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

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was kind of the image that he used was finding your way through the web of knowledge
ehm you know this interests you then that leads you to something else and you you map
out your own distinctive map of the landscape of knowledge not that you have a huge
overview and you understand everything you have to be able to situate it within broader
things but really that you kind of specialize ehm and so I I think in many cases I'd
be happy enough if I felt that students were sitting and retaining the ideas you know
grappling with them and going yeah that clicks with me I get that
R: and so what happens inside of the classroom in terms of teaching style and interaction
you kind of touched on it a little bit but would it be primarily PowerPoints um classroom
discussion discussion between you and the students etc.
David: yeah I try to again it depends on the um the size of the group really matters also the
even just the format of the room sometimes so I I still [exhale] I think like
everybody I have kind of an obsession with covering the material you know you want to do
it ehm interactive teaching activities they take up time and you do have to kind of do a a
cost-benefit analysis on it and you say so you’ve got a lovely engaging activity that
takes 15 or 20 minutes that really only gets one point @ across you know yeah it
was good it was engaging they seem to enjoy it and so on and yet and now @you know
this much behind so when I can which is typically with the master’s students I do try to
make it interactive I do absolutely use PowerPoints and I tend to use them mostly as
prompts so they're almost like my lecture notes ehm but I do go back in every single year I
put a lot of work into um uh I rarely just take off the hook what I did last year cuz I'm
never happy so I I look at them again and I change I take bits outs and I put bits in or I try
to make them more attractive to look up so they’ve gradually got over the years more
attractive I think ehm and I do try to have points in there where there is some sort of
reflection discussion points interactivity of some sort ehm because you do gradually
become aware that nobody no matter how interested they are in the topic can focus for very
long if they're just sitting passively listening ehm and uh so I have small group um
workshops I have plenary discussion and one thing I’ve ex- I've experimented with a little
um is using um what do they call it it’s turning-point software which is kind of
classroom polling [pause] you can either use clickers
R: oh okay yeah like so a voting system
David: voting system yeah exactly or it can be quizzes you know you can either ask yes/no
questions or multiple-choice questions or opinion questions uh so you might remember at
the beginning of [module] I tried to get people reflecting on their own beliefs and
experiences about [topic] and saying so I give them a series of kind of provocative
questions do you think you can learn [topic] purely through books for example or whatever it might be so that's the kind of thing where you could use this kind of polling system it's still a little bit clunky I I think I need more practice in using it myself I've only used it a couple of times um so I'm not confident enough with the system to really incorporate it but I like that in principle because that does give you greater efficiency it does mean that people are reflecting they're doing something they have to think and instead of just having a show of hands where everybody has to own up you know ehm and where it could be difficult in any case to kind of find patterns you can actually get your bar charts in real time on the screen and say well that's interesting we can see here that the vast majority of you picked the middle option whatever it is eh so in principle that is a very efficient way of incorporating kind of interactivity um uh but I I haven't quite done enough of it yet well anyway so it's it's a mix I mean I certainly do lecture um and I'm happy enough to lecture in ways as long as people don't actually start falling asleep @@ but I do I believe in lectures I mean I I I think that you know I listen to lectures on YouTube in my spare time kind of you know while I'm doing other things um I think listening to somebody who knows what they're talking about and is enthusiastic about what they're talking about can be a great experience it can be entertaining it can be it can be a learning experience so I'm not totally down on lectures ehm and I but but definitely I do try to mix it up and I've tried to do that more and more over the years because I've seen other people teaching and the way they incorporate very simple little activities that still kind of break up the monotony of just one person talking.

R: right and so what um okay well let's switch from your modules now to what do you require from your research students? David: for my research students uhm my research students have always been quite a mixed bunch in this and so I I don't I don't have that may I I don't know who else you'll be talking to but the kind of culture of of PhDs and how do you work with PhD’s can be very different from especially I think the STEM area where there's kind of a lab structure where your research students are part of your research team and they're all working on your research and they're all funded to do this ehm and I but definitely I do try to mix it up and I've tried to do that more and more over the years because I've seen other people teaching and the way they incorporate very simple little activities that still kind of break up the monotony of just one person talking.

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APPENDIX F: FACULTY INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

my time I’ve never done that uh but that used to be the the received wisdom was you know
you'd spend a year reading around then and you’d get you know you’d get students
spending seven eight years on their on their PhD’s [click] um so [pause] what I would like
to see from them fairly early on is what you have to see from them early on is a plan for
the research uh a realistic plan for the research they need to get their research ethics
permission in pretty quickly and start gathering the data fairly quickly ehm and uh it it
varies you know from one student to the next how far along they are in their ideas before
they start um and then and then you reach a point where you want to start seeing drafts and
quite often that comes quite late in the process but I think it’d be better if it came earlier
earlier in the process and the way I work with drafts would be the same with MPhil
students doing dissertations who I’m supervising [pause] ehm my policy is I’ll give you
feedback I’ll give you feedback on one draft like if I I if I keep getting drafts back and forth
then it could go on forever um I don't always completely stick to that and especially with
PhD students you might cut them more slack um there's there’s more at stake um but if
you're supervising six seven eight MPhil dissertation students you you couldn't be looking
at them and each of them there's five chapters um then it’s strictly you know feedback on
each chapter each ehm what I'm looking obviously at PhD level you're looking for the
critical engagement again you're looking for um structure uh but you're also looking for
clarity uh I think that's I may not have stressed that enough in all work what you what you
want uh what I always say to students is when you're when you're writing if there's only
one very general principle it should be clarity to be clear be clear as you can don't aim for
an academic register I think a lot of what is academic register is clarity in fact if you if you
try to be as precise and clear as you can then you probably end up something that looks
academic really um but I don't know how useful that advice really is to be honest anyway
that's the question of what I’m expecting in terms of the writing in terms of input uhm
I probably kind of assume that they're off working away you know in between
meetings I might meet them [pause] once or twice a month ehm I think I need to I've had a
batch of PhD students that have just finished up and I’ve got I think just one currently
about to come in and I think with him I went to a workshop on supervision recently and um
I'll review those of the slides @@from that session@ uh so I've got the ideas about how I
can um structure things better to so I could be happier that things are moving along
because you do sometimes as a I remember as a PhD student feeling guilty and trying to
avoid my um PhD supervisor because I'd you know long periods would go where I felt I
had accomplish nothing um but as a supervisor you can actually feel the same you know
not prodding this person along enough could go off the rails if I'm not careful uhm eh and
so on ehm so I think uh at least a monthly progress meeting is is probably important
another thing that I'd like to do more of that I've never really done is involving the student
in my own work and I've pretty well never done that uhm and I I think it's useful for the
student I mean I've got I've got a thing about exploitation you know I don't want to exploit
students I don't want to give students uh work uh especially if they're not funded you know
if I'm providing them with funding fair enough but uh in most cases I'm not uh and so I I
don't feel I can get them to be doing work for for free but on the other hand to give them an
insight into the way you know the professional academic work uh world works is surely a
good thing uhm and so it's probably depriving them of things not to involve them in you
know reading through drafts of mine or reviewing you cannot with student work not so
much um but there's all sorts of things that you potentially could get students involved in
uh so I'd like to do a little bit more of that and I think that would be part of the experience
and it would make for a richer experience for the student [pause] does that
R: yep absolutely and so in general what do you think students need to succeed at
[institution 1]
David: at both levels and undergraduate and //postgraduate
R: yes
David: because they're really they're very different in in ways um it depends as well what
you mean by succeed to come out with a degree [pause] you you could probably you can
probably do that on the basis of relatively minimal input uhm and a and a basic level of
academic achievement you know achievement to academia is about so if success
is just getting coming out with a degree at undergraduate level um I think I think kind of a
there's some sort of a minimum of understanding and goodwill and attempt to you know at
least do the basics would probably get you get you out with a with a degree um at MPhil
level [long pause] kind of likewise they they you would kind of have to to get it you'd have
to score at least two two in all of your assignments so to score a two two in all of your
assignments and put in an acceptable dissertation I I don't think you could realistically do
that without a a degree of commitment um so commitment in terms of turning up in
lectures and really giving the assignments your your best shot um I think what you what
you need is understanding just show that you know the minimum line you'd need say for a
master's student and the same would probably be true at undergraduate level for me to give
a passing grade or a two two and again so an MPhil is to see that there is a fundamental
understanding of what this is about that you've you have done some reading and you've
understood the issues [pause] but it might still be a bit fuzzy and vague and unclear but you
have learned something from this and okay then you're then you're through um at PhD
level you can't get away with anything like that that vague um but to re- succeed in a more ambitious sense of doing well you know kind of two one or first degree high two one or first degree or or um of course our masters are unclassified but and distinctions are relatively rare uh but there you need to have initiative kind of intellectual initiative curiosity uhh critical engagement um so you know that your brain is actually interacting with the materials a level beyond just processing it and understanding and getting it making connections being able to make connections with with broader things ehm across subjects you know kind of seeing bigger how things fit together so not just in this module but how that relates to this other module what does [topic] have to do with [topic] you know we learned [topic] in one module um but [topic] in another how do those two concepts relate to each other are they compatible are they incompatible [pause] are you learning anything bigger than that about life I mean I I think if you learn pragmatics for example@ you actually learned something about how people think and how they interact with each other in all sorts of ordinary ways and grander ways different ways and I think it tells you something about society um if any of that comes out in your work then you'll be doing extremely well um but I think that's something that you know larger implications an indication that you can see the larger implications of what you're learning about is is important for success and I think if you have that and sometimes the thing is that doesn't kick< in until later because I know some of the things that I did as an undergraduate at the time I didn't get them I kind of didn't get the point even as a master's student I was doing [discipline] for example I didn't really get [topic] I was happy with [topic] [topic] [topic] the same I don't and now I love the two of those [topics] at some point that kind of clicked with me I went I get it I see why this is worth thinking about and why there really are problems here and that there are different ways of thinking about them and tackling them and so on and I can't understand how everybody doesn't love them you know@ but you know sometimes these things have to ferment a bit in your mind for maybe for years so um I'm not too hard at at the undergraduate level I think a lot of people come in to undergraduate degrees not really having a clue what they're in for of what universities are I I got through my undergraduate degree I think without even knowing what an academic journal was and we weren't referred to them it's partly just cuz of the subjects I was doing were probably more focused on books then on journal articles but you know um I I think undergraduate studies I would cut people a lot of slack um I I think a lot of the weight of real learning has shifted from I think in a way undergraduate learning I I I don't to be too pessimistic about it but to some extent it is kind of a rite of passage I think you get a lot of people who do an
undergraduate degree and then start to that gives them a basis for saying what I really want to do or what I really like to not or the ideas that I'm that I'm interested in pursuing are in this other area or the profession or the occupation or whatever it is ehm and it gives them some sort of clarity to to make further decisions about further education or training or the jobs they want to go into or whatever ehm so you know not everybody wants to be an academic uhm and not everybody should be and uh uh [pause] I think it's a mistake to teach people as though and it's something that academics can easily fall into because when you're evaluating your research students’ work or your peers’ work in articles that they’re applying professional academic standards but it's not right to let those those kinds of standards bleed into undergraduate work for people who are you know being exposed to academic life for the first time uhm I think it's an easy enough to lose sight of what it was like to be an undergraduate and what your priorities were and your expectations and your understandings and so on [pause] so um a PhD level success really does mean that you have to master a particular area and that you're able to do a piece of of research that reads meets certain professional standards but even there I think you have to have a certain modesty because the thing that scares a lot of PD students is the is this phrase that you have to make something like a tangible or an appreciable contribution to knowledge and you know people immediately think Einstein uh you know but it's not that appreciable is actually a relatively low low bar but you do have to have done something new that stands up to scrutiny that is actually a contribution it might be of interest to a tiny tiny little number of @people but those people would look at it and say okay that's something they might reject it as well but still that they could thought they would recognize that this as a piece of serious research whatever its limitations it’s nonetheless a piece of serious research and this is person who a person who could go on to in principle be a professional researcher in some level [pause] so that's what success would be at that level to be a you know a really successful PhD it needs to be something that is um that does break ground it won't be recognized as breaking ground by a large number of people but actually in academia as well hard work and productivity is nearly as important and maybe as important um so it's not just the quality of the ideas but you know [pause] how much stuff you get out there and the networks that you build and that kind of thing that's also extremely important and if you have one without the other then that might put limits on how you how far you’ll progress R: right and so how much of a factor do you think language plays in academic success
David: uhhh aaa huge amount at least in our areas uh kind of humanities and social sciences uh hugely in other areas I guess not necessarily as much because um they're very prescribed forms um you know lab reports or that kind of thing or in maths it’ll be kind of might be very minimal the amount of language that you have to have to use um but it matters for your communication with other students with your lectures with your are we talking about studies now are we talking prof- the academic world in general

R: um studies yeah so in so your undergrad and your post-grad students

David: yeah yeah it matters a lost it matters a lot and as I said you do try to separate out matters of presentation say okay the writing has problems but the ideas are are good but that's often difficult to do because the ideas are coming at you through the through the medium of language and the language shapes shapes the ideas ehm [pause] and especially written language I think there are plenty of people who are excellent communicators in in speech and you would never think of saying they're illiterate or that they're you know anything like that they're they're great communicators in speech um but they don't but they're not good writers and the one thing just doesn't necessarily translate into the other so obviously you know literacy and especially academic literacy is a huge research area I I guess isn't isn't news to you um but but I think the ability to express yourself clearly on paper um is is one of the huge attributes of a successful academic and [pause] it you know puts you as a as a not just an academic but a student um and it puts you in a bad mood @when @you're @marking I've got like all of these assignments facing me that I have to start marking practically as soon as you @go out the door and you love coming across one that's well written because you can read it quickly and smoothly and you don't get bogged down in kind of editing details and the ones that are poorly written you're trying to disentangle them and you're trying to identify what is the problem here I know there's a problem but what is the problem ehm so especially being able to express yourself well in writing I think is massively important and it's going to uh be an impediment to you and then put a ceiling on the marks that you can attain if you don't have that ehm it's obviously important then as well in terms of communications with your with people in groups if your working in groups with your lecturer um and so on but but I think above all being able to express yourself in writing is cuz that's ultimately what you what you get judged on um but then being able to understand the material that you read being able to understand lectures and so on that's obviously key as well but it doesn't get directly assessed [pause] you assess it through what gets written so I think the ability to to write clearly if you can also write compellingly and entertainingly then then that's obviously a
huge bonus but really you kind of after a few years of doing this you abandoned @hopes of seeing much@ entertaining uh writing @@
R: and would you find differences between home students and international students um in terms of everything that you've been talking about really
David: um y-yes um and it's sometimes it's language so obviously some international students are native speakers of English so that that isn't necessarily the same problem or they have the same problems as other native speakers of English maybe from from home from Ireland ehm [pause] uh for uh for students whose first language isn't English [pause] sometimes they're not accustomed to writing essays that's just not part of the way their education system works so in Italy I think for example there isn't a whole lot of writing done and um so that it's not just that they have to express themselves in English uh maybe at length on maybe conceptually difficult matters all that is bad enough but also it's not something that they're used to doing even in their native language at home [pause] or if they do write maybe it's in a a different form maybe it's brief reports or or something rather than a lengthy assignment um so they do have much greater challenges [pause] in the case of the master's um I do relax my expectations for undergraduate visiting students because number one they're undergraduate number two most of them are non-native speakers of English and I just cut them a whole lot of slack um so I I strictly speaking you're not supposed to apply different standards uh to different groups in the same classroom but you do it's on- I I do and um I think that's only sensible uh it seems to me it's it's a huge challenge to them it must be quite onerous and I think if they give it a serious effort then fine I think I have over the years seen more plagiarism among visiting students than than among home students as it were and uh I think that probably reflects the just how hard they find it you know I think in some cases out of desperation or just have a conviction right from the start that I'll never be able to do this they resort to you know using other people's work but I've also with regard to plagiarism over the years I've concluded that it really is true that some people just don't understand what it is [pause] they just they honestly don't know what is fair and what isn't fair [pause] they ju- they they don't um and I've I've always been inclined to think look it's obvious you know you're cheating or you're not cheating you're trying to deceive me or you're not trying to deceive me ehm but I I don’t think it’s as simple as that actually it’s just it's too common it's happened too many times I'm still not very forgiving@ of it you know but and you can't be I mean there are regulations about it but I think I'm kind of less shocked about it or something now [pause] uh but I think that's [pause] it's not it's not that so I think there are cultural differences in what's what's acceptable with regard to using other sources and so on there's
misunderstandings about how a quotation works and so on eh and there's this perpetual
problems that they don't know how to paraphrase you know because if you're paraphrasing
and you don't speak this language very well you don't have a great command of it ehm and
you're reading professionally published academic literature and what I'm supposed to
summarize that in my own words as a non-native speaker how can I pos- that’s hard
enough for native students native speaker students ehm what I try to get across to them is
that you shouldn't be paraphrasing sentences you'd be paraphrasing entire arguments
you know paraphrase is a short summary of something ehm you know so you take like an
chapter an entire section at the least a a paragraph that's what you paraphrase and
then that question of you know using other words kind of goes out the window you know if
you're paraphrasing a sentence if you really need this sentence then fine then quote it ehm
those are the things that I kind of struggle with and I over the years you try to think how do
get this across [pause] to um people maybe I should do research on it @@ leave that to
you um so yeah visiting students it's it's very difficult for them yeah I think at every level I
think trying to follow along in lectures is difficult for them I’m sure trying to take notes at
the same time is is difficult ehm try to understand the sources and then try to express
yourself it's it has to be difficult especially if they're non-native speakers um visiting native
speaker students you can have the cultural differences as well so sometimes American
students for example have a different approach to voice as it were um you know they
sometimes I've crossed American students who [pause] tend to write something that is in a
expression that for me is too personal you know it's more like a creative you know self-
expression and stuff rather than critical engagement with evidence ehm so that can be a
that could be a problem but I’d I’d see that as a kind of a cultural difference
R: right and so what other factors do you think impacts academic success so not
necessarily language and not even necessarily within the university but in general
David: academic success in general like success in the education system overall
R: yeah
David: well I mean [long pause] I I'm kind of reluctant to use the word intelligence because
I do believe that there are different kinds of [pause] intelligence but let’s let’s call it
academic cognitive ability maybe that's just a weaselly way of saying @intelligence but
you know I I know plenty of people who are I would say is massively intelligent smart
people in all sorts of ways who wouldn't necessarily thrive or have thrived in the education
system [pause] and they they do absolutely fine when they get out of it not just fine you
know they thrive and I think many of our political leaders are like that I think take a lot of
our political leaders and put them back through school and college and stuff they wouldn't
necessarily cover themselves in glory so there's a particular kind of an academic way of looking at things ehm which partly has to do with curiosity [pause] ehh and I think it has to do is I was engaging with other people um b- if you extend the idea of engaging with other people to engaging with other minds which means engaging with other ideas so even if you're a mathematician uhh you know looking at somebody's proof or their hypothesis or whatever it might be uh that might seem like extremely impersonal where you don't need any social skills at all but nonetheless you're trying to make sense of where is this thing going what how does this work what's the logic of this other thing out there is this other thing uh that has been produced by a human and what the sense can I make of it and where is it right and where is it wrong where is it change so it's kind of a an intellectual openness I think [pause] in theory should be something that uh >but I also think< and I think this is where I fall down is um kind of ambition drive organization all of those kind of things they can carry you a very long way and and ehm and they are important it's not just that you know it's easy to say ah well you know so and so is really ambitious and so oh they can have their uhm no it's important you know I think if you really want to do justice to your ideas and this is again looking at third level and especially research ehm then you have to have those kind of attributes as well but those kind of attributes will also see you through you know various levels of school as well if you're organized and disciplined and that is partly a question of engagement too it's just saying there is this other agenda out there this school wants me to do this for whatever reason maybe I can't see maybe I'm only eight years old and I can't see the big picture but they want me to do this and engage with it I'll meet it on its own terms and make a good faith effort to to deal with it um I think that's kind of what you need if you go in with a very cynical attitude of I'm just gonna get through this [pause] then you're not going to get as much out of it and it'll fail you eventually you might get a certain distance with that attitude I think engaging with it in good faith you know doesn't mean you have to like everything doesn't mean you have to find every single lecture interesting ehm but it does mean that you think well they're teaching me this for a reason @somebody @finds this interesting let me see if I can find what's interesting in it and and do what I can with it and maybe be open to reassessing it later on and seeing maybe seeing that there was a point to it or not or saying no I thought about it I don't think there was any point to that at all so a kind of determination and an open minded engagement I think those are those are those are important factors.

R: okay and it's now kind of focusing in on international students um are you aware of any support offered to international students in your department or the wider college
David: [inhale] in our department not so mu- we're a funny department in that we don't currently have our own undergraduate degree we participate in a in another degree this is if by department you just mean [department] as opposed to her sister departments in the school uhm so do we have anything specifically for we have modules that are aimed at them so we have we offer [modules] so those are modules that are specifically designed for them and they're quite popular [click] but actually as support [pause] no I don’t think so I can't think of anything within the department but supports outside ehm I think the global office does does things you know kind of the social supports and [pause] you know social activities that that kind of thing um but also support with dealing with Irish administration and so on visas and that sort of thing um then what do we what we offer in terms of language support uh well I mean [center] uhm is is the big it's a big development there which is something that we've been saying for years that's you know the university needs because for years there was nothing offered to foreign students uhm at any level just about nothing and it just didn't make sense academically it didn't make sense from the point of view of competing in a global marketplace whose increasingly every competitor at university which would be in Ireland and the UK especially for us they had these supports they had you know pre-service and in-service language support and we had nothing so we were constantly saying we should be offering this and at one point the university went down this line of the of um of contracting an outside provider I think that did not work at all and we said this w-we're experts we this is what we do is our bread and butter we teach about this we research about it and so on and there's all sorts of synergies and I was you know I think that argument was eventually taken on board and [center] kind of comes out of that so there’s the pre-service and the in-service modules offered by by [center] they're the major language support that I’m aware of that’s that’s offered yeah R: okay and so all of the support that you've mentioned do you think that it's adequate for the international students David: [inhale] I really don't know to be honest because I it's not something that I I guess I have less to do with international students uhm then I do with most other well I mean in the case of international MPhil students I suppose I would and they probably predominate on the MPhils uhm undergraduates not so much I’d I’d only only well I'm actually the visiting student coordinator so I see them and I sign them up for their modules but then after um unless I happened to be teaching them I don't have a great deal to do with them and I wouldn't have the opportunity to have conversations with them where I get into that depth of establishing whether they’re receiving enough support or not I think nowadays they do
have a tutor some of them seem to and some of them seem not too and I don't quite know what the logic is [pause] um but then they probably don't haven't absorbs the point of the tutorial system to the same extent even if they do have them they they haven't been acculturated into that system as much as the the uhm Irish [institution 1] students the home [institution 1] students have so they may not know how to exploit that or what they can be used for but I'm not even sure about that to be honest about uh tutorial support uhm I think they should have it because they probably need it they run into the same difficulties as everybody else um a-another sort of source to support those probably things like clubs and societies uhm [pause] and each other and and and I know those aren't formal support
structures uhm but but they could be you know I mean if visiting students join the archery club or drama society or anything else and they're going to get to know other people and it's going to enrich their experience so that helps with social supports uhm but I suspect the main social support is each other and they do they sit together the the visiting students tend to sit together in class you don't notice them especially fraternizing with the with the home students uh and this is all entirely understandable and predictable and I wouldn't blame anybody for it uhm and it's not necessarily a whole you know you want people to have a more international experience when they're here and they probably want out themselves ehm but it they really have to be proactive to make it happen because it's very easy to find yourself lost at sea lonely and you kind of fall into each other's arms into the arms of other people who are in the same situation the same experiences and I remember feeling like that myself in my own year abroad in Germany I went there full of hope and glory but after you know a few weeks I found it really difficult to get to know people in some kind of a student orientation session I met a whole bunch of people and that was it for the rest of the year I hung out with them with other non-German students I met some German people as well but I certainly wasn't really integrated into the student body as much as I would have wanted to uhm so that's I think the the real support that they’ll getting is probably the housemates other visiting students and so on

R: mm-hmm and so you say that you have more experience with international students in your postgrad courses would you say that the support that they're receiving is adequate
David: ehm at at post-grad level they would get better support they'll have a supervisor for one thing and so that gives them one person that they're seeing on a much more regular basis so that by its nature is going to give and also um so ou- the postgrad visiting students have much more of a stake and there's there’s much less of a distinction I mean there is a distinction a visible distinction in when you're teaching an MPhil class between the visiting students they're on a different page of the attendance list for example so when we're taking
attendance take the MPhils first then you turn the page and it’s the visiting students and it’s just all sorts of small ways it’s evident that there are a kind of these two cohorts ehm the MPhil students will typically already know each they’ll have met each other the visiting students haven't and they’ve and uhm so but then the international students who are doing the MPhil there isn't that partition there isn't that distinction I I don't think you find Irish students gravitating to other Irish students and visiting students or sorry international students getting together I I think that it's it's much more you know integrated
david: integrated yeah yeah ehm the extent to which there's support for them you know there’s the the the course coordinators there’s the supervisor I think individual lecturers are fairly approachable but we tend to have a more personal um um relationship with with MPhil students cuz we probably see them more often it'll vary from one lecturer to another but um um so there's more I think you've just got more approachability and there’s less barriers between lecturers and students between one student to another in terms of formal support again there’s um does teach does offer it’s available to R: yeah
David: um so there's that there's also the um or there used to be a post graduate advisor but I think the last in the tut- senior tutor’s office but I think the last one left and I'm not sure she's been replaced so that was an attempt to make something like a tutor available to postgrad students but I don't think hm I'm not sure if that's still going and it's not explicitly you know specifically for international students
R: okay and are you aware of the type of preparation your international students currently participate in before they come to [institution 1]
David: well for the for the MPhils I used to be quite aware of and we used to have a a great system in advance of the MPhil orientation the international students would get together I think the non-native speakers they’d get a week I think it was just one week of intent- for free um intensive uh English language support that was great they got to know each other that helped a lot I think with it with with the settling in process and so on in any way they almost had an advantage socially relative to the other native speaker MPhils because they had already established relationships before the course began so that used to be great what there is now I mean again I’m aware of the MPhil orientation from having been coordinator um so there's that and I'm pretty sure global does something but what exactly do I don’t know
R: yeah are you aware of any preparation that they may do say in their home country or outside of [institution 1]
David: uhm no I guess Era- I'm Erasmus coordinator for for here but again it really boils down to just signing them up for modules that they want to do here and we don't send students out ehm I would guess that Erasmus coordinators in their home institutions uh probably give them some tips and so on you'd like to think that they might get to talk to other students who have been to at least Ireland if not [institution 1] but I really haven’t thought about it much no or very little

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

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

R: okay

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

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

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

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

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

R: yeah maybe in one band

David: yeah um and you could anyway but you can certainly you certainly do see people coming in with a 5.5 and that might set off alarm bells you know in one band that might set off alarm bells but it can't be the basis for rejecting somebody you're not allowed to reject somebody on that basis ehm and you can see great discrepancies in between say receptive and productive skills so people are scoring high for reading and listening and actually not that great for writing and speaking uh [pause] and that can worry you um I think it's better than nothing I'm not sure how well I believe in very fine tuned assessments uhm [pause] we used it way back in prehistory we used to interview every single MPhil applicant so we met them all and in those days there were probably not that many international students
anyway but then if you know if you had somebody who clearly struggled with English in an interview but then they might you know I guess I can't remember it happening but you might then have excluded so something like it you know face to face oral assessment might be helpful because you do sometimes get students who [pause] with whom communicate is really difficult you know they've got in they've got their 6.5 but when you're having a supervision with them or you're talking them through the assignment or something you're gradually become aware that you're being met with the incomprehension that they that they're probably trying to hide you know that they're not willing to say I'm not getting it can you please try to explain that to me in a different way [pause] ehh so [pause] it's rough-and-ready I mean I think if if you haven't got a 6.5 IELTS certainly it would be problematic but the opposite isn't true having a 6.5 is not a guarantee that you're going to find this easy well I mean I suppose nobody says it's gonna be easy but I think some people outright struggle with their written expression and with everything with all four um so it's then you know put you put it up to 7 [pause] it would probably make a difference but you'll be losing a lot of students then and you know and unfortunately student numbers are an issue we you know you're under pressure to bring in student numbers courses can get closed outright if you don't uh so a six point five is maybe a reasonable compromise between those those two but it's it's not it's not meaningless [pause] but it certainly doesn't mean that you're not going to be admitting students who are going to have difficulty R: and so what type of preparation should international students undertake before studying at [institution 1] so what would you like to see say like in courses that take place over the summer or to help students prepare
David: [inhale] umm du-du-du let me see now to prepare if you're coming to again are we talking about the international students in general or visiting student
R: yeah in general
David: in general so across the board um I think reading is probably the best the best thing to do I mean if we're just talking about informal like what they do in their own time or what kind of
R: um let's do informal first and then I'll ask you about formal
David: okay so informally I think um reading and listening actually the receptive things are very useful uh um so for example reading [pause] newspapers for example from the uh country that they're going to uh it's something again@ I should do some research on but um I think if I wanted to keep up my own Spanish for example something that would be worth doing would be reading a Spanish article from el Pais every day on a topic
that I already know about so not some obscure corruption scandal in Andalusia but
something about the latest Trump @@ issue or something you know something that I
know about so that you know that weight is taken off and I can focus on the language and
understand exactly what the language says ehm and so and I think that that can help and
likewise a similar approach for listening and of course you can do that on the internet a
great deal ehm but also uh if you could get access to some of the texts not very deep you
know not not a huge commitment so they're gonna spend the whole summer reading entire
articles but if they got you know if they could read the abstracts even from half a dozen
articles covering the the spread of modules that they’re going to do something like that
might help them get them into the right frame and try to start understanding now what the
issues are gonna be uhm yeah so informally they might be some of the things that that
students could do that it's also really important that they understand the course that they're
getting into ehm and you know um um sometimes you think that students haven't really
read very far and they we put all of this information up I know it’s quite dense but it’s
comprehensible ehm I try to uh so so especially for MPhil students that they know I'm
gonna do three modules in the first term and in three modules in the second term and
they're gonna be um assessed in the following way and these are the ones that I'm going to
be doing so on these are typical texts and so on all all of those things
R: and what about a more formal program what would you like to see taught or done in a
formal program
David: uh in a formal program I would like to see academic writing uh so actually
something very like what we used to do with it was [name] who used to teach it and uhh
other people taught it at various times and in fact I think what they used to do was was
very complete you know that they they introduced people to Dublin they helped helped
them with visa issues and that kind of thing but they also um they would have them doing
kind of academic exercises of you know small academic exercises so I think it would need
to be quite complete um so not just a kind of a technical thing of here's how you format a
document but um [pause] you know here's what you can expect here's what things are
gonna be like and I think try to get them into the right mindset so that they of engagement
of trying to you know trying to engage with the society that they're coming into you know
the small scale of the class and the course and the university and also they larger
society so I think something something that’s really quite holistic like that would be very
useful but it would need to in-incorporate the four skills from an academic perspective as
well um but I’d very much like to see it as something that builds a community [pause]
but also encourages them to be outward looking and then that has follow-through so
that they can go back and say I'm having this difficulty or that difficulty whether it’s an academic difficulty or social difficulties there’s kind of support built-in I guess something like that is what so it’s really holistic and with follow through um and that is generally supportive with practical issues as well I think that's what I'd like to see.

R: alright and what do you hope as a lecturer that your international students leave [institution 1] feeling and taking away from their studies

David: I would like them to come away feeling that they had been a part of the community that they weren't just an appendage so they weren't just a hanger-on or briefly tolerated terms of what they're actually taught but also that they saw something um of a different academic culture different ways of doing things that they got an insight into that and that they felt some sort of an affinity with it so that they went away feeling you know Ireland is a place that I had some fun and I would like to go back to I think those things um I mean all of the other academic things still apply obviously you know you want them to to reach their potential and so on but I think um you know an encounter with people who are different and and and think differently and behave differently and have different expectations and attitudes values and and a kind of an open encounter and that they felt that they were welcomed you know that they felt that they weren't in any way pigeon-holed I mean I think Irish people uhm are often felt to be friendly but [pause] not very deep in Irish person this is all it's all stereotypes but and you can fall into conversation fairly easily with them but to actually form a friendship that will last is more difficult uhm but that's maybe just things are and there's a lot of individual difference in that anyway so I’d I’d like them to go away with those kind of positive feelings but also something that they can that they can learn from not just about Ireland but about communicating with and living with other cultures generally in a sense of the way we do things the way I'm used to is not the only way of doing things there are other ways um so a kind of a humility with respect to yourself and a sort of a de-center in a way so that you're not [pause] you you realize that it's not that I'm at the center I'm the norm and everything else diverges from me and my culture and my society and my family to different degrees uh to the people who are wildly exotic to people who are more like us and so on but just a realization that it's more like a network there’s no there’s no center so I happen to come from this node but here’s people over there in this other node that see things differently a kind of openness.
David: eh I have no way of knowing eh I'd say some of them do yes but but there's there's a huge individual difference and it is entirely possible to encounter another culture and come away with your stereotypes confirmed and with a you know with a even more secure in your own @superiority in in different ways than you have before um so [pause] you probably can't guarantee these things but we've got to think about ways of you know fostering preparing people for intercultural encounters and reflecting on them and so on I think to be grandiose the world needs an awful lot of @that I think there's a lot of people retreating into their own culture and rejecting everything outsiders as being wrong or evil or threatening and an unwillingness to to enter into open good-faith dialogue where you don't have to give up everything you believe in but you can listen to the other person R: okay so that's the last question that I have for you but are there any questions that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask David: well let me think um [long pause] I don't think so but I'll tell you what if I do think of anything um because it'll probably come back you know as I’m thinking about this to making I will you know e-mail you or something if you’re happy with that R yeah that's perfect yeah definitely happy with that brilliant thank you

Finn

R: so first are you teaching any modules at the moment Finn: yeah @a @lot R: @okay alright can you tell me about kind of the work that's required of your students for the modules Finn: ehmm I've said the kind I teach undergrad post-grad ehm and across a range of programs all my modules are most of them are theory based some- some of them might be practice but the the basic requirement is reading. which they find very difficult. the the amount required of them which is a challenge R: and can you identify why it's a challenge Finn: ehm it's a challenge for two reasons ehm and many many more one if they've recently got here from school ehm they don't have a reading what I would call a healthy successful reading strategy @ eh two ehm they haven't they're not fully formed? to read critically? and that was sometimes ap- applied to postgraduate students ehm I don't know it might be a language issue but even if there isn't people don't have a heavy ability to put 20 minutes on on on a subject and to me that's the most important skill of going to college @ can you sit down for uh read for 25 minutes [pause] think about what you've
read move on [pause] they have to write they do they have to do assignments work
sometimes might have to do exams ehm assignments we usually take them through in
tutorials and stuff like that show them the marking scheme beforehand and I often use eh
they have to email me about their topic [pause] a couple of weeks before the assignment is
due and that starts a dialogue but it means it gets them thinking about what I what I
actually have to do an @assignment I need to get it in on time and what is my topic how
am I going to write
and then you'll give feedback and you can ask questions
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actually have to do an @assignment I need to get it in on time and what is my topic how
am I going to write
and then you'll give feedback and you can ask questions

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

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

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

Finn: yeah yeah

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

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

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

Finn: yeah we have a three pronged approach what do you call it the
formative assessment? so in a couple weeks they'll they'll turn up and make a presentation
using PowerPoint [pause] about what their idea is maybe two three minutes and then
questions and then about two weeks after that they hand up a literature review [pause] and
then they get both pieces of work back and in January they hand up a prop- a proposal
which will have the literature review in it and then when their dissertation class starts in the
second term they get given back the proposal corrected [pause] so they technically have
three or four goes [pause] at the idea [pause] so sometimes people might change
completely [pause] between their first proposal and what they actually do in the in the
dissertation but usually it's something [pause] something similar what the original idea
was
R: okay alright and um and so what would you as a supervisor what kind of work or
expectations would you have for your research students
Finn: well I expect them to be rigorous and I expect them to be questioning I expect them
to it's a word I it's a sense cliché they're very [pause] #parrot like or lecture like I want
to immerse themselves in the topic [pause] and why did they understand @whatever
@that @means and I'm not sure. they need to devote a lot of time but also thinking time
they need to wake up and think oh that was really good idea [pause] I could use
that. [pause] oh ok I never saw that really that I could use that [pause] but immerse
themselves would be key they need to immer- any student needs to [pause] there's a
Confucian word #shangming that means be the thing you claim to be and I would say to
the @students some days we have days where we're not really students @ and we have
days where we're not really lecturers but ultimately you should have more days where you
are #shangming than you’re not [pause] and you should know yourself when are and you
aren't @
R: and so inside of the classroom when you're giving the modules what's the general
structure is it a lot of PowerPoints lectures group discussion
Finn: well I [exhale] one of the benefits of being up the food chain is I don't get tutorials
[pause] so a lot of my stuff would be lectures I try and use the Socratic method [pause] but
a lot of times I'm like have you ever watched Ferris Bueller's Day Off?
R: yeah I have yeah
Finn: and is there anybody anybody I'm often that person but I do do it by question I pose
questions I pose my PowerPoints slides wouldn't have a lot of text on them [pause] it'd be a
lot of pictures and one statement question mark [pause] whatever [pause] so I kind of
answer the questions a lot of times >sometimes students< will discuss things depends on
the dynamic of the class last year I had a master's class and they were like [inhale] they'r-
they talked a lot this year's ones are still a bit quieter [pause] they they tend to come into
their own eventually
R: yeah I was gonna say do you notice the difference between term one and term two or the beginning of a term versus the end of the term
Finn: yeah there can be significant differences and uhm people generally go quiet as they go through so the first term they're all happy to be there second time they're like really? [long pause] you get a little bit of a bump the third term because they're back for a second year second year is the hardest year of an undergrad because you're the doubts the really is this gonna be me you want to do the students want to do better but maybe they're not executing their study strategy effectively? 
Finn: as possible they know what they have to do whatever so yeah second term is always a downtime and as they go through the semesters it tends to be less they don't want to interact as much unless they're super engaged every now and again you have two or three [pause] really good people but they won't talk in front of the rest of class because it doesn't become the thing to do but you'll send you emails I'm gonna stop and talk to you oh I read this thing #unt you know
R: so they won't do inside of the class but they'll //kind of reach out privately
Finn: less so less so yeah] yeah um and um a lot of our stuff is about theory a lot of stuff I would talk about is theory and I'm just not continually shocked but people don't know a lot of stuff or they didn't want to admit [pause] they don't know a lot of stuff I have students that are in their third year of a degree and I would say have you seen this [discipline-specific object]. no. @ so you know and you're like really? But this is what you're gonna do surely you should have wha- you should be that nerdy person who ju- kind of go no that was [discipline-specific knowledge] but they're fewer than you @might @think
R: and for postgraduates so you said the undergraduates kind of go quiet as it goes on now the postgraduates is it opposite the //same
Finn: no the second term they tend to be a bit quieter because it's all our post-grad has a lot of assignment work so when you get in February you've actually done a lot you've had five subjects you've written at least an assignment possibly two or three in each of them so that's like what um 15 bits of work maybe 16 and an exam and suddenly you're about to do it all again and the enormity of that begins to weigh on them and you have to do a dissertation this @summer
R: and so the examinations can you describe kind of what those would entail
Finn: yeah ehm my ones would be traditional of Universities you'd find in Ireland or Britain three-hour exam [pause] four questions or you know eight topics seven topics do four I hav- since we started the faculty here we've always had a no surprises [pause] ethos in exams so one of the courses I teach has eight topics it has eight questions [pause] you pick four [pause] so the student can display their knowledge rather than be tested did they know something was gonna come up [pause] but it comes back to my earlier point [pause] read. [pause] think.

