
8823the entire conference just go give your paper and fuck off even if your paper isn't that great  
8824just give it anyway because no one's recording it and then you can still like change it if you  
8825want to be published after so she's basically just like try it and you see it's more this and for  
8826the chapters I'm submitting she's really looking into referencing second sources and  
8827objectivity because I love my [topic] so I have problems of objectivity those are the main  
8828three things that she looks for

8829R: okay and so how does your supervisor communicate those expectations is she very  
8830straightforward

8831Lucy: yeah yeah she she has a lot of tact but she's a great supervisor I think because she's  
8832able to have a lot of time but also to be very honest [pause] like she can actually say I don't  
8833think so like this quote I don't understand it that way which is good and her corrections are  
8834kind of precise or you know exactly which means [pause] so she would correct it on the

8835paper and then we would meet for her to present to me her corrections [pause] so I know  
8836exactly what she means and I'm not like just wondering [pause] especially because her  
8837writing is very bad @

8838R: so you have both written and verbal and you can have a discussion ask questions

8839Lucy: yes and she's very available by emails or by text so um so it's pretty unusual

8840R: okay what do you think students need in order to succeed at [institution 1]

8841Lucy: @@@ to go out of [institution 1] @@

8842R: @ can you expand on that @

8843Lucy: @@ no it's a joke no no I think they need they need a supervisor on their side

8844[pause] because no matter what [institution 1] is still going to be [institution 1] you can't  
8845destroy the entire college with our problems and I guess like last term we saw that that  
8846student movement can do stuff [pause] but I think that students are not able to get involved  
8847for making things change if their supervisor is not on their side if the supervisor keeps  
8848telling them oh no that it's not gonna change they're not gonna be willing to change things  
8849like I know for example I'm a PhD rep this year because my supervisor told me that stuff  
8850could be done that I could get involved in stuff could be done and she went to the meeting  
8851of the [graduate students union] last year about the fees etc. so I think the most important  
8852for a student to [pause] progress and be happy or fight to help them would make him or her  
8853happy it's like a supervisor having uh a good supervisor

8854R: okay and so how much of a factor do you think language plays in academic success

8855Lucy: what do you mean the language of [institution 1] or the language you study or

8856R: um both

8857Lucy: okay [pause] I think I can like I don't say that but I have to admit it if you don't have  
8858English you're fucked [pause] can I say fucked?

8859R: yeah yeah yeah yeah

8860Lucy: @@@ I've never been interviewed before so ummm [click] yeah because I think  
8861that I mean you can be a great academic in [language] but right now you have so many you  
8862know again it's like traveling the world that I think that if you only had one language you  
8863may be stuck because even if like I remember I went to Spain in this conference I was like  
8864on [language] language but some people were presenting in Spanish [long pause] and I  
8865guess it was great but I wasn't able to understand that so you feel a bit stupid because you  
8866want to talk to them about their research but those- the problem was this person was not  
8867speaking English he was speaking Spanish so we couldn't but we're like working on the  
8868same thing so that's why I think that English is for important but also other languages  
8869because it's not that because you speak English that you should just [pause] you're an



8870English speaker I think it's always good to have a bit of a a- another language [pause] just  
8871for like personal skills but also academic skills because it helps you to understand how  
8872comparison works [pause] and to be more objective sometimes I think  
8873R: and so what other factors um impact academic success and this could be things inside of  
8874[institution 1] outside of [institution 1]

8875Lucy: I would say the main thing is the ineq- inequality between students and the  
8876inequality between different topics like I think it's great for a student to get Google to pay  
8877them 100,000 euros a year to do some stupid research on internet but at the same time  
8878Google can you not just give him like twenty thousand that's already a lot and use like the  
8879eighty thousand euros for something else same for medicine I think that the main problem  
8880is [pause] money and also mental health I would say is the two main things that you need  
8881to have and by mental health I don't mean you you necessarily really have to be happy in  
8882your head but you need to be able to say it that you can't that there's this problem and your  
8883supervisor should like know that should be able to understand that the college should be  
8884able to understand that because like both are kind of linked I guess [pause] but yeah I'd say  
8885that the difference of money and the difference of mental health issues

8886R: okay alright and do you think that those impact academic success more or less than  
8887language and things that people would typically consider to be the expectations of  
8888academic success

8889Lucy: hmmm [pause] well [pause] the easy answer would be yes cuz I think mental  
8890health is more [pause] complicated to deal with than just not knowing a language [pause]  
8891but at the same time [pause] like [long pause] I'm just I'm just thinking like when I when I  
8892first came to [institution 1] like I was doing my master and I uhh was in the class and I had  
8893like some few classes mates and I was not understanding what they were saying so it was  
8894so hard and when you don't understand the accent of the people you can't really make  
8895friends and I think friends is related to mental health issues [pause] so I would say even if I  
8896still believe that money and mental health are maybe more important language is still a part  
8897of it so

8898R: so you can't really separate the two

8899Lucy: yeah because if you can't speak you can't understand #unt

8900R: and so did you have any linguistic or academic preparation before coming to [institution  
89011] so like did you take any courses for exams academic language

8902Lucy: well in [country] every time you study a language or literature you have linguistic  
8903classes it's mandatory so it's linguistic like meaning etymology a bit of the grammar how  
8904do words works how grammar works why is it like this all those things and also those

8905crazy words about the phonemes and whatever I don't remember but like create a sentence  
8906and I had it in [language] I had this in English and then when I wanted to apply at  
8907[institution 1] I needed to pass the TOEFL so I passed the TOEFL

8908R: okay did you take any classes to prepare you for the TOEFL

8909Lucy: no no I didn't prepare at all because people were like ah that's fine cuz when I did  
8910the TOEFL was already one year I was in Ireland because the first year in [institution 1] I  
8911was doing Erasmus so didn't really need the TOEFL and then when I apply it to do my  
8912master and go away and I knew I wanted to go away you know I need to have a like  
8913diploma saying that I could speak English so that's why I passed the TOEFL also it was  
8914like the cheapest one

8915R: and how do you feel about the TOEFL

8916Lucy: [long pause] I think the computer bases is shite [whisper] can I say shite

8917R: yes you can see whatever you want to say @

8918Lucy: @ uhhh because a computer can't assess can't assess human I mean like [long  
8919pause] I believe the computers do it okay but it's different um because I just like remember  
8920like I when I was talking it like I got the flu and I my the grade I got for the oral part of it  
8921was very low was like I don't know I don't remember if they're ra- they rank on um  
8922percent or whatever but would be like the the equivalent of 30 percent and I knew was  
8923impossible because I I answered all the questions I was answering them but the  
8924microphone wasn't hearing my voice and so the headphones were not working that well so  
8925I thought it was kind of like a bit weird [pause] but at same time is one thing I think it's  
8926good with the TOEFL it's like it's only uh valid for three years and I think that's good  
8927because it's true that if you don't practice in language you can lose a lot within like three  
8928years or within two years so maybe three is a bit short for them it's like five years would be  
8929good deal because it's expensive so @ let's not make it too short but I think it's good it's  
8930not like you have it for your life @

8931R: Do you think that the TOEFL are adequately prepared to you for a studies in [institution  
89321] or adequately predicted your academic success

8933Lucy: no

8934R: how so or why not

8935Lucy: well in summary the TOEFL is kind of a basic [pause] it's like the leaving cert you  
8936have to pass it to do to do something later but if you just have it it's useless and if you don't  
8937have it you're stuck so you have to pass it but I don't think he prepares you it just tells you  
8938hey great you can speak English oh you can speak whatever language [pause] so and also  
8939like for example [pause] it's good and bad a thing like you know when you have to do the

8940 questions it's gonna be random and you can have like a passage of each structure you can  
 8941 scientific article and I got a scientific article I still don't remember was talking about  
 8942 [pause] because and I actually I took a picture of it and I showed it to friends of mine and  
 8943 they didn't either so it's good because I guess you're comforted to know [pause] so they can  
 8944 assess if you even if you're not in front of your main field you can still speak but the same  
 8945 time I don't fucking care understanding like and article on the cancer among whales  
 8946 [pause] because it was title so I'm like yeah great but you know like [pause] maybe  
 8947 assessment stuff g- really I would say that TOEFL prepares you for university if it was  
 8948 actually focused on your field

8949 R: okay so if it were like more discipline specific

8950 Lucy: exactly

8951 R: okay what type of preparation do you think international students should undertake  
 8952 before coming to [institution 1]

8953 Lucy: Irish accent

8954 R: Irish accent

8955 Lucy: @@ no I'm joking but actually [long pause] once again I remember when I arrived  
 8956 here the first time like the first month I was like ah I have no fucking clue what you're  
 8957 speaking okay I mean I know you're speaking English but you could speak any other  
 8958 language I wouldn't understand it neither like I would have no clue did you switch to  
 8959 another language and also [long pause] how could I phrase that [pause] I think that but I  
 8960 think is the same in every university [pause] but I would say it's not because you're paying  
 8961 that you're getting something good I mean I know from an American student it's very  
 8962 cheap so but for me in [country] it would be free or 200 400 if I'm not lucky so like my  
 8963 thing was like well at least if I pay I'm going to have good quality services so I would be  
 8964 like the preparation would be to like have a lot of um like [pause] I'm getting the rest of  
 8965 my thoughts @ uhhhh [long pause] yeah it would be like the the English part would be like  
 8966 I mean the language part will be like the accent and English properly and the second part it  
 8967 would be the organization of the college [pause] because it's pretty different between like  
 8968 [language] world Anglophone world etc. on how it's organized so we yeah that would be it

8969 R: okay so becoming familiar with both the language so the accent and the local dialect  
 8970 basically even though it's not a uh and then also and then also how the unique institution  
 8971 runs

8972 Lucy: exactly and by this I also mean like the vocabulary they use like [name] term [name]  
 8973 term uhh junior senior junior yeah I don't even know those uh juniors freshman senior  
 8974 freshmen junior sophister senior sophister I understood that only yesterday

8975R: I still don't know so

8976Lucy: yeah so if it's junior is the two first years and if it's seniors it's the two last year's

8977and freshman means new and sophister means old I understand see like you just like

8978making yourself like used to those terms so you know what's going on

8979R: um so if you could give advice to faculty in dealing with international students what

8980would that advice be

8981Lucy: [long pause] make sure that they find people to speak to but especially if I mean I

8982don't know if you're talking in general for every level or just more PhD

8983R: every level

8984Lucy: okay because for every level I would say make sure that the students is able to fit in

8985and I just have a look around see what's going on just pop in a class and just be like is

8986everything alright just because I was always very sociable but I had friends went to

8987Erasmus and they struggled a lot because of that are like oh I'm shy my accent they don't

8988understand I'm like okay my accent is bad if they don't understand they can ask you to

8989repeat you can ask them to repeat but I think it would be this and also at the PhD level even

8990more because as a PhD you don't have classes so very easily you can end up just being in

8991your house [pause] so for example places like the [research institute] I'm not saying it

8992because I'm an international student that would be a great way for like to favor- favoritis-

8993how how do you say that in English uh like to help ummm international because at least

8994you would be sure they'd meet people cuz they're there whereas like Irish people they

8995already at the backgrounds they already have their friends or their family etc. so yeah

8996R: and if you could give advice to organizations who are preparing international students

8997before those students come to come to [institution 1] what would that advice be like if an

8998organization where to like create a program to prepare them

8999Lucy: mmhm [long pause] I think it would be to present the University not as it is on the

9000brochure and how it really is I mean I'm sure alumni of [institution 1] everywhere so and I

9001think talking to an alumni is very useful because the person can tell you what she went

9002through but for real because she's saw it isn't like a brochure who looks like everything is

9003perfect I can say what is good is to be aware it's gonna be good but also bad so you'll have

9004the first months being like what the fuck did I do did I make a mistake etc. and also explain

9005that being homesick is normal [long pause] cuz so many people are like oh yeah I am

9006homesick but I can't really talk about it because it's ridiculous because I know I shouldn't

9007anymore but well everyone's got it and also maybe classes to force not to force them but to

9008make them practice their accents not saying that to improve it but they to be proud of them

9009there is one person told me that before I went to Erasmus in Erasmus and I think was

9010beautiful it's like think that every time you hear someone speaking broken English that  
9011mean it speaks a second language at least [long pause] so don't criticize them you're just  
9012fucking English speaker you just speak one language but like so like those kind of  
9013sentences and kind of thing of making them reassured even if their accent is shite would  
9014help someone through#

9015R: and if you could give advice to future students or prospective students of [institution 1]  
9016what would that advice be

9017Lucy: don't come @@@

9018R: @@ don't come

9019Lucy: @@ your supervisor is going to love that @@ no it would be like really think  
9020through the finances [long pause] and n- especially because now you have the crisis I mean  
9021of all the places to live etc. in Dublin so so from my own view it would be really like think  
9022for the finances and not for the first year like to know that you're gonna be there for a long  
9023time it's a PhD four years six years if you're in undergrad you're going to a master after etc.  
9024so just like see the big picture even if it's hard you know when you're 18 to project yourself  
9025but at least for the course you're doing [pause] and I would say also because you're paying  
9026take advantage of everything like go to societies we don't have this in [country] you don't  
9027have societies so and I think it's a great thing because you can network you can make  
9028friends maybe not friends but at least you're with people and also used advisory services  
9029the thing where they review your CV or LinkedIn etc. because you're paying for that so  
9030don't just go to class that would be this because like in [country] you're paying 300 so you  
9031go to class that's it but here if you're paying 6,000 I mean don't go just to class use the  
9032entire place

9033R: are you aware of any support that's given to international students either in your  
9034departments from supervisors in the wider University

9035Lucy: I know I mean from my experience I know [person] from the [department] was a  
9036good person he was very like welcoming and telling us if you have problem you can drop  
9037etc. drop by also someone called [name] in the [department] she's secretary she was very  
9038nice because she always had cookies and teas in her office and she was really  
9039understanding of the perils of administrations [pause] which is great because when I  
9040arrived so basically in [language] universities it's never their fault whatever happens it's  
9041your fault even if it's their fault obviously objectively and what happened is my university  
9042forgot to sign and send them a document so [institution 1] yeah didn't have me on their  
9043records I couldn't register I couldn't be a student and so my Erasmus was being broken and  
9044I just arrived I paid my I found the place everything was gone and then [institution 1] said

9045you cannot be here can't study here so it was a bit of a problem and what was good it's like  
9046this woman [name] she really kind of [pause] took care of me she said okay don't worry  
9047we're gonna do that like just go to class random classes so you practice your English and  
9048we'll see so I think that's good and I knew there was one other thing there's the society of  
9049international students and I wasn't in it but I know that I had many friends who were there  
9050and they had like trips around Ireland etc. that was very nice [pause] there's the Erasmus  
9051group it was also pretty good [pause] maybe of them there [pause] and there's a global  
9052room in the [building] it's pretty nice I know they have got some I mean at least when I  
9053was in Erasmus they're like some homesick dinners where you cook something from your  
9054country and you make it to try to other people so I had friends went there it is also free  
9055food @@ I'm all about free stuff @@ yeah that's what I'm saying we're paying 6,000 get  
9056the best you @ but yeah I had a friend who missed like bread and this Indian girl was like  
9057oh but I love making bread and she was making [bread]

9058R: amazing

9059Lucy: yeah and my friends know how to do um I can't remember those kind of pastries  
9060they have in India and this [clap hands]

9061R: Oh chapati

9062Lucy: yeah yeah and just because this girl she loved chapatis she was homesick and stuff  
9063so I think was good [pause] so yeah those two things are what I can think of

9064R: and do you think that the supports the [institution 1] has for international students do  
9065you think that it's adequate

9066Lucy: [click] well if I had to compare it with [country] yes it is @ in [country] they don't  
9067care like in [country] it's shocking we always wonder why no one wants to go to [country]  
9068[long pause] uh I think it's adequate [pause] but once again I am not from Asia or Africa  
9069I'm from [country] it's kind of closer you know cultural culturally is very close so you  
9070know catholic protestant and fast food and stuff I'm used to that but I don't [long pause]  
9071know if someone from Asia let's say who never left China before I don't know how would  
9072they feel about that because I don't have I mean I know some people that are from Asia  
9073and be like they seem pretty but at the same time I didn't I don't ever remember seeing like  
9074that many of Asian people or I'm gonna be cliché but black people coming from Africa or  
9075South America whatever joining Erasmus parties or Erasmus groups so maybe there is not  
9076that many of them I don't know but [pause] yeah I'd say maybe if something needed to be  
9077done it would be more towards those people because once again [nationality] can use the  
9078[bread] but that's not the end of the world you take a plane for 60 quid return and if you  
9079come from Africa you don't have the time to same China Japan where these countries I

9080sense it would be really very different [pause] that's why I said there's something that I  
9081think is good is for example [graduate students union] most of the members are like Irish  
9082because also America and also Indian and I think it's good because at least you don't  
9083you're not just in front of like those white dudes that are great because they're white and  
9084because they're dudes you know I think that's pretty nice

9085R: okay so are there any questions that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask

9086Lucy: [long pause] I thought something earlier what was it I was like ah yeah I want to talk  
9087about this but I don't remember what it is [long pause] yeah I would like it's a it's not really  
9088a question it's more like a remark because so basically you you were talking about the  
9089language in [institution 1] etc. I think it would be good to make it like option for people to  
9090study Irish Gaelic because like there's too much trying to keep it like a normal language  
9091and you see it on the signs and everything so that's it that's true when you're on Erasmus  
9092that you don't really have this option because you know when you arrive in Ireland that  
9093you could have different reasons but if you'd have like Celtic culture it would be good cuz  
9094I remember I wanted to it they were like no you can't so it'll be good to have that maybe  
9095you know Irish classes not in the will to be bilingual but to have an idea you know just like  
9096you know how do you say bus how to you say this the songs you know like the Irish songs  
9097that are in Irish every every Irish people know but you don't [pause] I know bits because  
9098like in pubs when I'm drunk I'm just joining but I don't really know what it means I think  
9099it would be kind of like fun now you know like like Irish culture class I don't know like  
9100something to for people that are interested in it or maybe there's a society for that I don't  
9101know I guess there's the Irish society somewhere @@ oh yeah that would be a thing also  
9102[institution 1] because they living in the country that we always talk about the fact that it's  
9103English-speaking but it's not only English-speaking [long pause] I don't remember if was it  
9104[name] no it's [name] I met someone who is fighting for all the emails sent by [institution  
9105 1] to be sent in English and Irish

9106R: yeah it'd probably be [name] it sounds like

9107Lucy: no because you're you I mean because I thought maybe it was someone studying  
9108language but uh yeah I think she's doing this and even if I guess 90% of people will be not  
9109with the Irish well if the country chose to have Irish on their fucking signs and the lána  
9110took me like a while to know what it was but I know how to say bus in Irish let's put it on  
9111emails

9112R: anything else that you would like to express or say

9113Lucy: hm no

9114

**Mary**

9115

9116

9117R: um so first could you tell me what your strengths are academically so what are you

9118good at

9119Mary: in general? or

9120R: in general

9121Mary: [long pause] hmm [pause] I think um [pause] researching like uh a writing literature

9122spotting [pause] what's relevant to my topic and structuring I think as well as a text [pause]

9123if we're talking about language or writing an academic paper

9124R: right now it's just in general

9125Mary: well general many other things but anyway we start with this one probably

9126R: yeah but I'd also like to hear what like general like in general academically what are you

9127good at cuz I will ask about language but this //a lot

9128Mary: but what do you define academically| what do you define academic

9129R: so it is like for some people it's time management for other people it's motivation for

9130some people it's determination it depends on the person

9131Mary: [pause] well [pause] because academic academically can be work in academia but

9132also writing but there's some other things so the question is like really actually very vague

9133R: yeah

9134Mary: and so I can only do that picking from whatever can get my mind which is

9135researching and um uh obviously [pause] my motivation as well in general that's human

9136quality not necessarily academic

9137R: yeah but that's fine yeah and so what would you define as researching like when you say

9138researching is a strength was what does researching mean to you

9139Mary: well exactly the the exact thing I thought about it which doesn't mean that it's it's

9140limited to that is when I'm looking for for um [pause] [click] the literature that support my

9141argument? [pause] I think I'm particularly good at res- &gt;well at least I feel&lt; and I've been

9142told that you know I I I do good literature reviews because [pause] I learned how to

9143structure how to look to- just look for the main topics how to understand what they are

9144how to structure to the content and how to obviously search and support them in general

9145R: and what would your weaknesses or difficulties be in terms of academics

9146Mary: academic. in general.

9147R: mmh-m

9148Mary: [sigh] umm [long pause] I wouldn't call it a weakness [pause] but it's something that

9149um [pause] influences hugely on my performance academically and that is uh the fact that I



9150 have to support myself so although I'm strongly motivated to research and to do what I'm  
9151 doing because I want it at the same time a part of me a big part of me also wants a a adult  
9152 life [pause] um so that influence is a lot on the time on focus the concentration that I put  
9153 into the work and um [pause] and also the fact that I have to work you know in order to  
9154 maintain myself but having to earn [pause] most of the money that I need monthly [pause]  
9155 takes almost half of my more than half of my working time so my my my whatever  
9156 academia research I'm doing is reduced to a couple of days [pause] together even so it's not  
9157 that so yeah it's a problem and if it's mine it's not a say my own weakness but I think that is  
9158 something that really im- im- impedes my whatever outcomes I could obtain which really  
9159 really wreaks havoc academically so that's one thing

9160 R: okay and so in terms of language what would your strengths be

9161 Mary: >language speaking language writing<

9162 R: just language

9163 Mary: >language in general or English language< no? language in general

9164 R: well academic language since we're since we're here I would say English but if it's  
9165 differs from an [language] I'd be interested in hearing that

9166 Mary: [sigh] [long pause] well that's interesting um that you're putting in the [language 2]  
9167 part in uhm and what was original strength or weakness?

9168 R: strength

9169 Mary: strength. in academic ehhhh writing?

9170 R: no not writing in general language

9171 Mary: academic language every language @ I'm sorry yeah we are tired for the record umh  
9172 my strength in terms of language [long pause] well I think my language never comes only  
9173 just as a language whatever I do the language comes with many other things comes with  
9174 mimic emotion orrr comes with [pause] uh empathy so my language is never just language  
9175 pure language it always carry something of me and carries out something from the of the  
9176 message I want to deliver whether it's writing or whether it's speaking both of them it  
9177 doesn't really or whatever I do the language in general and looking at English [language]  
9178 [long pause] uhm there is much more depth into the use I make of [language] obviously  
9179 because [language] became my second lang- uhm my mother tongue but I do think >no I  
9180 was think no< both same thing academically in terms of language probably be more in  
9181 [language] but still a lot lot less in [language] uhm let's add that second third language  
9182 which is actually the mother tongue so you don't have to write academically in [language] I  
9183 would have [pause] quite I'll be quite challenged in I don't I don't remember ever writing

9184academically in [language] so that would be difficult but I would still be able to speak I  
9185suppose like be very eloquent in [language] but I think would be a little bit more challenge  
9186R: what would your difficulties be in in terms of language  
9187Mary: difficulties. [pause] [sigh] specific difficulties [sigh] well [pause] if um [pause] if  
9188I'm in a relaxed environment I worry less about the perfection of the language I produce  
9189when I use it as a second language or third language whatever but even my own language  
9190given that the [language] it's less than the other languages now uhm [long pause] so yeah  
9191that a difficulty would be that even though I know the concepts I still worry am I using the  
9192right one am I >but it's< [pause] in this of course mostly in [pause] you know official  
9193environments those environments where you need to focus uh you need to deliver a certain  
9194[pause] message in a certain way because you feel the pressure obviously because and I  
9195feel the pressure even I'm among non-native speakers and honestly because uhm [pause]  
9196you know the perfection I'm looking it's not necessarily uh uhm provoked because of by  
9197the others or by the standards the other's set it's also a standard I set to myself all the time  
9198[pause] a desire another imposition I aim for that I love to speak the language well and ex-  
9199press whatever feelings I have as best as possible so yeah difficulties like this is looking  
9200back on my- uh using the right language that's the thing  
9201R: okay and so I know that you've done both a masters and now you're doing a PhD so  
9202right now I want you to focus on the modules that you've taken both as a master students  
9203and a PhD student so what did you have to do for your modules what was the work  
9204required in your modules  
9205Mary: [long pause] [sigh] [long pause] thinking from where to start [long pause] well you  
9206start from reading. reading the materials materials that you are given you have to do your  
9207own home readings in order to obviously not only to not only after modules were or classes  
9208were occurring but also before to prepare yourself that's the reading uhm then it's  
9209obviously [pause] uhm writing assignments which is a part that you know very well  
9210[pause] maybe deliver a couple of presentations [pause] engage with the knowledge  
9211material and concepts theories so yeah  
9212R: and can you tell me more about the assignment so what was the form of the assessment  
9213how long were you given the questions etc.  
9214Mary: [long pause] for assignment depends as well about of of the module some modules  
9215would uhm would require more descriptive uhh uhhm [click] let's say [click] writing of the  
9216[pause] whatever topic you choose so I remember one when I was describing a fact.  
9217[pause] and basically there you were asked to [pause] show that you understood the fact  
9218you know just to describe it in a certain way [pause] critically obviously [pause] >but not

9219as much< critically because in this case was describing that thing [pause] and other other  
9220modules instead you are asked to in the assignments you asked to uhm [long pause] either  
9221choose a topic and uhm write an argument critically in favor or against that whatever topic  
9222you choose and support with literature and so forth [pause]

9223R: and so as a research student what is the work required of you as a research student

9224Mary: @oh @Jesus @ @what @kind @of @questions @@ @okay @ obviously now that  
9225you ask me like these into two part two is in [language] and them can't think of anything  
9226requirements but over like to sum up the huge amount of work is required to do it it's uh  
9227researching and and and writing the thesis [pause] obviously [pause] with arguments  
9228collecting data using methodology huge amount of work I don't know if you want  
9229something specifically to say

9230R: no I just want you to describe what you see as researching

9231Mary: I see see like the I see like a huge amount of work but I love doing it I just wish I  
9232had more time [pause] but essentially it's uh exploring um the literature or whatever  
9233research that has been done on a specific topic [pause] uh that topic uh most probably  
9234relates to your your aims and objectives and then you need to establish a methodology uh  
9235you to write you know argument and and collect data or whatever all this together [pause]  
9236a lot a huge amount of work

9237R: okay all right and so going back to the modules and the lectures what would happen  
9238inside of the classroom so how were the classes structured what did you do was there a  
9239professor lecturing was PowerPoint was it class discussion etc.

9240Mary: well. all of them. [pause] but not all the time in the same module like [pause] uh I  
9241say in part because uh like depends the modules teaching about but yeah #unt was  
9242[module] performed general [topic] there wouldn't be any [pause] presentations there  
9243would be like homework and exercises kind of but then others will have presentations  
9244group work uhm and [pause] >a lot of engagement this one yeah< but depends but there is  
9245PowerPoint but there will be discussion there would be all these elements together but not  
9246in the same very few the modules would have had all this together

9247R: and so currently how would you evaluate your current academic success so how do you  
9248feel that you're doing

9249Mary: well uhm [pause] sincerely@ I think I'm going very well [exhale] @ but because I  
9250see well and I define well in a certain way [pause] however if I would look back at the  
9251standards or whatever I'm required to do I am behind with the work [pause] a little bit not  
9252that much but again because I know myself very well I know that when the moment comes  
9253and you know I know that I would be able to catch up with all that so [pause] I think over

9254all over over all good the basis are there I just need to have more time to actually you know  
9255[pause] deepen the knowledge that I have so time is always for me the matter of pressure  
9256huge huge variable in my results but at the end I will succeed however this imply at some  
9257points during the path the whatever program for how many years that I will have to work  
9258and write non-stop for hours and hours to catch up with what I couldn't do in the moments  
9259I had to work or other things so yeah

9260R: yeah so you said that you define well in a certain way how do you define well

9261Mary: well I defined well in terms of [long pause] uhm [long pause] th- th- the as an  
9262overall development so for me academia doesn't mean only producing the paper for me  
9263academia means uh broadening ideas learning more about other things as well engaging  
9264with people developing relationship which will and do to some extent contribute to that  
9265knowledge that I need and even if not in this moment I know that subsequently they will so  
9266my well is defined as more than operational [pause] way of dealing with an academic goal  
9267and [pause] so yeah this is how I define like an overall scheme like overall [pause] and it's  
9268broad it's not only that means it's not only to write a PhD and how the thesis is completed  
9269and you know very well but so

9270R: right so how do your professors assess academic success so what are they looking for

9271Mary: in this case we're doing about PhD

9272R: yeah

9273Mary: >in this case a PhD< well. so [long pause] well. I'm being told that what I'm doing  
9274now that the spending process I'm doing now which which in this moment is not conveyed  
9275in a written text [pause] it's something that others would do at the end [pause] so even if I  
9276my academic success between commas or progress cannot be evaluated in a full-length text  
9277elsewhere classic within the lines it's still evaluated as good because it's a different process  
9278it's a different thesis so yeah

9279R: okay and so as a master's student how did your professors evaluate academic success

9280Mary: well obviously we were assessed with assignments [long pause] generally uhh a  
9281couple of them [pause] used assignments [pause] written assignments obviously and  
9282presentations so it wasn't completely just final written product it was also a representation  
9283which involved as well group work and collaborative but only probably one or actually  
9284probably mostly only one or two modules would have had that I think

9285R: but what are the professors were looking for when they're grading so when they have  
9286that four-thousand-word essay in their hands how do they decide this is academic success

9287Mary: so they'd look at the content if the content is [pause] relevant solidly sustained and  
9288support they will look at uhm it's a series of things they look at the presentation they look

9289at the use of literature they would look at uhm look at [pause] uhm what is it I don't  
9290remember uh so there are four or five things that according to the grading system are  
9291looked at uhm [pause] I think only one out of six or seven assignments so I think only one  
9292so yeah we said structure argument literature uh presentation and I don't remember the  
9293other one in this moment but um and language is included? [pause] but not necessarily?  
9294and I was saying this probably only one in one assignment I've been >I can't remember  
9295what< well suggested to uhh >not to proof read the assignment but [pause] I must say that I  
9296wr- I must say that I wrote that assignment in two days so there was a reason for that  
9297R: yeah okay and how do your professors both in the Masters in the PhD how do they or  
9298did they communicate their expectations to the students  
9299R: [long pause] uhm [long pause] I'm afraid I don't have memory of that exactly [pause]  
9300but I can tell youuuu it's at the beginning you are told each of the aims of the module and  
9301[pause] you were told about the assignment [pause] and [pause] sometime probably after  
9302the third or fourth week there was probably there was like a workshop about writing  
9303assignments or exactly what they wanted assignments so there was in a way but uh [pause]  
9304a related section dedicated to what they wanted to have in the assignment or how they want  
9305to be construct to construct it or whatever something similar  
9306R: yeah and were you given rubrics or guidelines before completing the assignment  
9307Mary: [pause] [exhale] [pause] I do remember receiving the uh uhm th- completing the  
9308assignment in term of that topic? or in term of the structure because I remember one thing I  
9309remember receiving something uhm like how to write the assignment and you know  
9310talking a little bit [pause] probably the beginning [pause] not all the modules I think but  
9311there was anyway uh [pause] [click] whatever or sheet or mini workshop on how to design  
9312it and introduction and uhm conclusion and argumentation and other thing and literature  
9313and references included as well there was that yeah but for not all them at least not that I  
9314remember  
9315R: and do you remember if that was helpful and clear or  
9316Mary: well probably at that time I wasn't I wouldn't would- wouldn't have been able to  
9317actually know if it was clear or not because you know at the beginning you don't really  
9318know yourself although I did write a lot in English when I was doing my dissertation my  
9319undergraduate I did my dissertation in English [pause] so I I was aware [pause] anyway of  
9320the things [pause] but it did help maybe [pause] maybe to some extent but anyway when it  
9321comes to practice it's a bit more difficult when you have to space you have to find your  
9322literature your literature you have to yeah that is more researcher skill I think than an actual  
9323so it comes through practice in a certain way

9324R: okay right so now as a PhD student how would your supervisor or your professors  
9325express or communicate their expectations

9326Mary: well uhhm [long pause] [click] [pause] I'm struggling to decide which wha- what-  
9327what exactly to say about it th- th- the means of communication th- th- the content and  
9328which aspect because your questions are pretty vague

9329R: yeah they're purposefully vague

9330Mary: yeah to choose the uh probably uh the importance [pause] uhmm [sigh] [pause] how  
9331do they communicate what I am expected to do

9332R: mm-hm

9333Mary: well first of all [pause] I think I'm expected to know was well what to do to some  
9334extent uhm and if I'm not if I'm not expected completely to know what I'm doing I'm  
9335expected to work my way through it and understand how to do it because it's a PhD you  
9336are a researcher so you are [long pause] learning your way through it otherwise it wouldn't  
9337be a learning process I wouldn't be called student would be just full stop I think so certain  
9338where we are meant to learn what we're doing or by doing it [long pause] [inhale] but  
9339exactly exactly is expected uhm guided? [long pause] we we are never happy how much  
9340we are guided I think and we would always need more [pause] but I think I have a certain  
9341guidance [pause] and uh and and that guidance um relates what to what to structure both uh  
9342[pause] content [long pause] again we would like more but uhm in my case I think it's in so  
9343much of my own case because [pause] if I would request more guidance more assistant I  
9344would receive it [long pause] to some extent it's because I have my own time? because of  
9345the work and stuff I'm not requesting because I need to focus the [pause] so so this  
9346expectation what I'm expected to do it's well aware clear from the beginning [long pause]  
9347it's that maybe there is a certain flexibility freedom? in in in the the various steps of what is  
9348expected from me

9349R: great and so in general what do you think students need to succeed at [institution 1]

9350Mary: [long pause] well [pause] [click] I think they need possibility to [pause] engage to  
9351express I mean definitely need people to listen to what they the the enquiries even the most  
9352banal that they are you know unfortunately everyone is so busy [long pause] so [long  
9353pause] students [pause] struggle to find that [long pause] communication and fear >I feel  
9354fear< sometimes as saying this thing that may be seen as stupid because the others know  
9355everything and you know you don't know as a student something like that so I think it's  
9356[pause] so they would need more support [pause] uhh a more let's say open doors in a  
9357certain way [pause] whether whatever they have to say [pause] uhh complete guidance of  
9358what it means to be a researcher uhh and probably more support as well in in in how to be

9359a researcher in [pause] this environment specific environment which has it's specific road  
 9360and specific standards and so forth [pause] and uh language as well especially think-  
 9361thinking of international students language support is very important but I would say from  
 9362the beginning [pause] I would actually say prior to it [pause] then the in- the continuous I  
 9363would say as uhm uhm the continuous learning of the language yes complementing the  
 9364problem but like originally they should maybe students should receive >not necessarily just  
 9365international< also shou- should received you know a a a [pause] a training in what is to be  
 9366a researcher [pause] whether it's a postgrad or a PhD [pause] and that includes were  
 9367academic writing researching skills critical thinking and so forth [pause] for sure [pause] I  
 9368had to [pause] I had some? of it although not as much as I should have had when I started  
 9369my postgraduate master's because I was coming from a different system a system where  
 9370[pause] [sigh] uh critical thinking is less taught [pause] hm in [country] there's a much  
 9371more pressure from the frontal frontal frontal teaching and more passive learning perhaps  
 9372so then it comes down that you have to yourself being a teacher learner you don't really  
 9373have that th- those two so I didn't have I don't think I had that many tools as a researcher at  
 9374the beginning so I had to kind of know a very very fast but it was possible because [pause]  
 9375I engage with the people around me the researchers colleagues they're experienced so that's  
 9376the thing when I say the overall [pause] it's the overall structure that is to have whatever  
 9377R: and so speaking of language so how much per factor does a language play and academic  
 9378success

9379Mary: [pause] [sharp exhale] quite a bit @@ huge bit I would say [pause] because uhmm  
 9380[click] [pause] it's huge. [pause] that's it that's the answer language is huge it's huge it's not  
 9381complete [long pause] it's not the only thing and you can have the language you want  
 9382perfection in language but if you don't have other skills [pause] you don't you can't manage  
 9383>so it's a< it's a #toll that means the language in balance it's one of the most important  
 9384obviously but it doesn't come alone

9385R: okay so speaking of those other factors what other factors impact academic success and  
 9386that could be inside and outside of [institution 1]

9387Mary: [long pause] well [exhale] so I just said something earlier first of all uhm uhm  
 9388[pause] you come from different systems and different backgrounds so that's a big factor if  
 9389there's no adaptation to the new background uhm if there is no awareness and that you  
 9390don't have enough time to adapt to the new environment [pause] with [pause] all its [pause]  
 9391requirements and elements and so forth you will always run catch up catch up desperately  
 9392so [inhale] so so the difference or the the the not difference between the old and the new  
 9393[pause] but just how it is you need to you need to adapt to what it is to what the system is

9394then what else [exhale] as I said in an- most of it it comes from that from the differences  
9395from the system the critical thinking you need to know what is critical thinking you need to  
9396know how to support your arguments [pause] which is very common now in the normal  
9397communication but when it comes to writing in a different language [pause] and you  
9398cannot hope that you can actually express your opinion [pause] when you write something  
9399then it's a problem as I said the difference is huge [pause] [click] what else uhmm [pause]  
9400resources [pause] but actually knowing as well how to use those resources because you can  
9401have all the resources around you but if no one tells you or no one guides you no one's  
9402[pause] not actually that it must be someone to tell you what to do [pause] but a little bit of  
9403introduction? a little bit of as well [pause] effort in showing the learner why they should be  
9404investing that new thing or why they should learn how to use [software] and why you do  
9405those things yeah a little bit of more kind of careful attention? [pause] and in terms of exact  
9406language you are saying? probably? no? no no [pause] no no okay

9407R: just other factors

9408Mary: okay so other factors? yeah more factors?

9409R: if you have more yeah @

9410Mary: I'm a bad respondent @

9411R: no you're not @

9412Mary: It's a respondent researcher uhmm [long pause] let me just think so it's [click] [long  
9413pause] well the most important thing is academics what is academic uh ph- the program  
9414that you undertake is [pause] to have the network around you [pause] and uhm and again to  
9415be trained how to make the most of the resources that you have [pause] and um and have  
9416people around you that are willing to to look into the things as you see them as well  
9417coming from a different background with your own perspective so a little bit of you know  
9418kind of meeting at halfway? Not completely imposing the new system? just allowing the  
9419person to express [pause] >okay giving a possibility< the person to learn what's here  
9420allowing the person to express what they already have as a wr- as a researcher you know  
9421[pause] knowledge

9422R: okay all right so now I want to kind of switch to your experiences with entry and  
9423preparation tools the things before you came to [institution 1]

9424Mary: yeah

9425R: so did you have any linguistic or academic preparation before coming to [institution 1]  
9426so that's courses like IELTS courses EAP uhm you've mentioned that you've written your  
9427undergraduate dissertation in English things like that



9428Mary: so [click] uhm I didn't [pause] take any international language test IELTS TOEFL  
9429something like that [pause] I went to an undergraduate in [country] and uhm [pause] which  
9430[long pause] was many of the modules were English medium [pause] then again I had I  
9431was lucky that I my supervisor was she was- what was important about her is that she she's  
9432she's a researcher not only academic [long pause] so her approach to [pause] writing and  
9433dissertation assignment was [long pause] very much as a researcher and this is what she  
9434taught [pause] I'm not really sure that was the curriculum I think a lot of her work was  
9435separate because what skills I got from [pause] working with her in my dissertation or  
9436attending her modules other colleagues did not get so I think that was her own sometimes  
9437include whatever that was her in #unt was her professional background that [pause] is also  
9438not even specific modules [pause] I did learn English many years and in university the  
9439focus was on writing so I did three year of university the undergraduate were on let's say  
9440academic English a good part? [pause] and then other aspects because the undergraduate  
9441w- was in [topic] there would have been uhm there's the academic part but also uhm  
9442English as a lingua franca and all those say openings that the language has in real life  
9443[pause] more [pause] but there was a good focus on academic English [pause] >but also  
9444other languages other language I learned [language] in when I was in undergraduate  
9445[pause] and uh [click] uhm [pause] three years and the third year was again very specific  
9446[language] so so I kind of learn how to transfer as well the skills from all the languages and  
9447I learned [pause] so yeah and then the big thing was to communicate things written down  
9448in the dissertation in completely in English [pause] supervised by a uh [pause] my very  
9449famous [pause] supervisor [long pause] who uh like if you look now to my undergraduate  
9450dissertation [pause] you would see the the stamp of a researcher? [pause] but if you look at  
9451other colleagues [pause] you would see the stamp of descriptive or you know [long pause]  
9452the less critical thinking less argumentation all those those the the support so I think it's a  
9453lot because of this person in particular and [pause] her teaching ability

9454R: and do you feel that um specifically undergraduate your experience with your  
9455supervisor and also the academic English experience did that adequately prepare you for  
9456studies here in Ireland

9457Mary: [pause] I do think it prepared me more than it prepared others that took the tests  
9458[pause] because [pause] even if my English is even now not perfect [pause] and even if I  
9459still I'm still learning completely every single day I'm still learning things I did have those  
9460research skills that [pause] as I said others did not have [pause] that took them others who  
9461took tests and and and when you have to actually write your own academic paper or you  
9462research and actually when you're reading something the ability to extract main points uh

9463support that doesn't come just from reading perfectly English with the best English accent  
9464it comes from [pause] knowing how to do it and that knowing how to do it it came to the  
9465specific experience and I do think when I relate to other colleagues of mine who did better  
9466than I did in English it maybe they took the C2 or whatever standard [pause] I finished with  
9467C2 as well [long pause] but it doesn't really mean anything when you have to do your  
9468subject so yeah I think the undergraduate prepared me and do think they that experience  
9469prepared me more [pause] then maybe it just strategically for a test would have done  
9470[pause] but that's my opinion

9471R: okay and so what type of preparation do you feel the international students should  
9472undertake before studying in [institution 1]

9473Mary: [pause] well [exhale] [long pause] I do think that uhm [long pause] a preparation  
9474[pause] of at least two three months [long pause] wait uhm why am I saying two two  
9475months not because the time as you need this time to acquire the language you can acquire  
9476everyone acquir- learn a language at their own speed but you need a time to engage with  
9477uhm and even #unt suggests prior entry to uhm to your uhm university uhm in which  
9478academic writing is taught but not necessarily as a uhm just as [pause] a rule of what you  
9479should do but what it can be done uhm research skills. as I said also preparation into how  
9480to [pause] make use of the resources available [pause] uh in terms of language specific as I  
9481said uhm academic writing critical thinking argumentation uh possibly through uhm  
9482through [pause] you know projects [pause] so uhm [pause] less [pause] talk more active  
9483learning own learning and uhm so it's a direction someone to direct [pause] towards  
9484[pause] they teach how [pause] but also have the time >that's why I'm saying to two three  
9485months< have the time to engage. directly. yourself. and with these things and I'm so I'm  
9486saying project as well I mean a lot because [long pause] bringing something [pause] to the  
9487end [long pause] you know it's not only the the process >through to the end it's not the  
9488end< it's a process but it's also the end of bring a project to the end makes you [pause] see  
9489[pause] the whole picture what you will be expected to do and when you see what you can  
9490do how you can do it so I would say having the time to engage with [pause] actual tasks  
9491that you'll perform in them in your future whatever Master or whatever or undergraduate I  
9492think it's very important so it's [pause] and and possibly with a bit of content as well of the  
9493future uhm modules that the postgraduate or whatever course will be so maybe specific  
9494[pause] as well specific language or specific language for the specific uhm you know  
9495modules if [pause] if I would I would go to start in I don't know medicine a master in  
9496medicine [pause] and I did all my preparations was in [country] until now I really need to  
9497know the specific terms or uhm specific uhm structures not even the words because the

9498 words you can look for them in them in the uhm dictionary whatever it's just the whole  
9499 thing the whole part and uhm again possibly [pause] with using the same assessment  
9500 between commas taught in that it will be used in their future so I think uhm >it comes to  
9501 me in [language]< uhm uh [pause] getting to into the the actual module before starting it  
9502 [pause] through the means of the language obviously and focusing on not only the  
9503 language bringing content as well language but also the whole thing so I would make the  
9504 preparation I would say I would suggest uhm like ideally I think would be to literally do a  
9505 mini program in a short period [pause] and be guided overall specifically language through  
9506 the language and about the language

9507 R: alright and so if you could give advice to faculty and professors in in supporting  
9508 international students what would that advice be

9509 Mary: well just #unt that's my advice my advice is to [pause] [sigh] put in place resources  
9510 and programs uhm language courses but as I said the the blueprints I just I was just talking  
9511 earlier [pause] of the overall picture that's the most important uhm [pause] and give them  
9512 the time to adapt to the system a new system before the things the actual course actual  
9513 module or also actual program starts

9514 R: but what about when they're already in //[[institution 1] how can professors

9515 Mary: in [institution 1]? in [institution 1]? for international students?

9516 R: yes

9517 Mary: so [pause] the first that came to my mind [pause] may may not be very relevant  
9518 [pause] uhm but the first thing that came to my mind was a bit more connection between  
9519 [click] there should be bit more connection between the vario- various modules that are  
9520 thought they should not be taught in isolation and uhm there should be uhm  
9521 communication within the whole program uhm for international obviously continuously  
9522 preparation in terms language in terms of academic language if they feel they need it but  
9523 also that's academic preparation when you start the preparation should not come in  
9524 isolation it should not just come as you know that or whatever it should be integrated into  
9525 the actual module so I think it should be a continuous [pause] continued support continued  
9526 preparation and then yeah [pause] active more dynamic possibly and nothing in isolation

9527 R: and if you could give advice to future students more students for looking to come to  
9528 [institution 1] what would that advice be

9529 Mary: how to prepare themselves

9530 R: just advice in general

9531 Mary: bring your flask of coffee @ so uhm [long pause] well my advice [long pause] my  
9532 advice is to look for real life experience [sigh] and uhm [long pause] but you see depends

9533depends of many aspects depends from where you come depends eh who you are how you  
9534want it really if you are introverted person you will you need a different advice if you are  
9535uhm an open person there is different advice I really think this little bit little bit hard  
9536questions I I I can't give you like if to answer in a phrase would not not encompass  
9537everything I'm thinking could it would be just like the language tests that we are talking a  
9538little bit of what I'm thinking I would have different suggestions or advices for different  
9539students type of students but in order as an institution to be able to suggest or advise all the  
9540students that are all different would be to first put in place measures establish who is for  
9541who's coming and what overall defined them and try to adapt this uhm support for them so  
9542then for the students my advice would be to look for this support to the real experience and  
9543look for help in language learning as well [pause] again depends what level of language  
9544have- depended on so many things so this is not I can't give on advice because there are too  
9545many from my vision

9546R: yeah yeah

9547Mary: what advice [long pause] the most important is uh [long pause] as soon as possible  
9548try to engage with the place with the people because that will then give you create a  
9549network human but also resour- resources [pause] language is very important [pause]  
9550however I would not be intimidated if the language is not perfect as long as you insist in  
9551pushing you as an international student to [pause] to to interaction with environment so I  
9552think it's interaction because because the language learning or the learning in general  
9553[pause] of course [pause] when you actually have the possibility to apply it [pause] if you  
9554don't apply whether is in communication or written form [pause] you can't you don't know  
9555you are not actually able to say I've learned that you need to apply it so

9556R: and what do you wish that you had known before coming to [institution 1]

9557Mary: [pause] [exhales] wow [pause] well @@ you see again because I was here before  
9558starting my postgraduate program [long pause] so because I had this opportunity [pause] to  
9559immerse myself in the environment before coming to [institution 1]

9560R: so then but comes to two different questions I have for you wish you had known before  
9561those three months is the first question

9562Mary: I didn't came with I came here for [program] so I came even come sorry with a with  
9563a set of things with a set of expectations so for me was an exploration of my whole being  
9564[long] and it was a great exploration experience and that experience that's why I'm saying  
9565the two three months in the person has of learner has possibility to to engage with those  
9566academics with those students with the environment with the resources with everything  
9567[pause] with whatever he or she has to do that part it's extremely useful and it makes for

9568many many many many of many lacks you may have in the language and research skills  
9569and so forth because you'd have the time to catch up with what you don't have and to adapt  
9570what you have to what you are required [long pause] what else [pause] more time in  
9571specific in specific in specific specific I think I had more researching skills no I mean I  
9572think I had them more awareness of the the pressure that I will [long pause] uh go through  
9573at the speed of assignments every you know whatever [pause] three assignments in less  
9574than a month or something like that and in fact that we were working full-time at that time  
9575was assignment three days or two days [pause] but well I can't think that wasn't aware  
9576because I was aware of that so it's me I push myself so probably I'm a different case of just  
9577I don't know if I'm I I feel personally in like a different case from the standard whatever I  
9578mean a student that arrives here that doesn't have to pay his or her rent and you know I  
9579think it's a bit different when you have your own life it requires it but I was aware of most  
9580of the things maybe a little bit more awareness [pause] of the- the- an own of expectations  
9581in terms of assign writing assignment writing not assignment writing th- those the the  
9582requirements what is expected what do they want how do they want probably that's a little  
9583bit more a bit more clear and a bit more [pause] concrete [pause] more examples more  
9584[pause] and also kind of a little bit of a guidance to to to let you know to what extent they  
9585can deviate from what is they are required to do what is accepted what is not accepted so  
9586yeah that is what but again uhm I'm definitely not saying that [pause] that it can be done  
9587like that but that would have probably eased a little bit my [pause] whatever terrible you  
9588know constraints in my work a bit more awareness a bit more concrete with examples yes  
9589[pause] but again as I said I had the opportunity to see a lot of that before and that really  
9590enabled me as a full-time worker as a [age] years almost [gender] to actually uh with all  
9591the things that comes with to actually be able to complete the master in a year [pause] at  
9592that level [pause] was because I had that time and one hundred percent that if I would have  
9593came here uh if I had come here directly into the master [pause] that would have been a  
9594shock for me? [pause] and I wouldn't have I don't I'm not I never say never but I might not  
9595have been able to complete it [pause] which demonstrates that I was having so let's say  
9596having to work full-time blah blah blah blah [pause] and coming directly into the Master's  
9597without knowing people where are the resources uh I would have been like by the time of  
9598the first three assignments I would have been dead [pause] because I wouldn't have been  
9599able to write them at such speed or the things without actually having already knowledge  
9600of the resources available so that's my future advice

9601R: okay all right and so speaking of support and resources are you aware of support offered  
9602to international students and students in general in your department also the wider College

9603Mary: [long pause] I know I know the wider college there is support? I never [pause] I  
9604never though I know [click] I think it's not very much uhm obvious that support so I think  
9605[pause] it is there but you kind of don't know directly it's there [long pause] so a bit more  
9606support should be there >but there is I know there is uhm< association of international  
9607students and so forth [pause] but again as a stu- you need to also have the time to [pause] if  
9608you are a student who works that doesn't work and stuff like that maybe you are you have  
9609more time to engage with international societies or with the resources are available >in the  
9610department< I know there is um I know there isn't um [long pause] a uhm a support in  
9611terms of there isn't support in terms of >I don't know if there is< I don't I don't think there  
9612is I really don't know but I don't think there is a support in terms of you psychological or or  
9613networking unless you create your own network in my school [long pause] I may be wrong  
9614I don't I may be wrong but in this moment I can't think of anything but maybe can't think  
9615of it because I've never accessed it or never went for it because I didn't need it or I didn't  
9616look for it because I couldn't because I was busy [pause] I know there is EAP English for  
9617academic purposes in sessional oh I remember [pause] I remember when I f- when I started  
9618my Master's I remember we we at the time we were told that there is this EAP and I  
9619remember it struck see it depends on me see it it struck me it was like 50 Euro [long pause]  
9620and I was like I can't because I wasn't able to pay the 50 euro because I was earning very  
9621little money which is ridiculous because 50 euro it's nothing if you think in the nowadays  
9622society the value of money [pause] I think was one specific teacher that made like him  
9623directly found it amazing he was amazing but I remember it was like wow 50 euro for an  
9624in-sessional EAP my God and I remember going and actually talking about it with some  
9625teacher that I already knew and said maybe I'll I'll maybe I'll join because I think  
9626something and I n- n- some I could I could improve there is something that needs  
9627improvement obviously and uhm but else and if I can I want to I want to take the classes  
9628with you because I knew already the person again the same thing knowing what you have  
9629it's so important uh being aware it's important on the resources other people because they  
9630are more similar to you whatever you [pause] it's human to have to come with preferences  
9631which are not preferences they're just simply there is that switch you got uhm and I  
9632remember the 50 euros and I remember that uhm [pause] I'm sure I would have gained  
9633more knowledge? [long pause] not it wouldn't have changed my life completely [pause]  
9634but some extra resources would have been helpful yes def- definitely especially working  
9635on the first assignment that was the first first one was a trauma [pause] the rest you get  
9636used to because you have done one so yeah I couldn't take the EAP because of because  
9637they were 50 euro [pause] for two classes or something like that [pause] but I remember

9638that so money again money time why should there be 50 euro why shouldn't it be uhm  
9639[pause] integrated service [pause] compile as a set a part not in isolation not a payment  
9640altogether

9641R: okay so that's all the questions I have for you but are there any questions that you wish I  
9642had asked that I didn't ask

9643Mary: [long pause] no I don't think I have any question no because first of all they were  
9644very vague you know this @@ and eh if I had something in mind in the beginning because  
9645of the vagueness I just lost myself in whatever I had to tell you the moment so maybe yeah  
9646[pause] there's so much to talk about when you talk about this [pause] again it's not just  
9647language [pause] like writing an assignment it's not just delivering the paper of 3,000  
9648words it's your being in there personality your background what you learn what you  
9649studied how you learn just to work how you learn to express yourself how the topics blah  
9650blah oh there's so much behind it so so yeah this [pause] will be too much

9651R: is there anything else that you'd like to express

9652Mary: thank you for listening to me for one hour @

9653

9654

**Max**

9655

9656R: okay so um my first question is what are you studying at [institution 1]

9657Max: okay in [country] I mean [discipline] so here I am doing [discipline] two modules in  
9658[topic] and one in [topic]

9659R: okay are you a visiting student or Erasmus

9660Max: Erasmus for a semester

9661R: okay for one semester so this is your first and only semester here so far okay um so  
9662what are your strengths academically

9663Max: well I'd I'd say my English level I mean for coming here uhm [pause] and [pause] I  
9664have a certain like um historical uh school path cuz I in [country] I didn't go to university  
9665right after high school I did like two years of uhm studies that you can do to enter the best  
9666schools in [country] and I didn't have the school I wanted so I decided to go to university  
9667cos it's easier to get there but they assume that when you have done these two years you  
9668will have better skills in like comprehension and writing and it's easier for you to analyze  
9669stuff

9670R: mm-hmm okay and do you find that that's true it is easier for you or

9671Max: uhm I don't know if it's easier that I definitely see things that other students don't  
9672[pause] but um at university they don't expect the same things and usually what the other  
9673students see is enough

9674R: mm-hmm okay alright and what would you say your strengths are in terms of English

9675Max: uhm [long pause] I'd say that I I think I don't have a a academic English uhm I know  
9676some colloquial words and that helps uhm in conversations yeah I'm not stuck with the  
9677only things I've learned at school

9678R: okay right and what would you say your weaknesses are in terms of academics or  
9679academically

9680Max: [sigh] [long pause] well I don't know if they answers the question or not but I would  
9681say that I have some weakness in math because of my uh scholar path uhm I've always  
9682chosen to do it [discipline] as a major and therefore the modules in math are less uh har-  
9683yes less hard and therefore every time I try to go to something more uh mathematical I end  
9684up being stuck because I didn't have the prerequisites to do so

9685R: okay yeah so just not having the background

9686Max: yeah @

9687R: yeah okay completely understand that same @ so what would you say your weaknesses  
9688are in terms of English

9689Max: well I I did get an exam on my English level for Erasmus purposes so that they can  
9690see if there's a difference between before and after the Erasmus experiment and uh it was  
9691saying that um um I have vocabulary and grammar that is like it was like C1 which is not  
9692that good compared to that area a grade I had in comprehension and expression so yeah I  
9693would say it's more this is the academic part of my English is not that good even though I  
9694had really good teachers and I was in good schools but you had more English lessons than  
9695the other students

9696R: okay so you did you get a C2 on everything else and then just

9697Max: uh I I think I got a B2 in grammar and vocabulary and a C1 in the other stuff so um I  
9698want to get C2 in comprehension and expression at least if I could get a C2 in grammar and  
9699vocabulary it would be good but as six months abroad is not enough I think

9700R: it depends

9701Max: we'll see @

9702R: yeah so in terms of [institution 1] how would you evaluate your current academic  
9703success like do you feel that you're doing well do you feel that you're struggling

9704Max: um I am struggling because it's really different and I'm I'm struggling academically  
9705because I had to miss a lot of lectures hours the first weeks because it was hard to get at my



9706schedule and it was hard to get registered and uhm my schedule was finally decided like  
9707two weeks ago maybe three weeks ago so basically there's some like a lecture some  
9708modules I've been to like one month after it started so you have to get into a group that is  
9709already formed with for the projects and this is more for [discipline] modules and for  
9710[discipline] one it's really hard because we don't do the tutorials the way they do so here  
9711you it's like an exam you get a paper you have to answer the questions you give it back and  
9712you are graded but this is not what tutorials mean to me like [pause] the teacher does some  
9713exercise and then you do some on your own but he has done some before he has shown  
9714you how to do it so it's really really hard to manage a [discipline] tutorial and the only  
9715thing I think I'm quite good at is [module] cos it's uh coding and even though I don't know  
9716the language I've already coded in another language and I have quite good marks so it's the  
9717only one I feel quite comfortable with

9718R: ok alright um so can you tell me about the work that's required and your modules so like  
9719what do you have to do for your modules and tutorials

9720Max: yeah so in [topic] I think that you are required to do everything at home like  
9721understanding the proofs and finding exercise and doing them in [topic] I don't have a lot  
9722of things to do at home I have to learn how how do you write in R because I've never done  
9723this language before I'm I'm not sure that the other students have to do something like that  
9724uhm because the tutorial you you have to go to his tutorial you have two hours with him  
9725and he can help you and then you have two hours left to improve what you have done and  
9726send it to him so you don't have like a week to send it to him you have four hours so I don't  
9727think you have any homework specific homework you can always improve yourself but  
9728you don't have any tutorials or homework and then [topic] it's really different we have  
9729projects in almost every yeah almost every module except one that is [topic] so we have a  
9730homework like real one she sends us exercise and the solutions so we can really work on  
9731that and it's uh yeah it's a really [nationality] way of doing things the other ones we can  
9732have tutorials and we have to read some text in one of them I have to read a text and then  
9733we go on tutorial we do one exercise and we talk about the text and the other one we don't  
9734have any tutorials but just the project and the projects are it's very much [cough] I'm sorry

9735R: you're fine to me it's that time of year where it's like the weather is changing and  
9736especially like today from the snow to this

9737Max: it's since I've arrived in Ireland that I'm just coughing like that it's awful

9738R: yeah I know my first year here it was the same

9739Max: yeah you have to get used to it

9740R: yeah definitely I think like the first year you just stay sick and you you eventually built  
9741up that immunity to the Irish weather@

9742Max: @@@

9743R: @ so can you tell me about the skills that are required in your modules so that would be  
9744anything from English to time management

9745Max: I'd say that in [topic] you have to be really independent and a hard worker because I  
9746you spend a lot of time searching for exercise then you spend a lot of time trying to solve  
9747them without any help uhm yeah I think you have to be really tough and uhm I'm not  
9748finding the time to do this like as I told you um it's been only a month only two weeks that  
9749I have stable a balanced situation even ummm regarding my accommodation so I'm just  
9750starting to try to work properly and respond to what they are we want- wanting from us so  
9751yeah you have to be really tough and independent in [topic] in [topic] that wanting you just  
9752being attentive yeah uh they he really explains us what we are going to need on tutorial um  
9753if you are at his lecture then you can manage the tutorial hmm [sigh] [topic] is really  
9754different like you have to [pause] they explained us theorems or theories and cases and  
9755examples and then we have to use this material and you do our own analysis um examples  
9756like this is really the projects or you have this material that is my lecture and then you have  
9757to create something with that and go further

9758R: okay alright um and so can you describe the form of assessment in your modules is it  
9759exam based do you have to write essays you've mentioned group work quite a bit

9760Max: umm I don't have a lot of essays just one module with one one essay so it's really not  
9761a lot uhm I don't have to give homework back to teachers uh except in one of my [topic]  
9762module it's like during tutorials [pause] yeah just have to give back my code and statistics  
9763and [pause] yeah then I don't have to give everything like if I don't want to do something I  
9764mean it kind of make for example except group project I don't have to like like it's more  
9765for me then for the teacher

9766R: right okay and and so do you have to take exams at the end

9767Max: mm yeah I have one example like in [topic] in midterm it's [topic] and then we have  
9768final exams for everything except [topic] I think gives in [topic] I also have a project okay  
9769I don't know what it will be but I will have one yeah uh final exams are the biggest part of  
9770the grade final grade

9771R: and do you know the structure of those exams like will you just have to solve problems  
9772or do you have to write anything

9773Max: uhm it's still really blurry I know that in one of my [topic] module I will have like it's  
9774going to be three questions three topics and inside I am gonna have one question about

9775definition so it's learning by heart something and just giving it back and then more or less  
9776using the proof to answer your question so this three times and he only counts one uh two  
9777questions like the two best answers uhm but for the other ones I really don't know like  
9778maybe just [topic] it's gonna be some exercise but it's pretty basic stuff and it's not that  
9779hard so I can imagine I it's going to be some exercise on different topics and that's it and I  
9780think that in uh [topic] I think that it's gonna be some [topic] exercise and then some  
9781questions on the lecture I think or a reflection and analysis something like that

9782R: okay alright and so that brings us to what what do your professors expect so how do  
9783they assess your academic success

9784Max: hmmm this is a good question because it's it sounds really different from [country]  
9785like you are successful in [country] if you have really good marks and if you uhm come  
9786from like low marks and goes to higher it's even better [pause] but I think it's kind of kind  
9787of different here because um I was quite concerned with my uh I I there's only one module  
9788where I have grades so far so I can't really know where I stand and the first marks were six  
9789out of ten twice and then seven out of ten three times and the first time that I was quite  
9790concerned because six out of ten is not a lot for us like having 12 out of 20 is not a good  
9791mark in [country] you you don't consider it as a good mark so I sent him an email to know  
9792if I can meet him and I have some feedbacks on that and he just told me that I was uhm I  
9793wanted to do I wanted to make it 10 out of 10 but it's not the way it works and that every  
9794um tutorial is harder like you do the next one it's harder than the one before because we  
9795have less information less help so uhm it's not that bad at least I can always improve so I  
9796think that here they are searching for improvement and uhm maybe hard working people  
9797like if you don't have good marks but you still try you'll you are going to pass because here  
9798is 40% and you pass so I think you know you can see it's really for improvements and not  
9799to have top marks

9800R: mm-hmm okay alright um so what would you say in general do students need in order  
9801to succeed at [institution 1]

9802Max: uhhh [long pause] for a thing I think need they need money like really [long pause]  
9803it's obviously you can't you can't be a good student here if you do not have any money  
9804because everything is [pause] um more expensive I'm not just talking about the fees  
9805because we don't have any feels for university obviously and I think [institution 1] is not  
9806the most expensive university you can find but [pause] to you have a proper environment  
9807to study you really need money you need to have a good room so find good  
9808accommodation finding good accommodation without a lot of money it's really hard and  
9809uh eating properly and doing some kind of sports can also be expensive uh well I know we