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

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

R: and how long is their dissertation

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

R: oh that's cool

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

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

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

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

Finn: ehm I suppose high marks the marks come from an engagement critical thinking deep deep thinking about the topic [pause] or the you know and if it was about practice or they've actually maybe I'll give you an example we had student a few years ago who who
did a [discipline-specific object] about homosexuality and they used but it would be called
a snowballing technique which is that if you know one person they're going to introduce
you to another person to another person so they were they were had great access to an
insider group but well all they really had at the end of it was they weren't creative
editing the thing and they weren't great at analyzing where did people say the same
thing so the the approach was kind of wrong and they couldn't understand why
they didn't get a first why they got a low mark but they hadn't really engaged and go he
said the same thing as him and he said the same things her and um it could
have been great orally as a as a [discipline-specific object] to it could have been great you
know five stories the first time I told someone I was gay or there was another person who's
doing a a a [discipline-specific object] about transitioning which I didn't know an
awful lot about the time but again it was more that they were they never got past the fact
well I discovered just this great group but they didn't delve into the subject matter [long pause] it was more like look what I found rather than look what I found look and look what
I fe- look like what I think about what I found so I always want them to show me they've
thought about things they've engaged with it they've been critical of it that [pause]
you know doesn't often happen but it should ideally it should people should think and be
critical and read a lot normally they just want to read enough [long pause] yeah yeah I
think a lot of us are like that sometimes when we're in college
yeah depends yeah so basically when you're when you're marking assignments or
dissertations you're really looking for engagement and criticality
Finn: yeah I have a feedback form I put on the back of the assignments and I always show
it to them before I go through with them and I don't allocate percentages [long pause] and I
think I might have to this year it'll be the first year so the first one is that presentation and
structure what I call housekeeping right is there a bibliography is there an
introduction is there a beginning is there gaps between the paragraphs is there a
structure that's the first thing and second bit is knowledge of the topic so can they show
they've engaged with the materials that were presented to them maybe the class we
have a virtual learning environment Moodle and so how to use have- have they
read stuff and clicked through it did it have an analysis that's the third thing and
then forth is there evidence of independent reading and research and that's what
gets you a first right so if you hit the first two you get a pass if you get a good
analysis you get an honors mark if you found schmuck and schmuck
who wrote about this and you never mentioned that's the first yeah I do leave things out off
book lists to see will the students find their way to the so people kind of go
I found this great book and I go really yeah and I'll say I copied that from a- when I was in undergrad there was a lecturer who did that

R: okay yeah so purposefully leaving something //out

Finn: yeah

R: to see who's really kind of

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

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

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

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

Finn: I think| it's a mistake

R: yeah //and why

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

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

Finn: ehm well they need to [pause] nee- well students need they need to well the resources be there the classes to happen on time the teachers to make things clear to them give them outlines tell them when their assignments are due to have tutorials to [pause] help them catch up if they've questions be ready to engage with them on email which is a big big
change because that didn't happen when I was in college so there's a lot of they have to be
hours [pause] wh- what their thing is they but they also might in our case might need
resources like we have [labs] and eh labs and stuff like that so one thing is a big thing here
is there's nearly 24/7 access to labs [pause] so because the students they don't operate in a
linear way the way that other people might and they do want to finish an assignment at
night and I get emails at two o'clock three o'clock in the morning [pause] obviously I'm not
gonna answer them at @two o'clock @three o'clock @ but but they they they do
d email you atypical times so it's obviously something there happened to them at that time
in the morning they've been up to two o'clock they're reading stuff and thinking what did
this mean [long pause] whatever they've e-mailed you and gone to bed so it should they've
two right to an answer [pause] pretty pretty quick to you or whatever but uh they also need to
be in a situation [pause] in a more holistic way where they're not working too much? they
have time to give to their study? where they're not or they have accommodation that's
suitable they have a place to study and that's not our responsibility [pause] but I would be
cognizant of students when you're when you're looking at them thinking you look a bit
tired today @ [long pause] what were you working at what were you how many hours
where insi- inside here and stuff like that okay so I think that's think that's it

Finn: yeah they're not great at organizing their time and they tend to leave things off
they're like ordinary humans really they put things off you know I'd say a general rule the
thing that you thought that you didn't want to read is the bit that you should be and the bit
you think oh I love reading this you need to stop and read something else @@ ehm I
sometimes tell them the story that you know when I was in college and I was getting close
to my exams I was reading stuff thinking you know I've got three days left to the exam
'cuz we had a very exam based [pause] you know assessment f- method I'd think this is
really interesting I should have given myself more time I really like this and I say to them
do you ever have that feeling? [pause] and they say oh yeah and I say well yeah you should
give yourself more time so the next time that happens you need to say three weeks out four
weeks out so they'r- not they also have a squirrel mind what I call the squirrel mind that
you're doing one thing which but you start thinking about another and that first 20
minutes we do look look we do have we have a big module in first year thinking learning
writing it's going to be called [pause] next time or thinking learning creating so it's about
how to study how we teach them a lot of our students wouldn't know how to footnote stuff
or do Harvard referencing so we go through that with them. >what I love most about<

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

R: right so those study skills are actually going to be embedded in the curriculum now

with a new module

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

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

Finn: it's evolved it's it's one full-time lecturer and then two part-time ones and we're
actually gonna bring we have a version of it in the [discipline] degree and we've a version
of it in our we don't have it quite yet in our [discipline] degree so the next time around
we're also gonna bring all the students together for 4-6 weeks [pause] and say look you are all about in the same [broad discipline] business @ [pause] and so therefore you should meet th- you're gonna [discipline profession] they're gonna [discipline profession] you're gonna [discipline profession] ehm and then we break them up because there's things that [professionals] need to learn that are different from la- [profession] people and the general [profession] people so ehm then they'll then they'll split up so for example one of the big things that [professionals] do is they have to learn in the first term they write have your first go at writing what we call a [professional] statement so what is their purpose what is their [discipline] commercial purpose and they might change it again and again [pause] but they have to read something and look at something and think about it in order to write a [professional] statement [long pause] so when you go to their [discipline presentation] it's those those couple of lines underneath the name R: yeah and so they're actually getting training from an expert in the fields about how //to do that Finn: yeah well we would have| a lot of practitioners here in in the faculty and there's maybe I think four or five full time lecturing staff six full time lecturing staff and then there could be forty to fifty practitioners in any term [pause] so it's quite a lot of [pause] people who come in they can kind of go yeah they they clearly do the thing [pause] ehm but then the language thing we are only beginning to to embrace [pause] we do do support classes and things and eh English for academic purposes has began to become more more prevalent [pause] ehm and because the way way our faculty is set up um ehm language issues wouldn't be as big of a thing as there might be in other faculties because you need a higher level proficiency in English that doesn't necessarily mean people [pause] come with a super proficiency [pause] so we have to assess that and then put in supports as they go Finn: ehh more so now because in my particular [pause] situation we do a thing called APL's which is the accreditation of prior learning so I would-a lot of them would come across my desk okay that this person is a second-year where would they come or whatever so you can you can see course outlines we need to see what level that their college is at and we need to see subjects they've done so you have that knowledge of the student ehm depends where the- you you begin to get a lot of you know knowledge on the job so you begin begin to know what American students are like you begin to know what Nigerian students are like what students from India are like how they're different from
students from Pakistan - the North American [pause] students are fascinating because there's a line across America and they're very different: one side of it from what they are the other and the ones from the south they're really good they turn up on time they're quiet and they do all the things they're supposed to do yeah they mightn't be the greatness students in the world but they're trying and we've students from some northern states [pause] and it's their first time away from home [pause] and they just fall off the bus [pause] ehm we have to be very aware of that when they when they come here especially if they come from a state where that you can't consume alcohol till you're 21 and [pause] then they come @here it's a different world and it's usually boys [pause] who can't [pause] put a break [pause] you know but they might have come from different colleges you know we've we've only realized in the last three years I'd say? that a lot of colleges would have pop quizzes you would not have such a thing here [pause] there will be no marks coming for it the students are shocked [pause] that those Kentucky students I talked talked about they were when they realized there's no [pause] pop quizzes they were like oh great and they'll relax and then someone goes wow 60% of our marks are going for one assignment and then they began to really [pause] shit themselves but [pause] wow the house is on fire @ and then they began to ask a lot of questions and we never thought about that it would be natural for us to have an assignment based com- module 10 percent 30 percent [pause] that would not be unheard of but we've realized now that some international students when they see that they're like oh my God [pause] and it's weird because if it was an exam it wouldn't phase them as much [pause] if for example 60% of the the but the notion that some big essay or some big [discipline] media thing the product they made was was gonna count for that thing like oh my God how will I [pause] but there's a lot of formative steps R: right to kind of prepare //them Finn: along along] the way but but when you when you're looking at the outline and this is 60% I never [pause] conceptualized that that would be a challenge [pause] whereas for some students it is so [pause] so yeah it de- depends where they're where they're from [pause] and we've bigger knowledge now of our students [pause] where students are are from how they approach their studies and and now all that would be I'm the go-to really within the faculty we do do an annual program review and sometimes we do look at nationality and that would happen maybe [pause] every three or four years we'd kinda go yeah we'd a lot of Nigerian students through how did they do [pause] a lot of German students through [pause] how did they do and then sometimes we would share that afterwards because [pause] every program will have a program director and it's their job to
do the review so they would afterwards might might we meet we have a meeting before every eh [pause] every semester [pause] and we're trying to everybody to come all of the part time lectures and we'd say look we have a lot of students coming this term from such a such a place and you have to remember they don't like doing whatever they need to be guided through this way they we're gonna have a tutor for them they need to go through the tutor this is the tutor here you to the point person @ they're gonna be your contact you need to get make sure that they because that tutor might be the person who takes them through the assignment on a language basis [long pause] alright? so we have we have a person in the faculty here >even with postgrads< who sits down with people who can kind go yeah how would you do that assignment and [pause] and so it's up for example we've a few people from Brazil so Portuguese would be their language and there's something about them that they need things to be explained more very very clearly as a group I have found there's about eight or nine of them and each one of them they're good but well they won't do anything until they're one hundred percent sure [pause] and you're like start reading >what if we read the wrong thing< R: and you're like just read Finn: yeah just just read the stuff and you know co- e-mail me and then they get your e-mail I'm reading this do you think that's a good idea and I'll be like yes but you don't want to be over prescriptive because then they'll come back and go well you told me to read this and this [pause] and I didn't get a high mark and you're like okay that's not I said it's a halfway house but students they come come from different learning cultures too as well and that can have an impact and we're getting more knowledgeable about that but they change all they change all the time we might get people from a new college [pause] and they have a particular way of doing things in that college like we've students from France from Paris actually and it really depends on the college how they how they perform and what they're like and one college is a great college for [discipline] for what they do [pause] but they wouldn't be the most strict [pause] group the people they are very creative very well but sometimes their marks are not great [long pause] but they it wouldn't be an issue with them there's another college [pause] and then they would sit there they were doing classes on Saturdays [pause] R: so it really varies not even by country but //by institution Finn: yeah and that was a super-duper place and then get a few people from [institution] which is the number one Parisian thing and they were a completely mixed bag [pause] some of them are uh they're very good I'm like oh my God yeah you are cream of the the cream then other people are kind of really? how @@
R: how did you get there? 

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

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

Finn: yeah |

R: they have to take

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

//so

R: just to see a sample |

Finn: yeah so can you write me five hundred words before the end of the day on that topic and e-mail me [pause] and we would we would do that sometimes if we were dubious about a person say look write something first write something first write whatever and then when they come once you know they're in then so then the international office would tell us how many students we are we have and then we'd have to decide sometimes they might dec- it's like [pause] we have special needs students and we decide how to allocate supports to them and what supports are available so it's not unlike that [pause] in
terms of we need this support we need that support [pause] mostly it's a tutor to take them through assignments [pause] that would be what would happen most of the time

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

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

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

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

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

Finn: yeah but but it generally isn't a bad [pause] guide I- I’d say I say in a way one I th- the person I share this office with now is from another faculty and so it's [discipline] and stuff like that and read stuff as good as the New York Times or whatever [pause] and uh so they have to but em it generally is sometimes the students that do really well on the they come in with their IELTS is really high and they're not so good and they could do some modules really well and others

R: not as

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

R: right but it was still causing issues there

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

Finn: ehhmm independently?

R: independently or also like courses that kinda stuff

Finn: yeah well there's that [pause] there there that like the [foundation year] model is one method but we have sometimes they come here for summer courses they do summer language thing now [pause] they in our in terms of our faculty wa- the the the last bridge we have to really cross is that that there will be a course for them [pause] that would be [discipline] specific or or discipline specific now we had in the past when we had cohorts coming with particular cohorts come from Norway and Germany we got them in four weeks early and them in classes and normally we wanted test their technical ability just to see where they were but also to kind of go look this is what an essay is like [pause] this is how we teach a topic here just this this this is how what a reading list looks like [pause] so we have to make a [discipline-specific object] you have to interview people you have to ask them questions you have to speak the language ehm [pause] but you also have to be able to conceptualize and ultimately to cr- you have to be able to con- think you know and I often say to students you know ehm have you ever had a dream in English?

R: mmm how many of them had say yes
Finn: very few
R: very few okay
Finn: very few cuz I say that's the moment cuz I would say you know and I wr- well I'm mostly assessing about your language that's that and so what have you ever dreamt about your your thesis and they say yeah and I say well that's because you're immersed in it and uh like I don't know how many dreams I had about my @viva @@while @I was @there
R: @@I'm only in my second year and I'm already having @dreams about my @viva Finn: Oh yeah @and mine actually ended up being really [pause] it was very good actually because they just after a minute when I went in they were like you know you're good you know you have it calm down I was like really? yeah yeah you're it's a few minor things but we'll whatever [pause] but uh yeah you hear horror stories so but anyway but yeah but ehm yeah I don't know I'm I don't know what's happened to them what their cultural experiences of being here are you know what people are saying to them you know what they about the place and the city between the canals isn't [pause] so I don't know what that day-to-day life is like you know being a middle aged middle class male I can do what I want go where I like @in terms of the privileged here I'm at the very top so [pause] I like it's really hard to figure out when you're in the class that someone [pause] you know like I know for example one pretty simple thing a lot of the academic studies of our area [discipline] theories are all rooted in the United States [pause] so sometimes if you're an American student sit in your class you think everything is about having a go at you @ you have to say to know that academia is all about America cuz that's where it originated from right [pause] Europe is catching up on [pause] the critical [discipline] theories in Europe so but uh I a- I do understand it can seem pretty weird about [pause] people talk about your place or whatever [pause] like this one we've a lot of not not a huge amount of Nigerian students and I've had only two or three a year but there's one particular place in Nigeria we've never got them from [pause] never got the one and it's where there it was a war in Nigeria in the 1960s called Biafran and I've always gone why can we never get any students from this other place because they were the more progressive [pause] liberal wanting to change the world group of people and they lost the war to get independence or whatever but this is the first we have one [pause] in the class and the only reason I know is because the other students ask me well he's from that
Finn: yeah [pause] and I was like [click] it's not really [pause] but most students even the Irish students wouldn't be cognizant at all
of that kind of differentiation

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

yeah that's true actually @

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

yeah it's completely different it's it's //even

how do these| cities live beside each- like

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

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

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

yeah the EAP] is new now that's only happened this is the first year it's happening and really it'll be next year [pause] hmm and there'll be more of it ehm and there is there the tutorial stuff ehm there is [pause] the international office here as an office are pretty
good and they have a policy about pastoral care for the students [pause] yeah I think the big change we've managed [pause] to move the lecturing staff over the last decade away from thinking that this is a problem [pause] to this is the norm and it's just a different challenge [pause] and you need you need to you know we've like for us probably the biggest thing is special needs [pause] because in the [discipline] [pause] has because of improvements in the education system here is the students completing college, completing second level who never would have before and entering college which is brilliant but it means they rock @up [pause] and so you have a different challenge in the classroom you might have a student who is disrupting because he's got um Asperger's or is dyslexic or whatever so you have to accommodate that your accommodating the difference [pause] all the time. R: and so would you see much difference between the Irish students and international students in terms of I guess academic success and the difficulties that they're having or things like like if you were to get like essays from an Irish student and an international student are they kind of having the same types of difficulties or different or

Finn: emmm [long pause] yeah I think [pause] well [pause] first off I should say maybe the Irish students when an essay comes due if they're even if they're a weak student they'd give it a go [pause] and then they're going hand in a really poorly prepared work [long pause] alright and international students wouldn't. [pause] they would either kinda oh I'm having problems with with the assignment or they might plagiarize [pause] so the level of plagiarizing would be higher I would I'd find among international students than Irish students because they found somewhere else this is this is the way of doing it cuz you see a really poorly written essay from an Irish @student that you're gonna give 40 or 35 to and then you get this other essay that you didn't write [long pause] and you you have to we we have this thing here we give it a one because we have to the way our system works some mark has to be input for it so you can't put in zero R: right so you'd give it a 1%

Finn: give it a 1 and that means we're not really sure of the #providence of that the work presented [pause] and we need to talk to the student about it [pause] and it does happen with Irish students but it happens more international students or whatever em [pause] but that other cultures wouldn't have so

Irish people that just ah I'll give it a go [pause] but that other cultures wouldn't have so American students never do that [pause] they'd never submit something that they hadn't really thought a lot about and read about their their stuff they might have got something wrong they mightn't done it that well but they would have given it more thought [pause] uh
em the Nordic students we have from Germany and other places they've really put a lot of
thought into the work maybe way of thinking about it is well I've only ever been asked
by students from [pause] Denmark Sweden Norway or Germany and in one case Latvia
how they would have got a higher mark [pause] and like the French students and Irish
students wouldn't then

R: fair enough yeah okay

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

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

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

R: and do you think that they do leave feeling that and knowing that
Finn: a small amount

R: a small amount

Finn: yeah cuz a lot of them are here they come from societies that are credential driven
same as ours it's about getting a credential [pause] and that's all all that matters really and
um and this is an industry all right so I'm not as much as you might try to be something
super-duper it's it's an industry and even like if you think about [institute] being the
gold standard it's still an industry [pause] I was in a first-year class last week two weeks
ago and we were talking about um I don't know how we got onto it utopian socialism was
the topic and we were talking about society and j- rules and this this anarchist Proudhon
and I had said you know? so [pause] you- tal- I said you know facts you ought to know
this is something that came out of this revolution that schools were created to people are
learning but they're also learning how to work @ and how to how to behave or whatever so
if you've had you know twelve years of sitting in rows and stuff you know maybe there'd
be a better way of doing that there and I said well you know that what was it I was talking
about a French guy who what was his name #unt made this theory this theory in the in the 18219th century you know a third of jobs were pointless [pause] so I was saying what is a pointless job and I said you know I can walk into a town on a Sunday and this guy is holding a thing up and I said oh my God is that really someone's job [pause] you know I said um people who were kind of selling you charity stuff really is that someone's job and then I said how about lecturers? and they're like oh no and I said look surely you should be able to read the stuff we'd meet once a month [long pause] have a discussion you'd hand in your essay [long pause] and they were like [gasp] nooo @ and I said you know that would be I think a much better way [pause] I could do more research and other stuff and [pause] but they're kind of weird that it had never occurred as a @@ [pause] you know maybe you don't need all these you should be able to just come in and read the stuff answer a few questions write an essay or two but uh but yeah so very few people think about a degree or a lot of them want that degree wanna do a masters I want to go traveling or a lot of people come out of school especially in Ireland and they don't really know what they want to- like I was like that like #scooby [pause] yeah I fell into things by accident

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

R: that's all the questions that I have for you was um are there any questions that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask
Finn: ehh [pause] bu-de-duh [long pause] [click] I don't know really ehm cuz all your
questions are about educational experience and and then a lot of them are about education
experience for international students so yeah I don't know it was it- [pause] yes I don't
know really because see I- b- now obviously you want to come out and create something at
thing justify but you don't want to push the bug too far out and say you should be doing the
course@ you should be here for a semester before the you know whatever I don't know if
that's true in an ideal world maybe@ yeah yeah and um yeah so the questions were pretty
good interesting
R: Thanks is there anything else that you would like to express add
Finn: no no I'm good

Hanna
R: right so um so first can you tell me a bit about the modules that you would teach so like
do you teach undergrad post-grad both what types of modules like what the subject is etc.
Hanna: mm-hmm so I teach a combination of undergraduate and graduate modules in
discipline] and in [discipline] so [discipline] programs and then class si- sizes range from
pause] 80 up to 300 and um it would be primarily [discipline] topics primarily [topic] so
they would be learning about [topics] so there's a [practice] component to it as well and um
we have I'd say three quarters of our students are Irish students from anywhere from
Ireland and the others are international mainly from Canada and US as our Graduate
discipline] but for our undergraduates we have a we have a program where we accept
about a hundred or so Malaysian students and they come to us for 3 years and do
pre[practice] training with us and they have to pass all of their English requirements um
but they do come in at various levels of uh fluency
R: yep can you tell me about the work required of your students and your modules so what
do they actually have to do both inside and outside of the class
Hanna: sure so they attend lectures they usually attend 22 to 24 hours of lecture per
semester and they also attend [pause] 2 to 6 hours of lab time ehh per week and that lab
could be uh actual [discipline-specific action] or it could be [discipline-specific action] and
correlating that with umm [professional tools] they also do [practice] skills so we would
have them have to work with each other and to do [discipline-specific action] to try and
discipline-specific action] is whatever just certain [topic] that's on the [topic] they need to
know [topic] and we also have them do specialized [practice] skills they would learn how
to [pause] [discipline-specific action] and things like that so these are the types of things
they would do throughout the semester uh [topic] ehm [pause] and in addition to attending lectures and attending labs and attending [practice] skills they would also be regularly assessed throughout the semester and normally it would be formative not summative so it doesn't count for anything but that assessment gives them feedback on their on their uh performance and it allows them to identify their strengths and weaknesses and but they do get assessed quite heavily then but because they're [discipline] students they're they're quite competitive so they'd actually do a pretty good job on um preparing em in addition to that we may have some sessions booked where they're working in computer labs looking at [topic] or whatever and would they have like writing and reading that they would have to do outside of class so about how much would you expect them to read outside of class Hanna: right so they're expected to read quite a lot we have several [discipline] textbooks and [discipline] atlases and the atlases are kind of pictures of where stuff is where the textbook explains what [topic] is and how it can be [topic] whatever so they have to process a lot of visual stuff as well as understand [topic] and I would say [long pause] they probably have less reading these [discipline] students probably have a lot less reading than uh humanities social science students um but their reading is heavy and specialized um [pause] and we know that our students aren't reading R: right do you think they aren't reading because of time because of difficulty just because they don't want to or do you know kind of Hanna: yeah I think that's so I couldn't open a new [institution 2] I've been in Dublin for seven years and I think I've seen that they're not reading because reading isn't part of their student culture anymore they don't go to the library they don't know how to go to the library uh they want everything online and with [discipline] it is quite good for them to do a lot of learning based on stuff they watch on YouTube or online learning resources digital [discipline] things like this and they feel that that's enough and it is enough to get them to pass and be a basic student but the students are really good students you can tell that they're the ones who are reading yeah so we asked them to do a lot of reading but they don't do as much as we are wanting them to do ehm we wouldn't have typical assignments like social science or humanities we would have um we do some uh f-f-for assessment whether it's during the semester or at the end of the exam at the end of the semester we would have um we would have them have to build a poster for example they have an A4 size paper and they have to write about [topic] something like this and they have to write [topic] blah blah blah so it's short paragraphs that are descriptive it's not so much putting ideas together it's just showing what you know so that's a different type of um
learning output um we would have them also do workbooks so they would look at [visual] and have to discuss what's wrong and how that came to be so it's a lot of correlation quick paragraph writing we wouldn't ask for anything structured in their final exams we do ask for short answers or sometimes we ask for essays and we don't expect them to format it as if you're writing a proper essay where you've got you know introduction and you've got your hypotheses then you have a body text then you summarize it at the end we don't ask for this we don't expect this and they don't know how to do it anyways @ @

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

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

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

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

R: so do you have research students

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

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

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

R: so how do you //assess academic

Hanna: oh yeah how do I
and what would you be looking for when you're grading or assessing them

right so academic success on paper means they pass um but just passing doesn't mean you're gonna get a position in the [workplace] so we're looking for those students who are um A-level students and whether they're doing it because they're memorizing or whether they do it because they've actually learned the skills to be dynamic and yeah umm proper learning skills it doesn't matter they just need an A so on paper that's what's important um but my background would be humanities social science and I'm interested in students pursuing knowledge for its own sake and developing their skills to be better professional because how do you communicate to your [client] who may not be an English speaker who may not be Irish who may not be who may have some learning or physical disability all these you know cultural differences physiological differences blah or maybe they're just very old or maybe they're very young maybe they're not educated whatever how do you explain to them what you're doing and this I think marks you as a successful academic or not but these are not things that are embedded in our program to assess they have a professional skills module they have to take but professionalism in terms of not getting sued not in terms of [professional communication] these things don't really exist in [discipline] there's no more time for it anymore it's been pushed out of the curriculum so I think it's quite different in [discipline] compared to humanities and social science where our expectations of what is a good academic it's different uh a good academic means that you've met your learning objectives and you have high scores and that makes you competitive for your next stage and that's all really that we're looking for in paper

and so that's really again just basically content of being able to produce that content to reach an A level it's not as much about say like coherence of that content or how you're expressing that content it's basically if it's there you'll get it if it's not you won't

yeah um it's a bit tricky with with written work yes it's you won't get the best grade if you're not expressing it well ehm but a lot of their work wouldn't be written it would be multiple choice questions or it would be um show me that you can perform this action this skill yeah um so they're good at performing actions and they're good at organizing knowledge in an MCQ standard but when it comes to how they would speak to [clients] they’re they’re the the nu- they’re it's a bit the nuances are a bit lost because they're not used to communicating delicately or they're not used to communicating efficiently yeah it's a skill that they definitely do learn but unfortunately not at uni they learn it from trial and error to the dismay of some [clients] who might be put off or confused or and I don't think it's specific to [discipline] it's not specific to
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[Institution 2] it's just specific to these professional programs whether it's [disciplines]

18429 whatsoever yeah

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

18431 requirements to students would it be verbal written both

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

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

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

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

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

18437 skills

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

18457 them farther

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

18459 being able to make those connections

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

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

18462 students the ones doing [discipline] not our research students they're [pause] more [click]
they would be more creative yeah they're able to put connections together and  
they're able to be more creative in terms of problem solving but not so much not so much  
more advanced compared to the undergrads for expressing their ideas in terms of our  
research students or our masters PhD research students [sigh] again I think because of what  
they're topics are they'd be looking into [topic] research or they'll be looking into  
identifying [topic] that do this or that it's very technical and there's not a lot of language  
skills that go into that it's more methods based so again those aren't the skills they're  
hauling like our students are phenomenal they're super talented but it's not the skills that  
they're honing yeah yeah  
and so in general um what do you think that students need to succeed at [institution 2]  
overall  
Hanna: hmm [long pause] it depends on how you you're working definition of succeed so  
in my idea university isn't it's a false perception that students go to university and that  
preps them for a job I think I disagree with this I think university expands your mind it  
challenges you it gives you new skills new experiences new ideas [pause] it doesn't  
guarantee you anything apart from education um so on a [institution 2] level in a university  
level [pause] in my opinion as a non [discipline] from a humanities social science  
background I think being a successful student means you've learned a lot of stuff and you'll  
be a better citizen because of it in terms of dealing with people in terms of having more  
refined [pause] more thoughtful um well considered approaches to things to people to your  
actions uh and having a few specialized skills I think this is what makes you a successful  
university student ehm but then it depends on what school you're in and you're in the  
school of philosophy or school of sports science or school of medicine it's different so I  
think being a successful [discipline] student means knowing your field very well and being  
able to professionally interact with others um and again this English and language skills  
[pause] communication skills they're not what's being uhmm learned they pick it up as they  
go they don't come ready with it unfortunately they could go much farther but they are  
only at that limit I think  
yeah so basically in order to succeed they they basically just need to know their field  
and be able to meet the learning objectives and professionally interact with people  
yep yep so our students have a lot of other requirements that they would have to be  
volunteering for things they would have to be uhmm participating to get money for charity  
they would have to be doing advanced projects advanced research projects in the summer  
about [topic] skills they're always doing something 24/7 [pause] 365 days a year they don't  
get breaks [pause] and they compete with each other for the best CVs so our students are
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18498quite talented they're quite special but uhh language and communication is not it's not one
18499of their strengths
18500R: okay yeah alright and um so how can you expand or not so if you could say these are
18501the skills that I want them to learn um or these are the skills that I wish were embedded in
18502the curriculum what would those skills be
18503Hanna: um in terms of language and communicat
18504tion? just anything
18505R: yep
18506Hanna: hmmm well I think there should be modules on critical thinking and logic and
18507module on that um [click] communication I think there should actually be a
18508we fill this where do we fit this in because the students are during holidays they're in class
18509on Saturdays they're in class with us so umm yeah it's not realistic
18510R: to expect it additional work
18511Hanna: yeah absolutely not realistic but how can we incorporate it more and more in to our
18512modules so they are getting it indirectly [pause] I don't know that's because we're weaning
18513off of having short answer and uh essay questions in fact we're tend to be going all
18514multiple choice because of limitations staff to student ratio um [pause] demands on staff
18515we don't have time so in a way we’re when we we’re assessing them with essays and short
18516answer we are asking them to do something that we weren't preparing them to do or asking
18517them to explain and to [pause] make connections and to clearly articulate things yet they
18518didn't have training in it we assumed they would get it from their high school and primary
18519school [pause] but most students won't have those skills coming in so in a way I feel it's
18520[pause] uhm doing them a disservice because those students who do poorly it's not only
18521because they don't know the material when you give them an oral exam which happens
18522very rarely cuz we don't have time to do that they know their material and then when you
18523ask them to write a paragraph on it they can't articulate it so I think for me in [discipline]
18524this is the big problem so we're moving away from that primarily logistical reasons
18525because we don't have staff to be able to do this so it's all going to multiple choice so
18526they're very good at working out problem solving and correct answers from incorrect
18527answers ehm but again those multiple choice questions are basic they're not like complex
18528uhm some multiple-choice questions you can write very basically and some you can write
18529that it requires a lot of thought processes and a lot of mental calculations ehm this is what
18530they would get when they're qualifying to be a [professional] in various countries uh that's
18531not the level of where they're at so we build these basic ones so again we're moving away
18532from that um so what was sorry I might have gone off topic what was the question
R: just what they needed to succeed at [institution 2] and then we started talking about how they or what skills you would like to see them

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

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

Hanna: mm-hm

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

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

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

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

R: yeah yeah

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

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

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

R: alright and so how much of a factor do you think language plays an academic success
Hanna: oh academic success in terms of nonprofessional programs uh it's really important I think being able to communicate and read between the lines and all these small nuances I think it's really important uhh because it doesn't matter what your language skills are if you can communicate what you're trying to say that's important and ehm but again from a school of [discipline] perspective it's still really important but because I'm dealing with [topic] if they can tell me [topic] yeah and and [topic] and what features would cause some problems in the future that's all they need to communicate so those aren't thoughts though that's more you know what I'm trying to say it's more R: it's not the way that they communicate it is just if they communicate this
Hanna: yeah yeah yeah
R: and I'm so kind of switching from the more general side to the more specific to international but also home students who may be from a different background so socioeconomic levels or maybe they're Irish but their family is not a native you know it may be their second third fourth language um English um so what experience do you have with these international students or students from different backgrounds
Hanna: mm-hmm so like I said we have a lot of uh Canadian and American students for our graduate program primarily because it's too expensive to go to school in Canada and US um they come over here umm they perform really well their language skills are excellent all the things I've mentioned critical thinking logical that stuff is excellent they already have those skills in them since childhood so they only have to tackle learning the material um in terms of our non-native English speaking students we've had some from France we have the Malaysian group we have occasionally a few other Southeast Asian Singapore [pause] Indonesia ehm and we have a few um Middle Eastern students and their English wouldn't their English skills wouldn't be very strong but they're able to communicate the thoughts [pause] and it seems that there's a divide if the student is a good strong student in terms of getting A's and gets those A’s because they work hard they're able to communicate themselves they're able to communicate their thoughts even though their English isn't good and the students who are kind of weaker students with the same level of English um it's the same problem that they're not able to communicate their thoughts but it's not because their English is poor it's because they don't have those skills
R: yeah so you wouldn't say that English proficiency is kind of the determiner between success
Hanna: yeah I think in school of [discipline] English proficiency is um a minimum requirement these students after their pre[practice] years with us they go back to their home countries and practice they go home they go back to their home countries learn to be
in the [workplace] for 3-4 years and to hone their [practice] skills and so that might be why we're not so bothered that their English skills are poor but we do have a few foreign students staying on and doing their [practice] years here in Dublin or here in Ireland they tend to have quite strong English skills.

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

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

R: Ireland

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

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

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

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

Hanna: yeah definitely we have an international office that I believe gives them lots of information and there's web links and they have induction days and booklets and all this stuff so they know [pause] probably better than the local students what resources they have on campus uh and I think there's good support for them in terms of counseling in terms of just things they need to do um to get through their immigration or to whatever so yeah I think there's actually a good support and because you see [institution 2] really is promoting our sports teams and clubs and things like that there's opportunities for them to to mingle and to become [pause] to smoothly transition into the campus culture yeah
R: so you would say that support is adequate
Hanna: I would think so yeah not being a student here myself um but just seeing what I see on campus and recognizing my own students in various clubs and activities and looking at their CVs and seeing what they're involved in yeah I would say so yeah
R: and um so are you aware of the type of preparation that your students have before they come to [institution 2] so are you aware of say um you know their academic preparation or their linguistic preparation would you know the types of programs they would have done before coming
Hanna: yes so for [discipline] ehm we interview them um so they have to be at certain standards they have to pass language requirements they have to pass um qualifying exam standardized exams so on paper they have to have a number of checklist and they would have to be performing [pause] at a certain level for them to be applicable to apply with us and um [pause] because it's a three or four year program we also have to ensure that financially they can do it without working and um a lot of our students are [sigh] [pause] a lot of our students are meeting the requirements because in Ireland your first degree is free so if they do poorly in their undergrad [pause] let me think through this now their first degree is free and undergrad is really expensive in [discipline] so they would pay the money to do prep before they get into the undergrad and that prep does not include communication and language skills it includes understanding complex [discipline] things okay so they do a lot of expensive prep they pay money for courses they take short courses they do things online they do a lot of prep to get into [discipline] school and to be performing a certain level but again not yeah sorry I just repeated myself yeah R: yeah and it's with the international students would you be aware of any any programs that they would have done before so either academic or linguistic
Hanna: um [pause] for our international students coming in in direct entry [discipline] meaning they've qualified for stuff they can come um we see their CVs and they tend to do a lot of volunteering and sports ehh [pause] they wouldn't necessarily have backgrounds in cultural courses or language or music because that's not what they need to get into [discipline] it's science so we don't see a lot of that in fact they may have their own interests in it I am part of the philosophy Club or something like that R: right yeah so they wouldn't have necessarily taken like foundation year programs or like English for academic purposes program
Hanna: I think they just need to pass the uh what is the standard exam called R: that's gonna be my next question are you aware of it
Hanna: I don't know what it's called because our ad-admin people deal with this today because we have several thousand students applying every year so our admin people go through all the applications and they just for they prep all that stuff for us so I don't I shouldn't but I don't remember what those things are called but they have to meet the minimum requirements for blah blah blah R: yeah do you know what the minimum like so IELTS is typically the main standardized exam would you know where the cutoff is for [discipline]
Hanna: no no because I'm not an admin person sorry
R: yeah //and would
Hanna: I believe it is a bit higher though
R: okay|
Hanna: yeah I I'm not confident on that but I believe our cut-offs tend to be slightly higher than other programs because it's such a competitive and expensive professional program that's being reviewed by external bodies yeah
R: uh would you be involved in the interviews with your //students or is
Hanna: yes
R: that more admin| as well
Hanna: yes no the admin people prep everything and then the academics are interviewing the students [inhale] direct entry no I don't do this but in I don't know what it's called actually because again it's acronyms Irish people love acronyms and I never know what they stand for so um so next week we're we're involved with this so the students who don't qualify to directly enter [discipline] they may be older they may be from other programs they may not have had financial support blahblah or they may have gone [professions] and now they're ready for [discipline] they didn't have the grades initially but they've shown that's they're capable uh we interviewed those students we need to view those students and we're we on paper we asked for CV and a cover letter and we see their academic record and we see all the tests and standardized blah that they have to satisfy ehm so when we're interviewing them we're trying to find out why they want to do [discipline] if it's well I have to because my parents told me I have to to that's less appealing than I'm already in [profession] I see how much it contributes blah blah blah um so it's not so much can they justify it to us it's more we're trying to find out are they gonna be serious enough to spend that much money and stay with us for four or more years and to know that they're not getting weekends off and they're not getting holidays or bank holidays off or yeah [pause] so it's more looking at how hard can they work
R: yeah if they're serious enough student
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18706Hanna: yeah
18707R: to be able to cope with the workload
18708Hanna: yeah yeah and if they can communicate that to us basically we’re satisfied yeah
18709yeah
18710R: okay and um so what type of preparation do you think that students should undertake before studying with you
18711Hanna: [inhale] the ones they’re already doing making sure that they're standardized scores are correct or high enough and making sure that they can work hard enough
18712R: would you add anything to the preparation
18713Hanna: of course I would like to add uhh English and commun- proper communication
18714because we see that our students are having to do double time [pause] not just our international non-English mother-tongue students but even our Irish students who have English as their primary language we see that they're struggling not just with the material but they're struggling as they don't have skills to be a student [pause] or to be a student who's expected to perform at a high level [pause] so they don't like what we're talking about earlier they don't understand why they're doing certain learning uh activities they don't know how to put the information together
18715R: okay so more like study skills so critical thinking
18716Hanna: yeah
18717R: um synthesis um you know basic communication for you know [discipline communication] again in your context um would there be anything like cultural that you would want to them to prepare for as well before or kind of like induction of getting used to [institution 2] Dublin blah blah blah
18718Hanna: I guess I kind of assume that the university does that before that >are you speaking international students< or local students as well
18719R: both yeah both
18720Hanna: we kind of assume that the university takes that role but I don't know if they do students who maybe for their first time are on a university that is now dubbed the global university of whatever we're called now so we do have a number of international students and international staff and international researchers so it's kind of like a dive in [pause] and swim [pause] type of thing because again it's all about money and logistical support and these are not things we think about it because they're not valued on paper
18721R: yeah and so what do you hope that your students walk away feeling or taking away from the course at the end of the course
Hanna: at the end of their degree and the end of their degree
R: yeah
Hanna: okay so for the taught students for the degree earning students the [discipline]
students not our research students for the [discipline] students um a sense of competency to be competent to that they know the material and that they can approach it in an efficient way uhhm we always have we have this saying that in [discipline] we say it every year when the students are graduating half of what we taught you is right half of what we taught you is wrong because it's such a quickly developing field and now with a lot of global diversity [pause] there's a lot more challenges because [discipline-specific cultural challenges] things like this um and I actually don't know I don't know if [pause] I don't know if well if there are [pause] plans to incorporate these small things into our our teaching I don't know at least for [topic] we do not because we are strictly [topic and functional skills] blah um but what I do in my modules is I force them to interact and engage with each other this is how I indirectly teach professionalism this is how I indirectly teach communication so I'll group them based on their [lab] table or something you know with the [object] that they're working on and these guys will be together for 12 weeks and they have to work as a team um I may have them roleplay some of them are the clients some of them are the professionals so some of them are the admin some of them are the whatever blah uh and they have to interact with each other and in addition to learning [topic and functional skills] so we often uh correct them on their choice of words or on their approach or on their decision making because sometimes they just want to do everything they want to be the best thing want to have experience doing everything so you know slow down your role today your role is this don't step over you know so we try to do that that way again it's not language and communication it's more behavior you know yeah
R: and would that be in combination with like PowerPoints typical lectures or
Hanna: no no there's nothing formal there it's just an opportunities to embed this and they're not even aware that they're getting this training
R: so in terms of your your lecture style so you would have the group work but then would you also lecture
Hanna: yeah how I communicate the material just the [topic] material yes so PowerPoint is great because it's [topic] we need to show stuff uh so I do a lot of PowerPoint teaching for my lectures I also incorporate learning videos [topic] videos software where you can digitally [perform functional skills] and I'll say is this the right orientation blah uh I bring up [visuals] so they can they're supposed to learn their [topic] now can you see it in
this image because you're not going to interact with a [client] by [functional skills] you’re
going to interact with them by [functional skill] or whatever so it's a lot of active engaged
learning ehm I problem-solve with them in the class as well because I get bored doing a
50-minute lecture and I’ll uh get bored of myself talking I know the material so I'd try and
jazz it up a bit I would put a um problem [click] you're a fourth-year [professional] you’re
in the [workplace] a [client] comes into du-du-du-du there's no [professionals] on call well
you’ve never [functional skill] before but it's your jump in now how would you
assess this [client] and then I just go through the basic [topic] and I say knowing what you
know what could it be what could not it be so they have to do a bit of problem-solving so
in there they enjoy that and they really exceed at those types of things but again I'm not
asking them to articulate complex thoughts it's more like I did this because that thing's
broken you know like yeah um and then the practicals they're even more engaged because
there would be [functional skill] they would be having to I make them do puzzles so I'll put
a bunch of [objects] and they have to build an [object] for example but I've mixed [objects]
so they have to figure out what's what and this gets them to really understand their [topic]
and again role-playing um I do a lot of things to make it dynamic and to actively
engage them to the learning process blah blah but again it's not it's
communication and language but it's other skills that they're really honing yeah and I'm
sorry the question you originally asked me I don’t think that I
R: I was gonna go back you did but how so how do you or what do you want your students
to feel when they walk away or feel that they've achieved
Hanna: uhh yes I want them to feel a sense of competency they're competent I want them
to feel and be proud of the tremendous workload and and the tremendous sacrifices that
they've done and the tremendous learning curves because emotionally it's taxing and
they're under time pressures and they're under f-family pressures they're under pressure
from us they’re over assessed like prop-properly probably up until this point I've
been saying of how weak they are in terms of this or this but it's based on the questions
you're asking me so our students are superstars for the most part they are phenomenal they
are one of the girls yesterday she got an award in every section it’s just like how could that
be and she's also a volunteer and she's done this and that [pause] how so our students are
really asked to go over above and beyond what a teenager or young adult should be doing
at that level um and so again we can't expect them to be amazing at everything and
discipline is all about [pause] [exhale] well I don’t know how to summarize these things
quickly it's not the same as writing a a philosophical piece or writing policy or do you
know what I mean
R: yeah it's all about meeting those professional competencies meet those objectives so
Hanna: yeah yeah yeah so I want them to be competent I want them to feel competent and I
want them to be proud of themselves and really uhhh recognize how much they've learned
and I think those are my two definitely um [pause] I want them to be able to go out into
society [long pause] and to perform based on what they've been exposed to [edited for
confidentiality] but um often I feel really proud that I see them that they're doing really
well but I'm disappointed because they've learned all these amazing things and then they
get to the [workplace] and they're expected to be at another level but we haven't prepped
for it right now so they're not really allowed to [functional skill] @ or [functional
skill] @ for a few years on their own just good but we don't give them the opportunities to
really engage the [professional] are like we're too busy stand in the corner and don't talk
that's kind of how it is in fact ehm so there are at a constant war with here's what you need
do but we're not really giving you the tools to do it we've given you all the tools to be a
[professional] but now you have to do with [clients] uhhh so in fact you know this is why
language and communication is really important as well as all these other more complex
layers of dealing with different cultures and blah and there's nowhere to fit it in the
curriculum and we just hope that they've learned enough with us to have some skills to be
able to manage to talk to [clients] properly and we don't always see that but it was not
specific to [discipline] it's just a person people thing yeah so yeah those are my two things
I would like them to be um [pause] coming out with
R: and it's not the same with research students
Hanna: no so like I said we have very few research students and they don't take modules
really they're just primarily doing a PhD or [discipline] degree research and they're doing
high-level research novel methods novel questions uh some of it is exploratory some of is
based on what's missing in the [discipline] literature whatever and the students who are
doing research really to excel in research but they're not [discipline] students they’re
research students they're researching aspects of [discipline] but they're happy they want to
be in a lab they're happy in that setting some [discipline] students want to be exposed to
research they do projects with us over the summer and they're they’re they perform pretty
poorly in it because they've never been exposed to it and they have no skills so we kind of
get them caught up to speed and they have a sense a flavor of what is research like do they
want to go down that road or not it's rare for [discipline] for student who's successfully
passed [degree] to then do a PhD do you see what I mean so you get your undergrad
R: yeah so you more go into practice rather than research
Hanna: yes yeah so it's like can you do two horrendously taxing degrees in your life that're super expensive very few people will do both so you have your undergraduate in [discipline] so you can practice but then you need a few years to get a [degree] but then you have to do three four years do a PhD so it's not a pathway that most people take it's rare and when they do they're phenomenal but there's only a handful of people who do that so we really focus on you're doing research and we're going to get you taught in terms of science and research and critical thinking scientifically in scientific writing and being able to uhhh have certain lab skills special note skills that's very different from teaching.

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

Hanna: yes yeah

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

Hanna: oooo ummm confidence that they have [pause] learned special skills and have honed their ability to critically think and so my research students I want them to communicate scientifically which is different than everyday communication and so I want my students to be able to communicate their research ideas and their research findings and I want them to have the confidence to do that at any level they're it's very easy to talk to somebody about research when they know the lingo and when they know when all the methods mean but if you have to talk to an everyday person about your research we're really crap at it cuz we stay in our little circles I mean yeah yeah yeah and then somebody's like what are you doing and they're like they either talk they just say the same thing clearly the person has no clue what even the topic is or they just do a really bad job of explaining it and I think that is what it's key for communication in science if you can't tell a six-year-old what you're doing or an 86 year old what you're doing then you're actually a really poor scientific uh communicator and this I really drilling to my students they have to do their communication this way most of my team are non-English speakers I've got a Italians and I've got Spanish [pause] yeah and I’ve one Irish my Italians and Spanish the levels range in terms of their English abilities [pause] but they're very good because they're able to communicate thoughts in terms of critical thinking and in terms of structure and in terms of all that and they give me their manuscripts and I just go through them and fix the English so this is kind of how we work well together um I really train my students to be good scientists and it doesn't matter what they put on the paper English wise because it's all there structurally and in content and the English is just something that comes because you have to present in English your posters have to be in English publications have to be in English.
your talks have to be in English so this just comes naturally I don't have to work at that
they do [pause] so I focus on theeee
R: more just the research skills
Hanna: yeah
R: and would you like to see any sort of preparation for those research students so things
that programs that they could take before or during
Hanna: yeah yeah and I think they are in most universities basic introduction of basic
statistics but I'd like it to be taught properly uhhh they've learned all these things and they
know what tests are for so that’s st-st-statistical test are for but they don't know how to
choose one that suits their works so act- haven't learned it properly so statistics would be
good but that’s not critical because they can learn that with me it just takes me time which I
don’t have but they have to do it to finish their degree and to get papers so it'll be done
anyways more so I want them to learn scientific writing because that is really hard to do
and that's not something you can learn unless you practice and I think when you come with
no skills it takes a lot more a lot more frustrating and it takes me a lot more time to have to
teach them uh so I don't want them to have a learning curve of oh I don't know how write
scientifically and I don't know how to build my statistics I want them to have the learning
curve on developing and developing science and knowing how to interpret their
results so I’d really like them to have a module for scientific writing and how to
actually build a table what's like my students don't know that the legends of figures are at
the bottom but that the legends of tables are at the top and they don't know that because
they're reading loads of academic papers and they've just never processed it yeah
R: yeah and would that be the same with your Irish students and your international
students
Hanna: yes
R: or is there a difference
Hanna: no I feel that my Irish students cannot communicate >for research my research
students< not a [discipline] students my Irish students from my experience they cannot
communicate their thoughts [pause] the foreign non-English non-native English speakers
can and I don't know if that's because English is a technical language and my students are
Spanish or um or Italian because that's the collaborations I have and they’re a lot more
fluent and articulating passion and feelings I don't know if it's culturally or linguistically
because of those things or because uhhh the Irish students are not learning to write
properly on an everyday writing in English course in their secondary school but the Irish
students tend to forget the information there but I spend a lot of time trying to think you've
just written this sentence but can you see that I can interpret it this way this way in this way and they're like no it's fine I'm like but can you see if I interpret it this way it means this if I interpret this way means this and they say oh yeah I see I wasn't clear but they keep making the same mistake over and over and it takes them a couple of years whereas my foreign non-native English speaking students they know that they just can't put the spelling or the grammar or I know what they're trying to say but they don't have the right English structure to put it together but it's not ambiguous what they're trying to say R: so the clarity is there it's just the superficial um surface skills that need fixed whereas with Irish students the clarity isn't there Hanna: correct yes R: even if the grammar is perfect Hanna: yes and here I am speaking about clarity and and even articulate it to you @ @ @ but that’s because I haven't had a day off in four weeks @.@ yeah but yeah you know this is interesting because these are not things I've really articulated outside of my thoughts you know R: yeah I mean it's not something that I imagine academics are really asked to articulate very often so yeah Hanna: mm- mm so that is something that I actually noticed it's clear that my Irish students can't they're not clear and that may be what a lot of them tell me they're like oh but Irish language is poetic and there's all these roundabouts so when we learn how to speak English clarity isn't our thing it may be [long pause] so it's not necessarily English it's just clarity and that might be culture it might not be I don’t know R: okay that's interesting that they're kind of blaming the Irish language Hanna: and in some ways I can to see it because not being come I think I told you I’m from [city] and we would speak [language] and English in the same sentence because English is technical and [language] is passion so you'd have certain certain things you just you want to express in [language] because it makes more sense and so I would go back and forth lots so I don't have the right English words and I don't have the right [language] for certain things so I struggle [pause] so I do feel that I don't communicate well and it's my insecurities my language is my insecurity because I haven't properly learned English and I haven’t properly learned [language] because we would just have a mix and I do see it with um it is an Irish culture thing that communication [pause] is very circular it's like can you just give me a direct answer uh and I do think that is part of the language and culture yeah R: but it's been kind of passed down
Hanna: that's just how it is yes Irish people aren't direct they kind of dance around things and it's nicer and more softer that way whereas other uh foreigners we are always laughing and it's nicer and more softer that way whereas other uh foreigners we are always laughing like can you just tell us the answer I don't care about that just yes or no and Irish people take forever to get to yes or no and that's that's that’s a cultural thing but in scientific writing and in being able to articulate your thoughts and in a short answer essay question you need clarity yeah

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

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

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

R: yeah yeah thanks a million

Laurence

R: so actually first I'd like for you to tell me about any type of module that you teach what is the work required in general in your modules
Laurence: okay ehm I teach a preparation for placement module ehm across both the
Masters [discipline] program ehm the [degree program] the undergrad [discipline] program
ehm both professionally accredited ehm [discipline] programs ehm I also teach ehm uh
topic ehm to undergrads but the question being ehm to take one module so the
preparation for placement module on the master's program

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

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

Laurence: ehm [long pause] now that the the master's program has a a a well first of all
what I'm preparing students with being a professional course as a requirement of the
accrediting body is that they undertake the thousand hours of [practice] practice so that's
what I'm preparing them for [practice] practice and then bringing them in at points during
the practice and visiting them out on practice ehm eh and just checking checking in around
that that that it's happening that they're using the learning tools that are in a reflective
place ehm and that they're on track ehm in terms of on the master's program additional to
the placements ehm they do undertake a by by research ehm a a dissertation ehm I sup-
yeah supervised as as few of them as possible @@ for literally just workload management
I currently I just finished with the Nigerian woman and it was on
APPENDIX F: FACULTY INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

19018[topic] then the [topic] and [pause] the Irish experience of that but by such a semi-
19019structured qualitative research interviewing people who have who have ehm [action] at
19020what level of preparation they got around [topics] around sort of being enculturated and
19021and having contact with the world of the [topic] etc. so that that but it research
19022supervision would be ehm part of my workload but a small enough part
19023R: right ehm so when you're supervising a student can you just drive kind of your level of
19024involvement and guidance and then also what you would expect them to do independently
19025Laurence: ehm again just to s-s-say in terms of the sort of the the core areas of my work it's
19026it's quite a a a minor part ehm it's usually a student each year ehm and [long pause] it's
19027because I haven't a track record in research it's one of the areas I feel vulnerable in as a to
19028to be allocated a supervisor as supervisor to somebody and I pray that they are ehm
19029research savvy ehm I pray that their area of interest overlaps with my areas of interest so
19030that I can bring content and and and sort of maybe lived-experience or read experience in
19031terms of just the the frameworks or mechanics I suppose what I do ehm is I check in with
19032them one thing I check in with them is their work style are you last minute dot com or are
19033you paste organized measured planned and that that relieves me when I hear that they're
19034not last minute dot com because I'm not I'm systematic and if somebody's systematic we're
19035going to be buddies @@@ and if they're going to have me up Tuesday night or
19036Wednesday night eh before the the submission date I'm already hating them right ehm so I
19037do tell them that's my th- if that's your style that's my style if that's your style my style is
19038different because I'm n- and I I just point that out to them ehm and I I suppose what I what
19039I do think I bring is I do bring eh [pause] approachability I do bring ehm availability
19040regularity ehm as as supportive as I can be within the limitations of my own research
19041experience but where I need to ehm reach out to others ehm for second opinions I I I do
19042and have ehm so that I think on balance I think generally the students who come towards
19043me are often to do with topics around [topic] because they know I've worked in that area so
19044a lot like ehm [topic] ehm would be one ehm that sort of people often come as a different
19045model ehm that would be one topic that's come ehm somebody had access to judges which
19046is really rare and getting almost judges to reflect on their own [practice] about it all the on
19047on all the outside logic and rationality you know some of their stories of you know what
19048they call in [discipline] chivalry justice be maybe harder on male offenders and gentler on
19049female offenders or another one was you know judges being very straight about attitudes
19050they have to certain types of people you know and some etc. so so capturing judges’
19051experiences was an interesting piece and that sort of yeah
Laurence: okay ehm [pause] a warm climate ehm [pause] that that matters cuz I think people they're in better in a warm climate ehm I use what it- it- something when I worked as [job] I used it in group work is called um you know process illumination I say back to the class what I think is happening in the class so I'm losing my audience I say to the class I think I've lost you or I think I've lost a lot of you and that sort of brings them back in and that usually provokes people to say about the distractions we’d have in another discipline we'd have an essay in tomorrow and that's etc. ehm so I try ehm keep them with me ehm through sort of performance skills ehm [long pause] the in terms of what happens I also try and vary the- wh- each class like by having em a presentation ehm and exercises maybe also an outside speaker so that for example I'm just trying to think of ehm what I presented for the Masters recently was for different areas they're going on placement I've brought in somebody from each of the areas to start to tell their tale about what work looks like what the expectations might be for a student in this area I brought the students from the year ahead down to the students from the year below so that they'd say I was there last year and this particular placement setting and this is what it was like for me these were the strengths these were the limitations but I try and try and keep variety and I do a lot of trying to have a level of trust in the classroom that students will like I'm going to an [topic] setting I am so embarrassed around people with [topic] I don't know where I'd start or I'm going into a [place] ehm you know I don't really feel empathy for [group] I feel to hell with them or or my heart is broken every time I'm working in a [place] ehm you know I don't really feel empathy for [group] and that [group] just neglected so I try and get people's fears and what’s happening for them ehm try to sort of [pause] yeah I'm trying to use their their what's difficult for you and just is a way to journey into what's difficult for the person that to whom you're going to be working with because they're in they’re coming to you for a service they're coming to you for support and ehm eh eh so sort of h- h- how- that awkwardness you feel just to use that as a sort of common connection with the person that they're in difficulties they're in adversity they need a hand and uh you know just use that to empathize to res-resource yourself for empathy ehm so it's sort of fairly experiential ehm [pause] yeah and also I suppose when you say what happens in the class setting the tone right varying varying the tasks um in the class ehm and also just imparting [pause] lots of information to you know the statutory framework in this setting or that setting the procedures the agency context ehm ehm and then that as well is that information ehm a lot of lo- how do you learn in a practice situation because if you're on this course you're obviously pretty skilled in being in...
classroom and this is a different learning process so just how can we resource you to be an optimal learner in a practice situation and so a lot of tools and aids around that different yeah R: yeah when you're presenting things like policy um and more just imparting information would that be on a PowerPoint would it just be verbal would it be handouts Laurence: PowerPoints probably yeah yeah yeah yeah R: okay and so how would the students be assessed in your modules is it purely on the placement or do they have any other form of assessment Laurence: they they have a for- for- for- they have to proceed to the next year they have to pass placement which [pause] that's one of the gatekeeping bits but they also have to write a sort of 10,000 words ehm on the placement and that's a difficult exercise because it's they it has um the the the sort of template of it begins with will I call it section A ehm an agency context ehm community context and so both of those require doing a bit of work on governance structures funding structures rationale for the organization etc. ehm community context involves sort of in socio-economic indices who lives here what sort of things go on what are its strengths what are its limitations ehm so and then it goes on to taking the table of workload that they were involved in and then taking two or three cases in depth and writing up of them in depth and finally then charting their own learning so it has the personal bit your story and it's it's a sort of hybrid exercise in that it's both an academic piece ehm and it's quite a personal story and I think the challenge for students is trying to link up classroom learning and what happens in practice ehm linking those together ehm and been able to have a vocabulary for that and have a vocabulary of skills ehm yeah R: yeah and so when you're grading these um the written portion of the assessment what are you looking for how do you assess academic success in these 10,000-word papers Laurence: hm I I think em [long pause] there's two sort of poles there's some who write very theoretically [pause] and there’s some who tell my story and trying to get the marriage that my story and the theory and the academic community so that's a big piece for me that it isn't just my story ehm I m- I I mean I want to hear about self I want to hear your reflections I want to hear what was hard for you I want to hear what was uncomfortable for you but I also want you to be able to link that to theory that's why first year they do [modules] so that they understand context and not just individual but individual in context so I want them to be able to draw those pieces in as well and and that that's where people [pause] ehm I think score or score less well for me that that piece of joining practice and theory and we have we got the reflective piece and the theoretical academic and literature support elements and and then there's other things about
just showing their skill in working and being able to ehm and all all the other pieces like present work well and and I guess we do have a template how we mark and it's you know weighted like start to 20 percent for for for community agency context their table of workload maybe 20 percent the two or three cases they have to go into maybe 40 percent being able to account give an account of their own learning maybe 20 percent and then the actual marks for presentation are [pause] quite small so therefore somebody who doesn't capitalize who who uses colloquialism rather than a bit more formal English doesn't get heavily penalized which could be debated as to the wisdom or otherwise of that ehm yeah we I suppose another thing is we our course is the most diverse course in the college ehm we have ehm [pause] we have 20 percent mature students 70 odd percent school leavers and then we have a a access access routes and disability access routes and disadvantaged so so this [pause] there's levels of formal education and levels yeah ehm and that that that affects how people present their work some people are great practitioners and not not great at reflecting that in the written word so all of that R: okay and then for the actual placement um you said that you actually go there and observe and interact with them would there be a formal assessment on their placement Laurence: yeah the the supervisor to whom they're allocated ehm has has [pause] a the accrediting body [name] have of six domains under which ehm the supervisor has to score the student ehm and ehm n- it's actually I shouldn't say scored it's pass fail it's not it's not a grade so the the the the the evaluation framework that the supervisors have is is set down a- it's national across all [discipline] programs and these domains are meant to be the sort of core core proficiencies involved in [discipline] ehm they're written in the #tered ehm Foucault [pause] Foucault is accessible in comparison to the really quality assurance sorta awful technic-technicisms language yeah and ehm that's how the students are ehm assessed as pass or fail ready to proceed not yet ready to proceed [pause] it's actually a pretty difficult experience for students because if you fail an essay it's one thing if you fail in this it's a very painful experience and people do get hurt around it ehm and just and it's not an easy call for the supervisor to make either because they've got close to the student over 14 weeks and they still have to mess them up and costing them money and costing them maybe another year not an easy call to ask anyone to make but but there you go yeah Laurence: yeah ehm [pause] before [accrediting body] which is the accrediting body it only came in in 2014 before that [pause] ehm the what what what was in use in our handbooks
for supervisors was ehm agency context which was that the student could navigate his or her way around the agency context and that was where there was a huge bureaucracy like [institution 1] like the [organization] like too slow our standalone little voluntary organization that they understood the procedures the policies the statutes working across the different disciplines they got it so that was one one one piece they had to another piece was what they called professional accountability that you could manage a diary plan organize the punctual work with different disciplines represent your discipline etcetera um stand over your workers ehm the third one was all the human encounter skills that the person could listen could talk could write could sort of counsel had some sort of range of therapeutic skills and the fourth one was self-awareness that the student could hear difficult feedback could take it on board ehm and were self-aware in terms personally biographically etc. ehm so they were the four so but [accrediting body] have come in and have have have turned into it six with drop-down boxes offering domains to proficiencies running to micro micro but covering roughly similar ground ehm yeah roughly similar ground ehm you know under communication you've you've you know a list from writing and and and speaking and working across different platforms working through interpreters working with people who are mute et cetera et cetera you you know all all of you human @@

R: everything @

Laurence: everything yeah it's there yeah yeah yeah

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

Laurence: [shakes head yes]

R: okay is it verbal written etc.

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

Laurence: are looking for exactly ehm and it's not what they like you or not ehm and so you mightn’t be so brother or sister but just get with one another in a professional way so they know that they know it it's evidence-based that there would be observation of their work samples of their work ehm talking to colleagues about their work in some cases talking to service users about their work ehm so it’ll all be evidence-based and it’ll be to this framework so that's very clear ehm they also know in their written piece there’s a very clear word count a very clear template ehm they know how the marks are weighted this
that and the other so yeah that's all that's all clear eh to the students and communicated
very clearly and they have the paper copies or or electronic copies of all those assessment
frameworks yeah

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

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

R: so a lot of discussion

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

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

Laurence: [inhale] hmm [long pause] let me think ehm particularly in my pro-
wh-

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

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

19227challenge to people for young and a lot of ehm asked [pause] you know there's a like on
19228[topic] skills it's not about [topic] out there it starts with yourself and being an aware self
19229and there's a lot of group work in the class and there’s a lot of modules ehm on on the use
19230of self and ehm @@I @@certainly @wasn't @ready for that at that @age so I'd say that I
19231hope their eyes are open to what they're coming in to cuz it's a tough personally
19232emotionally ehm yeah it's very challenging I think it's very challenging at every level
19233personally intellectually ehm emotionally ehm it's quite a lot of self-questioning in it so
19234that's what I'd say it's a ehm and I suppose the other thing is that we have a very
19235diverse intake and and there are things that come with that like mature students have been
19236long but they're not just they're there they're they might be good practitioners but they
19237mightn’t have had ehm they mightn't be as good essay writers and the academics of
19238bringing them on as a challenge ehm and because we have probably also and I say diverse
19239we also have in terms of people who are registered with disability or registered with
19240counseling service we would have a higher number than most courses and what goes with
19241that is a lot of a lot of ehm it impacts on the work like deadlines are a problem ehm I think
19242I've heard we have ehm [pause] you know a really high ratio of of ehm extensions on
19243written submissions people with learning problems I know the disability service think our
19244world can disadvantage people with disability ehm with writing disabilities but we’ve we
19245we pride ourselves on the diversity we pride ourselves on that ehm adversity is a resource
19246if you're going to be working with marginalized populations it's a resource so is lack of
19247adversity@@ a a resource but but yeah it does it does create problems to administration to
19248yeah and if I'm not going too far wandering too far am I know yeah
19249R: yeah no
19250Laurence: yeah but yeah they’re particular problems just the number of people
19251registered with disability counseling service who who just can't meet deadlines who need
19252reasonable accommodations as required by law when they go out on placement whether in
19253a wheelchair whether ehm a visible or an invisible disability or mental health issue ehm it’s
19254quite a a high number of people that we d- work reasonable accommodations for and
19255[pause] placements are a bit surprised when you bring that off us something that is the
19256statutory obligation on them to ehm to give more time to somebody because whatever
19257they’ve arthritis are they have ehm what whatever ehm [pause] so so what do they need
19258they need to be aware they need to know what they're coming into they need to have
19259reasonable stamina because there's there's no real term structure they have terms
19260placements back in it’s a five years squashed into four ehm it's going to be personally
19261challenging ehm there's going to be work at the end of it which is good because they d-
they walk out of here into well paid jobs ehm yeah so that's I don't know if I'm just in a
general sense that’ that's our school yeah we're messy chaotic humans @ @

most of us are @

Laurence: @@good is it uh that wri- writer Schon S-C-H-O-N that I referred to earlier
talked about [discipline] the swampy lowlands and I think it's a good metaphor swampy
lowlands we’re working the swampy lowlands yeah

yeah and so in terms of [institution 1] in general not necessarily in [discipline] what do
you think students need in order to succeed

Laurence: [inhale] [long pause] ehm what do they need in order to succeed [long pause]

people went to college here and one did [discipline] and one did [discipline] and my
daughter did [discipline] [pause] loved it now she always said she never came to

[institution 1] she went to [organization] because she had about six weeks of so many years
on the campus but she got what she wanted and she loved it so that was a very so she yeah
it was like a professional training and in an area she was keen on so it was a very
positive experience my other person has a lot of health issues and was very disappointed
in the quality of teaching in [school] not in [school] but just felt that it was the old
style [pause] person at the top of the room and was saying of primary secondary
education the worst teaching she ever had was @from @the [discipline] School in
[institution 1] ehm I checked that out with others they said oh yeah if you want to do
[discipline] go to [institution 2] ehm so there that's that’s I'm thinking that it's these are just
anecdotal rather than what do you need to succeed when eh y-you need go teaching you
know it's not it's not it’s not always there ehm it seemed ehm strangely enough I've a niece
and nephew from the [country] that one di[d [discipline] here loved every day ev-even
though like my brother is Irish but either this young man's never lived in Ireland before
coming to [institution 1] here and loved it his sister did [discipline] here didn't like it at all
and and it was for sort of drink reason social life reasons of young people she was a
sort of serious-minded girl and didn't like the sort of party scene or the drink scene and felt
quite isolated and just this is not my sort of place and which was an interesting for me to
hear that and I and I imagine that's reflected by other students who social life is done
differently it's going to the theater and it's not a party drinking [pause] social life so that
that was just ehm I think our students one thing they do say is like they are a very diverse
group and they find it highly entertaining that when they go anywhere they’re called
[institution 1] snobs and that entertains them completely ehm because it's that is the brand
of [institution 1] outside of the four walls I think you know and they are on meeting
populations that are in awe of the place [pause] resentful of the place angry with the place
not our sort of social scene social landscape it'll never be accessible to us we wouldn't
even you know so they meet that a lot in in sort of the populations they work with ehm
so what do they need to study here I guess you need to be bright because well
bright it and I know that's a problematic term but to get into [institution 1] tends to be
pretty high points and in the Leaving Cert so you need to be an organized structured
ehm that'd be one thing what do you need to come here ehm yeah you need you’d need that
I think you’d need those sort of good study skills ehm [pause] and and a little bit like the
rugby players there is a sort of sense of well pr- to be the prince and princesses of Ireland
you need to have come through [institution 1] ehm there's a touch of that I think in the
outside now not saying that you know fairly or unfairly but there is I think that's the sort of
brand ehm I guess when you come here you need to keep up that that good study skills
good time management skills ehm [pause] to succeed here yeah funny I'm in such a ghetto
that I don't know what it's like outside my own little ghetto you know yeah except through
nieces or nephews or family connections you know
R: yeah but that's a good perspective to bring and to have as well and it's useful to have
that personal insight as well so ehm now especially because of how diverse of a group you
have here in [discipline] um how much of a factor do you think language plays in academic
success
Laurence: [long pause] language eh eh yeah
R: yeah it could be language in terms of um being well I don't want to lead you too much
but being being a native speaker or having English as your first language it could be
language in terms of having English as one of your languages etc. um so how much of a
factor does that impact academic success
Laurence: hm [long pause] ehm yeah well I'm thinking I mean that piece that
I'm trying to get out of my head is that learning disability is so present in our in our
program that when you say by language that's what I think of learning disability
there’s quite a high number of people are registered with learning disability and that shows
itself without- quite quite prominently and ehm it is it's been probably ehm [pause] that and
that’s ehm for anyone you know with any language related problems this must be a hard
course because it's a very high word eh they produce volumes of work every single year
the students so that if if written communication is is isn't with a lot of effort for
somebody that doesn't that this is a tough course I would think [discipline] too ehm once
upon a time was all about getting up close and personal with people in adversity and now
it's like [discipline] in the sense of it's it's a process they call that the defensive practice
defensive [discipline] it's sort of defensive [discipline] it didn't happen if it's not evidenced
writing so the actual word count in the job eh eh is probably 50% of the time spent on
the job and the time with service users is about half of what it once was on that account so
anyone [pause] with they struggle with language is is is is must be quite a struggle in
[discipline] practice eh with the volumes of writing case notes and understanding
writing in all [pause] platforms contexts court reports which are quite a big piece of
[professional] work now ehm quite you know and knowing the formality of court reports
and the formal terms with to address ehm so so anyone with any disability there’s there’s a
lot of hurdles in [discipline] training and in the [discipline] practice eh in terms of it not
in your first language ehm first thing that comes to mind is a geography student told me
this which was helpful [pause] I find like that woman I just supervised her Nigerian accent
to really tune in because it was a thick accent and I was saying that to a geography
student that I've worked with somebody from Zimbabwe somebody Malawi they're much
softer accents the lady next door's from Kenya much softer accent ehm and and he told me
interesting that because there’s enough Nigerians in Ireland that you can still stay in the
circle of Nigerians that they tend to hold their accents more than other Africans and if that
that seemed to make sense to me because I've I've I've just in oral communication haven't
had a difficulty I'm thinking of somebody who was here a number of years ago who
Zimbabwean and somebody K-Kenyan and somebody Malawian and I didn't have a
problem with having to really strain to understand ehm [long pause] yeah this like I'm
thinking I have a Croatian student ehm on the [discipline] course a few ehm Nigerians but
they've been here a good while but ehm it's it yeah there are there are difficulties I'll tell
you where it arises and um as well as saying all that stuff about them it just sounds like a
big challenge to ask somebody to to be in a job that’s so communication based around
orally and written ehm that when I place students in placement [pause] I can hear the tone
in somebody's voice change when I say this person is from Nigeria oh oh oh okay and right
if I say @@ this is probably the reverse of what is often it's a forty year old man oh oh
okay right I was expecting the young white middle class 23 year old female now that isn't
verbalized but that's that's em so [pause] they’re general points rather than focused on what
you're asking ehm [name]
R: yeah but it would still be you would feel that simply because they're not necessarily
Irish that they might face some roadblocks or some sort of difficulties in terms of
completing the course or interacting with in the placements etcetera
Laurence: yeah I think I said I think it like I’ve heard ehm I think I think so yeah I think so
19367ehm I think I think it's more of uphill than it is for majority culture Irish students who it has
19368to be it w-w- working at it working in written communication at a sophisticated level in
19369something that you weren't always wasn’t always your language that sounds to me an
19370enormous piece to take on ehm and I guess too in terms of oral communication it's it's not
19371it's not the content it's the whole you know ehm eh just cultural [pause] understandings and
19372misunderstandings and I know ehm the one student a black woman I was a tutor to was
19373saying to me [pause] that she didn't easily work with black clients because her authority
19374was rejected where it wasn't as much by white people because when you're in that job I g- I
19375get it you're you're in [discipline] and you're involved in assessing whether we can [action]
19376or not where she was saying in with pe- other black people it’s sorry what are you doing in
19377this role like you're so the that was interesting for me to know that that was it was easy for
19378her I hadn't realized that but I just found that quite insightful to how these dynamics play
19379out ehm yeah ehm so I would think yeah enormous difficulties ehm and and maybe getting
19380easier but but enormous difficulties in terms of just [pause] in practice in written
19381communication yeah
19382R: mm-hmm and what about okay so we've kind of covered international disability
19383students and what about those that will come say like they the #richer students or through
19384the access program etc. would they be impacted by language in any way
19385Laurence: yeah ehm I I I ehm and it’s the term language in a meaning in a generic way
19386R: yeah generic use of language communication so it could be communicating with people
19387on placements while communicating with lecturers communicating with other students it
19388could be written etc.
19389Laurence: yeah yeah oh yes yes is the answer yeah there would be and I suppose ehm like I
19390wants to like I think it can be quite a big cultural jump to be if you're if you're from a
19391family that you used to feel part of the expression queueing for a living and suddenly
19392you're on the other side of a desk ehm that's a big cultural bridge to have crossed and
19393owning the authority that goes with that role is really difficult for people who who’s aren’t
19394in socialized into it and and so that sort of authority piece of the role and in terms of how it
19395shows itself in language I I mean shows itself in person and in and in around authority it
19396shows itself in person in less confidence less ehm it shows itself in language I suppose
19397colloquialisms ehm bad grammar ehm in the written communication that like I came
19398@@@there’s one that just really amused me hi judge for a court report and signed off
19399cheers [name] and that's not what you can hand up in the court ehm and ehm yeah so does
show itself it does definitely show itself the grammar ehm the colloquialisms ehm the the
using authority [pause] um yeah it does show itself yeah yeah
R: and would you notice um kind of quite a difference between this group of students and
the students who come from a different or come from different country so like the Kenyan
or the Croatian would there be so much of a difference in the impact of language on their
academic success in the two groups or is it kind of the same [pause] is that clear
Laurence: ehm
R: like would you find one group is affected or their academic success is affected by
language more than the other group
Laurence: [long pause] ehm well if I say that the 70-plus percent who come through the
CAO and they come in here on 470 points from their leaving cert so they are well schooled
in [pause] essay writing so tends not to be terribly problematic even though we don't have
a module on writing per se but they they pick it up and run with it ehm they get endless
practice over the four years those for whom writing is problematic ehm yeah people with
with it’s a disability invisible disability around writing ehm particularly then as well
as them would be yeah people who are from disadvantaged backgrounds and and generally
the Europeans are non-Irish if say Europeans US on the masters ehm the Europeans tend to
have well I’m thinking of a particular one not a language problem that very maybe
internationally schooled in US people schooled you know in English language so that
doesn't present itself particularly ehm eh lack of local knowledge might present itself but
not just not knowing the sort of eh that all the states agencies etc. just lack of familiarity
but that's quickly acquired ehm but yeah those who who for whom the writing has
been problematic have tended to be Nigerians and have tended to be people from
disadvantaged backgrounds um yeah yeah
R: okay so yeah so are you aware of any support offered to international students and I'm
going to include also students from disadvantaged backgrounds in your department or the
wider college
Laurence: [long pause] I’d have some awareness not not I’d have some awareness rather
than a thorough awareness of what's out there yeah yeah some awareness yeah I do hear
such a staff meetings about some other colleagues saying I've referred somebody to
learning support or I've referred somebody to study skills they slightly all the support
services blend in my head to disability learning support ehm ehm counseling service they
sort of blend a bit in my head I have a fair bit of contact with disability service of a fair bit
of contact with the student health service because everyone wants to know what
vaccinations students have had when they go out on @placements everyone wants to know
the garda vetting records and the our our part non-traditional students present more
problematically there than other students ehm ehm but yeah are they slightly blend the
other support services slightly blend in my head
R: okay and do you think that the support that international non-traditional students receive
is adequate
Laurence: again without having the very thorough knowledge I'd hazard to guess and say
it's not adequate I'd hazard to guess it’s not because there seems to be [pause] ehm yeah
there seems to be people who are struggling with writing yeah yeah yeah and I I this might
saying is you know maybe I need to take some agency around and start to refer people
more actively or my colleagues need to because I am tuned in to disability and invisible
disabilities for all sorts of reasons ehm I'm tuned in to vaccinations for all sorts of reasons
I'm tuned in to garda vetting for all sorts of reasons I'm probably really not as on top of
Learning Support as I might be and and it’s yeah yeah
R: yeah but just from what you see you would hazard to say probably not
Laurence: probably not because I I I don't hear it as widely spoken of as the others I don't
get emails from places in the way I do about oh did you see this person’s garda vetting or
this person hasn't got a hepatitis vaccine what you sending them to a [organization] for you
know I've all that comes dancing into my computer
R: right the things that are really impacting the placement
Laurence: yeah yeah
R: um ehm so I would say I'm gonna skip those I don't think that would apply um are you
aware of the type of entry assessment that international students whose language is not
English and those who have not studied at an Irish institution before are you aware of any
English language entry assessment that they have to take before being admitted to
[institution 1]
Laurence: barely
R: barely ok do you have any opinions or feelings about what you know of that
Laurence: I heard a mention of that at a selection meeting in the last fortnight we have um
100 people applied for 20 places on our Masters in [discipline] program and ehm [pause]
the somewhere for EU and somewhere for non-EU and it was mentioned about somebody
had to do some English test that so I heard that I had there was a Malawian student ehm
here a number years ago who ehm um not Malawi ehm the place that had the genocide not
Malawi
R: Rwanda
Laurence: Rwanda yeah Rwanda and she had lots of languages and ehm I remember her telling me she had gone for some sort of testing and [pause] even after passing the bar struggled cuz it was about her fourth language and her father had been I think if he wasn't a president of of Rwanda he was vice president and they were hunted people all over the world and uhm she had an amazing life history but I remember her saying saying about her English you know [pause] something about coming here and having to do an English test so some bare-bare-bare

R: bare minimum

Laurence: bare minimum yeah yeah entry level awareness on it

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

Laurence: yeah

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

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

R: right so they don’t need to take

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

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

Laurence: what should they

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

Laurence: hmm ehm the thought in my head which isn’t helpful@ my grandfather was a veterinary surgeon and he did his course through Latin in Scotland ehm and at the time that was the language of the universities uh that's a big help the the universities doing their...
teaching through Latin ehm which made you know the globalization well more more more possible [pause] yeah [click] I I I haven't had enough a close enough encounter with it but I would think to be able to like it's certainly for our program you’d need good sophisticated knowledge of oral and written English to build ehm pass a program like our program because it's so communication based I mean [discipline] and I think when I say communication based it's it's so culturally based too because ehm the big piece that we try to do with students is that sort of what we call sociological imagination that they can they can set a person in context so that my private pains aren't just my private pains they are the there's there's bigger than what I carry that's in context ehm and and that sort of to be able to figure all that out to be able to write about the sort of all the different the micro meso and macro context and be able to join them all up you’d n- you’d need to be pretty good at reading pretty good at writing ehm so I I would think people would need to be at the same power as an English speaker really to [pause] because otherwise you're possibly setting somebody up for a hard time for a a a a bad experience ehm if [pause] yeah I think so I think you'd need to have fluency I think ehm yeah fluency yeah R: and so if there were the same type of program for non-traditional students so students through access programs or even um disabilities etc. who may have problems in language uh what would you hope to see on that kind of course Laurence: uhm [long pause] let me think I'm doing all this thinking for the first time Laurence: it is it is a lot of that I've never thought about this before but um [pause] this is such a [discipline] thing to say it needs to be not stigmatizing it needs to be non-classist because you know vernacular is fine it's just in the settings [pause] formal record settings you don't say hi judging you don't say cheers [name] yeah ehm ehm so ehm I suppose [long pause] so some sort of eh and probably it probably comes up more on the written communication that that some practice some instruction on on the expectations of functional writing academic writing and then professional writing in you know in in the sort of places that students ehm will have their careers and and will have their placements that there would be they’d be skilled up around it ehm that they'd be instructed around it that they'd be supported around it because it's not [pause] it's not beyond anyone you know it's more I think about building a bridge from their good language skills to this is how the world you're going into sort of how they they express themselves is is that R: yep yeah can you expand on that more at all so like how would you build that bridge
Laurence: okay see I like the idea right President Clinton was your friend by looking
#innocent and a scarf around our friend Hillary last week this day last week in fact and he
said he wanted the American cabinet to look like the American people I like that our
discipline course looks like the Irish people in its current presentation ehm so I'm I'm
glad too that because ehm because there's there's some process of identification and some
process of being closer to people's lives and there's all sorts of value in that and [pause] so
but to be effective ehm to navigate all the different agencies and ehm eh people also need I
think f- you know good written communication I I mean it nearly nearly could be it
nearly could be a module first year or an ongoing module like if it's a drop-in center
somewhere around the college [pause] this issue will will somebody attend where if it's
maybe normalized as the first year ehm module you know an elective or maybe a core
module just on writing skills formal writing functional writing academic writing ehm
professional writing writing for different platforms ehm [pause] yeah it might it just might
diminish people's struggles that they I think they carry on their own is that @
R: yeah that's perfect actually there's a lot of comments I'm saving for after the interview
Laurence: mmm
R: cuz I don't want to be like ahh good um but so this is kind of my my last two questions
actually um so what do you hope that your students walk away with or walk away feeling
when they leave the program
Laurence: [inhale] [long pause] I I always I meet first-year students and ask them what
brought them into [discipline] and I'm [pause] struck by how many people have that
impulse to put simply touch people's lives touch [pause] lift burdens off people make a
better world so that sorta seems to bring people into [discipline] and lots of other places but
it does it's a cluster a majority cluster and then some people who didn't get the points for
[discipline] and didn’t get them for [discipline] @ that's a yeah so there’s that there’s that
and everyone all is valid and I welcome them no matter what their journey was I was a
[professional] but [professional] was better paid so that's why I'm here and lots of different
things people say but but that impulse for others are care or humanitarian impulse I hope
that they will feel they have now coming out of the College I hope they’ll feel not only do I
want to make a difference actually know how to make a difference I know how to
intervene I know how to be effective I actually do know now how to ehm lift burdens of
people and contribute to people's fulfilment well-being without diminishing the person
without it being charity ehm eh with leaving the person feeling better ehm so I sort of hope
that people come out with understanding context ehm ehm and how to how to actually
affect context in terms of different levels and also had to leave people feeling better in
terms of you know ehm counseling skills therapeutic skills ehm and and ehm politically and bigger structures that they know how to navigate them to use them ehm beneficially and understand the process of change that small marginal change ehm and bigger level change and they're confident around at all and that they remain open and that they remain curious and that they remain learning ehm that they don't stagnate they don't get routinized they don't get procedurized ehm [pause] and that they live sort of authentic lives