9810have the gymnasium here but if you want to do something else it's quite expensive and  
9811being a good student is eating well sleeping well working well and eating well I don't  
9812know if I said it so ehm yeah money is really in the center of everything maybe it's a thing  
9813in Ireland and then uh [pause] I think you really need to be major like before coming here  
9814university in [country] uhhh we know that we we say that you're left to yourself but that's  
9815not true like I can see it with tutorials our teacher are always behind us and always trying  
9816to make us do a homework even if you don't have done it at home you'll have some time at  
9817the beginning of the lecture to do it again or so and here it's not the case like you do  
9818everything really on your own the teacher has only 50 minutes for his lecture he might  
9819have 15 slides so he just go through it and you are really left alone

9820R: okay alright and so how much of a factor do you think the language plays in academic  
9821success

9822Max: as a foreigner

9823R: um as a foreigner and also in general

9824Max: mm [pause] it's not it's not an important factor for me cuz for the majority of my  
9825modules I really understand what is going on uhm I mean once you've understood once  
9826you know that the translation of some words like in [topic] you can follow uhm except one  
9827module I really don't understand the teacher I don't know if it's because he has Irish accent  
9828or if it's because the notions in [topic] are like I don't have a background on that or  
9829whatever I don't understand it but a sentence like won't know I just can pick some words  
9830so in this particular module language is essential because I stopped going to his lectures  
9831because I couldn't get a word but yeah in the other ones it's quite easy if you have a good  
9832level in English but the teachers really don't take into account that they have Erasmus  
9833students and I had to go and see teachers asking them to write down some words because I  
9834understand them and I understand the context but I don't know how to write how to write  
9835how to write them and I think a lot of teachers are forgetting that they have Erasmus  
9836students in the lecture hall and it could be improved like I have a teacher in [country] he  
9837always writes words that he thinks are difficult sometimes even sentences that could be  
9838phrased in a certain way it could be hard to understand so it doesn't stop the lecture you  
9839just have to take a a a pencil and write something on the board and without stopping  
9840speaking it's something that should be natural for teachers who have Erasmus students

9841R: okay alright and so did you have any linguistic or academic preparation before attending  
9842[institution 1]

9843Max: no nothing I had um some lectures uhm English lectures but there are really better in  
9844in [country] universities

9845R: okay alright and um you did not take an entry assessment right so you didn't take IELTS  
9846TOEFL

9847Max: @no

9848R: okay alright um I'm gonna skip all of that @ well in general what type of preparation do  
9849you think the international students should do before coming to [institution 1]

9850Max: hmm [long pause] I don't know it's it's really specific like I don't need to learn  
9851vocabulary for history or philosophy or those kind of uh uh subjects but I would have  
9852really needed something but in [topic] or even sometimes in [topic] but it's really specific  
9853so is it like doing some background in [topic] in English or is it just learning some  
9854vocabulary like a list of words I really don't know

9855R: so if you could give advice to the faculty and professors at [institution 1] on how to  
9856support and how to handle international students what would that advice be

9857Max: hm ah there's a lot there's a lot of things that could be improved um first of all when  
9858an Erasmus student send you an email like just read it like I've sent a lot of emails to  
9859teacher that I've never met to ask them can I follow your can I attend your tutorial um that  
9860day for these brackets I have answers like yes and when I go to academic registry they they  
9861tell me that this hour bracket doesn't exist so you didn't have read my email properly I also  
9862send emails like can I follow your course I've never done this subject before and I know  
9863that you have one in the first term so can I go on [second] term and I had answers like yes  
9864and then you go to the lecture and you see you don't have any perquisites to this so you  
9865know you can't be there and you go and ask the teacher and she told she tells you oh no  
9866you can't you can't like it's not possible and the the due date for the module enrollment was  
9867already

9868R: like already passed

9869Max: yeah so I had to like find a way to take it off like find a new module and this is a  
9870nightmare and we are Erasmus students we arrived two weeks ago and this is a lot of  
9871confusion that we really don't need so just like you maybe a little more careful when it  
9872comes to us to Erasmus students uhm and yeah maybe ask several times like during the  
9873first weeks uh is there an Erasmus student in this room so that you know if you have to uh  
9874check sometimes if people are following you or not if you see people frowning and they  
9875are Erasmus students maybe you should like stop and try to rephrase something because  
9876we won't say excuse me yeah I didn't understand you [pause] and really when we have  
9877projects uh I think the best would be to mix to force people to mix because I have a teacher  
9878who says said try to be with the [institution 1] students and it's not possible because they  
9879they don't want to mix I can understand them but um it would be better if maybe like the

9880 groups are bigger but you take two [institution 1] students that want to be together and you  
9881 add an Erasmus one because when you arrived in the second term second semester it's  
9882 really hard to mix you don't know who is a Erasmus you don't know who is from  
9883 [institution 1] you you're just like here left alone if you didn't come to orie-orientation day  
9884 so it would be good teachers could like gather people and oh yeah I had a teacher that one  
9885 that I saw in his office to explain me some things in the tutorials um he took one hour for  
9886 me and he didn't ask me anything on the tutorial he basically asked me how things are  
9887 going and it was really nice from him I think and I mean it's good to see that some teachers  
9888 know it's hard and so they are um how do you say it they are concerned about you I think  
9889 I'm the only Erasmus student in his lecture so maybe that's why you you can't do that if you  
9890 have a lot of students but it would be good to show that you know it's hard

9891 R: mm-hmm okay and so if you could give advice to future students who are planning to  
9892 come to [institution 1] what would that advice be

9893 Max: first of all umm [pause] each umm I don't know how to say that maybe is each major  
9894 has his own websites you don't understand that every f- I didn't understand that and when I  
9895 was looking for the modules I could attend to I found some documents and they uh weren't  
9896 dated so go through websites from the major like it's [topic] dot [institution 1] and not just  
9897 [institution 1] dot ie uhm the week maybe before your arrival check on [student portal] if  
9898 the module exists when there are during the week

9899 R: yeah like what time and day

9900 Max: yeah like I would explain how to use [student portal] and I would explain that you  
9901 can go to my timetables and then search for it for with the name of the module uh so that's  
9902 you have a lot of a huge part of the Erasmus uhm uh how how can I say that uh like the  
9903 first weeks are gonna be easier also I'll show them how to find the lectures hall because  
9904 you have them I had a kind of an array with all the modules and labs and where there they  
9905 were but I couldn't understand the code for the places so I found someone really really nice  
9906 that told me for every day what was was the building and where where it was but without  
9907 him I couldn't find these places so yeah just check on [student portal] @ you can find a  
9908 little map with the place of the lecture hall try not to like try to come earlier and find your  
9909 accommodation uh here and not on the internet as I did and like I had some bad surprise  
9910 the place was kind of like there were moisture everywhere so I had to move out and it took  
9911 um like three weeks before finding something so try to come like during your uhm  
9912 Christmas holidays even if you have exams after the Christmas holidays it will really help  
9913 you when you come here for the second semester and uhm oh yeah ask for uhm at the  
9914 academic registry they have some books with the modules you can follow but they didn't

9915 tell me that and like the secretary in [discipline] gave me the one for [discipline] but like  
9916 she thought I already had that so she gave this to me really late and she told she told me  
9917 that there was one for every major so if I knew that before it would have really helped me  
9918 [pause] and you finally be prepared to not have any table in front of you uh so you be  
9919 prepared to not have lecture halls where you feel comfortable @ if you are a lefty you you  
9920 will find find some chairs but you have to know where exactly and yeah uh be prepares to  
9921 less than one hour lecture so it goes really fast and to have tutorials in a different way

9922 R: mmm-hmm are you a lefty

9923 Max: @yeah yeah I had some struggle the first days@ then they explained me it was the  
9924 first table on the left side in the huge halls and then I found some chairs in the small  
9925 classrooms but those chairs are um usually taken by right-handed people because there are  
9926 more comfortable@

9927 R: that's so annoying @ so what like what other factors because you've been talking a lot  
9928 about other factors like accommodation and mixing with students so what factors would  
9929 you say have the biggest impact on your academic success or your Erasmus experience

9930 Max: [long pause] uhm [long pause] I don't know how to say that um [long pause] the  
9931 support maybe I think we are not supported we are not enough supported I don't know how  
9932 to say that I thought that when I would arrived in [institution 1] I would find someone with  
9933 I would sit and try to see what are the modules I can follow yeah like I think someone can  
9934 do that it will take one hour two hours but at least the student will be like on track uhm  
9935 directly you can ask every question you have and maybe you can have you can have a lot  
9936 of advices because [institution 1] is nothing like it's really different from universities in  
9937 [country] and there's a lot of things that are completely different and I've been lucky  
9938 because I found that you can have someone at the airport waiting for you so she explained  
9939 us a lot of things and then here I have a friend from those two years of uhm schools that I  
9940 did after high school so she was there and for the whole here so I met her and she  
9941 explained me a lot of things but I think it's something that should be done by someone  
9942 working for [institution 1] and uh regarding to your accommodation I also thought I would  
9943 have more supports I thought that it would like the [college accommodation services]  
9944 would be like really helpful but it just showed me the same things that was already doing  
9945 so yeah I was expecting for more support but I think it's something in [institution 1] like  
9946 you are expected to be really independent so just doing things by yourself@

9947 R: and can you expand on the differences between [institution 1] and the universities and  
9948 [country]

9949Max: yep uhm first of all lectures hall like we have been here people don't take notes and  
9950sometimes they come without any pen and this is incredible for us like we we all have a  
9951computer and maybe we will use it but when you do [topic] you can't have a computer in  
9952front of you you have to write things try to understand how they work and like lectures  
9953here like some of them some [topic] lectures are um with slides so you really lose the  
9954practical part of [topic] so I can understand that you don't have any tables because students  
9955don't write because it's slides there's a lot of them so we're going through like really  
9956quickly and then you're expected to go through them again and write something maybe at  
9957home like the way you used to you you're used to work you can do it at home but not at  
9958college uh so yeah I was quite surprised not having enough space for my stuff I can't have  
9959my computer and write so this is the first shocking thing uhm we don't have any student  
9960space here like we don't have a lot of places to eat even though it's a huge university like  
9961you just have one dining hall but then you don't have any room for eating with the  
9962microwaves like that just one or this is incredible really uhm at least you have a huge a lot  
9963of um libraries but a huge one for example for [discipline] it's a good thing I think that in  
9964first you have less places to study like this it's not open so late and this is a good thing  
9965having those things open [pause] what what is different also is how sports are how do you  
9966say that uhm in [country] you can do sports like for free you can choose whatever you  
9967want to do here you have to go to a society uhm you have the the gymnasium but it's like  
9968it's not really free if you have to pay fees like it's free for me because I'm an Erasmus  
9969students but the person paying fees are paying for the gymnasium so [pause] I don't think  
9970that they're going to go to the gymnasium if it's not something that they used to do before  
9971like in high school or something in [country] at least you can choose a sport and try it and  
9972if you don't like it you can maybe go to another one and it's the teacher from the university  
9973that do that like I did handball with a real teacher for other students and then he went on uh  
9974Mondays to do some trainings for the this school the school uhm the students outside of the  
9975school hours so it's really good [deep sigh] yeah I can understand that 50 minutes of  
9976lessons it is better because you're more focused uhm [pause] but it hasn't been the case for  
9977me like 50 minutes are going soooo quickly and the teacher have to talk really quickly so  
9978basically uhm I'm more I'm not that focused because everything goes so fast my mind  
9979sometimes just quit everything and I have to go back and try to understand at least when  
9980the teacher have the time to explain himself uhm you also have the time to understand  
9981what's going on and I can see that because one of my module is two hours long and she  
9982gives us five minutes ten minutes between the two hours and it's really easier to follow her



9983and like she knows she has two hours so she takes her time and it's really easy to follow  
9984her it's not the case for one hour lessons I think

9985R: alright and so are you well the theme of support um are you aware of any support that  
9986international students receive either from professors your department [institution 1] as a  
9987whole

9988Max: @ uh well I would say I don't remember the name of the this place like the  
9989accommodation the it's not really society

9990R: yeah no I know exactly right it's like where you get your leap card and then it's yeah I  
9991know exactly where you're talking about

9992Max: yeah I went there when I had accommodation problems uhmmm I mean and I think  
9993that maybe our coordinator should be any help like you should help us uhm I think that you  
9994you could go and see them if you have a problem uhm but I I I don't feel comfortable with  
9995mine so like I have three coordinators but my major one I really I'm not comfortable with  
9996him so I rather not go I would say that you have the places like healthcare and I've heard  
9997recently about something like facilities like facilities like accommodation and facilities  
9998something like that because I have a problem with my landlord and full-term students full-  
9999year students I don't know how you call it uh told me that there was this thing that could  
10000help me like finding an emergency accommodation and try to uhm make the future  
10001students aware that the place where I stay is not that good

10002R: mm-hmm alright um and so your coordinators are they all here at [institution 1] or some  
10003in [country] some here

10004Max: oh I have both so uhm I have one in [country] I have just one coordinator like I have  
10005several persons to whom I have to refer but for different things like I have my coordinator  
10006who helped helped me choosing the modules will help me with the uh document I had to  
10007send [institution 1] and also a teacher that has nothing to see with Erasmus she helped me  
10008choosing the lectures because she knows better the like the like how do you call it like I  
10009mean [discipline] so she knows what is done in the lecture so she helped me choosing  
10010modules that are more or less the same and I had two other person I had to refer to one for  
10011the bursary and yes both for bursaries like it's quite blurry in [country] you don't really  
10012know those person except your coordinator and here I have three persons one for [topic]  
10013one for [topic] and one for [topic] and I just discovered that whenever I arrived I didn't  
10014know that before I thought that my [topic] coordinator would sign everything for me like I  
10015thought I would come with my modules he signs that and it's okay and no I had to go find  
10016the [topic] one and go find the [topic] one

10017R: okay alright so it wasn't very streamline

10018Max: no yeah a lot of surprises @@@

10019R: alright um let's see you so that's all the questions that I have for you um but are there

10020any questions that you wish I have asked that I didn't

10021Max: uhm [deep sigh] I think this surprisingly covers everything [pause] uhm like for an

10022hour I'm not I'm not sure what you're looking for I'm not sure what you want to do with

10023these I don't know if it's just for a creating like an English uhm English module that you're

10024forced to do before coming here or whatever [pause] but if I had to talk about my Erasmus

10025experiment to someone and if I wanted to say everything I would have done it this way

10026R: mm-hmm okay oh yeah and is there anything else that you'd like to add

10027Max: uhm yeah maybe one thing [pause] uhhh like there is one orientation day I don't

10028know how it is for uhm students coming to the first semester but for students coming in the

10029second one [pause] few of us can go to this date because I have an exam this day and a lot

10030of students have exams until like the third week of January [nationality] students and

10031sometimes other nationalities so if something had to be done to help us on our English on

10032how to uh uh adapt at [institution 1] it should it has to be done knowing that people won't

10033be available all the same day like if you give some important information to some students

10034you have to give the same to the other ones so I look gathering everyone is a good thing

10035but if you can't can't do this like just send an email with all your informations uh a video

10036maybe because an email like you don't want to read that and sometimes it's hard to

10037understand [pause] so maybe something like to explain everything that is coming to the an

10038Erasmus student everything like accommodation how to register how to find your modules

10039or your timetables everything should be gathered in one place and open to everyone so that

10040you have every informations [pause] that's it

10041R: okay alright brilliant thank you

10042

10043

**Mike**

10044

10045R: all right so first I'd like you to talk about how would you evaluate or uh your current

10046academic success or how do you feel that you're doing in your academic studies here at

10047[institution 1]

10048Mike: at [institution 1]

10049R: yeah

10050Mike: [institution 1] is good University but I think that it's very far from the other

10051universities the educational level and I think the the most advantage of [institution 1] is on

10052some uh some fields related to health and uh medicine but in the other fields [pause] no it's  
10053not really high rank University [pause] and [long pause] in my field [pause] it's not okay @  
10054R: okay so how do you feel that you're doing personally  
10055Mike: ehh I don't know about the educational system in other countries but compare with  
10056my country ehm the educational system is I think it's very weak eh for example eh if we  
10057want to pass a course eh can I say my country's name  
10058R: yes  
10059Mike: in [country] it eh every course has is 16 weeks and in each weeks we have two  
10060sessions each session is two house and eh compared with [institution 1] that is 12 weeks  
10061and one week off eleven week and in each week they have eh two courses each course is  
10062one house so it is near ehh half of the cour- half of the the time in [institution 1] is half of  
10063the time in my country for each course and because of that and also the lecturer don't really  
10064go into details and the exercises assignments are very very [pause] with the amount is very  
10065low and I think hmm the people don't the students don't get a good knowledge when they  
10066pass the course um they need more details I think in this way  
10067R: okay and are you happy with how you are doing at [institution 1]  
10068Mike: because I'm a PhD student it's not really related to take course because I don't for me  
10069is not important to be at [institution 1] or in South Africa because they're no different  
10070because this I do research the only things important for me is my supervisor and he is nice  
10071man it's it's okay for me because it's not really I cannot say something about [institution 1]  
10072because the only thing I need is a desk and a laptop and my supervisor @  
10073R: alright so what do you think your strengths are both in English and as a research student  
10074Mike: ehhh it is possible to explain  
10075R: so what are you good at in terms of English  
10076Mike: okay [pause] I think yeah because are you in a country that the English is not uh our  
10077generally speaking language I think that uh reading and listening is my reading and  
10078listening is good because we can watch movies in my country and also read a lot of papers  
10079and books but about speaking and writing no it's very bad because we don't ever  
10080experience because in my country we don't need to speak in English and also write  
10081something in English because of that these two points are very weak  
10082R: okay can you tell me about the work that you have to do in your PhD  
10083Mike: yes eh my project is in collaboration with a company and I should take sometimes in  
10084[institution 1] and sometime some days in that company name is it important  
10085R: no the name's not important

10086Mike: okay yes uh it's really it's a collaboration between the academic and industrial and I  
10087think it's a good Ph.D. should be a good PhD  
10088R: okay so you have to talk with a lot of people  
10089Mike: yes  
10090R: um are you conducting experiments or  
10091Mike: experiment means this is um hard work something like this  
10092R: um yeah or can you go into detail about like on your everyday what is your schedule do  
10093you read articles do //you @@  
10094Mike: good question| @ I like this question  
10095R: do you do you go and look things up on the computer do you design something  
10096Mike: okay eh [pause] my my days in Ireland divide into two days two kinds of days one  
10097when I want to go that company's [name] is very far from the city center it takes me four  
10098hours to go and back to my home yeah so I'm just honestly I'm getting my PhD in DART  
10099and bus @ I mean yes @@ I read eh uh @@@@ yes the days that I want to go to  
10100[company] ehm I try to keep my laptop with a full charge because I want to eh do  
10101something in the bus station @ also in bus if there is any free seats @ and at [company] we  
10102the most the main parts of the project at [company] is just to talking with each other with  
10103the other colleagues and find the good solution just brainstorming new idea and this kind  
10104of things ehh but in [institution 1] small research research means that reading papers eh  
10105[pause] just produ- just give new ideas and also do some simulation by laptop this kinds of  
10106things  
10107R: alright perfect um let's see so I'm gonna skip that because you're not in any //modules  
10108Mike: I I I am in module| but I don't get the course means that I'm I'm not finishing it  
10109R: ahh okay okay so can you tell me about that module  
10110Mike: mmmm so so what what what's is a general question  
10111R: so what what do you have to do in the module  
10112Mike: the module is in mathematics uh related to mathematics and we are just attending  
10113the course [pause] every week two times a week and just I think it's just going to class and  
10114just read eh just the lecturer present eh some something based on the slides and we just  
10115see the slides without any assignments  
10116R: okay so there's no assignment  
10117Mike: not really you know and there is no any pressure to do some assignment if it also  
10118they give they give us just one assignment but there is no any pressure to do just do it or  
10119grade it  
10120R: okay is it like a math assignment

10121Mike: yes @

10122R: okay alright

10123Mike: and also in the [institution 1] there is not any the the proposal and not check the

10124present of the students but in my country we should go absolutely the class we cannot

10125[pause] yeah if we from from if we don't go ten percent of the class we don't attend ten

10126percent of the class then we fail on that course

10127R: and here they don't check

10128Mike: yes what about America

10129R: uh @ we well it depends on the class depends on the professor

10130Mike: yeah yeah this very good idea to just ask the students to come to university @@

10131R: @@ alright so um how does your supervisor assess academic success so how does he

10132tell if you are doing a good job or not

10133Mike: [pause] how would he tell

10134R: well how so what is he looking for

10135Mike: mmmm is possible to explain

10136R: yeah so is is he basing his his evaluation of your success on the writing that you produce

10137on the meeting where you talk about your ideas

10138Mike: oh okay okay [pause] uh in my course in my field this is most important to produce

10139something new [pause] give new ideas to improve the past ideas and I think the only

10140assessment is based on what what is the result of my work yeah

10141R: okay great and how does your supervisor communicate his expectations

10142Mike: [long pause] he's a nice man he don't just don't talk eh with- uh he wants it means

10143that how can you say that I'm just doing well or not something like this

10144R: yes

10145Mike: he's a nice one I think he- until know after four months he doesn't tell me anything

10146about the progress but I said him that my progress is weak @@@ um eh [pause] okay is

10147okay I think just because he's from [country] I cannot understand his accent and sometimes

10148just eh just I cannot understand what does he said that's what did he say

10149R: and and so when you told him that your progress was weak what was his response

10150Mike: [sigh] his response said that no it's okay it's this first stage but it's I think yeah he is

10151okay his his statements isn't true because compared with the courses just because I'm come

10152from another country and my expectation is different [pause] they are just there from they

10153expect I can just compare the courses between my country and here and I think that they

10154are just they don't want to just work hard because of that it is better to just me reduce my

10155expectation from my PhD eh yeah I think it's because of that probably because of this @@

10156R: @ okay so why do you feel that you're doing weak

10157Mike: sorry

10158R: so why do you feel that you're doing weakly

10159Mike: mmmm because the amount of progress is very low [pause] because comp- in

10160[country] I just I do research alone means my supervisor don't help me uh didn't help me

10161but here I he he is very welcoming every time I ask question he answer me also he check

10162my codes everything he he's great [pause] but I think that in this condition I should have

10163better gain compared with what happened in my in [country] but it is not I cannot see this

10164progress when I compare with what happened in [country]

10165R: okay and what are your expectations for the PhD you said you needed to reduce them so

10166what are they

10167Mike: my expectation in PhD I think I need journals publications not conference journals

10168good because my supervisor is very famous in the world and I think that I just come here

10169honestly come here to Ireland just because of him [pause] without any reason I don't know

10170why I'm in this country @@ but only the reason is is him and just because I lost anythi-

10171everything that I have I had a great job in [country] with great salary but I come here to

10172ehm just do something good in my life and I think that it is not what I want until now yea

10173because of that

10174R: alright um what would you say

10175Mike: it's become more personal @@

10176R: yeah that's okay that's fine though @ it's um so well actually I'm interested in

10177Mike: it's become like a counsellor @@

10178R: @@@ well alright so now I'm interested in I don't have to follow these questions that's

10179the beauty of of interviews

10180Mike: yes @@@

10181R: so you brought up an interesting point that you you gave up a lot in [country] to come

10182here and up until now you don't feel like you've really done well here

10183Mike: yes

10184R: so what factors have impacted that feeling is this academically or is it

10185Mike: social [pause] both of them many factors if I want to just tell them without any

10186categorize about the coding or something like this ehm the main important is Ireland is not

10187really developed country yes you should absolutely sense it because compare it to America

10188it's nothing yes it is like a village @@@ also you compare with my country mmm yeah

10189and the [nationality] people here is very the amount of them is very low uhm compared

10190with social life is not really good here and also Irish people are nn-not really friendly and

10191the number of international students here is low I think [pause] maybe my course as all of  
10192them are from India and because of the that yes compared in this in the social part it's not  
10193okay and in the other and also in academic [pause] there is no really a lot of good  
10194professors in [institution 1] to have collaboration with them they are good not very good  
10195compared with the ranking of [institution 1] 88 in the world and [pause] because of that  
10196and also I don't have any future here for myself because I think that the economy here is  
10197not really good

10198R: okay so it's a lot of issues it's economic it's social it's academic [institution 1] is not up  
10199to what you thought it would be

10200Mike: yes and honestly before I coming here is I- I applied for another university @@@@  
10201and then come here for interview

10202R: yes okay alright and so what would you say in general do students need to succeed at  
10203[institution 1] to do well at [institution 1]

10204Mike: of course of course here eh I think the most important things in [institution 1] that is  
10205the students can speak in English is that they understand English it is very good I think it's  
10206very good advantage because they can easily read paper for me read a paper maybe takes  
10207one day or two days but I think for them two hours any because of that they should have a  
10208lot of progress but no here I don't uh students I think don't really like eh studying [pause]  
10209yes they want to just go to bars @@@ not all of them I talk in general for here because  
10210absolutely [unt] a lot the students but in general I don't think so they they don't take care  
10211about studying

10212R: okay is that international students uh Irish students both

10213Mike: in my field the number of Irish students is very low I just I will talk about my field  
10214so all of them are fro- not all often 60 or 70% are from India they are good they're good I  
10215think but about Irish not really yeah [pause] I'm very pessimist @ about things in this  
10216country

10217R: @ I can tell that's fine

10218Mike: @@ okay

10219R: yeah okay alright um so I keep going back to the personal life because it's just very  
10220interesting um I don't know I just want you to expand more on on why you have such a  
10221pessimist pessimistic feeling about Ireland and about [institution 1]

10222Mike: mmmm because when I compare ehm condition here with my country and also with  
10223my other friends that are around the world America Canada uh Sweden Germany and  
10224compare with them I think that the condition for here for international students is not really  
10225good

10226R: okay how so

10227Mike: for example compare with my country I think that many things that my country is  
10228like North Korea @@@ honestly but we are very developed compared with Ireland I don't  
10229I have never been in another country in Europe or America or Canada but compared with  
10230Ireland we are so developed because of that I am really upset and also my friends in  
10231[country] said me that why you are going to Ireland they are just making fun of me because  
10232I have a good grades and I can go to better universities and because of that yes I think it  
10233was a big mistakes for me to come here yes @

10234R: okay um can you give examples of how the condition for international students here is  
10235not so good like specific

10236Mike: [big sigh] I cannot say talk about all the international because I could talk about just  
10237about my nationality because the number of [nationality] people is very low here because  
10238there is a main reason there are two uh main reasons one is the economical because it's not  
10239really >in my field< it is good but not really in all fields and also eh about the getting  
10240permanent residency here it's very hard to get residency after nine years means that the the  
10241PhD is not considered as part of your residency and it is a very bad point for for  
10242[nationality] because they want to go out and um yes go out to go outside of [country] to  
10243go in better eh country in a better company something like this because of that yes for  
10244[nationality] it's not good situation @

10245R: okay alright um so going back to linguistics um

10246Mike: @@ counsellor do you have any advice for me @@

10247R: @@ no because it's the same for the United States for the visa

10248Mike: really

10249R: yeah but for for me being here so

10250Mike: but you don't need to get a residency of Ireland if you want to stay here for example  
10251yes

10252R: mhm I do I need it

10253Mike: okay just leave this country as soon as possible @@@ if by any chance this this  
10254interview be published and I will I think I will fired from Ireland @@@

10255R: @@ no no

10256Mike: @@ they will kill me @@

10257R: @@ no no they won't alright so did you have any linguistic or academic preparation  
10258before attending [institution 1] so things like academic English

10259Mikes: @ yes yes in general for my study I started studying English when I was [pause] six  
10260or seven years old but honestly I hate English @ sorry about that @@@ and always my



10261mother send me to ehm to just private schools to learn English but I don't go there because  
10262I said that my mother my mother I said that I am going there but I I honestly didn't go there  
10263all @ when I just attend the course just I sit there and don't attend the lecture and it is very  
10264bad point because I'm in trouble here because of English @@@ and after that when I just  
10265finish >in [country]< in during a bachelor and master we don't the lecturer don't uhh  
10266present anything in English all in [language] after that I think that if I want to continue my  
10267study I need to get TOEFL or IELTS and after that it takes a lot of time for me to prepare  
10268for this courses going to took to private ehh classes and it takes a lot of time because at the  
10269same time I need to work and also studying and because my major is not eh English it is  
10270very hard for me to just focus in one field that is very different from my background  
10271because of that yeah it was very hard to get TOEFL

10272R: and so and so you got TOEFL um how how do you feel about the TOEFL

10273Mike: because I think that because TOEFL is eh before I deciding that should I study for  
10274TOEFL or IELTS you think that because TOEFL is for America then they have good  
10275standards is better than England about IELTS and then I choose TOEFL ehh in TOEFL I'm  
10276very surprised about can I just speak about the four skills in TOEFL is it important for you  
10277R: mmhm yeah

10278Mike: yeah the in reading in just reading part it's very good but the very interesting thing  
10279that they ask students to know some very very uncommon words for example I cannot  
10280even remember them because as I want to study them for TOEFL if you don't know that  
10281the name of eh these kind of things very very uncommon words about some some creatures  
10282that live in the sea and something like this if you don't know the words then you cannot get  
10283higher score in reading [pause] and about listening listening is okay but sometimes they  
10284they just the the listening part is the accent is the British and it is not fair because when  
10285someone wants to get TOEFL they prepare it for American accent not for English accent  
10286this part is I think it's not good and eh also about @ the other part speaking oh speaking is  
10287terrible one minute or 45 seconds just to speak about something it's very hard for someone  
10288also I think it's very hard for someone that eh the American- English is his native language  
10289because should prepare two reason something like even the structure it's very hard this part  
10290is very hard and the reading and writing writing is also very hard because you need to write  
10291something in a very short time and also sometimes it's very hard to understand what is the  
10292sentence what is the question what you want to do okay it's yes it's hard

10293R: okay do you feel that the tests and the classes that you took prepared you for the  
10294academic work at [institution 1]

10295Mike: [long pause] academic

10296R: so do you //feel that

10297Mike: not really academic| but generally yes but not academic purpose for example I

10298ascend your course here EAP and it's is very different from what I learned in [country]

10299because you you give us some technical terms and this kind of things is very good for

10300academic

10301R: okay can you expand on that a little bit more

10302Mike: mmm yes for example about the last session you talk about ehh rheme and theme

10303and when I was writing I cannot even under- I cannot take care about this kind of things

10304because I didn't know before attend that course and after that now when I then I am writing

10305something then I take care about that the two sentence should be connected to each other

10306and I should consider the rheme theme rheme theme these kinds of uh patterns in my

10307writing for exam- that in that session is very useful for me and also the other sessions @@

10308R: @@ but and that's not something that you had in [country] so what were the classes like

10309there

10310Mike: no in [country] the the major courses are just trying to prepare students to get higher

10311score in TOEFL and IELTS it's very ridiculous if I want to explain what happen in

10312[country] there's something there are some guys in China I think you have never seen hear

10313something like this they they they ex- estimate the questions of the next TOEFL have you

10314ever seen here

10315R: yes

10316Mike: okay and in [country] just uh for example in [city] I attend them the famous courses

10317I think it was one of the very famous teachers in my country and he's just working in these

10318questions okay the next session this question will come okay I give you the reasons you

10319should talk about this kinds of >if you give< if you had this question then you should talk

10320about these reasons and something like that they're not focused on eh improving the

10321English it's to getting more score in TOEFL and IELTS

10322R: so this is the fun part um so if you could give advice to professors here at [institution 1]

10323about dealing with international students what would it be

10324Mike: [pause] @@@@ don't hire international students @@

10325R: don't hire international students @ why

10326Mike: @@@@ because of the life condition here @@@@ @@@@ @@@@ I'm I'm

10327not me someone else is talking @@@@

10328R: @@@@ no that's fine

10329Mike: @@@ just you can uh feel eh better than me because you come from America I

10330think it's not comparable with America Ireland yes

10331R: mmm

10332Mike: you're thinking about absolutely it's not comparable

10333R: mmm

10334Mike: @@ why you don't say something @@ Jessica this is not fair @@@ you @@@@

10335R: @@@ this is not my interview @@

10336Mike: @@@ no it's not fair okay you should I wanted I wanted to make you say

10337something that after that I can then you cannot publish this interview @@@

10338R: @@ no I I can still publish it umm @@

10339Mike: @@@@

10340R: @@@ but I'm trying not to influence you @@ so so tell me what else would you tell

10341alright besides not hiring international students because life here is horrible for

10342international students

10343Mike: @@@

10344R: what would you tell professor

10345Mike: okay for example in my case I eh talked with my professor one week ago about the

10346condition of PhD students in another countries in Europe not about American or Canada

10347Canada and I said that for example their salary is very high [pause] they have reward at the

10348end of the week uh end of the year it's like an employee a real employee they have the

10349health insurance their salaries increase will be increased during the years and also the PhD

10350is part of their residency and these are very good benefit is not very small things it's very

10351big things it's as important as PhD maybe more than the PhD

10352R: alright so if you could give advice to organizations like the one that I work for giving

10353English for academic purposes or the ones back in [country] that were teaching to pass the

10354standardized exams if you could give us advice for preparing students to study at university

10355what would that be

10356Mike: okay [long pause] I just I just write something for your course your class EAP but

10357it's nothing related to this question [pause] I think it's better to prepare students just not

10358focusing on reading and listening is I think more important than reading and listening is

10359speaking and writing it's very very important especially speaking because if they cannot

10360communicate with the other students it would be very hard for them because they should

10361present something and they may they make them ehh they confid- confident confidential

10362confidential

10363R: confidentiality or

10364Mike: no I don't know confiden-

10365R: confidence

10366Mike: confidence yes because they it will decrease the confidence and they because and  
10367they they then will not really easy eh present something it's always for me is afraid of  
10368presenting something because speaking is very hard yes and I just when I'm speaking I lose  
10369my grammar I cannot think about the grammar what's the grammatical point I'm using  
10370what are what is what are the mistakes that I am doing @ I'm making this kind of thing yes  
10371it's better to focus on speaking and writing my opinion because reading reading and  
10372listening is something eh by by by yourself we can improve it no without not without  
10373teacher but a little bit independent of uh the teacher

10374R: alright and I want to hear you have written

10375Mike: okay it's uh this I prepare for your course especially as I attend it [pause] I think this  
10376courses is not really interests is not really good for international students like me that  
10377English is their English is not good because I think that eh for me just they are I think  
10378twelve people attend your class around and me and the Italian guy are just only people that  
10379ehh English is not just we don't then the our major is science not teaching English yeah  
10380and isn't it is not fair for us and for them also because when we are in a team group in a  
10381team work ehh for them they want to focus on the ehm what you said what you class  
10382techniques but for me in my case is very it's very hard for me to understand some verbs  
10383that you write it's for its different aspects because they are more professional should be  
10384because they are studying English and the variance is variance is general question yes in  
10385mathematic we have some variance

10386R: yeah like the levels

10387Mike: the difference between people is very high and it's not good it is good for ehhe me  
10388because I learn from them but I think it's not good for them because they cannot learn  
10389something from me okay [long pause] eh maybe boring for them eh speaking and writing  
10390this I said [long pause] oh and it's very good to have for you uh uh that want to prepare  
10391these courses it's better to have absolutely you should have this but uh just for saying  
10392something have a long term vision about these courses because for example for me  
10393learning English during the four years as a PhD student here I think it's more than  
10394important than the PhD because it's very important if if I can just improve my English then  
10395win after these four years [pause] if you have I think there is no any long term vision in  
10396these courses when you planning these courses yes am I right

10397R: yeah there's not much @@

10398Mike: @@ you said yes oh a good one @@

10399R: @@ well I mean I have to be honest the way that it is structured it's um term-by-term

10400Mike: because yeah because it's in university it's easy for students to attend the courses and  
10401also it is very cheap [pause] for me I want to just come to just attend this courses every  
10402semester this is long term is improving gradually beside my studying my PhD [pause] but  
10403for example if I each semester I come to academic for English writing something like this  
10404it's not really good something every time go to the same class

10405R: right you want progression you want to be able to go

10406Mike: so maybe just if you change your names okay maybe but it's good because English  
10407is a very very vast and there is a lot of things to learn and in four years you can never just I  
10408I can never just uh cover you know ten percent of it but yes it's very good to just have it's  
10409also for something like um some entertainment to just come to class learn because I see my  
10410friends [nationality] friends their English is not good but they are not trying to improve it  
10411it's very good for other people yeah

10412R: okay so you'd like to see levels first of all

10413Mike: yeah something like this

10414R: so having levels and then also that way you can go through your four years having  
10415different content and moving up levels

10416Mike: yes but we want the same teacher

10417R: okay @@@@

10418Mike: @@@@

10419R: @@@ I'll pass that to my supervisor

10420Mike: @@ I can write an email to her

10421R: @@ sure

10422Mike: @@ honestly I attend a lot of courses in English but I hate them but this I think it's  
10423only courses that I liked because the class is very different from what happened in  
10424[country] the teacher just stand here and just read reads something write something on  
10425blackboard it's not really interactive between teacher there is no any as ac- connection  
10426between teacher and students >like other courses in [institution 1]< the teacher says  
10427something and the students just writing it's not like this you're very energetic and you try-  
10428and I think that you want to just um learn students something something it's very good also  
10429this motivates students to learn something

10430R: alright glad to hear that @ so let's go back um if you could give advice to future  
10431students of [institution 1] what would it be

10432Mike: @@ but [institution 1] is a good University but the students should take care about  
10433the what major they want to continue in [institution 1] in which level eh for PhD is not  
10434related [institution 1] is not something that they should eh take care about it because it's

10435 just supervisor is important in this part but in master I'm not agree for someone to come  
10436 here to get master if you want if he if he wants or if they want they want to continue their  
10437 studies get PhD the master is here not is terrible for cont- for continuing study but for just  
10438 getting a master and then go to work is good because it stations one not one year 9 months  
10439 in my country it takes three years to get master's yes

10440 R: wow is is that why you think that the Masters here is terrible so

10441 Mike: yes because maybe this I I'm just I'm not really it's not fair to say in this way  
10442 because I don't know about the other countries and their programs maybe it's very common  
10443 here because in [country] our educational systems based on American system I think  
10444 maybe in America is like is two or three years master yes

10445 R: yes

10446 Mike: it's very good because is America @@@

10447 R: alright @@@ so let's see you have talked about this question

10448 Mike: [info cut for anonymity] I asked my friends who studied in America and asked them  
10449 about educational system and is the same as in [country] and because of that for us it's very  
10450 good to go to America because is very similarity

10451 R: okay

10452 Mike: [info cut for anonymity]

10453 R: so actually you've answered pretty much all of my questions so I have a question for  
10454 you now well I'm yeah do you have any questions that you wish I have asked but I didn't  
10455 ask you

10456 Mike: mm about

10457 R: anything very broad

10458 Mike: @@@ okay [long pause] let me know [long pause] I can't remember anything

10459 R: okay do you have anything else that you want to add to the interview

10460 Mike: mmm not to the interview I think this the course academic for writing is great and

10461 I'm very happy to attend this course and Jessica is very great @@@ she is very great

10462 teacher @@@@

10463 R: @@@ it sounds like I'm forcing you to say this @@@@

10464 Mike: @@@@ no @@@@ I will say this but it's honestly because it's all the only  
10465 course I have ever taken English because I want interested to continue it @@@@ not  
10466 going outside for playing football not going to course yeah @@@ I think that everything  
10467 is okay but is it better to do be continuous next next term next uh higher levels or different  
10468 fields is very good in this way for international student and also it's better to decrease the  
10469 variety of the students I think it would be good for students because they can see their uh

10470progress without compare with the others always they are better than for example me and  
10471seeing the progress very hard it's important

10472R: alright perfect thank you so much...[recording turned back on with permission] okay so  
10473so go ahead and say what what you were just saying

10474Mike: for someone who hear this interview @ I am not that guy that talking I'm another  
10475one @@@ don't fire me from Ireland @@@ before I find a new PhD position @@@ eh if  
10476I want to say why I'm disappointed to stay in Ireland one of the main reason is one is uh  
10477one residency problem the other one is the because it's very expensive country and the life  
10478condition is not really correlated with this uh expensive expensive something the uh I get  
10479the my salary is 60% or 70% of our salaries is just for renting a room as I'm currently  
10480living a room in an Irish family and it's very hard for students in in my age to just to stay in  
10481a room and uh also about the transportation system it is not really good and if I the the  
10482company I working with it is very far from the city center and I just have one option to go  
10483there and it is sus and if this busses comes every 30 minutes or 20 minutes and it takes two  
10484hours to go there and two hours to come back and it's very expensive and here I just spent  
1048510 euro or something like it every day when I want to go to that company eh it's a very bad  
10486part of it and also one problem [pause] they are not really active people they go home just  
10487after sunset is about 6:00 p.m. it's not really active city you cannot see people at night on  
10488the street [pause] yeah these are the best things and a major bad thing they drive on the  
10489right @ is terrible@ I think is this is in just in the world of two countries drive on the right  
10490England and Ireland

10491R: India

10492Mike: okay that's not country @ it's very big it's a continent yeah it's very hard for  
10493international people also because they cannot drive

10494R: okay

10495Mike: I talk about a lot of disadvantages in Ireland I just remember it's weather is also very  
10496bad @@@ it's like hell @@@@ we are living in the hell @@@@ no I'm joking but they  
10497have a lot of water we don't have these kinds of water in [country] this is good advantages  
10498of this country @@@@ they don't have desert @@@@ yes do you want to continue  
10499@@@@

10500R: well yes @@@@

10501Mike: @@@@ they don't have sunny beaches @@@@

10502R: @@@@ well okay so going back you were before we turned back on the the interview  
10503you were saying that most of your money goes towards rent and so you're not able to save

10504Mike: yes

10505R: and can you expand

10506Mike: yes because the amount of money that I get from [institution 1] I just spend all of  
10507them a lot of them I think 80 percent just on the money on the for renting a room and also  
10508in transportation system so I don't have any save here if some some problem happened to  
10509me if I want to go for example another country any chance that I need money I cannot eh  
10510just trust on what I am saving because I don't have any save also the problem is that people  
10511here don't have any private health insurance and eh treatment is here is very expensive for  
10512example if you want to see a GP takes at least 50 euro and it's not really fair with the  
10513amount of money you you are given during their PhD

10514R: and so all of that does that impact your work on the PhD

10515Mike: of course of course of course when when someone is not uh when when you have a  
10516lot of things to a lot of problems you should think about them then you cannot focus on  
10517your work and absolutely it decrease the performance and it's it is not really ehh small  
10518problem it's very big problem because we need to focus on your work because [institution  
105191] is just paying money for us to eh publish something or do something do research but this  
10520money is not really good for doing research and I think that it is a bad game for both sides  
10521for students and for [institution 1] both of them are not really use this uh deal

10522R: okay and can I ask are you getting funding for how many years

10523Mike: four years

10524R: four years okay alright so and that covers the whole length of your PhD

10525Mike: whole

10526R: so it covers all of your PhD

10527Mike: yes of course all four years

10528R: okay okay do you have anything else to add

10529Mike: no thank you for this interview and please don't publish some parts of it @@

10530R: no no we won't get you in trouble so

10531Mike: okay

10532

10533

**Mona Lisa**

10534

10535R: all right so um I was wondering if you can tell me how sorry what your strengths are in  
10536terms of academics so what are you good at

10537Mona Lisa: well um in my country I was working as a researcher and as well as a professor  
10538in universities umm I think research is good specifically in [language] I'm going to say I I I  
10539write well I think I can say you know in my country I have publications as well here I



10540started to publish umm but it's a little more complicated um I understand very well uh the  
10541research you know that logic and I think I have good ideas and I think I'm a I'm creative  
10542yeah

10543R: and what would you say your strengths are in terms of English language

10544Mona Lisa: well it's important to say for me uh the English uh has been a process um when  
10545I came here uh my English was very basic and I was doing the PhD at the same time so I  
10546can see these things perhaps now @@ more um I read a lot so I think my comprehension is  
10547is better now @ um um perhaps more the reading this this skill is better uh I can say if  
10548perhaps my speaking or I don't know but because that that is a process yea for me yeah still  
10549yeah @

10550R: yeah and so how long have you been here three

10551Mona Lisa: three years

10552R: three years yeah okay all right and and so what would you say that your weaknesses in  
10553terms of in terms of academics are

10554Mona Lisa: academic in general hmm I think you know academic is very big area @ eh  
10555and I think you know that is related I have to be more organized um because sometimes  
10556that's the problem um I have too many information I don't know exactly how include these  
10557here I now develop better strategies uhm you know in English because I can say the  
10558writing is a problem for me I my supervisors always checking checking and say it's never  
10559enough never enough now I can see my improvements but I have to work a lot on that so  
10560hm that's hm that is the thing even um sometime I feel overwhelming with this yeah

10561R: and so when your professors were saying it's not enough it's not enough what  
10562specifically wasn't enough

10563Mona Lisa: eh they say the way that I use the words or sometimes eh you know there are  
10564different logic in my language than in English so sometimes it's different logic and that  
10565sometimes eh is complicated for them to understand exactly what this paragra- paragraph  
10566is really what is the point is you know so I always thinking and I try to organize the  
10567phrases differences different but uh this is this is the process I improve it yeah

10568R: right yeah okay all right so how would you evaluate your current academic success

10569Mona Lisa: how

10570R: yeah so do you think you're doing well do you think you know

10571Mona Lisa: well already you know after three years I can see got better fortunately you  
10572know I almost finished I'm writing everything I I you know I finish my research and I  
10573could that I I could do that so um you know the logistic was good I did a translation of the  
10574program I working online interventions I I was working with the translators you know this

10575is this is related and yes you know I work with you know that perhaps a little hm more  
10576things because my research is in my country so I have to translate the documents in two  
10577languages always and work with with people I had my [role] there so 10 people there and  
10578the coordinators of the project and um I think these logistics is part of this good you know  
10579things for me in the research um yeah and I'm persistent and I I try to to do the things well  
10580you know I don't know now I I had my first publication already that was this month so that  
10581that is for me you know I don't know that that says something that is not bad @@@ yeah I  
10582wrote two papers more I'm writing another one and I think that's that's a indication  
10583something yeah @@@ yeah yeah

10584R: okay yeah so did you have to take any modules here during your PhD

10585Mona Lisa: um there is some the minimal credit the minimal credits? are 10 credits and the  
10586the school offer a seminar and I took this seminar yeah

10587R: can you tell me about the seminar like what did you have to do in it

10588Mona Lisa: well basically attend a seminar and at the end the evaluation was a um um a  
10589essay related with my topic ummm I don't know exactly how they evaluated this because  
10590we nev- we never received a feedback not only me all the pers- the people in my office  
10591already I'm taking a diplomate in stats I'm finishing this and the exam will be hm in May  
10592so I it depend I think if I take this exam or not because I'm finishing so my priority is my  
10593thesis so yeah

10594R: and so the exam for the stats is that like you have to go to the exam hall and take a  
10595written exam or is there any sort of essay presentation

10596Mona Lisa: no the stats is writing yeah exam even is hard because is three days exam three  
10597hours a days each day it's include all the is one year diplomate so include all the modules  
10598and this is not multiple eh answers so yeah

10599R: so can you tell me the the certificate that you've been taking what are the modules like  
10600like when you go to the modules how are they run what is the work you're required to do  
10601for them

10602Mona Lisa: the seminar that I do before it was really the professor explained specific um  
10603um topics about research um systematic how how to make a systematic review or meta-  
10604analysis or um some stats as well hm neuroscience include but most of the seminars were  
10605were professor talk about something that is really no really interactions with others or yeah  
10606no no activities active activities I don't know yeah

10607R; yeah and for the statistics

10608Mona Lisa: and statistics yeah is almost the same yeah I even expect more more active um  
10609activities but not and I think that that's is good for that you know but no it's more

10610explanations even sometimes is too much you know they emph- the emphasis is more  
10611mathematical so sometimes the professor is explain one equation all the class so it's not  
10612really well I am disappointed with this diplomate I expect more you know perhaps more  
10613more work in lab sometimes there are some labs eh using MATLAB but I don't use  
10614MATLAB I use SPSS so you know hmm it it was okay it's good for the examples and pr-  
10615how understand better the exercise but ehm I don't find this very useful eh in my career  
10616already or in my research yeah unfortunately yeah

10617R: yeah and so what did you have to do outside of the classroom for the statistics modules  
10618Mona Lisa: ehm you know really study uh independent time study uh because there are so  
10619many topics even for the exam yes you have to study if you want to pass the exam yeah  
10620R: all right and how would you study was it reading just going over the examples again  
10621was at working out examples

10622Mona Lisa: well sometimes eh no all of the modules at the end the professors explain ehm  
10623various exams and eh exercise so they they explained and they give um material for that so  
10624I studied with that material sometimes because now@ all@ my@ focus@ is the the thesis  
10625so yes even the group study like I couldn't go because I'm busy now but eh that's the plan  
10626you know yeah

10627R: okay yeah and so can you tell me about the skills that are required of you as a research  
10628student

10629Mona Lisa: umm I think that stats is is important um as well knowing you stats qualitative  
10630analysis I think is is relevant um and all of the skills English writing speaking @@ ehm  
10631yeah are important yeah

10632R: okay um so how do you feel that your professors assess academic success so like what  
10633do they look for in your work when they're grading or when they're giving feedback

10634Mona Lisa: ehm well I can say these more from my supervisors more than my professors  
10635here this circumstances is you know I as a PhD I work more with my supervisors and they  
10636read directly my work so to say what is the what they expect

10637R: yeah what they expect

10638Mona Lisa: mm-hmm I think a deep comprehension of the topic usually hmm um now I  
10639have pressures at to publish ehm so and even I decided to eh start papers start to write  
10640papers because they pay more attention @@ and read more when it's a paper because eh  
10641their name is there I have two supervisors so the feedback I think is quite good eh they  
10642really read the paragraph and they eh suggest you know eh topics or even some suggestion  
10643in English or they even say change some something but I learn from the- from that so it's  
10644eh it's useful yes I think and and I think is not the question I think because you say what

10645they expect you know I think they say yeah comprehension about the topic how I explain  
10646eh the process and the concepts yeah yeah

10647R: okay yeah all right and so in general what do you feel that students need in order to  
10648succeed at [institution 1]

10649Mona Lisa: oh well um persistence @@@@ passionate yeah hmm well this  
10650conversation I I even had with other students because usually they expectation is higher um  
10651uh and I I have my master degree I have a another degree in my country a specialization  
10652that one hour one year uhh and I think there was a little more eh strict in that way but I  
10653think that's the the that the situation with PhDs is free so you have I think part of this is  
10654uhm organize your time well you know and strategies how organize time because nobody  
10655says how organize your time or how to start so perhaps is better more instructions from the  
10656from the college provides you know more support because sometimes you feel very lonely  
10657here academically @@ ehm but did you have you are disciplined and you have and you are  
10658very organized and you know exactly what do you want and what did you do that is has  
10659success or yeah

10660R: okay right and so how much of a factor does language play in success at [institution 1]

10661Mona Lisa: the language I think is everything ehm [pause] I can say for me I think I my  
10662my process was specifically I think is not common here because I even I I took the IELTS  
10663at the same time I was starting and even in academic registry said this so strange you @@  
10664because I am I was you know at the beginning here without all the requirements so and at  
10665the beginning even for that reason my communication was little so I can't almost  
10666communicate well and I can't understand everything well so that's that's is language and  
10667that affect me really @@@ a lot because eh obviously uhm I can't express my #worries or  
10668perhaps at the beginning nobody understand me very well and I don't understand  
10669everybody well so it's so important and even as a PhD and >not only as a PhD< eh you  
10670need a very good language skills in general you know to speak well you know in  
10671conferences or writing all of these is part of the the process yeah

10672R: okay alright um and what other factors um either so we've talked a lot about things like  
10673time management etc. but are there any other factors that you can identify that has  
10674impacted your academic success

10675Mona Lisa: hmm well of course um you have good comprehension reading comprehension  
10676I think that's specifically for humanities social science that is so important because we need  
10677you know uh analyze very well concepts and uh understand@ very well this is more than  
10678analysis even critical thinking is so important this is even part of the thing with my  
10679supervisors we need this discussion need more discussion or ehm critical thinking ehm so

10680this is I think this is very important perhaps in humanities specifically with these things  
10681concepts and these but in general is not accept everything or or you know copy other things  
10682this is more yeah

10683R: okay alright so um so did you have any linguistic or academic preparation before  
10684coming to [institution 1]

10685Mona Lisa: when you say linguistic preparation what does this mean

10686R: it would be like English classes basically or specifically either general English or IELTS  
10687preparation or English for academic purposes

10688Mona Lisa: well I said my situation was very special I was uh studying English in the  
10689States eh [city] specifically eh only two months uh before in my country I took some  
10690classes but at the same time I was doing a lot of things so I think was more umm it was  
10691better for me when I was in [city] um and then here I was ehm learning English eh at the  
10692same time I was doing my PhD uh my first year six months the first six months I was and I  
10693was this did the classes he was more emphasis in in in IELTS yeah

10694R: so so you were taking classes here and at a private institution or

10695Mona Lisa: ehhhh before you said or

10696R: well

10697Mona Lisa: no here I said no hear in [institution 1] in a private institution

10698R: in a private institution okay all right

10699Mona Lisa: yeah I mean this then I took the module here the academic puross- purpose for  
10700writing and speaking eh yes that was eh in like first year but first was in a private institute

10701R: right yeah and so how do you feel about that preparation so do you feel first let's talk  
10702about the private institute here in Ireland um how do you feel about that preparation did it  
10703help you um did it not

10704Mona Lisa: no it really help me you know that I was in that period very I you know I I  
10705need I need to pass the IELTS in that period so I I felt pressure a lot um but I can say most  
10706of the students eh who study English in Ireland English is not a priority for them so most of  
10707them finish all the the their basic English courses they attend IELTS but they didn't want to  
10708really pay a lot of attention about this so I was the the few people that who really wants to  
10709pass@@ the the IELTS so it was a little no not good at the beginning mmm I decided to  
10710even take the classes in the in the afternoon because less people and more personal eh  
10711training ehm we did umm how do you say training and apply all the program all the exam  
10712and it was very useful what is this the the world eh simulations it was very very helpful  
10713and even all writing speaking and they gave eh this course you know so it was good but in  
10714that period was more personal three or four people and I think that for me was better I took

10715the IELTS three times I'm going to @say @@ it was very eh a challenge for me but well

10716then I passed @@@ yeah

10717R: yeah yeah um I did that so the IELTS classes and then the IELTS exam did it actually

10718did it help you prepare for the work in [institution 1]

10719Mona Lisa: okay IELTS um [click] in some ways yes in some ways yes mm yeah because

10720it's the the readings is comprehensions comprehension is so important but sometimes you

10721know there's so many details that are not necessary hmm you know find the word a

10722specific word in you know if this is a scanning I understand but I think part of the problem

10723with IELTS you know you have very short time to do a lot of things I know this is part of

10724the eh the skills that they looking for you know it is to be eh fast and at the same time find

10725these things eh but there are so many factors um [click] there that is not necessary you

10726know sometimes even for example in listening or writing or not in eh eh reading you found

10727the actual word but but the word eh it was not in past participle or a specific eh you know

10728characteristic and you fail you know it's very very restricting this I understand but I think

10729the most important is you understand the context you know and there are so many tricky

10730question that is that sometimes you have you know any sort eh chart and eh and I

10731understand that idea comprehension but it's sometimes so so specific I think it's better

10732perhaps more general you know if you understand it the the text and you eh really know

10733what is this because at the end you can't read all the text you you are you always the focus

10734is in the questions but not really worried what does this in the the the text I thinking about

10735wri- re-re-re-reading that I wa- was that was a little tricky for me ehm my writing even it

10736was not bad ehm mas- that was more reading I think writing is fine in IELTS eh there are

10737two two tasks in academic and I know very @@well and um yeah perhaps for some

10738students because the first task is it's more description a statistic description and perhaps for

10739some people that it's not really necessary because not the skill that they need I don't know

10740and the second one is I think it's very useful I think this is this really eh um show that you

10741have the skill or not you know the free essay with the specific topic and it's good because

10742even this is the essays that you have to do here you know in college you know in short

10743period in short moment short time but is all of these things yeah yeah and listening in my

10744view as well is tricky too eh sometimes as well is very specific um and it's not necessary

10745that you don't listen that well so in my view these two eh tasks wr- listening and reading is

10746good to to check a little more yeah

10747R: okay and so can you tell me about the classes that you took here at [institution 1] so you

10748said that you took the speaking and the writing

10749Mona Lisa: eh hh oral presentations it was and wr- writing

- 10750R: okay yeah um so how did you feel about those classes in terms of preparation
- 10751Mona Lisa: but are going to read my answer no my experience was I I had higher
- 10752expectations no really ehm as strict very free you know and they never really checked your
- 10753work your writing so I feel like I felt like that ehm the material was good was useful the
- 10754activity was I I even like I felt like when I started my general English you know with
- 10755dynamic theories that perhaps here in [institution 1] is not say dynamic theories in that way
- 10756eh perhaps more emphasis in writing for example in a specific essay or specific even the
- 10757necessities that we have so I eh in that moment I was writing a paper I was very stru-
- 10758struggle with this and the professor unf- unfortunately he was not useful and helpful for me
- 10759so so I think that's um important yeah it was more ehm games really and I think we don't
- 10760need games you know we are in different level yeah yeah yeah
- 10761R: all right and so I'm not gonna ask you if you feel that that helped you prepare you
- 10762because you kind of answered that there but let's see you've done some of that so what type
- 10763of preparation do you think now that you're at a great advantage you've done all of
- 10764different types of preparation and you're in your third year so looking back uh what would
- 10765you say what type of preparation should international students take before coming to
- 10766[institution 1]
- 10767Mona Lisa: hmmm oh wow that is big ehm I think some activities in IELTS are good you
- 10768know eh more writing writing I think is very important skill hmm and eh emphasis in uh
- 10769how develop our writing better vocabulary because sometimes that's uh the problem even
- 10770still a problem sometimes eh because it's all different academic writing than the rest of of
- 10771this so eh I think that's important mmm [pause] yeah mmm yeah wr- and readings in that
- 10772way you know more academic eh perspective um I think part of the problems here is
- 10773people finish the college before a master their bachelor perhaps there are not many
- 10774strategies eh in study in general uh study strategies you know more hm critical thinking it's
- 10775called it's right critical this I think that's what very important but perhaps the most
- 10776important because this is say the main of the studies specifically in a a PhD eh is is the the
- 10777ability to discuss something in a deep way so yeah I don't know exactly what is the
- 10778strategies for that perhaps you know in my case I I I started to learn more about this here
- 10779by myself @@@ yeah
- 10780R: yeah can you identify the ones that you've kind of developed or that you've learned
- 10781about
- 10782Mona Lisa: uh critical skills uh critical
- 10783R: yeah study skills study strategies like what have what have you gotten better at

10784Mona Lisa: now I can read better the papers before I I don't know what I start to read you  
10785know I read but now it's it's scan the paper and what is the information that I really need  
10786what is the methodology and I understand that the methodologies um the discussion  
10787section I think I can uh uh identify this faster now hm I'm more aware about my mistakes  
10788before not really @@ also I think that is very important and I really think my writings is  
10789improving despite my supervisors' @thinking @@@ but yeah yeah I I I feel better in this  
10790way yeah I have improve my speaking as well @@ is confidence I think that part that is  
10791part of this develop confident specifically if you speak another language when I came here  
10792I lost my confident you know I in my country I ha- I I was working professionally as a  
10793[profession] so many areas and here because of English I felt I felt and I feel sometimes  
10794that I am I'm not the same person perhaps you read about the different personalities depend  
10795in languages I can@ see @@ this already III ma- I I find me different in English you know  
10796I'm not the same social person for example so this is a skill that is important to be aware  
10797because you you really never realize this before and and nobody says this so I think it's  
10798important yeah yeah

10799R: okay so these are some of the fun questions I think um if you could give advice to  
10800faculty at [institution 1] in dealing with international students what would it be  
10801Mona Lisa: hmmm I think it's important to give more strategies more practical strategies  
10802for students I I I think the courses that the faculty first writing and all of them are really  
10803relevant but um but perhaps eh firstly focus for the necessities because I think that is very  
10804important mmm perhaps eh eh yeah found eh to find relevant of readings relevant eh  
10805examples for students um I know it's complicated because there are so many areas um but  
10806eh perhaps is is is even at the beginning the school can can evaluate the students and what  
10807is the level you know it's not as highest but it's different you know what is the level of  
10808writing for this group before start or at the beg- you know the first class and this is good  
10809for for the professor to start with the strategies so perhaps for example he identify specific  
10810patterns or something and um yeah perhaps more rigorously because it's not games is  
10811different you know we expect perhaps more st-structure more even evaluation why not  
10812because this is part of this we are here because we want to improve you know so so it's not  
10813uh I think sometimes it's something that I realize in Ireland people are really nice always  
10814but sometimes so nice and it's not what b- what really we need sometimes is good that  
10815people say things very directly and you know exactly what happen my supervisors already  
10816says something directing @@ but at the beginning no so I thought that this was fine but no  
10817really so I don't know perhaps is part of the culture @@ because eh you know I was  
10818studying in the States and I can see completely different there people was more direct and I



10819prefer this 'cause I know okay that's the problem here you you don't know exactly what is  
10820a problem because people is so kind and don't want to be rude with you and you h- at at the  
10821end you don't not even as a student and I think this is not good you know in my view yes  
10822yeah

10823R: okay um and so if you could give advice to prospective students or future students what  
10824would that be

10825Mona Lisa: ehmm future students um [click] oh I I don't know [pause] perhaps eh is good  
10826that they know that this is thee the things not really rigorous that you think @@ um eh that  
10827is important as well enjoy the life in college 'cause I spent too much time in these things  
10828for example and I couldn't enjoy @@the time here for that reason so perhaps this is part of  
10829life and perhaps this is the best way to learn a a language even I thinking about  
10830international students ummm yeah well so enjoy as well the college and and perhaps  
10831because I realize this now you work your work depend on your um [click] #worries as well  
10832only in some ways so perhaps if you um ask to you you your supervisor I'm thinking of  
10833PhD students that uh you know pressure more @@ or they give more eh strategies they  
10834usually do that but this is depend on you

10835R: okay and so are you aware of any support that international students receive from your  
10836department your professors or from the wider college

10837Mona Lisa: ehm [click] I am the [discipline] school [discipline] yeah and ehm it's it's fine  
10838but not @@ there are not too many international students in in my school yeah as a PhD I  
10839recently uh yeah a girl from Turkey is there but it's this year before I was only almost the  
10840only bilingual @@ student there and I think no so many people understand me the issues  
10841with my language and it was a for me was an adaptation and a lot of things and I feel really  
10842isolated for the reason because hm 'cause nobody >it's funny because it's [discipline]  
10843school of [discipline]< mmm so perhaps more eh and and as well that's happen with any  
10844PhD student you don't have uh an induction or a proper induction so you you came here  
10845and you don't know exactly what what you to do what to do so perhaps more emphasis in  
10846this you know you can say my school they they did a a induction but I think was very  
10847@very general um so so um there are not many issues for international students in my  
10848school eh I think the Counseling Center here offers some support eh I even use the service  
10849sometimes and I found this useful but I think any school eh perhaps have to do something  
10850uh about it 'cause that is part of the success of the school and the students mm yeah

10851R: okay and um first are there any questions that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask you

10852Mona Lisa: ehmm [pause] not really I think it's it's yes yes you ask the that are yeah

10853R: okay and is there anything else that you'd like to add

10854Mona Lisa: ehm [click] no I think I say anything anything no everything @@@

10855R: all right perfect thank you so much

10856

10857

**Nadia**

10858

10859R: um so how would you evaluate your current academic success here at [institution 1]

10860Nadia: to evaluate in in which aspects

10861R: so just how do you feel that you're doing

10862Nadia: well hmmm to be honest I haven't got the re- got the results from the essay papers

10863that we submitted the last term so so far I cannot evaluate correctly but basically I feel that

10864uh I'm progressing because I can feel the challenges and also I sense the difficulty in

10865actually by taking lectures or reading through some academic papers or references uhm the

10866fact that I felt the difficulty actually means I'm progressing that's what I felt during the