R: yeah and do you think that they walk away with this or can you say Laurence: I think they know something's happened they know something's happened they've had a big experience there they've been rattled ehm I don't think for most more feel like they've been hit by a truck @ @ @ and and and ehm or purposefully not not destructively and ehm I [long pause] and they'd be different for being here ehm and wiser [long pause] yeah I I I you know I think generally students yeah they're they're [pause] and we do evaluate their placement experience and they're generally pleased with what they get generally pleased with what they get yeah I got a card there ehm I was saying I told you that I didn’t I @ @

R: your class is gas @ @

Laurence: @ the the the that’s new

R: that's being transcribed @

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

R: oh it is yeah @ @

Laurence: it’s a new category @@

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

Laurence: ehm I suppose if I I well one is I had a little energy dip somewhere and then I came back into it so I'm just acknowledging that I don't know of you noticed but I noticed no eh no but concentrate [name] ehm that was one thing the other thing is that [long pause] the reason this hasn't slapped me in the face before is because I've only done my thinking since [pause] you emailed me ehm is [long pause] in the way that I said all the other things are higher awareness the vetting the vaccinations the ehm eh disability and you know I'm attentive to those and have a consciousness about all those ehm [long pause] is is probably the the that we don't have many people who who aren’t native English speakers that cuz otherwise it would have been I think I would have been more alert to and I am through this
process I will be more alert to it and I will be better tuned in to like how is it for people like
this young woman different Croatia but I think she was internationally school she seems to have very good English but for others who are maybe older who have come you
just be more attentive to like is there anything we can do to help you with your written
ehm yeah I think so that's so it's so it's been an awakening process for me and a
consciousness-raising process for me and I'll be more alert to very very small numbers
because it is really very small numbers ehm that and and it's interesting making
the contact between people whose English is sort of street English and that that's in your
focus as well as people yeah
R: well yeah that's um I'm gonna keep the recorder on for this but because I think it might
produce um but what I was going to say is um Teresa Lillis uhm she is an academic in the
UK that does work with academic literacies and most of her work is based in mature
students um students from lower social class lower economic class non-traditional students
and uhm everything that you were saying not necessarily that hi judge is wrong it's that it's
not correct for that context and a lot of her work focuses on helping students navigate
through that about when they can use the words that they want to why they use certain
words in certain places and what they gain from it and that idea has been transferred over
into English for academic purposes where English for academic purposes is moving away
from just from non-native English speakers and towards being for everyone kind of
acknowledging that everyone has different backgrounds everyone comes from a different
place um even people who go through you know the Irish education system straight
through may not have a good grasp on navigating academia or navigating the culture and
the different institution specific expectations and it's more about helping with that than
saying here's a grammar rule learn it yeah yes it was interesting when you were bringing
that up
Laurence: yeah yeah yeah so that is interesting yeah to to sort of the lang- it's almost like
over there this is how they speak when you're part of the court system you know they they
say here's a grammar rule learn it yeah yes it was interesting when you were bringing
that up
R: yeah yeah so it's like here's the court system this is how they speak and so why do we
modify our speech when we're speaking to them what do we gain from it and then when
we're with um in your context where was someone trying to help them sort their [task] you
know how do we speak with them and why what are we gaining from it so do we go back
into our vernacular to make them feel more comfortable and at ease or do we maintain kind
of this formality to establish authority etc. all of that um and helping students figure out
when to do what and why and be able to navigate that
Laurence: yeah yeah yeah well that's interesting a nice way of doing it because I was
saying about not stigmatizing and sort of normalizing and that's exactly that it's like I do
this thing with the students just telling a bit about themselves in introduction and and and
just explain to the class everything is valid like whatever people have to say is valid my
life story is your life story is and your life story is and there's no big deal that you're in
reception center for ten years and that you’re in in some posh school it doesn't matter like
just let's hear it you know and it's it's versions of that isn’t it all all valid all English or all
any language valid but in this situation if you want to be effective that choice of words
would get your further
Laurence: and do you know another thing that struck me in this exercise [pause] the ghetto
I live in [long pause] you know
Laurence: this that corridor [pause] the corridor this building @
Laurence: y-you know like w-what's it like it like walk in [street] I went down to insomnia
near the dental hospital and had a coffee and a sandwich at 12 I'm walking in [street] this is
just so gorgeous absolutely so gorgeous and you know and I I do it six times a year like it
is a ghetto so I don't know how it is for other students often because I know my own [long
pause] family students ehm I know them less well that I used to cuz the numbers have got
bigger but but ehm what the [institution 1] broader experiences like or from what goes on
in different disciplines like linguistics ehm eh [pause] is sort of new information for me I
mean I just just struck with that sort of ghetto living you know living in your own
discipline and and not not knowing what's happening more broadly in [institution 1] ehm
so the the the the the main the themes and the changing eh term structure and
lots of those things slightly pass me by ehm and I'm looking for placements and thinking of
my timetable and you know in a very small life @ @
R: yeah well it’s you know everyone has so much going on that if it doesn't directly impact
something now [pause] then sometimes it's just like okay I’ll [pause] okay I'll deal with
that later
Laurence: yeah yeah
R: right now I need to make sure that I don't send someone who doesn't have a vaccine for
hepatitis to a drug center like
Laurence: yeah bad idea
R: yeah that's more of an important thing that oh we're gonna start two weeks earlier
Laurence: yeah yeah it is that it's like this morning I left the house and the postman had just dropped two letters in I said now I haven't a headspace to take in what's in those they can wait it’s so that you sort of push things back that aren’t aren’t pressing and immediate R: yes yeah and also um you were saying having writing courses for first year they do that in the US mandatory writing classes were all students for the whole first year of university it’s university writing
Laurence: and I think it could be helpful
R: I think so too
Laurence: yeah I think it would be helpful yeah because it's a a very different style of writing I did ask my daughter who did [language discipline] she's away this at the moment but I did ask her last week about meeting you and what was her experience and she said it was third year before I got a handle on [language] like a very good [language] but what what are they looking for like I was in third year before I got it like nobody no- I could have done with somebody saying we're not a language course or a literature course we're a [language] literature course and so we just assume you [language] [long pause] and and what we need what we want in essays is you know
R: this this this
Laurence: yes because because she's smart and bright and very very very good leaving cert ehm having done a very limited house of schooling through ill health but but just it would have you know sometimes these things do make a difference and you just have to figure it out for yourself but it it ehm so that yeah she woulda liked that I think just this is this this would’ve helped yeah
R: yeah yeah
Laurence: ehm I think the [discipline] school by contrast is a sort of little loving they all love one another and they’re all very informal and accessible and [pause] yeah you can just knock on somebody's door and say what do you what do you want in that essay
R: yeah yeah so it's definitely yeah differences in disciplines and departments based on even the nature of the academic work but also the environment
Laurence: yeah
R: alright do you mind if I transcribe this last little bit that we just
Laurence: not no no no not a bit
R: okay @@
Laurence: no secrets in it
R: I just wanted to make sure before I'm gonna turn it off now

Linda

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

Linda: sure um so my title is um an assistant professor in [discipline] uh but uh in terms of my uh interaction with students and particularly non-English speaking students I’m I'm the director of the masters in [discipline] and yeah so it's one of the more popular master's programs it's relatively new it's we're in our third year um now so I was there from the start I designed the the program from scratch and I've seen the three uh intakes um over the past three years so uh we're getting there this hiccups uh as with all new programs or relatively new programs uh but our numbers are increasing year-on-year I mean we've had we've had no problem of filling the program um we've had to actually cap and close applications early um so um and every year our our targets for want of a better word that we're given by uh I guess the Dean of the Executive Committee is increasing as well so I think uh uh I think one of the contributing factors to why this English competency thing is so important is because of the large class sizes ehm and when we have large class sizes you have um a relatively large amount of group work and and and also any large class sizes um students that may not necessarily have the skills that they need or be at the standard that they need to be can kind of disguise uhm themselves and and get through because it's it’s not a class of 30 where you know if the student is struggling you can pick them out and you can help them in a class of 75 which I have at the moment uhm they can go on undetected unless it's actually brought to me as an issue so that's where I'm coming from in terms of as being a director for three years I've seen the problem becoming increasingly more problematic ehm because of the growth in one of the reasons is because of the growth in student numbers so yeah the the director of a master's program I've learned a lot in the three years I was new to the role I had only taught pos-post-grad level I'd never managed a program let alone designed one so I'm learning a lot as well but I do know um our students are really liking the program eh but both for non-native speakers of English and native speakers of English ehm English proficiency is a problem all right and it's not a problem that’d I feel we can solve tomorrow but I definitely think there's more scope for for improvements there and I think the English language competency building program if that is the correct term eh will be one resource that would be really welcomed uh not just by myself but by the other directors in the school

R: yeah um so can you tell me about the the work that's required of your students
Linda: yeah [click] I um so again I don't micromanage every- there's 12 taught modules on the program and therefore 12 module leaders or lecturers of each of those modules I I I don't have the time or the wherewithal to micromanage each of those modules and the content and the assessment but I do take a general overview of when when module leaders send me in their module descriptors I look at the assessment uh to see what is required of the students and [pause] yeah more or less I would say 90 to 100 percent of modules are assessed with by some form of individual written component sorry individual component and group component and within those there would be a mixture of I know right now in the program uh there are modules that have your traditional essay uh writing uh or group oral presentations group written reports uh group debates so there's like an alive motion and you have to kind of think on your feet and and so that can be tricky al-although a genius way of assessing and really interesting for students and it's just another skill it's not just like your pre-prepared oral presentation it's in the moment being able to make an argument and justified and I myself I used a reflective journal um as an essay so a totally different style of writing I said everything you've you've been told to do in terms of academic writing forget about that leave it at the door so your know there's there's a lot required of the students we assess them in a variety of different ways but we do think that adds to their learning obviously um and there's always a pedagogical reason or motion put forward for why we're assessing that way but there is a a huge scope uh in terms of how we assess them and the modes of assessment and I think that's a good thing but it also adds challenges to g- to the students so there they would be the main ones I guess but in every module I always ensure that there is um [click] there is at least at a bare minimum it would be a 50/50 split in terms of group work and individual ideally th- the weighting for the individual components would weigh more than the group work and again that's to eliminate what I mentioned earlier about kind of hanging on people's coattails and and and not you can get through by other people's work which again is not fair so we try to eliminate that by having that breakdown um and it's not it's not perfect it's not a perfect solution but it but it helps and and then one other um way that I didn't mention is participation [click] and again I as our number we've had a major problem in one module this year and it's nothing really to do with the module itself or the assessment itself it's uh it's very very difficult toooo monitor on a daily basis or you know a weekly basis in each lecture uh 75 students level of participation um and I know that module leaders are very loath to offer marks just for turning up you know or maybe putting your hand up once and asking a question asking a question again um for most module leaders today it doesn't count for part- so students tend to be quite unhappy uh with their participation grades and
there are students in the classroom from who I've had personal experience of this cuz they
not only am I director of the program I make sure that I teach them as well so that I get to
know the students um there are students from one end of the semester to the other end of
the semester I won't have heard them speak [pause] and that is despite me trying to probe
them and and you know I I I you know I I I try not to pick on people you know that that
form of method that we tend to use for undergraduates where nobody opens their mouth or
nobody has an opinion because in postgrad classes there will always be somebody who
opinion which is fantastic but it just makes it easier for those people that are whether it's a
confident thing whether it's a competency thing it's probably a mixture uh for for non-
English speakers or non-native English speakers it's that bit more difficult to put your hand
up and say you know that's my opinion on something because not only are they concerned
about whether their opinion is right or they're concerned about how they're expressing it so
it's really really I understand that's really really difficult so I'm loath now to accept [click]
participation even if it's only ten percent as a mode of assessment in in a in a program of
that size and with so many students struggling with their English proficiency so I don't
think it's fair um I think it's easy marks for those people that are very competent in
speaking English in front of a a public audience and for those who just are totally uh out of
their depth and I really a for want of a better word scared to to say what they think
because they certainly do have an opinion it's just sometimes it can be just a matter of that
they're not able to communicate it in a way that they want to so that's it's really I find it
unfair so I'm trying to move away from that until we can solve this English proficiency
problem

R: yeah um so all of your master's students would need to complete a dissertation is that
right
Linda: yes
R: could you tell me a little bit about what the dissertation entails what kind of research
they're doing
Linda: yeah we give them an option um in the [discipline] school or I think on most
programs there's an option anyway that they can do the traditional academic dissertation
which is you pick an area of literature you do your review you find a gap you go
ahead and conduct primary research whatever that might be quantitative qualitative you
analyze it and you write up your findings and it's the traditional format but we also give
them the option of doing a live company project ehm which is essentially and the live
company project is is less uhh formatted or less structured I would guess in terms of what
we are looking for them for both forms of of final research project we call it the learning
objectives are the same I mean we want them to understand how to identify a prob- a research problem identify a gap in in our knowledge ehm [click] select an appropriate methodology to try and address that problem you know all of them mai- the basic skills of social science research are the same for both but in one it's a hypothetical or or an area of literature or theory that there is a gap and in the company project it's just a pain point that a company that they have been able to get access to are experiencing and so they're similar and they're different ehm but I guess in one the the academic writing the referencing and stuff would probably be that little bit more imperative because they have to do a complete and a fully developed literature review whereas if they're doing a company project the lit review they have to establish or show that they've engaged rel- relevant literature it doesn't have to be as in-depth as the the uh traditional dissertation would have to be uhm but for the company project their strategic recommendations and their findings need to be brought out more and teased out from a practitioner point of view so there's differences in the writing style I would say and maybe the structure of the final document but the requirements are the same the work effort that's required is the same and the learning objectives should be are the same and should be achieved by both so that's that's really it's a 30 credit component of a 90 credit program so it’s quite significant yeah R: yeah and um and so then can you describe to me the general structure of the lectures so what happens inside of the classroom Linda: yes okay we moved recently @from we used to have four hour lectures and they just it was felt by all that it wasn't conducive to a proper learning environment people were just dozing off um it was very mundane and tedious for the module leaders to try and capture someone's attention even no matter how interested they're in a subject four hours is a long time to be listening to people so we’ve reduced the class time the individual class time down to three hour to three-hour slots [click] um module leaders again have a bit of autonomy when it comes to how they deliver within that three hours a lot of a lot of module leaders including myself we break it up between you know interactive group work we set them a task we do the traditional lecture style where we kind of dictate to them content ehm a mix of video a mix of guests speech uh guest speakers and so yeah it’s a three hour slot but ehm then within those within that three hours it can be the module leader giving the lecture or the students actively participating and that active participation might require speaking in public whether it's a uh debates like I mentioned I know the debate assessment happens within class time ehm and then in other in other modules uh uh at least in one class or maybe across the board ehm [click] students will be presenting work as well so it can be a mixture uh they should we try to make them as interactive as possible
but as I said when you've 75 students over three hours it can be difficult for that interaction
to come out but we try our best yea
R: and what would the preparation for the students be for lectures would they have
assigned //readings
Linda: yeah
R: would they have discussion questions
Linda: for most eh I would say [sigh] a safe bet would be to say for all of the modules
there's assigned reading and for others there is a lot so that's coming back in some module
discussions that they find the reading a bit overwhelming and I've had to go and had
discussions with module leaders and just say is it necessary to have all of those are there
core readings and auxiliary readings that they can do after and we've had these
discussions but eh because of just the nature of [discipline] I mean there's some case
studies that they may have to have read in advance as well eh but yeah a lot of reading and
the reading normally is is required of them in advance of attending lecture so yeah reading
really is the main thing that they need to do before they come into the class
R: okay um I'm going kind of back to the assessment um would it be normal for them to be
given a topic for for the individual written assessments or what they kind of need to come
up with their own topic
Linda: ummm I I guess it's a it would probably be a mixture of both maybe more
towards them uh being given a a prescribed topic however that topic and how detailed and
specific that topic is can vary I mean module leaders can I purposely keep mine broad
because I like them to be able to kind of think independently ehm and so some some in
some modules they'll be giving a very specific brief uhm and then in others they'll be given
kind of a general brief and this and then they need to figure out for themselves what way
they want to do it I would say the main uh [pause] assessment that they undertake that is
where they decide or have to make a decision on what it is they're going to do is the
dissertation they find they're very very uncomfortable with that I find across the board I
think they'd rather uh from my experience they'd rather a two-page detailed 50 bullet
pointed brief rather than a two sentence or a very clear short paragraph on this is what I
would like you to do they don't like unstructured they prefer the template format of
assessment which I I I and probably most other module leaders despise uh and you know a
lot of them find it quite difficult to and I don't know whether it's a case that they're coming
straight from their undergrad and they're quite uncomfortable with thinking for themselves
and and making a decision and just going with it with conviction I don't [pause] a lot of
them not all a lot of them are very uncomfortable with deciding their own topics for assessment if they're asked to do that is what I've found in general

R: yeah um so then how would you assess academic success

Linda: [click] [sharp inhale] academic success in terms of of the students

R: yeah

Linda: [click] okay yeah like we [exasperated exhale] I would always ask that when module leaders are de- designing their assessment that they not only relate their module the learning outcome the assessment to their module learning outcomes but also to the program level learning goals which we have I think there's four or five of them I designed myself I did a lot of work in putting them there and what I believed that every student who has undergone a full time intensive masters in [discipline] should know or should at least have skills and competence in so those program level learning goals we've all these terminology here it's quite annoying uh ne- I think module learning objectives should align with program level learning goals and for me if that if that were to happen and students felt that through their assessment uh they were ticking boxes on both of those that would be academic [pause] achievement or a success in my view it's quite difficult to measure it's quite difficult to put a metric on academic success even the term success is gonna be very different from one student to the other you know getting through the program in one piece would be success for one student whereas nothing short of a distinction will be would be you know a failure if they weren't to get that for other students so again they set their own expectatio...
where the problem is so I guess [pause] yeah [sigh] I I I I can't really answer that question
about you know is that what's that one thing how students measure their own you know
academic success it's different for everybody
R: right yeah and so um for yourself personally if if and when you do get those
assessments from students and you're marking them what are you really looking for what
differentiates say first from a second class
Linda: okay yeah I guess I'm looking for what I what I really and I make it
very very clear to students I really don't want them to regurgitate [pause] what I've told
them or even what they read in a journal article okay if it's an entire summary of a journal
article [pause] great you read the article and you and you can remember it what I want to
see is [their] interpretation of the content so really [pause] and it's why I kind of use the I use
the reflective journal form of assessments so that they had to after every class they had one
free class where they could choose that they didn't want to p-submit an entry ehm but they
have for the others they had to and I simply ask them to tell me what they believed was
their most salient learning and they hated it at the start they hat- they absolutely hated it
they came to me with emails saying do you think that this was my most salient learning
and I had to turn out and say look at that question that you've asked me I can't possibly tell
you what your most salient learning was so I think being introspective and [pause] looking
inward and saying what did I take from that so not not forming an argument that they think
I want to hear you know the wording was excellent and the theory that was presented was
brilliant and it's really if that's the case that's fine but you need to tell me why you know so
I'm looking for critical thinking I'm looking for independence of thought and I'm looking
for interpretation of material as opposed to description of material so [pause] a lot of
students that can write well like English is their first language and they can write
exceptionally well in an academic style and are so flabbergasted when they don't get the
grade that they think they deserve because they to them they've presented a perfect or near
perfect description of the module content or summary of a core reading eh or combination
of core readings uh and they're shocked when I say that's not what I was looking for so I
guess there is probably the biggest discrepancy ehm I think maybe at undergrad even at
second level their ability to to to um synthesize and and remember material is an important
skill to learn but I think that a master's-level in particular they have to go far beyond that
because they're gonna be asked to think on their own feet when they go into the real world
so that's what I try and look for it's there it's that independence of thought is is which is
difficult to get across an assessment I know that but ideally if we're living in an ideal world
that's what I'd be looking for from students
R: okay brilliant um so would students have access to rubrics guidelines uh handbooks that would describe assessment and what's expected before completing
Linda: yes so uh every every module has an attached um module descriptor okay so within that it's the how the module relates to their overall program eh the learning outcomes of as I said that for that module the assessment break down most module leaders will then have a separate [cough] uh more detailed breakdown of the of the assessment brief ehm [click] and uh what I would expect in an assessment brief is that students are told um what on what criteria they're being assessed or what the module leader is looking for etc. etc.
Linda: and that and again students demand that and I wh- I wh- and they expected it and they demand it if it's not there they will ask for it ehm I guess the timing could be a little bit better I mean [pause] we're such a big program as I said there's twelve taught modules [pause] we don't have the p- we're growing the [discipline] school is growing and the full time staff numbers are growing but not quick enough to match the student numbers so a lot of our module leaders are adjuncts okay or external professors from other universities that fly in and fly home and so they're not and a lot of them are given the nature of [discipline] as a discipline ehm a lot of them are just ex- you know industry experts consultants and and they're not really used to the way of life of of a university and an educational institution so they get kind of a bit conflustered or whatever it might be with all of our red tape and our you know you have to design your assessment like this and and micromanaging all of those adjuncts and all those kind of non non academics as well is quite difficult so I what I'm saying is the level the level of detail that students are provided in terms of rubrics in terms of assessment criteria in terms of a breakdown of what they're looking what the module leaders are looking for varies across each module depending on the lecturer's style depending on again whether they're an academic a non-academic whether they're a full-time member here who are used to what we expect or not so there's a lot of variation which is not it's not ideal for students but I don't see around about I don't have 12 full-time staff members in all of the areas on my program here in the [discipline] school so I have to go elsewhere
R: right right okay and so this is gonna be quite a general question but in general what do you feel that students need in order to succeed at [institution 1]
Linda: uhh to succeed
R: well in your program
Linda: in the program
R: yeah
Linda: yeah okay I think they need I think the number one uhh skill that they will need is self-discipline or self-motivation I mean [pause] they can turn up to class and they can submit their work ehm but if they're not I mean no one is monitoring them really um we take attendance um but I mean turning up to class and paying attention in class are two very very different things so they have to have a desire and a hard work ethic to get through I tell all of the students prospective students on open days people that inquire via email that aren't haven't even applied yet I'm very open and frank that this is a full-time these are the words I use a full time intense program and so I let like they should be very aware of that and if they're not they're definitely made aware of it in orientation where kind of we tell them the importance of that whole aspect of self-determination self-motivation to work hard for a short relatively short period of time so that you can reap the rewards that w- that's what we say ehm so I do that's one thing that they need um they definitely need to be able to speak the language and again and that's not just because of the nature of the conversation we're having it's definitely a necessity I mean the majority of students that come here from overseas are looking to stay here at least stay the UK or stay in Europe and [pause] they may um have found a way and I don't mean this in any negative way I can understand why they're doing it as I said earlier ehm they may have found a way to kind of loophole the system in terms of meeting our entry requirements to get by without having the actual standard of English needed they'll be sussed out in two minutes in the real world when they're asked to send an internal memo or an email and they can't they can't do that which is quite basic um skill and my heart goes out to them if any negative way I can understand why they're doing it as I said earlier ehm they may have found a way of speaking a single word that was asked of them and it was just horrifying for the student involved for the panel that were there and this student had managed to get through an entire two semesters on our program undetected that she wasn't able to speak a word of English essentially so you know I hate when that happens and I I think our entry requirements need to be [pause] more more strict and but for the benefit of those students mainly you know it's no skin off my back if they pay the- uh except that I can't sleep at night sometimes I bring the problem home I mean I'm saying we're taking their money and they don't get through they don't get their masters they may leave with the postgraduate diploma which is not what they want it doesn't happen all the time it's a very very few occasions but it does happen so something isn't working but I also think there's a responsibility on students who are applying to an English-speaking program who have been told by our recruitment officers who are trained and you know well versed in telling
students the requirements that will be asked of them on the program that if they still decide knowing themselves that they don't have the English that they should have and they still apply there is a level of responsibility that they have to take themselves as well so it's a balance I think we need to get better at screening candidates who may struggle or may suffer or may get lost on the program and be able to fish them out before if they're on the program we need to fish them out early so that we can help them and provide them for with additional resources for instance the re-resources that you guys provide um but if they aren't already on the program and we think that they would struggle severely then we shouldn't accept them just from on a moral standpoint just yeah moral and ethical grounds but also just in in their benefit it's not it's not worth their money traveling here and the expense of it and then they're not able to get through so I did- can't even remember the question you asked me I diverged and I so sorry that's fine no no it's fine it's completely related and it also kind of flows into the next question where I was gonna say how much of a factor does language Linda: okay okay yeah R: so I guess you you've talked a lot about the language um can you so you've you've spoken a lot about oral language so they're not able to express themselves are not able to talk to people are there other aspects of the language you would really identify or Linda: yeah I guess I mean ugh [sigh] that there's a difference uh between being able to detect when a student because a lot of I don't really look uh I don't look at their name and I don't look at I look at the assessment in front of me and I'm almost immediately as you as you know and yourself you're probably able to do as well you're able to tell straight off the bat when uh this is somebody from Europe where English is not their first language or someone from Asia or someone from India where English is is not the first language in terms of writing ehm [click] and there are some grammatical mistakes there are some typos there are some you know just some minor errors throughout the document okay I would I would as assume that most module leaders take that into consideration I know I certainly do ehm it's it's a different it's a totally different matter when the English writing is so poor that I'm not able to to to even decipher what the student is even attempting to say and there have been cases of that so [pause] I know that there's a qualitative difference between that student student A and student B who struggled a little bit in terms of it's not [pause] pitch perfect [pause] in terms of their writing and those that are really really struggling that have probably used a direct translator to get their assignment in ehm and it makes them no sense and I have to read it three four times to try and decipher something so when I get those unfortunate cases of of student B they have I do have to fail them because
their writing competency is well below not only what it will be expected of an undergrad student but of a master's student and so there are cases where their uh based on their written performance they have they have failed um components but then I'll give you for instance this this year so in semester one there was a student like that who's so so dedicated and always sat in the front row um and was very eager to learn but I could- like that I struggled for days and days and I couldn't understand what they were trying to say and I had to bring her in and I just we just had to have a discussion and she said I'm seeing an English writer person @ I assumed she was seeing somebody who was helping her improve her English writing skills and so she failed that component uh and then as always they're giving a chance to sit a supplemental and she submitted a supplemental assignment and her wr- English writing had drastically improved now it was still below par but I was able to understand what she was trying to say but that was only because she had the professional help I assume she paid for it she didn't mention anything about [institution 1] and I told her there were resources available um and so yeah there's a bit so it's not just oral it's writing but the the reason why I'm probably harping on about the oral communication side of things in the English-speaking side of things is that in group work [pause] so even in in group discussions I've had students sit to my office crying not the non-English speaking the English speaking students crying saying we are using Google Translate in our meetings where we are typing in in our language turning the laptop around and they're typing they’re- that is no way to communicate in a and they're they’re baffled intelligent but cannot tell us what he or she thinks is doing on the program and I don't have an answer for them my answer is that I'm fighting to get the criteria entry requirements highered or increased just to benefit everybody so it's really I don't like when I hear those stories ehm and and from it from a personal perspective but also if we're talking from a [discipline] point of view you know reputational damage word-of-mouth is worth gold and if we're in our third year now and we're sending people out of here with master's degrees and then they enter a job let's say in Dublin and in their first day they're found out that they can't contribute in a meeting or they can't I mean that's going to come back and and bite the not only the school’s but the college's reputation so I think English proficiency both oral and written is critical and I don't think we're reaching those highs that we should be so oh which is very broad statement I know for the most part most people are fine but it's the few that are causing the issues >for themselves and for others< on the program that’s why I think it's really important
R: right and what other factors would you say play into academic success and this would be things both inside and outside of the academic world

Linda: yeah I guess ehm [long pause] when you’re a master’s student particularly straight from undergraduate there’s a level of making that [pause] conceptual leap let's say or it’s a from being an undergrad student to an adult that's responsible for your own learning and I think that whole you know they need to learn and they probably learn it quickly but in a tough way that that hand-holding system that they're probably used to at undergrad level is not here we don't have it we don't have the resources to we don't think that it's a great way to treat master’s students who are adults you know where we handhold them and we tell them everything that they need to do and how they need to do it and when they need to do by and if they don't do it you know that we’ll be looking over their shoulder and that's all removed in an in an in a click for so- in an instant for some students so I find that kind of the leap o- in maturity or you know the leap from being a student to an adult who's studying um is is a big one for a lot of them to take so we do kind of cool things on the program and I know the feedback has been astoundingly positive where we bring in professional actors ehm who who specialized in in translating the skills of a professional actor from on the stage into the classroom or into the corporate environment and the students have loved it and it's not your typical here's how to make a great presentation and they do a slide show and then they have to take that and make a presentation like that’s wh- that's just what we could do that but what the professional actors bring is something totally different I'm not privy to what goes on but they uh it's an interactive workshop they're leaping around jumping around the place and it's it's confidence-building it's knowing how to read the audience it's knowing how to build on your strengths and you know negate your weaknesses so it's kind of what we would describe as soft skills but they're not soft at all they're really really critical and I think things like that that we can bring into the program which we're getting better at year on year we're getting better at bringing the non-academic non-graded pieces on to the program now. [pause] the the feedback [pause] so let’s for instance this year we had one session in the orientation week students are all bright-eyed bushy-tailed haven't been bogged down with all of their content and workload and all of that stuff and it was a huge resounding success we had a follow-up then at this very beginning of this semester and out of the 40 people that it was a voluntary non-mandatory thing and of the 40 people that had signed up and committed to going I think 15 people turned up so you know they have to again it's a we're offering these things too a- and interestingly enough it was a lot of non ehm non-native English speakers a lot of our Asian students a lot of our Indian students so I'm thinking confidence-building is is
huge for them and I think that goes back to a cultural thing you know ehm and so they are
d they loved it but uh now none of our and like a huge proportion of students did not opt take
any of the help that was being offered to them and help that was coming at a great expense
to the school I don't mind spending the budget I’d happily spend the program budget if it
adds value to the students’ experience but I mean we paid to have two deliveries of that
and 15 people turned up so it was a bit disappointing that the students aren't taking a bit of
responsibility in that regard ehm but things like that like things like [pause] icebreakers
ehm confidence-building I'd like to see probably more [pause] stuff happen externally like
away from the college whether it's a field trip whether it's a I don't know a tri- a visit to
down to manpower resources we have the financial resources but we don't have the people
to do I certainly can't organize that so but those type of things kind of [click] opening up
their worldview outside of the classroom I would love to see more I think that's really
really important and again English speaking comes into that and you know um learning to
be confident in their ability to speak English come into it

R: right yeah um okay so this is kind of going towards the entry requirements and we've
touched on this a bit um earlier when we were talking about the IELTS um can you just
kind of reiterate what your feelings about the IELTS are what you know about it um is it
doing a good job predicting academic success etc.

Linda: um to be frank no is the the answer I don't think it's it's it's it's helping us really in
any way it's the it’s the requirement that we use so I I I I get on board with it and I and I
adhere to the criteria entry uh the entry criteria that we have but I don't agree that it's first
of all that it's set at the right level and um beyond that I don't think it's the right
 too for trying to predict when if students will not only survive the program but excel on the
program I just I don't and for a lot of the reasons that we discussed earlier on um but even
if we were to take IELTS as well we're stuck with it we have to use it for now I I think the
least we could do is raise the bar I mean I've done some benchmarking exercises with other
universities of the same stature or perceived stature the other world Russell Group
universities and they most of them have seven point zero as their requirement ehm my
external examiner who comes from a university in the UK has repeatedly said he's very
surprised that a university like [institution 1] has set the bar so low for themselves in terms
of what they require in English speakers in English speaking proficiency ehm I’ve I’ve for
the past three years of I feel like it's a battle that I've been fighting for three years ehm and
this you guys and your guys involvement now and this idea of a competency building
program is the first [pause] what I would describe as a win on the way to kind of and I
mean if that's been three years coming so I don't know whether it's falling on deaf ears or I don't know if [pause] the people that make the decisions about our student numbers and the criteria that we ask for probably have never or [pause] very rarely find themselves in the classroom having to teach these students having to listen to their experiences and how they're getting on I don't think there are in any way at the coalface and know what's going on and why English proficiency is so important I think they may look across the board at statistics and say on average universities look for 6.5 it means we can throw the net wider it means we can get more students on seats and it means our revenue model can grow and I get it I mean I'm working in the discipline I get it by also as I said to you earlier I'm a [profession] by not by profession at all I'm a critical [profession]@ but I get how [discipline] works and as I said reputational damage word-of-mouth is way more powerful than I think they understand and we have somebody from the equivalent of Harvard University in China sitting in the classroom and we have the equivalent of somebody from Blanchardstown IT nothing wrong with it but there's a huge gap in terms of academic rigor and quality and they're looking at each other and saying how are you on the program and how are you on the program and I just think we need to get better at at being able to identify the the candidates that we know will excel on the you know and and candidates that won't struggle because as a from a program director point of view I have to try I have to deal with them when they struggle and it’s I I'm not qualified to deal with you know the pastoral side of things but you know I certainly empathize with them and I hate to see them finding ourselves in a situation where they're failing or they're they're causing inadvertently causing major major issues for other people on our program which I know they don't intend to be doing but they are so yeah it's a difficult kind of situation so IELTS for me as a as it is as it stands I think 6.5 is far too low ehm and I also think maybe if I had a better understanding of it and that falls down to me but as I said ya if the where if there was an extra three days in the week and an extra ten hours in each day I'd be able to do all this but I know that there are a variety of different components in IELTS but I'd like to see you know a minimum standard in each of those components because what we're seeing and I know I've dug deep in in some of the applications we're seeing where a student is getting a five which is a very very low score uh in one component and they're getting an 8.5 in listening or something one of the components that isn't as important as the as comprehension or writing or whatever it might be and the the whole overall average score doesn't work I mean we're seeing students that are getting a 5 in writing which like they need to get by in the program but their a- their average score is dragged up by some other component and so that hole that area needs to be looked at in my view and but like I
said that what you outlined to me in terms of your eight-week program [pause] for me
that's the ideal situation that would be how we assess students I don't think we're going to
get to a place where we demand or we make mandatory that every students sits an eight-
week course I would love that because I know that that would tenfold affect their positive
experience on the program if they were to do it I know we won't get to that place but I
would like something in the middle maybe you know that where we we just have a better
way of [pause] of giving them that boost that they need and I'm not saying like I mean we
have students on the prog- for instance I find that a lot of our Indian students their English
is almost perfect I mean they've better English than myself I mean I've poor grammar and
I've fallen into the old Irish habits of of speaking poorly um so it's not across I'm not saying
that every student who doesn't grow up speaking English as their first language has poor
English that's not what I'm saying at all and I'm not saying that every Indian student is
amazing or I'm not saying every Asian student is amazing in English or poor in English
I'm not saying I I I hate talking in [pause] kind of sweeping statements or stereotypes but
I'm but anything that I'm saying here is just a build-up my experience over three years yeah
R: right yeah um okay so I guess I'd like to hear more about the type of preparation that
you would like to see international students go through before coming on to your program
except for aside from face to face in a room having a conversation with potential applicants [inhale] it's just it's not feasible um I think ideally speaking the best scenario would be that we interview all candidates [pause] whether that be a Skype interview a phone interview or preferably face to face if they are around ehm that would be the ideal I know what my answer would be if I asked for that it may be you can do if you can do it yourself that's fine and I can’t I just can’t the directorship is one miniature aspect of what I'm supposed to be doing in here in the school in my role I’m a researcher first I'm a lecturer second I'm supposed to be contributing to the administrative managerial aspect of school third but that directorship takes up the majority of my time so I can't give any more time to it unfortunately I think overall actually if we're if we're give me a blank canvas here overall I think every program should be headed by the director should be a non-academic uhh managerial full-time position I think there'd be far less problems or issues they'd have more time to give to the application and recruitment process and all of that all of these things would make the experience for both staff administrative academic and students far more pleasurable and enjoyable eh but again I know what my answer will be if I ask for that sooo yes ideally speaking it the preparation would be ehm that they are told they're given a date and then we have an interview with them I think you can you
could tell so much from a face to face conversation sorry to be virtual or actual face to
face ehm I know sometimes and our recruitment team are great ehm they are really really
dedicated ehm but they are given targets by their superiors and it's these targets that are the
kind of they're that they're the the it's it's polarizing aspect it's where I'm looking for rigor
and quality on the program and an enjoyable experience and there are other people that are
looking for bums on seats which is I know it's I'm being quite frank here but that's where
there's this kind of tug of war really going on ehm I want the school to be successful and
do financially well so that we can funnel that back into funding more programs and
dedicated resources and all that kind of stuff but at the end of the day I don't want to accept
anybody and anybody ehm on the program if they're not going to do well on the program or
if they're if they're going to inhibit or hinder other people doing well in the program ehmm
but yeah that that would be a ideal would be speak- interviewing every candidate but the-
uour numbers of applications are just colossal yeah it's not just not a realistic option
unfortunately I know that uh uh it's [name] this year uh [name] he's been doing a great job
he gets to speak to some candidates on the phone ehm and they he can sus quite quickly
you know their level and things like that but it tends to be the people that are confident and
proficient in English that call him and if they aren't they won't so there's you know you can
understand that makes sense so yeah that would be one and the other would be some
kind of prelim prerequisite module on English proficiency and again what that it looks
exactly like I don't really have the skills or know-how to know exactly it would be you
guys that are the experts in that but I'm happy to kind of contribute to what it might look
like but certainly it would be a blend of conversational [pause] [click] because I think if
they they nail that on the head regardless of this kind of very formal academic speak
that they might feel they need for their presentations I think if they can master or get to
grips with em being comfortable conversationally talking to their peers ehm because that's
what group work is mainly made up of that I think that would be excellent so
distinguishing between kind of formal communication oral communication and
conversational ehm English would be great ehm all of the things that you kind of
mentioned earlier on like that the idea of getting them to write a topic in a [topic] discipline
specifically maybe [discipline] eh review a journal or so show that they can read and a
journal article that doesn't necessarily have to be purposefully difficult but one that is
representative of the types of readings they'll be asked to to engage in in their modules
to be given that without prior notice of what that really will be and to be able to read it to
be able to under- show a basic understanding of it and make some interpretation of it again
like that would be excellent emm and then ehm making some form of or-or-oral
R: okay um so my final question is what do you hope that your students leave feeling after completing your program

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

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

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

Matilda

R: okay so the first thing I have to ask is are you teaching modules at the moment as well
Matilda: I'm not teaching this semester no
R: ok um would you be able to describe the types of modules that happen within your
department
Matilda: ok so within the graduate [discipline] school we have seven programs? and they're
all Masters of Science in [pause] [discipline] related areas so there's [Master's program]
there's a [Master's] program and there is a [Master's program] in [discipline] and there's an
a [discipline] master's which is probably a little bit different to the others both in terms of
learner profile and natures of assessment and and language abilities as well to be honest
um and we have a eh cross faculty collaboration at [discipline] we have a [Master's
program]
R: okay um the one that you said that is um quite different and learner profile and
assessment how is that different
Matilda: ehm so the masters in [discipline] is different because it's I suppose [discipline]
based so the modules are not necessarily >well they do [discipline] modules< but they
would also have a number of [discipline] based modules ehm we have a very strong
partnership with a number of colleges in Asia and particularly within China and we get a
lot of Chinese students who join our undergraduate programs of [discipline] now many of
them choose to stay on and because the program is very much structured in [professional
organization] exemptions ehm [pause] so that class would traditionally be ehm [pause] not
as diverse in terms of nationalities? And ehm ehm [long pause] would have a you know a
greater dominance of people from one country which affects the in-class experience
because [pause] with the best will in the world even the most dedicated students if you're
from China and you're sitting beside all of your friends from China you're going to speak
Chinese. you know unless you're until you're forced to in the class participation eh through
English and so no we've addressed that I think it has become a little bit more diverse in the
last few years we have a lot more students coming from Africa and coming from ehm
we have a lot more Turkish students Indian students and we have a lot of students
from Nigeria and that that has grown particularly and so there is a greater mix within the
[discipline] master's but I suppose traditionally it would be seen as the [pause] the less
discursive and the more challenging from a language point of view ehm for lecturers to
teach
R: ya would with the interaction between those different nationalities is that kind of
encouraged and seen or is it still kind of quite separate within the classroom
Matilda: ehm [pause] it's it's definitely encouraged so we have a group work policy in the
faculty which requires groups that are diverse ehm in terms of gender nationality
background culture experience ehm [pause] even when students self-select groups they
have to self-select against those criteria ehm or in some cases lecturers will assign groups
and then have their criteria of what is required [pause] it can be challenging if you get a
large cohort for example like some intakes you might get a particularly
high number of students from India ehm [pause] this year for example there was a very
high rate of visa approval from Africa so with a large cohort of students from Nigeria
[pause] in a particular class and that takes a little bit more effort in the classroom ehm from
the lecturer but also myself and the head of faculty will go into classes because I'm not
teaching this semester but we go into classes and kind of you know move people around
and have a chat and draw people out and try and get a bit of interaction going ehm but you
also uh you know they're master's students you have to push a little bit of personal
responsibility onto them as well so it'd be a big part of our induction ehm you will get out
what you put in ehm you know so [pause] it's about the start of the year it's making it very
clear that look the more you challenge yourself and push yourself and
engage in [pause] new experiences work with different types of people ehm the better
engage in [pause] the graduate you're gonna be so it's not just about the knowledge it's not just about
the content of your exams it's the entire experience and what you gain from that ehm so we
would focus a lot on that
R: right and previously when eh the cohorts were mainly Chinese eh do you think that the
language kind of negatively affected them in terms of speaking Chinese a lot?
Matilda: yes yeah definitely we also would have had ehm [pause] we would have had
issues with the standard of the students' English level coming in now we do have pre-
sessional and we have in-sessional ehm English for Academic Purposes classes but ehm
[pause] you would have [pause] students who achieve let's say the entry requirement is
IELTS six for our undergraduate program right now ehm you would have students who
would you know meet the entry requirements on paper? Ehm @but when they're in the
classroom >whether< it's [long pause] because they're surrounded by people who are you
know speaking you speak the same language as them or whether it's a confidence thing or
whether they've just really really prepped well for the test I sometimes have that suspicion
that people can you know really ace an @IELTS @test and you can tick all the boxes it's
very st- you know you get that standardized preparation ehm but that the reality that of
dynamically living and working and studying in English is very very different ehm so yes
we would have major issues. and we still would on the undergraduate side in the
degree ehm where lecturers would find it quite demotivating? ehm [pause]
both from a language level perspective? but also from an engagement perspective ehm
which are probably related but also cultural in terms of engagement you know the the
students who have studied [pause] maybe two years of higher education in China are used to sitting in a large room listening to the lecture and everything the lecturer says is gospel and you know it's crack your head open stuff the knowledge in rather than a dynamic exchange which is what our teaching style would be

R: okay and what would the form of assessments be within the department
Matilda: so we would have a variety of assessments we would have group work [pause] typically in a- a ma- a student in the master's program here can expect uh group work in half of their modules? so it could be four five [pause] maybe not six but ehm in worst case scenario every six assessments in an academic year will be group based ehm then we would have ehm [pause] assignments which could vary from your standard discursive essay [pause] which is relatively rare ehm most other the most common other type is ehm company projects so all of our lecturers ehm every single one are part-time lecturers? so they're working in industry and they're stepping into the classroom and then stepping back out into industry so they will bring [pause] clients ehm into the class and give the students a project based on that client so most of the projects will be action research based on a real company ehm in the vast majority of cases that real company is coming in to brief them and also coming in to see the results and interrogate at the final #unt or whatever
R: right okay and what would the outcomes be like would they need to write a report a presentation
Matilda: yep so there would be quite a lot of presentations both group and individual ehm and there would be ehm written reports for most modules >some are< uh presentation only ehm but then you would have in most cases you would have say a 3,000 to 4,000 in some cases [pause] larger sometimes if it's a group of people to 5,000 words uhm report and then alongside that you give your overview presentation your sum- summary of a presentation as well
R: okay great and what is the general form or structure of the lectures so what happens inside of the classroom is it a lot of group discussion a lot of you know the lecturer having the PowerPoint etc.
Matilda: hmm ehm it varies again by module so like for example one of our lecturers [name] has her class today in ehm [topic] and her she doesn't teach for two hours every week she takes block days so the students are with her for four full Fridays of the semester and ehm so a lot of that is a flipped classroom experience there's a lot of work to do in preparation for it in groups and individually reading but also working on cases and problem solving things and then when they go into the classroom it's a lot of discussion
and ehm group interaction [pause] this year we had our largest ever intake of students so
we had a @very successful September intake but it did give us major challenges in terms
of timetabling and also capacity on campus ehm so we would have this semester some
[click] I suppose old school traditional style lectures where ehm [name] for example in
[topic] has a lecture with 120 students sitting it it's a big fixed seating @auditorium eh full
of students so that's very traditional lecture he does his PowerPoint [pause] he's discussing
with the class what we've done to try and address the disadvantages? of that particular
approach is we've introduced tutorials [pause] we've recruited for and got some extra
lecturers in that area to do smaller breakout sessions so you yes you have your big
auditorium once a week for three hours and it's not brilliant it's not ideal but it gets the
knowledge across and then you have the discussion the the discursive options there in the
tutorial groups ehm other classes then I mean every lecturer is different I suppose but very
much the culture in [school] would be very much one of engagement it would be
challenging students but also expecting students to challenge you back to engage with the
material that you put up on Moodle ehm our online learning environment whether it’s
required reading or recommended reading that you're bringing you know again this
concept of you. get. out. what. you. put. in. so you're expected to come to class with your
a-game every time you're not there to sit back and listen ehm most of the lecturers would
have done a teaching ehm qualification? not necessary to a very high level but we would
we do like a special purpose awards ehm certificate so it'd be like a thirty credit special
purpose award ehm which is the requirement? ehm others would have done more we've
had people who done their post graduate diploma and some not very many with a master’s
in education they tend to be much more ehm much more ehm [click] industry focused so a
lot of their further research and any of them who've done doctorates tend to do another
discipline ehm so [long pause] most of them would have [pause] a very ya open casual
informal in-class approach
R: right and so how would you personally assess an academic success of your students
what are you looking for when you're marking and when you're saying this is a successful
student
Matilda: okay. ehm [long pause] I suppose I have two views [pause] on that depending on
what I was teaching so when I teach [discipline] is my background so I would lecture to
[topics] all those kind of things ehm I also delivered modules ehm deliver modules and I
still do workshops on kind of research and professional skills? ehm my expectation and
grading actually probably varies very differently when I'm teaching [topic] I would have
obviously my module learning outcomes and I will be assessing [click] ehm ability
knowledge eh but also ability in terms of [topic] putting an action plan in place in the case of a research [topic] research module ehm communication I think is really important I would always give decent marks in term for presentation and presentation of written work and presentation of an oral presentation ehm and I would also reward creativity ehm so I would always have [pause] scope I suppose to reward people who really pushed the boundaries who go outside the recommended reading and do their own thing and come up with a really unique way of approaching whatever problem I present them [pause] with research and professional skills my grading was always much more [pause] simplistic my view of it would be [pause] what I what what what I want you to be at the end of this process [pause] is a step closer to being the type of graduate you need to be to be successful for your life goals your professional goals so [pause] I might say if >well like I used to deliver to [discipline]< students an and there might be students very weak in English won't volunteer any information in the class won't contribute ehm and if by the end of the semester they could open give a five-minute presentation they're going to get graded very well [pause] because of the sheer [pause] jump. that they've made or the progress that they've made personally? ehm and then there might be someone else who you know is maybe not good on referencing and more structural issues and things like that and again you know they'd have a piece of work that they'll need to complete by the end of the semester so the grading I think there will be a lot more based on a progress principle? whereas the other modules will be very much so much of on the module learning outcomes

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

Matilda: ehm I would define communication as how they impart what they've learned to me the assessor but also to others ehm so I would reward people who can be insightful in a very clear plain English kind of way ehm so I like what are the things I always say to students they don't want to read something like you've swallowed a thesaurus I want you to >get to the point< I want you to tell me very simply and very clearly what you're thinking is reference appropriately and tell me why that's your thinking offer a justification and even if I don't necessarily agree with your decision or you're just- you know once you've justified why and there's a logical reason and evidence behind your decision you'll get the marks [pause] ehm so yeah communication would be for me being able to impart knowledge but also show an internalized [pause] knowledge? so that they [pause] like no copying and pasting that they've read something [pause] understood it and can explain it in
R: right okay alright and um do students would they have access to rubrics and guidelines and expectations communicated in the beginning of the term would they have it before completing assignments
Matilda: yeah so [long pause] in [pause] theory? 100% yes? in reality yes but in variances across modules so ehm we would give all students a handbook so there's handbooks there you can take a sample if you want to have a look so it has the module outlines in it and it has the assignments in it and has their assessment schedule so it says you know this is the weeks of the semester here's what’s due when ehm some lecturers would not submit? a good assignment brief ehm [pause] so would >like one lecturer this semester< for example sent me when I asked them for the assignment brief and I sent out the assignment brief template ehm actually submit it just sent me back a one-liner like a reply to the email as I'm gonna write the email I realized it was the title of his essay that was just was what he believed an assignment @brief @was @was @just the title no markings mean or weighting or module anyway so ehm [pause] it definitely varies and it can end up that myself or the head of faculty or you know that we end up putting a lot of that stuff [pause] in [pause] which [long pause] yeah you're making things clearer for the student? but it can be you know you have to keep checking in to make sure the lecturer is tuned in with what they're working towards and what's been communicated to them in the handbook so it definitely doesn't work perfectly but yes the students will get ehm the module outline and the assignment brief well in advance and all their due dates uh from around week two or three of the semester and usually they wouldn't have an assignment due any earlier than week seven [pause] ehm ideally I'd like to get out the handbooks in week one but logistically it's usually week two or three [pause] ehm the rubrics for things like for so modules are really detailed so some we we use Moodle a lot and grademark and ehm some of the lecturers do absolutely at the opposite end of the spectrum of the guy I just described you know one line in an e-mail have amazing rubrics on grademark and give really detailed feedback us- using that ehm which we are trying to move towards as a faculty that everybody does it's probably about 70 to 80 percent of lecturers do it correctly
R: okay and so in general what do you think students need to succeed in your programs
Matilda: ehm students need to eh attend? [pause] they need to [pause] take personal responsibility for their learning? they need to be able to work with others? they need to manage their time effectively? and [long pause] probably to be truly successful as in not just graduate they they need to be passionate about what they're studying and pick
up the ball and go ru- you know take something that's thrown out in a class and bring it on
and interrogate that and read about it and think about it ehm and yeah they are the students
that are gonna get a first ehm yeah a lot of self-discipline and drive is needed particularly
when they get to the dissertation stage because it's independent work [pause] you know
often remotely so a lot of our supervision would have been remotely ehm because either at
the international students go home? or ehm and their supervisor is there in Dublin or and
we have a number of supervisors in universities around Europe so they would supervise
our students using Skype zoom and other things
R: mmm and so the dissertation how large a project is lasts what's kind of required within
the dissertation
Matilda: ehm it's 30 credits ehm [pause] it's typically a sixteen to eighteen week [pause]
process offic- of supervised eh dissertation preparation they do a module on research
methods [pause] first and on completion of research methods they have their proposal done
and they're assigned their supervisor and they go into their dissertation stage so it's
essentially one semester ehm the outcome is kind of an eight ten thousand word
dissertation would be the guideline often times it's [pause] much more so a lot of students
would typically fall between two fifteen to twenty thousand word ehm dissertation [pause]
the dissertation can be academic or can be an action research projects on a company? a lot
of our students would get ehm so for one of the things that has changed and has led to the
increase in numbers that we had this September is that students who graduate with the
level nine program can now get a 1G visa for two years so they can work for two years
ehm on their graduate visa so we've actually seen a lot of students [pause] graduate exit
with the post graduate diploma? [pause] in [discipline] because they've got really good jobs
so they're going to [company] in [discipline] because they've got really good jobs
saying oh I'm gonna go off and work you know in the shop or I'm working in a bar for
when I'm studying like we would have had students in the past these are really high level
good students opting to take this approach and then while they're working they complete
their dissertation as part-time students over one academic year instead of one semester and
a lot of what they would do would be action projects so they would take a problem within
the company they're now working in [pause] and now do their research on that ehm
but other than that it's you know it's what you expect from a dissertation you've your
orals your research questions your methodology your data collection your analysis your
discussion your you know the conclusions and the outcomes and we have a viva for every
single student
R: even at the master's level?
Matilda: at master’s level every single student has a forty-five-minute viva ehm so we put a lot into our dissertations to ehm to really interrogate them to make sure that they're of a standard

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

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

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

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

Matilda: that's last year's one but it'll give a- yeah it'll give a good idea yeah

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

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

Matilda: yes

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

Matilda: and it's nice for them as well like the ones who've done a good @job it is a nice opportunity I think sometimes you know you get this massive just you know this massive bound thing and then you're like ah two people have read it or @whatever it might be you
know so it gives you a chance to actually express ehm what all the work that you put in
over the the preceding months right
R: and would there be revisions after that viva?
Matilda: yeah
R: okay
Matilda: yes there's a form a revisions form usually it will be minor ehm if there are major
revisions ehm a supervisor might refer them to the faculty and we might actually sit down
and say look you need to defer we're not going to accept this submission now for their own
good we try and not >now we do put through fails?< but if we've a student who has
engaged? and tried and somehow has gotten to the viva stage without being stopped by the
supervisor we will often intervene and say look I don't think we should accept a
submission from you now I think we might defer to the next session and then then they
pick back up with their supervisor and go into the more detailed revisions ehm but yes I
know every get their feedback sheet or a revision sheet and then after that they go and
make the changes re-submit [pause] and then get the okay to go get them bound
R: okay ah brilliant cool so I guess now in general what weaknesses would you say that the
students tend to have
Matilda: that the students tend to have [long pause] ehmm [long pause] [click] a lot of
weaknesses I'm gonna say are things that we should be helping them with more? So it's
kind of a weakness on our side as well and that makes sense ehm not understanding
research ehm students who [long pause] our students come from so many different
backgrounds and so many different institutions and so many different countries where the
education system is different so for example if I get a French student in they will look at
me like I have ten heads if I tell them they need to reference a document and they're like
what because it's a lot of it it's just the reflective discursive essay style assessment that
they're used to from their undergrad [pause] ehm if I look at students from [pause] ehm
Germany they're crap at exams because they don't do the traditional closed book exams
probably because we're so @archaic @in @Ireland and the UK we still have those closed
book exam things ehm you know so they're used to computer-based testing and and so on
so [pause] it's there's always a variety of different weaknesses which makes it very
challenging to address ehm to try and catch everybody ehm [long pause] language us-
[sigh] used to be a weakness it's not it's still a weakness for a coh- a cohort of students but
it's not as big an issue as it used to be [pause] I think we have gotten better at testing? and
at our admissions stage ehm we've also gotten better at offering structured programs in
English for academic purposes that before probably weren't fit for purpose so that's the
body of work that's been done in the last two years in the college ehm [long pause]
weaknesses [pause] yeah um ability to kind of take responsibility [pause] the jump from
undergrad to postgrad [pause] some of them really struggle with it you know and they they
come in going oh my God I can't believe I have to do this and I have to do that and nobody
told me this and in some cases their queries you know the concerns are valid so we'll say
well actually do you know what maybe we should improve our communication and that's I
mean some of it is our fault but you know what we should say [pause] these are the
expectations here's your role and your responsibilities here's our role and our
responsibilities to you as a learner ehm but then some of it is you need to stop waiting
know you're grown up you're an adult you should have researched that you should have
looked up the content of the program before you signed up for the bloody program so
there's a balance I think between information provision but also getting the students to be
that post-grad student that more individual responsibility type person
R: right so speaking of language how much of a factor does language play in academic
success
Matilda: massive. [pause] massive it's um an issue for everybody I think so particularly in
written work [pause] and like we mentioned earlier when we were getting the coffee that
it's not just international students that need to be concerned with their language ehm but
all students particularly in their written work and often we would find that the
work because they're more anxious about it and they spend more time on it and then they're
more systematic in how they you know the grammar the the syntax everything [pause]
whereas an Irish or English native speaker might have an assumption of [pause] sure >it
wouldn't even be it wouldn't even cross their minds< probably you know they just they
think they know what they're doing ehm so I think it is a massive for everybody ehm for all
students for our international students it is more problematic [pause] if you've got a lower
level of English ehm it affects your academic performance it affects your social experience
in college it affects so many aspects of [pause] your your life I suppose if you're trying to
live work study in Ireland and you have issues with English it's gonna really negatively
impact you professionally and personally and @academically and so I think it's a big big
issue
R: and what other factors would you say impact academic success and this can be inside
and outside of the college
Matilda: outside of the college is huge we've had you know with the housing crisis we
have international students arriving and living in hostels for weeks on end months on end
ehm [pause] we have [pause] you know students arriving with unrealistic expectations of the cost of living [pause] in Dublin and those things [pause] have a massive impact on their performance because then they're missing class because they're trying to find accommodation ehm their mental health suffers ehm they start they might find a job and although you know we tell all students you shouldn't be working more than 20 hours a week as an absolute maximum when you're studying a full-time masters you know they'll take all the hours they can get or they'll work night shifts and then come into class like a zombie the next morning and then they'll attend classes but they're physically there and mentally not and they're exhausted and eventually they'll hit a wall like working up to assignment week now next week is our like our reading week ehm and [pause] it's usually shortly after that that you start to see cracks appear for some students and it's literally because they run themselves into a wall between you know the the conflicts of study financial need to work or stressors like issues with accommodation or or family homesickness is a big thing that we would get as well because our students are largely international and they're far away from home often for the first time and even at master's level you know they've often done their undergraduate at home and then come to Ireland for their post-grad ehm internally I think yeah we would be under resourced when it comes to things like student services [pause] we would have a counselling service available we would have you know very good pastoral care culture [pause] but in terms of actual bodies and human resource and like resources behind it the intention is good but the execution isn't very good so things like our induction needs a huge amount of work ehm and then things like that the the student experience have actually got the e-mail's open there there it's actually uh [click] the board of directors are looking at the student experience currently in the college from everything from admissions through to the day that you graduate what is the what are the experiences that learners have [pause] what goes well or do we do well what we not do well and there's a lot a lot of areas that we have definitely got to improve on ehm in terms of being clear with students give them eh clear signposting really of this is where you go if you're struggling with your assignments this is where you go if you don't understand how to reference we've a lot of resources on our website or on Moodle [pause] but just signposting enough for students be very very clear from day one this is this is how you are going to navigate your way through your studies here R: right okay and in terms of so you guys are identifying these areas to improve on in terms of being under resourced is are these things that you you foresee being able to be improved without increased resources
APPENDIX F: FACULTY INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS  892

20725Matilda: no they have] to resources are required so [pause] one of the th- that e-mail that's
20726been circulated this morning is looking at job description for a learner experience manager
20727ehm so we would have like I said [pause] like we're a private institution so it's a private
20728business it's not [pause] public sector [pause] ehm so we would've over the last
20729>particularly the last five years< started to populate student services in different ways? so
20730ehm like the counselling services now we use an external body but they're very located
20731nearby and then it actually rolls really efficiently we used to have a full-time counsellor
20732ehm [pause] on campus and it didn't work [pause] students didn't feel comfortable you
20733know going into her office was right beside the canteen which well alright
20734R: everyone can kind of see
20735Matilda: yeah yeah it just didn't make sense and eh so the the system now although we
20736we're using a contractor essentially although we've outsourced essentially actually works
20737very well and it's very student friendly ehm our [long pause] then we got like just this sum-
20738la- during the summer we've appointed a a learner support officer so she is working
20739particularly with students who have learning difficulties so whereas previously it depended
20740on the faculty and it was a case by case basis you know of what experience tha- a student
20741say with dyslexia had [pause] so how we would deal with them versus how undergrad
20742would deal with them how law would deal with them how media studies would deal with
20743them would vary because they would all have their own processes but now we have a
20744central person so they submit their report their psychology report and we say okay that's
20745great here's your [pause] Learning Support Officer arrange an appointment she goes
20746through their needs she feeds back to the faculty works at the student ehm so that's a really
20747good initiative that has started just in recent months and is working really well ehm and
20748then eh [pause] yes we've got these little pockets of things that are happening but what we
20749need is to bring it together and say look this is the zoomed experience and have someone
20750have ownership of it from admissions and through to graduation and so you know I said
20751earlier our induction isn't good because nobody owns it [pause] it's kind of always it's
20752every year oh shit what're we doing with the @new @students do you know who's doing
20753@what at the auditorium have we done this wait ehm and it ends up falling between the
20754cracks so someone who actually has ownership of the learner experience I think is [pause]
20755needed [pause] so yes there are some resources there [pause] but they need to be there
20756needs to be a bit joined up thinking they need to work more cooperatively together with
20757careers guidance all that kind of thing but they're all in pockets around the place and not no
20758one clear network of this is the student experience or Student Support Services ehm so
20759yeah it doesn't it has a resor- it has some resources but it needs more
R: so you're aware of IELTS and you seem to be aware of you know the cut offline that
they need to //have
Matilda: yeah
R: to enter| do you have any feelings about the IELTS exam
Matilda: so I would have a lim- like a limited knowledge I would deal a lot with
international students I would deal with advanced applications for exemption or advanced
entry onto programs ehm or I deal with application to the master's programs now in my
new roll so I would have to have an awareness of it I have I know the IELTS bands and I
would have a very simplistic view in that I knew when I was in the undergrad school our
students have to have an IELTS of 6 to get onto the program ehm now that I'm in the
Graduate [discipline] school I know they need to have an IELTS of six point five I know
that on some programs they accept students at a five point five into first year of an
undergraduate with in sessional English support but they have to reach the IELTS six to
proceed into second year ehm [pause] so my feelings on it are with very little little
knowledge and actually real in-depth knowledge of what it is my feelings on it are the
English balance across all the testing are very complicated to understand them to get your
head around so if I see a student come in with a TELC or a TOEFL result or the new the
CEF? is that what it's call
R: Oh the
Matilda: the B2
R: the CEFR
Matilda: yeah
R: it's the Council of Europe
Matilda: yes yes [CEFR] yes yep so that's what we have to use now all the time and QQI
are saying B2 plus is the entry requirement I haven't been able to get a straight answer
about what a B2 plus means in the context of what I know of IELTS if you know what I
mean so it's eh most people would say it's a 6.5 but then because we've accepted we always
accept IELTS 6 onto our undergrad it's well maybe you can fudge it so that it's 6 [pause] I
don't have enough knowledge to understand really what it should be or what it is ehm but I
just find it's quite complex and difficult to understand ehm in my experience? I would have
students in front of you with an IELTS of six who are fluent [pause] ehm typically from
countries like Germany for example and things like that but they have a test for a six it's
not seven it's not seven point five it's six on the result and then I would have other students
with a six in front of me and I'd be like hm your English isn't great and we probably need
extra support even though you meet the entry requirements I'd recommend you go to ehm
English support classes which we can do as a faculty? So we can actually send students to English support even if it's not a requirement of their entry to the program. I just find it very difficult to really know what it is if I see a six point five, I probably have pretty good confidence in the student. But it seems like in some markets, in particular, students can be very prepped for a test and they can get the grade that they need. IELTS of six or whatever. And perhaps not, it's not a real accurate reflection of their language. What better way there is to assess them in a way that we can use universally for entry onto academic programs? I don't know. But it definitely seems to be a little bit confusing for what it is and inconsistent in terms of the standard of the learner sitting in front of you with the particular IELTS score. So that would be my experience.

R: And so, now you mention that the QQI is saying a B2 plus. And you don't actually know what that means. Is that a recent change?

Matilda: Yeah, it's yeah. I think it's in the last two years, QQI have changed a lot in the last kind of two years. Yeah, it went from ACELS to... Um, but even a person that just in terms of the nitty gritty, so it used to be if you had a programmatic review, you had an expert panel come in, they would give their view on the program, the changes you're proposing, and they would recommend us or they would not recommend or they'd recommend it with conditions made with the recommendations for re-approval and that was good enough. So once you got recommended by the panel, they wrote the report, and then it got signed, got rubber-stamped if you like. QQI and QQI are adding another layer of evaluation. So even if the expert panel have come in, QQI will go through the documents with a fine-tooth comb and could you send you three or four different follow-ups looking for more information or more detail. And one of those that they said the English-language requirement has to be B2 plus for all third level programs. I don't know how much thought they've put into it. I don't know how strong the reasoning is behind that. Ehm, but if the B2 plus is a 6.5, I know of IELTS ehm. It would cause a major problem for our undergraduate programs because we have always accepted an IELTS of six.

R: Okay. Are you aware of the I guess preparation that students would have undertaken before coming to (institution 5) so things like preparation for the IELTS exam or EAP preparation?

Matilda: Ehm, no, I wouldn't be not always. Now with some of our partner colleges, we would have an agreement whereby they must have extra support so on our [discipline]
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program for example because we get so many students from two particular partners in China we send lecturers over there to do academic sessions like some module content sessions of them through English we'd also send English teachers over there to do preparatory courses with them so we'd have some knowledge on that level ehm but your ordinary punter or the vast majority of even our partner students we just look for the test results we don't look at what has gone in behind that so R: right okay and if you had a say in the preparation so say well you're aware of pre-sessional courses with EAP if you had a say as to what was taught in the preparation what would you suggest Matilda: [inhale] so [pause] again from a non-expert point of view I don't understand teaching language uhm I don't understand the nuances of it and the complexities of it ehm but I would think that a lot of it could be study skills preparing students for third level understanding assignments ehm because a lot of them are used to I think I mentioned this last week you know they're used to very different testing systems and assessment methods and so even things like referencing and research and using the library databases could be really beneficial for them because it teaches them to find the right information rather than just trying to teach them vocabulary or something like that ehm so it's kind of like you know if you give them out of fish you feed him for a day if you teach him how to fish you know so even given those skills of how to improve their language ehm I think it also needs to <where possible> as I mentioned before we started recording where possible if it can be discipline related I think that's really really beneficial ehm we did have a really good system and again we talked about the kind of longevity of English teachers there was a couple of language teachers here a few years ago when I was in the undergrad school that I worked really closely with and I used to give my notes and they wouldn't be teaching my notes but they would be preparing students in the areas that I'm going to be talking about so when I start talking with the #unt or promotion and go you know definitions and the definitions they've seen before it is the words they've seen before ehm [long pause] teaching them skills like most lecturers have their notes up on Moodle or they give a big infor-notes pack at the beginning of semester teaching them to or encouraging them to read ahead you know get the dictionary out and notate things give themselves you know so it's time to to review ahead of a class rather than trying to review after a class so they get much more value out of that one hour lecture if they've had a look at the notes beforehand and said God I don't know what that is and figured out a little >you know a little bit of context< I suppose ehm that requires motivated students as well of course which which can be a challenge ehm
other thing I'd like to see is that it's fun that it makes them want to engage? we have every
we have students coming in I have students been in constantly at the start of every semester
arguing about attending the English classes they're free they don't have to pay any
additional fee for them though they’re obviously to support them and improve them and
help them academically and they come in saying I don't want to go ehm and part of it is
possibly a pride thing they're like oh I'm good enough and I don't need it but a lot of it I
think is that they just don't find the class very exciting or [pause] dynamic or engaging so
trying to encourage a bit of a love [pause] for those classes as well and the people are
looking forward to going to them so I don't know whether that's bringing in you know pop
culture movies music you know things that you would do you know if I was trying to teach
another language to a group of teenagers that's the kind of approach I'd do and I don't think
changes as we get older I think if it's something fun you'd engage a bit more so maybe
trying things like that
yes and so do students express why they don't want to go or is it more just I don't want
to go //I
Matilda: eh they say| it it takes up too much time and I want to spend my time better spent
studying or working on my assignments ehm [click] they would say that they are they don't
find the classes beneficial that they're too basic for them? ehm and now we do try in group
do group them so like on the English language timetables here there will be classes for
the master students so i.e. people who have an IELTS of six but not 6.5 ehm and then
there'd be undergraduate classes for pe- so you know so it is grouped by people by bands
of the IELTS I think? [pause] it's still by bands of IELTS I'm not hundred percent sure but
roughly speaking you know they’re in groups where it should be people of a similar ability
ehm but yeah most frequent feedback would be [pause] it's too basic I'm not getting
anything out of it? ehm [pause] and my time would be better spent working on my
academic studies
right and are the classes credit bearing the support classes
no so they're purely supports so yeah that's the other thing so while they're not charged from they also don't get anything for them like they don't get a even certificates or
anything like that no
okay okay so speaking of that preparation and we touched on this a little bit last time
but would you see much of a difference between the international students and the Irish
students or do you think that both were kind of benefit from some sort of academic
language preparation
Matilda: [long pause] ehmmm I think you'd have to package it very well to make it attractive [pause] for native English speakers ehm because I think otherwise they would take the same approach of some international students of that's not for me I don't need that ehm I think they'd definitely benefit from it ehm in terms of grammar [pause]

presentation issues that we talked about last week ehm structure [pause] we have an initiative in our undergraduate programs ehm called we actually have a credited module in the first year of our [discipline] programs ehm it's called learning to learn or effective Learning and development and that is for all students it's 5 ECTS and they all have to do it ehm and it's study skills what kind of a learner are you study you know studying percent coursework and you have to pass it to pass the stage and to progress ehm and it was introduced as a retention strategy? so much to try and prevent dropouts in first year in [discipline] because nationally as you probably know [discipline] has the highest number of dropouts ehm so it started as an initiative for that they get kind of mentors and tutors and small group sessions ehm and it's worked okay? I wouldn't say it's amazing or solved all the problems but it's a good idea it's a good concept [pause] but again it comes back to them recognizing the value of it? and first your undergrad students don't recognize the value of it ehm so they kind of putter along and they might scrape through they mightn't do the group bit they might do you know and they might scrape out #unt out their @40% to get through the module but they don't actually get the point of it they don't guess what it is they need ehm [pause] so they just see something we have to do rather than actually understanding and if you went to a third year group or final year group and do sessions similar to that on referencing you know how to write assignment report writing they soak it up you know they're so hungry for it and they really understand oh my God if I can work this database it's gonna enrich my @studies @so @much more it's gonna make my assignment so much better ehm and they really get it. So it's a really really I ehm don't have the answer I think it's really difficult to know when and how to do it >probably it needs< to be something continuous throughout through their studies but third year's too late. of course. ehm first year. I don't think they get the value of it but they need to start getting their head around it somehow so maybe how we deliver it or what you know how we assess it maybe needs to be looked at rather than just seen as another chore ehm [pause] yeah so yes I think everyone benefits from some sort of academic language and general academic skills preparation but when and how you deliver is key
R: right and going back to when you were saying you were working with some English teachers very closely and you were giving them your notes and and things like that um how far in advance do you release reading lists and things like that for each term

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

R: and it doesn't vary a lot from year to year about the areas that they have struggled in or

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

R: generally I think the issues are pretty predictable

Matilda: no they don't really I mean in reality lecturers are told you have to update your module outline every semester or every academic year ehm but the reality is that...
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20967assessments doesn't change like it'll always be an assignment and a 40% assignment 60%
20968exam or whatever it is they're fixed ehm for five year cycles of QQI validation and they're
20969reviewed and updated ehm but yes honestly lectures should be updating their reading
20970reading lists year to year but they're not gonna change dramatically with that< [pause]
20971from a language preparation point of view that it couldn't couldn't be continuously rolled
20972over
20973R: right let's see alright trying to see what we've talked about and what we haven't talked
20974about um what do you hope your students leave feeling after completing their degree here
20975Matilda: I actually talk about this all the time in @class so what I want from students when
20976they turn or become graduates is not necessarily that they can prattle off what I said in
20977lecture two or week four in [module] what I want is that they can go into an interview they
20978can communicate effectively with other people they can work as part of a team that they
20979can work on their own initiative that they have the ability to find solutions that they can
20980identify problems and find solutions that they can seek information ehm so research skills
20981ehm and that's when they get up and I what I say all the time in classes when you get
20982up and shake the hand of the president and collect your parchment on graduation day
20983nobody is getting that award other than you and when you get that award it is a [pause] a
20984statement of a certain level of graduateness and a certain skill set that we expect you to
20985have and that employers would expect you to have with that award not necessarily that
20986you're an expert in [discipline] or whatever yes you'll have certain discipline knowledge
20987ehm but anyone can read a book and can get that that you have honed your skills in [pause]
20988professional development areas and also the ability to be a problem solver and they'll be
20989the big things that I would look for
20990R: okay and do you think that your students walk away feeling that they have
20991accomplished that
20992Matilda: [click] for [pause] the most part [pause] yes >I would say it's a mix bag< I mean
20993you can you know when I'm sitting at the podium at graduation you see the pe- students
20994going by the vast majority I have a big smile on my face and say yeah yeah look they've
20995gone from here to here and [pause] they've changed as individuals through th- this
20996experience learning experience [pause] there's always a few that have #unt out scraped
20997through and group work helped them go over the line or whatever it is and look I think
20998that's everywhere and you can't avoid that really ehm but I think overall the reputation of
20999our graduates is in the general sense will be a positive one so I think for the most part yes
21000those that graduate ehm those that make it through generally have a decent set of those
21001competencies and skills
Matilda: ah

R: but are there any questions you wish I am asked that I didn't ask
Matilda: hm eh that's good. ehm [long pause] I don't think so I'm just gonna think about what my major issues or experiences have been [long pause] like I do think our major problems are I think once you get a diverse class [pause] a lot of the problems go away I think language issues persist throughout the program of study for students when there is a dominance of a particular language in the room other than English ehm [pause] and I think that's a major challenge organizationally to to manage that? to make hard decisions as I said we're a private college so you know do you cap numbers from a particular market?

R: and say well sorry we've already got 20 Chinese in the room and we've got many more and you know and yeah commercially the re- is like it's not gonna happen ehm [long pause] but yeah I think I think that diversity in classroom has the biggest impact because I think if people are in an environment where they're forced to engage through English not to sound negative but you know to be where they can't kind of go back into their shells as such and talk with people ehm in in a different language I think it does force them to improve and even without them necessary realizing ehm [long pause] but yeah no I think you covered a pretty comprehensive thing yeah yeah

R: and is there anything else that you would like to express
Matilda: [long pause] No I think I'm good I'm good yeah

Marta

R: okay um so first would you be able to tell me about your role in the school here
Marta: yep happy to do that my name is [name] I'm a program director for the [program]
R: okay and um could you tell me about the different modules that are in the program and the work required for those modules
Marta: okay we have a twelve taught modules each of them has um five ECTS and then we have a thirty credits dissertation so for all of the twelve taught modules we require you to do teamwork mostly eh from forty to fifty percent so team presentation and uh team report to resolve a [discipline] challenge or issue or problems we also have individual elements mostly you know by essay or exams you know would be around fifty to sixty percent of the uhh final grade so it requires academic writing and literature review or some
you know of a [discipline] challenge you know solving [discipline] challenge something
like that

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

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

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

Marta: depends different lecturers have a different styles and some lectures that give you
know very clear topic just discuss how [topic] you know why [topic] is important let's say
that uh but people can answer that is using different angles and some other lecturers gives
them a [discipline] case and then you analyze the case yourself sometimes this case is fixed
so students have to say they you know we have a variety you know as assessment methods to try to you know give the students critical thinking and you know creative thinking as well so they have you know they for the 12 modules we use different type of assessment so some of them that [discipline] case is one topic but some of them you know more broad you can pick about one topic and you write about it

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Marta: yes
R: yes okay so um when you have an assignment in front of you how would you personally determine oh this is a first class versus a second class what are you looking for
Marta: uh we go with the rubrics you know first of all of course the contents has to come
first did this uh student use you know uh has analyzed comprehensive literature you know
on this topic and if this student you know write very clearly about it and you know go back
to my the rubric so I have to stick to all the rubrics the first class would be good excellent
on each of them
R: okay and do the students have //access to these rubrics before turning in
Marta: oh yes oh yes| they have uh access to the rubrics and they you know they sometimes
send to pre work you know to us and looking for feedback yeah so we can't give them
feedback you know kind of give Y students or a few a lot of feedback and not giving the
others so most of the time you know when students you know emailed me I will give them
feedback look this is not of course not pu- the work but let’s say the outlines or something
R: right okay all right um so in general what would you say that students need to succeed
in your program
Marta: they have to work very hard this is a first thing uh not missing the deadlines for
assignments and clear communication with the lecturers if they miss the deadline for
reasons and as long they do the good preparation they attend the lectures they participate a
discussion you know in the class and then they work with the groups and the very
important thing that you have to work as groups and for 6 taught modules in one semester
they have to work maybe up to six different groups you know it's going to be very busy so
they have to coordinate their time manage their time very well and then the last thing that
they have to create independent study hours you know so those five things are very
important
R: okay all right and how much of a factor would you say that language plays in academic
success
Marta: how many what
R: how how big of a factor do you think languages in academic success
Marta: oh okay hmmm in my um program um you know we go along with the College
regulations so only the people who have 6 point 6 point 5 with all of the elements not less
than six point zero so the students come here I think most of the students have no problem
in writing and uh but we have to train them about how to avoid plagiarism language it is
important but I think more important is about their passion their interest in the subjects
language is a tool they can practice to you know to get to use the tool well but I think it
that's why I'm saying that language is important but I think their interest their passion and
their work attitude is more important the language

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

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

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

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

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

Marta: because this is a generalist course so it's not necessary they have to be working in
the industry they have to you know have a relevant work experience or they have to
graduate with a [discipline] background so we are providing a generalist course that
students with all type of different background can come to the course so they don't need to
do preparation you know unless they are from different you know countries they have to
pass the IELTS other than that I think um they you know they can come you know
because then we have a preparation uh kind of orientation week for them to tell them what
I expected and in the orientation week they will receive the readings you know for the first
lecture so this is the only thing they need to prepare
R: okay brilliant um and so are you aware of support offered to international students
either within your department or the wide College
Marta: uh I wouldn't be very confident in saying yes because in my school we have the
orientation week we are you know more building it better and better but uh we are
talking about thousands bunches you can’t you know face to face individually you know
give them support and uh for the college I’m more familiar with the counselling I’m off-
you know I for the libraries I always assigned my student go to the library you know it's a
how to write how to read how to write and for a language support I know we you know we
have some contacts in the language of school but I think I wouldn't be very confident
what’s been there you know what was there for them for the language support
R: mm-hmm okay great um and so what would you like to see your students um or what
kind of language preparation would you like to see them have either before they come to
[institution 1] or during [institution 1]
Marta: before they come to [institution 1] I feel some of my students got in a big shock
culture shock and um they come in you know with a different English test and but when
they come to Ireland you know the accent can take them you know few weeks to figure out
you know to understand lecturers most of our lecturers are fine they speak not that fast but
even though you know sitting in the lecture for three hours it’s it's going to be very tiring
you know and if they have two lectures in the day they're going to be exhausted so before
the come [institution 1] I think it would be nice for them to have some experience in
Ireland you know let's say pre you talk about eight weeks to pre I think it's not only for
them to do the language preparation it's more about cultural adjustments and then you
know they can know okay the lectures is like that you know the lecture that you can go to
lecture because for some countries you have to go to lecture sitting your table but here is
free sitting and and for some country that you cannot ask questions uh without permission
but here they come in and anybody can talk they were shocked so there’s a lot of a culture
um adjustments you know maybe in the through the format of the language support during
[institution 1] that we have offers a lot of support you know program director I made them
individually you know and give them each of them for half an hour to know where they
come from what the challenges they're facing and um we also have office hours they can come in all of lecturers can be communicated and through emails so for that I think they are fine but before you know just the time they arrive and plus the accommodation you know the challenge they have to find accommodation which seems very impossible now so I think it's going to be you know the beginning is very challenging.

R: mm-hmm right and so in the either eight-week or the two-week course that we've been speaking about um is there anything specific uh that you would like to see taught there any specific um you've mentioned you know getting used to culture and that kind of stuff so what would you like to see on those courses.

Marta: I think the eight weeks of before the orientation would be better because in the orientation week people have to look for commendation people have to you know get to know their new classmates and understand the timetable you know systems [institution 1] systems and then they do a lot of things in the orientation week that they are really confused so if we have eight weeks you know even four weeks before they can choose you know eight or four weeks that would be great for them because they come in they leave all of the trouble you know the challenge that they experience in the two weeks move to four and then they can be more adjusted to the foundational activities.

R: right and is there any specific on skills or topics or activities you would like to see on that four-week or eight-week course.

Marta: yes and um I know you're going to focus on speaking spoken English and one thing I think is m- if you can do a lot of a team activities this is the limitation of the IETLS they won't see their team activities h- so you know so they don't do a team discussion they only do individual you know in one-to-one interaction but if you have a team activities and let them sit and to solve one challenge so there is a lot of communication and a lot of ways you can persuade others people and there's also a way to present themselves you know sort of k- you know ability just to say ability to persuade ability to express ability to present and so those things I would love to see in the eight weeks course.

R: okay and so typically in your course when they're working in teams is it that they're working in a team to produce a presentation for the class.