10867postgraduate study and I think is after the second term I might get a clearer picture of what

10868I'm doing right now how how how I did how well I did in the master program

10869R: mm-hmm okay alright I'm and so what would you say your strengths are

10870Nadia: my strengths you mean in terms of academic skills or generally

10871R: yeah knowing let's say academic skills for right now

10872Nadia: [sigh] ah I think is uhm as an international students my overall English language

10873proficiency might actually give me some advantages comparing with non-native speakers

10874and the way that I practice English when I studied undergraduates program is I tried to

10875think in English I think it mattered a lot because instead of thinking your original your first

10876language actually you can actually get a lot of that advantages by thinking in English or

10877when you write so when you speak thinking in English actually gives you great edge uhm

10878so that's actually just uh comparing with international students but comparing with my

10879classmates or yeah comparing with my classmates I think my uhm strengths can be that I

10880focus on academic study and also I am strongly committed to attending study and in free

10881time actually I devote a lot of time to to extensive reading and also to make preparation for

10882lectures in advance so basically it's uh my strong commitment to the academic study makes

10883a difference

10884R: okay and what do you think your strengths are

10885Nadia: in terms of English in terms of English I think it is [long pause] my aware- my

10886bilingual cultural awareness I think because I've talked with a lot of foreigners native

10887speakers and I remembered that when I graduated from university I conducted an

10888interviewing in the [organization] the interviewer spoke uh made a comment about my

10889Englishes he mentioned that instead of just talking or conveying information I actually I'm  
10890a polite English speaker which is very different from most of my counterparts in [country]  
10891and I value the [pause] the norms that actually when you speak we we communicate with  
10892native speakers I think that actually sets me asset when com- when comparing to my  
10893classmates basically that's the oral advantage when it comes to the writing parts I think I  
10894have some advantage to some degrees after graduation I have I have done some translation  
10895for several years so actually most of the time I need to write English I need to think in  
10896English and practice English a lot of most of the time so the time or the efforts that I put  
10897into written work actually uhm [pause] will benefit me a lot during academic study in  
10898[institution 1] because I noticed some students who after after graduation they actually they  
10899haven't done a lot of work that's associated with the written or oral English so my constant  
10900exposure to written or or oral English actually makes a difference that's what I think  
10901R: and what do you think your weaknesses would be then

10902Nadia: my weakness is although I have achieved some certain level of written writing  
10903ability but my academic thinking mind actually I think it is it needs to be improved that is  
10904I've never never actually got some get a clear picture about international how I mean- to  
10905study in an international community is quite different from what I experienced as a college  
10906student because you you your language it's not it's not your native mother tongue so on one  
10907hand you have to actually constantly improve your language level to prove yourself  
10908competent in your academic study on the other hand the way teaching and learning are  
10909delivered is so different so I I think [pause] I need to make progress in both aspects one is  
10910to constantly improve the language level uhm associated with academic study and the  
10911second one is to to change your mind when it comes to academic studying a global  
10912community I think both aspects actually a challenges for most international students  
10913R: ok um so can you tell me about the work required in your module so like what do you  
10914need to do

10915Nadia: uhuh the modules that I have taken so far are basically most of the time ther- quite  
10916theoretical except the two modules which is very practical it inquires requires us to you  
10917actually to not only achieve some theoretical level about [topic] but also you have to prep-  
10918so practically involve yourself in [topic] so that module both modules which is [topic]  
10919practice one and two are highly practical uhm but in both modules those practical modules  
10920I need to counsel and come with up some ideas about practical [topic] so that's highly  
10921practical but the other modules are quite theoretical so to qualify to actually to keep up to  
10922keep the pace with our lectures lecturers in class I need uhm to do a lot of intensive reading  
10923like our teacher actually will provide us a list of references that you need to read in order to

10924 understand some terminologies or some theoretical concepts in class so basically is one is  
10925 you have to do a lot of extensive reading before and after class in order to actually expands  
10926 your visions about the this single module because what the teacher what the lecturer uh  
10927 acquainted us in with some theories in the class is far more sufficient to actually build help  
10928 us sort of clear framework about either [topics]

10929 R: okay and so I don't know if you'll quite be able to answer this because you're just  
10930 starting with your dissertation but um can you tell me what you think or what the work is  
10931 required as a research student

10932 Nadia: as a research students okay I haven't done that but in my opinion I think is as a  
10933 research students is so diff- it's definitely different from writing an academic essay so you  
10934 need actually first of things you might actually have to to talk a lot of research to come up  
10935 with a plausible research question or topic to start your dissertation and once the topic is  
10936 finalized you have to done tons of researches to gather useful information and to seek to  
10937 through the use of information and eventually actually select the most useful information  
10938 what they come up with in methods based on the information to proceed with your  
10939 dissertations at different stages so to be a researcher or to actually do well in your  
10940 dissertation upon the completion of postgraduate study uh some fine qualities like hm  
10941 researching abilities is quite the the prerequisite another one might be you have to to be  
10942 very creative and also to be a critical thinker because you are bound to raise a lot of re-  
10943 searchers will references about the fields of you the chosen field of your dissertation so  
10944 you need to be very critical it doesn't mean you have to criticize the references but you  
10945 have to be very selective I mean you have to to to actually to make sure that those  
10946 references are in favor of your opinion or others against you but you have to make com-  
10947 com- comparisons constantly and also in the meantime you might actually know what you  
10948 are doing at various stages of your dissertation and uh manage or to be very organized  
10949 that's what I can say about the preparation of dissertation

10950 R: ok and so can you tell me about the skills that are required in your module so either in  
10951 the class or outside of the class

10952 Nadia: okay skills so the general skills I think is the first one is to to just the ability to  
10953 organize your academic study matters a lot because it's so different from uh our the the  
10954 university study back in [country] because the teacher back in back in [country] well  
10955 during our high school the teacher always guides you give you a lot of instructions about  
10956 the management your study or the work we have to put into your study now here at  
10957 [institution 1] hmm we have a joke that like you are currently doing a postgraduate study in  
10958 [language] the [language] character that means research by yourself so we need translated

10959into [language] you so basically the skills what I mention is the ability to organize your  
10960academic study matters a lot and second one hm is you have to be be a creative creative  
10961thinker because you cannot just the follow step by step sometimes you have to think  
10962outside of the box and to be creative I right now I really realize the importance of being  
10963creativity being creative because that means you you think out outside of the box and you  
10964actually can see a lot of different things in the m- at the same time and that gives you a lot  
10965of possibilities and and options that actually can set you apart from your classmates that's  
10966general skills other academic skills like reading and writing write uhm what I find really  
10967important is reading and the writing are the important skills that I've found because  
10968because you can choose you can choose not to speak in class or outside of the class it  
10969doesn't matter whether you speak or not as long as you can listen okay listen matters to  
10970listen listen to the lectures is important but on the other hand the success of your academic  
10971st- study actually is decided by your own work after class so being able to read and being  
10972able to write those two skills in my opinion are the most important because we have a lot  
10973of academic references or readings available online or in the library so the way you read or  
10974the efficiency of your reading actually can decide the depth of your thinking and the  
10975writing skill it's decides how you do well on your term essay and eventually in your  
10976dissertation because the writing skills can actually help you tran- translate your thoughts  
10977into words that actually can help other people to recognize your academic literacy or the  
10978level that you have achieved a thorough academic study at [institution 1]

10979R: okay brilliant and so can you describe the general structure of your lectures and  
10980modules so like what happens inside of the class

10981Nadia: uh what happens inside of the class so basically is our uhm except the two practical  
10982modules I mentioned is quite difference and what happening classes we discuss so the first  
10983first term is the practical practice one is we conduct evaluate uhm we do microteaching and  
10984also we went to observe classes in a local [school] and we evaluate our performances in  
10985group session or individually conducted by our lecturer in the second term is in the first six  
10986weeks we create a curriculum in groups and then from week 7 or week 8 we go to teach  
10987separately in a local [school] our other modules which are very theoretical is our teacher  
10988our lecturers actually uhm familiarize or introduces topics or key concepts about the  
10989module through presentation through group work or through workshops to help us  
10990understand the key concepts about that module and sometimes students or we are required  
10991to to do presentation in groups through group work so basically that's the structures and in  
10992all those modules after class so we have to do a lot of reading yeah that's the general  
10993structures

10994R: okay um so what do you think your professors assess so how do they assess academic  
10995success so what do they look for when they're grading so I know you haven't received your  
10996grades yet but what do you think

10997Nadia: yeah well actually in last term before we proceeded to our to the writing of our  
10998academic essay two our professors actually have already mentioned the principles or the  
10999key points they would look at our academic essay for example the would actually [pause]  
11000they are not expecting some earth-shattering thoughts that the originality of our ideas  
11001presented in the academic essay matters and besides that how you structure your academic  
11002essay like the structure of your academic essay or the contents are very important too  
11003besides the some minor aspects of academic essay like some linguistic aspects is your  
11004grammar and your formats some minor points that I cannot remember right now is what I  
11005remembered is the originality of your ideas and the how you structure your essay and how  
11006you present your contents in your academic essay those aspects [pause] significantly  
11007decide the grade you are going to receive or the yeah

11008R: alright and so how do you professors communicate those expectations so you said two  
11009of them told you do they tell you verbally or did they give it in a written form or

11010Nadia: oh they actually one professor actually showed us some the grades of previous  
11011students and attached to this their comments like if the students final grade is two one then  
11012they would say your content is excellent but sometimes you made some grammatic errors  
11013like that they verbally told us and in the meantime they have uploaded to those comments  
11014onto the blackboard where every students can have access to the other professor actually  
11015told us in written form the that professor is hmm he actually printed out some specific  
11016requirements about our academic essay and in the meantime other details about the read-  
11017about the structure of the essay has been detailed in that document so both verbally and  
11018written

11019R: written okay and your other professors

11020Nadia: oh the other professor is actually the structure has been outlined for us so we  
11021basically just follow the headings the professor provide us and put our thoughts in an  
11022organized way that's that's that's okay yeah

11023R: alright and so in general what do you think students need in order to succeed at  
11024[institution 1]

11025Nadia: uhm so far I think to succeed in [institution 1] well at least I mean it is it is perfect  
11026that you can actually excel in both four aspects of your of English as as an international  
11027students but right now we cannot achieve a balanced situation so what I would suggest is  
11028students who come to study at [institution 1] at least can actually have sufficient skills in

11029 reading and writing those two skills are very very important because you don't need to  
11030 actually speak in the classroom or or outside of the class as long as you can actually um  
11031 absorb knowledge and then trans- translate your thoughts into words that count that counts  
11032 a lot but to improve your student experiences as an international student here so being able  
11033 to communicate effectively with non-native speakers or native speakers is also important to  
11034 yeah but doesn't mean listening is not important I mean listening and speaking are  
11035 important but not as important as reading and writing when it comes to the success of  
11036 academic study in a global community because when you are acting as a student the  
11037 abilities to read and write outrank the ability to listen and to speak

11038 R: okay and so how much would you say a factor um how much of a factor would you say  
11039 that language plays in academic success

11040 Nadia: well I I would agree that that language plays a major part in academic study  
11041 because if English is my native language then I wouldn't worry about so reading some  
11042 academic references I know some key concepts still will pose some challenges but at at  
11043 least language will not be a barrier when it comes to reading when it comes to writing  
11044 when it comes to listening and speaking so language actually challenges of students when  
11045 it comes to academic study for example in the class in the class when non-native speakers  
11046 want to answer questions because answering questions in the class can actually improve  
11047 student experiences definitely so if a non-native speaker wants to answer questions he or  
11048 she has to actually think how how I'm going to answer questions and am I going to actually  
11049 embarrass myself in front of other native speakers or not or am I going to you actually  
11050 make some grammatic errors or not so those concerns actually just prevent these non-  
11051 native speaker from answering questions and eventually or gradually the student will just  
11052 stop thinking about answering questions so if this speaker is a native speaker she or he  
11053 doesn't have to concern about the linguistic um [pause] accuracy at all so he's just jump  
11054 and then answer questions so a lot of lot of situations actually are associated with language  
11055 with the ability of answering questions in a correct away when it comes to academic study  
11056 so I would say language plays a very significant part in academic study because when you  
11057 are a comfort fluent speaker without any concern about your linguistic abilities you  
11058 actually you naturally can perform better than other students who constantly worried about  
11059 their linguistic abilities in academic study

11060 R: okay and what other factors do you think affects um academic success

11061 Nadia: well um according to my experience as international students other factors matter  
11062 to like whether you're happy with your [pause] with the place you are living because I have  
11063 classmates who actually felt very upset about everything happening in his or her place like

11064the landlady or landlord is not nice and so the place where you live the happiness the level  
11065of happiness actually um about your accommodation influences your academic  
11066performances sometimes also these social relations with your classmates and also the  
11067financial trouble when a financial concern you have as international students in a foreign  
11068country counts to because a very beginning I arrived here I didn't expect the the the price  
11069the it's so different [pause] it is expensive to live here so so actually and @@@ it can it  
11070takes time for you to accept ok it's different from living your country at it is different to  
11071live the prices are so differences financial trouble financial concerns and some social  
11072relations with your your relationship with you and between you and your classmates and  
11073between you and your professors and sometimes if some can some can be very extreme  
11074they talk about politics and everything just goes to goes beyond control so those things  
11075matter to you

11076R: alright so do you have any linguistic or academic preparation before coming to  
11077[institution 1]

11078Nadia: before coming to [institution 1] uh no not no not at all it's just when I took when I  
11079took the IELTS I just took it without any preparation ah yeah nope

11080R: um so how do you feel about the IELTS

11081Nadia: IELTS okay actually I studied I studied the master program at [institution 1] in  
11082September 2017 and I began to apply for the program in in March 2017 and I took my  
11083IELTS in January 2017 and I actually register for the exam in December 2016 so barely I  
11084had a little time to prepare for this exam but I know I wouldn't do a bad job in this exam  
11085because I have actually as I earlier I mentioned I have continually continuously studied  
11086English and every day I did work associated that requires the major thing what you write in  
11087English but the thing is what surprised me is I didn't get any chance to practice writing for  
11088IELTS that is why the score for IELTS for for writing is just well out of my expectation I  
11089mean the pattern there's a pattern for IELTS writing after I realized after I finished the  
11090IELTS exam and I was informed by some of my friends who took IELTS before they  
11091mentioned you have to you absolutely have to practice writing for IELTS otherwise  
11092although you can actually can do you can do a good job in your work in your work but you  
11093can't do a good job in the part of writing because you have to just to know the pattern of  
11094writing in IELTS there is a pattern to uhm some some writing articles about draw a map  
11095you have to explain how the map works and also some pie charts a lot of different kinds of  
11096hm writing prompts I think so yes other parts is I except except writing other ok I felt ok  
11097with the rest parts of IELTS exam but overall I felt that taking an IELTS exam was quite  
11098tiring because I I I remember that day I spent nearly 6 hours from getting up to the exam



11099venue and then after finishing the exam it was very exhaustive so for students who needs to  
11100take IELTS per month once per month it takes a lot of courage so I told my friends that it's  
11101better to just pass the exam or meet the language requirement of your applied university  
11102once maximum just twice because third time we cannot afford to actually take IELTS a  
11103third time it's exhausting and taking IELTS twice or a third time it just to put you under  
11104enormous pressure

11105R: and how do you feel about IELTS being used as an indicator of your English level for  
11106University

11107Nadia: uhm well if there's a chance to take another language language test I would suggest  
11108with that too I would suggest [pause] but we don't have an option but basically now  
11109thinking IELTS IELTS score used as an indicator for as an entry University study it's not  
11110very scientific I think because a lot of students uhm in my country a lot of students they  
11111have done a lot of preparation before taking IELTS they take classes they take the VIP  
11112classes and sometimes the students could not meet the language requirement and even for  
11113those students for some students who have met the language requirement based on the  
11114IELTS score uh I don't think they have the ability or the they have achieved the language  
11115level to actually succeed in their future academic study because IELTS like IELTS reading  
11116you don't need to finish you don't need to actually try to read the articles you just have to  
11117look at the questions and then pinpoint the key information and then answer based on the  
11118chunk of information that you have located well if such abilities turns out I mean those  
11119abilities actually you used to in IELTS rating well it just turned out to be so irrelevant  
11120when it comes to actual academic reading and also the their the writing I think writing  
11121plays a major part in academic study too so the writing skills required by reflected by  
11122IELTS exam and not very authentic I mean [pause] what kinds of academic modules were  
11123asked you to actually to describe a pie chart well except this SPSS sometimes we're just to  
11124require you to to present information statistical statistical information like that but the  
11125ability the writing ability is reflected from IELTS exam are not very useful in real world  
11126world academic study uhm listening I think listening part is authentic sometimes yeah it's  
11127authentic because it it's a little bit challenging actually as far as I am concerned because the  
11128when I remember when I did the listening part sometimes I have to really try to catch up  
11129the space that the pace of the listening to the speaker uhm well this part actually can reflect  
11130students listening skills other parts like reading listening reading and writing both skills are  
11131not really actually tested students skills required by academic study but these oral part I  
11132think is uhm it shows students authentic or real world oral proficiency it can actually  
11133because you have to talk with a speaker in front of you and sometimes you might get cold

11134feet but it is understand but because sometimes when you answer questions in in front of a  
11135bunch of classmates from different nations you will get cold feet so the way you react in  
11136front of a speaker in IELTS exam is quite similar to the way you answer questions in front  
11137of a bunch of classmates so I think the IELTS to some degree can reflect your students  
11138language proficiency but it cannot be in a strong for the sole indicator of students  
11139proficiency when comes to the admission of university study and also ahh sometimes  
11140students who after they apply for University they spend every single day of their time  
11141preparing for the exam and most of the time the actually just do exercises do the IELTS  
11142exam exercises and also they they ask they take classes where teachers actually tell them  
11143the pattern or they predicts exam based on their previous experiences to ask ask the  
11144students to make preparation for the specific pattern and sometimes they just get high  
11145scores like that so IELTS score are not they are not very scientific or cannot reflect the  
11146students academic skills in terms of both four aspects yeah

11147R: alright

11148Nadia: can I make a suggestion I think IELTS can be an indicator of student's academic  
11149skills in terms of the four parts of English in the meantime I think is the university action  
11150can should interview them either through skype or after they register for the program they  
11151should conduct a face to face interview to actually to measure the students overall  
11152proficiency well you cannot actually accurately assess students overall proficient though  
11153let's say fifteen minutes interview but you can actually get a general picture a real picture a  
11154truer picture the IELTS score

11155R: yeah good suggestion um okay let's see what type of preparation do you think  
11156international students should take before coming to university or if they should at all  
11157Nadia: oh one is we might have to learn to read extensively more intensively that's that's  
11158something that I've never done before and uh if some students or if some prospective  
11159students ask me what kind of preparation they should do before coming to [institution 1] I  
11160would suggest for one this you have read so much as much as you can and also once you  
11161have finished a certain amount of reading then you have to try to read critically I mean you  
11162have to actually learn the ability to to extract some thoughts from the author and also you  
11163have to check sometimes disagree with the author and come up with your own opinions  
11164that's that's reading ability reading ability it counts a lots so and the second one this is write  
11165writing ability so trying to write as much as you can because when you write sometimes  
11166you actually can spot can actually realize you're unable to write smoothly as you expect  
11167sometimes when we expect when we organize ideas in our mind we we just to feel well we  
11168can so the ideas that you have in your mind is cannot be actually translated smooth flowing

11169 into your writing if you don't practice enough so both skills writing and reading as I  
11170 mentioned so those skills the students have to make enough preparation in terms of reading  
11171 and writing uh third one is uhm you have to actually make some adjustments mentally  
11172 because [pause] it is inevitable that the educational system here at [institution 1] or in  
11173 foreign country or in Western countries is different from their own homeland for me uhm I  
11174 actually talked to with some students with some friends who studied in in the UK or in the  
11175 US they actually permission to the challenges how challenging it is to study in a foreign  
11176 country but I didn't expect the amount of challenges that I will eventually encounter as an  
11177 international student in foreign country so even though you are familiar with the challenges  
11178 how challenging it is to studying a foreign country but the real challenges actually at  
11179 beyond of expectation sometimes so try to prepare for for the challenges mentally and  
11180 physically I mean sometimes sometimes students they just get cold feet constantly and they  
11181 will just keep up or they fell pessimistic so aside from the the actual academic skills  
11182 students have to make adjustments mentally that's that's very important because when you  
11183 are studying in an international school you have to you to not only prove yourself  
11184 competent in the classroom you have to always cope with other challenges apart from  
11185 academic challenges

11186 R: alright and so if you could give advice to faculty though to professors in dealing with  
11187 the international student what would it be

11188 Nadia: uhm I would just suggest this one is uhm in terms of admission the faculty actually  
11189 have to to take cultural implication into consideration I know different countries have  
11190 different educational systems for example in [country] students during undergraduate study  
11191 they don't write much for me take me as an example when I was the undergraduate student  
11192 I studied in the specialty of [discipline] I didn't write much officially speaking I only wrote  
11193 one graduation paper which is seven thousand words aft- upon the finish upon the  
11194 completion of my four-year undergraduate study and I had six months to prepare for this  
11195 graduation paper so the amount of work that have I did as an undergraduate student as an  
11196 undergraduate student for academic writing is not enough and after graduation as when I  
11197 started to work I didn't get any chance to write academic papers so I guess for me or for a  
11198 lot of students coming from my country they didn't have enough training more the the  
11199 thinking methods for academic study for academic writing or for academic writ- reading I  
11200 think both skills have not gained enough attention in the education in the university  
11201 educational system in my country well I would guess that's that's the picture in some other  
11202 countries where English is not instruct- English is not the instructional language so to  
11203 prepare students for the incoming academic challenges once they get into [institution 1] the

11204faculty first of all in terms of the admission they have to actually not only interview  
11205students to assess the oral proficiency they have also ask students to actually submit some  
11206academic sample to at least get a picture of students writing skills I remember I applied for  
11207another university in Ireland uh they actually not only conduct oral interview but also  
11208requested me to submit an academic paper uhm sometim- at a time I don't I didn't know  
11209why they would take so much time to actually uh invest so much time into to the admission  
11210of one student one single student I guess they did with other students too but then I realized  
11211that the way they through oral interview and the assessments of the students' academic  
11212paper just a sample uhm they actually get the idea the possibility of the students whether  
11213the student can succeed in their future academic study but without those preparation  
11214[institution 1] might don't get the real picture of students overall proficiency that's one  
11215suggest so that's before before admission so if they actually admit- eventually admit this  
11216student to the program the student chose it might be preferable that the student that  
11217[institution 1] actually can start to send messages to encourage students to use the free time  
11218they have before coming to Ireland to make some preparation in term in terms of reading  
11219and the writing because the moment we actually commence our postgraduate study  
11220information about the preparation of dissertation has been disseminated amongst us and it  
11221can be a little bit overwhelming but if students actually can start to to do some research in  
11222their home country and prepare themselves in terms of academic reading and the writing I  
11223think they might come here with greater confidence and the possibility of them to succeed  
11224in academic study will be increased cuz confidence how you feel I mean whether you feel  
11225confident or what not when you go through your postgraduate program matters a lot  
11226because well if sometimes two people are equally capable let's say equally capable but one  
11227is more confident than the other so the chances for the first one the one who is confident to  
11228succeed is it's so much better than the the other one so that's the second one is mi-  
11229information might be sent to to potential to the perspective or the admitted students about  
11230the preparation they might need in order to succeed to better succeed in academic study  
11231and after students come to here to study like uh some support like the EAP courses that I  
11232have taken they have that I have that I have been taking really helpful I think because it  
11233provides ongoing support for international students in terms of academic writing and also  
11234oral uh fluency but I prefer these supports from for academic writing these aspects is what  
11235I really need where some students might need support from oral fluency so it's  
11236understandable so basically we have three stages that is before admission and after  
11237admission between admission and registration and then the third one might after the  
11238registration through from registration to completion yeah

11239R: okay brilliant um and so then so you mentioned between registration and actually  
11240commencing your studies so there's a lot of organizations that are now running summer  
11241programs to help prepare students yeah so if you were to give advice to one of these  
11242organizations on how to prepare students or or anything about running some sort of  
11243summer program to help students before they go into university what would that advice be  
11244Nadia: actually I know some programs some organizations they offer specialized a summer  
11245program to basically to help students improve their academic skills or study skills so uh I  
11246know they are doing a great job about helping students to to improve their academic  
11247studies I even know some students who have not achieved the language level for their  
11248program they can actually take these programs and after successful completion of these  
11249programs student can just go straight to take their degree programs uhm I don't know the  
11250actual operation of those summer programs but I don't know whether they provide a  
11251simulation like uh before taking the actual undergraduate or postgraduate program students  
11252can actually get a real picture about the lectures or the structure of their lectures they are  
11253going to take like during the summer program some real lectures can be presented to  
11254students for their program they can get a real picture like how I'm going to what kind of  
11255challenges I might encounter in future lecture lectures or how the lecture is what kind of  
11256requirements that I have to meet in order to you to actually do well in academic study so I  
11257don't know whether those kinds of simulation simulation lectures can be provided or not  
11258uhm second is those summer programs I know some the requirements I don't know there is  
11259a requirement for the summer programs or not or whether there's requirement for the  
11260summer program or not I know some universities provide summer programs like if you if  
11261your current IELTS is six point five then you can take this high level summer program  
11262where if you're sc- if you're IELTS program um IELTS score is below six well you can  
11263take the the other intensive programs or not uhm I would like to actually suggest use the  
11264pre-assessment for this summer program not only can be not only based on the IELTS but  
11265also should based on the their um performances based on their performances after they  
11266register for the summer program because as I mentioned the IELTS is not a true indicator  
11267of students' academic skills or language skills so the those summer programs actually the  
11268admission for the summer programs are based on students IELTS but summer programs  
11269should also be suggested to measure or to assess students oral fluency or writing skills after  
11270they begin to take the programs that's that's where I can come with at this point  
11271R: that's brilliant all right um alright well I'd say that's all of the questions that I have for  
11272you um but I'd like to ask are there any questions that you wish I had asked that I didn't

11273Nadia: uhm let me think [long pause] can I ask is mm what is the the ultimate purpose of  
11274your PhD dissertation

11275R: so essentially what I'm doing is I'm trying to get as many international students my goal  
11276is like 300 to take my questionnaire at [institution 1] and interview students and then also I  
11277have a questionnaire and interviews for faculty for professors and then I've also I'm  
11278looking at literature and at other institutions EAP curriculums and I'm taking everything  
11279that I found from all of the questionnaires interviews and the literature and I'm designing  
11280an English for academic purposes summer program for [institution 1] and then I will  
11281implement that this summer and the students who take that program I will actually have  
11282follow-up interviews and questionnaires all through next year to see how they do and then  
11283with the grades and the assessments so that I can correlate them with IELTS so I'll have  
11284two different groups those who went through the the preparation that I've designed based  
11285on all of my findings and those who have not had preparation and see if the summer  
11286program does a better job at preparing students than IELTS that's the big picture

11287Nadia: okay that's that's very interesting uhm because there's no such kind of EAP courses  
11288available right now in [country]

11289R: really

11290Nadia: no no so I actually have come up with ideas of introducing this kind of courses in  
11291[country]

11292R: that's brilliant

11293Nadia: cuz currently the [nationality] market I mean an increasing number of students  
11294actually right now decide to study or are preparing to study abroad I mean the UK or the  
11295United States or European countries including Island basically the preparation they receive  
11296is just an intensive training for IELTS TOEFL TOEIC SAT GMET those kinds of  
11297standardized tests other academic supports there aren't so many kind of courses available  
11298here I think as much attention has been given to the preparation of standardized tests like  
11299IELTS and the TOEFL a little attention has been given to the support of or the training of  
11300students' academic skills which actually the the key skills they are going to need to  
11301succeed in their academic study they just focus on getting the entry getting the chance to  
11302study in a foreign country or study in their dream university but they have not devoted as  
11303much as they have these should to the skills once the commence study in foreign country  
11304yeah

11305R: okay alright is there anything else you'd like to add or

11306Nadia: are are you going to actually to ask a lot of background information about the  
11307students language learning experiences

11308R: uhm not as much no uhm simply because the point to the interviews for me is more to  
11309see what students need at [institution 1] so things like I've been asking like what skills do  
11310you need or you know what's required and your modules etc. um so that's kind of what I'm  
11311looking at rather than the influence of previous language education on success now  
11312Nadia: but you're going to actually going to decide to whether an EAP no the summer  
11313program can help students do better do a better job in their academics study right  
11314R: well I'm going to try and design a program to address the challenges of students yeah  
11315that they will face in in [institution 1]  
11316Nadia: oh that program is different from some of the summer program right a little bit  
11317different  
11318R: yeah yeah yeah  
11319Nadia: that's that's that's really what international students' needs well if this programs that  
11320actually they designed to target students international students concerns before they study  
11321the postgraduate or the undergraduate programs that will make really huge difference I  
11322think yeah  
11323R: cool alright thank you so much

11324

11325

**Natalia**

11326

11327R: okay so um can you tell me how would you evaluate your current academic success like  
11328do you think you're doing well do you think you're not doing well do you know  
11329Natalia: okay well I don't really know because I have been graded only once I have  
11330submitted two essays but I have my grade only for the first essay and the second one will  
11331be graded maybe march so it's a long time to wait um I did one presentation but it wasn't  
11332assessed so I also don't know um what I did I just went to my coordinator and asked  
11333directly do you think I'm okay @@ because I'm nervous and I also wanted to make sure  
11334that I am at the right place right now and he said yeah I think you're doing fine but what  
11335you have to do is to focus on your dissertation because that's the most important part and  
11336this part@ is@ something@ that I'm struggling with because uh it takes more time than  
11337you thought it would and plus [pause] whenever you try to uh talk with your supervisor  
11338you think you're on the right track but then he sends you the comments and it turns out you  
11339have to rewrite like everything so I'm not I'm not really sure I think I'm doing okay but I  
11340could have put a little bit more effort  
11341R: okay and what would you say your strengths are  
11342Natalia: in terms of academic

11343R: in terms of academic yep

11344Natalia: okay well [pause] first I think I don't really struggle with making arguments with  
11345making myself clear because it's not difficult to uh phrase the sentences etc. etc. so I think  
11346speaking part is more or less fine [pause] uh except sometimes I get shy and I just don't  
11347really want to talk to anybody @ but that's another point umm maybe another thing is that  
11348I'm very um aware of language structures of grammar syntaxes etcetera etcetera so  
11349whenever I I write something it doesn't really take much time but I need somebody to  
11350proofread it just in case just to be sure

11351R: and what were your weaknesses be in academic terms

11352Natalia: okay good question @@ I'm gonna try to remember what I put into the  
11353questionnaire @@@@ I think paraphrasing is one of the things I'm struggling because  
11354sometimes I'm just getting lazy like I don't really want to find any synonyms @ that's  
11355really perfectly @ I don't want to bother like I just want @to @take and put it into my  
11356essay@ then no you have to do it and then it takes a long time because I'm always thinking  
11357and rethinking like did I do it fine oh no maybe should be more academic or maybe I  
11358should opt for another word or something like and you spend you waste basically like  
11359hours and hours just to make sure it's perfect or it's kind of perfectionist problem as well  
11360and time management thing is awful like I have no idea how to set the goals like okay I'm  
11361going to write 500 words and by the end of the week I will have like say 1,000 something  
11362something no. I I never do that @and @I'm @writing only when I have inspiration over  
11363coffee somewhere and uh that's why I usually submit my essays really late like maybe one  
11364hour before and I'm super stressed and I think if I could improve that part that would  
11365improve general writing skill I think

11366R: okay um and so in terms of English what would your strengths be

11367Natalia: [inhale] well I think based on the exam tests that I've taken I have advanced level  
11368so [pause] the strengths would be maybe I am aware of all of the skills I know what is  
11369reading for the gist what is reading for details how to read quicker about listening I think I  
11370kind of catch other accents I catch the intonation and you know uh basically [pause] maybe  
11371good listening skills also help you with the lectures because you you're not struggling you  
11372understand everything and that's a very good point because you're a student abroad and you  
11373know first you're really nervous what if I just go to the lecture and I'm like blank but thank  
11374God it did not happen [pause] yeah

11375R: okay and what about your weaknesses in terms of English

11376Natalia: lack of self-confidence because sometimes [pause] well I heard some people say  
11377that you kind of sound American and I also heard some people say that no actually we can



11378hear [language] accent etcetera etcetera and it's like sometimes these people will put you  
11379down and you're like okay so why would I even bother like why would I even try to  
11380improve myself to improve my pronunciation to work on the skills if like I will never be at  
11381the same level as native speaker so because of that I think you start uh [click] being like  
11382what self-come so you see like right now I forgot it words well I mean just you you  
11383become really shy and you're just really you don't want to participate in discussions  
11384because about just because you're not too- @@ ahah see like right now I forgot a word  
11385@@ um [click] you you become really shy and you don't really want to participate in  
11386discussions just because you're not too confident in yourself

11387R: mm-hmm um can I ask if most of the comments that you're referring to are they coming  
11388from native speakers non-native speakers both

11389Natalia: [long pause] oh well usually native speakers it's like 80 percent mmm 20 percent I  
11390think would be uh non-native speakers [country] maybe Polish or German @@ [pause]  
11391who else @@@

11392R: @@@ you have like list

11393Natalia: @@@ I hate you @@ umm no I mean uh mostly it's native speakers because I  
11394think it counts like their opinion is the one I would listen to ehm but like whenever I was at  
11395school university I was exposed to [language] speakers and so at that time I had to listen to  
11396what they think and get the feedback and okay I have to work on this this and that so it's  
11397kind of good criticism because uh it came from the professors and teachers and not just  
11398random people so I could trust this

11399R: okay so the comments are mostly coming from professors and teachers rather than your  
11400peers

11401Natalia: if that are in non-native speakers yes if there are native speakers they can be  
11402professors or it can be my friends or somebody who lives at the same res- at the residence  
11403or say just you meet someone in a pub and they're like oh your English is so great and  
11404somebody will be like yeah nah nah sure yeah mhm get out @

11405R: okay all right so going back to academic can you tell me about the work that's required  
11406in your modules like what do you have to do for them

11407Natalia: basically first we have lectures ehm I think it's maybe 40 hours all together and  
11408and then uh at the beginning the professors tell us about the requirements like say you have  
11409to submit an essay after every module so I have five modules and five essays um one time  
11410there was an exception because they told us we're going to do presentations and a lot of  
11411people kind of freaked out @because @it @never @happened before but then they said it's  
11412not going to be assessed so and still it was really brilliant the way how people it was a

11413group project so it was like maybe four people in one group and then everybody said the  
11414WhatsApp group and everybody was collaborating and everybody was meeting and  
11415discussing things and you know it's not like oh it's not gonna be graded so forget about it  
11416no everybody put a lot of effort into it and so it kind of makes me you know f-feel that  
11417everything you do here is very important and you shouldn't just you know close your eyes  
11418and do whatever you should really think and reflect and and try your best because  
11419somehow I feel that the professors they are assessing you like just in in their heads like  
11420yeah okay this is a good student yeah you you know

11421R: okay and as a research student what kind of work are you required to do

11422Natalia: I am required to do a dissertation twenty thousand words on a topic that you  
11423choose yourself umm I have tooooo provide either qualitative or quantitative research so  
11424it's kind of the methodology is up to you so you can choose and I don't think I have to  
11425defend uh it's just a submission of the hardcopy and [long pause] probably yeah both  
11426hardcopy and softcopy and then it will be assessed by external examiner's as well so we  
11427will find out about the results only in a couple of months so

11428R: okay and what kinds of skills are required in your modules so what do you need in order  
11429to be successful

11430Natalia: I would say critical reading critical writing are the key ones uh the professor's  
11431always stress this because it's not enough if you just read the article you have to extract  
11432actually what is important and what is not and also give your opinion about it and about  
11433critical writing @@ well it goes without saying that you cannot provide a good paper if  
11434you did not reflect on it if you did not mmm make counter arguments or found another  
11435point of view so that would be just descriptive and description is one of the points that will  
11436be uh well [pause] they will deduct the percentages if you just do the description uhm  
11437[pause] plus I think maybe participation in discussions is also important so it's kind of  
11438speaking and also it's not just sharing your experience it's also thinking why is it happening  
11439and how can you connect it with a [theory] with what we do with what happens in the  
11440lecture so it's not just uhm [pause] like peer talk during in the class it's more than that

11441R: okay and what kinds of skills are required as a research student

11442Natalia: [pause] well hmmm [pause] everything that already was mentioned plus [pause] I  
11443think that every student has to be uhhh creative at some point umm maybe a little bit  
11444innovative and brave I would say because sometimes we want to write about something but  
11445we're not sure and this is the best place to push yourself and try it out because for example  
11446even with my presentation I wanted to start with a joke and I didn't know if that would be  
11447okay because this is still academic environment and I still did it and when I when I put the

11448slide on everybody laughed and it kind of made the atmosphere more likeable and friendly  
11449and then I was whew @ how I'm going to deliver my presentation I'm more confident  
11450about myself and yeah so sometimes you have to take risks as well and kind of believe in  
11451yourself and this is more s- maybe socioeconomic factors because not everything comes  
11452from your mind a lot of things comes from your social background the way you can  
11453communicate with people maybe the way you feel people as well probably is that the right  
11454time to do it can I do it it's like assessing yourself your strengths and weaknesses maybe if  
11455you just push too hard you're gonna you know just break down and that's not what you  
11456want so sometimes you just have to you know think what other skills in my life is it like uh  
11457teamwork like asking for help like working together collaboratively or is it may uhh  
11458individual work but well whatever works for you so you kind of kind of just implementing  
11459your own set of skills into academic environment as well

11460R: okay and going back to your lectures so when you're inside of the lecture room what is  
11461the general structure so like what happens in the classroom

11462Natalia: it depends on the lecture umm we have lecturers that would just [pause] put on the  
11463slides and talk for one hour then we have a break and then maybe another [pause] two  
11464hours and that's it and sometimes we have the professors who uhh group us in pairs and we  
11465do peer discussions or we have this one amazing exercise it was about emotional  
11466intelligence and the professor put different emotions on board like say anger or love  
11467jealousy whatever and we kind of had to come up with as many adjectives as we can  
11468associate with this emotion and then it was great because we had to relate to our own  
11469experiences to remember like what do we feel and then we had to use active listening skill  
11470because everybody was telling about the experiences and uhm one person was supposed to  
11471look for the gestures another one for body language in general and the third person had to  
11472um listen to the facts and then the group had to present like what did they find out etc. etc.  
11473so it was pretty interesting because in the context you kind of understand emotional  
11474intelligence is very recent it's not so well researched but with this kind of advice you get an  
11475idea what it is because it's hard to explain academically it's more about empathy and people  
11476and feelings

11477R: right all right and um how do your professors assess academic success so when they're  
11478looking at your work that you've submitted or they're evaluating your essays your  
11479dissertation your work what are they looking for

11480Natalia: I think number one will be the structure if you follow the guidelines everybody  
11481has a handbook a guidebook something @@ and I think the first thing they take a look at  
11482this references did you reference it ummm in the right order did you use the right font etc.

11483etc. uh did you put every person you've mentioned and the references because what  
11484happens with me sometimes I forget and I'm like eh they they will not know it is but  
11485they@ they@ do @@ unfortunately@@@ the second thing I suppose they want to see  
11486the table of contents with a clear understanding what are you gonna write about uh they  
11487want to see that there is an introduction and conclusion and the main part and it's all  
11488narrowed down and I think logic and the way you linked the paragraphs so [pause] this  
11489second thing would be maybe what kind of questions are you researching so does it really  
11490follow the topic uh does all of this make any sense by the end of the paper are you in the  
11491same place or did you go further or deeper or maybe in the wrong direction so I think it's  
11492about logic coherency and structure

11493R: alright and how do your professors communicate their expectations and assignment  
11494requirements to you

11495Natalia: pretty clear @@@ yeah they start with it I think they make sure we know how  
11496many words we have to write sometimes umm [long pause] they give us the list with the  
11497ready-made topics sometimes they say it's up to you but you will have to confer- confirm it  
11498with us so you will have to send an email because sometimes you want to write about  
11499something but that's not uhhh within the limits of this module umm [pause] we sometimes  
11500we have webinars and uh you just log in the blackboard and they just run this short  
11501sessions what is required from the assignment because sometimes during the lectures just  
11502don't have enough time to cover it and I think they also put the slides on the blackboard  
11503and it has like the requirements page so they have all of the criteria written down so we're  
11504supposed to look through and follow like what is required step by step

11505R: okay alright and the sea so in general what do you think students need in order to  
11506succeed at [institution 1] patience resilience @@@ is that @@@@

11507Natalia: @@@ it yes it's fine

11508Natalia: @@@ okay @@ I could not just help myself umm well basically when we all  
11509come here our first semester you never know okay so now I'm in the big university what is  
11510gonna happen you just don't know anything and I think [pause] when it comes to the  
11511second semester you realize uhh [pause] that it's just it just takes time so you have to know  
11512if you want to succeed you need to take like baby steps and it's not happening in one night  
11513so you cannot just wake up one morning and right a perfect 100% perfect essay no it  
11514doesn't happen so probably successful students they're the ones who take time who go back  
11515and they reflect okay so last time I did this right but I didn't do this right and and then that's  
11516what you take it to your second essay and then the third essay so it's kind of always  
11517reflecting like one step forward two steps back something like that I think

11518R: okay and how much of a factor does language play in academic success

11519Natalia: it does play a huge part but it's not everything [pause] for example I [pause] am  
11520friends with French or Chinese people and I can catch some mistakes sometimes even in  
11521the class or and I just came and took conclusion that it doesn't really matter what matters is  
11522um how much a person can [pause] use the skills they have now and are they willing to  
11523grow within the university because uh some people they come to an English-speaking  
11524country and they spend six months or one year and there is no progress and there are  
11525students who came with a say intermediate level and in three months their level spiked and  
11526then um they their improved academically and like in every aspect of the life so I suppose  
11527it matters but your own motivation and willingness to improve and learn matters more

11528R: okay so besides motivation and language what other factors play into academic success

11529Natalia: [long pause] mm hm mm [pause] @ I have been speaking so much of her skills  
11530and factors I don't know what you had to be honest I think [pause] maybe I I would say  
11531that there are a lot of people who are afraid to ask for help or advice for example even  
11532[pause] you're not sure about something that's going around your modules or you're not  
11533sure about your dissertation some people they're not willing to send an email maybe ask  
11534the professor about something they're just afraid I don't know um so maybe another factor  
11535would be just to be open and communicative and we you will be surprised that people  
11536actually meet your halfway and they're willing to help and you know they even if it takes  
11537maybe five hours to respond but they still respond@ and then you know they are ready to  
11538support you so there is support and if you need it you have to ask for it you don't have to be  
11539afraid

11540R: brilliant um so did you have any linguistic or academic preparation before attending  
11541[institution 1]

11542Natalia: ehm well in my university when I was doing my bachelor's I was doing linguistics  
11543but still um I thought it wasn't really enough if I want to consider studying in university  
11544abroad so when I was googling what kind of documents I need I came across IELTS it was  
11545the first time I heard about this exam and then I took the two months preparation and I just  
11546realized that preparation is kind of important not not because it's about language it's just  
11547about like even the structure and everything um and after I passed the IELTS and I found  
11548out that I enrolled in [institution 1] and was accepted I was really really happy but then  
11549because I didn't know what kind of work I'm gonna be doing here I didn't really do  
11550anything I was thinking maybe writing essays will be something like IELTS you know  
11551writing part or maybe I wasn't sure and because I wasn't sure I wasn't really doing anything  
11552yeah it's when I came here when I started

11553R: okay um and so do you think that that preparation well first how do you feel about the  
11554preparation that you had um so you were saying you didn't really do anything between the  
11555preparation and enrolling in university but did that preparation actually help prepare you  
11556for [institution 1]

11557Natalia: [pause] I don't really know @ because in the set of context it like oh my country  
11558we have different approach for studying and for lectures and everything so what did not  
11559prepare me was that professors here use communicate and interactive approach a lot so  
11560how can you prepare for that I mean @@ and for in in terms of writing again like I I I don't  
11561really think even if you kind of google in the University website the guidelines and  
11562everything you read through it but then you still don't get any idea it's just I I don't really  
11563think it helps I think you need to be uhh exposed to it in the classroom like every day or  
11564like every week you know when you do it distantly and you don't know about the  
11565expectations I really think it's kind of a waste of time

11566R: okay and so you said that you took the entry assessment of IELTS before being  
11567accepted to [institution 1] so how do you feel about this entry assessment

11568Natalia: you mean the grade or

11569R: just the test in general or the grade that you got anything that comes up about it

11570Natalia: okay hmm when I was passing my exam I had a cold @@ I was there with a fever  
11571and I remember one of my professors told me that when you actually catch a slight cold  
11572you are more concentrated [pause] and I was shocked because I like I was really scared  
11573about the listening part because they only uh played the recording once and if you miss it  
11574so that's it goodbye @@ and I think I was sitting there putting my hands like in my head  
11575and and I was like no I have to do this I absolutely have to do this right now and the level  
11576of my concentration was so high I I kind of I gained like sss- a huge score just for the  
11577listening and I was so happy that it was one of the things that even we did it in preparation  
11578classes and everything and I was like average you know and then during the exam like I  
11579don't know what happened I just did it and then umm the writing part was like one of the  
11580most like [pause] struggling parts as well and and when I was writing uh this there there's  
11581like this two tasks I remember the first one I did okay but the second one I was really  
11582struggling with it because I had I didn't have so much time and I did not get a very good  
11583high score but then listening and reading and whatever took a lot of concentration at the  
11584beginning yeah it worked really well and at the end I think the cold and I was tired and I  
11585was really stressed and ugh

11586R: and do you feel the fact entry assessment accurately predicted how you would do in  
11587University

11588Natalia: um well University accepts people with I think band score six point zero and I  
11589gained eight point zero so I was really overwhelmed and happy because I knew that's the  
11590good score to be in university I think it should be more than enough so I think I didn't  
11591really have any anticipation anxiety like stress about it

11592R: okay alright and what type of preparation do you think international students should  
11593undertake before studying at [institution 1]

11594Natalia: that's very good question I was thinking about it uhh because I said I think  
11595preparation@ is a waste of time but then again ummmmm here in September/October that  
11596you serve the months when you kind of get used to the city that country the accents  
11597everything the surroundings umm at the same time you have to get used to academic stuff  
11598so it's kind of a bit too much um so I think if that would be like a summer course maybe  
11599like one month's one and a half I don't know and if if if we could just get an idea like okay  
11600so your >the problem is that everybody's in different modules< and different programs  
11601somebody does law somebody to economics so nobody can tell okay in your module  
11602you're gonna be doing this this and that but like if we could just get an idea that okay guys  
11603academic writing is not IELTS @@@@ forget about IELTS and then if we could start  
11604with um I don't know like small things [pause] may be changing our perception of it maybe  
11605at first not even doing all of this paraphrasing summary things but then kind of getting into  
11606this gradually you know so that ahhhh so this is how we will be doing that because when  
11607you come to the evening classes here like EAP classes my first class I was completely  
11608shocked I didn't know that that was required because sometimes the professors they try to  
11609make themselves clear but then without practice you're like hmmm so practice that's I think  
11610what students think and need and that's I think could be implemented in the course

11611R: okay so if you could give advice to faculty so your professors your supervisors if you  
11612could give advice to them in dealing with international students what would that advice be

11613Natalia: [pause] good question @@ [pause] hard question hmm [pause] well what our  
11614department does I think our coordinator [pause] oh he kind of tries to meet one-to-one with  
11615students to talk through things um when I first came here I had a huge problem because I  
11616came on the 15th of September and it turns out my semester has started at 8 or 9 or 8  
11617September and I was like @no it can't be I missed two lectures already and uh he emailed  
11618me himself and he suggested with me and talk and then he said don't worry you didn't  
11619actually miss anything with just introduction you know just getting to know each other etc.  
11620etc. so this is your timetable this is your reading list this is how things work here and I was  
11621so glad I think that's what um coordinators need to do in the future like try and and talk just  
11622try and talk like how are you getting a lot because that's what we need um I know that there

11623are a lot of students who are struggling and what they need is just 30 minutes with a person  
11624who can say no you will do it absolutely because from where I stand from my position I  
11625think you're doing great and you know we just need this kind of support

11626R: and if you could give advice to organizations like our EAP program or even private  
11627schools that are preparing international students for studying at [institution 1] what would  
11628it be

11629Natalia: hm [pause] I have no idea @@@@ I think what what is already being done is  
11630more than enough I don't know what can this organization do more honestly because they  
11631are organizing the classes the teachers are very good and I don't know no @ not really

11632R: okay alright um if you could give advice to prospective students what would it be

11633Natalia: hm international or

11634R: um let's do everyone and then I'll ask specifically international

11635Natalia: @ okay what advice undergrad or post grad @@

11636R: @@ um alright will do will do everyone undergrad @@ well no since since you're a  
11637postgrad will do everyone postgrad because you probably you might have more experience

11638Natalia: @@ well I mean when students are undergrads huh @@ there's a lot of advice  
11639coming up and if that's uhh well with postgrads I think I would say please try to find as  
11640many hobbies and activities as you can that make you happy because with the workload  
11641with everything going on you will have to take time and rest and usually just lying in your  
11642bed and watching a TV series doesn't help to recover and I remember [pause] in in the  
11643global room in there was um a guy I don't know where his neighbor he was organizing the  
11644trips it could be hiking and it could be just walking somewhere in the suburbs of Dublin  
11645and that's how students could get out of Dublin get out of the city and at the same time you  
11646know meet new people and just get a little bit of exercise and it was great it was absolutely  
11647great like you get back and you're so full of energy and you're like yeah yeah yeah great  
11648because a lot of students they think oh I'm gonna come there and I'm gonna study study  
11649study and study more but that doesn't work because everybody needs balance so I would  
11650say think about what kind of activities you could take up in this country because maybe  
11651what you used to do in your home country doesn't apply here so with me it was trying  
11652something new like I know there's a rifle club in [institution 1] so I went there I tried it I  
11653was like oh [gasp] I cannot believe I liked it and yeah I think it's more about another side  
11654um my advice would be think how you're gonna recover during your studies rather than  
11655something in terms of academic thing because you will get so much advice from your  
11656peers somebody who graduated maybe PhD students you will get that advice in time like  
11657every day yeah



11658R: okay and does your advice differ for international students or

11659Natalia: well [pause] not really no um [sigh] [pause] but like Irish students that I've met  
11660here they kind of pursue more laid-back lifestyle I think they don't they don't stress out that  
11661much as we are so even if they do all of these things for them it's easier they already live in  
11662their home country they already know English so [pause] they don't@ really@ have that  
11663much level of stress and [inhale] I think it's less applicable but still applicable yeah

11664R: okay perfect um let's see so are you aware of any support that international students  
11665receive from the University

11666Natalia: yeah I am aware of student counseling and I'm aware of drop by sessions I'm  
11667aware of support group for postgraduates support group for writing workshops about I  
11668actually participated in coping with anxiety workshop depression workshop and [pause] I  
11669don't remember if I went to anything else but I am aware I am aware because they are  
11670sending emails [pause] so it's it's a very good uhm like what's the word haha @ not the  
11671correspondence like they kind of the university itself makes sure that students know

11672R: okay and so do you think that the support is adequate

11673Natalia: it depends ehm I never tried how's it called one-to-one student

11674R: oh the student to student

11675Natalia: yes student to student I've never tried this but uh the workshops that I went to they  
11676kind of they they don't go very deep so if you have any problems and maybe you might  
11677want to go to a psychologist or something if it's really serious but if you're just an average  
11678student and you're you know a little bit lazy or you just don't really know how to uhh do  
11679time management or whatever I think they're really helpful

11680R: okay alright and let's see so that's all I have for you but are there any questions that you  
11681wish I had asked that I didn't ask

11682Natalia: @@

11683R: @ it's always the hardest question of the interview

11684Natalia: @ yeah it is [long pause] well you asked me about skills that are required in  
11685academic environment you asked me about how the college system could be improved in  
11686terms of additional support groups and classes and EAP so no not really

11687R: okay do you have anything else to add

11688Natalia: I am just hoping I'm going to survive @@@

11689R: you will @@

11690Natalia: no you know to be honest I mean whatever students come here first [pause] they  
11691they're not really sure if they they're gonna get it done because they homesickness you're in  
11692like right now I'm halfway through so it's another five months and it's over and like at this

11693time you're thinking [pause] it's either the times gonna fly and they're gonna be really busy  
11694and then you're gonna be finished and wow one day you wake up and you just hold your  
11695certificate that you graduated or it's gonna be a lot of sleepless nights that you cry and  
11696you're like I can't do this anymore so at this time I think plus winter plus the weather cold  
11697everything everything [clears throat] I think at this time it's really important to get in touch  
11698with your friends and maybe just socialize a bit more because when you find out that other  
11699people go through the same thing as you it's much easier it's not just you it's like 5,000  
11700other students who go through the same thing and they all graduate and you know that's  
11701just a good thought to finish with I think

11702R: okay perfect thank you

11703

11704

**Nicole**

11705

11706R: okay um so first could you tell me what your strengths are academically

11707Nicole: sorry

11708R: so what are your strengths academically like what are you good at

11709Nicole: my strengths I think like uh I'm better at uh reading than speaking English yeah

11710R: so reading and is there anything else that you would say that you're very good at that

11711would help you be successful at [institution 1]

11712Nicole: be successful you mean my uh academic ability?

11713R: yeah

11714Nicole: I think uh [long pause] when I'm like doing something I am uh I always pay much

11715attention to it and I uh [pause] it's uh it's not that easy uh no it's not like I won't be

11716distracted by things like when I'm putting my heart to do something

11717R: yeah so you have like a lot of concentration and you just like I'm going to do that

11718Nicole: yeah and I think I have uh I like to keep the things I want to do in order like I will

11719always do some planning so the most important things I will do them first and then like uh

11720I'm not good at like do many things together so I have to plan in advance and after plan-

11721after planning these things I can do things in order uh according to their importance

11722R: mm-hmm okay and what would your difficulties be then

11723Nicole: uh I'm not a native speaker of English so I have to uh spend much more time than

11724others when I'm like doing the readings and some assignments something like that uhh and

11725I think because also because I'm doing uh a course that uh I'm not doing this in my

11726undergraduate degree so it may be harder

11727R: yeah and what did you do in your undergraduate

11728Nicole: uh my undergraduate degree is about [topic]

11729R: okay alright and so now you're doing [topic]

11730Nicole: yeah

11731R: so slightly different um so can you tell me about the modules that you're taking right

11732now in your course so what do you need to do for your modules

11733Nicole: uh by modules you mean different

11734R: //the classes

11735Nicole: classes yeah| uh I have to uh do some readings and writing uh some assignments

11736R: mm-hmm okay

11737Nicole: yeah basically

11738R: alright yeah so just reading and writing basically um okay um the assignments can you

11739tell me more about the assignments

11740Nicole: so I have to uh write something like um I don't know how to call them like uh just

11741some assignments I have to write about uh 4,000 words for each of them each course need

11742to like I have to write an assignment for each of the cour- the modules

11743R: mm-hmm okay and so it's 4,000 words and are you given um are you giving guidelines

11744rubrics are you giving the question

11745Nicole: uhh basically the lecturer will uh tell us we should try something about the course

11746what we the topic should be what we've learned in this module and uh I think we have

11747something like we have some choice in the writing of the assignment

11748R: mm-hmm okay so it's a lot of freedom

11749Nicole: yeah

11750R: okay and and can you tell me about the lectures so when you are inside of the classroom

11751what happens

11752Nicole: uhh like each modules have they they@ they are different because some in some

11753modules uhh the lecturer uhh he or she were just like he speaks all the time@ and we don't

11754have much time to question him or express our opinion something like that and other

11755teachers they may spend more time like uh asking us what do you think and do you think

11756I'm like teaching uhh you can follow up do you think something like that

11757R: mm-hmm okay so some are more kind of engaging you know wanting discussion while

11758others are more like PowerPoint speak

11759Nicole: yeah

11760R: okay all right um and so in your modules is the only form of assessment the writing or

11761do you have other types of assessment

11762Nicole: yeah some uhh some courses we have uhh a graded assignment but not for every  
11763week just some we will may like submit some writing assignments but very short and we  
11764don't have to do that every week

11765R: okay

11766Nicole: but uhh the assignments that 4,000 word one that uhh takes up the main part of the  
11767final result

11768R: okay and so I know that you haven't submitted your assignments yet but um how would  
11769you evaluate your current academic success so how do you feel that you're doing in your  
11770course

11771Nicole: hm I think like uhh I've tried to do some self-study in this discipline when I was in  
11772my undergraduate degree but I find it difficult because because there fairly nobody I can  
11773talk to I can discuss with I can like share some information uh so I find it difficult but now  
11774uhm I have like my teachers and my classmates to talk about and I find it's like easier but  
11775also harder because I know much more@ than@ before@ and I find like more I don't  
11776know about

11777R: okay @

11778Nicole: @@@@

11779R: so it's like the more you learn the more you realize you don't know

11780Nicole: yeah @@@

11781R: okay so but do you feel like you're you're doing well

11782Nicole: I think I'm doing@ okay@@ yeah but I don't think uhhh I [pause] I'm the one like  
11783knows best about what's being taught in the class but I think I'm doing okay yeah @

11784R: okay and what do you think your professors look for when they are grading so how do  
11785they evaluate academic success

11786Nicole: uhh I think like uhh after we submit our assignments they are looking at them and I  
11787think they are looking for like uh what how much does this student know about the topic of  
11788this module and also uhh is he good at expressing his opinion and I think that's it@

11789R: okay and so how do your professors communicate their expectations

11790Nicole: [inhale] [long pause] uhh no no not all them@ have like have talked much about  
11791the assignment yet because it's only like halfway of the first term so maybe@@ it@ will@  
11792still have they will tell us later @@

11793R: okay so a lot of them haven't

11794Nicole: yeah

11795R: okay all right and those of them that have communicated do they give you like a piece  
11796of paper do they talk about it in class

11797Nicole: hmm they didn't give us examples something like that but they say did they say  
11798like I we can find some uhh papers written by eh students from uh previous years but they  
11799@didn't @just @give us and say these days exams or something like that they say you  
11800should @find @go @find @for @yourself if you want to like use them uhh reference @

11801R: okay so they say they are out there but you go find them

11802Nicole: yeah

11803R: okay all right interesting all right um so in general what do you think students need in  
11804order to succeed at [institution 1]

11805Nicole: I think they should they should uh they should be good at like uh thin- thinking  
11806independently because like you can't just uh accept what the teacher told you what's the  
11807textbook says you should like develop your own opinion because like uh at the end of this  
11808program we have to uh write a dissertation and that should be uh like a product of our own  
11809thinking

11810R: okay and so how much of a factor does language play in academic success

11811Nicole: uhh I think it is a very@ important@ role@ yeah because uhh for me like I'm not a  
11812native speaker of English but I have to read in English write English and my uh  
11813assignments and dissertations should all be English yeah

11814R: okay

11815Nicole: I think that it's very important that like I should use English

11816R: okay and so what other factors impact academic success and this could be things inside  
11817of [institution 1] or outside of [institution 1]

11818Nicole: uhh factors could you give me some examples like

11819R: yeah so a lot of other people have said things like motivation and housing finances  
11820things like that

11821Nicole: yeah [pause] motivation I think yeah like uhh and also I think maybe peer pressure  
11822yeah because like uh you see your classmates they're all like very motivated I will also be  
11823encouraged like to just keep going something like that

11824R: and so how do you find the peer pressure at [institution 1]

11825Nicole: uhhh I think [click] like for me it has advantages and disadvantages because my  
11826advantages is uhh they will like uhhh maybe sometimes I just don't want to study@ but I  
11827know I just know from like uh different@ sources that like my classmates they didn't  
11828relax@ they@ just@ like uh they just like they still doing some readings like or studied  
11829during the weekends I@ won't@ be@ play@ that@ hard@ and like uhh this is the  
11830advantage but is also the disadvantage because sometimes this will make me feel nervous  
11831like uhh when I'm @playing @and they're still studying@ I will@ feel guilty @@@@

11832R: do you often feel guilty like does that often happen

11833Nicole: @@@ uhhhh @not that much@

11834R: not that much@ are you usually in the library

11835Nicole: I spent like much time in the library but I will also find some time to relax

11836R: okay and how much time do you spend at the library is it like weekends weekdays all

11837day

11838Nicole: uhh I I I like uh I go to library mainly on weekdays because I think time to relax on

11839like at the weekend but I will also go to the library if I find I can catch up with the readings

11840the assignments I will also go to the library

11841R: mm-hmm okay all right so it depends on how much pressure you're feeling

11842Nicole: yeah

11843R: okay all right um and so before you came to [institution 1] did you have any linguistic

11844preparations so did you take things like IELTS classes EAP classes

11845Nicole: I didn't take classes but I took the exam

11846R: okay so you didn't take classes but only the exam

11847Nicole: yeah

11848R: um and so how do you feel about that exam

11849Nicole: I [long pause] find it very [click] I don't know how to say it [pause] it confuses me

11850like I think I like do a lot of exercises but I just like can't improve like maybe one part of

11851the exam I just don't quite know why

11852R: okay yeah so and so do you feel that that exam has prepared you for your studies and

11853[institution 1]

11854Nicole: not that much I think yeah because I I didn't prepare that hard@ for the exam so I

11855think maybe it's more important like I uhh I learn something when I'm uhh like um I

11856intended to study [topic] so maybe I'd learn new words through my study in this field not

11857like because when I'm uhh preparing for the language exam I have to memorize many

11858words but most of them I don't think I will use them in the future

11859R: okay yes so you don't see much of a connection between what was on the exam and

11860what you're doing

11861Nicole: yeah yeah

11862R: okay any other feelings about the exam

11863Nicole: yeah I [pause] after I've like got the results uh of the exam and I used it to apply for

11864[institution 1] and I like they've accepted me and I thought I like uh I'm ready for studying

11865at [institution 1] and living in Dublin but after I came here I find like there is still many

11866things that's not included in the exam but I will use them in real life like uh in on campus  
11867or off campus

11868R: yeah and can you give examples of those things

11869Nicole: uhh for example like uhh [long pause] the [pause] I don't know it's the the day  
11870after I came here I have to go out and find something to eat and I'm standing in a  
11871convenience store and they have some sandwiches but I have to I have to tell them what  
11872like what fillings in the sandwiches @@@ that I'm going to choose but I just can't name it  
11873I keep saying this can you please give me this and this and this I don't know how to say  
11874them in English

11875R: mm-hmm okay so it was even day-to-day thing

11876Nicole: yeah

11877R: yeah okay very um do you feel that you've improved since you've been here

11878Nicole: of course @@ because like I know that something I can't named name them like in  
11879English and after I go home I will check in the dictionary in the internet and the next time I  
11880should know and I should know how to say them in English

11881R: okay all right so a lot of it it sounds like it's just experience of being here that has helped

11882Nicole: yeah

11883R: okay alright I'm so what type of preparation should international students do before  
11884coming to [institution 1]

11885Nicole: uhhh you mean like just for the language part or everything

11886R: everything

11887Nicole: Oh everything yeah I think maybe like uhm for me I'm not a native speaker of  
11888English and for others students like who aren't who were not exposed to English that much  
11889before I I think they should maybe like uh spend some time in English English speaking  
11890country for a time I think that will be better like yeah and [pause] uhh [pause] also I think  
11891mmm maybe [pause] because I'm here for my master study uhh I've already my  
11892undergraduate degree before so although there are different in the college education in  
11893[country] and in Ireland I think they're I've actually anyway I've done something about like  
11894something academic@ before but like if students come here uh to for undergraduate study  
11895I think like uhh it may be more difficult I think

11896R: okay yeah yeah and can you tell me more about the differences between the study in  
11897[country] in the study here