Marta: yes yes

R: okay

Marta: and also a team report

R: also a team report okay

Marta: there's different format you know some teams may say oh you do A I do B you know then the third person C and the last person D but on another few you know good
teams I can have seen they actually the work really as a team they do have different roles
but they see the project you know as a whole process rather than parts you know so I think
of the team yeah they have to learn how to do the teamwork
R: okay brilliant I'm let's see so what do you hope you're this is actually the last question
but um what do you hope your students feel after they've completed the degree how like
what do you want them to feel leaving [institution 1] after completing your program
Marta: mmm this very good question because I don't want to read out to the learning
objective to mode personally as the director level of love that they leave the organization
through the course you know basic knowledge advanced knowledge about [discipline]
the challenges that [discipline] is facing and also I want them to leave with great [pause]
bonding with [institution 1] we run a lot of social events with them and you know it's my
role to to make sure they still feel [institution 1] at their home even they go away they
say oh I study there you know I had a lot of good memories I think I have the affect with
you know affect with um [institution 1] and the third thing I wanted them go with
professionalism so they're going to a business world with a competition with a lot of
challenges so they have to be confident to be professional and to to to policy how to say
to solve the challenge in the real world okay but in a professional way not in an
aggressive way okay and the last thing I want them to have is actually the learning method
they oh you know they just say okay I finished my master I've learned all the things that I
know about [discipline] but actually not you're always a learner wherever you go you
know where you are you always you know have a learning method in yourself saying
okay oh that's new I'm really interested I want to know more always you know keep
hungry in learning that's great
R: and I um do you think that your students do leave feeling this
Marta: uh I uh you know we run a lot of surveys but apart from surveys I keep in touch
with of my only one group graduates last year so I invite them come back for social events
and invite them come back for you know guest speaker or guest lectures and uh I do you
sometimes you know received a good you know very nice email from I receive email
last just yesterday I think and she said she just got a new job and I'm so proud of her
because she was you know she had a very difficult time in terms of her own health doing a
study and if she was really grateful to the support we offer to her and she sent an email he's
got a very good job but she's really grateful you know what she got from [institution 1] not
learn you know knowledge of but also the support so that's really feel I think they left with
very good position you know in the workplace a lot of them 96% you know get first job
offering you know you know within the study or you know three months after the study and then that's hard data and the second data they keep in touch with us that also the means that are really you know bonded with us and uh they are you know very professional uh because I have seen a good examples in LinkedIn you know they organize events they follow their own interest and the industry interest and one student working [company] got nominated as [discipline] rising star so and in terms of learning method I think they are still keep learning because of course they have to learn you know at their beginning stage I hope that can continue as well

R: brilliant I'm are there any questions that you wish that I had asked you that I didn't ask
Marta: ehh [long pause] I think I don't know if you know the profile of [institution 1] [discipline] students
R: um a little bit I'd have some contact because I I actually teach the English classes here so I have some of the students
Marta: undergraduate or postgraduates
R: postgraduates
Marta: okay
R: so but if you could expand more on that
Marta: we're just growing and more and more international you can see from the faculty or from the students so this year we have 45 students in the [discipline] program we have 17 nationalities so I'll just give you some uh [pause] a bit of information on that and you know what we are the group I'm really happy with them because they are from different countries but they are integrated together really well and this may not be the case for all of the programs and so there are some you asked me about the you know what do I want to see from the eight weeks I said a team work in terms of work is that you know I talked about the skills I want to see you know they are able to present able to convince able to you know express but what I also want to see is about their sensitivity to culture difference you know are they feel comfortable working with the people from other countries and so this is cultural you know sensitivity culture integration I think we should do that very early stage it's going to be very good for them because they're going to be assigned to you know six groups uh in one semester twelve group uh twelve modules in a whole year so they are going to work with people from everywhere and I don't want them to say oh I don't want to work that person she's from that country you know I don't want to see that so so that's another thing I want to say that you know if the culture integration in the students you know it's another skill very important skill to have
R: mm-hmm okay and is there anything else that you'd like to express or say
Marta: no I think we have you know talked a lot so I think I'm quite happy if you have any
you know question that you know need more information you catch up me email
R: okay brilliant thank you so much

Nichole

R: okay and so first can you tell me are you teaching any modules or
Nichole: yes I do teach I teach uh undergraduate and postgraduate
R: okay can you describe the work required of your students in your modules so what are
they expected you to do inside of the classroom outside of the classroom and as
assessments
Nichole: ehhh well for the module undergraduate we actually don't have many
international students who have come in w- you know we have some non-EU students all
right >no we have< some EU students but we don't have non-EU but and so for
postgraduate eh we do have some and they are required to well attend lectures they're kind
of the classes that I teach are shared so there are a large number of students in the lecture
so it probably does take more the eh uhh the form of a did- did- didactic lecture ehm but
then for that particular module they do a research proposal so they have supervision as well
with other facilitators so it's lectures on how to carry out the research you know there'd be
questions and answers on that
R: mm-hmm okay and do you have any research students so do you supervise research
Nichole: yes I do
R: and what would you require of your research students what would they need to do
Nichole: do you mean specifically for international students
R: no just in general yeah
Nichole: ehhh well they have to do a lot of reading obviously they need to attend their
lectures in advance if it is eh for lectures uhm I have some PhD students ehm they need to
do a lot of reading and a lot of writing and drafts and submit and engage with me I suppose
there's a big thing their engagement and that usually isn't an issue in now I've just come
from a meeting with an international student there actually as it turns out supervision
ehm I think sometimes I suppose it can be it's not to do with their English but
sometimes it can be their culture ehm you know he wouldn’t I would have spent huge
amount of time on feedback for him which I've just given him I met him today to suit him
and whatever but he didn't even particularly today thank you he did kind of but for all the
work that I've actually put in eh whereas I would've other also international students that
would be so could be just kind of cultural thing which isn’t great when you're [pause]
putting in I can give an awful lot to my students yeah that's just something I’ve noticed
R: yeah so it's not necessarily that it might be linguistic differences but it might be there's
cultural differences //that
Nichole: yes
Nichole: might] make hard for both the supervisor on the students in terms of the research
Nichole: yes yes now I have to say one thing that I do find difficult is understanding some
international students and particularly say with that gentleman that I just met which is is
difficult that I’m there kind of straining to hear and to try and decipher what they're saying
sometimes and that’s really difficult because you know really trying to create a rapport
and to get as much from them and to give as much and it can be difficult when you're
trying to think what are they saying when you can't understand so I do find that an issue
Nichole: I mightn’t have answered what you just asked me there
R: no but but you have you haven’t don’t worry so can you describe the general structure
of your lectures and modules so when you walk into the classroom is it more PowerPoint-
based is there group discussion is it seminars
Nichole: no because it's larger- if I was in a smaller class it’d be fine but I'm not I'm in a large
theater of which look 160 students in it so it is a PowerPoint usually however I really I go
out in front of the podium and I have a cordless mic and I try and engage them what
questions even with an large audience ehm and I'll try and get some dialogue going which
can be difficult I know with large groups but I do try to do it and meanwhile though I
suppose and the who- the whole thing is as well to be on time and all of those things I don't
know if you’re interested in any of that but also about trying to engage them from the
outset from the time I go in as to a bit of enthusiasm you have to be enthusiastic about your
subject matter and all of that or it just comes across poorly so that would be a big thing but
yes generally for those modules that I'm talking about because they're different national
students along with they’re combined and it would be a PowerPoint now I do have others
with other facilitation and tutorials and things like that but not they wouldn’t be for
international students
Nichole: okay so would those be um strictly for home students or
Nichole: no not at all it's only just that's what I teach it's purely we don't have
undergraduate students
R: that are international
Nichole: that are international because we can’t take them because of our it’s a professional course.

R: right so the structure

Nichole: so it's because of that we can't take them in so they're only on postgraduate master's programs post graduate diploma or master’s programs and then I have uhh one international PhD student.

R: okay brilliant and so can you describe the form of assessment in your postgraduate modules

Nichole: yeah well I just have one and that's a literature uh that’s a research proposal and first year and it goes on to be a dissertation in second year but I’m the module leader of the first year research proposal so that’s the form of assessment.

R: so how do you assess academic success so what are you looking for when you're grading that research proposal

Nichole: yeah hm ehhh and this is important because I also have one-to-one supervision as I've just spoken about for that module so it is on a one to one ehm with those students I'm looking to know that the first of all that they know their area that they're able to critique it that they're able to present it back that they're able to let you know to let the reader know and for it to make sense and sometimes it's the making sense that's problematic.

R: mm-hmm can you pin when you're saying makes sense are you able to identify in the students writing what doesn't make sense or why it doesn't make sense

Nichole: oh yea oh [sigh] I could have brought you proof only I've just handed it in ehm @ anyway yes you could read a paragraph and the words could be all jumbled up in the sentence so they're literally not in the right order [pause] and I actually find I'm editing because you have to show what's required so what I try to do is edit a paragraph and say this is how it should be but oftentimes you go on to the next paragraph and it's very difficult to know what the content is because you're trying to make sense of the sentences.

R: right and do you feel that um by editing one paragraph and giving them feedback do you feel that they take on that feedback and they're able to absorb and then apply it to the rest of the proposal or is it kind of does it stop at that one paragraph

Nichole: you know it actually depends on the students because I have another international student and I think she's from China she’s and she’s excellent and I do that with her and she follows it through she gets it with another student you know he might not get it and because it could end up coming back again what I did find I was doing and particularly for international students because they needed it I had to set aside and say I’ll correct one draft
give you feedback and then I'll correct I'll review the full proposal or the full thesis be it when I have second years at the moment these are first year and eh eh you know I could [pause] I wasn't doing that I would give feedback and it would be so bad that they'd send it to me again and I'd edit bit more and say now follow-through or you know a little bit here and there >because I was trying to make sense of it< and giving a huge amount of time and to be honest honest it impinges on my home life actually I shouldn't be admitting this but it does because I find it very hard not to give them the help ehm so this year I have said I would correct one draft as in review one draft give you feedback and then I would review the whole thing okay but even still I actually stayed up >and I'm not trying to be a martyr< but I was actually up to one o'clock last night ehm yeah I had spent the weekend doing a different chapter then he had sent me another one and ehm I reviewed that I stayed up until one o'clock because I was meeting him today and I thought you know what I'll actually give him it on a hard copy my comments I usually track changes and insert comments eh and then I have a copy of it as well but I did this I printed this out and I did it on a hard copy one chapter there for today to get it in ehm but I would find that it it's because of the English it is problematic and this definitely adds to the work work the lectures’ work load and therefore sometimes I would be there like this is all confidential?

Nichole: eh but I would be there thinking oh I have another two I have allocate- been allocated two international students one if I got one of each you know eh I would sometimes think like that however that's not always the case because I have the other student that I was telling you about and she is you know she probably maybe her English is better but she takes it on board it wouldn't ever have been as bad actually so I'd love to know what level some of them come in it at maybe she was at a higher level I don’t know how much background information do you know //about

Nichole: nothing]

Nichole: nothing okay

Nichole: nothing really only whatever you ask them you know that’s all

Nichole: yes I find it difficult and then I go back so I'm looking at the English try to get that and then I have to go back and try and get the content and look at the but the thing is you know you're there is it academic writing your looking at is it the content and I do think there has to be a certain element because it has to be at a certain level [pause] it has to be understandable and then so it's not that it's that you're being over fussy about the English
but yet this is a master's degree in the English language so it does have to be at a certain level but sometimes I question myself and think am I being too critical and am I being too difficult and I do but I've had conversations with others and they seem to think the same [pause] but you know so

R: okay and so how would you communicate your expectations and assessment requirements to the students do you say like post on blackboard exactly what they need to do for the proposal

Nichole: they have a booklet so we design as module leaders we have designed an actual book list and it's really clear it literally says you know obviously the word count and all of that but also it says introduction this is where you set the scene you compare it to the national the international guidelines and all of that that it literally says what you put in your introduction then it goes on to the next section then it goes on to your search strategy you know ehm it gives guidance on every single section step by step it gives an approximate word count ehm for each section they're very good I think they're very very structured very good guidelines and I say so this is your Bible and I go through the full guidelines in the lecture with them and I say bring in your guidelines and look at this and this is literally what you do so it is very structured then they also get individual supervision as well

R: where they can ask questions

Nichole: of the supervisor oh totally yeah and eh initially we find at masters level some of it is over the phone by email the meeting when they need to ehm wouldn’t always be face to face meetings because of they’re working ehm yeah but they’re work if they're working they might not be on site so I am inclined to track changes make loads of comments and then say I'm here to ring uh be on the phone to them ehm arrange a time to go through the feedback page my page if we haven’t met up or like today I was able to say I’m in [location] today I’ll meet with you at 10 o'clock ehm so I spent an hour basically ehm and gone through given you know the feedback so I would well I tried to give it as structured as I can and to give as much guidance and say now follow this through if you understand what I mean sometimes you're not sure they understand what you mean it know depends again on on the student and how well engaged they are

R: okay all right and so in general what do you think that students need to succeed at [institution 1] so kind of more not even just international students

Nichole: I they really need to what do they need to succeed well y- you know I suppose we're trying to instill in them that to be lifelong learners and it's I think a lot of it is we'll
say even for example the research I'll try to instill in them it doesn't matter if you do it wrong or there’s like actually that was one of the comments I made the questionnaire that he used you know hadn’t great psychometric properties I said that's okay don’t worry about that it's about the process you know so you're learning the process you're learning how to critically appraise and all of that it's so that you can then go out and use these skills so it's about getting the skill set in that you can use in the future so it's not about just doing a perfect piece of work it doesn't have to be perfect it's about the learning you know and to know how to do that you know even to go out and know how do a search even to know the skills really and also I think to foster in them to say particularly you know for that module is you know the the love of research or the love of learning and reading and updating themselves keeping updated how it can improve their practice but they also want them to enjoy it you know it's very important that they enjoy the course you know and I would kind of get something from their personal both personal and professional ehm development

right so you would say in order to achieve that that students would need to say be like have a good set of critical thinking skills be able to be inquisitive things like that Nichole: hm yeah yeah absolutely ehm definitely ehm critical thinking absolutely and to be you know to want to learn to be able to read and go through the literature and to extract what they need and also a part of it is that they are also able then to educate others and that it just continues on really

okay brilliant and so we've discussed this a bit but I want to ask you anyway um how much of a factor do you think that language plays an academic success Nichole: I actually think it does play a big part ehm I do I think that people who are good writers do well do better actually because ehm marking can be subjective? and I know it is definitely competency based and we also use a grid or a guideline for the different levels so the students would have that I might not have mentioned that but that's very important and the students would have that I might not have mentioned that but that's very important so we would have different criterion and I can’t tell you what they are but it's you know like a marking grid so like over like if they’ve over 70 or 80 percent what what level that should be be at in each differ- >for you know like critical thinking and analysis< and synthesis and all that and even with regard to their referencing and supporting their evidence so they get that as a guideline as well now what was the question

how much of a factor language plays Nichole: yeah I think it does because I would even see people who are very good ehm I’d have to work at it myself ehm and I would see how it comes easy to people but I mean
[pause] yeah I would have to work even at my sentence structure and all that but I would
like getting it right I feel a great sense of achievements but I do think it's easier I do think
it's easier I think you can showcase more what you've learned but even if you have the
critical analysis and all of that if you can’t put it down on paper you're not showing it’s not
evidenced to your marker
R: right right so just having strong writing skills and being able to express
Nichole: I do hm yeah yeah
R: your ideas and your
Nichole: and organize them really as well like not have them all over the
place you know just one topic per paragraph that kind of thing rather than
R: just a mind dump onto a piece of paper
Nichole: yeah exactly and it does not because you won't get them right even though you
might have all the content down there it's not making sense because it's not following at
least to follow a process really it needs to if you're thinking needs to be logical or you need
to organize it it’s just what I think
R: and so you mentioned something on that I actually quite like you saying because I feel
the same way that you had to work as well on the writing so what do you feel that language
is not necessarily restricted to international students it might be more difficult for them
Nichole: oh yeah absolutely it applies to all my students actually ehm and some of them
like I had master's student maybe two years ago and oh my god she was a beautiful writer
absolutely beautiful and it was lovely and it was a pleasure reading her work and even
though her critiquing and all the rest critical thinking and analysis and all that might have
been similar to someone else she it was able to it was clearer on the paper and she's a good
writer used and I like simple it's not that I'm looking for ehm you know terminology that
we don't understand it has to be simple and that's what I say to them it's just keep it simple
so that the reader can understand what you’re what you're writing about because we don't
have to be you should be able to understand and anyone should be able to read what you're
writing you don't have to have a background in the area it should be because it should be
definitions to identify what you're talking about that's just what yeah
R: yeah yeah very helpful so I'm so now I'm kind of going towards international students
Nichole: oh I’m sorry I’ve been talking about international students so much
R: oh don’t worry you're giving a lot of valuable information so don't worry uhm so are
you aware of support offer to international students in your department or the wider
College
Nichole: I'm not really sure they can come and probably pay for a course in advance of starting. I know there's a foundation program which sounds really good from the graduate students and I think that sounds fantastic but I'm actually not sure of what other supports they can get or where I could refer them to for maybe more writing skills. ehm so um not really

R: right okay and so you mentioned the foundation program and also like a course that they could pay for in advance

Nichole: yeah during the summer yeah

R: yeah do you have experience with students who have taken those

Nichole: no because I think mainly they're for I think mainly undergraduate students might do them I think and so I have no more information. Also in our department we have only a total of ten international students so we don't have many

R: okay all right and are you aware of the type of preparation that your international students currently participate in before coming to [institution 1] so either academically or language-wise

Nichole: I just know they have to have IELTS or an equivalent and that's all I know about their preparation so I'm actually communicating with a potential PhD student in China who is repeating her IELTS all the time she even emailed me there at the weekend she has to keep repeating to try and get them up because she can't apply otherwise so that's my only information.

R: and so how would you feel about these exams would you feel that they're adequately predicting how they will do just any general feelings that you have about it

Nichole: ehm actually I need to say that the international when I say the international the non-EU student is actually registered as an EU because he has been here for three years so when I'm talking about him you know he actually so he mightn't have gone through although he had to have for registration but I don't want this to be identified because don't you know yeah but for registration here for [topic] registration they have to be at a certain level so he would have had to have his IELTS at a certain level before coming to the country anyway ehm because we've so few international students I'm not sure how it prepares them as I say I have a PhD student and he's very good he's great and he works well here and you know a little bit of English issues but not not too much so I don't probably have enough experience to but [pause] I don't know I wonder should we raise the bar as to the requirements I do wonder that for the the writing @ ehm because I think that's at a 6.5 is it I'm not sure
R: that's usually standard for for the wider college and then some departments are higher

Nichole: yeah ok ok

R: so and so what do you feel or what type of preparation would you like to see international students having before coming

Nichole: I'd love better academic writing I think that's important when they’re doing an academic course they have that their academic writing skills so I don’t know what's involved in the taking the test or anything like that or I don't know what the pre the course that up to a level it would make then it so much easier for them it is like it's all assignment or exam based and they need to be able to put it down on paper [pause] you know to get the marks and the grades that that they should get if they're putting in the work like if they're having to work harder at trying to get their English across as well as doing an academic course it's difficult whereas if they were focusing on the English and got that up to a level it would help now I know I'm all talk about writing and not talk about the communication and in class but because my main experiences is in a larger class you know but I would find at least you know they would participate very well and you know there's not as much as much of an issue it can be me trying to understand what they're saying sometimes but could be just the person not the you could have that with an EU person an Irish person as well that they mumble or you know that you don’t understand what they're saying that their diction isn’t great so but it might not be an international thing

R: mm-hmm and and so what would you hope that international students would feel walking away from [institute 1] after taking your course

Nichole: hmm [click] oh I suppose first of all I'd like them to feel that they enjoyed us and they had a good experience because if you don't have a good experience [pause] you know what it doesn't matter you know you have to have a good experience they have to have been I think it goes down to the very b- they have to go expensive to be treated well they have to be minded and looked after as every student does and I think that's really important because even if someone is struggling if they feel that someone cares and will is looking out for them it does make it easier so I think that's very important so they need to feel that but then they also need to feel that they have achieved you know they have to be kind of happy with the level of what they’ve achieved now that's not to say that people are disappointed with the results and that's okay but ehm it would be nice for them for the work that they put in that it's acknowledged and reflected I suppose in their grades within
their marks and um also that it has instilled a desire for more you know and the desire to put those skills in well see I'm talking a lot about research I suppose but to put those skills into practice to now be in the area and think my goodness look at that practice or that practice isn't based on evidence so I should look at that and do a literature search it doesn't mean there has to be all formal they're doing a literature search to see what's available out there to see about changing policies and practices or doing an audit on something that it instills the desire for them to make practice better to make life better to improve [practice] and that this all contributes to their personal development too that they feel good oh my goodness look what I've achieved look at that this is brilliant and I'm so proud of myself and I have a good experience you know while I was there and those international students that have gotten through do you think that they come out feeling that way right

Nichole: [click] ehm [long pause] [click] right I know that the student I told you about of them that I've had >I'm not saying it's because of me< have had a good experience and had actually a few international students but they're not international per say but international living in Ireland not here very long so it's the same issue really and yes some of them that I've had >I'm not saying it's because of me< have had a good experience and they have actually come out and I've one girl wrote me and said about how //she

Nichole: yeah yeah I know I know| not it was honestly so nice and about how it instilled her love of research and she had a great but she was just lovely absolutely fabulous so yes I’ve had that now I’ve also the experience of not me personally but someone had told me about the situation where there was an American student and there was issues with the student’s graduation and a lot of issues with academic registry whereby it it really ruined the person's experience she didn't end up was it to do with her graduation all there was huge issues that everything went wrong for this student and her supervisor would be very similar to myself and she’d really go bend over backwards for the student but there was an awful lot of issues that were to do with college [pause] not trying to put the blame on someone else

Nichole: yeah there was no yeah and she did not have a good experience like that’s one like I said we have so few eh but that was one that happened maybe last year or the year before ehm we don’t have so many so it's hard to say but like I'm not sure like say the guy that I have now that I’m advising at the moment I'm not sure what he will but I said to him am I pushing you too hard I did say to him today I'm just trying to improve his
work ehm and to teach him and I say to him look it I put these comments in it's up to you whether you want to accept them or not but he didn't say to me you know yes you are or no you're not sure ehm you come away from him not very sure you're not getting the feedback ehm and I explained to him I'm putting I have to give you as much feedback as I can in order to help you to see where you can improve and it's up to you now he's actually a very bright very bright and very good and I'd say he's excellent at his job really good and very nice but I don't know it could be just a communication thing ehm so when you say that someone you prefer yeah like and if he actually turned and said yes you're pushing it too hard and I’m finding this stressful you know I didn't really get anything just kind of a blank smile you know which probably I take that yes I am pushing him too hard but so I just said look I'm just giving you the feedback there because this is what I see and as your supervisor I have to give you ways that I think you can improve it and for you to learn you know so but I mean it was just all over the place you know but I tried to explain you know anyway so I don't know what he at the end if he’ll turn around and say I had a good experience [pause] because maybe he just wants to pass but I don't know what a pass is until I see the full thing so [pause] you know what I'm saying I have to see his full thesis I have to see his full the was his literature review chapter so it’s early on ehm but yeah I don't know if he will see I pushed him too much but I'm just trying my best

Nichole: yeah yeah that's all you can do

Nichole: yeah it’s all you can do and I can’t be mad at my- I can’t beat myself and I couldn’t give him any more than I’m giving ever see is what mistake many more than I'm giving you know to be honest yeah

Nichole: yeah no and so something that you had said earlier in the interview was that sometimes it's difficult to have meetings because they may not actually be here and a lot of them are working and whatnot would that be placement with you guys

Nichole: yeah yeah it’s purely this is for the part-time students so I know most of the other international students but I'm talking about you know students in general and when they're directly working and they're doing the course once a week for the other international students they're full-time because they have to be for their visas yeah so they might not be around either because they don't have to go into college everyday but yes you could certainly meet them so you meet them if they want to meet that’s the way I do it but for those that are working it's more difficult to meet them

R: and would you say that those who have jobs or those who might be having issues kind of in the larger world so with //housing finances etc.
Nichole: mmmMm
R: does that impact their academic success
Nichole: yeah yeah like I think it's the same as any mature student I would see those and I
would have actually studied mature students at one stage because I was a mature student
myself seen how external influences such as finance such as family sick children sick
parents sick wives husbands whatever partners and all of that impacts on the time that you
have to give you know so it does but if you didn't have those [pause] this is so much
@easier but it usually but everyone has their own
R: yeah their own
Nichole: their own issues or whatever or commitments I suppose
R: yeah all right I'm so that's actually all of the questions that I have for you but are there
any questions that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask
Nichole: no you've actually covered everything ehm no because I just kind of I suppose
added in bits that I thought were important even if they were off the point ehm no
R: and is there anything else that you'd like to add
Nichole: no I don't think so I think I've more or less probably said too much@@
Oisín

R: okay first I kind of just want to know if you can explain what the work is required of
your students in your modules first so what kind of work do you require them to do or
even inside and outside
Oisín: normally most of the work that's expected is reading-based um on the modules I
would teach the the methods would be sort of fairly classically humanities um I think one
of the um one of the attractions of teaching postgrad level is that you don't necessarily
teach the syllabus in the way that you might do at undergraduate level you tend to get
students who are already coming in with the clear idea of the aspect of the course or study
that they want to focus on so you're not directing reading you don't get people who are
conscripts to the course if you like um they want to dig into particular areas uh that may
mean sometimes the reading lists are a little bit daunting to when people see them first
because you're trying to suggest to them perhaps at whatever point they want to dive in
here is the way to dive but yes they are quite long re-reading lists but the assumption is that
they're not mandatory materials this is to give them a sample of the field and allow them to
jump in where they want to so it would be a high level of self-directed learning um and
very often you know the student will come to do a masters because ultimately they have a
PhD somewhere in mind uh [chuckle] either explicitly or implicitly so they're they're driven by their own uh coherent sense of what the whole thing is about and we therefore would try to cater to that the the reading I think is is the major requirement made on them they will usually write an essay usually four thousand word assessment piece uh except for the module that I'm involved in on research methodology which we would look for a research portfolio of combining summative and formative and the assessment piece for that is simply a research proposal [pause] it’s in some ways it is the easiest thing to write because you supply a template and they fill it out you give them the word limits that they need in each section on the other hand because they've never written anything quite like that it's not like the conventional essay just longer so I think they experience that as a difficulty [pause] the final thing that I would be involved in in terms of it’s @classed as a module but would be the research dissertation so again a lot of reading a lot of writing R: okay and so as a research student what do you expect from your students Oisín: [pause] uhm [long pause] in what sense R: uhm is it again you would say more reading and writing or would you expect them to be even more independent than say those students who are taking modules Oisín: yeah [pause] I think a lot depends on the the nature of the project that they're working on um some students will be doing very text based analysis I work in [discipline] so a lot of it has to do with text text interpretation um the [pause] in terms of language most of what I would supervise through would be English but I have a few people who'd be working with French uhm who would have French as a second language um [pause] I suppose in terms of [pause] uh the sort of work expectations I would have I would usually want to meet them quite regularly in their first years as a researcher um I usually encourage them if to to just take a closer look at their proposal and rework that um my my my limited experience of this is that where people run into difficulties as a research degree student whether it's an M.Ed. or a PhD it's where they don't have clarity about what they’re writing or the purpose of it and that they need to have a clear sense of the field they’re contributing to and then design the project that gets them into that field and out of it in four years if it’s a PhD there has to be an exit strategy there may be a point at which they will simply m-many pieces of very good research are never finished they're always just abandoned at a certain point so at what point are they going to have to abandon it they need to know that um I continue to encourage them to write as soon as they possibly can I think in the humanities there is a a temptation to believe that [pause] if you just keep reading someday you will reach the end and then you will know everything uh and this is rubbish but it's very tempting so I think trying to get them to identify what are the key texts
is a crucial element. I would usually ask them to provide me with their own #perceived time
version if they’re focusing on a particular author I would like them to give me
their principal works in their own words into an abstract and #proceeds so that they have
actually got it in self-digested form when they go to write more about it but I think largely
that is simply to do getting writing writing writing after the first year I would tend to
encourage people to present their work at conferences uh it’s a slightly different kind of
work and it can be quite distracting uh they need I know to gut out and show their work
they need to get publications um [pause] it's not always easy to align what they might
usefully give at a conference with what they're currently working on [pause] uhm and
sometimes I think it does help people overcome whatever perfectionism they may have
[pause] that you know they are going to have to get out there and they will have to stand up
and say something for 20 minutes [pause] so I think that's a major part of it um so it's
mainly it is it is library based work for them some people will undertake field work uhh
which is is is a different kind of activity altogether
R: okay um so you've answered a couple of questions in that which is great
Oisín: ooooh I’m sorry I’m jumping
R: no that's actually brilliant so um so how would you assess academic success so what do
you look for when you're grading or assessing a research project
Oisín: ah that’s a good one um [pause] one of the first professors I had [pause] told me that
when he was looking for first class [pause] essays he was looking for the word he used was
flexibility that the student would be sufficiently comfortable with the material that you
could see they had the material at their disposal that they were not simply trying to gush
down on paper all that they know they knew and therefore they were slightly more
comfortable with expressing themselves um I think flexibility is something that I look for
in research students I think over the course of their writings a certain quality of density
arises that that you can know that there is there is a kind of uhm greater simplicity and
clarity that comes the more people know about stuff uh at the beginning there's a kind of a
haze of clarity and then it just gets horribly complicated and then they’re able to move on
to something else I also think that when people are writing theses as what they're arguing
becomes more obvious and clear to them that is communicated in the text texts tend to get
the more you read them the more I think from the students point of view it becomes boring
because it becomes repetitive and you know they're stating the boldly obvious but
it's only boldly obvious to them because they've lived with it for three years but I think that
kind of clarity is something that I like to see um yes originality is is an important element
in the humanities I suspect originality is exceptionally hard to come by and people who claim it are probably mad um it’s all been said it’s all been done eh but there are there’re different ways of expressing that so yes there is a I think a sense of modest understanding of how what is distinctive about the approach the student is bringing at proposal level is good you want to see that you want to see what they’ve got an idea that they can use and get into a particular field >I also think it depends< on what the student wants to use their PhD for you know we we have in invariably people who are writing PhDs at the end of careers in various forms of work and it's it's this is this is a final digestion that's quite different I think to somebody who is attempting to collect their passport to an academic career [pause] and therefore you're looking for slightly different things in a proposal than you might otherwise do.

R: and can you describe the general structure of your lectures and your modules so would it be more PowerPoint-based would it be group discussions etc.

Oisín: [click] it depends [pause] um I'm only recently coming around to the use of PowerPoints and I'm I’m a somewhat reluctant convert um I would have taught at undergraduate level in uh as part of the course there and very often I find [pause] that I'm introducing a lot of unfamiliar material [pause] usually to second and third years so it's it's a combined which is a difficult bridge because third years are indefinitely different in the processing of information to second years [pause] uhm so I think I probably use the blackboard a lot more um simply [pause] because information and it's conveyancing is really quite important uhh they're not in the same level as the MPhil students who are there who would have done all the reading before you open your mouth um I'm coming around more to PowerPoint as a way of structuring lectures particularly um with the master’s students um [pause] I suppose I am wary of it of to the extend uh I went to a CAPSL course at one stage where the person who was providing the inputs at one stage he said if you want to if you want to lecture well don't use PowerPoint you know we use PowerPoint for presentations or for public lectures that kids who have PowerPoint at school are probably going to someday bring a machete if they have to look at it again um but I think that's that's targeting the bad use of PowerPoint I think it's very useful for giving the flow of what's happening in the particular lecture and anchoring the topic um what I would like to see is that however the PowerPoint if I'm using PowerPoint then the printed version should be a useful resource for revision or structure so that is sort of I look I look at the PowerPoints with the view of how they will emerge as a potential augmented set of of notes for people um the numbers in most of the classes I would teach would be quite small uh at undergrad level slightly larger um but I would try to have as much discussion as
possible I would try I’ve moved away from seminar presentations um [pause] probably for
I have to look at that again I think here in the [department] we’ve had quite a lot of
pressure from visiting students to have the seminars graded uh as part of the assessment
um I’m I’m a little uneasy with what's being looked for there uh I'm happy to grade a paper
that somebody has presented uh I’m not sure that I’m comfortable with grading somebody’s
PowerPoint skills or their [pause] deportment at the lectern or whatever it is is I’m not sure
what is being looked at there um but um I do like the idea of a seminar but I think if we
can I think an unmarked seminar is sometimes a better way to bring out the best in some of
the students who are just quiet but have something to say [pause] and I have sometimes
relied on getting the right position papers just to get that discussion so that’s a single side
R: okay and how would you communicate your expectations and assessment requirements
to the students
Oisín: I’m not sure if this is a good idea or not but one of the things that I do is on the
module outline is I simply with the opening the opening@ the opening shot is the the
module outline and the the learning outcomes so those are there upfront and central um I
would usually introduce whatever the assessments are within the first couple of weeks and
will try to in introducing them simply comment on how they are intended to demonstrate
the learning outcomes and I usually leave students free to select or to choose or to propose
another topic for their assessment piece so long as it complies with the learning outcomes
for the module um again one of the most useful things I did at CAPSL was it was a course
where somebody simply suggest that you give the learning outcomes to students in the first
lecture along with the module outline and ask them to come up with assessment topics that
would demonstrate the meeting of the learning outcomes and then those are the essays for
the class but they have actually produced this I’ve done that a couple times um and I
found it very good [pause] it probably requires a [pause] a good dynamic in the class
R: and so will you do that is it they’re coming up as a class the topics for the whole class or
Oisín: that would be for the whole class
R: okay
Oisín: now they’d be divided into small groups to come up with it but yeah
R: okay brilliant um I'm so in general what do you feel students need to succeed at
[institution 1]
Oisín: what do students need to succeed hm is this any level of students or with research
students or
R: um any level so if if you’d like to go through undergraduate MPhil PhD

Oisín: hm yeah [pause] at the undergrad level [pause] I think a lot of students need to be deprogramed from the leaving certificate [pause] uhm the belief that there are somewhere texts that can be learnt is it's insidious and it’s very hard to try and break people from that habit um [pause] well when I was a first year we had a tutorial with she died recently held up in her office in [city] in [discipline] she used to dispatch us off to the library and tell us to bring to find a book on whatever the topic was and then we have to justify why we had chosen it and it was really an extended lesson in how to choose the appropriate book for the topic without saying I'm now going to teach you how to choose a book uhm I think that's an important element but it does I mean it highlights the role which mentoring to some degree is really quite important that students who’ve come out of the leaving certificate unless they’ve been extremely fortunate they will probably have been taught to the exam rather than more broadly and therefore um you know the whole purpose of self-directed learning is just not there it has to be it has to be picked up um there needs to be ways in which students are taught the dynamics of how to read academic this here is a primary source you know we now go to the journals to see what they're saying about it well that kind of very basic stuff um I know some courses do this kind of basic research stuff basic research schools not everybody does but it's really important um I think also to succeed I mean it's subjective but you do meet students in their first year of university some of whom have not quite made the adjustment to college um and are really seeing lecturers and demonstrators as you [pause] know teachers grownups the enemy generally rather than as gatekeepers to to more knowledge people who will stimulate and assist how we cope with our curiosity um yeah we’ve got classes where people are curious and they know this is they come here to be curious um that's good um [sigh] and I think that has to be kind of a hunger and ambition on the part of the student as well um it's sad when you see students who come in who obviously have been doing very well in secondary school and they suddenly flounder when they’re in college um you’ve just been knocked their perch as the top top cat and suddenly they don't know don’t know where they are that's really really hard but um at post-grad level what you need to succeed um I think there needs to be a number of things in place uhm the most obvious I think this financial security um that goes hand in hand with the coherent research project um students who don't have the economic wherewithal to to relax sufficiently to write [pause] or come together to read so there needs to be some way of having reliable financial situations people need to be able to understand how they're going to be financed over a four-year period for a PhD um if you can't have that the anxieties
of home um and people people struggle um in terms of the most most people I think who are are contemplating a PhD usually bring with high levels of motivation um the kinds of support over a four-year period uh vary from student to student but I think again it's it maybe it's a humanities [pause] issue that a lot of th- and social science to some extent a lot of the research is solitary that there isn't that climate of research teams uh there isn't the doing the research and writing it up culture it's an ongoing solitary battle um and I think a great onus is on departments and schools to to make an an accommodating place for people who [sigh] by virtue of what they're doing they need to be alone but they can't just be on their own [pause] so you I would I would lay quite a stress on the more existential side of it I think good supervision is really useful um the whole point of writing research is that the student becomes the expert and therefore in many ways the supervisor if the project is going well they're commenting not so much on content but on form you know there is a case of in this project given the nature of it you know what does chapter two have to do [pause] you know to link one and three you know there is a supervision is not you know admitting somebody from to a lesser level of expertise they have to become the expert they have to do it um [pause] I am not familiar with too much with working as part of a supervisory team arrangement um I believe it it is a very good thing but I haven't tried it yet um I was extraordinarily lucky I had a supervisor who has come through Oxford in the 1950s and 60s and believed that the appropriate way to supervise somebody was to take them for dinner [pause] 
Oisín: which is excellent but this is not the way uh the current PhD factory would allow us to take everybody to dinner would be rather rather bankrupting um but I think that humanizing touch is important um I think students need to find a place in the discipline I think that’s why becoming a part of the conference circuit at an early stage is in important I I I think to feel oneself amongst peers is a really important part of the process um you you you know it's almost impossible to feel your way into the discipline without that so I think yeah drive ambition clarity and financial security R: and in general what would you say what weaknesses do students tend to have when they come to [institution 1] or when they’re doing their studies here Oisín: yeah I’ve commented on some extent on that I mean I think the ones who enter into the undergraduate program uh they've never done anything like undergraduate studies I think uh because I would be teaching in the area of [discipline] very few of them would have done A level or leaving cert [discipline] which would be the closest thing to it therefore the nearest disciplines that they would have had some experience of would be
maybe history or English so you are effectively introducing a wholly alien discourse to them. Well not alien in the sense that it's unusual, but it is a bit like learning a language and therefore if they did not make themselves aware of the extent to which they need to learn how to speak a discipline and like learning French or Irish or anything, they simply have to immerse themselves in it and that is basically reading reading reading writing thinking talking. If they don't make that jump and nobody can make it for them then they're going to be floundering so I think that is the difficulty of trying to explain just how much of it it's not just simply carrying on studies that they have done at the secondary school. I think a lot of students have an assumption that because of their experience of the leaving cert that a great deal depends on memory, but when the department was reviewed prior to entering [institution 1] in whatever 2000 the external reviewers pleaded with one master's program at that stage which still included examinations simply to get rid of exams that that regardless of what you ask people are going to write down what they know about um I still quite like the idea of an exam I'd like an exam that didn't actually count for anything because sometimes the only way you can find out what somebody is thinking or sometimes the only way somebody will find out what they themselves are thinking is if you give them a pen and a sheet of A4 and say what do you think about X but this is not pass or fail this is just to help consolidate the thinking process. I think students have not always been helped in how to study. I think study skills are appallingly impoverished. That that really we sometimes have to sit down and explain how to read how to take notes how to write an essay but very often we've sort of focused on the formalities of how to do footnoting and reference but actually it's the very basic how do you write an essay what is the point of this what points are you trying to communicate um most students are very very unclear on that very unclear on that so I mean I think I would tend to in the research methods class we do I would tend to sort of keep emphasizing form over content all the time because you know as a result of the leaving cert they have this desire to amass as much content as they possibly can and then regurgitate it all over the paper. They just think about what it is that they are doing. I would like to see more uh lectures and classes on study skills when I was first year we had quite a lot of week one immersion in uh this back in the eighties but it was quite a lot of you know how to write an essay for Humanities how to write an essay for social science it was very useful.
the things I would be looking for you know uh that was useful you know if the students
don't want to attend that's fine you know not everybody knows what they're doing and I
think so guidelines around how often you need to read what you should be reading we we
had a nice German man who used to yell at us that we have to read a hundred pages every
day and take notes on them [pause] which you know it's a counsel of perfection [pause] but
you know it was it was good at least we had an expectation which was [pause] frightening
but it was there

so how much of a factor would you say that language plays in academic success
people have to produce outputs of essays theses reports book reviews and what have you I
think also I so- some- something depends on the kind of field and and [discipline]
as a discipline partly relies on quite an explicit engagements with with metaphor
with analogy and with non-literal language um so that's quite a high level of fluency uh
that is required to capture nuance um so when I mentioned ear- ear- Korean students
who were here you can sometimes see that in the first couple of drafts they’re they're
struggling to get the nuance that they know they need but the language skill they have at
the minute is still a little clunky um so I think yes languages is tremendously tremendously
important um [pause] now to some extent I mean it is like learning a discipline is like
learning a language the more the more you see it done the better [pause] but does that
mean that we should be assessing them harshly because they are too clunky or to crude in
their language not necessarily um I'm constantly appalled at how the basics of of sort of
decent vocabulary and grammar are sometimes missing in students who are otherwise of a
very high ability um and and sometimes once they're put on the right kind of reading and
writing diet you know they'll come on hugely um but you can see that that their skill level
at the present is working

okay so kind of switching from a more general view to more looking at international
students what experience you mentioned before we started recording but um what
experience do you have with international students in your department
this department has a higher than average number of international students uh quite
a large number from the States uh this year we have several from India uhm we have
several from the Italy uhm usually we would have maybe 12 to 15 different nationalities in
the room at orientation so it's quite expansive but undoubtedly I’ve seen the single biggest
different group from overseas would be from uh the United States uh and therefore the
language issue is other than silly spelling the uh language issue isn’t an issue
R: okay and what do you feel that international students need to succeed at [institution 1] if
it's different than what you've already described