11898Nicole: yeah umm in [country] uhh [long pause] uhh I think that like my teachers they just  
11899keep like [pause] they used to uh at least in my college like the teachers use similar  
11900materials for every year@@ they don't change that much and they don't like they don't like

11901they don't have that much interaction with the students and yeah like we we uh we study  
11902mainly like [pause] by ourselves I mean I also studied by myself here but in a different  
11903way like uhh [pause] I study like independently like I think I don't know how to say that  
11904right now but I I've got like some guidance from the teachers but in back in [country] in  
11905my undergraduate study I don't think they are much more like they're that much  
11906connections between teachers and students

11907R: so they're much more like removed or much more like hands-off

11908Nicole: yeah

11909R: yeah okay all right um so talking about teachers if you could give advice to professors  
11910my [institution 1] in dealing and helping international students what would that be

11911Nicole: uhh [pause] I've only know about like @three or four professors so far but some of  
11912them they I think they are more considerable? like they will write down things they think  
11913students may not know if they are like non-native speakers of English but others feel like  
11914they don't think that much yeah and some teachers they speak very fast@ and they may  
11915have some dialects and this uh more is difficult for international students and some of them  
11916they speak like slow- slowly relative

11917R: yeah okay hmm so kind of a how they talk and then also what they write down so that  
11918you can see it not just here okay

11919Nicole: yeah

11920R: all right and if you could give advice to organizations who create preparation programs  
11921for international students what would that be

11922Nicole: uhhh I think they should uh give some uh specific preparation for different  
11923programs the students are going to take like if you are going to do a science program then  
11924you should have different preparation from students work doing uh arts humanities for that  
11925I think

11926R: okay yes and if you could give advice to future students of [institution 1] or students  
11927who are looking to come to [institution 1] what would that advice be

11928Nicole: [long pause] uhh I don't know how to answer that question can I skip that @@

11929R: yeah you can if you want to yeah or like pretend that someone like a friend from  
11930[country]

11931Nicole: yeah

11932R: is like oh I want to come to [institution 1] what would you tell them

11933Nicole: okay so uuhh

11934R: you can skip it if you want



11935Nicole: yeah I know like I will tell her or him that like [institution 1] has many  
11936international students so you have chance to know about different cultures but only if you  
11937are willing to do that like some of my classmates they only talk to students from the same  
11938country they don't want to talk with others I don't think that's good I think people should  
11939always like move out of your comfort zone

11940R: yeah okay all right that's good advice yeah and so are you aware of any support the  
11941international students receive either from your department or from the wider college

11942Nicole: um you mean the um the support from school like for international students

11943R: yeah

11944Nicole: I know I've heard that there is a support [pause] or something like that but I've  
11945never I haven't been there yes so I can't say I know but I I've heard of that

11946R: okay so you've heard of it but you haven't gone okay

11947Nicole: yeah I can't say something about this but I just know they have some kind of  
11948support

11949R: okay so you know it exists

11950Nicole: yeah

11951R: yeah okay all right um and are you aware of anything else that the college offers  
11952international students to help them in their studies

11953Nicole: [long pause]

11954R: like any well yeah um well just anything that would make life easier in [institution 1]  
11955that um it could be things like organizations classes programs things like that

11956Nicole: [long pause]

11957R: or is it kind of the same you know it exists but you haven't

11958Nicole: yeah I think

11959R: ok alright cool alright so um that's actually all of the questions that I have for you but  
11960are there any questions that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask

11961Nicole: ehh I thought like when you talking about the language examination I thought you  
11962will ask me you more about that but you just @@ move on to other questions @@

11963R: okay okay do you have anything else to say about the language examination like how I  
11964guess I would ask what kind of exam should students take to get into [institution 1]

11965Nicole: [long pause]

11966R: so if you could design an exam a language exam what would it be like

11967Nicole: I think like the exam uhh should also cover the main aspects as in TOEFL and  
11968some other languages examinations but it will it should also like consider what programs  
11969the students are going to take [pause] yeah because like if you are going to do history I

11970 don't think students like they need to know that much about some physics term- like words  
11971 or something like that

11972 R: okay yeah and do you have anything else that you would like to say about the exam or

11973 Nicole: I just think the examination like [pause] like these examinations they don't they  
11974 they do tell the schools wh- like the students has uh they [pause] I don't know they they  
11975 they do tell the schools about the students' performance in English but I don't think  
11976 students who like have the highest score in the examination they are really that good in  
11977 English yeah

11978 R: okay so you feel like it's kind of a mismatch

11979 Nicole: yeah and because um I took the TOEFL examination for two times I think and I've  
11980 got it's 30 in each part of the examination and I got 30 in reading for both times it seems  
11981 that I'm good at reading but I still find it @difficult the way I'm doing reading for my  
11982 current program

11983 R: mm-hmm right okay yeah and what would you say is difficult about the reading for  
11984 your current program

11985 Nicole: eh-hh because like I have different textbooks to read for my modules and I find  
11986 some of the books they are written in a reader friendly way like I can see the main points  
11987 very easily and they are the sentences are written like they don't have much they don't have  
11988 many clauses like it's very short it's relatively short but not that short but they are they  
11989 they're more like they're easier to read but other books they may be not

11990 R: okay okay

11991 Nicole: I sh- I will like I may like read a sentence for several times to know what is talking  
11992 about

11993 R: mm-hmm okay and so is there anything else that you would like to express or say

11994 Nicole: oh about the examination like the language examination uh I [pause] like my weak  
11995 point of the examination is the speaking part yeah and like uh [long pause] I think like I've  
11996 read something on the internet about how to excel@ in the speaking part of a language  
11997 examination and they say like you should use some uh templates@ like memorize them@  
11998 and you will like have high score in that section but I didn't have much time to prepare for  
11999 the examination like so I didn't have much training for that but I don't think that's good  
12000 because like uhh you are goi- if I'm going to study in an English-speaking country I don't  
12001 use this those templates like in daily communication or for like uh academic purpose I  
12002 think yeah

12003 R: okay great

12004Nicole: and and the materials in the language examination I think they some of them I  
12005think they I think some of them are like boring@@ they always talk about like certain  
12006topics yeah

12007R: yeah okay anything else about any topic that you would like to say

12008Nicole: uhh [sigh] [long pause] @@@ I can't think of any for now

12009R: okay all right perfect all right thank you so much

12010

12011

**Noémie**

12012

12013R: okay so first of all can you tell me what you think your strengths are academically so

12014what are you good at

12015Noémie: um I think it's more reading because when you read I think you have like more

12016time when you struggle with the word or whether you struggle with a particular formal

12017paragraph I think you have some time and you can think or research or look at the Internet

12018if you don't know the translation I think definitely reading and I think speaking also uh

12019[pause] because people I feel here even in the academic uhm environment people are really

12020friendly and even they lecturer sometimes when you're not sure about what you're saying

12021or even you're q- when you're questions it's not really clear they always try to understand

12022you and I think yeah re- reading and listening and reading yeah reading listening and

12023speaking ey[ because re- uh re- uh yeah listening also because I think it also depends on

12024the accent I feel like sometime the Irish accent or a certain lecturer when they speak really

12025really fast it can be difficult but I think if just like since I arrived I arrived like in beginning

12026of the term and uhm since then I I feel I have improved a lot in listening you kind of get

12027used to the accent and and I think I have improved in it but before before uhm arriving in

12028[institution 1] I think it was more reading and speaking but now I think it was also like

12029listening uhm more and yeah I think yeah writing skills are really difficult to develop and

12030to improve because we don't have that much assessment like I have an assessment like for

12031the end of November to [discipline] essays but it's like you don't have any practice before

12032so it's like he- it's one and you have to work a lot on it more than the others because you

12033didn't practice that much even if you take your notes but it's not uhm it's not formal writing

12034so it's more about the structure of the of of the sentences the structure of the essays also

12035that you have to learn really quickly alright so I think this is more huge huge weakness

12036about like I think in English

12037R: okay and so can you tell me about the modules that you're taking so what kind of work

12038is required for it

12039Noémie: so I'm taking [course] so it's a [multiple disciplines] and I have a lot of readings to  
12040do @@ really a lot I didn't go through all of it @@@ like @most @other @students so I  
12041think I'm quite the same as the the naive speakers because like we sometimes we don't  
12042have that time to do everything uhm so reading a lot uhm also taking a lot of notes of  
12043course related to readings uhm and to write they are they want us to write essays for  
12044example in [disciplines] I think I've got after at which one or two for the final exam so I  
12045think basically what they what they want from us is uh a lot readings researching so  
12046readings and writing so yeah

12047R: so inside of the lecture um when you're in class what happens inside of the class is it  
12048more a professor giving a lecture with the PowerPoint is there group discussion group  
12049work

12050Noémie: it's really like lecturer giving a talking we don't really I don't really work in  
12051groups we don't have any group assessment or so no since the beginning uh of the term I  
12052didn't worked in groups so I don't think we're gonna have some uhm it's only really like  
12053individual assessments ummm and during tutorials or lectures during lectures it's really  
12054like the lecturer most of the time use PowerPoints and speak about the materials but in  
12055tutorials it's more ummm a discussion so you have to participate ask questions give your  
12056opinion so I really enjoy it because it helps us it tells me to articulate my ideas in a formal  
12057way because when you're taking that when you're talking in everyday life you don't use the  
12058same vocabulary for example in the [discipline] tutorial when you have to use the@  
12059[discipline]@ vocabulary so it's it helps me like to to use the vocabulary that I've read for  
12060example in preparing the the lectures uhm and to reuse this vocabulary and to try to  
12061understand if I have really understand the concept so I think it really helps the tutorials  
12062uhm to use this vocabulary and to try to uh to >and I think it's gonna help< me when I'm  
12063going to write the essays because I had already during the tutorials use the vocabulary like  
12064academics more academic style and so yeah that's it

12065R: and so your assessment you've said there is a lot of essays and then you also said there's  
12066exams

12067Noémie: yeah I have a MCQ I have a I am going to have like MCQs in [topics] so  
12068basically it's really just uh I think it's it will be easier than essays for me but I'm really not  
12069used to it because like I'm [nationality] and in [country] we don't have MCQ at all I really  
12070don't like MCQs so I'm kind of used to to write a lot but in a formal academic [language]  
12071way so it's really different from the English one so I have to learn how to write an essay  
12072because in [language] is all dissertation form so it's kind of difficult also to see how to  
12073organize an essay in English compared to what I am used to but MCQ is little less simple

12074for me because you can uhm you just have to read basically but at the same time it's tricky  
12075because you cannot uhm justify your answers and I'm used to that I'm used to even if you  
12076have a an answer that is basically not the answer that the per- that the the lecturer was  
12077waiting for if you justify it it can be relevant and accurate but in MCQ you cannot so and at  
12078the same time it's a simple it's a more simple from for me but at the same time I think it  
12079will be kind of difficult at the beginning because I'm not used to this kind of assessment  
12080R: yeah um and so how would you evaluate your current academic success so you don't  
12081have any grades back but how do you feel that you're doing  
12082Noémie: on on on what on 10 or how do you like  
12083R: yeah okay well let's do out of 10 but then I'm also gonna ask you to like expand on like  
12084why you feel like  
12085Noémie: @@@ okay so I succeed in some area and not in others uhm so I feel like most  
12086students I'm struggling with time management and with like managing all the readings  
12087[pause] but I think uhm I don't really know like I think it's difficult to judge what you're  
12088doing since you I didn't have any assessment so it's more like I'm studying kind of for  
12089myself I have no one to tell me if I'm doing in the right way or not uhmm but I think in in  
12090in readings and what they are waiting for that what they asked us to do for every lecture  
12091they upload the reading they ask us to do I think I'm quite I'm quite well I think I've I've  
12092done not everything but that's fine I think I'm in the norm you like more students yeah I I I  
12093don't really know I think it's very difficult to judge some to judge and maybe it's there is a  
12094lack of feedback about it because like it has been we are in October say two months almost  
12095two months and we don't know no one knows if we do it the right way or not so yeah  
12096maybe I think sometimes it's it's kind of stressful because you don't know if it's right or  
12097not @ so yeah I think it's for a difficulty to judge @@ actually currently so I think I will  
12098see after my exams @@but for now no I I I must admit I don't know really @any @idea  
12099R: yeah I'm so what do you think professors are looking for when they're grading when  
12100they're marking when they're assessing success  
12101Noémie: I think the looking for independent learning they always say or this these words  
12102but I think it's true they want us to be independent in the fact that we are reading and we  
12103are researching about the topic that we are interesting in also the topic that we are less  
12104interesting but like the important topics and I think they're waiting for us to to to be critical  
12105about what we we are reading for example in [discipline] our lecturer always say when you  
12106read something does it convince you or not so always when you have to read something  
12107you always have to critics and try to understand them for arguments and against arguments  
12108like the thesis of the author and I think it's uhm it's really interesting because they ask you

12109all your own point of view about what you read what you learn uhm and they yeah I think  
12110they they want from us critical thinking to be to be free thinker it's difficult @ but they  
12111want us I think to develop our own opinion and to when we face difficulties when we face  
12112theses that we don't understand or what when we find that thesis convincing or not they  
12113want us to research and to find arguments to to develop our own own opinions and I feel  
12114like most of the lecturer are really open open-minded about what we think if it's based on  
12115evidence and arguments so I feel free in the way that they really want they they make us  
12116uhmm free about our research topic even if we are just undergraduate I feel they they want  
12117us to to to love what we do you know to love what we are studying and they they push us  
12118to to to learn what we're interesting in so I think yeah they wait for they they want from us  
12119critical thinking and to research on our own when we don't understand something but also  
12120to ask questions [pause] most of the lecture I always have like come to our office hours if  
12121you don't if you have some questions and most of the students don't go because like  
12122because we are in university a lot of students feel like you don't have the right to ask  
12123questions but at the same time you can and I went to the for example [professor's] office  
12124hours and I think it helps a lot to realize that lecturers are really uh wants us to succeed so  
12125they want us to understand what we're talking about and some some sometimes a lot of  
12126students forget that

12127R: and so how do your professors communicate their expectations and assessment  
12128requirements to you

12129Noémie: yeah it was I think most of my yeah every every lecturer at the beginning of the  
12130term has made kind of module outline explaining the different form of assessments the  
12131percentage that is going to represent in our grades so you think it's really helpful because  
12132from the beginning from the start we knew what we the assessment will be so but at the the  
12133same time yeah it depends just @one lecturer in [discipline] he was not very clear but what  
12134was waiting for it was what he wanted from us but like now it's clear at the beginning we  
12135were like we don't know what we're going to be assessed anyway @@@ but it's one  
12136lecturer but no I think the others are really clear try to make it clear from the start the  
12137assessment the date of the assessments most of them so yeah do they always say from the  
12138from the start which is going to happen to us @

12139R: okay and so in general uh what do you think students need to succeed at [institution 1]

12140Noémie: [long pause] yeah difficult question @ what do we need to succeed at [institution  
12141] hmm maybe guidelines about how to study on our own because I feel sometimes it's  
12142difficult especially for some time for international students I feel um at the beginning for  
12143example I struggled at the beginning I was completely exhausted after every day of of class

12144and I couldn't I couldn't study I was completely exhausted because following classes in  
12145English was >even if I enjoyed it it< was a lot of kind of overwhelming because it was a  
12146lot of new new things new classes new country new student life so as an international at  
12147the beginning was really exhausted exhausting but at the same time I feel like we were  
12148kind of lost most of the students international students but also native speaker students  
12149because we don't know how to study on our own what is really even if we know the  
12150assessments we don't really know how it's gonna be you know we know that for example  
12151that we were going to have an MCQ in [discipline] or that we were going to have and an  
12152essay to write in [discipline] but we did not have them we didn't know really what they  
12153were waiting wanted from it like concretely what they wanted in the essay or so it's kind of  
12154difficult but I feel at the beginning to you know what to do what not to do uhm and I think  
12155yeah maybe guidelines about how to @survive the the first weeks because we take kind of  
12156bad habits and then we realize they are bad habits so we try to change them but we have  
12157accumulated a lot of lot of uhm readings that we didn't do for examples and yeah I feel  
12158maybe maybe make it clear that we have to @study from the beginning because most of  
12159the students started to really study after two or three weeks of college so we are maybe  
12160maybe guidelines about how to study on your own and yeah @@@

12161R: okay and so how much of a factor do you think language plays in academic success

12162Noémie: almost all of it I think we've if you don't understand what the lecturer is talking  
12163about it's really difficult and I fell on privileged because for example in the subjects I'm  
12164taking in [disciplines] in [country] in my last year of high school I studied uh the main  
12165points that we have been through for the first part of the term so it was really really helpful  
12166because I had an idea of what they were talking about so even if when the language was a  
12167barrier even if when so for example in [discipline] I didn't know the vocabulary that they  
12168were using I could refer to my knowledge in [language] and kind of see the translation on  
12169the links in [topic] I had since I in [country] you the last year of high school you study  
12170[topic] it was really really helpful and I'm really happy that I have studied that last year  
12171because I think when you know the uhm the kind of the main points of the subjects well  
12172you know what you what you're talking about then why you have a kind of vague idea  
12173about the subject the topic I think it really helps you to get over the language difficulties  
12174and to focus on the parts that are more difficult and so you can for example when in  
12175[module] was talking about a particular topic I knew I could refer to my knowledge make  
12176links even if it was well with [language] more knowledge it really helps me to follow more  
12177easily the classes and I think I think it really helped me because sometimes it's very  
12178difficult to arrive in a academic language kind of classes and to follow of the classes and

12179with a really specific vocabulary and knowing more having read before about this topics  
12180even if it's in your mother language I think it really really helps me and I think I didn't  
12181@like you know I think I went through it and I enjoyed it because I was not completely  
12182lost because I had some background knowledge that helps to build your then your English  
12183knowledge but language is the most important things because if you don't understand what  
12184they're talking about you you just give up really easy and yeah I have a Chinese friends he  
12185told me like he for example in [discipline] that if he didn't have the background knowledge  
12186about the Western culture for example when I our [topic] lecturer made references about  
12187Greek mythology he was like I didn't understand anything because he didn't have this this  
12188knowledge and I tried to explain to him but he said yeah but during the lecture I was  
12189completely lost and he couldn't get the idea of what the lecturer was was explaining and  
12190developing because he didn't have this background knowledge but I had it so since I had it  
12191I could follow his idea and get what he meant but he couldn't so that's why I think it really  
12192really helps to have the basics knowledge about the topic that you're going to study  
12193R: yeah yeah and so what other factors plays an academic success and so that could be  
12194inside or outside of [institution 1]

12195Noémie: uhm I think for example um my I don't have the stress about the fees because my  
12196parents are afford the to pay the fees for my accommodation and and studies fees and I  
12197think it's it's really it's a relief of stress because for compared to other students that that  
12198have the stress of loans or that have to work in order to pay the the fees I think it's more  
12199stressful learning it could have I think it could have really negative consequences to the  
12200academic success because it's a lot more pressure their grades on the how they going to  
12201spend to study but at the same time if they don't rest then they are going to @burn out you  
12202know I think it's it's yeah it's really I feel privileged because of it because I don't have this  
12203stress and I think it helps me to more focus on my study and enjoy it more and I think if  
12204you enjoying more you don't see that much at the time passing by studying so I think it  
12205really helps to don't have this this pressure of concerning money and living house so I have  
12206her student accommodation also and I'm very lucky because I live surrounded by other  
12207students that have that go through the same struggles so if I struggle about topic if I have  
12208questions I just have to to ask someone uhm so I think it really helps because when you're  
12209when you face academic struggles related to writing an essay or not being able to find a  
12210book that uh you have to read or these kind of things I think it really helps to be  
12211surrounded by students to know that even if you fail at an exam it's not the end of your life  
12212because @hopefully @I @will not fail but I have this this flexibility of knowing that I can  
12213get over it and I it's I'm not going to to have to pay for it in a way that I cannot afford



12214like since I have the support of my family and I am surrounded by other the students I  
12215think it really helps to get go through difficulties or through yeah I academic struggles or  
12216personal struggles

12217R: okay perfect so now I'm going to kind of switch to your experiences with entry  
12218assessments and preparation tools so did you take any entry assessment before being  
12219accepted to [institution 1] so things like IELTS TOEFL

12220Noémie: yeah I took the IELTS uhmmm let me think I think it was one year ago yeah just  
12221after I've done the CAO application form I think I have done it in October or December  
12222and they asked me to have the an IELTS so I think I have done it yeah in December so  
12223yeah around one year ago and I took that and I prepared on my own because I didn't uh I  
12224didn't have that much time to prepare because CAO asked you to post the results before  
12225certain dates and so I wanted to take the the exam really quickly in order if I didn't have the  
12226grades high enough I would have the time to pass it a second time before the deadline of  
12227CAO uh I just passed it once @@ I got the grades that I wanted even if I uhm in writings I  
12228don't remember exactly but but in in writings I think I got like six point five I was really  
12229disappointed by it because I feel it was the most difficult uhm part of the IELTS to prepare  
12230to practice all the others I've worked with online resources former online resources that I  
12231found by the IELTS and when you pass the IELTS they give you an access to a website  
12232managed by IELTS where they give you access to a lot of former exams and so I could  
12233train I could practice a lot of for example listening I watched video on YouTube when they  
12234show students preparing for the speaking test so I could prepare also see what they were  
12235wanting for me I've trained also with them recording myself because like I think there is  
12236one one one the one that you have two minutes to prepare a speech of one minutes  
12237something like that that so I think I've done it one or twice so every every part of the  
12238IELTS is except for the writing part I could practice on my own reading I found a lot of  
12239resources online speaking yeah I watched videos on YouTube so speaking reading and  
12240listening I've I've listened to like I watch movies I listen to the radio not that much more  
12241movies and listen to former former text test but for writing it was is really really difficult  
12242because I didn't even if I try to do the assessments my own by looking at the at the topic  
12243that they were for- of the former test I didn't have anyone to grade my work or to told me  
12244to tell me this is not right you have to to they are not wanting for that or and I think it was  
12245the most stressful part of the IELTS because I really didn't know if it was right or not even  
12246if I looked on the online you know on on sample I just didn't know what to do so I think it  
12247was really difficult to prepare and to pass because you have only one hour and you have to  
12248write one one e- one short essay and one about a graph I think you have to depict the graph

12249to depict a graph and I've never done that before so writing an essay was not that bad but  
12250like about the graph it was awful and I feel like if I have to do it this year@ I'm gonna ask  
12251my classmates how to do it because I have no idea how you can the depict a graph because  
12252in in school I've never done that so I don't have the vocabulary or a way of presenting it so  
12253yeah I also I think the most difficult for were the were the writing part

12254R: okay and um do you feel that the IELTS has done a good job of preparing you for  
12255[institution 1]

12256Noémie: uhhh I think in a way yes because it helps you to see your weaknesses and your  
12257strengths and for example for the speaking part of the IELTS uhm I think I got like 8.5 or  
12258or 9 and it gave it gave me a lot of confidence about the fact that I could speak @ and I  
12259think in preparing in preparing for the tests maybe it helped me to work on my listening  
12260and reading skills in a limited time so maybe for that for the writing skills I don't think that  
12261much because because I didn't have any feedback I think it didn't help it didn't help me that  
12262much

12263R: um and so what type of preparation should international students take before coming to  
12264[institution 1]

12265Noémie: I think writing really a kind of help about writing skills I think I wish I I don't  
12266regret but I think I should have practiced more writing ex- writing for example try write  
12267more try to #unt to tried to see how an essay structured how to write an essay try to write  
12268one in a short time for example for at the end of the year I'm going to have like to write in  
12269two hours two [discipline] essays and that kind of scares me because for example in  
12270[country] you have like [discipline] questions and you have four hours to write it and I  
12271have two questions in two one hour just for one question it's kind of really scary because  
12272I've never done that in such short time and I feel yeah definitely writing uh international  
12273students I think should listen you know before coming I think it's it's better to kind of go  
12274into the language so try to read newspaper but it's not that difficult that I feel a lot of  
12275students have done it international students when you speak with international students  
12276with some of my friends they say I've watched movies or lots of watching Netflix or movie  
12277so the kind of use to the language speaking or listening and reading most of them get kind  
12278of get used to it because since you have a lot of readings to do you you have to do it so  
12279even if at the beginning of it's kind of difficult with with the time I think you improve  
12280really really quickly uhm but writing I think we don't write that much as I said I think like  
12281you write your notes but you should most international students I think we struggle in  
12282academic writing so really I think we should try to write essays before really about a topic  
12283really like in real condition like you have a limited time you have to do it maybe first of all

12284like try to write an essay as the the best as we can so maybe not in a limited time and then  
12285in a limited time period uh because I think I'm gonna be @com- I'm@ gonna@ be@  
12286kind@ of lost I'm going to try to do it with I'm gonna ask maybe some my classmates to to  
12287to kind of join all together and try to do something like that you know giving us one  
12288question one hour and try to to to see what we came up with come up with what we were  
12289able to come up with but I feel yeah it's kind of difficult to know where@ we are going in  
12290terms of writing essays and academic writings definitely to work on that on writing skills  
12291R: right and so if you could give advice to faculty and professors in dealing with  
12292international students what would that advice be  
12293Noémie: [long pause] maybe being more specific but what they are what they want from us  
12294because they give kind of yeah the type of assessment that we're gonna do but like more  
12295specific uh particular guidelines for example in an essay that they are wanting from they  
12296are wanted from us critical thinking but what does it mean to critical thinking because like  
12297for example in [discipline] lecturers said it the like one week ago he said here critical  
12298thinking you see are you convinced or not by the arguments of the author or the thesis so I  
12299was like okay that now that makes sense but maybe at the beginning of the year it would  
12300have helped me when I took notes for example about some readings that we have to do  
12301because in the beginning for example like I didn't took readings took notes about readings  
12302in the way that I took them right now because I didn't questions for example the the  
12303author's thesis I just wrote down the author's thesis and I feel like maybe more having kind  
12304of compulsory courses to explain that how to take notes and to to to really use what they  
12305are wanting for is for example having kind of uhm tutorial about what is critical thinking  
12306but for compulsory for all students because I feel we we don't know what does that mean  
12307what does that really mean and yeah I think and for particularly for international students  
12308more explaining us what does that mean to write an essay in a particular field because  
12309writing an essay in [discipline] and [discipline] is really different and they assumed at the  
12310beginning of the year that we knew that it was different but most of us didn't know so most  
12311of the time we learned it because some second-year student told us that it's different that's  
12312it you can for example use I in [discipline] essay but not in [discipline] essay so I feel  
12313maybe in being more specific about the vocabulary or about the form that we are able or to  
12314use or not that we can use or not yeah for international students yeah how to write an essay  
12315in particular field not just saying you have to write an essay but really explaining what  
12316does it mean and what does that mean to be to have critical thinking in different fields  
12317because it's different and the lecturers kind of assumed that we know the differences  
12318between the different topics but we don't sometimes you feel like you have to to to

12319questioned the [discipline] for example arguments or thesis the same way that [discipline]  
12320one but it's not you have to question it in different ways so I fell sometimes you you you  
12321forgot you forget that it's different topic so you have to apply different method maybe  
12322being more yea specific about really giving examples I think it helps sometimes to give  
12323example about what they are wanting from us yeah I think giving examples about essay  
12324samples or yeah I think giving essay samples could really help international students as  
12325well as native students native speaker students uh but international students definitely @@  
12326if we could read some essay samples I think it could definitely help us to understand what  
12327what the form what structure what kind of work is they wanted from it  
12328R: yeah and so if you could give advice to future students or students who are looking to  
12329come to [institution 1] what would that advice be  
12330Noémie: mmm try to read uhm newspaper about the field that you're going to study to get  
12331more familiar with a with the vocabulary for example in [discipline] we use [newspaper]  
12332uhm I think definitely tried to read newspaper or readings about that use academic  
12333vocabulary because that helps to get to be to be more familiar before from beginning the  
12334beginning the the difficult readings and sometimes it takes a lot more time to read readings  
12335where you don't know all of the vocabulary but if you have kind of read it before you can  
12336get the meaning by the context and you it's it's quicker to read so I think definitely read try  
12337to get to read academic paper and before and to write to write I think uhh to write essays to  
12338try to understand how it works to really look at the at the topic that they are going to go  
12339through and try to see which topic they are interested in and maybe the mo- which topic  
12340they are most interested in and try to give a look at it uh for example if they were  
12341passionate about [person] try to look on the internet like what [person] talk talked about  
12342and try to get more family over the ideas I think definitely try to understand what is going  
12343on in their in their course to get more yeah to get more familiar with the vocabulary and try  
12344to see how you write an essays I think trying to practice essay or to write at least a little bit  
12345even if it's not essay to write maybe everyday a little bit uh to practice just writing skills to  
12346get used to show argument you ideas all right about anything that comes to your mind but  
12347just write in English I think because it helps when you're write you realize that for example  
12348you're missing this vocabulary so you're gonna look about it or even like that you don't  
12349remember this grammar rule so you have to look at that so definitely writing and reading  
12350and then yeah I think speaking and listening it's more skill that you you acquire really  
12351easily because since you are just surrounded by native speaker you kind of when you don't  
12352understand and when you cannot express your ideas are you accumulate a lot of frustration  
12353here so you want to learn really quickly or really faster so I think it helps to improve but

12354 writing and reading it's on your own so you are kind of the own judge of your work so I  
12355 think beginning before it's it's really an advantage

12356 R: okay and so are you aware of any support the international students receive from your  
12357 department or from the wider College

12358 Noémie: uhm I I knew that I've heard that we can I'm taking the English for academic  
12359 purposes course that I've really enjoyed it @ that I really enjoy yeah and I knew about that  
12360 but I don't know how I think it was I think was during freshers week we had a kind of  
12361 course orientation when the the man I don't know maybe was a lecturer I have no idea  
12362 don't remember and he talked about the fact that we could go to the help center that there  
12363 were math help class in order to help you that where they were and English for academic  
12364 purpose and I was like yeah that's that's for me and it was really really really cheap I was  
12365 really surprised by that and I think it's will help student to to do it and then I I speak about  
12366 it because I knew another [nationality] student and she was yeah I've never heard about  
12367 that in so I I told her about what what was it about and the it was only like 50 euros for one  
12368 term so it's really like I think most of the students can afford it I think it helps us a lot of  
12369 international students to to do it and it's a really good incentive I think for most of the  
12370 students so I knew about the English for academic purpose and and yeah I think it's a really  
12371 I think it's kind of an amazing help for international students because you feel like for  
12372 example he said [name] I don't remember his name it's [name] but I don't know his his  
12373 family name anyway he told us that he going to read our essays and I will I felt so more  
12374 confident for example for my [discipline] essay that I have to write for at the end of  
12375 November I was kind of freaking out about the idea of writing my essays and don't know if  
12376 I was going to do it right or not and since since now I know that he's saying he is going to  
12377 read them and to tell me to give me a feedback about it to tell me that I have made an  
12378 terrible grammar mistake in paragraph three I'm gonna be feel more confident you know  
12379 when I'm going to post it and send it to my lecturer no my tutor and I think it really helps  
12380 me to to to enjoy the writing of my essays @even if it's not always enjoyable@ I I feel like  
12381 I feel way more confident because I know he's going to read it and to tell me if I have done  
12382 like horrible grammar mistakes of or if the structure is not the structure that they are  
12383 wanted for me so I think it's it's really like an amazing help and even though I've talked  
12384 about one of my former teacher in in [country] as she told me yeah it's it's amazing to be in  
12385 your studying in college and to know that someone is going to help you and give you  
12386 feedback before you are going to be grade on your work to give you feedback about if  
12387 you're doing the right way or not and I feel a lot of students don't know about it so I'm  
12388 trying to talk a lot about it since I really like it and I feel that it's actually great idea and it

12389really give help to international students to give confidence about writing skills in which  
12390we don't have any feedback before the graded assessment so it kind of really is a lot of  
12391pressure about one assessment because you know since you know you're going to have  
12392feedback before being graded you I feel less stressed about it because yeah so yeah  
12393R: so would you have any suggestions for the support like how it could be improved what  
12394could be added anything like that  
12395Noémie: mmm I found it really great@ really good job@ the uhm what could be added no  
12396I feel it's really he is it always clear you make us really like I think it really depends also on  
12397the teacher but he really makes us feel confident when you talk and make us feel  
12398comfortable and when we ask question nobody is scared on ask a question and I think what  
12399should we keep is really the the small size of the groups because we kind of we know each  
12400other and really helps you to have a good atmosphere and whenever there is good  
12401atmosphere is easier to speak and to to me to be to just speak about what we think or to ask  
12402questions and I think it's it's a good thing the presentation that we have to do and he  
12403recorded us for example with with we've done um a presentation about three objects that  
12404best represented us and I felt even if everyone was kind of nervous it really helped us to  
12405talk about ourselves and to be recorded for it and I think it's a really great way to improve  
12406and I feel that because I've took it even if it's like two hours every week and sometimes I  
12407wish I could use these two hours to do readings@ um I really enjoy it because it's a place  
12408where you are in small groups and you don't have that much small groups you know even  
12409if in tutorials you are like 20 I think it's a really small groups when you feel comfortable  
12410when you don't feel your judged or and I think it really helps you to to speak more to to  
12411take confidence I think he- it helps me a lot through the term like the beginning of the term  
12412to to to just enjoy the language and yeah  
12413R: okay so actually that's all of the questions that I have for you know um but are there any  
12414questions that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask question  
12415Noémie: [long pause] good question uhm let me think [long pause] I think it's pretty right  
12416uhm yeah I think yeah the main point I think about you know I think about when we  
12417arrived at [institution 1] the most difficult point is writing skills writing skills because like  
12418when we prepare for English test we don't really know how to to prepare for writings and  
12419maybe more trying to work on writing skills because yeah in English for academic  
12420purposes class we we talk about linking words and maybe more practicing before doing  
12421our essays maybe doing little I don't know giving a little like introduction or conclusion to  
12422write about a random topic to the students in order for us who practice before having to  
12423write the essays I don't know if we have the time I only must have students our first

12424graduate in my in my English forget amorphous class but I think most of the students are  
12425postgraduate in my class I think maybe most of them don't have the time but maybe just  
12426few lines to practice maybe before the big essay that we're going to write maybe could help  
12427because we're talking about it we're improving on our speaking skills and we're talking  
12428about writing skills but we're not really practicing maybe practicing a little bit before yeah  
12429before the essay

12430R: okay anything else that you would like to say or express

12431Noémie: no I don't think so

12432R: okay brilliant

12433

12434

**Nono**

12435

12436R: okay so um I want to know how you feel that you are doing in your academic studies so  
12437do you feel that you're doing well or are you struggling

12438Nono: uhm I think I feel more like academically I can like my my working PhD okay in  
12439the lab but you know like so if you have lab work and you have get samples you you just  
12440busy all the day full time from sometimes from nine to five full day just do the with the lab  
12441the equipment but with sometimes the speaking it's not like they're some like the in the  
12442lunchtime I feel like with my colleague I can talk and I can speak but I feel I like mainly  
12443it's uh just like [click] I don't speak too much to English speakers so I don't know @

12444R: okay and what would you say that your strengths are

12445Nono: uhhh in my my like

12446R: so first academically so in general yeah

12447Nono: okay academically I think I can work uhh as maybe full time in the lab I interested  
12448really in the lab but I'm afraid from the just because I'm not English speaking uh speaker I  
12449feel like I afraid from the presentation I afraid from like to give a talk to the public but in  
12450the same time I want to improve my this my my skills in this uhh career I don't know like  
12451it's I feel like struggle when my supervisor even now you have presentation like few few  
12452weeks I know I want to know in advance you know like one month before or three weeks  
12453so I prepare myself I feel like in that in that time I like a little bit afraid but when it I I give  
12454it the presentation it was fine and everyone like especially my supervisor but for myself  
12455[click] like all the time even now when I'm taking the [course] if there is presentation no  
12456I'm not taking I'm not keen to give the presentation so @ can other one take it so I don't  
12457know maybe maybe I'm because I'm not English speaker or I don't know @ or it's from a  
12458part of my personality so @

12459R: and what do you think you're good at in English

12460Nono: listening I would be like perfect in the listening and I'm [pause] eh hh maybe the  
12461next one would be speaking but not in the public and reading but the worst one that I think  
12462so over the time I fled from the writing if like I am forced to write I write but like oh hh I  
12463feel like I'm not really really good at writing maybe because I don't have and just you know  
12464like now in the PhD so in the first year you co- you concern about just lab work and maybe  
12465literature review but because I'm not writing daily daily like a paragraph or something I  
12466feel like it's ooof all the time I I feel in the end but when when I reach that point I were  
12467really concerned and I did I did it in the end but like I don't know I like all the time I plan  
12468my like I should uh hh read and summarize because now science so I read articles and  
12469summarize but because I'm busy with family and PhD so the end of the day I didn't do it  
12470like but I'm trying to watching movies or listening to the radio or the TV so just improve  
12471and to get more vocabulary but the writing [clap] no way @

12472R: yeah so what what do you find difficult about the writing

12473Nono: the starting [pause] so I plan all the time like what should I plan I do planning but  
12474when I start the introduction I feel oo like the topic how I will introduce the topic once I  
12475started I can go and fill in but the starting is the bit uh the difficult one

12476R: yeah so just first getting a word on the paper

12477Nono: yes maybe @ one @ line @ @ paragraph and then I can proceed yeah the the first

12478R: okay and you said that reading is also a bit difficult for you so what's difficult about  
12479reading

12480Nono: at first when I came here like if you like when you I took a class as general and then  
12481I took Eng- IELTS classes the reading like if you have like passage like three or four pages  
12482then like they said just three or five minutes skim and scan and like just the topic or like I  
12483know like most of the words I didn't when I try to improve my reading not concentrating  
12484every word in the sentence so maybe I got the meaning of the ideas from the paragraph or  
12485but but I'm still still like now I feel like improve it too much four years ago but I'm still like  
12486not not like that perfect and I'm trying even I'm trying to daily reading but it's it's better  
12487than the writing so I can read now so quick scan the topic the keywords in that but but the  
12488writing is maybe @ just @ because @ like @ panic from the writing I don't know yeah

12489R: great okay and so can you just tell me what kind of work is required for your PhD so  
12490every day what is your daily schedule

12491Nono: uh like actually we don't have in my in my PhD I don't have daily scheduled but I  
12492can like I come every day to the my office because my my samples my patient it doesn't  
12493like come daily no when they are [patients] have like [illness] so maybe week there's no



12494there's no samples but I come to the office like okay I have scheduled maybe reading two  
12495paper summarize two paper for analysis the results depends it's not like a plan you have to  
12496do it this one this one this one because if some some days I have six samples in a day so I  
12497can work because and the lab it's like the first they need my experiment need maybe three  
12498to four days to finish but but I don't have fixed it like really planned do this one this one  
12499this one and reading or planning but but when I have like because we have this journal club  
12500and research meeting if I have like no one she will present so I have to concentrate on that  
12501talk to summarize to finish the result so it depend it's not fixed so

12502R: yeah it varies a lot

12503Nono: yeah varies a lot I love to be planning and I love like this is this is the aim this is go  
12504go go but it doesn't it's not working with my PhD @@@

12505R: so you don't feel like there's a clear aim or

12506Nono: ehh no it's there's a clear aim from my projects but because there's I even I concern  
12507there's no too much sample from the patient I have like basic lab work but from from that  
12508really the main idea for my project like I feel I am go away from I go away from the the  
12509aim but I love if there is like okay there's aim in this two weeks or three weeks you have to  
12510finish this one and then go to the next step but just not it's not the case with with this  
12511project so you need just we need and in the I like it's so sad we I love to have samples but  
12512but for this the [patients] and when you feel like that so sad to concentrate this [patients]  
12513because they will they have developmental and intellectual developmental delay in their  
12514life I wish I have like a samples but in that meant I know that will be scary for for the  
12515[family] and for the [patients] in the meantime but I if I have like plan I love to go with the  
12516plan like daily doing this one monthly or or weekly or daily I love to do finish like or just  
12517for my when I was like when I'm from undergrad I feel like you have to concentrate do  
12518this one this one timetable it will be perfect but it doesn't work I really all the time I want  
12519to drop to my supervisor I'm worried about my project I didn't do just one I he said stop  
12520worrying now you will be finishing that we will get degree and but but I don't know maybe  
12521maybe my @personality or this is the project difficulty or I don't know really@

12522R: right um can you tell me about the skills that are required in as a PhD student

12523Nono: okay first I think should be ummm enthusiastic and team worker so you have to  
12524work with the other because I'm in two labs so [topic] and [topic] so we have to be good  
12525communication and good uhh speaking because you have to present weekly and I think  
12526even in the scientific ways so we have to read articles updated update articles journals  
12527about our projects so maybe reading and the writing but I'm se- I feel now like I have like  
12528result I have to write a paper but but you know I feel ok I will postpone it I will postpone it

12529because I'm afraid for that for the writing but my co supervisor she assisted me all the time  
12530no one you you are or you already read the article why you are not summarized this one in  
12531paragraph and keep it and doing the other one and then you will feel you are really like less  
12532stressed and you improve your writing at the same time but but I okay I will read and then  
12533summarize a little bit and then go to the other one and then go to the other one so @ yeah  
12534[sharp inhale] but but I think the main one should be [pause] umm I think writing reading  
12535all this stuff but writing it's really for I don't know maybe the other the other what they  
12536think but I believe the writing for me is most important skills I need it in my in my project  
12537time now

12538R: okay and um let's see how do you feel that your supervisors assess academic success so  
12539what do they look for in your work

12540Nono: [sigh] they say even if I have meeting they all the time they are kind first of all the  
12541kind they are not strict so if I if I ask them to have have a rest or have a holiday they don't  
12542mind you can do this one they are really like they are not strict to have finish this one and  
12543give me review or literature review but or systemic review there they are not but but in the  
12544me- but when I am I'm I stay with myself and like sometimes you have like minutes to  
12545speak with you would you mind just if I have strict supervisor it would be perfect for me so  
12546I need someone like uh asking me to do many tasks in the timetab- okay and my work I  
12547work at present analysis that result and but but if I I wish I have strict supervisor so he  
12548@may be I improve and get more more academic performance so maybe @@

12549R: okay so so you wish that you had someone telling you okay I need this by this date  
12550Nono: by this yes and by this time yeah but @@@ my supervisor @ they are open mind  
12551okay if you if you can't do this one it would be good if you can and even because maybe I  
12552have just a new baby so they will let okay don't r- don't stress yourself you have family in  
12553this but but because maybe I came here just to finish my postgrad I'm worried about the  
12554time is I am finished in the time is I am with the aim is I am with the plan if I am in the  
12555scope of the project they said yes yes you know all right and you don't worry don't worry  
12556stop worried sometimes okay I feel but it comes the idea if I go back to do have a think  
12557have like to go to see my plan I I really I really worry you know but they said okay you did  
12558do great in the first year and then you can keep going I don't know @@ maybe if they're  
12559strict supervisor they're not say that @

12560R: so when you've given them a piece of your work so say you you've given them your  
12561literature review or

12562Nono: sometimes uhhh yes some of the literature review and but the main one because I'm  
12563just doing the first aim just analysis of the results we can maybe talk presentation like in a  
12564PowerPoint and they give me feedback so yeah

12565R: what kind of feedback have they give

12566Nono: uhhhh sometimes it's not scientific but just with the writing so my my main  
12567supervisor like written mista- like in the writing the comma the punctuation but in the it's  
12568not ehh mistakes in the analysis or just he and sometimes in the slide of the presentation  
12569just he give it to me every the first I I haven't do like uh you it must easily slide have a title  
12570and conclusion but I just give him bullet point and then he said no maybe maybe maybe  
12571give a title try to plan every every idea maybe in more two or three slide but uh I'm trying  
12572I'm I learned I learned in the PhD and the masters sooo I haven't finished but I learned too  
12573much since I started the work in the PhD @ I'm still learning until now @

12574R: okay yeah okay so how do your professors communicate their expectations so do they  
12575tell you exactly what they want from you or

12576Nono: hmm yes because we have me I think weekly meeting so I tell them uh what I did  
12577this one and this one and this one and they said most of the time they said okay great yes  
12578you did good and maybe if you had they have extra extra advice so you can correct this one  
12579and maybe if you read more in this area concentrate doing because ci- them I think the  
12580main supervisor he needs some time as he asked it to do posters and abstract for the  
12581conference so we we they insisted me to all the time they insisted me to write because I'm  
12582not English so they try now I try to read because I the first when you have a project so you  
12583have to read then write but if when you have like for example writing a paper or abstract so  
12584you have in the same time of the reading in the writing but they advise me write write write  
12585but I'm not a fan@@ of @@ writing so the main advice I got from them face to face but  
12586they gave it in kindly way it's not it's not strict anyways all the time have a chat laughing  
12587chatting in the yeah and the other of that so I dunno but some time is my investment  
12588because I got scholarship they wrote like um um six months the report they give me most  
12589of the mark four from five four out of five I'm good but but in that literature review I'm not  
12590finishing it I start I'm still reading and writing they said maybe three four so so they never  
12591they give me five out of five and sometimes if I ask did me did I am did badly or good or  
12592he said yeah yeah yeah but if you give you five so there's no need@ to@ be@ here like  
12593doing finished so this is just maybe official way to assess but I don't know@@

12594R: okay alright um so how much of a factor does language play in academic success so  
12595how important is it

12596Nono: ah I would I think I say ninety percent eighty from nineteen because if you like  
12597because now we are [nationality] so [language] is completely different from English  
12598everything the grammar the writing write way so translate even the meaning sometime is  
12599the in English like the word sometimes it depends on the sentence and in the topic but in  
12600[language] not it's like so if you study in language other from your uh tongue mother  
12601language I think a little bit difficult but if you see yourself you can do it I think you will  
12602you can but but the language is really really important it's so for listen you have to have to  
12603understand and you have to speak and I'm still until now afraid to give a presentation in the  
12604front of my colleague if like we have a three three labs if my just my own lab I'm I'm  
12605comfortable I can like but if like more people I'm a little bit afraid you know like but I  
12606think 90% is the language play a really important role

12607R: and what other factors are are important so besides language things like content or a  
12608family life or housing or social life

12609Nono: oh okay I think even the family because now I see the difference now between my  
12610undergrad and postgrad my undergrad was a a single just with my mom and my parents  
12611just going to the college studying with my friends studying and when I come back at home  
12612I'd just cuz concentrated on my study I can help with my mom but now as I'm mom for  
12613three kids I think it's as a wife I think it's really really difficult you know your your  
12614husband needs time your kids your even your uh your house needs me so I would be  
12615recommend if anyone I even I was saying now to my colleague while they are doing  
12616Master with me last year if you are applying to do your PhD try to do it when you're single  
12617@ but not when mother with children it would be really really difficult they had really  
12618impact so trying to and even in the evening or try to read a few planning to read or write  
12619but you are still busy so maybe getting tired from that from the kids at the same time the  
12620kids they need extra care and they are still young homework mind the baby baking making  
12621the food so yeah it's an even the social life so if you are going abroad apart from your  
12622family you're missing your country your family it will impact your studying but if you  
12623have plan you can you can do this one and and even now with the social media so you  
12624can speak to them I haven't seen my my mum for three years now but I I phone her every  
12625day so I feel she is close to me and this is not really really impact to me but but in the  
12626family if you busy this is impact you really in different ways but if you have I think I you  
12627will stress to yourself because you have you have family and you have PhD work you have  
12628to done we have declined it's a little bit difficult but with with the help from your husband  
12629if your husband helping you I think you can do it and you can reach your objective in the  
12630end yeah

12631R: so you have a lot of help and support from your husband

12632Nono: yes yeah yeah yeah yeah if I if I'm not like if I got husband but like he doesn't care

12633about me I'm not in the place now doing PhD with the kids you know it's like difficult they

12634are still below ten so they need@ @yeah maybe time you know yeah but because he is

12635support and yeah I can do what I'm n- I'm looking for yeah @

12636R: good that's so important

12637Nono: yeah @ it's really important yeah

12638R: um so did you have any linguistic so language or academic preparation before coming

12639to [institution 1]

12640Nono: uh yes because when you are as international student so you have to get IELTS or

12641TOEFL but I choose IELTS because it I feel it's academically preparation so you can when

12642you go to master or PhD you can get importance of the IELTS because concentrate and

12643academic writing academic speaking reading yeah I took IELTS before but it's not for a

12644long time maybe just four and a half months but the general maybe six six months yeah so

12645it's really important that language yeah for

12646R: yeah so so you took alt classes for about four and a half months and how did you feel

12647about that preparation

12648Nono: ahhh I I I before I came here like I didn't have a preparation in my country I just try

12649to to read to get for grammar but when I came here I just took the general classes but it was

12650it wasn't like academically really academic like in the university it's in the school so they

12651teach uh teach the maybe for it's general language like playing or grammar listening but

12652doesn't they didn't concentrate on the speaking and I like I left I just I was in the school in

12653the in the city center and it's not like they didn't plan like for for example today we have

12654present simple and next day they are not go by page and by planning from the grammar to

12655step by step they randomly I and then I decided no no no it's not academically I don't know

12656I just I waste my time I will prepare to go to the university I studied in [institution 12] in

12657English and I took just uhh uhm Eng- IELTS classes but it was a little bit short because

12658they didn't have full year IELTS and then I took IELTS classes in [private language

12659school] in [street name] for maybe four months yeah at first I feel it's so difficult because

12660they need it's not like IELTS they need to reteach you that skills once you learn the skills

12661you can practice whatever you want like three four or five exams in a day but the really

12662important is keep exam practice especially for the reading and the writing you can read and

12663then I took priv- uh private classes because I was looking for seven at first in every task I

12664tried two or three times and then I didn't get that score so I was give up to register I cancel

12665and I then I took private teacher to get just go to the University got 6.5 doing master doing

12666 PhD and then you can register other otherwise I don't I don't want to waste my time and to  
12667 ask my scholarship at the same time so I took a private teacher maybe five hours but she is  
12668 she is really good it was like the struggle it was just the writing but I'm really good at the  
12669 listening and sometimes the reading very got depend on the exam if it's difficult or not but  
12670 the writing and the speaking okay sometimes I feel like comfortable with the topic but if I  
12671 got difficult topic @oh my god I do not know what I will talk @ but the writing the writing  
12672 yeah but I feel in the classes because the teacher comes and just uhm speak and doing give  
12673 you and give you they didn't give too much just speaking for the student if they speak just  
12674 maybe one to three minutes and that's it for the day but because I feel the English language  
12675 it's the communication while you are speaking while you are speaking you can improve  
12676 your your language it didn't happen in the I I never tried English classes in [institution 1]  
12677 but in the in the schools that is just listening and even some school they didn't practice  
12678 listening or reading just like the teacher okay give the photocopy and practice this one and  
12679 that's I don't this is the way of this they should concentrate on the speaking interacting  
12680 R: okay and so how do you feel that IELTS and all of these classes prepared you for  
12681 [institution 1]

12682 Nono: yes I when I got that score six point five I applied for the master in the [institution  
12683 1] and when uhhh because we have exams and we have assignment written essays so it's  
12684 like this the main structure parag- introduction paragraph body paragraph conclusion is the  
12685 same I really got good benefit from IELTS classes uhh I in my I believe if I studied maybe  
12686 more than four months in IELTS maybe my academic performance was uhhh better than  
12687 better than better than now so I can I feel like my writing improving my reading but if I  
12688 had like a really good IELTS classes really good time even if the m- are like too much time  
12689 I can like but it definitely helped me so much written the essays and yeah just maybe I  
12690 need push up in the how to write the introduction and then I can go @@@ yeah

12691 R: okay alright and what type of preparation should international students take before  
12692 studying at [institution 1] so what should they learn

12693 Nono: uhh as I said before they should the skills like of the IELTS I think the IELTS it in  
12694 my opinion at its model really perfect model for for the academic people with eh who are  
12695 seeing from doing master or PhD in their postgrad they concen- but but in my opinion they  
12696 should concentrate on this speaking so if you find someone just conversation maybe two to  
12697 four hours a day or watching more more movies every day writing up every day so  
12698 definitely you will improve your skills or watching videos uh or teach and even now the  
12699 youtubes like they have and even I enjoyed watching YouTube's IELTS feature in  
12700 YouTube I really they helped me the it will be perfect so they really improve their skills

12701but I recommend if someone looking for postgrad and his international and his language is  
12702not not like should be take IELTS classes or general but in academic in academic way is  
12703not like the the schools like they just business in my opinion they are just business should  
12704be in university like academic for purpose like what are you teach now @  
12705R: so it should be focused on academics not going to the store and buying groceries but  
12706how to write a paper how to read journal articles  
12707Nono: yes yes yes yes  
12708R: alright so um if you could give advice to professors and faculty about how to deal with  
12709international students how to help international students what would it be  
12710Nono: I think I commented to ask them if it's difficult to write daily maybe weekly may  
12711may be monthly or if it just even just at the first maybe just summarize read and  
12712summarize what you read and the article just make just a little bit paragraph and maybe if  
12713once they were familiar with with the methods so maybe they can ask them weekly or  
12714monthly but this is I think this is this is the main important if you ask your your your  
12715student to write weekly or monthly just in my opinion daily is so so difficult maybe busy  
12716busy but weekly month it would be perfect yeah  
12717R: okay so asking your students to write on a regular basis  
12718Nono: yeah yeah yeah  
12719R: is there anything else that you would tell professors to do to help students  
12720Nono: maybe also encourage speaking so ask them to give a talk or maybe some people  
12721afraid like what has happened to it me now I'm afraid if someone asked me to give a  
12722presentation but if they practice and uh they regular basis like monthly you have to present  
12723monthly has to present even like for a short time five to ten minutes it will they will get  
12724benefit from that in my opinion speaking write write write speak speak speak  
12725R: okay um if you could give advice to organizations so schools so like our center or the  
12726IELTS schools or the English schools in Dublin if you could give advice to them about  
12727preparing international students what would that be  
12728Nono: [sharp inhale] hmm I think they should encourage uh them to read daily write up  
12729daily uh speak because I did I'm in my experience I have like three or four schools and one  
12730university and even in my master so I took my master like it's not research but it's modules  
12731taught module there's not that much speaking so just the lecturer came and gave lecture but  
12732in the some of the modules we have in the end of day we have project presentation but if  
12733they change the way just doing daily speaking or maybe just have five minutes every  
12734student have to present maybe uhm story or whatever it is but just to encourage them to  
12735speak and write they will get the benefit so they will not struggle when once they started

12736the their postgraduate or undergrad uhm especially if you are not a your language is not  
12737close to the English uh as what happened in the [language] so it's a completely different  
12738language in everything so must be practice speaking and writing listening I don't know  
12739because my I feel myself like my listening from the start it is good I can I can understand  
12740the movies the news if someone speaks to me in a little bit slow but it's not that fast I can  
12741understand and my like a good get word but but the writing but they should be like this is  
12742not even now with the technology I think the way how they teach previous generation it  
12743must be changed so just no just just the teacher came and give it must encourage the  
12744student to participate to give talk to to build the confidence and and in the same time  
12745improve the reading and the writing and their skills so they will and I think now most of  
12746the schools they do because now we have kids so I see my kids daily do writing reading  
12747and even and just the are in first and second class so I but I don't know about the speaking  
12748maybe they but they are my my kids they are English speaking so sometimes they correct it  
12749for me mommy say in that way it's not that way pronounce in that way so I feel okay@  
12750my@ kids they are really learn@ from @school you know@ and even they try to speak in  
12751English watch in English try to afraid they say oh [language] is difficult and ahh we don't  
12752want to speak but because we it's our our language we we need them to speak at least but  
12753now they are starting in [country] school once a week a little bit few hours on Saturday so  
12754they start they now start to speak and but they prefer English so @@ I think yeah speaking  
12755the speaking very very good and even from the from the from the beginner at school and  
12756the writing @@@ sorry maybe I feel I go on@@

12757R: noo no it's fine alright are you aware of any support that international students receive  
12758from the school from [institution 1]

12759Nono: I didn't exp- in my experience uhh I don't know I never try any support of for the  
12760English you mean for the English no no I never tried because I just got that score for the  
12761IELTS I saw like there is a #unt courses so you can even but because I'm busy I wish I  
12762would go to these classes but and even there's like CV preparation like career service here  
12763so but I never try it is when I'm busy I wish if I have time to to write up even if someone  
12764like even apart it's not from my project I can like write up and give it to someone correct  
12765for me so my improve my improve my writing but I never tried so if you have someone  
12766maybe ask me to @@

12767R: @ okay so those are all of the questions that I have for you but is there any question that  
12768you wish that I had asked that I didn't ask

12769Nono: uhm [click] uhhh [long pause] I think I did say I think

12770R: okay anything else you'd like to add or anything else that you'd like to express



12771 Nono: just maybe because you are now you are expert in academic academic teaching so if  
12772 you have you see like someone have like classes for postgrad to go to improve their writing  
12773 just let me know because I'm really you know I want to improve my writing I wish if I can  
12774 write like English speaker without any mistakes like okay can I can start because I'm really  
12775 struggled to the in the writing you know and the especially that introduction you know and  
12776 even if my supervisor correct for me sometimes the grammar he said but the punctuation  
12777 but if you if you have any of these like support for just let me know [click] that and it's a  
12778 great experience and thank you for this

12779 R: thank you thank you so much

12780

12781

**Patricía**

12782

12783 R: all right so um first I'd like for you to say how would you evaluate your current

12784 academic success at [institution 1]

12785 Patricía: @@ well uhm I have taken only one module well I took two one was about um  
12786 general skills for PhDs we didn't actually have any formal assignments for that one it was  
12787 most um about you know small talks about how to deal with stress or how to uhh you  
12788 know work with certain like the endnote and those kinds of things um the only thing with it  
12789 was a [pause] a how do you call that a resume and we were offered feedback and it was  
12790 actually very helpful because uh especially for me coming from a different country um we  
12791 do it differently so I got to see how they will be expectations and and the things that you  
12792 want and look for in a resume here so it was actually very helpful and then I used that  
12793 resume the corrected version and sent it to an actual um website where they were hiring  
12794 people for um some kind of linguistic uh uh work and I got the job they didn't get back to  
12795 me in the second stage but they said it was nice and they liked my resume bla bla bla they  
12796 didn't pick me because I didn't have a device that I needed to use for recording so [pause]  
12797 but the resume was successful which means it it was well done @ so in a way I could say  
12798 that it was successful and then the assignment that I wrote for the module um I was very  
12799 happy with it I got a high [pause] grade I think it was a 70 you one or 74 I don't remember  
12800 so I think overall it has been okay for modules however for the dissertation I found a little  
12801 bit more uh challenges uh I've had some uh sessions for feedback with my supervisor and  
12802 she's just mentioned a couple of things for example about my writing style or certain uh  
12803 issues I need to work on it so I wouldn't necessarily say it is successful because I haven't  
12804 had and you know clean no corrections kind of thing but I think it's been helpful and it's  
12805 progressing positively @ yeah

12806R: um and what would you say your strengths are

12807Patricía: in terms of uhh writing? or

12808R: well first we can do academically and then I'll ask something else after

12809Patricía: well I would say [pause] my previous experience as a lecturer and a [discipline]

12810teacher gives me some kind of [pause] hm guidance or foundation to kind of understand

12811the world academically eh or at least what @I @think it is like umm obviously the expect-

12812expectations here and in [country] are different the way we treat students is differently so

12813[pause] it gives me some kind of idea but [pause] I feel very confused sometimes when I'm

12814here yeah

12815R: um can you expand on the differences so you were saying these expectations and also

12816how you treat students is different between the two countries

12817Patricía: so well um first of all in [country] we don't have a lot of programs that uh

12818evaluate students' academic English so when they have to produce texts that are written in

12819English or when they have to work with English [pause] we don't really expect high grades

12820or um we don't expect them to be really proficient so as long as they [pause] can handle the

12821task and they follow certain rules that we give them [pause] it's acceptable but [pause] and

12822also because I think being in an EFL environment [pause] makes it different [pause] like

12823[click] [long pause] for example the the experiences I've had writing in English in

12824[country] have been very successful I have a few publications and one of them actually

12825international although it was in [continent] and it feels like there what I write is good it's

12826like I've had two papers accepted with no corrections by journals [pause] and then here it

12827feels like [pause] I can't [pause] I can't get them right so I don't know if the the fact that we

12828are not native speakers makes it a little bit like [pause] like they're a little bit more tolerant

12829with our mistakes there or if it's actually good and I just don't understand what is

12830happening here so could be yeah

12831R: okay and what would you say your strengths are in terms of English so linguistically

12832Patricía: umm [sigh] [pause] well I would say [pause] writing is one of my strengths or at

12833least I thought @it was um [pause] reading I can read I can understand in fact I I I don't

12834only read academic texts I read novels and all kinds of things um I struggle for example

12835with colloquial language? because I've never been well until now I've never been living in

12836a native country or environment so a lot of the cultural references for I don't know even

12837music or you know things like that slang and informal language is not my strength um the

12838the English has learned it has always been in the school context so I feel that I can I I I'm

12839comfortable in that environment uh-hu

12840R: okay and what would you say that your weaknesses would be academically

12841Patricía: hmm [long pause] even though I consider myself a good writer I would also say  
12842[pause] I I still have weaknesses in that area uh particularly now that I'm writing the  
12843dissertation I think um [pause] dealing with the style? [pause] of a dissertation is becoming  
12844challenging now mm-hm

12845R: and do you know what about it makes it challenging or is it just kind of feeling

12846Patricía: well from the feedback I've had from my supervisor um she mentioned that it's  
12847very narrative that I have a very nar- narrative style [pause] I kind of know what she means  
12848but uhh after she mentioned that I started looking at some uh dissertations that I could  
12849access and I started to see like the difference between my paragraphs and their paragraphs  
12850and and I see things for example I use a lot of quotes and then I when looking at the other  
12851ones I so there's no quotes it's just you know parentheses and who said or just like

12852signaling where you found or where you would find a quote so I I I after I got the feedback  
12853I started looking at things a little bit differently but it's only after I got the feedback

12854R: okay um alright what about the feedback do you feel that the feedback is um so you're  
12855saying that's now you're seeing things from a different way but it was only until you got the  
12856feedback do you feel that the feedback is coming at the right time that is timely or is it  
12857were you kind of left on your own for too long

12858Patricía: no I think it's been very um constant very [pause] helpful and and appropriate? we  
12859meet very often and whenever I ask for a meeting or help or you know something [pause]  
12860help is always provided by my supervisor so I think I'm I'm lucky and I don't think it  
12861happens for everyone but at least in my case it's been fine

12862R: okay perfect um so thinking about the modules that you've had to take can you tell me  
12863about the work required in your modules

12864Patricía: okay so for the first one as I said there was no formal assignment it was just like a  
12865an activity or exercise which was the resume writing and then for the other one the  
12866[module] it was a four thousand word essay um we were given [pause] I think two topics  
12867or I don't even remember no maybe she had us look at the whole um all the topics for the  
12868module and then we picked one that we wanted and and she told us to write an essay on it  
12869she told us to be um to consider certain features that were discussed in in the module and  
12870[pause] I sent her an email before writing being the assignment and I told her about my  
12871idea I wanted to contrast two um studies that I found and and then analyze it using the  
12872things we saw in the module so I sent her an outline and she agreed with it and she  
12873provided a little bit of feedback and then then I wrote it and it was successful I guess @

12874R: um can you tell me about the skills required in your modules

12875Patricía: I think for the [module] it was mostly using the computer when you was very  
12876challenging because we were working with um programs that are only used in [topic] so  
12877things like transcribing or programs to to upload text and come up with you know the  
12878frequency of words and stuff like that it was very challenging um we only have two hours  
12879and only one hour was dedicated to the computer um skills and we were all lost like we  
12880had a Chinese classmate who was very good with computers and we were all copying  
12881whatever he was doing like he was so fast and he was natural at working with the computer  
12882and we were just like okay what are you doing how do you click on it and you know can  
12883you come back and he would be helping us like the teacher would go around and he  
12884became his basically his assistant @because we were like ah help us@ so I think um  
12885computer skills for that particular module also uh [pause] for computers and I think I told  
12886you this the use of endnote endnote I think those are at the moment some of my biggest  
12887challenges um [pause] what else [long pause] obviously academic writing and being able  
12888to use certain phrases connectors um using the vocabulary that is appropriate for the  
12889writing that we're doing reading a lot in short time and I think those would be the main  
12890skills

12891R: okay and can you tell me about the skills required as a research student

12892Patricía: hmmm [pause] independent work being very analytical and critical [pause]  
12893reading a lot @ um and I would say figuring out [pause] things because they [pause] don't  
12894tell you what to do they don't tell you what to look for they just kind of say something and  
12895you have to go [pause] jump in the sea and you know swim @ and and that's it I think  
12896that's something very important to be able to [pause] to look for things and know [pause]  
12897or try to figure out what they want you to find [long pause] if that makes sense

12898R: yeah so going with that how do your professors assess academic success like what are  
12899they actually looking for

12900Patricía: @ I don't know @@ I feel like there's something [pause] um general? [pause] but  
12901at the same time they don't tell you so of course they say okay you have to write this  
12902dissertation and you have to use academic language [pause] and that's it so how do you do  
12903it and then then they say things like okay look at other dissertations go find examples of  
12904other people in the department who have written something [pause] and you go and look  
12905for it and they're all so different even though they they are about the same topic or similar  
12906topics [pause] they look very different they do have certain things in common for example  
12907references um [pause] um in terms of format the length of the paragraphs like very obvious  
12908um [pause] characteristics in the text but at the same time it's like yeah but how how do I  
12909do it how do I get here and and you have to be very critical with yourself because

12910sometimes you would write something or I would write something and I look at another  
12911example I say well it sounds similar I I I think this could be you know similar and then  
12912when I go for feedback [pause] it's not [pause] so I don't know there's something there that  
12913it's not getting through but I don't know what it is

12914R: alright so in general what do you think that students need in order to succeed at  
12915[institution 1]

12916Patricía: hmmm [long pause] well first of all I think the university lacks a lot of resources  
12917as a student coming from [country] I know [nationality] universities have a lot of umm  
12918issues with providing students with services and and resources and when I came here I  
12919thought it would be different for example um the library doesn't have a lot of books that I  
12920need or that I would like to find uh some of them are lost like even though the system says  
12921they are there when you go and look for them they're not even if you ask for help no one  
12922can find them um [pause] so that's one thing umm [pause] and also like there is help like if  
12923you go and and or or if if you contact people they always tell you okay we have this  
12924services we have mentoring we have the student services or this department that is  
12925supposed to be helping students with academic issues but at the same time it's not clear  
12926what they offer and [pause] and I feel like everything is so [pause] directed to master's  
12927students or undergrad students and PhDs PhDs is like okay you guys know what to do you  
12928you're old you're you know you're supposed to be doing things fine so [sigh] I don't know

12929R: so you feel like PhD students kind of just get brushed brushed under like covered up

12930Patricía: yeah yeah like they assume that you already know things [pause] and they just  
12931don't care like they expect it to know what to do

12932R: okay and how much of a factor would you say language plays and academic success at  
12933[institution 1]

12934Patricía: hmmm [long pause] language [pause] I think it's more about finding this style  
12935[pause] that they want [pause] also I don't know if it's because my experience has been  
12936mostly with American English and a little bit of British English in the masters [pause] and  
12937maybe there's something particular in Ireland [pause] about Irish English that I've never  
12938heard before well I didn't know anything about Irish English before coming here it has  
12939been a challenge I think it's very very different from the other um varieties of English that I  
12940have used and maybe [pause] that's part of the problem maybe there's some kind of style in  
12941Irish English that I'm not familiar with? and maybe that's the problem >because I mean  
12942how< how is it possible that I am successful when I use American English or British  
12943English like and and then here is like no no no I maybe it's something there about Irish  
12944English or Irish um style in academic English I don't know

12945R: um and what other factors so if identified this the Irish English or the style but what  
12946other factors have an influence on academic success

12947Patricía: hmhhh

12948R: and it doesn't necessarily have to be academic it could be anything

12949Patricía: mmhm I think I also get the feeling that you have to be involved and you have to  
12950be very active and it's a little bit like social media like how much can you [pause] say or  
12951how many things have you done it's like showing off [pause] and sometimes also as a PhD  
12952student it's difficult to be everywhere and to do everything because you are so @busy with  
12953your own research so uh I find it a little bit tiring? that they also expect you to to do many  
12954things on the side [pause] of the of the PhD

12955R: and give you can you give examples of those

12956Patricía: eh attending conferences lectures uh even social events I feel like if you're not  
12957really involved in social life here is like you don't exist and uh also well personally I don't  
12958like a lot of socializing? because that's my personality and and I don't think it's fair because  
12959also uh if you're here to do academic stuff why are you required to engage in so many  
12960social stuff or like even turning things that are academic into social like that thing about uh  
12961tell your PhD in the pub or something like that or events were drinking and academic stuff  
12962get mixed like to me that's kind of weird? And I don't necessarily want to take part of those  
12963things so yeah I don't know @@@ it's confusing @

12964R: okay so um did you have any linguistic or academic preparation before attending  
12965[institution 1]

12966Patricía: yes and no I I have never had any formal EAP [pause] uh preparation everything I  
12967know about academic English I've learned [pause] by doing so hmm in in [country] the  
12968English classes that we have our general English so you know the basic working with a  
12969textbook listening to dialogues and preparing for a TOEFL exam or in IELTS exam um  
12970when I started the BA I started to write in English because all the courses were delivered in  
12971English and our teachers were native speakers of English or had been trained in European  
12972universities so they kind of taught us um how to do it and [pause] I would say it was easy  
12973for me and and I was the one helping my classmates uh at some point and that's how I  
12974learned by helping other people and by hmm having our teachers [pause] explain to us how  
12975to do things but I've never had any formal training

12976R: okay and you've touched on this a bit but um how do you feel that that training even  
12977though it's informal how do you feel that it prepared you for [institution 1]

12978Patricía: [long pause] well I think the fact that I got accepted @@ with the proposal that I  
12979wrote using those skills that I learned could be considered as being successful or as having

12980had something that set me apart from other people and and come here so I would say it was  
12981helpful yeah  
12982R: okay and did you take an entry assessment before being accepted to [institution 1]  
12983Patricía: like a test a language test?  
12984R: yeah  
12985Patricía: yeah in [country] for my job we're required to take an IELTS exam I took the  
12986academic IELTS exam I don't remember when I think it might have been a year before  
12987coming here [pause] and it was fine I think I got a band seven which is you know enough  
12988@ to get in  
12989R: yes //and  
12990Patricía: sorry| I I don't think it necessarily shows or [pause] means what hmm like [pause]  
12991a number means what you actually know? but [pause] what can you do @@@ yeah  
12992R: can you expand on that because that was going to be my very next question @  
12993Patricía: @ yeah so for example um [long pause] I don't think when you read the  
12994description that comes with the number that you've got [pause] like you kind of see okay I  
12995know this or or they say this about me but I don't necessarily think it reflects [pause] hmm  
12996my reality as as an English speaker or for example um in the writing I felt very confident  
12997and I think it showed but [pause] maybe because of the format of the exam also the fact  
12998that you're not given enough time or or or well not enough time like you have to be  
12999efficient when when taking those exams so you cannot really show what you can do or it's  
13000different writing those little essays that come with the exam than writing you know one  
13001assignment for a module or something like that so if if I get high grades in an assignment  
13002like the [module] and then I get a number that [pause] it's low or consider low and when  
13003you talk to teachers hmm it's it's not it doesn't correspond  
13004R: okay all right um and so what type of preparation do you feel that international students  
13005should take before studying at [institution 1] if any  
13006Patricía: I think definitely you would have to take um some kind of content classes in  
13007English it could be very overwhelming to come here and suddenly have everything [pause]  
13008being explained in English having to read that much in English and basically well doing  
13009everything in English so you I think having some kind of content [pause] classes [pause] I  
13010don't know if hmm an EAP class because obviously in every country [pause] I don't know  
13011what happens and it it would be very different but at least being able to know what it's like  
13012to be [pause] in a classroom where everything is done in English would be enough at least  
13013to to to start

13014R: so if you could give advice to you faculty and professors at [institution 1] about  
13015interacting and supporting international students what would that advice be  
13016Patricía: [long pause] hm [long pause] probably um like I know for assignments for  
13017example they do have [pause] a rubric or some kind of chart that helps them great but for  
13018example is showing us that beforehand um would be helpful to know what it is expected  
13019for what you're being graded on when you turn in an assignment because um [pause]  
13020sometimes you think that you're writing what you're supposed to write and then when you  
13021check that table you see what they marked hmm maybe you didn't understand correctly or  
13022maybe there's eh some kind of mismatch between what you think they want and what they  
13023actually grade so being aware of those grading charts would be helpful and maybe even  
13024though [pause] professors don't have the time to work with you in class you know in your  
13025assignments at least providing examples or [pause] some kind of guidance so that you  
13026know what they want @ yeah because as I said at the beginning everything is so different  
13027even if you look at assignments of other students who got good grades and you look at  
13028yours it's like okay we all got 70 or whatever but why is it so different it was we took the  
13029same module we we we you know wrote about the well similar topics and yet everything  
13030looks so different and you don't know what it means when professors grade it [pause] so  
13031R: so like what actually makes it a 70

13032Patricía: exactly

13033R: like what are they looking at

13034Patricía: uh-uh yeah yeah

13035R: okay so if you could give advice to organizations who are preparing international  
13036students before their university studies what would that be

13037Patricía: [sigh] organizations [long pause] well I have an issue with organizations@@@  
13038because um for example all those courses that are supposed to prepare you for standardized  
13039tests or working with standardized tests well this is supposed to [pause] to make everything  
13040homogeneous and kind of tell you okay generally this is what you're expected to do in this  
13041context but then in reality it doesn't happen like it helps but it's not enough so I think or-  
13042organizations work a lot on coming up with standard [pause] versions of things but it  
13043doesn't necessarily match reality [pause] and like the the IELTS exam it's a nice effort that  
13044they include different kinds of accents or different kinds of tasks in the exam but it doesn't  
13045reflect [pause] what you do when you come to school so maybe I don't know pairing up  
13046with universities asking professors and people inside the university and see if they could  
13047come up with some kind of [pause] tasks that are better suited for [pause] for the actual life  
13048inside the university



13049R: okay so having more of like an in-house program and an in-house assessment rather  
13050than relying on external standardized exams

13051Patricía: yeah yeah I think so [pause] yeah because they they would be testing exactly what  
13052they want or at least I @think @they @should @do @that @@ yeah @

13053R: okay and then if you could give advice to prospective students what would that be

13054Patricía: hmm [pause] about academic English? Or

13055R: anything

13056Patricía: anybody coming into //[institution 1]

13057R: [institution 1]|

13058Patricía: uhh [long pause] I would say first familiarize with Irish English hmm [long pause]

13059I think that's one of the biggest ones [pause] umm [long pause] I don't know [long pause]

13060maybe not [pause] expecting to be [pause] guided @ so be ready to do a lot of

13061independent work to be ready to do a lot of things on your own to be isolated I mean if it's

13062not necessarily a bad thing like working independently and being isolated could be good

13063sometimes it could be positive because also when you go into [pause] uhh a career in

13064academia you're left alone so it's okay but sometimes when when especially from countries

13065in [continent] we're used to our teachers or lec- lecturers or professors holding our hand

13066and guiding guiding us through the whole process like working in class in your assignment

13067like you would be given an assignment and they would actually work with you you know

13068we're going to write the introduction we're going to write this and that or like they give

13069feedback or they provide some kind of step to step thing to help you through the process

13070and here's like okay you know what to do go do it [pause] and it's it's [pause] could be

13071difficult

13072R: okay so you've touched on resources here at [institution 1] but um are you aware of any

13073support that international students receive from your professors from your department from

13074the wider University

13075Patricía: well I know there is the global the department of global relations um at the

13076beginning I thought they would be more involved and they would be checking up on me at

13077least @ and they haven't like they welcomed me they the first day that I got here they

13078acknowledged my presence but I haven't had any contact with them at all since then so it

13079was only one day half an hour coffee welcome to [institution 1] pff that's it. Nothing about

13080you know housing nothing about your progress in the school nothing um I know there's

13081also the EAP program uh from [center] um [pause] maybe because I'm part of the

13082department and [center] I know about it and I know what they do and I know the effort

13083they make but I don't think other people know so maybe trying to to get schools and and

13084 people inside the university to first learn about it and then recommend it to students  
13085 because um [pause] I mean if there's that help people should should access it and obviously  
13086 the program is not perfect it needs changes and and no program is ever going to be perfect  
13087 like it could be it would be very difficult um to have the perfect program but there are little  
13088 things that could be done like I was thinking for example about I saw this in on Facebook  
13089 the other day about Irish schools implementing a program where they have where where  
13090 kids have little buddies to help them with language problems and stuff so I was thinking  
13091 like the EAP program has for example levels or it's divided by discipline >which is very  
13092 helpful< but having for example other [language] speakers who are successful in writing or  
13093 in reading or in whatever academic skill it is [pause] that understand your mistakes and  
13094 your problems with language maybe they could hmm help you with some [pause] tasks and  
13095 also I know it's very time-consuming but having some kind of um support in terms of  
13096 [pause] okay I wrote this or I wrote this draft I need someone to check it and tell me if it  
13097 makes sense if it's okay so I don't know working in smaller groups or some kind of focus  
13098 group where people could share and and you could get feedback from [pause] more  
13099 experienced um [pause] students who could share their hmm first language and I know uh  
13100 it's not difficult because here Dublin you know you could find people who speak any  
13101 language so if you find those people you you could build something that could be helpful  
13102 >even if it's not< you know Spanish Italian French uh Russian you could even have  
13103 Romance language languages so all those people speaking French Spanish Italian they are  
13104 going to share some problems and as a teacher you know that you know where they  
13105 struggle so so giving some kind of [pause] yeah like peer support or something like that  
13106 R: okay um that's it from me but um are there any questions that you wish I had asked that  
13107 I didn't ask

13108 Patricía: [long pause] hmm no I think I think it was fine yeah yeah I can't think of anything

13109 R: okay and do you have anything else that you want to add

13110 Patricía: no I think that's all

13111

13112

### Seven

13113

13114 R: okay so first can you tell me what your strengths are academically like what are you  
13115 good at in academics

13116 Seven: actually I didn't do a lot of academic uhh in [institution 1] but from my IELTS

13117 scores I think maybe I will be good at uh writing? because I got 6.5 in writing and uh also

13118 uhhhhh speaking because I really enjoying the group discussion during module

13119R: okay right and what do you have difficulties with

13120Seven: oh [pause] writing as well@ because I don't know the structure of the essays so uh

13121maybe it will be very difficult for me to uh when I need to write and also critically thinking

13122yeah because when I reading papers and articles that professors give me I I can only uh

13123read it and uh have recorded but I can't it's very difficult for me to uh think to think by

13124myself about some new new opinions

13125R: okay yes and can you tell me about the modules you are taking like what kind of work

13126do you have to do for the modules

13127Seven: uhh you mean the name of the modules

13128R: well the name of the modules and then also like do you do outside reading do you do

13129assessments what what does the module contain

13130Seven: uh I have three modules this this term and the first one is [module] and the second

13131one is [module] and the third one is [module] and all these as for the assessment I need to

13132finish this essay

13133R: okay and can you tell me more about the essay like how long it is are you given the

13134question

13135Seven: yeah for the [module] I need to write a essay about [topic] for the [module] and it's

13136about like 3,000 to 4,000 letters yeah and for the [module] I have three options the first one

13137is the essay that the letters is from [pause] from 3,500 to 4,000 and the second one is a

13138journal but actually I don't know what the journal is and I think it's very difficult for me to

13139record all my daily conversation it should be included in the journal and the third one is the

13140meaning essay and the essay yeah I think I I I won't choose this one maybe in the first one

13141suitable for me and as [module] I need to finish two parts the first one is I need to analyze

13142the [topic] like the tree diagram@

13143R: yeah the tree diagram

13144Seven: @ and the second part is the essay and the lecturer gave me some give us some

13145some topics uhhh I only remember two of them the first one is [topic] and the second one

13146is a contrast between [topic] yeah I think maybe I will choose the second one the compare

13147between the [topic] because my first language is [language] and I have learned some

13148grammar of [language] when I was in university so maybe I will choose this one

13149R: so you'll compare [topic]

13150Seven: yes

13151R: brilliant and so your since you're doing the master's you also have to do a dissertation

13152can you tell me what's required of you in the dissertation

13153Seven: oh @ I I don't know too much about it I just know uh maybe it should be related to  
13154my major and about the research methodology I learned the quantitative and qualitative  
13155and that's all @ and now I'm learning statistics

13156R: okay so can you describe the general structure of your lectures so when you walk into  
13157the classroom what happens is it the professor just speaking with PowerPoint is their class  
13158discussion etcetera

13159Seven: uhh it depends on the different modules for the [module] the first the first hour the  
13160lecturer will uhhh speak about the content and the second hour we were handed a group  
13161discussion and the lecturer divided us into several different groups like according to the  
13162age of the students and uh I'm on to the child children because I'm interested in them and  
13163as for the other two modules just the uhh lecturers will speak

13164R: all right perfect um and so you've talked about the form of assessment um but how  
13165would you currently say that you are doing academically like do you feel that you are  
13166academically successful right now

13167Seven: no@ @ because I always have difficulty in reading yeah and uh um every week we  
13168have a lot of extra readings but sometimes I uhh I have problems to read them all I can just  
13169read maybe like one or two articles for for foreach module yes and I during reading I can  
13170just read but without thinking and summarize their opinion

13171R: okay all right and what do you think your professors look for when they are grading so  
13172how do they assess academic success

13173Seven: ah [pause] well in my opinion I think maybe they look they are looking for our  
13174creative opinions and also a good structure of the essay and that what I think

13175R: okay alright and do your professors communicate their expectations to you

13176Seven: uhhhhh only one module the [module] uh the lecturer told us something about our  
13177essay like the topic and the presentation and and the we- the assessment the essay yeah

13178R: okay and the rest have not

13179Seven: mm-hmm [pause] maybe after reading week they will

13180R: okay all right yeah true we are only in week 6 so@ okay um so how helpful so the one  
13181professor that has talked about the essay how helpful was that how helpful where the  
13182guidelines

13183Seven: uhh it's very helpful because they give us the topics uh so I have some idea about  
13184what I need to uhh what kind of reference I need to read and uhh I think maybe I can think  
13185about my essay from now

13186R: yeah okay right and it's so in general what do you think students need in order to  
13187succeed at [institution 1]

13188Seven: uhhh academic@ writing a I think it's the most important because uhh [pause] I  
13189think for us it's very [pause] difficult to write a dissertation in English yeah we have no  
13190idea about the structure and the the academic vocabulary and how it can link like uh  
13191[pause] between each paragraph yeah like this

13192R: okay all right and so how much of a factor do you think language plays in academic  
13193success

13194Seven: oh sorry I didn't

13195R: so how much of a factor do you think language plays in academic success so how  
13196important is language for getting good marks

13197Seven: yeah it's of course @very @important cuz without such language we can't write it  
13198mm like before when we are trying to write some essays we just use our mother language  
13199not English so umm actually I had an EAP class now and the teacher taught us a lot like  
13200how to write introduction and how to use linking words I think it's very useful

13201R: okay and what other factors play a part in academic success so what else impacts your  
13202academic success

13203Seven: uhhh I think like the knowledge of the major content is very important because now  
13204my major is related to [discipline] but uhh [pause] when I had undergraduate study my  
13205major is business English so it's totally different and now when I have the modules I  
13206especially for [module] I feel very difficult about it because I know nothing about  
13207[discipline] and but for [module] I found it's easier for me because in [country] my teachers  
13208always pay more attention to the grammar and vocabulary especially in high school to pass  
13209the exam so when the uh uhh when we when I I ha- having class here I found it's very easy  
13210for me to understand grammar yeah

13211R: okay and is there anything else that impacts so this could be inside or outside of  
13212[institution 1] that would impact your academic success

13213Seven: yeah I think maybe for my major is also very important to have some teaching  
13214experience because I [pause] didn't have too much experience so when I had the class like  
13215[module] I found sometimes I need to imagine what the students will like in my class but  
13216for some other classmates maybe they have some experience before it will be easier for  
13217them to understand what's the lecturers talking about

13218R: okay yeah alright so now I'm going to move towards your experiences with entry and  
13219preparation tools so before coming to [institution 1] did you take any linguistic or  
13220academic preparation so that could be like EAP courses IELTS preparation courses pre-  
13221sessional summer courses anything like that

13222Seven: uhh I have done IELTS classes before and I also had uh [pause] it's like a class  
13223that taught me how to write dissertation yeah but uh [pause] because my major it was  
13224business English so I need to finish my dissertation in English but in [country] uhh the  
13225teacher they don't pay much attention to the content they only focus on the structure  
13226[pause] yes so maybe it will be a little di- uh helpful yeah for my structure but as for the  
13227content I don't have many @confidence

13228R: okay yeah and so you just talked about the dissertation and how it may or may not help  
13229you here what about the IELTS classes how well do you think those classes prepared you  
13230for [institution 1]

13231Seven: uhh for IELTS classes I just had the speaking and uhh reading and writing classes  
13232for the speaking it's like just uh talking with the foreigners to practice more and it is very  
13233helpful because before when I was in university which I just uh study writing and reading  
13234but not too much about speaking so practice means perfect right @so I think it is very  
13235helpful for me

13236R: and so you took IELTS before being accepted to [institution 1] how do you feel about  
13237IELTS

13238Seven: [big sigh] @@ it was really sad for me@ because I took a lot of time to preparing  
13239for IELTS like almost two months yeah I actually I firstly had IELTS exam in February  
132402017 and without any uh preparation and I got to 6.5 but and I I and actually it uh achieved  
13241the requirements to enter here but I thought ah I can I can do it without any preparation  
13242maybe if I prepare more I can get a higher score and then I prepared it for two month and  
13243then the score is still @6.5

13244R: so it just stayed the same

13245Seven: yeah so I feel a little disappointed about me

13246R: okay and um do you feel that that exam did a good job predicting how well you would  
13247do in [institution 1]

13248Seven: hmmm hmmm [pause] I don't think so because from the IELTS exam especially for  
13249the writing we had two parts and I think it's not very related to what I need to write now  
13250yeah [pause] maybe for speaking is helpful and for listening I think it's more about the  
13251daily life yeah

13252R: okay right and so what type of preparation should students take before coming to  
13253[institution 1]

13254Seven: mmm well I think maybe they need to read more articles in English and uhhh try to  
13255write some essays in advance yeah uhh to get familiar with the structure and vocabulary

13256like this and then maybe they should find some prof- prof- professors to help them look  
13257onto their essays and give them more advice yeah

13258R: okay perfect um so if you could give advice to professors about dealing with  
13259international students what would that advice be

13260Seven: mm-hmm [pause] I have to say that could you please @slow @down because they  
13261are all- maybe they want to talk more about in the content so their uh uh speed I really fast  
13262sometimes when I I found very difficult to uh [pause] how to say it to grasp them yeah and  
13263mmm I hope the the the keywords can be clear because sometimes there are too many  
13264informations in one class so uh and after class I feel uhh hard to to summarize it yeah I'm  
13265always spend a lot of time to uhh like sum up the whole module

13266R: okay and if you could give advice to future students the students who are looking to  
13267come to [institution 1] what would that advice be

13268Seven: I think maybe in the lang- uh the language courses during the summer vacation is  
13269very helpful if I had the time to uhh uh if I had time I will [pause] participate uh in it yeah  
13270and also uhh maybe they can find the the reading list the reference and reading list in  
13271advance and read them more so because I I feel like it's difficult for me to read all  
13272reference in the reading list I need more time

13273R: okay that's a good idea actually and so if you could give advice to organizations who  
13274run summer programs like the language summer programs what would that advice be

13275Seven: hmmm [long pause] maybe they y- you mean like the institution should have the  
13276//language

13277R: mm-hmm yeah

13278Seven: during| summer vacation //before they entering

13279R: yeah yep before they enter yeah|

13280Seven: yeah uhh I think maybe it will it it should be related to [pause] the [pause] what  
13281they are going to learn in [institution 1] like some skills [pause] like writing skills and also  
13282the yeah I've also the presentation is very important part right yeah because I feel like I'm  
13283nervous when I need to speak English in public and every time when the lecturers say do  
13284you have any questions about our class I don't have to I am not very confident to product  
13285myself yeah

13286R: okay um okay and are you aware of any support that international students receive from  
13287your professors from your department from the University

13288Seven: uh yeah I know there is a postgraduate spot in [institution 1] that I didn't uh @go  
13289@there and uh seek help

13290R: okay um so you haven't done that but you have mentioned the language classes that  
13291you're taking um so do you think that the support like the language classes and what you  
13292know of the postgraduates support do you think that they're doing a good job or is there  
13293anything that they could do to improve

13294Seven: yeah I think the language class is very helpful yeah I took I had I had this class  
13295every Friday and the teacher in this class they I think he's the @best teacher I ever met in  
13296[institution 1] because he can speak very clearly and uh every time I have some problems  
13297in my modules I can ask him and he can always give some good advice

13298R: mm-hmm brilliant good um let's see yeah so that's all the questions that I have for you  
13299are there any questions that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask

13300Seven: uhmm [pause] I remembered in the questionnaire I had wrote uh written down my  
13301experience in studying English and I want to talk more about it this part yeah because  
13302actually I started to learn English from @kindergarten and I think most [nationality]  
13303student they also have learned English from like maybe primary school or in uhh  
13304secondary school and but when I was in [country] the teacher always pay more attention to  
13305the writing and reading so uhh it's very difficult for me to practice more in listening and uh  
13306speaking and I have I have paid a lot of time in when practicing this two part when I need  
13307to have IELTS exam yeah and uh when I was in university because my major is related to  
13308uh English actually I had I think most [pause] classes I had is related to English English  
13309reading and speaking and writing but I feel like after graduation I know I still know  
13310nothing about my major yeah so when I come to [institution 1] I [pause] it's like a totally  
13311new field to me yeah

13312R: yeah so it's just it feels like it's completely new

13313Seven: yeah yeah so if I still have a lot of problems and the same situation also appears to  
13314my roommate because we are in the same major yeah

13315R: okay so if you would say it's kind of a common problem to have

13316Seven: yes

13317R: okay um and is there anything else that you would like to express anything that you  
13318want to say

13319Seven: uhh nope @no

13320

13321

**Shelly OB**

13322

13323R: so first if you could tell me what you think your strengths are academically Shelly: in  
13324general?



13325R: yeah like what are you good at

13326Shelly OB: um [ pause] I think I am a pretty decent writer [pause] um [pause] I think that I  
13327have a [pause] thorough enough drafts by the end usually have a pretty dec- decent way of  
13328explaining my ideas in an accessible way? ehm I hate these types of questions @ um I'm  
13329not a detail oriented person but I think I'm much better at kind of a broad view like I'm a  
13330big-picture when it comes to kind of conceptualizing the issues or drawing conclusions  
13331between different ideas um that's my strong suit not delivering nuance

13332R: okay and what would then be your weaknesses or your challenges academically

13333Shelly OB: so that might be one um my memory is not great input so like presenting um  
13334you know talking about my material I would be able to give you like the big picture ideas  
13335and whatnot but remembering dates or even sometimes specific names I'm not great at so  
13336in terms of um the presentation side of academia that's a drawback um [click] I tend to  
13337overthink things which results in anxiety and self-doubt a lot of time which can hinder my  
13338productivity um I'm often easily distracted I have the thoughts that play in it of my head  
13339I'm a terrible speller if you want to come to the great details um [long pause] yeah I  
13340suppose those would be the main things kind of

13341R: okay um and what do you have any strengths or weaknesses in terms of like academic  
13342language so you've mentioned spelling and you've //mentioned yeah

13343Shelly OB: yeah if you kind of| like small fine detail of print things are you going for

13344R: um whatever you would like to tell me

13345Shelly OB: like I have a pretty well sized vocabulary but I'm a terrible speller and that has  
13346tripped me up my whole academic life so it's handier now because we get to type things up  
13347but like when I was in undergrad and you hand wrote in your blue book I was always like  
13348embarrassed by that because I knew I was I'd like leave disclaimers at the beginning of my  
13349blue books um [pause] I am not a big fan of very heavily um like specific departmentally  
13350rhetorically heavy stuff um [pause] I I mean I can make my way through it if it's if it's the  
13351language that I am fluent in but I'm generally not a big fan of that kinda stuff um as far as I  
13352I don't know what kind of questions you're looking for

13353R: yeah that's good yeah yeah so you did both the masters here and you're doing your PhD  
13354//so

13355Shelly OB: I also did my| undergrad in a different country in case that is at all applicable

13356R: hmmm we're gonna focus on Ireland only because I'm creating the course for Ireland so  
13357can you tell me about your module you had to take here so what was the work required in  
13358your modules

13359 Shelly OB: um so in my masters we had one essay due at the end of each module [pause]  
13360 and then that was pretty much it so there was like your research methods we may have had  
13361 two because we had one kind of you know small piece demonstrating we can condense  
13362 material or whatever and then our um proposal but basically it was one I think was it 20  
13363 thousand words no that can't be right that's a thesis [pause] how long were they 10 thou- I  
13364 don't remember how long the essays were

13365 R: mine were four

13366 Shelly OB: that sounds right @@@

13367 R: I was like 10 thousand oh God @

13368 Shelly OB: @@ no that's not right yeah four thousand it's been a couple of years yeah  
13369 they were four thousand so I think we have like to take uhh six modules and then research  
13370 methods maybe? And then each one had an essay at the end that was 4,000

13371 R: and were you given like that's a title or

13372 Shelly OB: so we were given um options we were given essay title options but then we  
13373 could choose anything else you wanted and I never chose an essay topic that they provided  
13374 for us because I never really liked those and I always wanted to use something I was  
13375 interested in so you had the flexibility of being able to do that >with I think was a very  
13376 good idea< but they gave you some structure in terms of like your options if you want to  
13377 go down that route

13378 R: okay and um was there a lot of reading associated with the classes um like what outside  
13379 work did you need to do to prepare for the lecture

13380 Shelly OB: um [pause] [sigh] there was external reading that often articles we didn't really  
13381 get saddled with full books they were like chapters or articles ehm or jour- like [pause] and  
13382 it's our so our department was not structured I think as well or as strictly as a lot of others  
13383 so ours would have been different I think than probably than a lot of other ones but you  
13384 didn't say have to do all the reading like often times it was supplementary or say one of our  
13385 classes he would come in and he would do I guess kind of rambling lecture about the  
13386 material and then we can discuss it so you didn't have to it wasn't like strict reading  
13387 guidelines um I also worked two jobs at same time so I'll be honest >I didn't do all the  
13388 reading if I didn't have to< but um and [pause] I don't remember like I don't think it was  
13389 crazy amounts of reading but I actually wouldn't be able to remember how many hours a  
13390 week say you were supposed to be reading

13391 R: yeah yeah all right and um so inside of the the modules was it mainly so you said that  
13392 one of your lecturers would give like a presentation and then you would have a discussion  
13393 was that fairly standard

13394Shelly OB: no well uh kind of so there were they did presentations in different ways and I  
13395can tell you that ones that worked for me and ones that don't if that's helpful

13396R: yes please

13397Shelly OB: yeah so coming from [country] ehm our understanding of the system is much  
13398more regulated and much more kind of systemic so we had one professor who he like used  
13399PowerPoint presentation you know led you through his lecture with that uhm allowed for  
13400questions and whatnot so he wasn't just speaking at you but he gave you a very clear  
13401format to follow the other thhh- I only ever had [pause] three four professors I only  
13402remember three of them uhm anyway but the other ones didn't um [click] one would give  
13403you say like sheet that kind of had an outline [pause] they may both have actually um but  
13404one followed that relatively well and he would kind of talk you through and your  
13405supplementary material would allow you kind of like foundational understanding he would  
13406kind of talk you through that material and other things but you'd follow the sheet [inhale]  
13407one of ours should have been home sitting in an armchair with a pipe and he just rambled  
13408about stuff tangentially kind of un-systematically and I'm sure it was very brilliant but my  
13409grounding or foundation was not in [topic] which was kind of what that those classes were  
13410uhm so I didn't have any reference material to be able to follow him along on his rambley  
13411journey and I was not the only one who found this a problematic approach to teaching  
13412R: mm-hmm all right brilliant and I'm so you said to think if they gave you like a topics but  
13413you didn't have to choose them but did they give you guidelines on structure or how they  
13414were going to grade

13415Shelly OB: kind of um they gave you uhm they gave you structure in terms of like number  
13416of words um [long pause] actually they might not have really given much else besides that  
13417uhm the topic like I found it really challenging the first couple essays because I didn't  
13418know what a master's essay looked like uhm [pause] uh some of them were there to help  
13419you through it but still like I don't I don't have a memory of them handing us a sheet which  
13420would have been really helpful of you know these are the expectations this is the format  
13421with which we expect you to present this material uhm and talk you through that I don't  
13422remember that being there that we've been really helpful um [long pause] [sigh] they even  
13423like even with uhm the proposal I remember struggling and and having to ask multiple  
13424times to get like an example of somebody's um so that's something I'm not sure if they do  
13425as much here what we do in [country] that I find very helpful which is give specific  
13426guidelines because if you are starting a master's odds are you've never done one before and  
13427so you may have figured out how to be an undergrad but you haven't necessarily figured  
13428out how to be a master so that would have been really helpful

13429R: okay um I'm so what did you think your professors how sorry how do you think that  
13430they assessed academic success so they didn't give you many guidelines and some of them  
13431didn't give help so what do you think that they were looking for when they were marking  
13432your essays

13433Shelly OB: [exhale] uh [sigh] understanding the material so being able to regurgitate it  
13434in a clear concise uhm and comprehensive way uhm within our classes a lot of the  
13435emphasis was on tying different ideas together because [discipline] is like the bringing  
13436together of disparate ideas and trying to find links between that so I think in our classes  
13437that was important so understanding and demonstrating that you that you could find and  
13438articulate a link between two different say belief systems um [click] [exhale] other than  
13439that like they sent us out a form right when you got the score that had you know [pause]  
13440five different areas I can't remember what they all are but you know sp- not really spelling  
13441um grammar and content and that kind of stuff and [pause] I tended to do quite well on the  
13442essays so I didn't get as many criticisms to be able to figure out kind of like you know that  
13443kind of way do you know it'd be like this is a um really positive comments um so I didn't  
13444get a lot of kind of you should have done this better you should have done that better but I  
13445don't remember if they ever sent out that they might have included it in the handbook or  
13446something that guideline that they were gonna do a checkbox of but I don't think it was  
13447fleshed out very much whereas like when I was teaching you know primary school like  
13448you had a major box and then you had kind of supplementary things within it and that  
13449probably could have been helpful as well

13450R: right okay and so going to being a research student so doing your master's dissertation  
13451on your PhD what is the work required of a research student

13452Shelly OB: what is the work required like writing? what do you mean @

13453R: um just general like when you if you were to have to explain to someone what it means  
13454to be a PhD student what would you say

13455Shelly OB: okay um well specifically in this country because you guys don't we don't do  
13456classes it means basically being on your own uh it means having somehow learned how to  
13457access and approach book material journal material navigate online resources uhm [pause]  
13458as well as kind of figuring out largely for yourself how the structure of these two things  
13459should be presented um and then [pause] depending on your subject matter either just  
13460spending your time pulling out ideas from books pulling out um theories then being able to  
13461apply those to whatever issue that you are personally dealing with uhm or if you're doing  
13462this type of research right uh figuring out how to access individuals who have knowledge  
13463that you need um in their own heads and figuring out how to approach them how to get

13464them willing to talk to you and how to be able to um once you get them to the table get the  
13465information that you want from them I think those are the two major parts

13466R: okay and how would you say that your supervisor assesses your academic success as a  
13467research student

13468Shelly OB: ooooh I love my supervisor so I should put that out there um I I mean I don't I  
13469don't go to them with a lot of frequency so I would just send them [pause] I have my soul  
13470interaction with them is around my PhD um so not like material I'm submitting say for a  
13471publication or conference or whatnot like um so they would assess me based on the [pause]  
13472documents that I send them and then within that kind of how on point they are or not on  
13473point they are and then helping reorient me to get them on the right path

13474R: okay and can you identify what on point means to your supervisor

13475Shelly OB: um clear not um rambling or too verbose um [pause] kind of uh coherently  
13476organized um I'm a very kind of verbose writer and rambling thinker so that like that's a  
13477self-identified but they know this as well about me so um getting me to kind of weed out  
13478all of the extra bits and really clearly and coherent present just the material that I need to  
13479present that's what they're looking for and you know when I've done that they identify it  
13480and when I don't they go okay well this is great you've so much material here but maybe  
13481we need to work on this eh so I think that's that's like the refrain for my relationship with  
13482them is you know clear concise straightforward

13483R: okay alright and so how do you assess your own academic success right now how do  
13484you feel that you're doing

13485Shelly OB: oh God that's much murkier one uhmm I think they're two parts of that  
13486academic success in terms of my PhD uhm I feel okay like constantly freaked out and  
13487stressed because it has to be done but kind of on trajectory it with- you know I don't have a  
13488lot of wiggle room in my trajectory but I'm kind of on point in terms of that as far as all the  
13489other stuff I don't I'm not doing anything like I'm not presenting at very many conferences  
13490not spending a lot of materials I'm not doing the kind of robust academic presentation of  
13491my research that I probably should be doing strike that from any official record though um  
13492so academically when it comes to my PhD I feel okay the rest of it if I think about it freaks  
13493me out stresses me out makes me depressed

13494R: okay alright @@

13495Shelly OB: @@ that's the honest answer

13496R: but also like your professors are not kind of pushing for that are they or

13497Shelly OB: no that's what I'm saying that they're not really involved in my academics life  
13498outside of my PhD uhm I'm the [funding body] asks you about that kind of stuff so they

13499see what I've done when that comes in and when I meet them you know I'm going to  
13500present at the conference in Italy in March and they know that because they are both  
13501looking to maybe go to the conference and one of them was the one who told me to submit  
13502something to it um but I wouldn't and it's like a two-part thing it's not that they don't want  
13503to be involved it's also that I just never occurs to me to kind of talk to them about it like  
13504they're busy they've got loads of other shit going on s- it's just not something I think of  
13505involving them in which I don't know if that might not be the right way to do it but yeah  
13506but yeah like they'd be encouraging and supportive even if I said to them I'm doing this  
13507they say great job and they might even show up if I invited them it's just not kind of my  
13508relationship with them

13509R: so how how do you kind of navigate the whole other academic part then so  
13510Shelly OB: I don't uhm so I kin- like I think because I know I don't wanna go into  
13511academia I don't have a lot of drive in that direction I know it could be useful in terms of  
13512getting other jobs as well but um it's just not really something that I'm particularly  
13513interested in and so I don't have a lot of personal drive the only thing really driving me to  
13514do any of that is the fact the [funding body] asks me to account for what I've produced so  
13515like um conference wise you know this one I applied to because they told me about it the  
13516[institution 1] one was like hmm sure a poster I can do that uhm and I submitted articles for  
13517a publication last year because I on the form there was a space to fill out if you had and I  
13518felt like I should have you know so and that's just I'm personally not driven in that  
13519direction and I'm sure part of that is because I know where I want to end up and that's not  
13520necessarily contingent on that also it's a lot of freaking work and I already work jobs  
13521outside of school and I'm not as driven as other people if that's just #unt @@ so yeah that's  
13522why I don't really navigate it is my honest answer

13523R: okay all right yes brilliant um so then in general what do students need in order to  
13524succeed at [institution 1]

13525Shelly OB: way more support

13526R: expand please

13527Shelly OB: yeah um [pause] the same thing I know there are different school systems like  
13528when I studied abroad in [country] there's I mean there's a lot more support here than there  
13529was even there as a student so I understand the scheme like this scale but um there's not  
13530much in the way of kind of guidance or it's a certain degree hand-holding which I get they  
13531always say you shouldn't need this at this stage but for each for us every stage is a new  
13532stage so even if you're in a job you're informed of how to do the job before you know you  
13533get promoted you spend a day with a person who's already done the job or you sit down

13534with your manager and they say okay these are your new responsibilities this is how you  
13535go about it um and [institution 1] has not been great for that whether it's um you know  
13536helping students who are coming in looking for practical things like housing and visa stuff  
13537or academically ehm [click] giving them like there's the handbook but that's just like  
13538massive voluminous ehm honestly I think it'd be helpful coming in in at the masters or  
13539PhD level to have like a specific minima handbook that shows you like you know here are  
13540the pragmatic ways that these that you can um get access to these different resources or this  
13541is what is expected of you know each school is going to have a different slightly different  
13542one because different school have different expectations but this is what an essay looks like  
13543or like this is the these are this broken-down expectations for this um or like our school  
13544would have mailed them out to you as prospective student which is a guaranteed way to get  
13545them to every student um there's a lot of kind of well you know you'll figure it out on your  
13546own but the number of people I find walking around on campus without a clue I met a girl  
13547who was studying abroad here in her second year they still haven't figured out like how to  
13548get a computer connected to the Internet here she didn't even know where to go and I  
13549walked her to the place to go the only reason I knew it was because I asked around a bunch  
13550um so there's like the academic side of instruction but you need the pragmatic side to be  
13551able to to investigate the academic side because you need certain like just day-to-day  
13552existence things here out it's not doesn't very centralized they don't s- nobody seems to  
13553coordinate with other departments so even with things like funding like I've had my  
13554funding I've have had problems with kind of the funding [pause] three years running now  
13555because two different departments don't coordinate so they've got numbers wrong and so  
13556funding has come out of the wrong you know the school's pocket so the [funding body]  
13557whatever ehm there's not a lot of coordination ehm so if you go to one area they don't tend  
13558to know the types of information um in relation to another area and so ehm those as a like  
13559as a foreign student dealing with this it'd be the two pieces for me like the practical as well  
13560as the academic but both could use some kind of handbook specifically designed you know  
13561for somebody coming from an outside system

13562R: right okay and so how much of a factor do you think the language plays an academic  
13563success

13564Shelly OB: um [pause] are we talking like conversational language or are we talking like  
13565like specified rhetoric for a department

13566R: uhm probably specified rhetoric yeah

13567Shelly OB: okay umm it's probably depends um like I had to learn a lot of new language  
13568when I came into my department because I didn't have a grounding in that that was really

13569hard um there's a lot of assumption I think in masters and PhDs that you come from a  
13570background that is has led you to this place and partially that's may because in Ireland you  
13571do tend to have that more as trajectory like in [country] we have a much more broad  
13572ranging set of um academic requirements to graduate so I struggled with the assumptions  
13573within my department that everybody had a foundation in this arena and I didn't and it took  
13574me six months to catch up and I like thought I wasn't going to be able to and totally had a  
13575meltdown halfway through um so I think that can be problematic I imagine coming in as a  
13576foreign language student that triple fold is challenging but like subject-specific um I  
13577definitely found assumptions there that I did not have and I found that challenging  
13578R: okay um and so you also mentioned kind of conversational language so what do you  
13579think about that

13580Shelly OB: I have so much appreciation for people doing your post-grad work like I did  
13581part of my undergrad in a foreign language and that was challenging as hell so I don't know  
13582what access to like linguistic services are here um I'm thinking just like observing in a  
13583classroom with people with who had a different language there wasn't a lot of checking in  
13584with them now you can only do that so much we were in small classes though so they  
13585could of um Irish people tend to speak quickly so I'd often that can be challenging as  
13586second language learners when you're in that or they have strong accents and a lot of  
13587foreign language students say to me over the years your accent is so easy to understand  
13588thank you for speaking so clearly ehm so I think just like Irish context usually their  
13589patterns of speech are probably more challenging and because they're very verbal and not  
13590the the professor was Italian the one who had a PowerPoint um because the others didn't  
13591uhm it was all auditory and so it's all listening which once you get lost I mean I was lost  
13592and it was in English sometime because I didn't have the the- like this the subject specific  
13593language so ehm but if you have like a visual map especially as a foreign language learner  
13594it's much easier to follow along and you can figure out where you're lost and put yourself  
13595back in place um which is much better if it's on PowerPoint that on a sheet of paper or  
13596where like you don't know when you slip into the next subject uhm so that is something  
13597that I would say it would be very helpful if was a bit more awareness because the  
13598[institution 1] is a very diverse school with a lot of people who are of foreign language  
13599origins uhm that that kind of visual guide along with the auditory guide it would probably  
13600be very helpful

13601R: okay and so what other factors play a part in academic success and that can be things  
13602inside and outside of [institution 1]



13603Shelly OB: uhm having a really good support system whether that's family or friends  
13604having uhm a safe and [long pause] contented place to live so not l- not be forced to live in  
13605really dodgy areas or in really disruptive homes um having space on campus where you  
13606can go and work like [research institute] has been life changing for my PhD this year um I  
13607was felt very isolated before because I basically worked from home which is safe and has  
13608plenty of space and is warm so that wasn't a problem but um it was very isolating and I  
13609think my masters felt isolated as well and because I work outside of [institution 1] and I  
13610have worlds outside of it that was okay because I had balancing measures but um  
13611especially if you're you know a foreign student you often don't have those um I think it can  
13612be very lonely and isolating and because of the nature of say a PhD but also there wasn't a  
13613lot of kind of community spirit in my school or maybe I was just out of it but it didn't seem  
13614like there was a lot of kind of social cohesion as a group if I hadn't had those other things I  
13615imagine it would have been really lonely and that shows in your work as well you know if  
13616you're not happy your work suffers so

13617R: okay um so I'm going to skip the things about like language standardized exams and  
13618stuff because

13619Shelly OB: I didn't take that

13620R: yeah exactly um so you've kind of touched on this but if you could give advice to  
13621faculty to better support international students what would that advice be

13622Shelly OB: hm [long pause] I hesitate to say this as faculty have a lot on their plate already  
13623[pause] um but knowing knowing where to point your students to get the help they need  
13624um like our even our not just professors but like our head of school is so overworked you  
13625always felt bad going to her asking for things ehm and your professors you tend to have  
13626any more of a relationship with so you may be a little bit more open with them but [pause]  
13627I'm trying to think like [pause] like I don't know if they had a better familiarity with the  
13628workings of college outside of their teaching but I think you can't really expect them to do  
13629that which is the hard part um [pause] things like sending out maybe before a class the the  
13630structure of the class so students could familiar like I'm just academically speaking to  
13631familiarize themselves with it um know what they're coming into ehm I some teachers do  
13632this put their PowerPoints up on line but if you do that prior to class so that you know say  
13633if you are a student say an [nationality] student who comes from that system you can create  
13634the system for yourself because it's provided for you you know if you do a little extra work  
13635because you're doing it for yourself but at least you have access to that or as a foreign  
13636language student you can familiarize yourself with what's going to be happening in the  
13637class and that might help and hopefully you shouldn't take too much work on their part it's

13638already created um [pause] even checking in with their students which I know they're  
13639professor they don't need to be doing like the mentality is you don't need to be doing with  
13640that they're independent but as a foreign student you're not a you're not an adult in your  
13641own world you're an adult in a different world and so there's a certain amount um of that  
13642could be even just you know a couple of times a semester you know I don't know or or if  
13643they had a sheet of of details about where to find you know that they didn't have to do it  
13644themselves it was there they could give to students who are struggling to find the places  
13645they needed to go to access certain things um that might be helpful if that makes sense  
13646R: yep yeah definitely um and so if you give advice to organizations who are say creating a  
13647preparatory summer course for students um what would that advice be and what would you  
13648like to see being taught on that course  
13649Shelly OB: a preparatory summer course before they started in on the year  
13650R: yeah  
13651Shelly OB: oh my God so many things @@ I mean like this would basically be kind of a  
13652welcome to Ireland and whatever and here let me teach you all the things you need to  
13653know  
13654R: yes  
13655Shelly OB: okay [sigh] well where to begin I mean on the broader scale of yes it's not  
13656specific to the in- to the institution but you're caring for your students and they need the  
13657other pieces so to help them understand like things having to do with housing and having  
13658to do with visas um understanding where major things are what kinds of shops you can go  
13659to to get certain types of things because like the shops are not the same you don't get the  
13660same things here say like medicine you know you can't get certain medicine you have to go  
13661to a pharmacy well I'd figured that out but you know you could spend ages looking around  
13662trying to figure out how to get those types of things uh what it means to go to a doctor what  
13663types of things you need to present or doc- or just like basic things of living in a foreign  
13664country would have been super helpful um familiarizing with the campus knowing where  
13665actually things are what the different um like where the different places you need to go to  
13666do for finances and those types of things [long pause] I guess the academic things you  
13667know ex- explaining kind of how classes work in this country for what expectations are the  
13668way they're structured um what expectations are for the material you produce from them  
13669[pause] um like all those things which is be super helpful so even you know you can get a  
13670leap card this leap card does to like the expectations for an essay or that you'll produce this  
13671type of material and you know here are the guidelines and like it's rudimentary but it's  
13672actually really helpful

13673R: mm-hmm okay and then if you could give advice to prospective or future students of  
13674[institution 1] what would that advice be

13675Shelly OB: don't rely on [institution 1] um kind of that that you need to take initiative  
13676much more than you may expect to need to nothing's gonna be handed to you so make  
13677friends in you know important places early on because they'll be willing to go out of their  
13678way to help you um ask lots of questions keep asking questions so you get the answer you  
13679need a lot of places aren't going to have the right answers you may not have to ans- ask  
13680different questions or go to different places to get that answer [long pause] don't expect to  
13681have your hand held that you're gonna have to figure a lot of this stuff out yourself uhm and  
13682don't wait around like proactively seek out the answers yourself those yeah but I don't  
13683mean that to sound bleak

13684R: yeah no it's fine honestly that's probably always the most bleak question that everyone  
13685answers really bleakly so yeah so then you've talked about a lot about supports um in  
13686[institution 1] so are you aware of the types of supports that are offered

13687Shelly OB: no I haven't thought any of them out I mean yes and that I know there's tutoring  
13688services you can go to um I know there's counseling services you can go to I've never gone  
13689out and saw any of them myself so I have no reflections on the quality of them I'm aware  
13690of them um but they wouldn't be made like repeatedly noticeable um and I not sure how  
13691much professors are aware of their existence or kind of encourage them you know that  
13692that's the kind of resource that say if you see a student of yours is struggling it's very  
13693simple to put that material in their hands cause odds are they may be overwhelmed with  
13694everything else and not be able to even see that far

13695R: okay um so does actually all the questions I have for you but are there any questions  
13696that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask

13697Shelly OB: ummm [long pause] not really like your your aim is to try and create something  
13698into better the experience of our students right

13699R: yeah yeah my aim is to create that preparatory summer program

13700Shelly OB: yeah yeah I think that's it I mean I think the fact is as assuming it's beyond  
13701academics like it's your whole life especially as a foreign student if you're plopping in here  
13702first like this is your port of entry and there's nowhere else out there that's gonna help you  
13703um and as a school the school should care that their students are taken care of I really just  
13704don't think they do um generally speaking they want your money they want you to be here  
13705but there's very little um you know there's what one day of fresh- or like when we get  
13706freshers where loads of different societies are trying to get you to join them like there's not  
13707a welcoming that acknowledges the fact that you do not understand how this country works

13708and maybe we could do something to help that if we report to care so much about our  
13709foreign students so everything from like you know understanding how the library works  
13710and stuff in campus to understanding how you function outside of campus I think is  
13711equally as valuable to the- their experience as students yeah but I don't think yeah I mean  
13712you hit all those and your questions so I don't think

13713R: okay brilliant thank you

13714

13715

**Shree**

13716

13717R: okay so first could you tell me what your strengths are academically like what are you  
13718good at academically

13719Shree: um I'd say that I have a fairly good ability to articulate speech [pause] sooo [pause]  
13720even if sometimes I don't usually but if sometimes I lack in a little bit knowledge I can  
13721make up for it in the way I present it which makes it look a little better so that helps me  
13722score sometimes and overall yeah I'd say that's a strength yeah I might have a few more I'm  
13723not sure @ as such yeah

13724R: and what would you say that your difficulties are in terms of academics

13725Shree: my difficulties so my difficulties time I mean for exams or academics in general

13726R: both

13727Shree: anything for academics it's always been time management for me always like if I  
13728have lost grades it's it's because of I couldn't finish exams so I'm really slow that that's a  
13729very major weakness of mine something that I haven't been able to overcome I've been  
13730writing exams for like 16 17 years now but I haven't gotten over that yeah

13731R: okay I mean what would your strengths be in terms of English and academic language

13732Shree: um the same thing again I have a fairly decent ability to articulate speech so I  
13733believe I can write well and so that that helps me yeah [pause] and I can learn new words I  
13734can pick up the jargon a little quick so if it's something related to my subjects like um I can  
13735give an example so like maybe like um after a year of studying so I've obviously picked up  
13736a few words and I've studied [discipline] so I've picked up words relating to [discipline]  
13737like for example there's a word called [technical vocabulary] it's actually a technical word  
13738but I learned to use it everywhere even outside my academics so that kind of benefits  
13739overall

13740R: okay and what would your difficulties be in terms of English and academic language

13741Shree: umm English and academic language [long pause] comprehension can be one um  
13742sometimes if there is sometimes if I'm reading a research paper um sometimes highly

13743technical papers or just any research paper as such like Nobel prize-winning articles they  
13744tend to have be like they have a lot of um complicated words in there so that makes it  
13745difficult

13746R: okay and can I ask have you done most of your schooling in English

13747Shree: all my school was in English

13748R: okay perfect that's what I thought just wanted to confirm um so can you tell me about

13749the work that you have to do for your modules so like what do you do outside of class and  
13750inside a class etc.

13751Shree: okay so [pause] inside class it's pretty much just listening nothing much I am not the

13752kind of person it takes too much notes in class either um so in class it's just pretty much is

13753attending lectures to know what the module is about it to me classes they just give an

13754outline of what's needed to study so that is the benefit of classes for me um but most of the

13755work I think I have to go home and do it obviously I think for most of us um so I'm sorry

13756what was the question I'm a little

13757R: so what what work do you have to do for your modules

13758Shree: work so what do I go back and do so it's obviously reading so I I take down notes

13759after I go back home so after I go back home and if I'm reading I take down notes so

13760remembering things and then taking down notes and then especially if they're important

13761words key words I write them down I make sure that I find a good definition for those

13762words and um I have to understand things conceptually so a lot of the times it's not

13763sufficient for me to just rely on classroom knowledge or just my notes or something I have

13764to actually go up on and look up online so I have to go the extra mile to actually learn a

13765little more about the concept so I read related articles related topics and overall I have to

13766understand the subject overall in order to know the subject pretty well right yeah

13767R: and so you were seeing inside at the classroom it's mainly just lecturing so they go do

13768they have a PowerPoint is it mainly just the professor talking is there any group work

13769Shree: mmmm there is some group work depends on the lecture depends on the module

13770there are PowerPoints always and yes uh the professors would be talking as well so it's

13771mainly the talking and the PowerPoint um in some modules there's group work some

13772models there isn't

13773R: okay and is the group work inside of class are outside of class

13774Shree: well outside class I think most of the lecturers uh provided there is group work

13775outside class we have group assignments outside class um but within class most of the

13776professor's don't some of them do but even outside the class um I don't know if it's up to

13777the professor to decide but it's mostly about the um the module the cour- the module

13778structure how it was structured so how much percentage of the marks are being given for  
13779group assignments so it's like that but most of the modules that I picked they have group  
13780assignments

13781R: okay um so can you tell me more about the assignments that you have to take

13782Shree: okay so I think um generally anything or just

13783R: yeah anything that you have to do for your modules so you've mentioned that you've got  
13784a group assignment so what does that mean like what do you actually have to do for it

13785Shree: okay so I think a lot of the um positives that I had from [institution 1] were through  
13786the group assignments and [pause] basically in most cases about maybe seven out of ten  
13787cases we are put into groups so we're put into groups and I come from a class where there  
13788are about 90 so we don't know each other @@ and we're just put into groups so which is a  
13789good thing so I get to meet new people and I'm from [discipline] so we have about I think  
13790something around 38 nationalities in class or so so the reasons why we're putting groups is  
13791because it benefits manage learning [discipline] in general because you're working in an  
13792environment where you don't know a person and the person's from some other country um  
13793sometimes you have communication gaps mostly you have cultural differences um for  
13794better or worse it doesn't have to be for worse it's usually for the better so for the example  
13795for example like if I'm working with Germans they they tend to be um it's just my  
13796observation they're very systematic and they're very organized and they need to make a  
13797plan so on day zero they're gonna arrange a meeting and I think the first few weeks I was  
13798really mind blown because I'm not used to doing assignments this way but I learned  
13799something good from that and they would [pause] arrange a meeting on day zero and they  
13800would just make everybody say and when it comes to work it's it's work so th- you're  
13801exposed to all kinds of cultures so sometimes it makes it difficult sometimes it makes it  
13802easy um sometimes you many times you differ it's never a cakewalk but if you're able to  
13803leverage each person's strengths it time and again it has proven that we can actually uh  
13804produce good results

13805R: okay and do you also have written assignments and like timed exams

13806Shree: yes we do

13807R: okay can you tell me more about that like are you given the topic for their written  
13808assignments do you have to come up with it on your own how long they are

13809Shree: okay yeah so the written assignments sometimes we're I assigned a question  
13810sometimes we're not given question but most of the cases even if we're given a question  
13811we're given choice so we could choose between whichever question we want to > this is in  
13812specific to the group assignments< so they're very open-ended that's the good thing so I

13813 think that's more if a in my opinion is you see the for and I mean it is a good in a good way  
13814 it seems to be more of a European thing wherever things are more open-ended here and  
13815 they ask a question there isn't a specific answer to that so it's up to you how you want to  
13816 frame the answer what angle you want to take what you want to say do you want to agree  
13817 with something do you want to disagree with something do you have a different point of  
13818 view these sorts of things so written assignments are usually very very open-ended um  
13819 that's something I noticed and with assignments they are timed and with the other thing  
13820 with written assignments is that um sometimes we're not assigned questions at all  
13821 sometimes in some modules I remember the lecturer actually said you could literally write  
13822 anything and he literally said that so like what @ is @ anything @ I @ mean @ like @  
13823 anything related to module like I don't know I haven't read that module before so he said  
13824 anything so it was actually a good thing so we could pick up literally anything related to  
13825 that particular topic anything that comes from the mind and um if it's a group assignment  
13826 then we discuss and we just write on it maybe a three thousand word essay it's not too  
13827 much three thousand so if we're given some amount of time you you can actually research  
13828 and you could present a good piece of work so and for the exams it's a little more close  
13829 ended but that's I I I I guess most exams are so you have to actually study what's being  
13830 taught and you have to remember that and more or less produce whatever you've learned  
13831 in class

13832 R: right okay I'm so for the group assignments I'm are you actually writing essays together  
13833 or like what is the finished deliverable for the group assignments

13834

13835 Shree: the end result so um [pause] are we writing it together well it's it's it's totally up to  
13836 us so it depends on how we do it but in the group assignments that I was there we it  
13837 depended on who I was working with so in some cases we don't always literally write  
13838 together um uh you know different people come from different countries some people are  
13839 very good analytical some people are very good at research and they may not necessarily  
13840 be very good at writing so some people may be very good at writing but they're not  
13841 necessarily that good at researching so because we've all come from different education  
13842 systems so I've noticed that like um again like you know I come from a class where there's  
13843 so many nationalities so in my experience um I mean in particularly my class I've noticed  
13844 that some of the Asian people they're very good with numbers so anything that they write  
13845 it's empirically grounded so they come up with numbers and they're really good at that sort  
13846 of stuff so we try to leverage each other's strengths so though we don't necessarily have to  
13847 write together we can it depends on how we decide to do it so if they want to help in

13848 writing sure if they want to help more in the research sure so it's different for every

13849 assignment yeah

13850 R: yeah give and take

13851 Shree: yeah give and take yeah it's more or less like that

13852 R: alright um so how do you think you're doing academically so how would you evaluate

13853 your academic success right now

13854 Shree: um overall

13855 R: yeah

13856 Shree: yeah I think it's been pretty good umm so [pause] it's it's been fairly good [clears

13857 throat] it could have been better it definitely could have even been better but it's still good

13858 so ummmm and this is actually my third master's sort of like I've completed my masters in

13859 [discipline] and before this I did two postgraduate diplomas in a year so I've already been

13860 through this process before so I've studied two diplomas in a year so like I've literally had

13861 to work really hard the previous year [pause] so this year it's been a little bit easier because

13862 I've studied some of the stuff and then what I I've learned there I could utilize over here so

13863 it's the academic part it's been decent so I it it put less pressure on me and I was able to

13864 score a little more without putting in as much of effort

13865 R: right and where the diplomas were they here in Ireland or

13866 Shree: no well there were British courses so it was a post graduate diploma in [discipline]

13867 um it was designed by [British university] so that it was their course that I did so yeah the

13868 other course the other diploma was not a it was not from the [British university] one but it

13869 was a an [nationality] postgraduate diplomat so I was told that the [British university] one

13870 would be pretty challenging and not everyone passes that so it's always better to keep some

13871 sort of backup option so I decided I don't want my year to be wasted so I want to do two at

13872 a time so I did two at a time and there was some overlap so that made it a little easier than

13873 maybe what it sounds um but I did end up passing both with two point one so it was okay

13874 @

13875 R: yeah that's very good well done

13876 Shree: @ thanks

13877 R: so what do you think your professors expect so how do they assess academic success

13878 Shree: [long pause] it's very hard to be honest um every professor seems to have their own

13879 style um [pause] if I can be honest like you said I think that's one of the things that can be

13880 improved in our education system maybe in [institution 1] in specific because I feel that at

13881 least in my department I cannot speak with all departments for all departments the- there

13882 could be more structure so the issue is each module it lasts hardly maybe a week or two



13883 weeks we don't know the professors we don't know how they're gonna assess we don't have  
13884a problem putting in the effort and maybe going back and studying but what do they expect  
13885it's hard to know a professor in a week or two weeks and you don't have direct interaction  
13886with them you're sitting in a class with maybe 20 30 40 the other people so these are all  
13887optional modules so we don't know them very well and everybody has a different style of  
13888correcting mm some people expect certain things some people I still don't know what they  
13889expect like I I felt that I put in a lot of effort for some of the subjects and I scored much  
13890less than what I deserved it's not because I put in less effort but it's because I genuinely  
13891didn't know what they are expecting so and there are some professors where and I didn't  
13892think I put in as much effort but I ended up scoring far more than what I expected so how  
13893do they assess I really don't know it's @ everybody has their own style over here it's like  
13894that yeah

13895R: yeah okay and so do they give you anything like rubrics or guidelines or you know how  
13896they're going to grade it before you complete the assignment

13897Shree: to a larger extent no [pause] um sometimes they give a vague outline but in most  
13898cases no if you specifically ask them then sometimes they will but um [pause] to a larger  
13899extent no

13900R: okay it's not really communicated

13901Shree: no not not to a larger extent yeah

13902R: okay alright so in general what do students need in order to succeed at [institution 1]

13903Shree: um [pause] a general ability to research and I think a lot of it is I I can talk about  
13904people who scored more than me and I can look in retrospect what did they do to have  
13905gotten those extra grades um what I think they might have done was uh they had a good  
13906ability to read the teacher and they knew what the teacher expected and they gave exactly  
13907what the teacher expected and that was smart in my opinion so I think knowing what the  
13908teacher expects solves half our problems because everybody's got knowledge because  
13909everybody has fought to come to get that seat in [institution 1] in that particular course  
13910everybody is capable so but it's like if you don't know what you're expected to do then it's  
13911harder to do it so the people who tend to succeed more are people who understand a little  
13912more what the teacher expects maybe that's just my interpretation I could be wrong I don't  
13913know but another thing in general I think which applies everywhere is just the ability to  
13914really go back and read so it's just plain hard work um listen attend your classes go back  
13915home research do the extra work uh do the essential readings and do the additional  
13916readings and put in as much knowledge into that paper within those 60 minutes or  
13917whatever eh as you can and that will definitely pay off as such