Oisín: um [pause] I I think there's two things um um [pause] I mean if the student is
coming and and having I'm trying to think of someone who's had really little operational
experience in English um [long pause] [sigh] I'm tempted to say I'd love them to get an
extra year simply because they're now operating in a different cultural linguistic realm uh
and that takes time and it can't be done remotely it has to be done it has to be done here
that's probably an unrealistic uh demand uh I have I tend to think that the the technicalities
of operating through English [pause] are less important than other assumptions that people
might have for example we have a number of students who have come from countries
where [pause] academic [pause] progress relies on showing fidelity to the authorities so
you read the texts and very largely you've quoted the texts say because the people that
write the texts are authorities and you as a student are not [pause] now the climate in
[institution 1] like many Western universities is that we would like a more questioning and
critical approach to texts and that is a huge jump for somebody who has a different attitude
towards how they demonstrate their grasp of the field so I think that kind of like
intercultural sensitivity is something that really needs to be spelled out to any incoming
student [pause] um because otherwise there will be you know they were run into
difficulties of plagiarism [pause] and they're not necessarily seeking to plagiarize [pause] I
think plagiarism is an issue particularly at graduate-level when I started teaching at this
level it was usually either students who were attempting to demonstrate their their
obedience to the tradition who plagiarized uh and thought of it as a virtue or students who
are terribly weak and frightened of failing and who might plagiarize in in recent years it's
actually been students who are gung-ho for success [pause] who have been the worst
perpetrators of of trying to find ways of of raising their grades by by using sources now
Turnitin is great uh people will still say oh I don't know how that could have happened uh
but it is nice to have some type of standard against which you can judge things uh but I
think a very basic course of research ethics needs >I mean I I would love the university
wide research ethics approach to not just you know there there are other broader issues of
research ethics but how do you conduct your approach to the sources I think would be very
useful

R: okay and are you aware of any support offer to international students in your
department or in the wider university

Oisín: yeah we’ve we’ve had some of our students have taken the uhm [pause] English for
academic purposes uh and that's been very useful uh [pause] beyond that for ongoing
support we have occasionally um made use of most >I'm not not really< aware of students
where language ability was the or English language ability was the determining
problem we've had issues where people have had a specific learning difficulty and and
we've made use of the college services there but generally speaking those who are
struggling with the English language we would trying to help at a local level within uh the
department simply because people w-w-with kind of a specialized vocabulary tripping
them up you can't send them to a general language class to see how they get on [pause]
but I mean I think one of the advantages of being a relatively small department is that you
have a pool of postgrads and others who will do the conversation skills who will you know
sit down and read texts slowly or sometimes you know wh-where necessary we will
ourselves
R: and would you have any advice or improvements or suggestions that you would make
for the support that you're aware
Oisín: [pause] uhm [pause] that’s a very good question [pause] I think I couldn't really
comment on that unless I actually saw what was being offered uhm I know we have
referred students who are incoming to it but what they have done there I don’t know
R: okay
Oisín: that's a good question for me to go and look up now
R: @@ that’s a good question for me to know and so for your modules of what aspects of
language are probably the most important for international students to master
Oisín: uh what do you mean by aspects of language
R: um aspects well you've touched on this where reading is very important and also where
you've said technical vocabulary
Oisín: yeah
R: uhm so things like that would be more technical vocabulary would it be understanding
and comprehending complex ideas
Oisín: yeah I mean this uh [pause] there’s quite a lot that is required of them there's
quite a lot of [pause] conceptual work uh that they would need to be able to handle
language in terms of being able to abstract from the concrete and think about things quite
broadly um there needs to be also quite a a [pause] I think a lot a lot of what we would do
here would have a even a sort of small #age historical purview that you are dealing with
long long lived traditions and how they've developed so there would need to be some sense
of how things change over time including the way in which we talked about and how we
examine things that develop over time so the conceptual and the historical are both quite
demanding I think a fairly sophisticated vocabulary is necessary in order to you know
work comfortably with the material uhm [pause] what else do they need I think the other thing that's important around those kinds of requirements is that because reading [pause] is quite a key part of it there needs to be time for that to happen you but we can't fill them full of lectures that they do actually need to sit down with the lovely book and try and stay awake as researchers everywhere do um [pause] yeah I think I think the time >and that again kicks back to< the economic thing if they're rushing from lectures to work in this bar [long pause] not good

R: okay and so are you aware of the type of preparation your international students currently participate in before coming to [institution 1]

Oisín: um if they have been is this particularly linguistic or is this in general

R: um in general so kind of more linguistic or academic preparation as well

Oisín: um well part of the application process to the university would usually we would get a sense of what they have been doing at their at their home university and they're usually invited to make a statement or to present some kind of if if it's coming into the taught masters they usually will make a statement if they're coming in for research degree they’ll be making a proposal that usually spells out what they've been doing and how they've been doing it um usually [pause] I mean we would have quite a lot of contact before students come in here I'm thinking in particular of the module I'm most involved the course I'm most involved with is the [topic] so this year is a very small number so it's untypical but the previous we had about 16 um we’d have been in touch with them all through the previous year before they arrived in and we would have been you know they would be probably telling us a little bit about some of the papers they were working on um and we would be you know we were intimately involved in sorting out accommodation whatever they were doing so we’d have good sense of of them in advance of them arriving and that would be kind of typical um it's not possible with the larger program so [degree] might have maybe 40 so the staff on that have an idea of who's coming in they will have vetted their applications and seen that they you know they formally comply with what is required and the executive officer who looks after that has will have done Trojan work trying to sort them all out and point them at the right kind of places for [pause] what they need to know so yeah there's there's good preparation work um [pause] whether it's as good as it needs to be or whether it could be more streamlined is a different question I think it tends to be catered to individuals and their questions rather than a pre-programmed [pause] this is the sort of stuff that we need to communicate or assess
R: and so do you feel that the current preparation so things that maybe international students take on themselves some courses that they might take especially linguistically do you feel that these adequately prepare the students or help prepare the students

Oisín: yeah I I mean I'm not I’m not as I said I'm not I'm not really aware of language being a particular barrier maybe that's because it's masters level um I mean I don't know I mean I don't know I think uh uh English is extraordinarily hard to avoid um [pause] no I mean I my my what I’d where I do pick up such things that people in general haven't got is a good sense of the basic around research writing reading

R: okay so it's more the the study skills and the research skills

Oisín: yeah yeah and being able to connect [pause] yeah there’s there’s a kind of an artificiality about a lot of the research skills uh discussion and sometimes people don't quite connect what they are doing with these kinds of mechanics which might actually [pause] help us get our idea across I mean there seems to be a mismatch

R: and would you have any ideas on how to make those match better

Oisín: mmm [pause] hm do I [pause] well yeah I suppose I suppose I don't I don't have anything particularly gripping to say I mean I I've been involved for a while I we we brought in a research methods class to try and bring some of some clarity to this uh one of the books that we've used I found very helpful and have sort of sent off to various people who are contemplating doing a PhD um it has a it has a worrying title I think it's how to survive your dissertation but it's gone to its third edition at least at this stage so it’s so it's doing something right but one of the things that I really liked about it was that the chapter on writing your thesis quite a lot of the books on research methods seem to think that nobody has a problem writing you know but if you just lined up everything all you need to do is supply a pair of hands and a keyboard and off you go um [pause] we we had lots of very good students who [pause] seem to balk as actually putting it together [pause] they’ve got all the ingredients they're really good at accumulating but the whole synthetic effort is is difficult so the chapter on how to write in that particular book is written by a professional writer [pause] who seems to have a good sense that it's not always easy [pause] and you know it mightn’t it mightn’t be a very technocratic piece of writing uh but it does engage people that yeah it’s hard to write [pause] it really is quite hard to write I I get my research students to try and keep a journal as well as whatever else they're doing just you know and every couple of days just write what have you been reading what have you found what’s interesting just to try and get them processing into their own prose of what they're doing [pause] because otherwise it just becomes the accumulated information it's not it's not the immersion of knowledge so I think journaling
APPENDIX F: FACULTY INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

22154[pause] which sounds like we’re treating them as people with conditions rather than but
22155maybe postgraduates are but I think that’s something that people need to do because
22156breaking the breaking into the act of writing is the the crucial thing
22157R: and are you aware of the type of entry assessment that international students so
22158especially non-native English speakers have to take to be accepted to the University
22159Oisín: the IELTS yes and other tests yeah in that sense yeah
22160R: yes how do you feel about the entry assessment
22161Oisín: um [pause] hmm [pause] I I I’m not necessarily a fan [pause] now I think there’s
22162a balance to be struck [pause] the college cannot possibly be taking money from people
22163who are not in a position to benefit from their time spent here [pause] um so that my mind
22164means that the the English competency requirement is uhh is there to help the students I I
22165think it seems to be usually wielded as a way of protecting the college [pause] um [pause]
22166one of the things that I’ve been very happy with in we’ve had two cases where a student
22167whose language competency was almost of the desired level uh was that we were allowed
22168to to enroll them subject to their passing as again I was delighted to see that level of
22169flexibility um because you know once a student is here and dealing with landlord and the
22170shop and their classmates it is an awful lot easier [pause] to do the kinds of assessments
22171that IELTS and the others monitor so I think so long as they’re handled with a degree of
22172flexibility I suspect [pause] >well I don’t< see the process for getting in is usually
22173something where you’ve built up some kind of rapport with the student that you have a
22174sense that they actually have a project um they have an idea of what’s involved and their
22175English language competency is one part of that jigsaw and and I think if the other
22176elements of the jigsaw are in place then that that would predispose me to look kindly
22177on anybody who’s wobbling a bit on the English [pause] because with with practice comes
22178huge improvements
22179R: right um and how how would you feel about sort of in-house assessment for that
22180Oisín: uhm I suppose it would depend who who devises it and what kind of criteria they
22181are and how different they would be from the existing testing regimes so I I would have to
22182see what’s what’s proposed I mean I wouldn’t wouldn’t be against it but so long as the
22183other regimes are being interpreted you know not as a way of [pause] filtering out the @ @
22184you know people you know people you know I might my fear would be somebody who
22185actually is acceptable really and you can and who’s who’s you know if we’re healthy in
other ways you know maybe with the bursary maybe with teaching hours I don’t see why
we would not help in relation to language

R: right brilliant right and so what type of preparation do you feel that international
students should undertake before studying at [institution 1]

Oisín: what should they what should they undertake before ummm [long pause] I don't
know is the honest answer they one of one of the groups that we have coming to us at the
minute are are undergraduates from principally from the states who are doing a semester
abroad with us which is organized through global relations [pause] and they seem to have a
program of activities and immersions that that really work very well I mean I you know I
would I would like to see something similar expanded I mean these kids arrive they get
their immersion they get a lectures on Ireland Irish life Irish culture maps of Dublin
weekend trips to Galway Belfast Waterford Cork [pause] that’s lovely isn’t it?

R: that’s great

Oisín: that's that's the kind of immersion you need to know that you are yes you're a
student yes you're here but we kind of know you’re also a little tourist too because you
assume you're curious >you don't have to do the things< I mean nobody should
be forced to go to Cork for the weekend at gunpoint but you know if if it's there and it's a
nice way of socializing with other people who are in the same boat and who are finding
this country terribly odd or terribly wet or terribly cold or all three you know [pause] so I
mean I think whatever global relations are doing they're doing it well with that [pause] I
don't know about the whole of the whole university are doing because some of them do
actually have global relations for the students that are coming so they are quite reasonably
programmed in advance and some of the scholarship programs certainly I think Rotary and
the Mitchell scholarship schemes certainly would would have some preliminary
preparations for them #unt [pause] globe-global they're the people who do stuff that seems
to work for the kids who are coming here now that’s for undergrads who are coming so
maybe maybe it doesn't have to be quite so touristy for postgrads but I think [pause] I’m
just very impressed with you know when you're trying to organize something for them
de they're they’re busy going off somewhere else at the weekend it's very good

R: that’s great

Oisín: yeah it is it’s very good yeah I mean you know they’re not sitting at home in a damp
little flat they’re off to the Cliffs of Moher or they’re down at the pub down in in
Ballycastle or something it’s good

R: really making the most of their time here
Oisín: well it’s a it’s a good experience I mean the idea is that you know it seems to have

R: exactly um so that’s actually all of the questions that I have for you but are there any

Oisín: [long pause] no I don't think no no it’s been very interesting so I mean I how will

your research to make available as a par- or or is it part of a plan to roll something out or is

this about raising questions

R: yes it's actually a plan to roll something out and so obviously with the typical you know

publications conferences etc. um so we have the summer English for academic purposes

course right now um which we're taking usually about 15 to 30 students each summer

between 4 to 8 weeks and so there's two pathways right now one is for the IELTS

preparing them to make the IELTS if they have a conditional offer and then we have the

ones who have the unconditional offer and just kind of um they want to prepare more

before actually entering [institution 1] um and we'd like to redesign the curriculum and

actually have a pre-sessional pathway where perhaps instead of taking IELTS they can

come for three months if they have a conditional offer we would offer English language

research English for academic purposes um cultural aspects etc. and then at the end instead

of having to take IELTS again they would have to pass our assessment um and then that

would kind of be the university's way of yeah so that's the dream the ideal goal

Oisín: yeah that’s great yeah brilliant

R: so yeah but we um we didn't want to do it without having research behind it

Oisín: yeah yeah yeah I can see that good brilliant that’s fantastic alright that’s very good

well I I’ll try to watch this space with interest I hope it all pans out

R: well brilliant thank you so much

Oisín: not at all I hope it’s been helpful I don’t know what you get out of talking to us

some of us who don’t probably don’t know what we’re doing half the time

R: no no it helps quite a bit um [recorder turned off]

Penelope

2250

2251

2252R: can you tell me about the work required of our students in your modules

Penelope: okay so I teach about f- on eight different modules [pause] at masters and

undergraduate level my master classes involve [topic] practice? modules? And also I teach

a module called [module name] that requires students to [pause] participate in a classic

lecture style experience and at the end of that they submit a four thousand word essay uh
[topic] practice modules involve and you know this already but they involve students mostly to carrying out [topic] practice and I give them feedback and the assignment that they do the end is based on ongoing [pause] practices and reflections [sharp inhale] umh and then I teach on undergraduate modules and that requires students to I guess engage in lectures to submit [pause] essays and also oral presentations R: okay and can you tell me about the work of your research students Penelope: [sharp inhale] my research students so my master's students that @I @ R: at the masters and PhDs yeah Penelope: [sigh] [sharp inhale] uh those poor critters @ they [pause] they all have to submit dissertations of different lengths so master's students are submitting about a 10 to 15,000 word dissertation and PhD students are obviously go way bigger than that umh it's requires them to independently research [pause] it requires them to look at the literature in the area to become experts in their area they need to begin to understand what the methodology is and the best methodology that could be applied to their research [inhale] uh it requires them to think independently work independently and to be able to incorporate the feedback that I give them umh and master students are also at the same time carrying out just sort of normal modules as well so they are arguably sort of wearing a number of different hats whereas PhD students are support to be focused on their dissertation but a lot of them are doing admin as well [pause] like yourself and doing the normal things things applying for conferences and uhm I think a lot of them are- while doing the PhD looking for jobs and having to work as well and so it's never very straightforward I think for disser for research students R: and so can you describe the general structure of your lectures and modules so what happens inside of the classroom Penelope: it really depends in the module and the class size [pause] on the cohort of students that I'm dealing with on the learning outcomes so every one of my modules would look very differently [pause] so for example umh I teach an undergraduate module called [module] and that has about 200 students so >and it's in very structured lecture environment so they are mostly listening to me umh work through a PowerPoint >now I'll have them do little paired group activities or I'll always start by having them brainstorm with a question that's kind of big picture that relates to their environment that they can really it- it's a way way for them to access the material but then after that the next 50 minutes will be me kind of [pause] speaking to the relevant research in that area so it's it's more of a listening exercise for them than anything [pause] but other modules like [module] are very much project based so they'll be in groups all of the time they'll have to
have done a reading before the come in they'll have to present on that reading the way that structure the material is through articles or through the big topics and so it's much more task based and that's because there's they're a group of nine students a lot of them are international? so I don't think I I tried to change the content so that it sort of so that they can use their own backgrounds to conceive of why this material t- to make sense of materials so and then and then the [topic] practice modules would be different again so I really look at the learning outcomes the size of the class the architecture of the classroom space to decide on what influences what they do [pause] you know what I mean hm

okay so you've already kind of described the form of assignment and your modules but how do you evaluate academic success so what do you look for when you're grading Penelope: [pause] well we have [sigh] this [click] [pause] how do I evaluate the academi- that [pause] how do I evaluate whether they have achieved the learning outcomes? Or broader academic success

both

Penelope: okay okay so it's pretty if it's if if the assessment is a four thousand word essay we have a pretty developed rubric that looks at a couple of different areas so we look at structure we look at whether so h- how ideas are structured we look at the referencing and the academic formatting we look at really at whether the student has gone beyond what we expose th- them to in lectures and whether they've [pause] gone in they've researched this independently they've developed new new ideas or new pathways of thought on t- on the topic so that's really important and there's another one or two criteria as well so I'll have that rubric in front of me as I'm grading essays [pause] and that then would determine whether this is a one one or a two one or a two two [pause] so it's really that b- b- but that's [long pause] I try not to just do a four thousand words summative assessment at the end because I don't think very responsive so in other modules like uh if in week six I have students do an oral presentation there'd be a different rubric for that and so the criteria is quite similar are they building on on it are they coherently putting their thoughts together are they extending beyond the field is the are the ideas that they're reporting academic or rooted in academic or th- or like do they have a theoretical basis [pause] and are they grounded in literature [pause] so that's really how you see that that's what you're testing when you're looking at academic skills that's what you want to understand that they can develop innovative lines of thought that they can do that in a succinct way [pause] uhm and that they understand what you've exposed them to and they've built on that themselves it's really a lot about the- their ability to go beyond [pause] what you've taught them or to take that theory that you've taught [pause] that you've exposed them to
APPENDIX F: FACULTY INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

22327and apply it to different situations [pause] that's I think academic success so that's what
22328you're focusing on when you're assessing them [pause] okay?
22329R: so how would you evaluate the academic success of your research students
22330Penelope: so master's and PhDs?
22331R: yeah
22332Penelope: mhm that's a really good question [click] it is it's really through their writing
22333[pause] so the the only I mean it's through conversations as well [long pause] but it's as
22334they submit chapters to me [pause] that's where I can get to see [pause] where they're going
22335to what extent they're- they're building on something or they're struggling with something
22336>actually it< happens the whole way throughout I mean I was just chatting to you about a
22337student who is struggling with her research ethics form I can already see where her
22338academic [pause] shortcomings are they're linguistic [pause] they are conceptual [pause]
22339because things that I would see as basic enough for a master's student to be able to
22340understand she's she's not understanding so the ability to [pause] take on board feedback
22341and apply independently that's academic so I can see I can see from conversations that I've
22342had with them so in meetings as well as in their writing I can pretty quickly see evaluate
22343their success and [pause] the way you try to resolve that then is by giving feedback and
22344kind of going through drafting processes and so on and but ultimately [pause] the
22345evaluation comes down to giving a grade at the end and that's what's really tricky do you
22346know what I mean [pause] it all comes down to that but I suppose that's [pause] maybe it's
22347the fairest way in terms of you'll have some students who will take your would be exposed
22348to your feedback once and they’ll get and th- they'll apply it and they can go do that
22349independently and invariably they're the ones that will come out with a two one or or a dis-
22350or a distinction because they had the ability >for whatever reason< [pause] they got it
22351[pause] where as other students will struggle and so how do I evaluate that again through
22352all of those those chats [pause] the meetings and the submission of chapters
22353R: and uhm so do your students have access to rubrics or guidelines before they complete
22354assignments?
22355Penelope: hm yeah I always try to put the rubric up on blackboard for the students so that
22356they can see exactly what's expected of them so for like I just did that for my undergrads
22357[pause] so uhm [pause] who'll be submitting a three thousand word essay and
22358they're second year students so I still think they're unsure about it so I will upload the sheet
22359with the rubric that I use so that they can see exactly what ex- expected of them >now
22360that< can be an advantage or disadvantage I think for most of them it's great but there are
22361always students who are really adept at [long pause] checking off the boxes but not still
22362Actually saying anything so I know there's some lecturers who would be opposed to that
22363but I think transparency is is all that we is is what we do it's what these students deserve I
22364think we need to take the mystery out of the assessment for them you know I think we
22365should be very clear and I'll also talk to them at the end of lectures and what I expect
22366what to avoid and [pause] what's a good idea and things like that uhm when I taught in
22367[country] we would all I would always give students a sample assignment [pause] so that
22368they could see and I would try to do that with my research students so sharing other
22369students' methodology chapters or sections or sharing my own work so that they have some
22370idea of what to do what this should look like I do that in my research methods class so
22371one or two lectures will b- are devoted to me bringing in other dissertations and having
22372students analyze them so that there are loads of samp- they are exposed to samples and it's
22373not a complete mystery for them [pause] so I do think that's probably a good idea [pause]
22374we don't do it now our department doesn't [long pause] kind of allow us to give samples of
22375essays to other students because they argue that they could be over influenced by them and
22376I see that point uhm [pause] but I do think there's a certain value to it as well
22377R: and so you said that you discussed or that you talk about what you expect in the
22378classroom do you allow time for students to ask questions and as they're going or is that
22379kind of restricted to the classroom
22380Penelope: no definitely I mean again it it does depend on the context there are [pause]
22381I'm just thinking about the module that I teach this evening we'll have [pause] in every
22382single class somebody will ask a question about the assessment with the nature of my
22383teaching style is informal so they know that they can ask questions all all all along the
22384reason I don't designate a formal time for them to ask questions it's very much integrated in
22385to the relationships that I have with them some will email me for follow-up if they don't
22386feel comfortable talking about it uhm and I'll ask in the bigger modules where I feel like
22387they're not going to come through enough I'll make sure to leave ten minutes at the end
22388where they can just ask I'll tell them that I'm gonna stay back for ten minutes if so if they
22389want to come and ask me questions about the assignment they can [pause] and they do
22390almost invariably they do so there's a lot of time for for clarification and with a twelve
22391week module like [module] I give the second last class I always give over to [pause] to
22392focusing on the assignment but also in the way I structure >now that I think about it< when
22393I structure my materials [pause] I'll struct- hm I'll try and structure them around the essay
22394topics so for [module] there were seven essay titles that they can choose [pause] uh and
22395one of them might on [topic] and so I will structure my material for two or three weeks
22396around that essay title [pause] so that there again there's no mystery they know I I I say to
them if you want to do this essay here are the materials that relate directly to this so they're
I think they're always very tuned in I think they're making decisions very quickly which
essay they want to choose and for that reason then they'll ask questions so kind of the
essay is integrated into the whole module [pause] so that they it isn't like this thing that
hangs out on it's own I think I try to be realistic about the fact that you're not here for the
good of your health you're going to have to write an essay at the end of this and that should
be we'll keep referencing that as we go along
R: so do you introduce the assessment in the beginning of the term //or
Penelope: oh yeah]
R: or do you wait and
Penelope: no I mean they'll know [pause] by >in all of the< modules that I coordinate the
essay titles are up from the very beginning [pause] uhh in the syllabi that I would use for
for example [module] they'll know what the assessments are from the very first day and
they'll slowly be working on them through [topic] practices so they're they know they
should know in week one for almost all of my modules exactly what the assessment is and
we'll discuss it at the very beginning and they slowly work away at it [pause] do you know
what I mean [pause] [click] in the bigger ones that there's some that we co-teach they're put
up the essay titles are put up on week three and they can pick one >that can be< a
disadvantage because students will hone in on one essay title and disregard the rest of the
material because they won't see it as relevant so that is problematic for certain [long pause]
that's the disadvantage they'll decide okay I'm going to do that and it doesn- she's not
talking about that today so I won't need to listen [pause] do you know what I mean but
ultimately I think it's more important for students just feel that they know exactly what
they need to do at the very beginning
R: and so in general what do students need to succeed at [institution 1]
Penelope: hmm [long pause] [sharp inhale] uhmm [pause] that's a broad question I think
you need to be a good independent worker honestly I think we are so [pause] uh
constrained with time as an academic I feel that we are constrained with time [pause] we
have huge workloads huge administrative loads and it means that it isn't the kind of
experience where we have loads of time to give our students and that's the biggest
disadvantage so they have to be [pause] able to take feedback on in fifteen or twenty
minutes [pause] and go away and apply that themselves and maybe that's the only thing for
two months and this is the and so that ability to work [pause] uh independently
is unfortunately and I really do stress that term unfortunately what they they will
need because they're not going to be handheld at all? um [click] I think you would also >I
would say you can be very confident in your own abilities which no student really is
because there isn't a culture of positive reinforcement in [institution 1] it's very different
from the [country] model or the [continent] model in that realm and so um it tends to quite
dis- I think it tends to be quite disciplinarian I think it's very hierarchical and students are
expected to [pause] to to take on often arbitrary criticism [pause] and not have much
recourse for action on that I think I see students especially Irish students but also Chinese
students almost trembling in their boots in the presence of a lecturer and I I I find that
really problematic and so to succeed I think you would need huge amount of confidence in
yourself and autonomy that you're doing a good job because the environment doesn't give
that to you [long pause] uhm what else do you need I mean [pause] to be successful in
[institution 1] so that I mean it's and you do need an intellectual spark there are good
students [pause] who can follow what you're doing but to really succeed [long pause] the
ability you need to have an inquiring mind [pause] and that is what separates a good
student from a great student the the interest the actual deep level interest in a topic or the
ability to focus in on something and see capacity to deepen [pause] an understanding of it
that and that is something that you can't teach actually teach either you can model how it
can be done or you can model how you did that as a lecturer or how you did that in your
career but [pause] it's something that I've noticed especially with research students it's
some- some students have and others just don't you either have intellectual spark or the
intellectual interest [pause] in unraveling theories or or you don't and you can get by by
being prescriptive and looking at loads of other [pause] studies and kinda doing what they
did but the great student [pause] who will really succeed will be able to go will be able to
navigate that landscape without clinging to a map [pause] so I don't want to call it into
intuition but it's just intellectual [long pause] uhm an intellectual spark [pause] what else
do they need I mean you need to be [long pause] I suppose yeah incr- hard working uhm
but I think that feeds into being an autonomous learner as well [pause] uhm [pause] I don't
yeah I think that's all I can think of for now I think there's lots of other things people are
but I think they're the core the core [long pause] I don't know [pause] values that you or or
attributes that you would need to bring to study in [institution 1]
R: okay so how much of a factor do you think language plays in academic success
Penelope: you mean English language or language in general
R: uhm let's start with language in general first
Penelope: hm I think it's [exhale] I think it's so it's so huge I've noticed when I correct
essays that students who may be [pause] ooookay in terms of grasping the content they
may be fine but if their language is really developed if they're good at coordinating an
arguments or arranging an essay or making it coherent no matter how deep their
understanding of the content actually is if they're good at doing that it creates an immediate
[pause] positive impression and [pause] their life will be made much easier by that there-
there's often been essays or assignments that I've corrected and the student may really
understand the content [pause] they may have to say about it but because their
language [pause] is compromised for whatever reason and I'm not talking about first or
second language speakers here maybe they just don't have a good writing style? or maybe
the English is their second language [pause] if you're struggling to access [pause] their
content then it's a massive barrier and a really damaging barrier I mean that's the one
thing that would really affect their success [pause] and that's frustrating because we don't
teach that we don't teach them essay skills [pause] or we don't teach them linguistic
skills we teach them content but then I think whether we're aware of it or not we are
grading we are assessing their language skills [pause] which is sound reason if you can't
access the content because they don't have the language then you can't grade them on their
understanding of the content if you can't get at it but it's that's under recognized
that we're not we're assessing something that isn't on our rubrics and that we're not
teaching [pause] I suppose sorry but I suppose the presumption is that if they get in in the
first place they should have that language they should be at a level where language isn't a
problem but I know and you know that that isn't the case at all
Penelope: so would it be more that um so accessing the content would it be clarity in their writing
and coherence what could you kind of pin down what would be that barrier
Penelope: yeaah it's it's a bit of everything it can be this their syntax of-often it's their
sentence ir- ir- irregularities in how they would open up the first paragraph how they link
between paragraphs if it's all over the place and conceptually it's not building from one
concept to the next but it's just firing all around the place so that themes don't interlink
that's really important it's yeah at the beginning they may [pause] I mean ideally they
would provide a road map at the very beginning [pause] or some sort of a quote that shows
where they're coming from how they're approaching this essay uh straight away you can
tell whether they're they're deeply grounded in this topic or if it just kind of opened up a
book and they're kind of imitating or trying to copy and paste other things together and
they don't really understand what they're grappling with and if that happens can you pause
for a second
R: yeah
Penelope: you might have to repeat that question for me one more time
R: um yeah it's how much of a factor does language play in //ac-
Penelope: okay yeah [pause] so it's huge so what exactly are the problems they
interlinking of ideas the arrangement of ideas but then often it's within a sentence you
could be looking at a sentence and there's no full stop and the syntax is all over the place
and you don't really understand what they're trying to say so it's it can be very [sigh] it it
can be like an umbrella problem? or it can be specifically within the essay and it's it's really
you can see immediately where in each case where the student is going wrong it could be
an no- a native English speaker an Irish student who just can't who hasn't I'd said who
doesn't understand the content well enough to put their ideas together and that comes
cross in messy abstract language or it can be a student who just doesn't who [pause] for
whom English isn't a native language and they just can't they don't have the linguistic skills
the grammatical skills [pause] or their vocabulary is too limited to really express their ideas
so it really so it can be seen in loooaaads of different realms [pause] and actually it's often
difficult [pause] no it isn't usually difficult to pinpoint exactly what the problem is you
usually can see by putting a red line under an example and you can usually see okay here is
your problem you know your syntax is wrong here or you really need to look at how you
reference [pause] or how you punctuate or this is not this is an irregularity you don't put
commas here or this phrase is consistently being used in the wrong context [pause] do you
know what I mean so by using but the really @ bizarre frustrating thing is [pause] we in
our Department wh- I I I'm go- I'll mark essays like that but my understanding is that
those those markings go to the external examiner and they don't go back to the student so I
have to end up rewriting all of this into a feedback form but th- e- the student can't see? on
the feedback form where I'm marking [pause] so that's just a chink in our system [long
pause] that hasn't been addressed properly so anyway
R: all right and so you're saying that both home students and international students are
language can actually play a huge //factor
Penelope: in their success yeah
R: yeah [pause] so is there really any difference between the two groups or would you say that it
plays the same level in in their academics
Penelope: I think it's a spectrum I think it is a spectrum I think [long pause] I can't say that
systematically uh native speakers are at [pause] an advantage or disadvantage over non-
native speakers and I do- I I can't say that because I'll think of an undergraduate module
that I teach [module] and when I look back at the grading I'll notice that my French and
German Erasmus students [pause] and Polish or European students categorically almost do
better than Irish students because [pause] they- they're not native English speakers but th-
they may have a lot of exposure to English texts and they're very good at grasping the ideas
their intellectual vigor is really impressive yeah they're arguing more intellectually or academically experienced than Irish students so in that regard you can't say oh definitely one is at a disadvantage to another but within that I can see problems within within other cohorts so I've a lot of Chinese students and they would systematically struggle with language [pause] um both oral language and written language [pause] so they would be as a cohort they would be disadvantaged uhm when compared to native English speakers and because it's a #grammatical disadvantage or it's a it's a [click] a structural [pause] issue in their linguistic competence uhm and again there are always exceptions to that I can think of a couple of students Chinese students like this year who's who's actually they're spoken English is fantastic it's really really great it's not problematic at all but I'd see problems when they're giving presentations or PowerPoint presentations and they'll have mistakes in their like their punctuation and grammatical mistakes that a native Irish- English speaker would never [pause] make but but so what I'm really saying is that there are different linguistic problems for different language communities and they exist for native language speakers and non-native language speakers and it all exists in a spectrum [pause] do you know what I mean? R: yeah no exactly okay so I'd say what experience do you have with international students in your department so you've talked about some cohorts but would most of your cohorts be international Penelope: yeah or would it be a good mix Penelope: no most of mine actually are I think I'm an unu- in an unusual position in which most of my students are international students because I teach mostly at masters level because [department] has a very high proportion of non-EU students um most of the students are international uh in terms of where they come from? it depends on the year we always have a h- like I've just been reviewing applications for the masters in discipline and I think I've rev- reviewed about forty so far this year and every one of those are from China [long pause] so now that may change later on in the year but that is a good [pause] and like they all won't come but that's a good indicator of where our students are coming from so a lot from China we have a lot like yourself from the US we've a couple from Greece and there's always a few from Europe uhm you know yourself Spain it really just it really does depend but we have a large portion of non-EU students [pause] and so yeah I would say I'm probably much more exposed than other colleagues I would have in other schools to international students I would say so
APPENDIX F: FACULTY INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

22571R: so are you aware of any support offered to international students either in your
22572department or in the wider College
22573Penelope: @@ well @I'd @want @to @be @@ so obviously as [role] I'm I'm aware of
22574the EAP classes and I'm a huge advocate of them I think they make a massive difference
22575but outside of the EAP I'm not aware of any other support that's available to them I'm
22576really not I think it's they're they're out on their own [pause] um you can't I can't speak to
22577the support that they might be getting at the level of their supervisors or their their
22578academics but being an academic I can imagine that everybody else is in the same position
22579as I am [pause] in that they're very limited in the support they can actually give them
22580R: right so do you feel that the support that you are aware of is adequate
22581Penelope: [long pause] umm [pause] I think the EAP do a really good job [pause] um but I
22582think [pause] what I don't think is adequate is [pause] the the entrance level criteria I don't
22583think that's adequate I don't think a 6.5 in an IELTS is adequate and I I don't think it
22584reflects what is actually demanded of students I think it completely sets them up for failure
22585I don't know what the answer is maybe it's making it higher maybe they should come in in
22586the seven or seven point five um I think that yeah I think that's the major failing
22587R: right so it's the standardized exams more than the supports in the //University
22588Penelope: yeah
22589R: that's not|
22590Penelope: I mean you can't I don't think you can be Utopian about it you're not you're
22591never going to get a biochemist to stop in the middle of their lecture and do a grammar
22592lesson they won't do that they don't see thems- they don't see that as their role uhm [long
22593pause] and it's really hard to do that and I know as academics we're all really devoted to
22594teaching our content and we feel an obligation to do that and it's really hard to steer away
22595from that so I don't think that they can do it um I know that we offer a lot of EAP classes I
22596think we've done a good job of offering a range of them I know that stu- I think we've tried
22597to be flexible in our approach and we try to be very open and how students can sign up and
22598we try to make it affor- very affordable in fact kind of free and uhm we try to be pro-
22599students and we evaluate constantly to make sure that they are happy with the experience
22599and we're working with constraints loads of constraints uhm I'd love there to be more
22600[pause] work and more innovation and more supportive teachers and more program
22601management I'd love there to be more resources I'd love there to be more Easter writing
22602camps and summer writing camps but uhm [pause] yeah there's lot of restrictions >but I
22603also that< the classes don't fill up I know that we don't exclude anybody so uhm and
22604students can sign up for as many kind of classes as they want and they don't do that so I'm
assuming that if what we're supplying with the EAP isn't exceeding [pause] the demand
isn't exceeding the supplied and I'm assuming we're meeting what the students want > but
you never< but do you know what I mean do you know what I mean so I would say if
there's a problem there would be an identifiable problem if the classes that we were
offering were all completely filled up and there was a waiting list but isn't that but I don't
know if that's because students aren't aware of them or they're just so stressed out and
overburdened that they're not taking them because they can't [pause] do another two hour
class on a Wednesday night because they're exhausted > and I think it's< probably a little
bit of both
so you mentioned the entrance exams so IELTS was the one that you specifically
mentioned uh can you expand on your feelings about that standardized exam
Penelope: I think again I have to balance this betw- between being Utopian and being
practical and being and applying my knowledge of standardized assessments so there has
to be of c- I think it's important to have a baseline entrance requirement we have that for
leaving cert exams you have to show that you're at a certain level we all know that that will
only get you so far but that's the level that's that's your baseline so I think that's really
important if we didn't have that? I think it would be chaos [pause] because it would be very
very subjective and I do think all order would breakdown [pause] from what I've seen of
the IELTS I can see some [pause] some strengths in the IELTS I think there's some things
that aren't bad about it all but what it doesn't acknowledge is linguistic differentiation
between disciplines [pause] there are things that an IELTS exam would have a student do
[pause] a- a- a physics bound student do that are just not relevant and they should get
through but they're gonna fail IELTS because it's it doesn't make sense for them you know
it's and it's not it's asking you to develop a skill that you don't need the way that students
abuse the IELTS exam is really shocking to me there's this kind of Russian roulette thing
of I'll keep taking IELTS until they get the score and that is you know really laughable so
if it was me I'd would have something I-you can't limit how many times a student can take
it but it is being abused [pause] I hate that it's a commercial exams see these are paying to
take it all of the time so I think ultimately when we're endorsing the IELTS exam
we're endorsing a private company [pause] uh and I have a problem with that uhm so there
are the problems and the deficiencies [pause] but also I see the need for a systematic
standardized exam that that does create some kind of a baseline so you're not starting off at
nothing [pause] do you know what you mean
so you said that there are some things that it does well can you pinpoint what what it
Penelope: well I think the reading comprehension is quite okay [pause] uhm I know there is a listening exam but the way that it's [pause] examined is going to look at things like the pronunciation and intonation and things really quite technical things I know native English speakers who've taken IELTS and haven't come out with a native a native English language score so um but I think the reading comprehension is is okay and I think it's [pause] you know it will expose students to you know closed procedures and certain it'll test their basic in- the formulaic language structures >it does that quite well< but it doesn't test again their ability to think critically any of those skills that I talked about earlier as being crucial to [institution 1] it doesn't test any of those [pause] and that's the problem with it [long pause] what they do need at the same time they do need to have those basic skills before going on to that next level I suppose and I mean we probably get on to say I think the ideal formula is what we've been developing in the center which is this idea of creating standardized tests that mirror the assessment strategies that we us that mirror those skills or that build those skills that you need to succeed in [institution 1] but even to get to that point we still need to have an IELTS minimum entry level because we need to know that to teach that [pause] they'd have to be able to understand us at some level [pause] do you know what I mean so we're still there's no we could never really cut the dependence from this assessment so I think you it's you you can only use it as a base as a baseline measure that's not enough [pause] I don't think but you do need it? but it's a baseline measure measure but after that loads of other support systems need to be put in place after that [pause] to acknowledge that the IELTS does not support those skills that they absolutely need for academic success.

R: and so are you aware of the type of preparation of your international students currently participate in before coming to [institution 1]

Penelope: in terms of English language?