13918R: okay and so how much of a factor do you think language plays in academic success  
13919Shree: um a decent extent um you would need to have if you're studying in in an English  
13920system an English-speaking system I think that it's important to be good at language so if I  
13921wasn't very good at writing then I definitely most likely would have scored a little less I  
13922would have scored a little less in my opinion um and like I said if I've articulated the  
13923speech very well then it makes it look a little more professional than it probably is even  
13924though if it's got a little less facts but it seems very structured very organized and language  
13925is on point and if I'm using the jargon uh right amount of jargon it definitely pushes the  
13926marks by an extra maybe seven percent or so  
13927R: okay and so what other factors impact academic success and this could be things inside  
13928or outside of [institution 1]  
13929Shree: [pause] other factors? Uhm personal factors for people or relating to the course or  
13930both  
13931R: both yeah  
13932Shree: well general ability to comprehend can be one sometimes our subjects can be a little  
13933technical and um some people are maybe a little better at comprehending than others so  
13934maybe they just read it once and they understand [pause] but sometimes for some people  
13935maybe they have to read it a few more times and really understand it and maybe break it  
13936down to bits and do extra readings to understand this better so comprehension can be a  
13937factor overall  
13938R: okay all right any other factors or  
13939Shree: mmm well that's one that I can think of  
13940R: okay  
13941Shree: yeah that's all  
13942R: alright okay cool so now I'm going to kind of switch to the entry tools so things like the  
13943standardized exams so did you have to take an entry assessment before being accepted to  
13944[institution 1] so did you take like IELTS or TOEFL  
13945Shree: yeah I've given my IELTS yes so any questions regarding that or  
13946R: yeah so how how do you feel about the IELTS exam in general  
13947Shree: well personally for me um [pause] maybe the overall it works maybe it's a good  
13948indicator I don't know maybe it is maybe it's not but that's something that I trust that you'll  
13949find out through this research but um [pause] one of the things that I had difficulty with  
13950was that they're given in ass- assessment centers and in my assessment center during one of  
13951the tests uh I think it was the yeah it was during the listening test so >I assume you are  
13952aware of the structure< anyway so yeah during the listening test there was actually a

13953technical difficulty where in the um I think the thing stopped and the listening whatever it  
13954stopped and they started it again like a few seconds later but what happened was that you  
13955that broke my flow and that affected my exams and I lost a few answers because of that so  
13956it's just a few seconds maybe but it still made a difference to me like I could have gotten  
13957those extra grades so it's not because I didn't know it's it's a pretty easy for me to be hon-  
13958it's just it's just listen and you write so yeah I could have gotten those grades but it's due to  
13959a technical difficulty so that's I think in a way that's been a negative for me personally  
13960[pause] but overall it was okay

13961R: okay and did you take any courses in preparation for IELTS or preparation for  
13962[institution 1] like did you take exam classes to help you prepare

13963Shree: no no no I was going to take classes but then I found out that they send in a  
13964preparation book anyway so I thought that I looked at what the structure is it seem pretty  
13965straightforward so I thought that my entire education systems' been English in in English  
13966anyway why do I have to take an extra 14 days to learn that language English is like my  
13967first language like I know it better than my mother tongue so I don't really I didn't really  
13968find the need to take the extra 14 days and I was told that IELTS is more or less just like a  
13969qualification exam I don't need to eh get very high grades I just need to get the passing  
13970mark of about 6.5 and so I was pretty sure that I could get more than 6.5 I didn't need a 9  
13971or an 8.5 I just needed more than 6.5 so I didn't s- I I just like you know I studied you  
13972pretty much on my own at home

13973R: okay perfect and do you think that the IELTS um has adequately prepared you for the  
13974demands of [institution 1] do you think it's done a good job kind of predicting how you'll  
13975do or preparing you for what you encountered in [institution 1]

13976Shree: no not not really to be honest ummm the questions are a litt- are very much different  
13977than my course in general [pause] so like um I don't really feel that taking the IELTS was  
13978in any way similar to my classes in [institution 1]

13979R: okay alright um and so what type of preparation should international students take  
13980before coming to [institution 1]

13981Shree: well one of the things that was a preparation for me was the course that I did before  
13982this the post graduate diploma if I didn't do that course I would have struggled here  
13983because the education system in Europe see is very different from the education system in  
13984[country] so it's kind of an ironical because like I thought the [nationality] always think  
13985that we follow the British education system but we don't because like I think through over  
13986the years the Europeans have adapted their system but in [nationality] it's the same old  
13987ancient system and the way that it was different so I can give you an example so the

13988scoring is way different so I think scoring here is way harder so getting is 60 or 70 is  
13989considered fairly difficult getting over 70 was considered to be fairly difficult here getting  
13990over 70 was considered to be pretty much average in [country] you could score above 90 if  
13991you were really good there were people who go closer to a hundred as well who are really  
13992good but it was definitely possible if a person was actually pretty good and they put in a lot  
13993of effort you could score far higher um that's something I didn't know so I might have had  
13994unrealistic expectations of my grades if I directly came here and that would have affected  
13995maybe my motivation levels and overall that would have played a factor in my success and  
13996another thing was that referencing in it's one of the good things that I picked up referencing  
13997is very important so when I did in my post graduate diploma course it's a hardcore British  
13998course so they take it very seriously so even within the exam that's one thing we don't  
13999necessarily have to do as much in [institution 1] I guess but in the exam like we had to ref-  
14000reference everything like with the year so at least my lecturers here in the [school] they  
14001said that if you can't do it if you can it's okay in an exam in an assignment it's very  
14002important but in the course that I was taking it was very important so learning the topics  
14003was hard enough but learning the names was even harder @ and sometimes there are  
14004names that I can't even pronounce because they're maybe from Netherlands maybe from  
14005somewhere else and like long names I can't even pronounce them so I have to learn the  
14006spellings and I have to learn the years and I had to really put in the effort it's very  
14007structured and formal but it's a good thing um so it's very difficult and I I felt the that was a  
14008a good preparation for me so uh learning how the British system is how they work how the  
14009mark system function and how the course is going to be like how to write your exams the  
14010referencing the and in the exams here the questions here are also very open-ended like I  
14011mentioned [country] they're very closed ended there is one specific answer to one ans-  
14012question so if you if you deviate from that if you write from your own knowledge you're  
14013not credited your mark you're not marked as much for it you're you're losing marks so  
14014that's that's very different um both of them have their ups and downs I mean their  
14015advantages and disadvantages but um I think that if I wouldn't have done that post graduate  
14016diploma I would have struggled here so if maybe there was some sort of system that would  
14017train us for that um maybe a brief about it could even be a brief maybe it doesn't take it it  
14018sounds complicated but maybe if like if you spend maybe just ten days explaining or  
14019maybe five days in class explaining this is how it works it would have been a better  
14020preparation and I know a few who my [nationality] friends who haven't done those sort of  
14021courses and they directly came from the [country] education over here and did this they

14022struggled a lot the first semester the second semester said they picked up but the first  
14023semester they did find it quite difficult

14024R: um and so if you could give advice to faculty in the dealing with international students  
14025what would that advice what would you tell them

14026Shree: um [long pause] I think overall I think one of the things I don't know if it's within  
14027their control um it probably isn't but I'll tell you ideally what should happen perhaps um a  
14028lot of the teachers not everybody's been to obviously everybody's from a different  
14029background everybody's studied in different education systems I don't know how people  
14030study in China and I did- and before I came here I didn't know how people studied here but  
14031if I were a teacher then if somebody you know who's not used to this education system is  
14032struggling I would need to address the specific points that he's struggling on or help him  
14033leverage his strengths so if you're good at numbers then try to you know incorporate  
14034numbers into your answers that would push your marks a little bit more and but if you're  
14035trying to I think there are two ways of doing this one is you could help them adapt to the  
14036current education system the other thing could be you don't have to entirely adapt um but  
14037just leverage your own strengths to some extent you have to adapt to some extent you  
14038might be able to just leverage your strengths so I think if the the lecturer or the professor  
14039knew um where a person is lacking and since these were all one or two week modules so  
14040and there and n- if there's like 30 people in class or 40 people the teachers try their best to  
14041remember their names and they actually remember everybody's names by the end of the  
14042week or even the first day actually it's kind of surprising if they're 30 40 people they end  
14043up remembering everyone's name like on the first day that was kind of shocking to me but  
14044if they couldn't so it's a little hard within that time frame to know a person and know where  
14045they're lacking and what they're good at but um maybe it's a skill that they could pick up  
14046over the years if they were able to better be a better judge of what what a person would  
14047struggle with coming from maybe that sort of background and what they're good at and  
14048addressing those issues and asking them to improve in so and so manner that would  
14049improve the result overall

14050R: and if you could give advice to future students of [institution 1] or students who are  
14051looking to come to [institution 1] what would that advice be

14052Shree: [pause] um in specific to academics or anything

14053R: anything

14054Shree: oh I don't know if this would directly address the research but I think one of the  
14055things that I found difficult umm was the career option seemed a little difficult for my  
14056course um it takes a while to actually get a job um I am working now but I'm not in the job

14057that I want to be in and I'm trying to change so I think that I think you would I would ask  
14058them to be um be little careful you know what you want and know how you want to  
14059achieve that so if you want a job in maybe consulting what do you have to do at the  
14060beginning of the year to make that happen by the end of the year because the way it works  
14061in my country we don't worry about jobs until the last semester the last maybe two months  
14062or so and you have a bunch of companies coming into class they have numbers in mind  
14063we're going to take ten people twenty people and they screen to 200-300 people and they  
14064hire them on the spot and print them off the letter that's how it works that's not how it  
14065works here @ so th- I I didn't know that so that that's something that if I would have  
14066known in the beginning maybe I would have done it a little differently um so that's an  
14067advice that I would give in another advice I would give for people coming to [institution 1]  
14068it's one of the better things [long pause] I think that it's such a large college and you know  
14069there's so much going on and that's the great part I mean there's always something going on  
14070so you know there's so many departments everybody's passionate about what they do here  
14071because everybody's worked fairly hard to come here maybe so [pause] and you know  
14072everybody's passionate and good so learn from everyone take the most of it like one of the  
14073things is like I regret which I should have done was maybe um there were a few of these  
14074groups and stuff that were set up so there are groups related to the I'm forgetting the exact  
14075name but yeah it's the student managed fun so there were positions available in the student  
14076managed fun so people who took part in the student managed fun I saw that these are  
14077people who were really able to learn their subjects well because they were actually while I  
14078was sitting in a classroom just reading books I scored well but like you know what what  
14079what does that got what what has that gotten me you got me a little extra grades and maybe  
14080a little knowledge knowledge extra but that knowledge chances are I won't end up using  
14081anywhere but if I would have maybe spent a little more time outside the classroom within  
14082[institution 1] and took part in these sort of activities maybe took up a position in the  
14083student managed fun and most of these things are just voluntary so if you if you really  
14084want to be a part of it nobody's gonna say no so you could just join one of those groups or  
14085there are other groups as well within [institution 1] uh so if you could join one of them and  
14086[pause] if you could gain some in it get some insights from them that would help you learn  
14087your subjects better and it it would prepare you better for your career and people who were  
14088actually to pardon these active I don't know how much they scored but they actually took  
14089part maybe they scored a little less maybe they scored the same I don't know maybe they  
14090scored more I don't know but those are the people who actually went on to get uh really  
14091good jobs later because they've already had some amount of practical experience before

14092they left college so I would advise newer students to actually um spend less time in  
14093classroom more time outside

14094R: okay and one of the last questions is are you aware of any supports the international  
14095students receive from your department or from the wider college

14096Shree: I am aware yes um so I think I've heard that there are some student health help  
14097groups um I don't know what they do in specific but I think it's self-explanatory by the  
14098name I think I don't really know what they do in specific I never really went to any of those  
14099meetings so I think they generally happen during the lunch time somewhere but I don't  
14100know exactly what happens and I think every now and then once in a while they have um  
14101maybe classes happening regarding to help with the thesis or something like that and these  
14102are just general outlines to teach um how a thesis is written how the research needs to be  
14103done um maybe things like that so there are some help groups outside class but I don't  
14104know too much about them they happen once in a while maybe but I don't know there  
14105could be more but I'm not aware of all of them and there's some online support as well I  
14106think so some resources to be used but these are things that I found out in the end um so  
14107there there are some we have access to certain libraries and stuff so I'm not sure if that's an  
14108answer that you're looking for but yeah so these are things that I found out in the very end  
14109that I that we and these are actually free for if you're a [institution 1] student and nobody  
14110told us that in the beginning of the year we found out writing the end when we are halfway  
14111through our thesis so @ if we would have known that before maybe we would have things  
14112would have been a little more easier

14113R: okay so that's the last question that I have for you but is there anything else that you'd  
14114like to say or express

14115Shree: no I think I've covered it to a larger extent yeah

14116R: yeah okay alright

14117

14118

### **Superwoman**

14119

14120R: so um can you tell me what you would consider your strengths to be academically not  
14121necessarily in English but just in general academically

14122Superwoman: I learn quick so the problem is with memorizing but I do understand what uh  
14123professor is talking about or the lecturers

14124R: okay um what would be your weaknesses academically

14125Superwoman: yeah memorizing that's my weakness so if there are tough words or

14126complicated sentences or like somebody has quoted something in the past and we have to

- 14127remember that quotation and who actually quoted so that is something I need to work on
- 14128I'm poor at it @
- 14129R: right okay and in terms of English what would you say your strengths are
- 14130Superwoman: maybe speaking and listening
- 14131R: mm-hmm and difficulties with English
- 14132Superwoman: writing
- 14133R: writing
- 14134Superwoman: yeah
- 14135R: how so
- 14136Superwoman: I take more time and like um once I am written about once I have drafted
- 14137everything once I have written so I check the time so usually the task of the essay is for 30
- 14138minutes but I take more time I take like one hour to like write the entire piece after one
- 14139once I'm written I read it and I feel that it is okay yeah not that good but it is ok but yeah I
- 14140take more time in writing
- 14141R: okay and do you think that taking more time would be something to do with language or
- 14142would it be content
- 14143Superwoman: it would be construction of the words so where I like if a question is given in
- 14144the exam or there is a topic so I am aware about the content so content is not a problem but
- 14145how to draft that content or the piece of paper is a problem@
- 14146R: okay alright and can you tell me about the work that is required in your modules right
- 14147now so any modules that you're taking here what do you have to do for them
- 14148Superwoman: we have one research skills and methodology module and that we have a
- 14149project and at the end of the group project we have to submit our individual analysis of the
- 14150experiment that we have done and there is one tutorial skills group in that group we are we
- 14151would be um taught how to write like in the exam like what is the format and how we
- 14152should be laying it out so in that we have to do a presentation and we also have to submit
- 14153one essay
- 14154R: and are you at a master's level or a PhD level
- 14155Superwoman: I am doing a higher diploma that's a postgraduate program it's a [discipline]
- 14156course conversion
- 14157R: right okay alright perfect um and so are you doing any research on top of your modules
- 14158Superwoman: no no
- 14159R: so it's just modules
- 14160Superwoman: it's just modules



14161R: alright so can you tell me about the skills that are required in your modules so you  
14162mentioned things like you'll have to give a presentation you'll have to do an essay and is  
14163there a lot of outside reading a lot of group work

14164Superwoman: right currently it is more towards group work but in the tutorial skills we  
14165have to submit the essay individually and we have to do the presentation individually but  
14166in the research skills and methodology we are doing this as a group project wherein we are  
14167replicating an existing experiment so just to see if the results are as what they have  
14168concluded in the past so yeah

14169R: okay perfect and so can you describe the general structure of your lectures so like what  
14170happens inside of the class does yeah like does the professor's down there with a  
14171PowerPoint are you working in small groups how does the actual class take place

14172Superwoman: um because we like this is a course conversion program so some of the  
14173lectures are with undergrads and some of the lectures are with master like the degree  
14174program uh students so we have like most of our lectures are with the PowerPoint  
14175presentation but there is one of the lecture in which there is PowerPoint presentation and  
14176they keep on showing us YouTube videos so in that particular lecture I'll fall back a bit  
14177because I feel that if you have to show me everything on the YouTube then I can go home  
14178and you know Google Google myself and see the YouTube videos myself I'm coming here  
14179because I want to know something from you not from the YouTube videos so if it is more  
14180like video learning or you know a media learning that I can do myself so that is that is one  
14181of the modules I feel that of way @@@

14182R: and so everything else is pretty much the standard PowerPoint professor speaking

14183Superwoman: yeah

14184R: okay alright and I'm so the form of assessment again you've mentioned essays and  
14185presentations but you were also talking about exams um do you know what the format of  
14186the exams

14187Superwoman: are so far I know that we are going to have a research lab exam in which we  
14188have SPSS tool in that tool we have to do some exercises so that would be the one and the  
14189others are mostly we would be given six questions and out of that we have to answer two  
14190so right now I don't know what will be the length of the exam I think it is would be three  
14191hour exam three hours so I like I was struggling with it because if I have to answer only  
14192two questions in three hours which means one point five to each of the question that means  
14193I have to invest good amount of time in the content and in the writing so by looking at 1.5  
14194hours it feels like it okay like it is sufficient time to do so but I am worried about the  
14195number of words that they are expecting so I think it would be around 1,500 words yeah

14196 which I feel is like two pages it is bit more for me because I would like to answer a  
14197 question in one paragraph or few lines but if we have to write the entire story about it then  
14198 this I mean sometimes it happens that there is a lot of content and limited pages and  
14199 sometimes it happens that you little content but you have to fill in pages that way @

14200 R: right right okay the the presentation and I say that you do have to turn in do you know  
14201 how long they have to be what kind of format they are do they give you the topic that kind  
14202 of stuff

14203 Superwoman: um so for the tutorial skill we have to pick the topic ourselves [pause] but  
14204 for the group project they divided us into smaller groups then we came up with our own  
14205 ideas and one of the idea was picked and on based on that we are doing the entire group  
14206 project and but I don't know the format of the essay yet so I don't know like is it it starts  
14207 with because usually I know it starts with paraphrasing then you give your introduction  
14208 subparagraphs and then conclusion but I don't know if that's the way they are going to  
14209 accept the essay or not

14210 R: do you know how long the essay needs to be like is it 3,000 words

14211 Superwoman: it's 2,000 words

14212 R: two thousand

14213 Superwoman: two two thousand words

14214 R: alright cool and you have to pick your own topic

14215 Superwoman: yeah we have to pick your own topic

14216 R: okay all right and so how would you think that you're currently doing academically

14217 Superwoman: how I'm doing academically

14218 R: yeah so how do you feel right now we're what five weeks into the term so how do you  
14219 feel academically at the moment

14220 Superwoman: okay so um because I have a [discipline] background so I find research lab  
14221 easier because it's more computer related tasks and stats I'm good with stats and computers  
14222 um there's one subject which is [topic] I'm not good at that because when I open the book  
14223 there are so there's this thing in the lecture they give an overview of what this chapter is  
14224 about [pause] and then you have to do a follow-up reading right and then when I start  
14225 reading I feel that oh there is so much to read I mean this was not covered in the lecture  
14226 this was something which was just you know there was just one slide? that how [topic] or  
14227 [topic] but when I see the chapter there are like five or six pages on that particular topic so  
14228 I get confused that is the topic really important in respect to the exam or it's just for the  
14229 reading so I am not clear on this point that whatever the lectures I am attending so far are

14230that is that important or the reading which I have to do myself is that important in order to  
14231crack the exams yeah that@ is @something

14232R: @ right so okay which leads me to my next question and what do you think your  
14233professors look for when they're grading so how would they assess academic success

14234Superwoman: yeah so that's a question for me@ to figure@ it out yet but I had like I had I  
14235got a chance to talk to our program coordinator so I checked with her like how like we are  
14236going to be g- marked on [discipline] because [discipline] is a subject in which there's  
14237nothing really wrong or nothing really right so it's your own perspective that you are  
14238writing on that paper so it how will it be taken so she told me that in [institution 1] people  
14239like professors are very acceptable to the answers so the spelling mistakes and like until  
14240and unless the word is literally not making any sense then it is something problematic but  
14241if you did a little bit spelling mistakes it would be okay [pause] but I'm really not sure  
14242about the marking and I this is something which I would want to know in the first place  
14243like how would you be marking us in the exams because if I write two pages and there are  
14244some people who like pointers you know in the essay some people like diagrams to be  
14245shown some people are looking for particular keywords if you don't put those keywords  
14246then they find that essay is not up to the mark so I'm not really sure about the expectations  
14247from the professor ex- like from their point of view

14248R: okay yeah alright and so this might be a redundant question but I do you have access to  
14249the rubrics or guidelines or expectations before you complete assignments

14250Superwoman: [long pause] hmm [pause] before we complete assignment yes so in we have  
14251one research skills and methodology seminar so in that seminar they talked about the uh  
14252ethics that we have to follow while doing the experiments or end-to-end about the group  
14253projects and then we are going to write something individually and if we are quoting  
14254something then uh we have to follow all those rules of ethics and uh but uh there's no clear  
14255idea about how the write-up should be right so how much stats they want to see in our  
14256writings it's more like okay I've given this topic you figure it out you explore you see how  
14257you're going to come up with and that is bit scary because you don't know how much to put  
14258what and how much you will be graded on then because a person like me will try to put  
14259everything as much as possible and I'm not sure if they are looking for that much of detail  
14260or how much stats they are expecting because this is a course conversion program which  
14261means that we all are coming from different backgrounds I I have that privilege to you@ to  
14262be more comfortable with computers but there are people who are coming from very  
14263different type of backgrounds like educational and something like linguistics and they are

14264not exposed to stats that much so I don't know if they have set a standard expectation from  
14265everybody or they have an individual expectations that I'm not sure of yeah

14266R: okay alright um so in general what do you think students need to succeed at [institution  
142671]

14268Superwoman: [long pause] @@ a lot of reading @@@@ uhh and [pause] making contacts  
14269with professors um because they I mean you need to book appointments with them you  
14270need to if you want to get your answers then you need to take the initiative go to them and  
14271talk to them and though there are like orientation presentations like PPT's that they make  
14272they and they also make one for like for each course and each program there is one  
14273handout in which the information is given about which courses of which credit how many  
14274credits of this year and everything but there is no um information about the layout of the  
14275exam or what is actually going to happen on that day so in that way they look for an  
14276initiative from your side it's more like you think about it you come up with questions and  
14277we will answer it so it's not that they are rude they are very like approachable very friendly  
14278all the professors but you need to approach them like you need to make the first move and  
14279go to them and talk to them and if you're not that kind of person who makes the first move  
14280then it could be a problem for you that way yeah

14281R: okay alright and how much of a factor do you think language plays in academic success

14282Superwoman: oh it plays a lot and also depends what type of course you are doing because  
14283my undergrad was in [discipline] in which language was not a big problem it was most of  
14284the questions were multi choice questions or something like right or wrong or computer-  
14285based language based coding based so in there much of the focus was not on the language  
14286it was more on the problem-solving skills and uh your coding skills and all the technical  
14287stuff but when you're doing a program when I'm doing this program of [discipline] and  
14288when there's so much of research and everything now I feel the need to write more now  
14289this is the phase where you are doing an experiment and then you are expected to write an  
14290outcome from it but sometimes I feel that there is one simple simple sentence written in  
14291different ways many times in the whole article and um I feel that this is a redundant like  
14292once you say something in the article it is understandable why do you have to write the  
14293same thing twisting the words and tweaking it here and there and place it all over the place  
14294so that is something I feel is overdone while writing yeah but I like to write precise  
14295because this was the expectation in undergrad and then after that I did I worked in  
14296[profession] for six years so I never I we were writing emails with one or two sentences  
14297because we mostly were sharing the results of what we have done and analysis but and

14298most of the thing were automation related but now everything is like writing and that's how  
14299you are going to be judged@ so it's very tricky

14300R: right and um this is just kind of a random question did you do all of your schooling in  
14301English or only undergrad

14302Superwoman: oh no my entire schooling was in English yes

14303R: okay um yeah cuz I just know there's [language] medium and English medium

14304Superwoman: yes yes yes yeah

14305R: alright so yours was English medium

14306Superwoman: yeah

14307R: um but you're still finding quite a contrast between what you were expected in  
14308undergrad versus here

14309Superwoman: yes yeah yes

14310R: okay alright and um so what other factors do you think plays in academic success and  
14311this could be anything from things inside of [institution 1] things outside of [institution  
143121]um so I can give examples if you want if you know just

14313Superwoman: hmmm like from my point of view as an international student this is my first  
14314like exposure as being an international student I had been working in different countries  
14315Singapore US and Germany but at the time I was working so now I'm a student so  
14316personally to me it's a huge difference because for the six years you were getting a good  
14317amount of income as your salary every month but now when you're a student you are just  
14318giving away and nothing is coming in so when when I was preparing to come to  
14319[institution 1] we had this um conference or maybe a session with embassy of Ireland that  
14320was in [country] in [city] and the over there they said that it is easy to find a part-time job  
14321and it is like 10 euro per hour so I made all that calculation in my mind because I till that  
14322point I was not very sure whether I'm going to make this move or not but then when they  
14323said this thing I was like bit comfortable okay now I think I can survive with this okay but  
14324when I'm here and I'm applying you know various places so it's hard to get a part-time job  
14325it's not easy no it's just said that it is easy but to all other my friends who think that they  
14326would want to come here I would like advise them that this is a very expensive city and  
14327that um the part-time job is not easy to find because I am having a trouble because if I  
14328applied as a receptionist and I what I get back a feedback is that I'm overqualified for the  
14329position so I'm like I am ready to work so I don't see any problem for you rejecting me on  
14330the grounds that I'm overqualified maybe they are going to find a person who does it for a  
14331cheap you know a less amount but I don't know so that is something which is bothering me  
14332and that is affecting my studies because when I go home and I start reading or you know I

14333start looking at the lecture slides which are going to be taught tomorrow there would be a  
14334pop-up in my inbox saying that okay Dublin 30 new jobs are available okay and then I'll  
14335click on that and I'll just see and most of the time goes in there most of the application it  
14336takes about half an hour to complete the entire process and after that in two days you get an  
14337email that oh no we cannot take you in@@@ so yeah it bothers a lot no I'm like if I get a  
14338kind of part-time job then I would be at my mental peace and I would be able to focus  
14339more on my studies right now it's just that ok deadline is approaching so you keep working  
14340fast and a deadline that's not there then you keep on posting for the part-time jobs until you  
14341find that so that is very personal to me in general I find that there are because [pause]  
14342though I have done my schooling entirely in English but the sentence formation and  
14343sentence construction was very simple I've never used very complicated sentences or a  
14344complex word right in order to do the writing or speaking but when I come here there are  
14345like words coherent right so I do know the meaning of that but when they place it in the  
14346sentence then it takes me a while to understand okay okay this is like this okay this  
14347sentence means this so there are fellow students in the class who are international and they  
14348are also facing the same thing because there are some words which are very common in  
14349English in here but as but we do know those words because we read the newspapers and  
14350magazines so we know that these words means but I cannot use those words in my writing  
14351because I'm not habitual to it because those words I'm not like I I won't think of those  
14352words in my writing until and unless I select them and or I do a right click@ you know and  
14353find a synonym for it @@@@ in a computer otherwise when I do writing by myself then  
14354it would be I wouldn't think about those words so I'm not sure if you know using those  
14355words are going to impact the level or the quality of my essay when I sum it so that is one  
14356thing yeah

14357R: okay yeah so it's still again back to the differences in countries and language even  
14358though it's the same language

14359Superwoman: yeah same language

14360R: but it's different

14361Superwoman: different yeah yeah

14362R: yeah alright um so now I'm gonna kind of switch towards that's more general about  
14363[institution 1] and Dublin so now I'm going to kind of go to your experiences with the  
14364entry tools and preparation tools so these are like the standardized tests and whatnot um so  
14365did you have any linguistic or academic preparation before attending [institution 1] so like  
14366short courses to prepare you for coming to [institution 1] or for standardized tests

14367 Superwoman: um so for IELTS exam I did join one super-fast track something like  
14368 program it was there so they were preparing students for IELTS so I joined that um I think  
14369 most of the things I knew already it was just that when you start working there there's  
14370 something you don't really follow the structure so it was more like how you should be  
14371 laying out the structure of their essay when you go for the IELTS exam and you write or all  
14372 that so that was helpful I did that and my score in IELTS was 7.5 wherein I lacked in  
14373 writing my writing was six that was again with the problem there were two questions and I  
14374 had spent most of my time in the answering the first question which was really well it  
14375 written like this is how I feel about it but the other part I did not find enough time so it I  
14376 just went like whatever is time left I was just writing it down so that it is it is not like blank  
14377 so yeah that was one thing I am still working on it I don't know how to cope with it@  
14378 yet@ and yeah that's it I mean um other thing was with the accent so here the accent is bit  
14379 thick I think this is my opinion this is what I've understood because when I go in stores too  
14380 make for a job or interview or something and I give my resume they ask me something and  
14381 I don't know what they're asking sometimes so it's just something is there they are saying  
14382 but the words are not clear to me so that isn't >but the professor's in [institution 1]< I don't  
14383 find any problem with them they are very clear on what they say so we have one professor  
14384 from Denmark and one is Irish and when we have it's [country] so I understand what they  
14385 say perfectly there is no issue but in general in local when you go around and you talk you  
14386 know you make a small conversation at that point I feel that the accent is bit thick and  
14387 which makes I am not able to focus on the words I'm more I'm focusing on the expressions  
14388 just to guess that what you are trying to say @@@@

14389 R: @@@ right so would you say that the preparation that you took for the exam do you  
14390 think that it adequately prepared you for [institution 1]

14391 Superwoman: no it adequately prepared me for IELTS and not for [institution 1] so for  
14392 [institution 1] I like I did a short-term course in introduction to [discipline] because I just  
14393 wanted to see whether I will be able to understand this program before I apply for it so that  
14394 was something I did but it was not specially for [institution 1] it was like just to get into  
14395 [discipline] I wanted to see myself how good I am whether it's just the passion which is  
14396 here for a while or it's really something I can do in it but for [institution 1] there was no as  
14397 in preparation to come and apart from shopping and packing your bag @@ yeah @@@  
14398 there was nothing but it would have been good if they would have been a pre prep  
14399 something you know for a week or like a day program or something where we see that  
14400 okay this is how the campus will look like >although you can find it on YouTube< as well  
14401 how the campus looks like there are a lot of many videos but from your own like if I'm

14402going into the [school] I would like somebody from that department to prepare something  
14403for international students so that when they come here some of them they feel that oh we  
14404did a mistake [long pause] okay so it's not about the college college is great it's like really  
14405great but it's about the environment yeah so I would be like people to be more honest about  
14406it right so if I would have known that there it is really difficult to get a part-time job here  
14407it's not that easy I would have had a second thought in my mind but because somebody is  
14408putting you in confidence that yeah it's easy you'll easily find it so you kind of make your  
14409plans that way because everybody is not rich so @@ we all make plans according to what  
14410finances we have and so so and I also got to know that uh that five students from our  
14411seniors they dropped out so they did the year one but they did not return back for year two  
14412so we have been told that they had like some personal@ things to take care of but I just  
14413like kind of don't believe it because we are a very small group so right now currently we  
14414are eighteen and our seniors were fifteen and now there are only ten so [pause] not quite  
14415sure what was the reason of somebody to back out because for one girl we know she  
14416wanted to become a singer so she went back others they never came like I don't know  
14417really what happened but uhh in terms of somewhat I had the privilege to have the  
14418education entirely in English and the privilege to go around other countries to work so I  
14419had the opportunity to work with people coming from different backgrounds with different  
14420accents with different people you know but not everybody has that chance so a prep before  
14421coming here an honest one would really help in making a strong decision because it's a big  
14422decision leaving your country coming here risking something yeah for two years and then  
14423you feel that oh shit I did a blunder so @@@ yeah that way  
14424R: right yeah and so so you're saying like the prep would be good on and you keep saying  
14425this word honest like an //honest one  
14426Superwoman: honest one one  
14427R: so if you| could kind of suggest say you're talking to the people who are designing this  
14428prep what would they need to say what would they need to teach in this prep to make it  
14429honest  
14430Superwoman: okay so they should be talking about uh first of all they should like like  
14431speak about the criteria how they are going to mark us it is very important because um I  
14432don't know how it goes in Dublin or in Ireland but from country where I come from having  
14433a first division is is that's it if you have a second division if you have third division people  
14434don't look at you in the same way they feel that you are a failure though you have passed  
14435the exams but you're not a first division holder so that kind of thing so but I'm not sure how  
14436it goes in Ireland or Europe how you're seeing how your judged or whether it is based on



14437 particular courses because you cannot excel everything right so if I because I want to do  
14438 [profession] so my focus is more on [topics] and [topics] so [topic] is something which I  
14439 don't want to pursue so I'm not much interested into that subject but I still have to crack it  
14440 so I don't know if I get you know just a passing marks in [module] going to affect the  
14441 entire overall grading that is going to be done so if they would give us some kind of this  
14442 background and also because not everyone has done research before right so this is  
14443 something new so if they give a kind of background towards it that this will be a research  
14444 >though they have written everything on the website< it's not that they have not told this so  
14445 people know that this is research-based or research oriented program but I don't think they  
14446 really understand like this is a research oriented program they're like okay we have to do a  
14447 research we'll do that because they feel that we have done the projects in the past so we can  
14448 do this here as well but [pause] they I mean so there are certain things which [institution 1]  
14449 is really excellent about it's about research orientation it's about self-learning so in that  
14450 prep slide if they can more focus towards these aspects that with research orientation we  
14451 mean that you have to be or you should have these skill sets before you come in or this is  
14452 something which we would be looking forward that you already understand that that would  
14453 be helpful yeah

14454 R: yeah and so going back to the IELTS exam do you think that the IELTS exam prepared  
14455 you for academic work here in [institution 1]

14456 Superwoman: it was more like a revision to me so because I was a [profession] so I had to  
14457 then start writing longer emails and do more analysis more do write up work but yeah it  
14458 kind of gave me a revision to what I already did my in my undergrad and what I was doing  
14459 so it was more for towards the structure like how you should be putting in your essay to  
14460 make it look better that way yeah

14461 R: okay and do you think it um it accurately predicts I guess how you're going to do in  
14462 [institution 1] or accurately predicts academic success

14463 Superwoman: no @ no no

14464 R: can you expand on that

14465 Superwoman: um so IELTS exam it's more like like it is academic writing uh so it is the  
14466 structure structured format [pause] and I believe that here also in [institution 1] when we  
14467 are going to write the exam I'm going to follow the same structure which I am uh you  
14468 know I'm aware of so um but some professors [pause] they are not they don't care much  
14469 about the structure they care about the content what you have written so they won't mind if  
14470 you have if you have not mentioned any quotes right or if you are not um emphasizing on a  
14471 particular like names of the [theorists] or names of the [theorists] who have done certain

14472 amount of work they would be more into what you think this is about so it's more like yeah  
14473 you know towards inside you like self or or you're centered like what what's your point of  
14474 view in that then you can like we obviously like to correlate to others yeah the other  
14475 achievers who are there this area but some of the professors they are more towards you  
14476 know no your essay should be structured it should start with like this because in research  
14477 when you write a paper I think there is a format APA format that you need to follow so it's  
14478 more towards structure so it's both the things both things are there if in the research and  
14479 skills methodology we have to write down the whole structure structured writing is there  
14480 but this is my feeling that some of the professor's they have said that what you are that  
14481 what you have learned or what you have experienced what you understand out of the  
14482 course is important and that has to be written so yeah it's mix of that

14483 R: okay alright um so if you could give advice to professors and faculty in [institution 1] in  
14484 dealing with international students what would that be

14485 Superwoman: hmmm [long pause] that would be like I think so far I have not found a huge  
14486 issue with how we are being taught apart from the YouTube video thing but that's only for  
14487 one module so it's fine I'll just let it go yeah @@ uhm for intern- it would be like if you  
14488 can dilute your accent a bit yeah because we have one professor and when he starts  
14489 speaking fast so he eats up some words and it's hard to understand what is the entire  
14490 sentence was so if they can be little slow and the way they speak that would be yeah if the  
14491 focus if they stress on words more rather than the accent it would be beneficial in the initial  
14492 days to understand so that way yeah

14493 R: okay um if you could give advice to future students or students who are looking to come  
14494 to [institution 1] what would that advice be

14495 Superwoman: that you have to be very self-motivated you cannot just rely on what has  
14496 been taught you have to do yourself learning which means that you really have to be  
14497 passionate about what you're trying to pursue so if you think that only the lectures are  
14498 going to help you crack the exam I don't think so you need to go around see look at the like  
14499 if they have to talk about particular experiment because I understand that they don't like the  
14500 lecture is of one hour they also have a limited time they cannot cover everything so if they  
14501 just say that okay this part is important or this experiment is important then you can go  
14502 back re-revise it because as a student for me it is difficult to make everything important  
14503 right so there would be some things which I can skip there would be some things which I  
14504 cannot skip I have to know that so if if professors they stress about that then just go back  
14505 and do the learning and for the ones who want to come to [institution 1] the way they teach  
14506 is really different and it's unique I never I have never been exposed to such type of learning

14507 which is so self-oriented so research oriented so like you go find things come back and talk  
14508 to us it's like that so you really need to be self-motivated that way yeah

14509 R: yeah and can you expand more on how I mean you've mentioned it a bit but can you  
14510 expand more on how the environment is different and unique

14511 Superwoman: okay so um when I was doing my undergrad I did it from [city] yeah over  
14512 there and most of my friends who were doing their studies in different institutes it was  
14513 more like how to crack exam okay so when professor they we would go chapter by chapter  
14514 so today we know that there would be chapter number one that we would be studying so it  
14515 would it was more like open your books okay so we are going to study chapter number one  
14516 today and in that chapter you they also they will talk about that this is really important this  
14517 might come in exam so it was more like how to crack the exam okay how to get that first  
14518 division but in here it's not like that if you go into lecture it's more like it's like everything  
14519 is important so you pick your topics which you feel that will help you build your career  
14520 which you feel will help you build you know your own path so you pick your own modules  
14521 you pick your own topics you study about it and you come up with something so that way  
14522 it is different yeah

14523 R: okay alright perfect um so are you aware of any support that international students  
14524 receive from your professors your department the wider college

14525 Superwoman: uh in terms of finances I know there is something like graduate #unt  
14526 program but I really don't know how to apply in it or what are the criteria is that they you  
14527 know account take into account and do the selections uhm yeah [institution 1] in terms of  
14528 fees fees expenses yeah the education is expensive here that way yep

14529 R: are you aware of any other kind of support like

14530 Superwoman: yeah there are a lot of student support so because they understand we are  
14531 coming you know we are leaving our families and friends behind and we are literally all  
14532 alone here so there are uhm certain facilities where you can make a call if you are in  
14533 distress or you want emotional support you want a mental peace you want to talk about  
14534 something which you might not be comfortable in talking to any of the person then you can  
14535 yeah make a call or you can write and they are really fast they will respond you like really  
14536 quickly so that sense of you know having that you know if you are in trouble you can reach  
14537 out to somebody and they are going to help you so we have global Student Union in  
14538 [institution 1] and I think they are really helpful so I like I don't think twice if I have to ask  
14539 something to them because they because I know it can be stupid for them that why she is  
14540 asking this but that is important for me yeah so they help with everything then they will let  
14541 you know what are what are the like cheap and best places where you can go and shop you

14542 know buy groceries to what is near what is not near where to go where not to go and they  
14543 keep on organizing uh these a little bit of what do you call like celebrations like here and  
14544 there so you go you participate so that way so it tells you with your own network like meet  
14545 new your friends and all

14546 R: okay and do you think that the support that the college provides international students is  
14547 adequate

14548 Superwoman: yeah I think that is adequate yeah

14549 R: okay um is there anything that you would suggest to the college that they could do to  
14550 improve that support

14551 Superwoman: I think in su- in support wise they are really good yeah I don't think there's  
14552 anything about that

14553 R: yeah okay um let's see alright and those are the questions that I have for you but are  
14554 there any questions that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask

14555 Superwoman: [long pause] no I think we had a good conversation @@

14556 R: is there anything else that you would like to express

14557 Superwoman: yeah there's one difference I mean when I did my undergrad in and back in  
14558 my home country over there once you graduate so it is the responsibility of the college to  
14559 bring in the good employers to the campus and it give the students a privilege to you know  
14560 they conduct the interviews in the campus and so they have that kind of facility so yeah so  
14561 it mostly happens in the final year when you reach the final year so they would be  
14562 requesting big like companies like [companies] all these companies they will come into the  
14563 campus and they will recruit out of the final your students but here it is more challenging  
14564 here is like you need to go into the world and find a job for yourself so yes we do have  
14565 career services and that's a portal where they keep on you know updating information  
14566 about where opportunities are available but there is nothing like something coming up in  
14567 the campus and recruiting and having a talk to students one-to-one though there was one  
14568 graduate Ireland um I think career fair that happened yeah recently so it's more like that if  
14569 you want to find a job you go get a job like that

14570 R: right yeah so it's more on the student rather than the University

14571 Superwoman: yeah on the student rather than the university yeah they would let you know  
14572 that these opportunities are available but then you need to go and you know crack that yeah

14573 R: okay alright thank you

14574

14575

**Tina**

14576

14577R: okay so um first I'd like to know how do you think you are doing academically at

14578[institution 1] do you think you're doing well //not doing

14579Tina: no I'm not doing very well| yeah

14580R: you're not okay um is this just from your feeling is it from grades it from both

14581Tina: um I think it's from both um my module my scores like about 50 um sometimes I get

14582a 60 @really @hard like that

14583R: okay all right so like thirds two twos

14584Tina: yeah

14585R: yeah okay um so what would you say your strengths are academically

14586Tina: umm my strengths well@@ um I think because because in my course there are

14587people who like didn't don't have a background in this field so because I am in in un-

14588college ge- uh studied the same field so I have a comparative advantage of that but if I

14589compare that to other people who also studied um my field then I'm @@ not good I'm not

14590really strength uhm I think my greatest strength is I think my own point of view because

14591them yeah I think most of o- people's department professors and other students they are

14592from America or Germany and they're only like two people from Asia and so when we

14593discuss problems I often have different perspectives yeah

14594R: so you bring a different perspective to the conversation and along with

14595Tina: um yes other people have told me that like they can learn this perspective

14596R: good um and what would you say that you struggle with

14597Tina: only academics or everything

14598R: everything

14599Tina: well because uh even if the master's is in [discipline] I have to learn about

14600quantitative research and you know a lot of math eh logic I think so basically I have a

14601problem with critical thinking and also creativity@ this like uhm I think in I I've regret

14602that I didn't study like hasn't study about critical thinking or philosophy logics I mean I did

14603the in college but @ this is not I didn't study in somethings so I really struggle with

14604evaluating written materials and when I design research it's very hard for me to like

14605visualize or see the hmm se like all of the factors that can play a part in the results of the

14606research so I think it's requires both like to thinking about creativity and like critical

14607thinking logical thinking so I struggle with it yeah

14608R: okay and what are your strengths in terms of language of English

14609Tina: um language is um I think like so much about the language because the readings it's

14610very technical so sometimes I even I'm not really sure that I understand what they mean I

14611think understand but then I still have to like search look look up the words in dictionary

14612because in social science there some words I think I understand what it means but in the  
14613field it sometime it means something different or sometimes the author has theories they  
14614don't explain the concepts so I don't know if it's like a concept everybody know or there  
14615some omission from the article or something so I feel like I spent a lot of time laboring  
14616through like the first steps of read of engaging with articles that's to understand on a  
14617surface level what is this means and then as the uh only then that I could really see the  
14618logic of the art- of the article and then like evaluate if it good or bad I I don't have enough I  
14619feel I don't have enough time I just reading one time and then understand of what it mean  
14620so yeah I feel like I slows me down a lot

14621R: okay and can you tell me about the work that is required in your modules

14622Tina: um I think it's a quite similar um we have to do a lot of reading each week and write  
14623a response paper and then you have some make assignments like um a big essay to write  
14624it's actually not an essay but like research proposals and um also to presentation individual  
14625or group presentation yeah

14626R: alright and so as a research student so you're doing a master's right

14627Tina: yeah

14628R: so as a research student what is the work that is required

14629Tina: I think mostly is the required finding the gap in the literature and design research that  
14630improves on the previous ones or maybe that explore some new topic I think mostly the  
14631professor that requires the we do some research to improve on #discipline yeah

14632R: and what skills are required in your modules so you've said there's a lot of reading what  
14633else is required

14634Tina: @@ I think it's mostly reading and critical thinking in like I don't know research  
14635design also like a lot of skill related to it like how how to study like method methodology  
14636and yeah um I think

14637R: okay so in can you describe the general structure of your lectures so when you're in the  
14638classroom what do you do are you just listening to the professor are you working in groups

14639Tina: it's mostly listening to the lecturer in some it's more listening to lecturers in other is  
14640more like discussion yeah

14641R: okay and in the discussion what are you expected to do

14642Tina: um well also depends on different class but I think in general that some people who  
14643raise some points maybe sometimes is the lecturer and sometime question then people that  
14644give their opinion and we are required to listen to other people and um give our own  
14645opinion but like kind of in response to other people opinion instead of just sticking our own  
14646yeah

14647R: okay and so how do your professors assess academic success so what are they looking  
14648for when they're grading

14649Tina: uhm I think um my um first I think most important thing is like the logic and  
14650coherent @cohesion @coherence of the the writing so that it can be short exercise but it  
14651must be really kind of make sense to them and so logic is more important in a second  
14652second most important requirement is really like we have to make it I don't know like have  
14653to kind of complete like introduction bib- bibliography@ and yes and format@ the right  
14654way@ that's something we that we need we need properly cite though yeah

14655R: okay and how do they communicate these expectations so do they tell you verbally do  
14656they give you a piece of paper or posted online

14657Tina: uh yeah they write about it in the syllabus and in the comments and they can show  
14658like what they're looking for but I think they really express em verbally yeah

14659R: okay okay and do you feel that the the guidelines that they provide do you feel that they  
14660are helpful and clear

14661Tina: well they are quite clear but then I guess I feel like um sometimes I should be more  
14662like international feedback from students and professor be good at first I like the  
14663requirements are very high for example in my first module the requirement is like read  
14664articles and then propose a research design to improve on articles but I have no background  
14665in anything related to research I just that's my first semester but I really struggled with it  
14666that but uh and so it's also due to I don't know I guess it's also because I didn't I wasn't  
14667very confident in approaching the professor so uhm yeah I uh yeah but I guess that if I  
14668want to happen more like maybe some adjustment or like the most important requirement  
14669because if they just list all the requirement I think that's too high I don't know what's a  
14670priority only after I get the feedback on my individual assignment I guess okay this is what  
14671he or she looking for

14672R: okay yeah alright perfect um so in general what do you feel students need in order to  
14673succeed at [institution 1]

14674Tina: well [pause] I feel like communications is a very very important skill because uh uh I  
14675feel like the professor's here they the lecturers they I don't know they kind of like they  
14676don't explain everything if you have a question you have ask really and I think the ability  
14677to frame the question to find the right question is very important yeah because sometime I  
14678feel lost but I also don't know how what kind of questions should I ask how to frame it  
14679yeah so the kind of I think studying [institution 1] is very difficult that it it's important to  
14680like conceptualize your study what you want to do what and then answer the question @

14681R: yeah okay and how much of a factor does language play in academic success

14682 Tina: I think it's like besides the you know obvious like intelligence and everything like  
14683 it's the most important because of I feel in [institution 1] there is a lot of support for  
14684 students but if you don't know how to communicate what your problems you don't get help  
14685 and uh secondly that for me um there's a lot of writing in the course so if you have a  
14686 problem with the language yeah it does so very difficult because for example it take a lot  
14687 of time to read so sometime I couldn't do all the reading and I go to class and so it would  
14688 occur something that I haven't read about so I couldn't participate in I don't I feel like  
14689 because I haven't read some sometimes with teacher lecturer say somethings I didn't feel  
14690 like I entitled to ask them because maybe if I have read it I would have understood so I just  
14691 basically it's a little um I don't know it s- it make my study very um my study very  
14692 ineffectual

14693 R: right okay so because you couldn't read then you couldn't participate which means you  
14694 couldn't gain as much from the class or learn as much

14695 Tina: yeah that's right

14696 R: okay alright and so you are also saying that there's a lot of support and [institution 1] for  
14697 students but if you can't communicate then you won't get help

14698 Tina: yeah

14699 R: um so can you describe what other factors you're referring to or what other factors affect  
14700 academic success

14701 Tina: hmm I guess it's um it's a confidence and and I think I guess it's a willingness to get  
14702 out there and just I don't know what to describe but it is a little bit sometimes I feel very  
14703 embarrassed and because when other people ask questions they are like some questions  
14704 that show that they could understand it and just want to have more understanding but if I  
14705 ask questions it like very simple question like so I I mean I understand that yeah you're  
14706 here to learn to so you can ask questions the professors uh lecturers they are very helpful  
14707 but yeah sometimes@ not confident in asking questions but when I do approach the  
14708 lecturers some are very enthusiastic but some others are like for example I asked my  
14709 lecturer because I can't read all of the readings say could you tell me which reading which  
14710 article is the most important that I should focus on then he's like oh you have to read  
14711 everything @@@ and I feel there's a lot of support like student learning and they also say  
14712 you can approach the [service] they give out the crisis student I haven't gone there but like  
14713 oh there's others but I don't know where to start I have very sometimes I have problems  
14714 that are so basic who I don't know like you know I don't know where to start yeah

14715 R: right so like you're aware of the support but you don't know how to approach them or  
14716 what to ask



14717Tina: yeah I guess it's also because in the in the orientation I was I didn't understand  
14718because my listening wasn't very good back then so I just really know yeah you should  
14719sign up here yeah but I don't know exactly what they do

14720R: okay so it's not clear what services they offer

14721Tina: yeah

14722R: okay alright I'm I'm so did you have any linguistic or academic preparation before  
14723coming to [institution 1]

14724Tina: well I think practically nothing@ this I I worked for few years and I mean I study  
14725English a lot when I was in school and was college but then when I go then I have n- well  
14726partly because I had a little time and partly because I didn't really think that I would go to  
14727[institution 1] yeah yeah I didn't really plan@ so um yeah so basically I have@ a little  
14728preparation because in my job it kind of related to the field but I think the focus of the  
14729course here is more kind of Eurocentric I feel is sometime only in some class that I can feel  
14730that my experience and insight is my useful to people but some other class for example like  
14731research or [modules] yes mostly just I don't know know I feel like I start from the  
14732beginning

14733R: ok so you feel is it the content of the class that's very Eurocentric or is it the experiences  
14734or the expectation of what you should know about already

14735Tina: hmm yeah I think that's certainly there is um I thought is my perception then there's  
14736expectation that you know about the thing but I've talked with a a student this some other  
14737person I know she said that like you Canada for example if you want to study a field that  
14738you don't have a ground knowledge of then you have to take some kind of subjects before  
14739that to compliment but in Ireland then if you qualify you go in the you can qualify but still  
14740there a lot of things you don't know compared for people who are like familiar yeah that's  
14741right and then secondly I think ah Eurocentric I think it's the content >is I guess it's um<  
14742it's kind of expected because quantif- quantitative research so mostly works in democratic  
14743countries with everything very uh transparent accountable but I come from um non-  
14744democratic country so yeah and so basically also is because I'm #unt I know about  
14745institutions both electoral system etcetera so I'm very I'm unfamiliar with that and we were  
14746really touch like what inside about you know how the system to work in an authoritarian  
14747system so yeah like @ I feel bad because I already have a degree in [discipline] in the  
14748country so I thought I should know but really I don't know @@ so yeah so um and also I  
14749think mostly of the culture because most of the students in the course they're from North  
14750America or Europe so the the discussion often like kind of centered around people  
14751experience and of course I can talk about my but sometime because I had to listen to them

14752because I need to understand to follow the discussion in that form ideas in my head and I  
14753was often not quick enough eh@ to say my idea

14754R: okay yeah so you felt like you have things to say but you had to think about it first and  
14755then the conversation had moved on so much

14756Tina: yeah yeah yeah that's right because yeah yeah@@@ something that I couldn't even  
14757listen to all that if I when I think that I miss it then I get worried that way um I'm I'm not  
14758sure if I don't know what the question is anymore @@ like yeah @@

14759R: right and when you did express your ideas and our insight how do people respond to it  
14760like your peers and your professors

14761Tina: well people are supportive and they listening uh at first it um in first semester I often  
14762struggle to to express myself so the lecturer he kind of like supported he explain again or  
14763like say thing what I said again in a clearer way which it doesn't do to @other he doesn't  
14764do to other @students so I can see that yeah yeah he like encouraged me and and in in  
14765second term then I could some maybe some subjects as a are more relevant to my country  
14766then I speak up more and yeah people they most people they are very supportive and like  
14767respectful it's like I had some time I've kind of uh got it because I never see I rarely see  
14768them like um you know have some counter-arguments with me so I don't know if I make a  
14769good argument or because they like I don't know@ like maybe that let her talk don't  
14770@make @her @feel uh @discouraged from expressing her opinions but sometime I have  
14771thought that but I think mostly I have more positive experience experience in expressing  
14772myself yeah

14773R: okay good and and so did you have to take an entry assessment before being accepted to  
14774[institution 1] so something like IELTS or TOEFL

14775Tina: yes yes I I um done IELTS and I got quite high score but the score in speaking and  
14776writing is lower than for listening and reading but I feel like because of my high score I  
14777could quite unprepared for how difficult listening and understanding people here @and  
14778not only not only because of Irish accent but sometime I struggle to listen to the Americans  
14779British people I don't know why I think for a few months I really don't understand what  
14780what people said and even right now I don't know I can't understand 100% but it's I know  
14781but in academic environments it get easier than in informal setting but I guess when  
14782sometimes the subjects get very technical like when we study about recent method or  
14783statistic like if I have to follow because both have to understand English and concepts  
14784numbers and you have to @write and look and @listen so difficult@

14785R: so when you're having to understand the concepts and the language and take notes  
14786you're like ahhh

14787Tina: yeah@@ yeah@@ that's right@

14788R: okay@ so do you feel that the entry assessment he said that you still feel unprepared but  
14789um do you feel that the entry assessment kind of accurately predicted how you would do or  
14790that it prepared you for the studies

14791Tina: I think it doesn't accurately predict how well I do because I got 8 you know is quite  
14792high score so I think that I could success very quickly but in reality I and um also my  
14793speaking even though not 8 it also six point five or 7 I think it's like I can manage with that  
14794I thought but um when I study here then uhm I don't know like my pronunciation some  
14795time is people couldn't understand me my pronunciation is so bad@ and the listening is so  
14796difficult I guess it's because um uh I think the first semester I didn't have we didn't have  
14797any lectures it's mostly seminars discussion and then it's very confuse people talk very fast  
14798and sometimes over each other and the topic moves so quickly sometime unrelated to each  
14799other@ and so this too makes things difficult as well uhm and also some I guess I know  
14800some time I feel like people speak and then a lot of factors come in and then make it very  
14801difficult for me

14802R: mm-hmm okay so despite having an eight point zero it just it didn't reflect what you  
14803had to do here

14804Tina: yeahh uhm [long pause] well I um I must say that the second semester I would say is  
14805more lecture than it kind of look like the test yes but the first semester it doesn't look at  
14806anything@ like@ the@ test@

14807R: okay so it depends on what kind of class you're doing

14808Tina: yes yeah

14809R: okay alright um so what kind of preparation should international students take before  
14810coming to [institution 1]

14811Tina: well I feel like pronunciation is very important this I guess because when I in with  
14812my country listen even like because people from same country like second speak English  
14813in second language say we speak English wrong in the same way so we kinda understand  
14814each other easily as people understand me but here then for example if I meet an Asian  
14815student who she speak English very badly I still understand her she understands me but if I  
14816meet a very good native English speaker but says in the quite of an accent or phrasing I  
14817understand and some time I try bit hard to speak but people still wouldn't understand me  
14818what I mean is that like I think they should student should find as many opportunities they  
14819possible to speak with native speaker and in academic environment if possible or maybe  
14820just lots of conversational English but really discuss some topics academic topics and if  
14821will be easier:

14822R: it will help them

14823Tina: yeah I guess it's not @really @realistic @though

14824R: ok um is there any other type of preparation that you would suggest

14825Tina: okay I said about pronunciation already in question um yes I don't know why I think

14826yeah listening I don't know what to suggest my like for example when I listen to the BBC

14827or CNN I can understand very easily perfectly and I feel really confident but maybe

14828watching TV shows where people kind of fake the accent like Irish TV show or British TV

14829show where people speak in accent that are similar to in the place then this will@ help@

14830a@ lot@

14831R: @yeah okay alright so if you could give advice too and faculty at [institution 1] in how

14832they interact and how they support international students what would it be

14833Tina: @yeah that's a good question yeah well yes that's really different between how the

14834international students perceive a lesson and from native English speakers hmmm so

14835sometime it's not about the content or the ways as a professor explained concepts but

14836sometimes it's a low concentration or sometimes it's a part like oh they didn't we didn't

14837catch what they say and for a newcomer sometimes it's like I understand like half the

14838@modules lessons uhm I think that some professors kind of after class they often put their

14839lectures on blackboard or some notes at least I think it help like even if I miss some part

14840during a lesson then I could look it up then uh [long pause] yes and I can my second advice

14841some time I don't know if yeah I think they could have had that expectation some professor

14842have some expectation that this knowledge is like uh everyone knows it but yeah

14843sometimes they could stop and say oh does everybody understand it I guess yeah it also

14844helps when the explain and I don't know I guess that's all@ yeah@

14845R: yeah yeah I think those are two good points yeah you know providing the notes

14846afterwards to make sure that everyone understands and then also not assuming that

14847everyone knows what they consider as basic concepts

14848Tina: yeah yeah

14849R: okay so if you could give advice to organizations or schools that are preparing

14850international students for [institution 1] what would that advice be

14851Tina: prepare for [institution 1] in general I feel like informal um conversational English

14852like a commanding of conversational English could affect your study because I said I

14853sometimes it's easier for me to talk about my problem with other students or sometimes

14854reach information like when you sit in a group and people discuss the study and sometimes

14855I can get understand more about something or get some information that their missing uh

14856but my conversational English little bit like speaking and listening is like even @worse

14857that my academic@ English I don't know why maybe it's nerves or something mmm  
14858maybe just learn@ I don't know @references uh kind of like when I got in my country I  
14859look talk with foreigners and like I talk with them so it wasn't a big problem but here like  
14860very difficult me to understand that's maybe because most of them are drunker@ than me I  
14861don't know@@ and I like I don't know what to talk about@ then humor all of humor  
14862references so sometimes I feel a bit isolated because I couldn't talk much with them and I  
14863don't know som- I feels sometimes I feel a little bit like [long pause] I because I I want to  
14864like mingle with people to know yeah to make new friends but because if you just go to  
14865school and study and then go home it's so boring@@@ yeah so I feel like it also could  
14866affect my confidence in like talk in sticking up during class yeah  
14867R: yeah and and so if you could give advice to future students like so students who want to  
14868come to [institution 1] what would that advice be  
14869Tina: yeah I think it's the same generally um try to um practice listening and speaking as  
14870much as possible but I guess um but because a lot of people uh especially people who  
14871study out of like overseas student from some people they they don't have a lot of time or  
14872opportunities they have to like prioritize then I think that listening to the news doesn't help  
14873that much@ because they speak perfect English yeah and like formal @the kind of  
14874language that people use in real life like it's very different so just try to seek out native  
14875speakers and yeah practice with them@@  
14876R: and so um are you aware of any support that international students receive either from  
14877your professors your department the wider university  
14878Tina: well I'm aware of support for students in general but I'm not aware of any support for  
14879only oh I know that's kind of like teaching in this course academic English because for  
14880international students that's it@  
14881R: okay um do you think that this support is adequate  
14882Tina: I didn't take the ac- the academic course the academic English course so I don't know  
14883um there's other support um [long pause] well it's very hard to say@ because I I have no  
14884reference to say it was good or not in general I think I'm quite impressed by how much  
14885support is like is available [institution 1] is very diverse like not only academic student life  
14886or health yeah um but uh sometime I feel like just like make some appointment it took a  
14887long time for me to get someone eh then because I don't know I spent one year here  
14888sometime I feel like it take so long for me to get support and secondly I feel like uh people  
14889often like only get some a little bit information and they they get the counselling help and  
14890that sometimes is not what I need it's very different I don't know maybe com- a matter of  
14891communication because if I never find kind of this kind of support before so sometime I

14892don't know again if it's a matter of commutation I don't know how to describe my  
14893experience you know just type a few lines on computers and that people go oh meet this  
14894person and then I feel like he he or she doesn't understand my question you know but at  
14895the time I was I feel like I don't want to be rude like no you @don't @understand@ me@  
14896like@ @ @ @

14897R: okay so when you went for help you felt like they didn't understand you but you weren't  
14898you didn't want to be rude so you just okay thank you

14899Tina: yeah because this like um [pause] I guess I don't know like go straight into the  
14900problem they think it is @ I was a little bit overwhelmed and I feel there should be more  
14901talking in person back and forth to because I feel like yeah sometime have a specific  
14902question but sometime I just feel like lost and yeah and I feel like this would be more  
14903helpful if they yeah if there's more uh feedback yeah

14904R: right yeah so it may not always be a specific question but more just a feeling and you  
14905need someone to help you explore that with you to figure out what actually is going on

14906Tina: yeah yeah@ yeah that's right

14907R: okay um okay so for me that's all the questions I have but are there any questions that  
14908you wish I had asked that I didn't ask

14909Tina: uhm any question um I don't [click] uhm well I know this is about academic English  
14910but sometimes I feel there should be some assistance with the academic and conversational  
14911English because the study experience is not only the classroom but also when you you  
14912some time to meet the lecturer at lunch and the you discuss sometimes for example my  
14913classmates and I go to hang out at the bar but the topic it also about this study yeah and I  
14914feel it really invaluable I don't know some some people feel like and people express their  
14915political opinions @@but it very interesting I mean yeah I feel I if I have better  
14916pronunciation and conversational English then I could like make friends easier and then  
14917you know discuss topics like not related to the academic subjects and also our lives as  
14918people in around the world for example

14919R: right yeah yeah okay and is there anything else that you would like to add

14920Tina: no I think @ no I think that's all@

14921R: okay thank you so much [turns off device]

14922R: [Tina wanted to add information so device turned on again] yeah go for it

14923Tina: uh okay yeah I think um my lone um I have some problems with my lone but  
14924sometimes yeah it could have a long-term problems if I come here but I feel like because I  
14925had so much difficulty talking and forming in a relationship with people that I feel um

14926sometimes depressed or unmotivated um bored kind of is um and I think also academic  
14927like problem that affect my academic performance yeah

14928R: yeah so it's not just language or content it's emotional and what's going on in life

14929Tina: yes so because the language barriers that make that creates some kind of difficulty in  
14930social life and then yeah it affect my study yeah

14931R: yeah alright is there anything else you'd like to say

14932Tina: @no

14933

14934

**Vick**

14935

14936R: great um so my first question would be can you tell me about your strengths

14937academically

14938Vick: my strength academically my strength is in understanding the content and uh

14939speaking and critically analyzing so these are the two strengths which are always fine

14940because I read more and I analyze and with my experience with the traveling of the people

14941that gives things of speaking that's my core of my strength in academics

14942R: okay what would you say that your strengths in terms of English are

14943Vick: English uh in speaking conversation

14944R: uhm just in general so speaking reading writing listening all of the above

14945Vick: okay basically uh yeah of course I start for my school I was from a English you

14946know like my father is English teacher okay so upper form so English is my second

14947language and we used to like from my place the English is the second language uh to the

14948mother [language] and my all my graduation studies everything been in English but the

14949difficulty at the time and from seeing the different places we learn English through

14950[language] we don't speak or pronounce English in terms of English so we use the local

14951mother tongue to pronounce English words like a will be promises to ah so ah is the first

14952sound in [language] we reference a so that's where every dialectic or every word

14953everything we speak in our own dialectic but we write in English but at same time always

14954it depends from my country where um my familiarity goes with the [language] and we

14955have the agitation always the other religion so cultural so we gave up English in the middle

14956so then everything is in [language] understanding the conversations usually in college will

14957be in [language] but not in English but the writing will be in English these other two

14958directly opposite so it's like a mixed bag unless until ah I wanted to came to [city] for my

14959studies then only I started learning or writing in English academic English well when I

14960moved to northern [country] for my work I started learning my English first of all because

14961 I need to take a trade-off between learning [language 2] or English so I stood with English  
14962 because where I need to work so that's where I learned formally then I joined courses at the  
14963 British Council no not before IELTS just while I'm working so I'm going to have a some  
14964 good conversation and after my stu- working I went to prepare for my diplomatic service  
14965 and there I really grown up with some English the basic foundations again I've restarted  
14966 my grammar everything and that's time I entered the British Council in [city] so join some  
14967 course to learn to prepare for myself for any interview and everything and that's how I start  
14968 with English and then I academically in writing when I came I faced difficulties in writing  
14969 where sometimes with the academic writings in a two-way like when you read an [country]  
14970 author where I'm from it's very easy for me to read but when I read an American author or  
14971 European author it's always a bit difficult I need a dictionary because the words they use or  
14972 the new terms which they resemble we don't understand so either we have to give up on the  
14973 reading the tough text or we have to go deeply slowly there to construct ourselves but  
14974 eventually I constructed in a way but until when I faced with the exam like IELTS and the  
14975 preparation where I made it on my own but still I try to clear but still after coming here I  
14976 still find a difficulty where even the conversation between the students are very vocabulary  
14977 the words they use or something different where we don't use those words in our daily  
14978 usage in [country] the country so that's a familiarity in reading I don't have any problem  
14979 but in conversation of course still here I have in [country] I don't have a problem in  
14980 conversation in writing so there are differences

14981 R: right okay alright it's very interesting um so your your school like primary school and  
14982 secondary school was that um in [language] or was it in English

14983 Vick: uh it's in English it's

14984 R: okay but it was through [language]

14985 Vick: through [language]

14986 R: okay so it wasn't English medium

14987 Vick: English medium

14988 R: okay but still through [language]

14989 Vick: [language] except in English class we read or write in English but when the- when  
14990 we ask some doubt even teachers used to explain in [language] rather than in English so  
14991 rest of the subjects are like in books we will read in English when the teacher and student  
14992 conversation will happen in [language] to explain everything so it's like a in familiarity  
14993 will come but but this is during my time not the present time right like the present  
14994 generation after millennium we can say it's like for them they are much fluent and the same  
14995 thing since I am coming from a village background so other say two types it is not the



14996metros metropolitan like people from [cities] they are very fluent there where the teacher  
14997students speak in English they write they dialect they interact but for us in a village it's like  
14998a medium is English but the [language] is the common thing so even that's a different state  
14999the difference where I come from that also is a part of life

15000R: exactly yeah that's very interesting actually so um so what I how would you evaluate  
15001your current academic success here at [institution 1] so what do you say you're doing well  
15002you're not sure you are you aren't etc.

15003Vick: well um my academic success maybe I'm doing well in a way with my content and  
15004the focus on the work but still writing yeah I have some difficulties still uhm it's like the  
15005way they organize the writing and the way I came from writing it's for me it's a learned  
15006writing it's not a built in writing so I faced difficulty in writing so I need to check my own  
15007paper two three times I I put it to my friends either so that in a writing of course I lack but  
15008rather than that of course I'm coping with the conversation or reading I can read for a long  
15009time so I don't any problem with that

15010R: okay so it's mainly writing and mainly organization just from your background with  
15011English or is it um like what about writing do you find difficult

15012Vick: uh writing I can say that academically the choice of words so it's like the way I write  
15013if I give it to my professor in [country] it will be evaluated for almost full more marks the  
15014same writing if I produce here it will be evaluated for less mark is because the vocabulary  
15015we use the academic vocabulary and the organization of sentence so these are the thing  
15016>content is always fine for me< because I know which content to be top down right and I  
15017have that experience so content wise I don't differ but in my vocabulary and sentence  
15018phrasing I differ of course so there I get the feedback so even my for example I even when  
15019I for my essay I just gave an outline and a much of my professor here she d- here is she  
15020didn't give me a feedback on my content she gave a feedback on my writing so the  
15021grammar and the vocabulary so those things differ

15022R: okay alright and and can you tell me about the work that's required in your modules so  
15023are you taking formal modules

15024Vick: yes

15025R: okay so what do you have to do for your modules in terms of like reading or  
15026assignments etc.

15027Vick: ah for modules of course we have to write an essay end of the term which should be  
15028long around 4 thousand words three thousand to four thousand words and then reading of  
15029the core of articles or books because end of assessment is a presentation so it's like the  
15030three things comes involved in everything so the weighted goes to writing so then the

15031presentation then the conversation but you're marked for your participation your speech but  
15032the participation does not include whether you speak wrongly or correctly in the interaction  
15033there it content ehm in your presentation again it's your knowledge and the expression and  
15034then the writing of course it's a judgment of a combination of all so that's the three things  
15035R: okay and then as a research student since you're doing the master's um what kind of  
15036work is required of you as a research student

15037Vick: for uh

15038R: so you're doing a master's a dissertation right so what do you have to do for your  
15039dissertation

15040Vick: mm-hmm maybe I'm like we have to prepare a literature review so there it's are two  
15041kind of things to analyze from academic articles journal articles and the books so from I  
15042have to differentiate from uhm uhm the person who were writing from the media there any  
15043difference the are academic writers the media writers the persons how they see the issue  
15044how they address again I have to when I'm narrowed down with this I have to write only in  
15045academic terms of academic words which precise way to my [discipline] they're academic  
15046terms but when I research from uhm say for example from a journalist who written a book  
15047on [topic] so their journal articles and the vocabulary is something different there's a one  
15048difficulty I have again but I can differentiate the terms since I used to it for a long time I  
15049can differentiate academic words in the general world so that's a one thing in literature  
15050review numbered from the then writing content and researching their data so I think that's a  
15051two thing

15052R: okay and so can you describe the general structure of your lectures so when you're in  
15053the classroom what happens is it mainly like the professor speaking with the PowerPoint or  
15054is it a class group discussion group

15055Vick: well it's a two-way process the first part will be for an hour will be a PowerPoint  
15056presentation from a professor uh after there's a interaction in the way and the second part  
15057will be a group discussion we in groups and then you have to present in group or either one  
15058person so it's always different difference with that lecture but those are both the things

15059R: okay alright um and so when professors go to grade your presentations and your  
15060assessment so you said that mostly it's about content but can you tell me what you think  
15061they look for when grading so how did they assess academic success

15062Vick: uhhh I've yet to get any paper assessed paper so in a way with the way I understood  
15063from the handbook and the people when I had the feedback and I had an informal talking  
15064well they asses on your critical thinking and how you represent your critical thinking in a  
15065balanced way so that's a one point they mentioned all the time even when you are in

15066interaction or in a presentation you should have a clear balanced view of presentation how  
15067you present both your the known basic content the contradictions and you are trying to  
15068bridge that gap so we have to address in a holistic way that's on expectation or if you are  
15069trying to if I try to address some subjects in a very critical way when I where I don't need  
15070to take a balanced view then I have to put myself and framed that I'm going to take this  
15071view and why I have to explain it even I did some presentation on that way so I think that  
15072is acceptable until you have to be on non-academic terms so if you are addressing you have  
15073to be on what methodology you're addressing and why then you can be a critical you don't  
15074need a balanced view or if you are generally speaking it shouldn't be too gentle but be in  
15075academic terms that's the thing I found

15076R: okay perfect and so how do your professors communicate those expectations is it just in  
15077the handbook do they verbally say that do they give you assessment guidelines

15078Vick: oh yeah of course assessment guidelines are there but not a very nuanced guidelines  
15079it's like uhh grading for how many persons we are doing for a presentation speaking 10  
15080percent 20 percent of mark and then the handbook will carry the same thing but not a very  
15081nuanced one how they are going to check and that thing there's no clear specification or  
15082demarcation not specification so the clear demarcation of the outline is not there

15083R: okay so it's not super clear it's not super detailed

15084Vick: mm-hmm um it's not super detailed I can say that

15085R: alright um so in general what do you think students need to succeed at [institution 1]

15086Vick: well from my if you ask from my department uh first I can say from [discipline] it's  
15087mostly studying [topic] so it's said to oppose opposite so we can't no one can stand on a  
15088single pole without knowing the other pole so obviously you have to come narrow down to  
15089the center so how you come down is a different thing uhm well that should be structured  
15090within our academic lines the thinkers what we think I think that's a one point we have to  
15091narrow down to be an academic success so like if you are working on a thinker and uh  
15092what are his person his or her perspective or approach and how you contradict by knowing  
15093that and you have given a good example and why what you're doing and why you are  
15094doing you have to be very clear for an academic success in [institution 1] from my  
15095department that's on line the second when I was being with my friends from my  
15096engineering department like when I have some friends it's like for them it's more like a  
15097presentation and writing on the end of the work it's not assessed in-between so it's the end  
15098of their work so it's more like grading for their projects how they present and how they  
15099work so that include some mathematics more than conversation or more than presentation  
15100more than a critical thinking they have to be very objective with the result plus one plus

15101one is equal to two they have to be very clear engineering students like some of my friends  
15102from [institute] like for them they have the term exams they are graded by writing not in an  
15103essay for like us so they have to sit in the exam hall how they reproduce everything the  
15104medical system and everything the questions so it depends from center to center only I  
15105have friends from this 3 departments @

15106R: @ alright and how much of a factor does language play in academic success

15107Vick: factors?

15108R: so how important is language to academic success

15109Vick: oh language is much more important I mean English like a country like Ireland of  
15110course it plays part in English is bigger you have to be without that it can survive because a  
15111professors are either from British or from Irish which they have look like English and they  
15112know how to write and how to produce but when people like from me from a developing  
15113country or from my friends from Africa where we have not used too much of English we  
15114have to improve writings are one difficult task the factor comes to play there the factor of  
15115play for example my friends from say from States or other countries in my class where  
15116they are in uh putting in a very organized to be in writing because they don't find difficulty  
15117in writing in organization you know one more difference oh I found the factor is the  
15118thinking and writing pattern like for example when I had an interaction of my friends from  
15119States or other countries they have writing skills right from the school but and people from  
15120developing countries we don't have writing skills from school we only go to school and  
15121write the formal exam not any creative writing are not there so we don't think critically  
15122basically we don't think critically except the special science students the demarcation is  
15123always there so here those who practice add to it add value so I think that's a one main  
15124factor but I don't know how people from like one of my friend our she's from [city] as she  
15125is working in nursing she finds much difficult in conversation and everything even though  
15126she had a good uh IELTS score because IELTS the mostly we train in a closed room when  
15127we write the exam we reproduce everything in [country] it's like a reproduction so  
15128everybody was into the three months preparation they reproduce but when you're into the  
15129open environment we don't find that match so then the sense of fear so the factor is  
15130external now so how you cope up with your fear and external factors then how you once  
15131you manage there then even the internal fear of academic writing thinking and learning so  
15132it's a two way for some people so it's also again differ like she's from a village background  
15133and people from [cities] they are okay with everything so it's like a metropolitan cities  
15134where the people come from that defines them ultimately the base

15135R: so can you expand more on external factors like so what other factors are going to affect  
15136academic success so this could be like things like fear or living situations social life etc.

15137Vick: well to answer that of course external factors are multiple ways like depends people  
15138were first of all where they are coming from like me even though I have a multiple  
15139experience in metro cities even though I'm not grown up I have for 22 years I've been from  
15140village and then immediately I've been into a metro city when I was working in Metro  
15141Cities I don't have any difficulties but when I came to a metro cosmopolitan city like [city]  
15142for my graduation I had a different experience altogether even in [country] my place  
15143maybe that could give us some space to understand like first time in a closed enrollment  
15144I'm having a different diverse core people from different places of my country different  
15145culture different sects behavior pattern everything even though there's a common language  
15146of English but it's always are difficult to communicate because people first assimilate  
15147themselves in a group it's a group dynamics always there so you know always #unt or  
15148whatever you know since you are from [country] the people from North [country] will be  
15149in northern [country] South will be south so there are a lot of differentiation of be there  
15150within the North [country] like there's a different regions [region] and the people will  
15151assimilate themselves to the scale apart from that there are external factors of the  
15152hierarchies different system so within the system when we study and we came we also  
15153have the external fear we can't speak uhh somewhere or the other I always try to break this  
15154on my own where in any different situation I never assimilate with my [language] people  
15155because first thing I can't learn anything so I want to get into step myself into the opposite  
15156pole whether I know or not whether I have the scale zero they might be higher level I don't  
15157mind whether I know the language or doesn't matter but I step myself into it but that gives  
15158it acts in both way so in a way it's okay but in a way how long you will sustain that so  
15159that's a different equation so somewhere I sus- I sustain I'll learn the language and I'll learn  
15160the food and everything so the external factor now I want to draw is on two things one is  
15161the culture language particularly language and the second one is on food because food is  
15162always I found in my experience in traveling food is a very demarketing factor for to be in  
15163a group where your whom you're assimilating and especially people coming from  
15164[country] therefore this is a big factor right yeah in a way so always I have a different taste  
15165for food so first people accept me into their culture from food I accept the food whether I  
15166like or not I pretend to be liking so people first they break their gates so they break  
15167themselves okay [Vick] is like this fine okay then they start speaking first they will speak  
15168with me English whatever they know then I learn two three languages words from their  
15169own language then I try to communicate them then I find the similarities linguistic bit

15170similarities so that's from my experience so literally I enter I step into their culture to meet  
15171that external factors but once I'm comfortable with my friends again with the social sphere  
15172of either education or working the both the sphere again we have to demarcate into the  
15173label so there it's something I simplify now when I came here in Ireland even though I I see  
15174the first some conflicts I had with the people so even coming here it's like people French  
15175are French German are German Austrian are Austrian so I was a little shocked here  
15176Austrians never like German German never like French French and German never like  
15177Belgian and Italian are different oh and what a kind of European we are thinking European  
15178are one land and everything they are so differentiated fine the same case I found that the  
15179people from States where #unt Dakota north south east west some from Michigan or some  
15180from New York there are a lot of differences from which school you're coming from so  
15181again the dynamics plays there so how you resemble but the central point for people to the  
15182topic this is a broader and these external factors when someone is coming in and when you  
15183see in a group dynamics in the class so with whom you will relate yourself the sense for a  
15184person from say from [country] for example like me coming from such a 6,000 miles away  
15185and where you have a close relation or friendship to talk friends to talk first you have to see  
15186who the [nationality] are and for me I've been in [institution 1] since September say six  
15187months I know only two [nationality] only I met the two [nationality] people last in my  
15188Chinese New Year Day with my friends place I never been with [nationality] @ anyways  
15189because I know what will happen with them so that's one thing but when I see there they're  
15190a group of [nationality] people who communicate who talk in their own language so that's  
15191where the friend who I mentioned from [city] she used to speak and she has a sense of  
15192speaking at least freely so she goes with a [language] she never speaks in English but when  
15193she came to the morning into the class she needs to speak in English but she is very poor in  
15194English so the difference the external factors played here like affiliation or affection their  
15195sense of resemblance so these are the factors that play the emotional factors not the  
15196intellectual factors they're not from external so emotional factors are a lot of things to do  
15197so I think that's one reason I want see this the vast differences I gave the same experience I  
15198feel like even in the class sometime the French people will speak English is something  
15199different and the Italian the way they use the English dialectic is different Germans are far  
15200better so again the difference of assets to play to understand what they speak so for  
15201example I it's very difficult for me to understand someone speak English from my friends  
15202from States because there are dialectics and the pronounce uh pronouncing the word are  
15203different but it is for me very easy to speak English from Central Asian country one of my  
15204friend so it's like more of slow pronunciation so like that it's those are the factors so there

15205 people try to assemble other friends to speak fluently that not from the class outside the  
15206 class that cut something for them I mean somewhere that engagement everything  
15207 happening so that will innovate will enrich in my opinion it will enrich it but the  
15208 continuation should be there so how you can assemble the external factors so internal  
15209 factors it's up to you

15210 R: alright um okay so before you came to [institution 1] did you take any linguistic or  
15211 academic preparation so did you take like IELTS classes English for academic purposes  
15212 anything like that

15213 Vick: no I took some classes from British council [country] [city] just for learning I mean  
15214 speaking English

15215 R: okay so a more general English

15216 Vick: more general English well for me to cope up with the working environment but then  
15217 I learned academic writing when I stepped in myself into a social science field in my  
15218 getting my master's [discipline] but I learned on my own writing and everything and when  
15219 I took IELTS exam I never gone for a coaching I just got the book what they have given  
15220 the material and then I prepared on my own so and that's really when my score will reflect  
15221 my speaking will be more seven the rest listening reading and writing will be over six six  
15222 six writing would be five point five so the average comes down to six so that's the one  
15223 thing

15224 R: okay okay um so now since you've said that you've taken pretty much every test out  
15225 there um I want you to tell me how do you feel about the test

15226 Vick: the tests are a very highly differentiated thing the way they test you like IELTS it's  
15227 like you have to be in a written exam not a computerized test that's why I prefer first the  
15228 IELTS okay so because first time I skip the TOEFL because of I should write on a  
15229 computer and not use to the computer typing or writing or speaking nothing so that's why I  
15230 went for IELTS so IELTS basically their test to the speaking will be conversation and the  
15231 listening will be #unt and not much of very big statements of continuous-flow the linking  
15232 part will not be there it's like a two sentence three sentence and they will have a time of ten  
15233 seconds in between the sentence so you can think you can listen slowly the writing the  
15234 questions also will be different in IELTS like it will be a very simple question describe  
15235 explain some content that's it so reading it's a paragraph mostly doing in the paper we  
15236 know the calculate the time we can read a paragraph because the since school we are doing  
15237 the comprehension work in the paper comprehension reading and of course q and a  
15238 answers so it's very easy for us then this is the part with IELTS my experience so it's  
15239 overall good for me but when I want to step into US universities and I got the admission I

15240 need to submit my TOEFL GRE score all the stuff the first time I went in TOEFL even I  
15241 prepared on my own after my registration the point is the preparation in itself something  
15242 different like it comes with the conversation like it's like a listening for example in IELTS  
15243 you will have one listening it will go on you will write it so finish in our TOEFL it's like a  
15244 one conversation being in a classroom the teacher will explain a subject or like  
15245 anthropology or any social science or a medical whatever it is and the students will ask  
15246 question then you will have a q and a what the student asked or the what teacher replied or  
15247 how you understand the content or the whole subject is all about what so we have to even  
15248 listen in a multiple dimension three four things will happen simultaneously and you don't  
15249 know which one you are going to answer first two three four and the video will not be  
15250 played second time it's only one time even in IELTS it's one time but you'll have only two  
15251 questions and the simple sentences while in the reading like same you have to do in a  
15252 computer for TOEFL again the same paragraphs it will be very #unt something raised on  
15253 assertion you have to find many things different and then you have to answer the questions  
15254 accordingly and the choice will be also something different the there won't be any  
15255 straightforward choice you have to be critically something explaining tougher but that  
15256 criticality will not be an IELTS IELTS is a much more like a Commonwealth countries so  
15257 British is has that mindset I think the colonial thing to have the people from there but US is  
15258 something different entirely altogether uh writing also it's very critical in TOEFL um and  
15259 not as much as in IELTS when you write that critical level of the the basic what you write  
15260 in TOEFL if you write it in IELTS you will get seven or eight but the basic you what you  
15261 write in IELTS is if you wrote it into TOEFL you'll get zero you will not be graded at all  
15262 so the bench- benchmark is entirely different from TOEFL and IELTS so these are the few  
15263 things in speaking again the multiple dimension comes to play in speaking between  
15264 TOEFL so it's like an IELTS one-to-one personal will be there and like they will ask you  
15265 like a teacher is an opposite side someone person they must you describe your hobby  
15266 personal life so it's like a man-to-man interaction and it's more formal and informal facial  
15267 expressions are there but in TOEFL it's again like you'll have multiple questionnaires in  
15268 conversation you have to answer like a speaking whatever they say you have to speak so  
15269 that emotions are not related there these are the two things so this is a basic difference  
15270 between TOEFL and IELTS which are the both of #unt and when I want to compare it with  
15271 a PT Pearson's teaching education it's a grading system in itself altogether different like  
15272 they don't go for a clear speaking category then reading then listening then writing no for  
15273 example in speaking itself they will ask question you have to speak you know it's a  
15274 computer-based test you have to speak again in speaking itself they will speak you have to



15275 write again in the same thing they will speak you have to listen and you have to tell the  
15276 three things happens in speaking the same thing will come to again in a reading part you  
15277 won't write anything something how to write after listening after listening you have to  
15278 speak after you have to talk so it's a mixer that through all the stages PT and the grading  
15279 system also it comes like a communication and grammar communicate speaking and  
15280 grammar so it's a different grading skills so the academic part this other way TOEFL  
15281 IELTS and the PT differs I hope I have answered your question

15282 R: yep um so how do you feel that those tasks prepared you for [institution 1] or predicted  
15283 your academic success in [institution 1]

15284 Vick: oh nothing

15285 R: nothing all of them

15286 Vick: all of them uhm they prepare only for visa especially TOEFL prepared me on the PT  
15287 prepared me to get admission in US of course then I can explain in US in US cities but in  
15288 [institution 1] that doesn't matter [institution 1] I got my admission without all the stuff  
15289 only for a visa I have to submit my score @

15290 R: okay fair enough so do you feel that has any relation or any benefit taking these tests  
15291 and these preparation course for the tests for [institution 1]

15292 Vick: oh well not for me as I say that it's not directly but indirectly I know how do the  
15293 people think when I come here when I see that demarcation of the conversations but these  
15294 are the tests which are seeming okay this is the reality what I have done so it's like I'm not  
15295 into that fear or anything okay better I learned that and since I prepared something already  
15296 I'm not know that everything is new to me but not everything is the same familiar with me  
15297 so I mean somewhere percentage-wise 30 40 or 30 70 or 40 60 so just I have to cope up  
15298 with the things so I can use my own mechanism to communicate or write the way I used to  
15299 do in a way it it clears the air a little bit okay and I know what's happening there it's not  
15300 any shock so that's the one thing happen with me

15301 R: okay alright good um and what type of preparation do you feel the international students  
15302 should undertake before studying at [institution 1]

15303 Vick: I mean maybe international students or from different things from Europe or from a  
15304 developing country or developed

15305 R: from everywhere if it differs for for different countries or different areas expand on that  
15306 so what kind of preparation should European students take what kind of preparation should  
15307 students from developing countries take etc.

15308 Vick: okay so maybe from uh developing countries are from say third world countries or  
15309 from Africa uhm from my experience here I think it should be a multi-dimensional both

15310speaking uh writing these are the two things and conversation these three elements are  
15311much more important because the point is for example here we people speak with the  
15312different people from different countries in like Irish British the different accents and  
15313everything like we learn English in our own terms on our own language own dialectic and  
15314we don't when we speak that also keeps the difference the sense of measurement among  
15315the students so why you speak English maybe within when I speak English so people can  
15316say I'm from [country] because of my dialectic so that's all one way altogether so in writing  
15317yeah keeps the same so the people cutting the conversation they don't go for a long  
15318conversation with the students from Europe or other English countries so they go with their  
15319own people again and they go with their own people they cut off with the language they  
15320speak the common language so they end up nowhere they started somewhere they end up  
15321with the again with the same line base line so only there's a again demarcation when they  
15322come to the within the campus within the class they are exposed to high English but within  
15323the outside the campus and outside the class where they are affiliated and how they are  
15324going with the same thing that makes a one difference especially from our people from  
15325develop and then same thing applied to the writing skills what we know we apply we write  
15326but in academically whether we are growing or not ah it depends on the individual of  
15327course how they want to improve but everyone tries to complete end of the day so that's the  
15328one thing with the developing country like if I say from people from European countries or  
15329from US of course they are already fluent in English but uhm of course they are very good  
15330enough with the people from my country like mine and everyone so everyone knows the  
15331English so no big comments or anything but always I think it's a it's not a problem with the  
15332people from Europe or other countries or the mostly westernized countries from Western  
15333country where people have the always we like people from [country] or Asian countries we  
15334always have the two side of mentality not a rational individual always you are reduced to  
15335something either since you're in [country] you know how people are reduced either by the  
15336[social hierarchy] or the hierarchy social things so when they come when the people more  
15337to the different space so they can't go with the individuality in their face and they take the  
15338image reality they always try to back up themselves with some known people so they  
15339reduce themselves I think somewhere that should be expanded that line where people can  
15340traverse freely like more conversational class like people used to go hang up in the bar and  
15341the pub and how many people can speak for a long time after two rounds of whiskey or  
15342beer and they speak only the movies but not about the academic stuff but like some of the  
15343class stuffs could be discussed after the class or the peer groups can be created more which  
15344I prefer I think when I face that time but I can do it with the masters so it's like a different

15345thing I think that's all people I mean the people from developing countries should be lifted  
15346up to bridge that gap so I think that's a gap I hope I answered your question

15347R: yeah yeah yeah no no you're answering perfectly uhm so if you could give advice too  
15348faculty at [institution 1] in supporting and communicating and helping international  
15349students what would that advice be

15350Vick: [long pause] uh it's a difficult question for me @ like uh I don't know you're  
15351recording that @ what if they @

15352R: no it's fine your name isn't going to be attached

15353Vick: no it's like uhm like it for me it's comparison because I always do comparison and I  
15354think like many things in [country] or my institution my institution in [country] will work  
15355informally there is no any formal structure like you can knock anytime you can step into a  
15356teacher you can meet anyone if they're really busy they will say really busy if they are not  
15357doing some work they will ask you what is important you need to really talk yes then you  
15358can sit you can talk they will cut off from their work then the engagement will go on then  
15359you can go then they also get back to the work this is again the two-way people are in to in  
15360a [country] for example they will assimilate they will reorganize and then de-organize  
15361depends on the situation but when you come to the west which I felt here it is very formal  
15362here because of that individuality whatever the notion we had uh we developed in the West  
15363uhm they has set timings for everything they can't spend more time for you or for even for  
15364themselves even their family their dimensions is different so here the teacher [institution 1]  
15365they have the office hours for one hour until they have an emergency thing to interact with  
15366them they will give an extra time to talk but how far it will help you in understanding the  
15367English or conversation is a question for me because they assume you know English you  
15368can write everything they can give one feedback for example I can say my own I  
15369experienced in my class when I was writing an essay I was I'm not aware that only the for  
15370essay a discussion outline I can have one appointment with my teacher course coordinator  
15371not the second time so I'm not aware of that actually I never went through the handbook  
15372completely probably well that's I'm from [country] we trust the words more than the book  
15373but here people trust the book then the words so that's the point @ you know I never aware  
15374of it and uh I prepared everything I thought of writing a second time maybe I can have a  
15375discussion where I want to put my all my thoughts the rough thoughts so then I can edit  
15376them but the first feedback I got I asked for a second time in the email but the second time  
15377I got only I got the rule only in the handbook so and so column the mentioned it only one  
15378time you can meet the professor so they are not supposed to I'm not supposed to give  
15379another feedback or a meeting that will be dishonest to the other students so in a way you

15380 can understand of course I understand so then I have to work on my own right I can't ask  
15381 so I think then how people engage so there they can create some space maybe it's a new  
15382 thing we have to think from the West I mean uh I think some manner I want the Western  
15383 people to think in that way it's much more not doing for them like [country] like that's a  
15384 lower disorganized but like some professors who are really into it they know when to talk  
15385 when to have they don't have any formal office hours or sometimes even though when you  
15386 step in immediately if they are really into the work they will say I'm into the work I can  
15387 talk to you later so they don't go with the too formal way only on two hours in Tuesdays  
15388 the fixed time so that's also an extreme like all the time you're giving all free time is also  
15389 extreme but somewhere in the middle so like for example I need at least in my research  
15390 discussion at least I needed two three times to meet a professor because the way I think I  
15391 go slowly because I'm coping up multiple things like vocabulary I have to think I have to  
15392 think the content I have to think the research question I have three dynamics in myself but  
15393 when I have a chance to meet a professor once before my presentation not the second time  
15394 how many things I'm going to put when one thing when I'm looking at the coursework  
15395 daily course work weekly coursework I have to do at the same time I have to work so at  
15396 least it should be two three times at least not all the students who are much in need if they  
15397 ask and if they can figure out so then that could be a one thing in [institution 1] I mean the  
15398 whole not in [institution 1] everything in the West because I understand the people from  
15399 different space we have to think like for example I can cope on my own but what about my  
15400 my colleague in class from Africa [pause] so actually he got uh what to say sleepless night  
15401 and then he go oh he can't sleep somewhere because he is thinking nothing is coming out  
15402 of it something needs to pull out of it maybe the counseling helps but it's not counseling  
15403 helps with your stress or emotion but not with the writing so when the writing is taken care  
15404 of the fluidity of thought happens then the stress automatically comes down there is a  
15405 interlocking between the both I saw during my people writing the essay some different  
15406 things even the people from let's say from my Europe they are stressed of course they don't  
15407 have any problem in writing so they enjoy the stress so their difference between the you  
15408 stress and the normal stress they came to play of course they study psychology everybody  
15409 has the answer for everything here everybody is from the text yeah your stress what kind of  
15410 stress stress is the stress right no it's you created your stress or a subjective stress okay  
15411 come on stress that's it end of the story sometime I say I'm from [place] soo even though  
15412 that's where I try to different some cultures they cultivate some cultures don't in the even  
15413 the rationality part you know I see it's a very difficult for first time to cope of it like in  
15414 [country] you know when you're with the people it doesn't matter whether you have money

15415or not you will go on to enjoy everything but here even if you don't have you can't do  
15416anything can leave their friends they can value they can't ask you there you need to ask  
15417everything is formal like here in [country] we will pull a hand you come there you don't  
15418have don't care you come we pay and everything next time you pay whatever it is we don't  
15419mind so those are the nuances comes to play the people from that kind of structure and  
15420they see the new kind of structure it's like a totally circling in opposite direction clockwise  
15421and anti-clockwise so then the academics how much the focus will happen so many things  
15422interlinked I think in a way so the teacher should focus on the culturality also to study or  
15423think like four people we are from [country] my class so and then say five are from States  
15424two are from France three from Germany if you value the majority will understand  
15425everything then somewhere I drop-down because out of four from [country] I am from  
15426[country] they are from [cities] so they are far better ahead of me so their needs are  
15427different but my need is something different so how you but IELTS will give if they judge  
15428by the IELTS score even I can get in a constructed in I get six but the ground reality is  
15429something different that is produced out of a closed door but not from the external things  
15430from open-enrollment I'm not produced out of an open environment so then how the  
15431teacher understand the difference so maybe an analysis could be made if 34 students are  
15432there they can see different cultural background even some students from Ireland who are  
15433from a country side they have face difficult in any way they're fluent much in English  
15434writing everything of course but in a content they face a difference then they need  
15435something but again one thing I found us like the these are the factors teachers are caring  
15436in more in undergrad students not in the master students because they think the people are  
15437matured or they crossed a period of cycle here also again the one difference comes  
15438between the Western society of the students here on the East like undergrad students not  
15439the majority of them immediately moved to the masters so they go the experience they  
15440work they come back at least they have the two three years of mature the level of outside  
15441see then #environ but in [country] or in the other countries the people come from we study  
15442school immediately we study grab bachelors immediately we go for masters PhD PhD so  
15443the ten years is a continuous thing so some people who complete their engineering like my  
15444friends over here they complete engineering and the next year for master's they have been  
15445here there's no space of seeing the people or language so it's a one in only the the closed  
15446space has changed not their mind or anything so again there is a nuance to understand you  
15447can't grade on a single thing that they know everything or uh they know how they know  
15448then the epistemology comes to play how they know we have to think from angle so their  
15449analyzation or some counseling or maybe from uhm career services or talking to some

15450group of students from different countries like within [country] or within [area] or the  
15451[nationality] from who are migrated and stayed in London for a second generation those  
15452people are a different thing so again these are all multiple differences exist people from  
15453Africa which part of Africa again so how much access there so we have to analyze  
15454somewhere even in the application I can recommend to have something understanding  
15455thing how much they're testing I think maybe it's open to you know @  
15456R: brilliant yeah um so what advice would you give to future students at [institution 1]  
15457Vick: me?  
15458R: yeah so based on your experience now what would you tell students who are looking to  
15459come to [institution 1]  
15460Vick: oh who want to come to [institution 1] ah I welcome them  
15461R: yep do you have advice for them  
15462Vick: yeah if they ask me why you're welcoming so warm way then I can tell one thing  
15463even you make a mistake you'll get the second chance third chance very easily @@  
15464actually that's a flexibility I found in Irish institutions well not only in some of the other  
15465Irish institutions in Dublin and I heard from people so that flexibility is very good with the  
15466teachers but the point is only you have to correct on your own so that's the way the  
15467difference comes but the flexibility is good only but the more than that well I welcome our  
15468students in a way it's a sound environment I think the people friendly in a way after that  
15469I'm not used to the word when people ask me about racist or anything I never experienced  
15470anything in a life I have been in a very hard racist country [country] because I'm from  
15471South and I been in eight nine years but on the North [country] mm-hmm I have been a lot  
15472of racist seeing there but uh I don't value those people with one comment so I can't  
15473generalize the thing you know I have a good friends so it's about how you go and see the  
15474people talk to them and moreover that's the one way to put it so friendly environment  
15475which people given me the comment well I'm not sure about it because I never experience  
15476even experience it's like for me a part of a study like I analyze the person who makes a  
15477racist comment I see from how they develop their way where they come from I have ten  
15478questions before judging them or putting an answer so I neutralized myself but to be honest  
15479maybe I can share my experience I had a good thought on racism when I was in Westport  
15480and here to my friend's place we went to a pub and there came an Irish family with a two-  
15481year-old kid I think yeah two years less than two they're sitting my friends and our family  
15482everyone sitting they started playing with the kid and the kid was so laughing everybody  
15483enjoying the kid that she made sure he was so into the play and they know my friend  
15484introduced this is [Vick] from [country] and then everybody I shake the hands with them

15485and I was seeing the kid and uh I shown myself the next second the kid went like this no or  
15486something I have so on something actually I don't know why then I really thought for two  
15487years it's seen the people from the white skinned everything and immediately he saw a  
15488black skin it's a color differentiation the race is not in the mind when we grow it's from the  
15489mindset like Freud and the first six months what we see we don't see any multicultural  
15490things that's what Freud said so it's a new dimension for me but how people think from this  
15491angle is a different question so second thing I can recommend that's because of the  
15492education the level of education I think that's performed here I mean because I know  
15493universities throughout everything since I have played for 82 universities @@ I was  
15494rejected by US Embassy

15495R: no really

15496Vick: yeah I got my admission to [US school] for my PhD

15497R: and but they wouldn't give you a visa

15498Vick: they stopped my visa they I'm not allowed to enter well that's a different thing  
15499actually [institution 1] is like I got my admission in 2014 after my masters but I be not able  
15500to come and away due to some reason then I forget all about the [institution 1] then only I  
15501started stepping into US universities so then I started TOEFL GRE everything I prepared I  
15502got my admission almost I wrote for nine universities I wrote and three year I got my  
15503admission and I rejected all when I went to [US school] finally so all the [discipline] I  
15504wrote since I my interest is there yeah I explored almost all here in UK I got my admission  
15505in [UK school] for [discipline] and then in Brussels I got my admission in [University] for  
15506[discipline] so and finally when my US visa got rejected all this admission is there I said  
15507why not [institution 1] again yeah last year and then Ireland rejected my visa last year @@  
15508and then then one year I worked with my professor volunteer I worked with the refugees  
15509and everything and this year I applied for [institution 1] and this I got my visa that's what I  
15510doing it something I think [institution 1] is a destiny for me no I didn't choose [institution  
15511] [institution 1] chose me @ he wanted me here I don't know what yeah so that is  
15512education yeah to answer the question it's a level of education was good and what other  
15513people like from [country] or more engineers so the developing economy in Ireland they're  
15514focusing on like engineering subjects for a job also they're coming by studies one year but  
15515how much people from the [country] are aware of the social sciences subjects it's a  
15516question mark for me because still all the social finds is preferable to UK and US more  
15517most of the countries so if you ask me about the the negative side is there is no scholarship  
15518from Ireland many universities don't have money and they and really they don't have  
15519money so that's one lack they face people only the people with money can step into Ireland

15520but if they came at least some 50 50 or 25 75 depends on the class and everything that  
15521could be more they can attract more students like the Irish government has said that they  
15522want increase 30% of students by 2021 no sorry 22 but what is the target of the students  
15523who are the are they engineers or the students from social science field who are they so I  
15524think that's sort of one lack we have here

15525R: okay um so as my last question and are you aware of any support that international  
15526students received from the University so in terms of services offered to them

15527Vick: services you mean scholarship or

15528R: not necessarily scholarship but services it could be academic services it could be you've  
15529mentioned counseling uhm social stuff like that

15530Vick: uh I don't know I heard of people went a lot of them took a counseling so only my  
15531professor referred me when she asked me to go for a counselor okay so I was something  
15532running with my so many issues oh so you should have gone already but I never went so  
15533okay some people took it I heard apart from that I don't know whenever I see the services I  
15534see the Facebook or the postings of whatever they go to the events and the bar or the food  
15535or everything [student council] meeting@@ so that's a service I think @@ so free food  
15536every time I see the everything they have that only there so no any- actually there's nobody  
15537else updated or they are keeping to themselves purposefully I don't have any idea but my  
15538professor told yeah few people are going for a counseling it works pretty well for them you  
15539should try okay I said I should try I don't have any time to do it so I think that's my simple  
15540opinion on it @

15541R: okay I'm so that's all that I have to ask you for us is there anything else that you'd like to  
15542add to the interview

15543Vick: no I think honestly I think I answered your question no way contrasting all the time  
15544so I think that's a one factor always the culture within the culture where you are and who  
15545you are I mean that's the thing need to be answered like in writing and at least a people  
15546who are from social science background so how they can think or what they can think even  
15547when we are preparing critically here how the you know all the people from Germany or  
15548the European Union or us for example I'm telling how they have the perceptions from my  
15549class like how they see the America is influencing the w- East in the policies either in a  
15550positive or negative then positive is why the critical thinking is very less they are still  
15551obliged or tilted towards the West entirely like there are that differences and how we can  
15552differentiate the situation even of course everyone knows some are critical some are lenient  
15553I mean the cultural aspects can be taken care of even from people like from Central Asia or  
15554other people they might be okay but are they really okay yeah of course there's my research



15555my masters and my future is such as capabilities so they are okay but are they really okay  
15556and really means how they are really okay to what level either in English in writing they're  
15557coping up whatever they are struggling we need to have something I mean since  
15558[institution 1] has more than 65 percent of international students at least once we can group  
15559them into a country wise or at least a region wise to know what they want and we can  
15560assess in a multiple of a course a professor can do from a psychological perspective  
15561whether they are mumbling or where they're they're bold or elegance or fluent even if they  
15562took the IELTS exam or any English proficiency exam we can say we can need to figure  
15563out whether they take it in a closed environment or really they came up with an open  
15564environment and uh how the service can be or a speaking or a English speaking class and  
15565writing skills can be modified a little bit for them so not like only like the essay writing  
15566workshops are there it always focuses that everybody knows the basic first they have the  
15567baseline the threshold is set but the threshold is measured by when you're entering you  
15568know English because of this exam but how we know that exam is the question I need now  
15569so so the people who are taking the workshop is their writing or an interview or whatever  
15570they have the at least one or two will not match even the threshold itself so for them it's a  
15571bleak again it's not a holistic thing and again the people from like Germany or from a  
15572continental Europe who are taking the workshop and how they see how they attach  
15573accordingly maybe less variant but still there is a variance I see from my friends when I  
15574talk with my friends of course the commonality in understanding they don't have variant  
15575but after the workshop and the discussion and after two three days whether they are really  
15576converting that workshop into an essay say like productive thing or they are taking the  
15577feedback and eventually it fades in a week whatever they learned in the workshop I think  
15578my answer could be honestly it fades away they stand on their own line where they have  
15579learnt English or whatever the attitude they have the really that workshop never changed  
15580the attitude so always the workshop is for an attitude so what they developed what they  
15581cultivated it fades so we have to think again from a country perspective and why why  
15582should be there if they know how they know and how much they really know that will  
15583really enrich [institute 1] that can get a student in a very enlightened way to cope with the  
15584things both in writing and speaking of course good in listening and reading  
15585R: okay alright thank you

15586

15587

**Zan**

15588

15589R: okay so first can you tell me what your strengths are academically like what are you

15590good at academically

15591Zan: @@ uhm I don't know I'm good like academically in general I'm not really sure so if

15592you give me like some options that I can pick from

15593R: yeah like umm so would you be really good at say um writing papers or at exams or

15594giving presentations

15595Zan: okay yeah I'm pretty good at um presentations uhmm [pause] and exams

15596R: yeah okay and what would you say your strengths are in terms of English like what are

15597you good at in terms of English

15598Zan: uhm [pause] I pick up you know the new words pretty quickly and um [pause] and I

15599say because um people you know I got a lot of comments that I pick up um the accents and

15600you know the um um I don't know you know all all the time when you say something that

15601you don't really mean it? Like you have some sort of question or something like behind it

15602and I can pick it up like kind of naturally ehm [pause] and I'm pretty confident in my

15603speaking and and that helps in you know in my communications every day and yeah that's

15604it

15605R: okay and what would you say your weaknesses are in terms of academics

15606Zan: ehm [pause] um I would say um I don't I'm not too bad in any academic thing

15607because you know I'm pretty good academically general like um the thing I most struggle

15608with um [pause] would be writing [long pause] but you know I'm not too bad you know I

15609don't get too bad marks yeah on things but I'm I have to put a lot of effort into writings to

15610you know to get a good score

15611R: right and what would you say about English so what are your weaknesses in terms of

15612English

15613Zan: um I would say um listening? I find it hard because um when I come to Ireland the

15614English when I come here is different than the English that I learn at you know at home um

15615so the accents and then you know the local language uhm uhm it's very hard especially

15616when uh you know the lads they they speak so fast and they use all the slang words and

15617stuff and sometimes they don't want you to understand as well so they try even harder to

15618use more slang words and speak you know faster than usual so and I'm living in [city] and

15619the accent makes everything worse so that's very tough for me

15620R: yeah yeah and so you've already said that you're quite academically strong um but how

15621would you evaluate your current academic success in [city]

15622Zan: um that'll be based on you know the the marks that I get but uh but because I think

15623that I'm doing this community work so I kind of make it just one of of you know of a thing

15624of my study and then the other part is very much practice you know a lot of  
15625communications and face-to-face interactions you know with people so I you know I  
15626would push you know half of my effort on academic you know study and then a lot of you  
15627know face to face work and trying to to learn the language and you know to use and and to  
15628use the language more efficiently yeah you know effectively then as natural as possible and  
15629so because I only put half of my effort into academic work uhm so um I say I base on my  
15630my academic you know the the mark that I get and the feedback I'll I always get feedback  
15631from my lecturers um after you know after essays I don't don't get feedback from my  
15632exams but the mark but would say a lot about it

15633R: and is is the feedback that you get on essays is it helpful is it useful is it detailed

15634Zan: um it depends on individual lecturers I think some would give you know very detailed  
15635feedback you know they have written feedback and then they also you know give feedback  
15636verbally as well but somewhat only you know give us written feedback with very bad  
15637handwriting that I have to ask him no I don't know@ what what are you saying here so  
15638you know and some and some lecturers that I have have been so good that they well they  
15639you know give me the feedback although written feedback and verbally they also give me  
15640like you know encouragement you know no you're not very strong at this you don't have  
15641you have very good structures um you have very good you know logic in your your essay  
15642but you know there's still a few you know um English you know you know errors in your  
15643in your em writing and like collocation you there will be words that don't go together like  
15644that and and then the things they will always say like you need to add a little more of this  
15645you need to elaborate a little bit on this because you haven't go you haven't gone into depth  
15646into this you know into this argument and like that and so it really depends on who I get  
15647feedback from yeah

15648R: yeah yeah okay and so can you tell me about the work required in your modules like  
15649what do you have to do both inside the classroom and outside of the classroom for your  
15650modules

15651Zan: uhm so uhm in class we have to do a lot of readings and discussions eh um group um  
15652you know between the groups in the groups ehm you know with the lecturers and um we  
15653have readings to do at home and then we we come to class the next day and we discuss  
15654about what we what we learned from the readings and then we have to do presentations as  
15655well not many just I think just a few times over the last three years and we had to do also  
15656essay and um um we have um uh speakers come to our class as well and we have two  
15657blocks of placement in third and second year that would be three months full-time yeah  
15658and exams at the end of the year

15659R: okay and in your placement like what types of things are you doing in your placement

15660Zan: um as I say that I'm doing is community work so basically the most you know the  
15661main thing that that I did in placement is you know face to face work with the the  
15662community members with the young people with the groups so firstly teaching and you  
15663know giving some sort of advice uh encouragement and um um support in you know and  
15664working with the volunteers and then um we also did um like I helped my supervisors with  
15665report and you know other duties you know and like getting stuff for the parade or you  
15666know preparing um some sort of documents or or you know data data entry you know a  
15667little bit of everything

15668R: right okay and do you are you required to do any sort of research project like a  
15669dissertation

15670Zan: yes

15671R: okay

15672Zan: uh I did my dissertation this year it's my final year I did a dissertation as I did a case  
15673study

15674R: okay and so what kind of work did you have to do for the dissertation was it basically a  
15675lot of reading was it interviews etc.

15676Zan: uh both uh so I did to do I did the readings for a literature review and then I did uhm  
15677uhm individual interview with my participants as well

15678R: okay all right great and can you describe you've touched on this but can you describe  
15679the general structure of your lectures so is it mainly like PowerPoints with the lecturer  
15680speaking or is it discussion based or a mixture

15681Zan: uh it's a mixture and it it also depends on what lecturers that is oh excuse me um so  
15682basically we we we have you know all lecturers will have PowerPoints but then it's just  
15683you know just the guidelines really but we did most of it it's the main we did was  
15684discussion yeah and sometimes we have a lot of the activities within the class like you  
15685know we will have clipboards and you know to to take notes and and you know it's very  
15686um because we're doing youth work so it's kind of we have some creative you know  
15687element into it so yeah sometimes we have you know your like in our facilitation skills  
15688class we got to do our own first presentation um practice and yeah and the other would be  
15689ehm so PowerPoint and and the lecturers speaking

15690R: and would you have access to the PowerPoints like what they post them online or send  
15691them to the class

15692Zan: ehm we can access it online through blackboard yeah so it's very easy and it's always  
15693there it's the same as Turnitin we submit our assignment through Turnitin

15694R: would you have liked the rubrics and the expectations for the assignments would that  
15695also be on blackboard

15696Zan: uh yeah yeah

15697R: all right and then would um so how would the professors communicate their  
15698expectations is it only on blackboard or what they also discuss it in class

15699Zan: yeah yeah the most of them discuss it in class and they also post the the rubric on  
15700blackboard or send it to us to our emails to our student emails as well

15701R: okay and um how do your professors assess academic success so what do they look for  
15702when they're grading

15703Zan: um so they they have the rubric so there'd be um there there'd be the um [click] so  
15704the language like you know accuracy so you know punctuation um grammar and and  
15705spelling that uh so the structure and then references um and they they see if you have you  
15706know references ehm [pause] and then they see it is you know relevant to um the topic you  
15707know to the questions uhhh yeah I think that's basically yeah what the requirements are

15708R: yeah okay and so in general what do students need to succeed at your institution

15709Zan: I think that first of the induction will be very important and I think is important for the  
15710students that they they recognize the importance of it because you know in first year a lot  
15711of students didn't you know oh it's first year and I'll just chill and you know and uhm that's  
15712kind of the same thing to international students I saw I think they kind of get into the the  
15713mood of Irish students like you know it's just chill ehm but then and then at the end first  
15714year everybody was panicked because oh my god we didn't learn anything uhm so then for  
15715an international student I think it's really tough because you know it's another language  
15716and we need to learn the language and and then you're not try to fit in the class to make  
15717friends and you know to to try to socialize to know the town to know the the country and  
15718everything it's really tough and I think I got a very good induction with international office  
15719as well as my the lecturers in my course they I think they think they know the students very  
15720well that they will be very chill in first year that they give very you know specific uh  
15721instructions like you know this is how you do the references they even get me them you  
15722know lecture just to do references and they they clarify and they say very clearly what they  
15723expect from the students in first year that they don't they don't expect you know very high  
15724performance from the students but they do expect very basic and you know like and the  
15725thing that you can do like you know you just need to work a little bit hard like references  
15726try to work on your readings and and sort like that so I think that the induction will be very  
15727important that we need to just you know to really put an effort in it so that you know and  
15728then second year and then third year will be so much easier when so yeah

15729R: okay and so you've mentioned that there's a lot of factors um that international students  
15730have to deal with so like socializing knowing the town knowing the country um on top of  
15731language so would you say that those factors impact your academic success more less the  
15732same than language

15733Zan: uhm [pause] I'll say do you mean the socializing kind of

15734R: yeah so basically everything kind of outside of academics so things like finding a house  
15735having friends knowing the culture

15736Zan: okay I get it yeah I think it has a huge impact not like you know directly but like like  
15737if I don't you know I don't get a good accommodation so that I don't think that I would do  
15738you know do very academically and I have friends who live who lives in [city] and she  
15739lives in very very bad accommodation and even I think that's even very bad for her health  
15740you know her well-being even um you know mental health as well so I don't know if I  
15741lived in such accommodation oh no no that would be disaster and I would yeah I cannot  
15742focus on my study and everything else and also you know I got so much confidence  
15743because now I know the people um do you know like I feel like I fit in like I feel like a part  
15744of the community I have friends who are Irish you know like it makes me feel very  
15745confident and so when I go to class you know I feel very confident to talk with my  
15746classmates you know because we do a lot of group works so do you know that would you  
15747know what be a big thing yeah um and you know like um yeah I'd say so and you know  
15748doing all the other speaking you know all the presentation you know it gives me a huge  
15749confidence in my academic work yeah

15750R: yeah good okay so kind of going to the entry and preparation tools so things that you  
15751had to do before coming to [city] um did you have any linguistic or academic preparation  
15752before coming to [city]

15753Zan: yes I so I took a IELTS test and so that I could get the visa to you know to to come to  
15754Ireland and I think that was it that was and I did I did English in schools as well yeah so  
15755um English in schools will be very much ehm you know a lot of grammar and um you  
15756know vocabulary and then I I took a course for my IELTS preparations and so where I did  
15757a lot of you know how to structure your essay and you know to [pause] and yeah like  
15758structures um [pause] yeah I think that's a lot about structures and a lot a a bit of speaking  
15759yeah

15760R: and do you think that the IELTS course I prepared you for studying in [city]

15761Zan: yes like in terms of language definitely because as I say that it's it prepared me you  
15762know with you know how you need to structure your essay you know you know everything  
15763from the very little things like how you write your introduction how you write your

15764 conclusion and I was kind of surprised in like in first year that was one of the thing that the  
15765 lecturers give feedback to the students you know like you need to to rewrite your  
15766 introductions even to Irish students as well um uh like that and um yeah I I the course that I  
15767 took it was very short it was something for one and a half months and so it was yeah it was  
15768 basically they they went through you know all the other speaking and writing and reading  
15769 and listening four skills yes I think it's pretty much practicing yeah more than anything  
15770 yeah

15771 R: and how do you feel about the IELTS test do you have any feelings on it

15772 Zan: um

15773 R: it's probably a while ago now

15774 Zan: yeah it it's three years ago so it's kind of a while ago I think it's good that it really you  
15775 know it really gave me a pretty good idea about you know you know writing an essay and  
15776 stuff and really gave me of the um the vocabulary to you know in in writing the essay and  
15777 exams [pause] um but I didn't do very well on the exam in speaking test I'd say because I  
15778 didn't really know what they expected um so I I was kind of I just say what I I thought in  
15779 my head but I didn't really show what I can I could really do but then when I finished the  
15780 test you know a few months later I found out that you know there are certain tips that you  
15781 can get high score in IELTS test so they'll be certain you know certain words that they they  
15782 want you to include in your in your speaking that you know they would give you higher  
15783 marks for it that there would be certain grammars that they that would give you higher  
15784 marks and stuff but I didn't know so I got very bad on the speaking test so I was a bit upset  
15785 about it um but that was okay I mean I still got like you know enough overall score to  
15786 apply for the visa and to apply to to the course in a [institution 8] so yeah

15787 R: yeah okay um and let's see what type of preparation do you think international students  
15788 should do before coming to study in Ireland

15789 Zan: I think I think that they should um I think they should contact with the students who  
15790 you know alumni that who you know what who lived in this town before going to studied  
15791 in in the college before so that would give you really you know a really good idea of you  
15792 know what you should expect and what you should prepare and I didn't get it@ because  
15793 there are not many [nationality] student studying in [institution 8] even with me now I'm  
15794 still the only one so it's very tough and that because I didn't know anybody before I came  
15795 here um but I think that'll be really good and now there are a few [nationality] students  
15796 coming um next year so I try to to get in touch with them so I hope that you know I can  
15797 help them in you know a little bit of tips and and you know experience and so I think you  
15798 know the contact with the people who experience you know my experience will be really

15799really good and you know doing research and you know ask support from international  
15800office you know they are very helpful [clears throat] before I came here they they gave me  
15801a list of you know a accommodation you know the tips or and then what you need to know  
15802about the town and fe- a few basic you know that I need to know before I came like the  
15803transportation and they you know they they got me the taxi to get me from the airport from  
15804my first arrival so that was very good um and I think so and then that yeah so

15805R: yeah okay and so you've talked a lot about support you know from the international  
15806office and also from your professors um are you aware of any other support that  
15807international students have [institution 8]

15808Zan: um they have um English class for the international students who you know who want  
15809to improve their English um they also have um [pause] they also organize activities that all  
15810the international students will get together like you're not going to a short trip to Wicklow  
15811or to somewhere else for one for one day um we have International Day in the college in  
15812December so that was that's a great day um and also anything else like I just for anything  
15813that I need that I think that I can ask help from the international office I just I think I  
15814basically just walking through walk into their office and you know ask if anyone can help  
15815me you know I don't know I don't know where I could know which dentists will be good  
15816that I can I can go to or you know with good price or you know I get stuck with getting a  
15817lift to my placement you know you could you just put a word out so you know I can get  
15818somebody to bring me or like you know uh oh looking for a job you know would you  
15819recommend to me any a site or you know anything that could help me with us and you  
15820know just very small little things and when you know with all the paperworks uh like like  
15821the lecturers to like visas the bank you know visitors and everything yeah I just basically  
15822they're very good

15823R: yeah so you think that the support at [institution 8] is is good it's adequate

15824Zan: yeah

15825R: would there be anything that you would add

15826Zan: hmmm no not a thing on my head now

15827R: yeah all right and so if you could give advice to faculty in dealing with international  
15828students um what would that be

15829Zan: um I don't know I don't know um I think um it would be maybe making a some way  
15830in that um make like you know more accessible to international students because one of the  
15831thing I see from international off- international students is that they very shy and and if  
15832they have a group they would never get help you know if they happen you know if they  
15833have a group of [nationality] students you know they were stick together they would never



15834ask for help they would never go into it especially if their their language isn't good they  
15835find it really hard to just to you know to to walk into the office to ask for help um I think so  
15836yeah and then they'll be you know when for the students who you know are very confident  
15837and and stuff yeah they're you just don't they they just kind of you know do what I do like  
15838they're just gonna get help from anyway

15839R: right yeah yeah yeah okay and if you could give advice to organizations who are  
15840preparing international students for studying in Ireland so these could be like Pre-sessional  
15841English for academic courses or IELTS courses or agents who are sending students to  
15842Ireland what would that advice be

15843Zan: sorry can you repeat the

15844R: yeah so um if you could give advice to organizations in preparing international students  
15845to study in Ireland what advice would that be

15846Zan: um I think it would be good if they if they held um a session or like some sort of a  
15847meeting where you know I applied through an agency so I think it would be good if they  
15848organize you know a morning or a session that all the students who apply through their  
15849agency um you know a day to you know to really talk about the community to talk about it  
15850the questions you know what you you know what the reality is you know what you should  
15851expect um I think it's just a day to to really prepare like you know in our head that what we  
15852need to prepare really because you're really up to the students like individually that they  
15853prepare but you know you it'd be good if they are prepared you know that what they need  
15854to know and what they need to prepare so I think that will be good yeah [pause] oh and in  
15855that day maybe to get one or two you know former students to to come to that day and you  
15856know tell them to tell the new students about their experience I think that would be a good  
15857link and a good preparation

15858R: yeah and let's see if you could give advice to future students future international  
15859students at [institution 8] what would that be

15860Zan: [pause] uh I don't know I would say you know it's just you know just you put yourself  
15861out there and you know try to do as much as you want you know I you know like do a  
15862volunteer you know try [city] is a small town and and you know it is safe and friendly and  
15863people are so friendly and helpful and you know you're just so I think it's just yourself that  
15864you know try to to learn the language try to do to you know to access to all the support that  
15865you get you know do do the extra language course you know do not do the English class  
15866with and then try to socialize with other international students you know try to really fit in  
15867the class with other Irish students rather than just stay stick in your own group of you know

15868students who coming from the same country you know to do you know so get yourself out  
15869there and experience and do the new thing and and learn yeah

15870R: okay that is actually I'm the last question that I have for you so is there any question that  
15871you wish I had asked that I didn't ask

15872Zan: [long pause] no

15873R: okay is there anything else that you would like to say

15874Zan: um I'd say that I am very interested in your research it's very much um [click] it's  
15875very much my interest and also I sh- you know I really want to you know to support  
15876because um because I I said to you that I am the only ones and the only [nationality]  
15877student in [institution 8] for last few years so what I'm trying to do is I'm trying to I wr- I  
15878write blogs and blogs for like education in Ireland [country] so they are the agency that  
15879they know they work with Irish Embassy in [country] that they to promote Irish education  
15880in [country] so I wrote blogs for them you know for them to post in their Facebook on their  
15881newsletter you know try to you know just say you know if as most students will go to [city]  
15882you know first I would recommend [institution 8] as you know it's still still good college  
15883but in a very good town and the price isn't as high as in [city] and else like accommodation  
15884and everything so that's what I'm trying to do yeah so good news is that I there are four  
15885students coming next year I don't know if all of will come but as I say four offer letters  
15886have been sent so I hope yeah so I'm very happy with that I think it's something very good  
15887and so I also you know I worked a lot with the international office trying you know  
15888because I need a lot of support from them so oh you know for the last three years you  
15889know I've been waiting for your research and if you think when you finish your research  
15890you know please you sent your report to me it's nice to get it you know and if possible if  
15891you know if yeah you allow me that can publish it you know I can post it and share it  
15892through Twitter or my Facebook you know saying that you know to get more people to  
15893really put you know do you know like I think I I know international students are good for  
15894for Ireland you know it'd be great if Ireland could get more international students so I think  
15895that'll be great you know to to get more attention on this matter

15896R: yeah all right I'll definitely send you my results and like in the meantime it'll take a  
15897couple of years because I'm only in my first year of of my PhD and but in the meantime if  
15898you have any international friends anywhere in Ireland if you just pass along the word  
15899that's I'm looking for people to take the questionnaire and even more so I'm looking for  
15900people to do interviews so even if they don't want to take the questionnaire if they want to  
15901do an interview like send them my email address um I would love to speak with anyone  
15902and everyone who's an international student here especially from places like you know I've

15903done a lot of interviews at [institution 8] but I'd love to talk to people in different areas or  
15904different colleges just to get other perspectives

15905Zan: yeah I'll pass on the word

15906

15907

**Zico**

15908

15909R: okay so first I'd like to know what you feel your strengths are academically like what  
15910are you good at

15911Zico: what am I good at I think I'm really good at engage- because my approach to  
15912research is a qualitative kind of thing I'm a qualitative researcher I think my strength  
15913strength is really to be [click] able to engage with participants and really good people but  
15914my weakness I would say writing skills my writing skills are not there yet I feel you know  
15915because I started learning English at a very late stage in life when I was adult already so I  
15916think that was not good for me when I came to academia you know and but I'm getting  
15917better I mean I get that that's why I take the module English for academic purpose to really  
15918gain those skills you know but I have seen how much have changed when I did I did my  
15919Master's work I was completely lost at the beginning I had no idea how to write an essay  
15920you know so today I have I have those skills but I think still a little bit dry you know I can  
15921write English but it's not like in [language] I can write much better [language] than in  
15922English so I want over time is just really bring that up you know to learn to learn those  
15923skills because my profess- profession is going to be writing English you know so yeah  
15924R: and so is it more that you feel you can express yourself better in [language] or what  
15925exactly about the writing in English do you find difficult

15926Zico: definitely I can express myself much better [language] uhh it just come nat-naturally  
15927for me because I'm a [language] speaker and you know and I went I was located in in  
15928[country] I went to college in [country] of course I I express much better in [language] you  
15929know uhm [click] but I I'm not that bad in English as well you know but when it come to  
15930the writing skills I feel that I'm not there yet uhmm I I I doubt myself a lot on you know I  
15931think there is a space for lots of improvements related to my writing skills you know but I I  
15932really haven't been able to uh uh publish for example I think when it comes to this stage for  
15933me to publish stuff then my writing skills will come you know because the PhD it is very  
15934messy you really don't have time to sit down and publish anything you just have to go  
15935around and doing things at the same time you know but I have the data now and maybe  
15936next year I'm going to be able to start uhm uh uh start start to publish then I think my  
15937writing skill is going to be really tested you know and and also that I wh- when I'm going

15938to start writing for for academic journals I think I'm gonna get more skills you know but  
15939until that stage I'm just kind of you know getting by I guess yeah sure

15940R: so can you tell me what like an as a research student so you're doing your PhD what is  
15941the work required of you as a research student so basically what is a day to day life PhD  
15942student like

15943Zico: hmmhm it has changed uhhm since the beginning was like you know um write the  
15944proposed at the beginning write the proposal and submit the propose I did that so when I  
15945started doing it PhD the first stage was to refine the PhD the proposal because was just a  
15946rough idea then I have the first step was to refine the proposal and also to bring something  
15947from [discipline] to [discipline] research because I was I was I based my prop- my the  
15948literature that I used a lot of my proposal was from the [discipline] and my sup-supervisor  
15949asked me to bring something from [discipline] so I have to change the the proposal  
15950beginning uhm also I spend lots of time at the beginning applied to the IRC the Irish  
15951Research Council so I spent about two months doing the proposal as well and and that was  
15952was really nice because it really helped me to redefine the you know the topic the the  
15953contacts the aims you know the methodology so that was nice to me so the next phase was  
15954it the literature review so I spent loads of time on the literature review because initially I  
15955had four aims so each aims of the proposal was a different kind of literature you know so  
15956and in my knowledge at that stage was really kind of small we know to the literature so I  
15957really to to dive myself in the literature of each aim so I spend lots of time in the first year  
15958doing that then the second year I I I did the methodology ehm and all the confirmation  
15959report so the confirmation was really int- interesting because as I said before I had four  
15960aims and was too much and was I was really looking at different literatures and they did  
15961not like that they thought it was too much and I was really mixing literatures so they asked  
15962me to really scale out the whole thing and cut half half of the proposal then I just left to  
15963aims and the literatures are now linked are very close so it was easy for me to you know so  
15964after the consummation I I finished the methodology before going to field work so so at the  
15965moment just doing a transc- transcribe transcriptions so it's going to take me until December  
15966to finish each five interviews then I'm going to translate to English everything you know  
15967because I want to have that data in English then after January I'm going to just doing the  
15968results and the discussion so that's what I aim at at the moment sure

15969R: yeah and um did you take your masters here at [institution 1]

15970Zico: I did

15971R: um can you tell me about the modules that you had to take so what kind of work did you  
15972have to do for the modules

15973Zico: mm-hmm so I did the master's [discipline] is studies here at [institution 1] so the  
15974modules I took about six modules and ten credited each one so the mode- one was at this  
15975about the [topic] in you know in the [topic] and all that stuff the hit- the history of  
15976[organization] and the importance of that institutions you know to peace and so that was  
15977nice that's was that was my favorite module because the module entailed us to go to  
15978Geneva for one week fieldwork so that was cool we got I got to go to Geneva then we got  
15979to spend a few days at the [organization] attend seminars and meeting important people so  
15980that was the interesting I did another and in addition to going to Geneva we had also an  
15981assignment um 4000 assignment on the about the [organization] any aspect and I  
15982remember that I wrote about the reform of the [organization] and I pledged um because  
15983[country] is a candidate to get a permanent seat at the [organization] so my essay was about  
15984arguing that we need to reform the you know the [organization] and I am argue to open to a  
15985nation like [country] you know so that was my my um [click] assignment so a second  
15986mode was on the other module was on about the [topic] so because of that module we got  
15987to go to Belfast for two days as well so that was really nice that was an open eye kind of  
15988thing because I I had some knowledge about the [topic] but I had no idea that was walls in  
15989Belfast there was a division between the east and them uhm so that was a shock to us and  
15990and also it entailed a four thousand essay on the [topic] so I did that as well and the  
15991modules one was about you know [topic] and I can't remember the other ones uhmmm but  
15992I remember that I did on essay on gay LGBT and gay rights in Latin America because at  
15993that time um um gay marriage was legalized in Argentina so I felt I was doing one more  
15994that um [click] I could write an essay on LGBT rights so I did that and also was a 4000  
15995kind of essay so all the modules was you know going to a little a field work and also an  
15996assignment of about 4,000 words and I think at that stage I really had the chance and that  
15997was my first time of writing an essay but I did lots of mistake because I never asked people  
15998to spellcheck for me I never asked people to proofread for me you know so I was doing  
15999things by myself first time so the grades wasn't that great it wasn't that great uhm I never  
16000got like first you know because I forgot to to check spelling proofreading and other people  
16001with other with more experience than me they were doing this all the time you know so  
16002that was a mistake uhm because I was doing lots of work but I always forget the other side  
16003of you know look at grammar and spelled and proofreading you know so that was my big  
16004mistake but I managed to pass I'm a bit surprised but in the thesis I got A in the thesis  
16005R: perfect and while you're doing a PhD here so of course yeah and so inside of the  
16006modules like when you were in the classroom was it mainly the professor lecturing with  
16007PowerPoint or was there group discussion group work that kind of stuff

16008Zico: yeah um um most of the lectures was a professor talking with PowerPoints you know  
16009but always student students were required to read you know an article was to that lecture to  
16010that lecture and of course there was open discussion as well during the the the lectures but  
16011most was um professor talk with PowerPoint and we were required to read the papers  
16012before going to the lectures uhmm yeah there was never like group work but there was  
16013discussions uh especially there was a week about [topic] where you know we have to bring  
16014people to the table and and so we the one week we really work we study together to really  
16015learn those skills how to you know to bring it to the table about these [topic] something  
16016like that so but most of the modules the professor talk with PowerPoint and we read the  
16017papers like that you know they allow us to to ask requests of course they did

16018R: and so how would you evaluate your current academic success in the PhD do you feel  
16019like you're doing well

16020Zico: mm-hmm I think I am doing well umm uh I feel much stronger now but before I was  
16021really doubt myself a lot you know you just get to your head at one point you know  
16022especially doing the confirmation report because I I was they thought that was too much  
16023and I blamed myself why did I got myself to this point of you know but after I I I passed I  
16024understood the whole thing that was good for me you know and when I really scaled down  
16025the whole thing was good because I had a really clear vision how to go to the field and  
16026collect that specific data would being impossible to go to the field and have four aims to  
16027collect data to answer those four aims so yeah now if I feel that I'm half way through yeah  
16028I am okay now you know I'm just very happy with the data I collected you know I was  
16029afraid of not be be be able to go to the field and collected the data and I really proved that  
16030that was able uh to engage with people to build trust to you know to collect data so that  
16031was uh important to me too to feel that I can do this you know I can go to the field I can  
16032collect data I can you know and I think I can I can I can finish this I can finish this but I  
16033feel strong now but before was doubt myself a lot yeah and I also have a really work ethic  
16034a a good work work ethic so I really work hard and Monday to Friday in college and you  
16035know so I think that will pay off at some stage uhm and I feel that I'm not behind schedule  
16036as well I think I'm I'm okay I'm okay because some people did fall behind schedule yeah  
16037but I think I am okay uhm you know I'll just start third year you now and I have already the  
16038data in my hand I just have to you know transcribe and start the analysis process write the  
16039results and discussion so I have already the literature have the methodology I have you  
16040know the framework I just have the to write now the results and discussion the conclusions  
16041so it's not that bad so I feel confident at the moment yeah

16042R: good good and how do you think that your professors assess academic success so what  
16043are they looking for

16044Zico: mm-hmm

16045R: so like your supervisor yeah he's looking how does he evaluate how you're doing

16046Zico: mm-hmm academia is like that the the way we me- you are measured today it's by  
16047publications how many publications you have I think so far I don't have publications but I  
16048have gained all these skills I think is important in academia as well you know uhm but  
16049she's not really happy with my like she really wants me now to start eh present papers she  
16050in our last meeting last week she said you are now we are you know you at the moment  
16051that you really have to push yourself to start writing papers not just present your proposal  
16052anymore now I want to see you move into the stage of writing papers you know because I  
16053have the data now so there is no excuse for not write a paper about you know so I think  
16054that's the way she wants me to go now you know to start writing papers and maybe publish  
16055something in fourth year you know and the way we measure it it's on publications you can  
16056be really really good you can have you know you can collect data where you can really  
16057engage with people but if you don't really have publications all that hard work is lost you  
16058know because wh- when it comes to get in jobs and employment you need publications  
16059that's that's the main job of academics you know to publish and publish and publish and  
16060also another skill that I she's not really happy because I failed the IRC twice the Irish  
16061research council and I think that's another skill that I really have to trying to gain the next  
16062two years write a proposal well because that that's another skill that researchers need today  
16063to really write proposal to get money so she she's not happy that I failed the IRC twice you  
16064know soooo yeah but I think she's okay with my work so far but she wants me to move to  
16065write papers she want to see papers you know and I agree with her sure

16066R: so how does your professor communicate her expectations

16067Zico: mm-hmm through meetings yeah and she's really keen and um that's the side of her  
16068that I don't like and she really thinks through a timetable oh it's all the time she's talk about  
16069timetable it's a timetable it's a timetable where are you at the moment you know and  
16070people doesn't work like that you know people have problems people fall behind schedule  
16071and you know some people are slow we slower than other people and she always ask keep  
16072asking about the timetable timetable timetable I want dates and you know and I I don't  
16073really work like that you know really so the early days it was difficult for me because she  
16074was really trying to set up meetings all the time and I had nothing in my hand to show in in  
16075four weeks' time you know so yeah so we communicate communicate through timetables  
16076we have a one-year twelve-month timetable that I try to follow so every two- every eight

16077week we meet and I send something to her and I tell her what I am at the moment and so  
16078every eight weeks we meet so that's the way we we communicate sure

16079R: and let's see um during your masters yeah what were your professors looking for  
16080academically so when you were handing in those four thousand-word essays how did they  
16081assess them what were they looking for

16082Zico: uhmm yeah I think they were looking for you know good argumentation you know  
16083and good writing skills I think that's the way they you know good argumentation the the  
16084assignment good writing skills good use of good literature in the assignment variety of  
16085literature and I think I failed you of those you know um um um um expectations because I  
16086did not check spelling I did not do the proofreading you know I was doing the other things  
16087uh [click] also because I was really writing for the first time I was kind of shy of really put  
16088forth my my point of view and some of the feedback that I got back was that where's your  
16089opinion here what do you think yourself about is you know so I was good of really bring  
16090the lots of literature lots of you know was good at that of bring lit- loads of literature but I  
16091was not really good really express myself through that literature you know here's what I  
16092think these guys are saying you know so I think that um um giving myself a voice through  
16093other people's work you know I was just give- I would just make their voice heard but I  
16094was not you know so I think that was um something that they value in in writing I guess  
16095yeah I think messed up that answer though

16096R: no no you did terrific that was awesome yeah yeah um so in general what do you think  
16097students need in order to succeed at [institution 1]

16098Zico: mm-hmm the problem with the students here I think you know at least my case I just  
16099got here like you know no one told me listen here is a master level when I was asked to do  
16100the first assignment I had no idea what goes into in a in an assignment for an assignment at  
16101that point you know I had to learn by myself I think if if people that start doing a master's  
16102here if they could have some kind of you know seminars on writing skills or what goes into  
16103an assignment before they are asked to do something you know even for the undergraduate  
16104students I think that's important as well because they just come from secondary level and  
16105they're not really asked to write that much in academic style at that point so they got here if  
16106they I asked to write write write without knowing how to do it you know I think uhm yeah  
16107I think it will be lovely for either undergraduate student postgraduate students to have a  
16108little bit of you know to develop a little bit of writing skills before they are asked to to  
16109write something I think that's important I guess

16110R: okay yeah and so how much of a factor do you think language plays an academic  
16111success



16112Zico: mm-hmm uhmmm plays a lot it plays a lot because ac-academic is through language  
16113you know you just communicate through publishing stuff you know so language language  
16114skills are very important you know and some people really good at use academic lang-  
16115academic language in the writing and some others are not you know as I said I have lots of  
16116skills I can engage can collect data but I fall behind when it comes to writing skills you  
16117know so I have lots of skills one side but I fall fall behind the other guys when it come to  
16118write skills but it play a big role academic write- writing skills are very important in  
16119academia you know they're important

16120R: and so what other factors impact academic success and that could be things inside of  
16121[institution 1] and also outside of [institution 1] so what else affects academic success

16122Zico: hmm what more affects academic success so could you repeat that question

16123R: yeah so what else affects academic success either inside of [institution 1] or outside of a  
16124[institution 1] so that could be things uhm well people have brought up things like time  
16125management things like personal things like working housing stuff like that

16126Zico: ah yeah what the helps academic success at [institution]

16127R: or what could impact it either positively or negatively

16128Zico: yeah in my case what will affect me was lack of money that affects me a lot you  
16129know because I'm tired I have to work three days a week and because the scholarship that I  
16130was offered it's not really enough for me to pay the bills so and I have seen that over and  
16131over and over at my department uh I have [click] two friends of mine or two or three that  
16132are living living with 500 euros for 540 was a month you know so they faced a lot over  
16133they years to be able to pay the bills and get by so that really brings so much eh stress in  
16134students life I think bring support mostly with financial with better scholarships and you  
16135know so that's the main problem uhm of lack of of a funds of scholarship for student  
16136especially for the grad graduate students because they are at a stage in life that they don't  
16137have the parents support anymore you know so the undergrad is fine because they're very  
16138young so they they live with their parents I guess but the graduates students are like  
16139independent people so and they have to you know to do a PhD at the same time they're  
16140worried about rent and you know money so that's my case and that really affect me I have a  
16141I have a um happy happy face so I'm tired but I'm all the time putting this happy face you  
16142know because I don't really want to be the and be seen uhm you know tired or so always  
16143puts for this happy face but I'm tired and you know stressed but um so that's the main  
16144problem I guess and that [pause] affect the way people [pause] gain success because if you  
16145they're eh rested and not worry about financial problems of course they will do better they  
16146are gonna write better they're gonna you know have leisure of course they're gonna of

16147course they're gonna do better you know at least in my case it has affected me a lot of not  
16148being able to be there 100% because in my head I just think okay I have to pay the bills  
16149how to you know so that's the main problem in other college even worse you know the  
16150other college cause I was at [institution 2] before it's even worse

16151R: is it

16152Zico: yeah I have seen many people left there yeah

16153R: okay and so were you doing a PhD there

16154Zico: yeah yeah I did for one year

16155R: okay and you left and came back here

16156Zico: yeah I couldn't pay the second year there and then I applied here and I got accepted  
16157and I got a scholarship it's not much just little but at least paid for the fees there they were  
16158charging me eleven thousand for the fees you know so I really couldn't pay the second year  
16159and and that was painful because I um I worked really hard and I was accepted and you  
16160know I got to know people there but I made friends over suddenly suddenly I have to leave  
16161everybody behind and I left yeah that was painful you know so

16162R: yeah and it was purely just because of finances

16163Zico: finances yeah yeah yeah finances sure

16164R: okay yeah so I'm going to kind of switch now to looking us your experiences with  
16165preparation tools and also things like standardized exams um so before coming to  
16166[institution 1] either before the Masters or before the PhD did you take any linguistic or  
16167academic preparation to help you prepare

16168Zico: mm-hmm no uh before I did my Master's I was living here before just um um attend  
16169a language schools uh because I had no idea at that point that I was going to move into a  
16170master's degree I was kind of you know to be honest I was working and just going to this  
16171you know very not good not very good English school in Dublin at that time you know at  
16172that time but they closed now so so I was just going over to use those English schools here  
16173just you know to learn but I didn't know I have no idea at that point that I was really going  
16174to do a master's degree it just came you know just came over the years like oh I'm going to  
16175do a master's degree but I have no preparation before that and that was my big mistake I  
16176think that was my big mistake because I could have a a first class in the master's and I did  
16177not you know

16178R: yeah and so what kind of standardized exam or did you have to take a standardized  
16179exam like IELTS TOEFL to gain admission

16180Zico: yeah oh yeah had that yeah that's the good point Jess I I study for three months to do  
16181the IELTS then I got a really high scores I get seven point five

16182R: nice good job

16183Zico: yeah almost eight yeah I think I did a great job on that and I just wrote one because  
16184we have to write two little essays and I just wrote one because I ran out of time yeah so I  
16185think if I have write the second one I would have to score eight or eight and a half so I did  
16186the IELTS yeah so I did the IELTS yeah I

16187R: and so how do you feel about the IELTS you have any feelings about it

16188Zico: I think uhhh it really because it's so fast it's so so so fast I think it really if you really  
16189want to see if someone able to speak and to write you don't rush that person and I feel the  
16190IELTS just go go go go go you know you have ten minutes you know I think you really  
16191don't measure the English skills of someone by pushing that someone to speak quick or to  
16192write quick you know the problem with the IELTS is time uhm and I think you know  
16193there's a problem with that it's time is too short to really reflect what people have you know  
16194the skill that people have I think yeah

16195R: and so do you feel that the IELTS adequately prepared you for your studies in  
16196[institution 1]

16197Zico: not really not really because this just was a specific for you know yeahhhh I got to  
16198read few articles while I was doing the preparation the three months preparation yeah in a  
16199way yes you know especially for wri- reading skills writing skills yeah it did a little of  
16200course it did you know did more than my years just you know at times the normal schools I  
16201think those three months yeah I gain reading skills writing skills that I did not have before  
16202in a way to help to me of course it helped me

16203R: and did you take the IELTS course did you take it in a language school in Dublin like a  
16204private language school

16205Zico: mmhm a private language school yeah

16206R: and so what type of preparation would you suggest the international students do before  
16207coming to [institution 1]

16208Zico: mm-hmm-hmm I think the first thing is just really uhm have the proficiency in  
16209English and you know but mostly but despite that have have academic skills because  
16210everybody there is a distinction between how to speak and how to write academically in  
16211English you know some young people really good at speaking at at everyday English  
16212they're really good on that because the learned through social media but when it comes to  
16213academic writing they really don't know what that means you know so I think it's despite  
16214be able to speak really have to to be aware that I al- I I need also to have writing academic  
16215skills here because I'm going to [institution 1] next year you know they should be aware of  
16216okay I can speak but what about my writing skills you know to because this is a very up

16217level high level so some people they get here without that though that skill writing skills I  
16218think is important but there is some support here like you know they here in your  
16219department I think they aware about that lack of writing skills of most of the international  
16220students have so I think over there they of of got better of of asking people to come before  
16221the term and and and and and take some of those like because I did I think I did back in the  
16222day before September before the beginning of the the term I took a module with [name]  
16223uhm here

16224R: during the summer

16225Zico: during the summer I think amazing amazing amazing idea but they should they  
16226should really advertise that it's really important for you international student if you are able  
16227to speak to really gain those academic skills through this summer come to school here you  
16228know

16229R: and so do you think that that summer program helped prepare you more

16230Zico: it did yeah yeah for the first time I was you know listening to someone uh uh hear to  
16231someone talk about linking words how to build an argument how to what goes into  
16232introduction what goes in you know so for the first time I was like hmm you know there's  
16233this structure here so yeah it helped me uhm a lot what lacked to me that I did not pay  
16234attention to the spelling and proofreading and grammar so yeah probably when I did the  
16235summer camp I was aware about you know linking words how to build an argument how  
16236to use the literature yeah of course I was

16237R: yeah alright and so if you could give advice to professors and faculty about how to deal  
16238with international students um what would that advice be

16239Zico: mmm [long pause] I think uhhhh I don't like them to distinguish you know you are at  
16240a stage that everybody's equal there you know at the master level you know I know that  
16241there is the international student there but I think the professor they [pause] it's not really  
16242their problem I guess should be at the Department problem or college problem we have a  
16243community of international student here so the college should be aware of that not the  
16244professor you know I think the Department and the college should be aware that we have  
16245international community here who have to create policies that support them you know  
16246support them and I think [institution 1] is doing that through here to the global relations  
16247office as well to support international student but to throw that responsibility in the  
16248professor's shoulders hm [click] I because everybody have the language to understand the  
16249lectures you know nobody have difficulty to understand the professor I never came across  
16250someone in [institution 1] that was not able to understand 100% what the professor was  
16251saying you know um but the problem is when it come to to the assignment you know some

16252 people we really don't have the same skills as a native speakers so that's the problem you  
16253 know but to to attend the lectures everybody's at the same level about understand a 100%  
16254 what the professor said but when it comes to the writing skill of course some people are  
16255 behind but I think that is a more kind of department or college it should then the professor I  
16256 cannot grade this this way because it is you know I don't think is the right thing to ask a  
16257 professor oh grade this in a slight slight way because is a international student you know  
16258 right I think everybody should be I'm gonna grade these essays in the same level I don't  
16259 want to see who is international you know but I think the college should be aware of that I  
16260 think

16261 R: yeah so there wouldn't be advised that you a give to a professor but what advice would  
16262 you then give to the college so you've said they need to be aware of this but what in your  
16263 opinion could they actually do

16264 Zico: mm-hmm really um going back just really really and make sure that before students  
16265 international start here they they aware that they're gonna be asked to write in a high level  
16266 so if they don't have the skills there that the college it's it's here to help them you know  
16267 really it's really important for you to be aware that international student that you have to  
16268 have the IELTS that you have to have the writing skills if you don't have if you feel that  
16269 you don't those skills yet we are here to support you to this modules over the summer nah-  
16270 nah-nah all doing the the the thing as well here are the you know and the global relations  
16271 like one of the problem that international student that some people feel like >not my case<  
16272 lonely and depressed you know like they're young people that come from Asia or come  
16273 from Africa find themselves here alone you know I think the college is aware about that as  
16274 well of create support the global relations office I guess for umm you know yeah [click] be  
16275 more aware of that you know that intern- international students are more vulnerable regard  
16276 writing skills more vulnerable to be depressed and lonely than a local person just to be  
16277 aware of that but I think they are working towards that I guess

16278 R: and if you could give advice to future students or students who are looking to come to  
16279 [institution 1] what would that advice be

16280 Zico: mmhm ummmm ummm you just take me as example just be aware that the highs the  
16281 high standards they have standards they have here very high to be read- uh gain those  
16282 writing skills those you know writing skills before you come here you know and if you  
16283 know 100% sure that you have those writing skills trying to gain those skills ehh before the  
16284 the the new term and explore the the tools and the you know the the things that we have in  
16285 college to to help you to gain those skills that would would be advice and ask someone to  
16286 proofread and check spell spell check and that helps a lot I guess okay

16287R: okay so that's actually all the questions that I have for you but are there any questions

16288that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask

16289Zico: mmm-hmm no just like I said it's really interesting and you know because oh you're

16290here to study the international student I think and now it's gonna open even more so more

16291people will come in future I think this research is interesting in a way that it's going to

16292really allow not a [institution 1] to better receive these students and make them to excel

16293their academic achievements but all also to other college to you know create space and

16294policy that welcome better international students and give them the best platform for them

16295to you know try and to do well hopefully sure

16296R: and is there anything else that you'd like to say or express

16297Zico: no just thank you for asking me to do this

16298R: thank you

16299

**APPENDIX F: FACULTY INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS**

16300

16301

**Chris**

16302

16303R: okay um so first can you just tell me about kind of the work required of students in the  
16304modules in your department so that could be if you wanted to do like undergrad postgrad  
16305Chris: okay well I suppose in in level seven and level eight undergraduate work typically  
16306there's an examination which would be 60% of the module typically and then there will be  
16307continuous assessment which would be 40% almost all of our modules across the school  
16308would have a laboratory element which would be at least 20% so the students would be  
16309expected to participate in the laboratory follow the instructions and submit a significant  
16310enough report on documenting their methodology the limitations of methodology and eh  
16311commenting on the results they achieved um most of the time now the examinations are  
16312two to three hours of examinations there'll be a significant focus on analysis some  
16313descriptive element um and then there'd be a lot of project work where students will be  
16314expected to define and specify a particular problem that's relevant to the module or the  
16315program um and produce a body of work with a justified methodology and good comment  
16316on the success or lack of success on the particular approach in the postgraduate modules so  
16317there is only one taught postgraduate program in my school in [discipline] I th- believe mo-  
16318I'm involved on the research project module which would be a significant 30 credit  
16319research project um where the student would produce a very significant dissertation at the  
16320end of that the majority of the modules have I think are 50/50 between examination and  
16321CA and again most of the CA would be a project on within the particular um specialization  
16322within within that module so there would be a significant amount of written in English  
16323required on all the submissions um is that

16324R: yeah yeah that's perfect um and then as research students so your your master students  
16325and your PhD students what's the work required of them

16326Chris: so all our post graduates are now are re- would be registered on the structured PhD  
16327program so ehm one of the modules in particular they have to take is a research methods  
16328module which provides guidance on how to carry out research how to structure your  
16329research how to you know kind of some guidance on submitting technical papers and eh  
16330just general funding availability and how you access it and the particulars of those funding  
16331approaches the other modules so there are at they do eh a statistics modules because a lot  
16332there'd be a large statistics element to a lot of people's research so they undertake them so  
16333there are probably necessary modules that they take um and there may be others then they

16334can take other modules that would be more particular to their discipline area um so I think  
16335it's 30 credits in total to take um they're generally expected to work very closely with their  
16336supervisor as I'm sure it's the same within the general arrangements for making putting  
16337together publications or reports they make a lot of presentations including a significant  
16338enough annual evaluation each year where they're expected to submit a report and produce  
16339a presentation that follows a format um and then they're given feedback on their progress  
16340over the that previous year um [pause] I'm trying to think is there anything else [pause] all  
16341the students have access both undergraduate and postgrad to an academic writing center  
16342which provides them with support and again I suppose possibly international students  
16343would avail of this more than the eh our Irish students but again that's not to say [pause]  
16344they need it @more @ um and so they just provide guidance on the types of submissions  
16345they'd be making and interest generally put together English technical concise eh eh  
16346sentences which convey the meaning with clarity and avoid ambiguity I suppose so that's  
16347available to all students

16348R: and um and so then kind of the structure of your lectures or modules and specifically  
16349ones that you might be teaching what happens inside of the classroom is it PowerPoint  
16350group work

16351Chris: okay so speaking for my own module this semester I have a module in [topic] and I  
16352take a kind of a flipped classroom approach I give them out a full book of the notes um the  
16353notes I will kind of work through they'll be up on a PowerPoint during the during the the  
16354lecture but is more as a support or a reference on what we do during the class so I've three  
16355hours of lectures in a week we generally work through applications or we provide context  
16356to the contents or so it's a it's a fairly analytical [topic] module like we spend the majority  
16357of our time using the relevant tables and standards and graphs to work through problems  
16358with as much real-world significance as possible um then they undertake an examination at  
16359the end of the year that's worth 60% if you haven't attended the classes it's quite difficult to  
16360pass the exam because the notes alone are not really sufficient because you wouldn't get  
16361access to how you actually undertake the solutions um the exam is slightly ha- more  
16362difficult on that basis that we're we're using the notes in a very applied manner so it can  
16363up the level of it there's also a laboratory where it'd be a two-hour session the students  
16364come in there's guidance given to them on what's expected of them in within the laboratory  
16365and they'll undertake a relatively prescribed exercise within the laboratory environment  
16366and they'll either produce the report their conclusions whilst within that two hours or else  
16367they'll be given a chance to send it submit it within two weeks there's also a project they  
16368do for me where they take a problem from that they've identified within their own lives um



16369and they it has to have a general some adherence to the module content and they will have  
16370to defin- a a a big thing is that they have to provide a rigorous specification of the problem  
16371they're considering and put together a methodology for solving it and sometimes that'll  
16372involve you know some software developing an experiment or something just to do >and  
16373it's not< it's only a 20% project so they're not expected to produce a large body of work the  
16374big thing I focus on is the specification I think that's a big thing I get them to work on and  
16375it will [pause] be relatively similar for all the modules I teach that is kind of the format I  
16376take um all my modules are 60% exam 40% CA they all have a laboratory and they all  
16377have a project and so that's my approach

16378R: okay and so then you described a lot about the form of assessment so then how would  
16379you assess academic success so what are you looking for when you're marking

16380Chris: um prin- so within within [pause] first of all we we try to make sure when we're  
16381generating our module descriptors that the learning outcomes and the assessment methods  
16382are mapped appropriately that the the assessment techniques that we're employing are  
16383actually measuring the learning outcomes for the module so I suppose within the project  
16384area what I'm trying to get them to do is in a less the exam questions are very  
16385prescriptive they they it's a very closed thing they have a solution generally and there's  
16386[pause] only one if two ways of solving the questions the proj- the idea the project is to  
16387give them a more open-ended type ehm problem which they define themselves so what I'm  
16388looking for is their capacity to provide a rigorous specification on a problem which they've  
16389principally identified themselves um so again the problem would be very specific to them I  
16390try to in order to avoid plagiarism I try to ensure that when I'm giving the the project that  
16391they have to put their own stamp on it so um I will ask them specifically how this is  
16392something that is particularly relevant to them and try to ensure that it is going to be a  
16393custom project or problem for them to solve so I suppose the project area is is about that  
16394taking away the prescription and giving them the freedom to put definition on on their  
16395approach themselves within the examination essentially um I'm assessing their capacity to  
16396to justify and apply the correct tools to a particular problem um I I generally don't let them  
16397away with just providing mathematical answers I would expect some comment or  
16398interpretation of the of the results so for my own modules um they will get very little  
16399marks for just regurgitating or remembering things uhm they're principally getting the  
16400marks on their approach their analysis justification and then interpretation of the results um  
16401in the laboratory generally what we're looking for is can they work on a team can they  
16402follow eh the required safety ehm health and safety directives that are given by the  
16403technical staff and then use equipment that would be relevant that their discipline area and

16404be familiar with the variables and the conditions and so on that would be relevant to that  
16405particular sector

16406R: okay and um so kind of leading on with that question as well what would really  
16407differentiate say a first-class honors versus a second-class honor so how would you look at  
16408say a project or even an exam or in the laboratory kind of this is a sign of the first class  
16409Chris: yeah well [pause] I suppose I've had quite a lot of uhm exposure to undergraduate  
16410projects what I would be expecting from someone and that would be getting first class  
16411honors is they would [long pause] so we meet them on a weekly basis for half an hour and  
16412our during our conversations a lot of the time you kind of agree a work package for what's  
16413going to be completed within the next week um some groups will have logbooks where  
16414they specifically write that down I personally don't do that what I expect from someone  
16415that's in the first class honors territory is that they're taking a real lead in the work and that  
16416they're going beyond beyond even the definition of what my expectations would be for the  
16417work in other words they would be they would be taking full direction and responsibility  
16418for the work and they would be producing work of I'll not say has to be completely novel  
16419or completely unique but they would be putting a clear specification or distinct definition  
16420on it themselves quite aside from even to support they would get from the supervisor so in  
16421other words we expect the student to ultimately be the specialist in their particular area and  
16422the first class honors students will be expected to be doing things that the supervisor  
16423wouldn't be necessarily directing on so that part of the work where they're actually just  
16424they're not receiving as much guidance but they're they're uh they're taking it in their own  
16425direction so I I I suppose it's the real thing first of all is it at the level and as the person  
16426taking ultimate responsibility for the direction in which the work is going and then you k-  
16427they provide very clear justification um on the particular direction that they've taken from  
16428an examination perspective um most of the examinations would be graded like there would  
16429be a kind of a a ABCD type approach and the the part Ds would be for people um you'd be  
16430expecting students at 75% plus only to be able to address those particular elements so we  
16431try to ensure that there is a grading of requirements across the questions not always the  
16432most simplest thing to to achieve but we try to do it that the examination will reflect our  
16433#line measurement across a full range where you can distinguish between the candidates I  
16434suppose

16435R: and so then how would you assess the academic success of a PhD student that you're  
16436working on

16437Chris: umm principally the same I suppose we're looking for the same things that the  
16438person is really taking over the ownership of the project during the annual evaluations um

16439they would be given not only to talk about the publications they would have had in the  
16440previous year but what their plan is for the the the subsequent the the upcoming year I  
16441suppose one of the key metrics is is the quality of the submissions they're making for  
16442conferences or um journal papers the impact factors of where they're getting published on  
16443a daily basis again just generally we would meet with our research students at least once  
16444per week um sometimes more often sometimes less depending on just what's being  
16445required at that particular time again you're just looking at the quality of the anal- I  
16446suppose from an [discipline] perspective is the analytical quality of what they're doing are  
16447they employing the appropriate tools are they have they uh applied them and employed  
16448them correctly have they interpreted the information correctly um and again the real  
16449indicator that when it goes for peer review at a conference or a for a a journal the feedback  
16450that that they're getting and so there is that external way of measuring it as well as the  
16451internal panel on the annual evaluations and the the transfer report and so on so  
16452R: right and so with the students in terms of having uh say the projects and the  
16453examinations would you communicate expectations and rubrics and guidelines kind of at  
16454the beginning of term would they have it in written form or  
16455Chris: so students would get a student handbook which would provide the relevant details  
16456on the assessments that they're going to be taking over the course of the year in all the  
16457modules for the program um within eh my own project areas I provide a relatively detailed  
16458very detailed breakdown on where they're getting the mark so I've broken it up um even  
16459even even though these projects may only be 20% they're given very clear guidance on  
16460where the marks are going for and that is communicated on the first day so the very first  
16461lecture I will go through the full details of the module I also give the students a little uh  
16462booklet specifically for each of my modules to say this is basically the support you need  
16463um and then they get appendices and so on on da- but they would be given they would be  
16464given very clear instructions on what's expected from them um and in general that means I  
16465don't get people coming in going I thought I was gonna get 80% I only got 60% on the  
16466limited few occasions that that has happened I've had a few final years I'd I'll just give one  
16467particular example might be relevant he was a student who was doing a project with  
16468[company] um and he got 63% and he was convinced that he was a first-class honor  
16469student he came in we sat down and I explained to him what I would have expected of  
16470someone who would have been achieving a first class honors he left the office very happy  
16471with his 63% um and I think most cases people are willing it's something I'm happy to  
16472provide because um I think students should be aware of what's expected within a particular  
16473area so again if you have a su- a question a student will frequently ask is what do I need to

16474get first class honors in this um and the supervisor should be able to provide some  
16475guidance on the expectation in that particular area for the student and then to also say that  
16476they'd be expected to be able to reflect on that guidance and also accept that they will take  
16477the part of the project in a direction which will be somewhat unique to them so I think it's I  
16478think there would be a good that would be good clarity in general it's not always easy in a  
16479semesterized environment because when you're only dealing with class or have a class for  
1648012 weeks it's very difficult to always give the extent of feedback that you would like to  
16481give because by the time you get to do that the module is finished and and a lot of the times  
16482the students [pause] particularly in the early stages of the program will just want to move  
16483on @ to the next semester so they've not as interested in the feedback some of the students  
16484mightn't be in the feedback as you would expect even though it's available @@  
16485R: so in general what do you think students need to succeed at [institution 10]  
16486Chris: [pause] uhm [pause] because the contact hours for our programs are quite high  
16487relative to say programs in some of the universities or programs outside of [discipline] um  
16488the best thing they could do is be here @@@ um if if you're attending and you're  
16489following um what you're doing the work that you're supposed to do and [pause] and  
16490you're investing we define a a a module as 100 hours of student effort which includes the  
16491delivery time and then the independent learning um I think of a student invests 100 hours  
16492in any of our modules um and they're deemed to be qualified to take that module [pause]  
16493success will come to them@ I I don't think um like stu- some students will say okay I've  
16494attended all the classes and I haven't done well but the classes might only account for one  
16495third of that hundred hours so they're expected to do significant independent study so I  
16496think [pause] all modules have been designed as as packages of learning that require a  
16497hundred hours for a student that comes in with the entry requirements um so I think if they  
16498invest the 100 hours they'll have success @@  
16499R: and so then how much would factor do you think language plays in academic success  
16500Chris: um I'd say it's a it's a big factor we generally our programs require that students  
16501would have IELTS 6 or 6.5 coming in um I think if a student has lower than that their  
16502ability to pick up information during our classes would be quite difficult um I suppose our  
16503classes [pause] are not just about lecturing and kind of just throwing the information out  
16504there a lot of the time we're trying to teach and and and provide tutorial support during the  
16505class particularly when the classes are small if your language is not um sufficiently strong I  
16506think the listening aspect of the class will probably be the biggest difficulty you will have  
16507like I think a lot of students that have that will come in with maybe so so non-native  
16508English speakers the written aspect [pause] I kinda feel is not is is is not as compromised

16509by that lower ability but the ability to pick up information during lectures is much more  
16510difficult um so I think providing sufficient support with notes available before class and so  
16511on and we have a repository for notes that that's quite an important thing that the student  
16512needs to do but I think as with my own classes what I do in class is not 100% represented  
16513in the notes so you're expecting them to be able to take up that information um during that  
16514time so I think um it's very important @ and and that listening aspect and we we do expect  
16515students to be able to produce in [discipline] we expect them to write sentences which are  
16516technically concise and convey the meaning without there being confusion or ambiguity  
16517um and from a research perspective you're expecting them to produce the work in a way  
16518that other people can replicate their work or at least identify with methodology so the  
16519clarity and expression of uh the intent is is very important so yes I think it's critically  
16520important @

16521R: and what are their factors would you say play into academic success and this could be  
16522inside or outside of the university

16523Chris: um I think it's the student who realizes that this education is just one small part of  
16524what allows them to forge out a career um like I think what we're sometimes students think  
16525we're training them for a job rather than educating them for a career um and I think the  
16526people that identify and have some purpose or intent of where they want to be in five  
16527years' time after they graduate or ten years I think it's identifying with the career or the  
16528context for their education I think someone that just sees it as okay I start in first year and I  
16529finish it fourth year I'm gonna get some job and some people do very well you still get  
16530people who get first class honors on that but I think the student that I see doing really really  
16531well is a person that if not on the first day through the progression of the program identifies  
16532the context for it and where it's going to fit in with their ultimate goal of achieving a career  
16533in a particular sector or a particular discipline um I think it's that drive and again it's  
16534responsibility it's about them taking ownership and responsibility for their own direction or  
16535their their progression path within their career ultimately if you have that I think  
16536irrespective of how difficult you might find the academic aspect you see it as a stepping  
16537stone to where you want to be so even though you might struggle with some of the parts  
16538that you will ultimately get there so I I I think it's that having that goal and identifying  
16539what the education what education is giving you in achieving that goal I think is is  
16540important

16541R: um so I'm gonna go more towards international students and like IELTS and such um  
16542so what experience would you have with international students in your department

16543Chris: eh well I suppose specifically I have a lot of experience with the Chinese program  
16544um and the difficulty students taking our program in China through English would have  
16545with successfully completing modules through through a second language um so through  
16546that I've become very aware of the difference between IELTS 6 IELTS 5 IELTS 4 and so  
16547on and I I was also the Erasmus coordinator for the school um for around ten years so uh a  
16548lot of times we would have students coming in uh with from Spain France and so on in  
16549general I find they've always done remarkably well I think um it's principally b- because  
16550not just because the bar is set at IELTS 6 but because these were brilliant students to start  
16551with um I I have never seen English as an issue for them um [pause] maybe during class  
16552[pause] additional support or they might ask different questions or after the class they  
16553might ask you what did you mean by that and that I think all people are able to provide that  
16554support um my own experience of it is that they've always been very very successful in  
16555their their learning um I was involved with the [program] eh a a few years ago also we had  
16556students come in in language even though they were all IELTS 6 minimum coming in  
16557language seemed to be a bigger issue for some of the students um I'm not sure whether it  
16558was related to where they had achieved the scores in Brazil um but some of these students  
16559did have real difficulty with project work and so on anywhere where there was less  
16560prescription um and they had to think and write their own ehm definitions and so on in in  
16561English seemed to be quite problematic um so I suppose my experience with Erasmus  
16562students is in general they've they've not never had an issue my experience with some  
16563other international students would be that with the [program] it seemed to be an issue  
16564because it was a large body of students coming in um in general the international students  
16565coming we get uh students coming into our postgraduate program um English would be an  
16566issue with some of these students also um and again they seem to do fairly well in  
16567examinations but when it comes to project work um there would be a noticeable difference  
16568between the the their construction of technical English presentations so on would be  
16569wouldn't be what we'd expect ehm or hope for at that level I- from level 9 students  
16570R: okay and um and so you you've been talking about IELTS and you kind of talked about  
16571how you're aware of the differences but would you have any kind of general feelings or  
16572thoughts on the exam itself and how well it's doing either preparing or predicting students  
16573for higher education  
16574Chris: [pause] I think and again because I'm not a I'm not going to pretend to be an expert  
16575in the area from what I can gather IELTS seems to be a fairly technically rigorous um  
16576approach to trying to measure English ability um and if a student can get through the  
16577IELTS system or achieve a six um they're pretty good um the alternative to that would be

16578taking approaches which I've heard people talking about just trying to increase their their  
16579word count and so on I suppose softer approaches and again [pause] maybe they are maybe  
16580that's better but I don't know my my my only experience is really with like I if I if I see  
16581someone's coming in with an IELTS six I have I generally I expect I have a general  
16582expectation this person is going to fit in with relative ease um so [pause] on that front um I  
16583would gather it to be an effective method ehm whether there's a more efficient methods of  
16584doing that I'm not sure it's again I suppose defining efficiency in that context is difficult  
16585um but it seems rigorous so um and I think in general the number reflects [pause] what I  
16586would expect don't know if that's

16587R: yeah yeah that makes sense so for your international students would you be aware of the  
16588kind of preparation they've had before they come here especially in terms of language wise  
16589would you know if they've been taking like English for academic purposes or private  
16590language classes or IELTS preparation

16591Chris: I think eh eh probably there's combinations of all @ of what you've talked about I  
16592think in a lot of the European universities they would probably have the English for  
16593academic purposes available because unlike some of the colleges and universities here they  
16594they're they're measurement of success of a European University is sometimes based on  
16595the number of partnerships they have with with other colleges and universities so I think  
16596the importance that across Europe in particular that they place on on partnerships and  
16597international experience is probably higher than what we put on our own students because  
16598we Irish students some students will go away but not a lot so I believe that within those  
16599places they would be getting direct exposure to English for academic purposes um some  
16600international students that I'm aware of would be independently undertaking the IELTS  
16601exam IELTS classes and IELTS exams um preparing them specifically ehm for I think it  
16602can be for some of the students coming from some of the some of the countries it can be a  
16603bit expensive for them to do that um so possibly in some cases they can come so in  
16604[institution 10] for example they can undertake foundation programs that will will provide  
16605them with learning in on the IELTS system and get them up to a level they require to get  
16606into our programs um but again they need to be of some [inhale] threshold level of English  
16607before these programs are useful to them as well

16608R: right yes would you have experience with students who have come through the  
16609foundation program

16610Chris: yeah

16611R: yeah and would you be able to make any comments on how the foundation program has  
16612done preparing them

16613Chris: um I think in the main the foundation program works very well um in some cases eh  
16614[long pause] [exhale] [long pause] in some cases I think maybe the level between some of  
16615the jump into some of the level 8 programs still appears to be quite difficult for some of the  
16616students but I think this is just highly dependent upon trying to to map the ability or the  
16617learn- the previous learning of the student and the expectations that we might have for the  
16618student coming in um so anytime I've seen issues with a student it has probably been a  
16619combination of language and maybe not having the the discipline specific knowledge that  
16620they require to to succeed in a program also um so I think that our foundation program  
16621does provide the foundation they require for our program

16622R: and if you could give advice to programs like the foundation program as to what you  
16623would like to see in that program what would that be

16624Chris: [click] I think possibly a source from an [discipline] perspective is a focus on  
16625technical more of a focus on technical English um again not being an expert in the area I  
16626don't know [pause] is that a step that needs to come after the word count has increased um  
16627but what sometimes students get away is is is I think it's it's not a problem just with  
16628international students is thinking about the sentence in advance of writing it so that you can  
16629ensure that what you represent on the page is as clear and concise and coherent uh a  
16630representation of what you're trying to say as possible so I think maybe a bit more focused  
16631on short sentences technically concise sentences and ensuring that meaning is conveyed in  
16632a kind of a succinct coherent logical logical way um and again that's eh something we have  
16633to work with our students not just international students just trying to okay [pause] it's not  
16634about getting things to sound good is getting things to convey meaning concisely and I  
16635think just a technical conciseness is quite important us so

16636R: and would you work on that in class with your students or would it be something that  
16637you would refer them to someone else or

16638Chris: I would work quite a lot it on class and if I I'm work if I'm correcting reports quite  
16639often I'll be writing the sentence is too long the end of the sentence is at the start and the  
16640start is at the end um the sentence is confusing there's too many words it's completely  
16641unnecessary so I think particularly in the projects is where I really really focus on trying to  
16642get them to structure concise technically kinda ehm ehm ehm literacy kinda just to to make  
16643sure that they're kind a- getting some guidance on how to put the sentence together and so  
16644yeah I I I work quite hard on that with all students so

16645R: um okay and so then are you aware of any type of supports that international students  
16646have within the university so I know you've said that they have academic writing supports  
16647they have



16648Chris: so they get they will get access to the English for academic purposes modules at at  
16649eh introductory intermediate and advanced level ehm so they have that on a weekly basis  
16650when they're here they the academic writing center is available and I suppose beyond that  
16651it's just what they get from individual lectures or or program leaders or heads of  
16652department [pause] I think that's really about it unless unless there's something in the  
16653International office that I'm not aware of um I I feel that's probably the extent of the  
16654language support they're getting

16655R: ehm so the modules that they're taking once a week are they mandatory or is it optional  
16656is it for credit

16657Chris: they they get credit yeah so they will when they arrive here they will be tested in the  
16658in the induction week and based on the score they achieve and the testing they will be  
16659assigned to one of the three levels um they get five credits for that so a lot of them are  
16660happy to take that some of the other universities may require them to achieve that five  
16661credits in the English language some completely ignore it um so but it is credit based so  
16662they get to get their five credits the same way as they would for any other module um and  
16663it's [pause] there's a significant enough exam I think a presentation exam and project I  
16664think hm

16665R: interesting and so you kind of covered that so uh what do you hope that your students  
16666leave feeling after finishing their degree or having achieved after finishing their degree

16667Chris: in general or internationals students

16668R: uhm if it's different both

16669Chris: um I think it it's the same for both but I think what I like students to feel [pause]  
16670it's a good question [pause] I'd like them to be enlightened in their discipline area I'd like  
16671them to still believe that that's what they wanted to do um I'd like them to see the  
16672limitations of the knowledge they have within their particular career area um but that they  
16673know how to progress within their career so that they leave here they know that they've got  
16674the piece of paper that and there's a grade on it that in some way reflects the extent to  
16675which they've taken responsibility for that part of their ehh education but to realize that the  
16676education will continue afterwards I think if we have have it that okay you've done your  
16677education bit now it's time to move on to the work I think we've done them a disservice um  
16678I think it's just one small step on their actual education within their career um because if  
16679they do take it as a stop the chances are they're going to be in the same job for the rest of  
16680their lives and that's >I think if that's happening< or that was happening that would be  
16681saying that it's a failing on our part that we haven't we haven't helped to develop in them  
16682an awareness of what happens or what should happen within development of a career so I

16683think is to identify with what where they are and where what they need to do and the steps  
16684they can take to ensure ehm a career progression and and continual progression or  
16685development of their career and education once they leave us

16686R: and do you think that the majority of students start leaving feeling this

16687Chris: uhm [click] some students [pause] [exhale] I would say it's almost 50/50 a lot of st- I  
16688think what we do in the [institution type] more than [institution type] is eh we provide  
16689more access to tools in [discipline] so a tool will get you a job so [tool] you know access to  
16690part- particular pieces of equipment will generally get you a job where you're able to  
16691contribute very early on so you start a job and immediately you're using a tool that your  
16692fairly familiar with um what you don't want to happen is that you essentially become  
16693someone who just uses this tool so if you're doing the job the same job five years' time I  
16694think we've definitely done um these people a disservice and we haven't educated and we  
16695have trained them in a tool um so I think [pause] some people have a greater awareness of  
16696that than others um to put percentage-wise I don't know if it's 50/50 and but sometimes I  
16697think we don't necessarily talk sufficiently about when we're eh talking about some of the  
16698packages we deliver we should be identifying what they are rather than eh okay this is how  
16699you do this thing um so I say it's 50/50 I'd like to think that most of our students the  
16700majority of our students eh know what they're getting from us and what they need to  
16701ensure to prevent them from just looking like they've been trained in it tool

16702R: okay um so that's actually the last question I have for you um are there any questions  
16703that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask

16704Chris: eh no but the question that I thought was the one that caused me to ponder was what  
16705would you like to get from the English English educat- the English learning because I think  
16706it's something I'll reflect on afterwards to see do I believe that there are uh hmm things  
16707missing from people eh not people from the learning the English learning language their  
16708learning English language learning that they've been given to date so just to to provide  
16709them or make them more able coming into an [pause] program um but I don't think there's  
16710anything else I think I think you were fairly comprehensive with your questions

16711R: okay alright and is there anything else that you'd like to add

16712Chris: no I'm okay

16713R: okay brilliant thank you

16714

16715

**David**

16716

16717R: brilliant um so first can you tell me a little bit about the modules that you would teach

16718on so like what work do you require of your students and your modulus

16719David: um okay so do you want me would you like me to list the modules that I teach first

16720of all

16721R: um yeah

16722David: yeah okay so I am coordinator of [general] curriculum that would be an

16723undergraduate module that's widely open to to uh uh to undergraduate students from all

16724over and visiting students eh so one of the [general] curriculum modules is called [module]

16725ehm it's also available as an obligatory core module to [disciplines] students so they have

16726to take it that's in the first term five credits so 12 weeks or 11 and then in the second term

16727there's another [general] curriculum module called [module] eh it's only [general]

16728curriculum so it's only taken on that optional basis and it is sometimes taken by visiting

16729students as well [click] so there's those two undergraduate level do I teach anything else so

16730I I'm coordinator of those modules I like teach a handful of topics in each of those those

16731each of those I teach one topic [topic] in the second term and I teach like two or three

16732topics in the first term ehm so I think that's it for undergrad so what else do I oh no wait I

16733teach em a a module that is currently called [module] which is an obligatory first-year

16734module for [discipline] student uh studies students and that's a five credit module I teach a

16735lot of that and I'm the coordinator of it but I don't teach it all ehm so that's that's that ehm at

16736master's level then I teach two modules uh uh I teach [module] and I teach [module] so

16737[module] is an option that's available to um all four of the MPhils so [disciplines] uh

16738[module] is a core module for uh [discipline] students as you know and um there would be

16739visiting students who take both of those um modules as well so then in terms of what I

16740expect students to do do you mean in terms of coursework or just in general what kind of

16741input they

16742R: both yeah

16743David: in the larger modules like the two [general] curriculum ones that I mentioned ehm

16744those are very large groups of it would be in or around 60 or 70 for the for um the [module]

16745and up to 120 in uhm [module] and I don't expect much in the way of classroom

16746contributions there um you know getting interactivity going with large groups is a difficult

16747thing that I haven't resolved I do occasionally so what I will occasionally do is ask students

16748to uhm you know I'll I'll give them some sort of prompt or a stimulus and say can you

16749come up with an example of this or of that or of the other and then hope to get some

16750volunteers which is hard work sometimes so occasional kind of spontaneous oral

16751contributions in class but most students will simply sit those out and will never have to

16752pipe up in class at all so there would be for the very large groups there's very little of  
16753interaction and for their for assessment then they have to write at undergraduate level they  
16754have to write depending on whether they're the people taking it as a core module or as an  
16755optional module they'll have to write an assignment which is more or less an essay essay  
16756form essay form of either two and a half thousand words that wouldn't apply to the visiting  
16757students or four thousand words that would apply to the visiting visiting students and  
16758anyone as a [general] curriculum so it's currently uh 4,000 word assignment is the way the  
16759[general] curriculum version of it is assessed and that's all that they have there's no other  
16760form of assessment they don't have any exam the ones who take it as a core module  
16761[disciplines] ehm they do two and a half thousand word assignment and an exam we're  
16762changing all of this @@ and uh everybody is going to be assessed the same way a lot of  
16763things are changing in in [institution 1] at the moment and I think everybody is going to be  
16764assessed on the basis of a maximum three thousand word assignment and there'll be no  
16765exam in future so three thousand words we've generally agreed uh is is much more  
16766appropriate four thousand words for master's students okay but for undergraduate students  
16767um uh that four thousand word assignment is really daunting a lot of them find the thought  
16768of four thousand words daunting and there's also this kind of anomaly that um so um so it  
16769used to be that the master's students would be taking a ten credit module so they're  
16770master's at the postgraduate level ehm they were taking a ten credit module [modules] and  
16771they were writing a four thousand word assignment for ten credits while the  
16772undergraduates were also writing a four thousand word assignment for five credits and that  
16773just doesn't seem right so I think we're going there will be some differences in exactly how  
16774people assess things some people are splitting it into two and so on I think [name] uhm  
16775splits [module] assessment in two parts for example but where there's only one assignment  
16776I think in future at undergraduate is going to be 3,000 words which seems to be more  
16777manageable [click] because one of the questions that students often do come up with is um  
16778you know how far well they they all have a notion that there's a kind of 10% margin I  
16779always #think why it's just it's just a kind of a common sensical thing it's four thousand  
16780words it's if you're a hundred words over who cares you know if you're wildly over that's  
16781another matter so I don't I don't legislate for that but they're also often concerned about  
16782what if I don't make it up to the word limit and my uh view of that is always that that isn't  
16783in itself a sin there's nothing wrong with that the problem that arises is if the substance isn't  
16784there so if you turn in a three thousand word assignment you'll get penalized for being  
16785under any word limit but it's likely because if you're a thousand words short of the  
16786maximum then it's likely that there isn't a whole lot of substance in there compared to what

16787your classmates have t- have turned in ehm but what that does tell me because they they  
16788often ask about that is that there are concerns that they just can't produce enough that they  
16789don't know enough and they don't have that kind of academic chops yet to be able to  
16790produce something of that size and therefore substance so that's at undergrad level and then  
16791at postgrads 4,000 words uhm and it's the one slight inequity there is that our postgraduate  
16792modules are available to visiting students as well in their undergrad our visiting undergrad  
16793students eehm so they're having to produce 4,000 words assignments as well and they have  
16794the additional issue of it not being their first language uhm writing in English but then that  
16795applies to some of um many of the master students as well because many of the master  
16796students aren't native speakers of English either but I guess you know they're undergrad so  
16797it's it's that bit more more daun- challenging for them and what I try to do uh is [pause] I  
16798try to distinguish between language problems and conceptual or academic problems in  
16799assignments when I'm marking them uh so you do your best it can be difficult it can be  
16800difficult even with native speakers to say well is this this is garbled but I don't know  
16801whether it's that the student knows exactly what they mean [pause] but that they they aren't  
16802skillful enough as writers to get it across or that they um that they they actually don't know  
16803what they mean and they're so they're not thinking clearly you know you've got that clear  
16804thought and clear language thing they often go together but they don't absolutely always  
16805some people who are very good thinkers and very good maybe face-to-face communicators  
16806are not great in writing it's a very different kind of a skill ehm and then that's magnified I  
16807think in the case of um visiting students who don't have English as a first language  
16808R: right and so in your undergraduate level and the postgraduate do you give the  
16809assignment topic or do they need to develop their essay topic themselves  
16810David: I it's kind of a mix ehm well in the case of the undergrads um there's a range of  
16811different topics so it's taught by different people um and so let's take just as an example  
16812[module] so I teach three different topics in there one about kind of [topic] to to [topic] one  
16813about @let's see oh yeah [topic] and I used to teach something about [topic] but I don't  
16814think I do that anymore ehm so anyway I have two or three topics ehm and they will have a  
16815menu then of topics everybody contributes one topic on each topic that they teach unless  
16816they teach many of them then you might say well pick two out of three so in that case it's  
16817pretty well specified what they what they have to do ehm in the case of the uh my  
16818postgraduate modules um I tried to combine the two things so in [module] for example I  
16819have one that's a kind of a catch-all that just says some find some aspect to this module or  
16820something related to this module it has to be at least t-touched on in in the module and  
16821research that and write an essay about that and that appeals to some people because they

16822 might have uhm they might be very autonomous in in that way that they have ideas that  
16823 they'd like to pursue and they're prepared prepared to do deep reading into it and so on  
16824 ehm or it might be that there was a particular topic that was touched on in the course but  
16825 not developed at length and they'd like to go into that some more others feel a bit at sea  
16826 with the with the whole challenge of of academic ehm writing and and and eh this kind of  
16827 an assessment exercise and they prefer to have more guidance and so I have two other  
16828 options there that are more carefully worked out and one of them is like a critique of [text  
16829 type] so you know take a [text] and do an analysis and critique of it in terms of the kind of  
16830 things that we talked about and some people ehm some people like that just because they  
16831 they they find that an interesting challenge anyway but I guess also it's something a little  
16832 bit more structured and then there's a the the third one is also pretty well structured and it  
16833 maps on to >oh I forgot to mention that< in [module] they also have to do a presentation  
16834 you'd remember that too taking a topic in [module] and discussing first of all the uh the  
16835 [topic] itself then what challenges it presents for [clients] and then how would you  
16836 [deliver] it give us a a a imaginary situation [workplace] situation tell us how you'd  
16837 [deliver] this and then they can do the same thing for their assignment so um but I often get  
16838 people [click] saying I'd like to do something on say [topic] and I would encourage them if  
16839 they don't have a very strong idea of what they want to do and that accounts for a lot of  
16840 students there's a lot of them who don't know exactly what they how they should approach  
16841 this so very often they'll email me with a suggested structure and I'll give them feedback  
16842 on that or they can come to see me and we talk through um you know what they have in  
16843 mind so ehm so I like to give both of those options and that's partly in response to feedback  
16844 from external examiners many years ago not I think for me particularly for just talking in  
16845 general about the masters courses they said there is kind of this discrepancy between some  
16846 of the assignment prompts that are that are set are very specific um they're very  
16847 prescriptive about what you have to do and though there's a very wide open ehm so I try to  
16848 give both options as my solution to that

16849 R: and so when you're marking both how do you assess academic success and what are you  
16850 looking for when you're grading

16851 David: well we have a set of um rubrics that we've developed we we have descriptors for  
16852 the different grades so first class honors two one two two third ehm and those have been at  
16853 for undergrad but we haven't done this for a post-grad at undergrad level we've developed  
16854 th- those into a table of rubrics you know you're familiar with the system of rubrics ehm so  
16855 that kind of gives a description of what first looks like under or a 2:1 or whatever under  
16856 each of these headings so we have like seven headings is coherence of argument um

16857presentation uh I can't remember what else content and use of relevant literature and so on  
16858ehm [click] so but at the same time I I think the truth is probably that if you have  
16859experience in the system and particularly if that's the system that you did your undergrad in  
16860yourself ehm you kind of have a sense of what first looks like you might be hard-pressed to  
16861really draw it very accurately but you'd know it's kind of I know one when I see one ehm  
16862and likewise for it a two one and two two which is not to say that there aren't cases where  
16863you hover between two grades and then you try you can kind of assess is this somewhere  
16864in the middle of this typically 10-point band or is it higher up or lower down but they do  
16865correspond pretty well to the descriptors but I wouldn't want to say that I'm I'm you know  
16866constantly looking at the descriptors and saying is this is this dead-on is this exactly what  
16867I'm it's really more an impressionistic indicator both for me and the students of what is  
16868meant it's kind of a sanity check on what is meant by these things but if you >you never  
16869do< but if you got a student coming in and saying look you gave me a two two but a two  
16870two says this this this and this whereas the two one says this this and this and therefore I  
16871think I should have got a two one because it is it's not as mechanistic and deterministic as  
16872that ehm and we say that about the rubrics as well at the undergraduate level that this is  
16873supposed to give you an indication you know it's not necessarily we're not doing any  
16874applying any mechanical algorithm that says if you have a tick in this box this box and this  
16875box then you get a two one or anything like that it's just one of the things that does is it  
16876simplifies the process of giving feedback ehm what I'm looking for then having said all of  
16877that I guess is [pause] critical engagement I mean the one criterion that probably jumps out  
16878above all others is does this student [pause] have ideas of their own and not just having  
16879ideas of your own because you can have lots of people have ideas of their own and they're  
16880cranky ideas that are @@you know that aren't well-founded or that well thought through  
16881and that haven't really been brought into interaction with opposing views with views that  
16882conflict with this you know and where you get that where you get somebody who has eh  
16883read the literature or some of the literature at least and you can see that that has triggered  
16884ideas and they've made sense of it and they've gone back to interrogate and said well hang  
16885on in that case what about this and they read it more deeply and they say oh yeah I can see  
16886what they mean that kind of critical interaction between you know something that shows  
16887an actual process of intellectual engagement with the material that for me is what uh  
16888represents success in in as an academic enterprise and I always say to students as well it  
16889doesn't necessarily mean that I agree you know I might disagree with you umm but you  
16890know the best conversations you have aren't with people who agree with everything you  
16891say you know there are people who disagree and then you have great fun trying to persuade

16892them but there has to be something there that you can where they're actually engaging with  
16893it and if you can see that process of engagement on the paper that they're they're they're  
16894they're grappling with these ideas and they disagree with some of them and they think well  
16895this person hasn't taken into account this that or the other [pause] you know that there's  
16896some intellectual initiative of their own that there's some spark of an idea whether it's a  
16897development to something or applying it to an area that you mightn't have thought of  
16898especially that if you see something in an assignment ehm that gives a perspective or an  
16899example or it you know something that you haven't thought of before ehm it mightn't be  
16900earth-shattering but but that's fantastic you know then you think that's somebody who's  
16901who's you know operating on some kind of an intellectual level so I think that's that's what  
16902you hope to see if that's all then presented in a in a well-written style as well with a bit of  
16903voice in it then then so much the better [pause] uhh does that answer that question or I can  
16904develop it a little bit if you'd like

16905R: no yeah that's great um so what would you say that um here we'll stick with the kind of  
16906assessment side at the moment um how do you communicate your expectations and  
16907assessment requirements to the students so would you verbally tell them at the beginning  
16908of the term middle of the term would you post it on blackboard would you give them a  
16909handout

16910David: it's in the handout the the handout is the main thing so that's kind of the law that's  
16911what we are going to be doing and that's uh what in most cases I think there might be one  
16912or two handouts at undergraduate level where it's separate yeah at at the undergraduate  
16913level where you have to marshal a team of people who are all teaching this thing then we  
16914give ourselves a few weeks and there's a certain point you e-mail everybody and say we  
16915need we need uuh assignment topics you can you please send them to me by such and such  
16916a deadline and then that will go up separately so it's all actually in the in the module  
16917handout ehm but it'll go up on blackboard ehm personally I try to avoid [pause] I do in the  
16918yeah I don't I don't have paper handouts for the big ones so for the two [general]  
16919curriculum ehm for the smaller ones for [module] which is 36 I'll distribute paper one for  
16920them and likewise for the uh post grads I'll give it to them on paper uh it'll also go on  
16921blackboard um and in most cases the assignments are actually in the in the module handout  
16922so and um we'll discuss them in the introduction but then also when you're getting closer  
16923when you're kinda halfway through the module and they need a reminder they're starting to  
16924turn their minds to what they're gonna do so then I'll go through it again start talking about  
16925requirements and saying the sorts of things that I've just been saying to you about you  
16926know what constitutes a really good assignment and hope it doesn't scare too many people



16927off because I think you know what I've described that kind of evidence of critical  
16928engagement and and and thinking ehm that's kind of to me that's sort of first class level but  
16929if you give a you've got a very competent uhm uh no I don't not not a regurgitation not  
16930something that's too reliant on the sources but something that's a very good uh review of of  
16931an area without much in terms of breaking new ground or or new insights or anything that  
16932could still be a good two one [pause] especially if it's well presented as well  
16933R: right okay I know so what would you expect your students to do outside of the  
16934classroom in terms of week to week day-to-day  
16935David: well [pause] it kind of depends on what you mean by expect there's what there's  
16936you know what you officially expect and that's what you in real life actually expect having  
16937been a student yourself and having seen many generations @ @ of students what I  
16938officially expect is that they would [click] review their notes review the slides and read  
16939maybe one thing maybe not in huge depth on each topic that I teach I'm not sure I've ever  
16940actually said that to to students there's an interesting interesting thing what I actually  
16941expect will happen@ is that they'll keep up as they go along week by week um with their  
16942own notes [pause] in many cases do nothing at all in between@ especially at  
16943undergraduate level um and then start turning themselves um t-turning their thoughts to um  
16944to the assignment a few weeks out from the deadline uhm in some cases only um seriously  
16945thinking about it when the deadline is really looming and that's what I think actually  
16946happens I don't think that's the best way to do things but on the other hand I also personally  
16947think [pause] that I didn't do a whole lot in between @ @lectures when I was an  
16948undergraduate student anyway um but what I did do was pay attention in lectures [pause]  
16949and I think if they even do that and if they engage in lectures and go and come out with a  
16950sense of yeah I got that [pause] then I think that's not bad I mean I think if if all of your  
16951students did even that much at undergraduate level that wouldn't be bad at all postgraduate  
16952level you want them to do some reading as well but in the things that I teach you're not  
16953asking them to master everything and you're g- kind of want them to specialize uhm you  
16954know that they're gonna pick one topic that they're going to make their own and go into  
16955that more deeply ehm so I'm okay with that that's that's something that one of my lecturers  
16956um impressed on us early on when I was literally in first year yeah as an undergrad uh he  
16957had come through the German system [pause] [click] he was himself Irish but he had  
16958studied done all of his studies in Germany and he had never done an exam in his life uhm  
16959and throughout it was all based on seminar papers and so on and every seminar paper was  
16960on one topic so you did the research even as an undergraduate you picked a topic you read  
16961up about it you wrote an assignment on it and your you got your marks based on that so it