R: um English language or even academic preparation

Penelope: uhm I would only because I do I review students' applications who the students who are going into the master's in [discipline] I review their applications so I'll see their background degrees I'll see where they've taught [pause] I'll examine their proposals and things like that so that will give a sense [pause] in that in that case that would give me a sense of what they're doing or where they're coming from but in all the other modules no I'll have no idea I've no idea who's sitting in front of me absolutely zero uhm no I really don't >and often< I teach an undergraduate class and I don't know know if they're second years first years or third years nobody tells me that information they're [category] and [general] curriculum so students I could have engineering students in front of me or I could
have linguistic students in front I could have anyone and I don't know their backgrounds

[pause] yep

and for those of you that or those of the students that you do know what kind of
preparation they've had how do you feel about that preparation

Penelope: uhm

I guess would want to say more linguistically rather than academic

Penelope: hmm like it- > I don't know I mean < don't have a formal way of measuring how
I feel like how confident do I feel about their abilities?

yeah so would you say that because of preparation that they've undertaken that they
have a more likelihood to succeed or do you see them at an advantage as compared to
those who haven't undergone preparation

Penelope: yeah like okay so and this is probably based on on my own biases but also my
experiences having lectured in [continent] and [country] and taught different cohorts of
students I'd almost always see my Chinese students at a disadvantage because of the way
that they're taught uhm that very structural disciplinarian passive learning approach isn't
what we use here at all and so I know that they'll struggle with that style of learning uhm
so I'd I'd rare- Id usually start the term or the year kind of >not shaking my head< but
just being aware just feeling sorry for them because I know they'll struggle with that
[pause] uhm like I say w- with my what Erasmus students undergraduate Erasmus students
I'm usually pretty confident about them [pause] because I think French for example French
and European structuralism will mean that they're [inhale] vigorously like trained to to
develop and say to develop a line of thought it to- like they really take their academic
learning seriously in a way that in Ireland we kind of don't it's still a little bit of a joke and
it's kind of I think I think being a colony and being a postcolonial nation where it's still all
very new to us and I think to our students and so it's almost like they're playing a role of
being student? but the sense of this being really a part of their intellectual identity is still
missing [pause] or it's still evolving uhm when I see a mature student in the class I'll
generally have more hope because I feel they're- they've got it it deep intrinsic motivation
to be there so I'll feel I'll feel like they're they're more prepared than an eighteen-year-old
Irish student uhm linguistically as well as everything else [pause] uhm [pause] and then
with my American students yeah I'll I'll just know that there will be things that they'll be
very well equipped to do like linguistically I find my American students are really
confident in orally participation in class really confident in that and they'll usually do fine
but I know that there will be cultural factors that they'll really struggle with in Ireland
because we don't we don't do positive reinforcement we don't have time [pause]
because we don't have these elite systems of education we don't have to we deal with massive numbers so we don't have time to handhold or to comfort or to be there in the way that they would expect and our grading system's much tougher so American students are used to getting As and we give Cs and that creates problems [pause] so outside the linguistic realm the la- language is just one area that I'll feel is will affect their preparation it's their age it's their where they're coming from >whether they're studying< in France or whether they're studying in China like that and I I I'll have a sense of the kind of exposures they will have had before >which like with my Greek< students I get the sense that they come from a much more philosophical and theoretical background and so they can't cope with the rigidity of a methodology chatter [pause] that's really hard for them so they'll struggle in that regard so I suppose I am aware I suppose I am scanning and I am aware of where they'll struggle >but there's< not a whole lot I'll actually be able to do about it other than saying I understand that this is not what you're used to but this what this is the culture here [pause] this is what is expected this is what you're being graded on and they they're ability to adapt to that system is also ultimately what will what will determine their academic success R: so what type of preparation should I guess students undertake before studying at [institution 1] Penelope: mmm [pause] do a pre-sessional pathway program @ it's fantastic great people uhm [long pause] I don't know I'd sa- I mean I think we've a good job if I think of the [institution 1] and all the podcasts that they put up on their website and there's a lot more awareness of engaging with the media and things like that so if I was a master's student or a PhD student coming to [institution 1] for the first time I think I would be treading through the website and going to the [research institute] and list- listening to podcasts [pause] uhm from the research that's it's emerging from there listening to videos and see looking at the department that I'm going to and seeing what their research profile is like maybe looking at papers they've given or conference papers or things like that >like I think you'd< want to be very motivated to do that but that's probably what I would if I was motivated enough to really try to prepare myself I think that's what I'd be doing uhm [pause] I do believe that [pause] students are coming to an English language institution like [institution 1] for the first time should take some sort of preparation course [pause] but I don't think they realize that because I don't think they realize that as soon as they start they start and they're thrown in with everybody else and no special accommodation is provided to them I don't they they they're not going to see that from having applied from China or America they may assume it [pause] but it's not available to
them so yeah a good preparation program uhm and and then >but there's only< so much independent reading you can really do I really think it needs to be scaffold for them all of the rules all those hidden [pause] rules that I'm talking about that needs to be explicitly taught to them and I think the only time you could do that is at the beginning in a very intensive four or eight through for or eight week program where they're really given time to absorb it all so they're no [pause] just [pause] lost. [pause] in September

R: and so that's all the questions I //have Penelope: really?

R: yeah but uh are there any questions that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask Penelope: hmm [long pause] uhm just I suppose if I there was a question that

was missing it would be like how do I rate how academics or how international students feel like how how what do I think international students feel at the end of their course of study [long pause] um yeah because that's the question that I carry around all of the time like what are they leaving with and that's that kind of burns in my heart a little bit like how have they >because I have< my own biases about how they feel I feel like they're the support they probably need I wonder if they leave feeling alienated and unfulfilled? [long pause] I wonder if they feel leave feel like they've taken a challenge and succeeded in it I wonder if they leave with any sort of warm feelings about [pause] people like me that they've encountered along the way or if they leave feeling absolutely like they wouldn't that it was the worst experience of their life [pause] linguistically and otherwise do you know what I mean [pause] and there's no I don't know anyway where we can measure that like we in a very superficial way we evaluate their [pause] satisfaction with the module which is tokenistic at best [pause] but that's the question that I would I would add to other for you I think that would be and it's very subjective but I think I would like you to ask that other lecturers how do they feel like they're international students are leaving at the end of a year or a four year program

R: how do you think yours are Penelope: @ yeah I really I really don't know I mean [pause] obviously there's students who [pause] like I say who are able to navigate all of these challenges and love it and feel like stronger more developed human beings who who thrive in the struggle but I think there are others who will just feel despondent because it was too hard [pause] and it was hard not just because of the academic standard because it was too hard because of the culture [pause] because of the [pause] the lack of explanation around rules because of assumed knowledge and then immediate kind of getting your knuckles rapped because
you weren- because you didn't pick up on some sort of a culture rule that was never explained to you in the first place [long pause] and so I think I do I strongly feel >and it could be up< to fifty percent are leaving like that and there could be another fifty percent who didn't have a problem with that but that's honestly where I don't think that eighty-five percent of my students are leaving feeling like that was amazing [long pause] I don't think that because I think there is and I think that is to do with the culture [pause] be it the linguistic cultural the academic culture but really to do with the [long pause] the the assumed knowledge almost the arrogance of the culture [pause] in which we [pause] it's very institution specific and there's a sense of outsiders and insiders and maybe a sense of exclusivity and a sense well if you can't reach this [pause] without me explaining this to you then you're just not good enough [long pause] and so I think that's ultimately what crushes students [pause] and I think that's honestly where I think a good preparation program that's where where I think the work could be done outside of ex- of explaining grammatical structures I think un-peeling those cultural expectations and clarifying those for students so that they're prepared I think that's actually the part that's what they need [pause] they'll pick up the language stuff probably over time over the year through EAP but that other stuff needs to be taught [pause] needs to be >and it< needs to be understood [long pause] I I I think having these conversations where I as an academic can reflect on what are actually the what is the criteria what my expectations are and then finding a way to channel that to students because we don't do that [pause] do you know what I mean

R: yeah there anything else you want to say

Penelope: no that's all that's all

Rose

R: okay so first can you tell me about your modules that you teach what's the work that's required of your students both in the class and outside of class

Rose: okay so any module undergrad?

R: all modules yeah

Rose: [exhale] okay well it depends on the module but if we take a typical one like let’s say an introduction to [topic] they would need to do some reading they would need to be engaged I try and make the classes as interactive as possible so while I would put some PowerPoint notes up on blackboard the goal is that they'll have read them before the class and then when we come to class I can use that as a backdrop for
conversation about that and related subjects but that we’re not literally just show and tell because that's not going to be very helpful in terms of active learning um so I do [pause] sometimes have little impromptu in-class tasks so I'll tell them they can sit on the ground if they want that they can you know chat to the person beside them they can have small groups where I'm just trying to get them to [pause] work through certain questions or you know problems in terms of trying to figure out well you know is that a noun or a verb it might be you know or then you know as we progress then something a little bit more complex um I get them to do wiki's about particular topics um that's also a way of making sure if they can't copy from each other because the each have to pi- so I'll give a list of topics and then they can select from that list so there’s at least some sense of choice@ not much but some uhm and they have to prepare something and then they have to do like a little quiz and they have to prepare a poster exhibits over here at the moment [shows posters] uhm they prepare a poster and my grand plan had been that they would take the wiki and they would translate that to [language] but in fact the quality of the submissions were so poor@ that I decided in fact that I would give feedback and the requirement would be that they resubmit [pause] and would get marked again on the resubmitted new and improved wiki's because I thought that would also give an opportunity for a course of learning they also have to do an in-class presentation so again there would be a list of topics and they get to choose one

Rose: mm-hmm so with the presentations be in [language] or

R: [click] no in second year they’re in English but in other modules sort of further up the food chain they present in [language] so when they have for their placement modules for example um near the end they come in and they have to talk about uh a topic like say fitness to practice what does fitness to practice mean for say an [profession] what have they learned from being on placement what kind of issues have been seen observed heard about and then how does that link in with the academic or codified practices and then they deliver that in [language] or they talk about their post-graduation six-month plan or medium to longer term plan in [language] so we we do both

R: you do both and are the classes delivered in a mixture of [language] and English as well

Rose: it again it depends so in first and second year um any classes that are delivered through [language] have interpretation or in English if there's a [group] student in if they're delivered in English well then they would have interpretation to [language] for the [group] student in third and fourth year uh if the classes are say outside of the center well then for sure there would be interpreting provided but otherwise here uh by third year the students
actually have the degree of proficiency required to be able to engage with the subject matter in [language] which is pretty phenomenal.

R: yeah that's really great.

Rose: yeah you know so they have modules on ethics delivered in [language].

R: oh that's brilliant and would many students have a background of [language] before coming to your program?

Rose: five to ten percent.

R: okay so very little.

Rose: very small yeah and then you know I would say of those maybe five percent would have robust so it's a very small percentage and some of those who have had some [language] teaching prior to coming have a lot of very bad habits because the quality of teaching out there is very mixed there very few trained [language] teachers there are maybe forty in the country.

R: that's not a lot.

Rose: yeah so the you know if you go to your average evening class in your average #vc the likelihood is that you're not getting a trained [language] teacher and so there are problems with that in terms of pedagogy and understanding of the task and what that means for the learner yeah.

R: and um also just out of curiosity would you have many students who have learned a different type of [language] like [language] and coming to the program?

Rose: very few very very few.

R: alright and so can you tell me about the work that's required of your research student so your masters and PhD students.

Rose: mm-hmm [cough] the usual you know so they would obviously have to be prepared in the first instance to complete the college's requirements so completing their ten ECT's worth of courses um selecting courses that are going to be a good fit uh completing the written worked standard required engaging in one-to-one sessions um but then also for us here in the center we set up monthly post-grad meetings so more group-based because we happen to have maybe five people who are working using the same methodology so that helps uh so that means then if they're also engaging in English or [language] because [name] is one of the supervisors so he sits in on some of those meetings and it's so with an opportunity to to talk about ideas as they're unfolding or to try and troubleshoot ideas or you know figure out where is this going you know so it might be for example we had a student who's um completed all of their interviews they've started coding their data but they were trying to figure out you know well [pause] does this fit together do I have a
theory have I been asking the right questions does my data tell me anything and so you

know to have that opportunity as a group to work through that with the student um it's it's wonderful but it does require then engaged skills you know the potential to co-construct meaning but also to work with wooly meaning which is tricky because you know even if you're working in your first language that's tricky stuff because you don't quite know what it is that you want to say and you don't quite know whether or not you've got the right grasp of the data that you're dealing with or the idea that you want to convey so if you're doing that in a second language that’s even more difficult

R: yeah and so we'll get to English in a bit but um since you're working in a different language as well for your research students would there be a level of [language] proficiency or some sort of interview or gatekeeping um

Rose: for entry

R: for entry Rose: as post grads no because it depends on what the topic is uhm so with the post the post grads we have at the moment I mean also if you go back to just you know sort of BICS versus CALP they would all have good >well you know again< there are degrees of goodness but they would all be able to have basic interpersonal communication but that's the difference then between bridging that gap and you know now we want to talk about you know what's the nature of grounded theory or you know was Chomsky right when he said that there's a general gram- you know how do you do that

Rose: in [language] yeah and also you know the fact that with the language having been suppressed for such a long time that there aren't established lexicon for many of these concepts so we're also figuring out how do we talk about these in [language] generally as you know as proficient [users] so we're having to coin new phrases in the language or borrow them from another sign language potentially

Rose: in [language] that’s kind of cool

R: it is@ cool@ no it is@ cool@ um but it adds to the complexity then yeah because it's like what are we gonna what you know so here's the words in English and here's what it means so how we can talk about this in [language] and because we then have interpreters involved too it also means that we have to be mindful of that so there's a great deal of in some ways that is very good because it can slow down and inform our thinking about what things mean and it can help us to ensure that we're all on the same page and understanding what a concept means in fact um but it also means that then there's a great deal of extra
Work that goes into figuring those things out and negotiating those things and co-

constructing information across linguistic boundaries yeah

R: that's so interesting I didn’t know that um and so you've kind of touched on this but can

you describe the general structure of your lecture lectures and modules know what happens

in the classroom

Rose: okay there so the it would depend again on on whether it's a it’s a language class if

it's an academic subject or if it's say an interpreting class so I teach different kinds

R: are you able to go through all of them

Rose: yeah yes no problem so if it's it's an academic class well then you know there are

points in the year where it has to be chalk and talk um but I really want the student to do

some of that engaging and so like in my class I try very hard to to flip that as much as

possible and to [pause] make them responsible for shared learning and you know so if I get

them to do things well then I try and get them to give me things that I can then upload but I

mean that doesn't that doesn't work as well as it might and I think part of that might be also

that I may not have been using say blackboard as efficiently for some of those #four

environments so you know I know that there are things on my list of to do try and help

improve some of those things but um as I said earlier like in my classes so in those

academic classes I I try and make sure that the notes are available in advance that they

have the opportunity to read them in advance um that we then get a chance to talk about

some of those issues that there’s time for questions that there is little exercises to do just to

get them moving because they come in they're tired uhm you know if they’re just

going to sit there you can see people who are gonna doze off um [pause] so it works best if

you can try and get them to do something too [pause] that would be those modules I'm

thinking yeah I do the same I teach a research methods module and so you know the

module previously was a first-year module now it’s a second year module so my

expectation of what the students are able to do and how they should engage is increased

because of that they also have a knowledge of [language] that's maybe to A2 B1

level um with the research methods module um I expect them to be very proactive we build

group essays the funny thing is a they hate that group work@ yeah I thought that was

really interesting so

R: have they said why

Rose: because they feel that they like the ones who speak up and say I hate this it's because

they feel that the the weaker students are not pulling their weight and then they have to do

the hard graft to make it work I mean I try and have really frank conversations with them

about saying you know you know it's not just and here's the exercise but I try and put it
into that broader bigger context so I'll say to them you know we're not making you do this just for the sake of it um we're making you do this because the college says that when you graduate you're going to be good communicators and communication entails oral communication for us [language] communication written communication but who you're writing for you're writing for different target groups so this is why you know a wiki who's that for and it was really very interesting because the students there what the really bright students they're really articulate this particular group are are wonderful but they thought oh wiki means really informal and so the way they were writing it there were no references there weren't even full sentences um it was patronizing so you know being able to go back to them and say you know this wasn't good but here's why it wasn't good and you know who's your audience and sort of working through some of that with them was helpful in in sort of reframing it saying to them you know in the third year group you know the reason why we have group work is because when you go out into the real world you're going to work with other people and there are going to be shirkers and there are going to be times when you're gonna have to pull your weight more and do things well play to your strengths you know so you might be really good at doing the writing up and the editing well maybe somebody else is better at doing the face-to-face bit or the organizing everybody to get together or you know coding the data bit so build that in play to your strengths and they might again they might not like it but then they see that there's a purpose that it's not just a you know I hate that we have to do this can you not do something else and I think I think it's really helpful to be able to say that to them to say look you know there are deadlines here's why there's deadlines you know if I'm writing an application for funding there is a deadline and if you don't meet the deadline you're out doesn't matter how much work you put in and just because you've worked really hard doesn't mean it's really good so you know and nobody the other thing I really try to say to them is nobody is born writing say you know an academic piece of text well it's a learned skill so you have to practice it and you have to integrate the feedback and I think you know that's why I think that one of the challenges here in [institution 1] is that there aren't enough opportunities for those recursive pieces of work and I was really surprised pleasantly surprised at the very positive feedback that I got from the second year group when I said to them listen why don't we do the fourth piece of course work as a reiteration of the second piece of coursework um and they really like they literally people came up with it I really appreciate that that was really good that is fantastic and I wish we could do this for some other modules too so you know that really took it to court but that tells me that they're not getting enough opportunities to practice writing and they're not getting enough
opportunities to build in formative feedback so we give formative feedback but are they applying formative feedback I don't think so yeah or you know the ones who are really good they can do that but there's that there's that group like there's a group of people who are in to say two one two two level and you know that if they actually if you if you had a way of forcing them you know in inverted commas to do something to demonstrate that they were implementing pieces they can move up and I think you know when you also articulate that to them and it's not in the schoolteacher way where you say oh you can do better than this like that's not it it's about saying I know [pause] that this is just a matter of not quite knowing how to tweak this but if I tell you how to tweak it and you do this this is what's gonna happen and then people are suddenly more motivated yeah so you know I think I think it's also it's about making time for that conversation because if you're teaching you know you have a curriculum to cover and there's an exam at the end [pause] you have to be brave and say well actually you know what that's the bigger goal because if you know how to do this you can read the feckin’ slides you can read the papers so there’s that bit I think the other problem is that the students don't read enough they simply don't read enough they want to have shortcuts they'll read that's my other problem though with the you know you get PowerPoints and the weaker students are the ones who want to regurgitate that or Wikipedia is you know and it's like that's not okay we have academic papers for a reason and you need to look at them for a reason but you have to again you know you just say that to them and explain to them that this is the process and explain to I it and they'll give feedback and then I have to implement it so you know don't think that this is school like if we're doing it here this is real-world stuff too and if you go and work in business and you're preparing a report it would be circulated as a draft and it will be commented on and then you get to a final version so I think we need to build in that expectation of feedback and implementation I really think that that's very important so that would be the academic that's a long long answer

Rose: you know so there's that but then we have modules where like the language skills so um actually I don't teach the the [language] modules that would be like [names] um but it's also with they’re CEFR aligned um and it's about them you know trying to keep it as authentic as possible and trying to bootstrap learning over time and clearly it works when people come to visit us from abroad they always say you're doing something special there because the the capacity of students at the upper end um graduation is better than comparable institutions abroad and I actually think that the difference is that we have
people who are teaching academic subjects so they're getting content based learning as well as language learning yeah I think that that's the fundamental difference that's really really important I think for our students yeah and then in the interpreting modules we have um again I try and use CEFR aligned text so if we have a student doing say a simultaneous interpretation say if we pick a TED talk um we'll pull out the text they've done their interpretation to [language] we'll go through the text and we'll just mark up on a paragraph by paragraph basis where is this CEFR wise so you know it might be well paragraph 1 introduction A1 great you know but then you can go up to maybe quite complex so to C level descriptions of uh you know say policy change over time an increase in numbers relative to another place or time uh so that’s complex to handle in terms of understanding but it's also really complex to handle as a simultaneous interpreter um and so I think that's also useful because it means that the students get to see how they're coping with work from English into [language] at those levels we can see then [pause] you know okay you doing really well at the B2 but the C and it's like just a slim sliver of C level stuff normally but that's knocking you you know and that's again that's okay because that's where they're at and that's our target to get them to B2 level comfortably but with some C level receptive um and then we do the same thing for [language] you know so we gloss up the [language] text and we mark it out in terms of omitted or this was skewed or that was completely warped or you know oh you're struggling here or you’ve lost that.

R: okay and can you describe the the form of assessment in your modules

Rose: ooh lots of different kinds so we have coursework so for these for again like um so with the [module] they have an in-class presentation they have um this wiki because I wanted what I wanted to do is I want to build into their consciousness the fact that they're very privileged they're here they're learning about [languages] formerly they're learning a formally the majority [group] people don't get that so access to information about the language should be then shared you know also there are like parents of [group] kids who are desperately trying to access information and there's a real lack of public resources so I wanted them to be able to write about little linguistic topics for that audience uh so plain English rather than patronizing English but still accurate you know and that's a hard thing to do actually and they struggled with that initially so we'll see what they've done I've got it over there yet to be marked um what else did they have to do they have to poster because then I thought well you know what um next year they're going to be doing research methods and they're gonna have to be able to summarize ideas next year they’ll
have to summarize their own ideas their own methodology so here's a way of just priming
that by getting them to talk about somebody else's ideas and summarizing a paper in a
poster fashion and it allows them to be a bit creative as well and they've done really nice
stuff so hold on I’ll show you here's one on um can we talk about a morphology of
[languages]
R: oh that's nice
Rose: yeah
R: is that actually him
Rose: I think that might be one of their friends
R: one of their friends
Rose: yeah yeah one of [name]'s friends there
R: that's actually it’s very well laid out
Rose: it's really nice yeah or like this one
R: that's very nice
Rose: yeah so they put in a lot of effort in terms of thinking it through and you know I say
to them you know you don't have to do this on your own you could talk with each other
and some of the topics are related so you know if you're doing [pause] gosh if you're doing
what let me see I had different different groups of like phonemes you know so if you were
doing the first set of phonemes and I’m doing the second set of phonemes let's talk to one
another and see if you're number one well maybe you could talk about what a phoneme is
and then I can refer back to your poster and we can have them as a series you know so or
you can think about what's your layout like so let's have a similar layout and you're really
good at layout and I'm really good at referencing so if you help me with the layout I'll help
you with the referencing so again it's collaborative and they have to talk about it um
[pause] so there's that bit and then I have the the in-class presentation because I also want
to hear them talking about ideas that's also come back to the in-class discussion you know I
want to ask them questions because I want to hear them talking about it using terminology
properly so you know [pause] trying to get them to understand or to articulate different
verb types or you know why is that a noun describe it why is that a minimal pair you know
what are the rules that govern that um how do we talk about time you know because people
talk about tense like [language] doesn’t have tense tense is marked on the verb [languages]
don't mark tense on the verb so stop using that word to talk about this so you know
obviously I’m not going to say >stop using that work< but you know yeah you know you
can it gives me an understanding of where there are better whereas if they're just quiet in
the class you're never going to know how they're conceptualizing it and how they're trying
to articulate it and you want to be able to get in there and make sure that they you're helping them to articulate it [pause] properly because they're gonna build on that then as they go forward they need to be able to use that language when they become student interpreters or teachers um because then in their third and fourth years they're going to do a lot of self-reflective work so in the interpreting modules the kinds of assessments we have include portfolio building a lot of self-assessment and then we have final exams so for the in previous instantiations of the examinations we would have um say an interpretation they would do an interpretation and then they would do a self-analysis of the interpretation but our problem was that some of them are really good at doing the analyses but they weren't very good at the interpretation piece and we didn't want to be giving the marks that was gonna get them to a pass [pause] if they couldn't do it right so we had to make a decision to take the you know for some of the final year modules that we would just take we need them to be able to do the self-assessment we’ll make that part of maybe formative development skills uh and use some of the class time to be really talking about what is it they're doing can they demonstrate the capacity to identify these things properly so a lot of again talking about it and writing a little [cough] but then we decided no actually in terms of fitness to practice we just need to make this a pass/fail type thing so it's performance-based so uh again because of shifts in the university from old system to #TEP uhm a process whereby now everybody in the seniorsoph year has to do a research project uh we've had an interim phase this year where we had to take some of the interpreting modules’ time and space to put in a little research project but that will revert to usual next year so next year it’ll go back to it’s just the interpreting test uh and then they'll have a separate research project that they have to do and I think that that's good too so everybody has to do a research project so they’re learning about research methods um and they’re learning about you know how do they handle an idea that they're grappling with it's their data set and they have to do the write-up so you know that's good and we also get them for one of the modules to do a present- in so the research project this year belongs to sim one simultaneous interpreting one um but in simultaneous interpreting two we have 10% for an in-class presentation and 90% for a final role played live interpreting assessment um and for the 10% piece the in-class presentation like sometimes in some years we say okay we're going to focus this year on healthcare interpreting so everybody has a different task so you know you've to find out about what do they do in Northern Ireland do they train medical staff to work with interpreters and somebody else's to find out what's the HSE’s current policy on provision of interpreters somebody else's to find out is there any documentation so that we have a class based presentation like a mini conference then where everybody's
presenting on their findings um but this year what we did was we got everybody to present
on their research projects [pause] so it's like with the second year's where you're you're
getting people to work with data and present to different audiences for different purposes
here they were able to then bring together their work in progress because it wasn't there it
wasn't due for another month or so but they could present work in progress talk about their
methodology talk about any challenges talk about the literature and take feedback but they
then had the opportunity to implement again in a meaningful way right so it's authentic it's
real for them so therefore hopefully that means that it's it's going to be leveraged in some
way yeah and then for the the placement modules um the assessments include site visit um
we get some feedback from placement providers but that's really tricky that's [pause] [sigh]
it's completely subjective@ it's a varies significantly depending on where you're based@
and you know some people are allergic to putting anything on paper you know people are
very slow to want to say anything negative mostly um so you know the validity of that as a
fair assessment is problematic but that's not unique to us that's common across the board
so for that reason we now do we do the site assessment which can just simply be an
interview with the student and we'll talk with whoever the person was dealing with them
on the placement [cough] and then they have um interviews so they have the the review
of maybe you know ethics or ethical issues or fitness to practice issues or and then they
have another one where they have to talk about their own professional development goals
um they also have to write up they they compile a log of evidence around their
placement what did they see what did they do reflections on the literature reflections on
best practice blah blah blah blah um and they put it all together in a portfolio so so we
try to have a very varied range of assessment um both formative and and summative

R: and so the master's modules would there be specific [discipline] master’s modules
Rose: not not yet not yet part of the reason for that is because we've been beyond capacity
with the undergraduate modules there were plans afoot back in 2008 when we set up the
degree we moved from diploma programs to degree programs we were supposed to have
more staff but then the recession hit and all of our funding was cut so we lost 80% of our
funding @@ but still had to do the degree @@ so @@ so we've we've been really at
full capacity there um so we just you know it didn't make sense to do what we had planned
to do with rolling out some master's modules but we TEP one of the possibilities here is
that that allows us to regroup and to review and to revise and our goal would be that that
would leverage us back enough space so that we can offer a module on the MPhil
programs um you know the other thing that we’re looking at again back in 2008 we had
been bringing forward a proposal for a master’s in [language] and that was to be funded by the Department of Education and Skills and then they said sorry there’s a recession no money so there are a room like there's a lot of interest at the moment in the aftermath of the [language] act that might bring that back and so we had you know we're talking about well maybe a version of that maybe something for interpreters but what how when where would the resources come from um they're all things that still need to be teased out but there's there are opportunities

R: there’s scope for it

Rose: definitely yeah

R: that’s brilliant

Rose: so that would be really really cool yeah and then we have the PhD students

R: right um but you're still taking master students from the MPhil as a supervisor

Rose: oh yeah yeah yeah yeah yeah

R: alright yeah

Rose: yeah yeah yeah I have a wonderful woman at the moment this year who's we went down to Cork last week [cut for confidentiality] yeah it’s like oh my god yes but we went down and we had an absolutely wonderful time we had wonderful interviewees we had a chance to brainstorm because [name] who’s who's doing the PhD was also there and so we're taking the data from different viewpoints so he's doing a grounded theory analysis and then [name]’s going to use the same data but come at it from the discourse analysis perspective so it's going to give a sort of multiple viewpoints on the same data set

R: and kind of verify any findings

Rose: absolutely yeah

R: brilliant

Rose: so she now has a whole ton of data to go transcribe [cut for confidentiality] so that’s great I mean that's the wonderful thing like you know that you get to work with really enthusiastic motivated people who you just sort of tip them in the right direction they're like whoop off I go and do this so that’s great that’s wonderful but still even with those I mean you can see and even my PhD students you know it's about writing it's about um like the research ethics process is so stressful for them and it takes a lot of time and I think you know again supervisors vary from place to place but I I always say I say to the third years I say to the master’s students and I say it to the PhD students [pause] writing the REC that's that’s a road map hmm and you know take time to do that properly and you know as a supervisor I think if you sit down it doesn't matter if it's gonna take you know six or eight hours well if you have the time to do it because if you do it properly well then you have the
guts of your introductory chapter down you have the guts of your research methods chapter done yeah and you know you know exactly where you're supposed to be at any point in time

R: I'm be doing XY and Z this is my plan

Rose: absolutely you have clarity and that means that you can explain it better to your participants and that means then that you're in a better place already in terms of thinking around like okay so what am I doing with this data and how might I deal with it and I find that as a result of that typically the students who are collecting data tend to have a better conceptualization of what they're doing with their research than students who don't have to collect the data

R: yeah I agree with that yeah especially after collecting data for both my Master's and now the PhD it was so helpful to have to go through that process but and so going back to your um assessments how do you assess academic success so what do you look for when you're grading or when you're telling a PhD student if they're on the right track

Rose: [pause] well it depends on what the kind of assessment is while we we’re talking about RECs actually one of the pieces of assessment for the research methods module is to complete a draft REC

R: that’s brilliant

Rose: hm they hate it they hate it and they hate me but you know again like just you go explicit this comes back to what are the learning outcomes why are you doing research methods so that you know what's appropriate and you know what's not appropriate and you demonstrate that you can actually complete this kind of requirement in research um but the whole co- again groupthink the whole cohort of students wh- this year we have I have a relatively weak a cohort of third-year students and everybody comments on the fact that they're a little disengaged as a cohort in contrast to my second-years who are fabulous and the fourth years who are fabulous and they're all very nice but they're just for some reason there's like this group men- think mentality despite the fact that we had gone through it all in class many times despite the fact that on a weekly basis we had talked about particular aspect not a single one of them submitted a PIL a consent form [pause] yeah letters to gatekeepers but they all ticked the boxes [pause] you know so I'm sure I said to them I met with them and I said did you all just talk to each other and go ah yeah we don't need to do that they went yeah yeah pretty much and I said not one of you asked me not one of you thought well I'll send an email and like this module in particular you know I think it's also bad the fact that the module was taught in [first] term but the hand in date for that wasn't
until I don't know March so it was like out of sight out of mind and it was less pressing
timeliness of of things but they're also under a lot of pressure of time and so there's the
balance there to be considered too I haven’t answered that question at all @ so give me the
question again
Rose: oh yeah how am I evaluating mm yes yeah okay so it depends
so if it's if it's an essay @have they answered the question have they read the literature are
they referencing the literature appropriately um what's the quality of the writing you know
depending on what it is you know if it's a wiki it's like have you have you looked at any
wiki's what's your goal you know have you demonstrated the capacity to think through
who your audience is uh whereas like you know for these posters for the the second years
they clearly have they put in time and effort we built in an editing process to it because
they knew that these were going to go up on the wall for real and that people would be
looking at them um so I think I think that [pause] ensuring that yeah knowing having the
students know what it is that you're looking for is really important so that they can cross-
check if they are so inclined and we have them articulated in our student handbooks and
we have sample rubrics in our student handbooks but do they look at them in advance
some do [pause] but I bet they're the stronger students um for you know more extended
pieces of work [pause] I tell I tell students that when I'm marking something you know
when it's something that's in progress like a PhD or a master's thesis it's for me it's about
having a conversation [pause] I say to them you know when I get feedback on my work
you can either see it as a criticism or you can see it as a critical friend something really
helpful I choose to see it as a critical friend because if the person who's reading who
happens to be in my field and is bloody brilliant at what they do doesn't get what I'm trying
to say well then why would we put that out into the world when lots of other people are not
going to get what I'm trying to say so then pointing that out to me now is helpful because it
gives me an opportunity to change it so I try and say that to students look you know if I'm
giving you this feedback please don't panic and it's not a criticism the goal is to try and
help you make it as good as it can be so you can do as well as you can do and if I give you
that feedback and you see it you know that it's honest and you know that that's the
trajectory that we're going in but yeah I try not to do the red pen thing so I normally use
pencil or a black pen and I also try um and point out where I think people are doing really
well so yeah I think you know over- I try try and make sure that they understand that this is a scale it's like riding a bike or learning to swim a thousand meters you know that you have to just put the time in and it has to be repeated you have to drill it and you know if you're on if you're on a sports team or if you're in the swimming pool you have a coach so sometimes you know I use the coaching metaphor so I'm just going to coach you here I'm gonna give you feedback and it's not to criticize it's to help you be better um in terms of quality with say the interpreting students we do sessions in class so they might have so it moves from and it has to move from the teacher being the person who's the one who's the holder of knowledge to the student being and the students forming a community of practice so that they're able to identify what their strengths and weaknesses are and then as a teacher like near the end I'm stepping in only to maybe things that aren't being said that I think are really important but not just for everything for every purpose you know um and I think you have to also be mindful of where people are at you know so there’s this cycle so the the beginning of the year it's shiny and new and you want to hold their hands um I think you can give more critical feedback sometimes in that period but then once you get after Christmas they're more stressed and their window tolerance for feedback is is maybe a little reduced you know you really have to be mindful of the psychology of the of the learner and where they're at and you have to read that and um you know touch base with them and moderate your feedback according to where they're at so if they're telling you they're having a hard time it's about figuring out are you having a hard time with this or is it that you're having a hard time with life so you know in terms of the quality of the work might not be a reflection on the quality of the effort that's put in and so you know while you're interested in the product I think if you're teaching somebody over a period of time say for a masters or a PhD you have to see the product as being just one component of that person's life and you know I think it's really important to be able to say you know okay so you know there's the the product you can look at the product but the person's coming back to you for feedback you have to be reading how they're going to be receptive to that and can you know you know do you are they like you know give it to me that's fine you know I'm quite happy for you to just please tell me honestly yeah and you know I've had people who've been really like no give me more of this I really want it to be [pause] I want you to critique and then there are other people who you do have to be more gentle with and you have to you know say okay so you know so this is really good but well you would say that everybody you know this is really good but uh you know this needs a little bit more work uh I just think you need to be mindful of that
and so what would you look for it say a PhD student submits a chapter how would you
tell that it's a good chapter like what are you looking for in the chapter
Rose: mm-hmm [pause] clarity of thought charity of articulation cohesion [pause] critical
thinking you know not simply descriptive but analytic thinking synthesis [pause] uh
original ideas you know where possible I mean um you know clarity of description of
examples um that they're they're and this is tricky I mean it's tricky even when you're a
very experienced writer uh that you forget sometimes that you haven't articulated some of
the concepts that need to be articulated more fully because you know it so well so you
know I think it's also about thinking about [pause] has the person demonstrated due
consideration for the reader and you know as a student is progressing sometimes that's all
you're saying to them is like you know that reads very well to think about your external
examiner will the external examiner know that so I'll say you know coming up towards the
end it's like okay now you know now we have a good draft we're going to go back read it
as if you're the external examiner what's the external examiner need to know yeah yeah
R: alright and what would you say in general students need to succeed at [institution 1]
Rose: ohhh ehhh community yeah I I think [pause] particularly when actually I read an
article this morning there was an article on Twitter some link uh to a study that somebody
had done I think in the US around the community of support that a student needs in order
to progress they identified different kinds of students you know in terms of those
who have like a family group almost and those who have you know um sort of socializing
buddies and academic buddies and those who are maybe more isolated and they looked at
who's more inclined to succeed and pass and maintain those friendships and I thought that
was very interesting so I think you know I think we see that here too you know that you
see that the students who are engaged who are really participatory at group-level are the
ones who are they're going to be able to hang in there when times get tough eh so I think
that's really really important and can't be underestimated um but I think what else do they
need they need to use the resources that are available [pause] yeah I think [institution 1]
has amazing resources available [pause] part of the time of might be I don't know do
people fully realize what's available and part of the time there may be just reticence to to
draw on those supports but I mean particularly for the undergraduate the fact that every
student gets a college tutor that is a phenomenal asset that is somebody in your corner
who's going to be your advocate all the way through uhm I think it's a shame that there isn't
an equivalent for postgraduates actually because I think uh there is you know the danger
you know if if I know that there have been students who have had supervisors where it
hasn't worked out and then what do you do you know you don't then have somebody else
who can advocate for you you have to like what you have to go to your head of school or your director postgraduate teaching and learning but their their colleague or you've got to go to the Dean of research and the Dean of postgraduate studies and you think well you know as a student you'd have to feel very comfortable and confident to do that or have to be very distressed one would imagine so so I think that's a challenge I think that's a gap in the system and in the college um but it's not just here I know that that's true in other places too so you know they're kind of the more macro issues but then use use the resources use the library you know engage with people participate in events like you know the [research institute] events would be of interest to a lot of people in our school ehm the post graduate seminars um you know I think that they're great but I also I think it would be really nice if there was sort of a common space that post graduates could get to you know and I think at the postgraduate research event that we ran last September was really successful we had lots of people came up and said oh my god that was great because we often feel like we're isolated we feel on our own so you know I think that again that comes back to the building community and practicing [pause] it's not quite multidisciplinary but you know across [discipline] and [discipline] boundary conversations because [pause] they're beneficial to people no matter what it is that they're going to do just having the opportunity to talk I think really helps I think that that really helps so in fact it's in many ways I think it's the community piece is as important as the you know you've got access to a great library and you've got access to a good supervisor I think it's the people that really matters

Rose: right yeah okay and so how much of a factor do you think language plays in academic success

Rose: [pause] [click] big part [pause] oh absolutely yeah I I think you know all you've to do is to have a look at the experience of [group] people in education where [language] well [languages] were suppressed across the world and as a result their access to education suffered terribly with the average intelligent [group] person leaving school with a reading age of 8 to 9 years

Rose: so that is you know a a perfect example of what the deprivation of access to language means in educational contexts if you're talking about students who are coming in with poor language skills that puts them at a disadvantage you know it may be that the receptive language skills are good but their potential for participation and for also just you know highlighting themselves as net contributors in a commu- again in the community practice um if they're not able to do that effectively well then they're disadvantaging
themselves and they may find themselves more isolated and they may not then be as willing to step up for opportunities you know be that say teaching opportunities or you know presentation opportunities which then also has consequences downstream potentially yeah

R: right and what other factors would you say play an academic success

Rose: [pause] a social support you know where are you coming from um do people think it's a really good thing for you to be doing this study you know in terms of you know from family support you're from a working-class family you know you may get a lot of ooohhh hoity toity going to [institution 1] now are we now ohhh it’s far from that that you were raised you know why would you be doing that would you not go and get a job you know so a lot of students from working class families and sort of first-generation college-goers they get that and they have to deal with that uh I think mature students who are women have to deal with a lot of that too in terms of you know oh are abandoning your family you know there may be less now but you do tend to see a trend that um relationships come under pressure when women are returning to education much more so than man I think um [pause] so there’s that social dimension there's the financial pressure the students are under you know can I find accommodation that's affordable do I have to work full-time in order to study full-time as well so then there is that narrowing of the time available to engage in the college community and in the whole experience of study um yeah the the time the management of expectations what is it that a PhD will bring me or a masters will bring me what is it that I need to do to get this you know and I think well also going back to the undergraduates oh you know there are 12 hours of classes therefore that's all the time I need to give this it's like eh eh nope @@ yeah so I think you know understanding what it is that you're letting yourself in for and the consequences of that are huge but I think more and more it's a a and also mental health issues of course like people are saying that the the level of mental health concerns amongst post graduates has increased or is at least more discussed and I think all of those issues are because of those additional pressures you know that are coming to bear on people and the concern about work you know so okay I've got this qualification but I'm not gonna get a job in academia or you know these zero hour contracts um so what about job security where am I going to go from here do you think that working in you know if you get a PhD if I don't work in academia do I see that as some kind of a failure eh you know how do people talk about the value of postgraduate qualifications for working in the social sector in private industry and in valuing that and making sure that people recognize that you know it doesn't matter what you do with this it's the fact that the PhD isn't so much well of course I mean it makes you
a subject specialist but actually it's the transferable skills that you're demonstrating that you've learned from this as a researcher that you can handle data that you know about research integrity that you um know about engaging with participants maybe you know or that you're learning uh scientific methodologies that you can read complex data that you can write effectively that you can present to different audiences that they're the transferable skills and that's what many employers are really interested in so you know I think those conversations about what's your trajectory and why are you doing this are really important too so the people I think that also may be linked to you know how people feel about themselves and and where they're going and I think you know imposture syndrome @is also something that you need to talk to people about and I think you know if somebody's on their own they may well think you know I'm the only one in the world who feels this way and you know I shouldn't be doing this or ehh I'm gonna be found out any day now you know whereas if they have the opportunity to talk together they can all say oh Jesus you know why am I I feel like a complete fraud and you're able to say well actually it's okay that's a common phenomenon uh but you know it's a we can also guide you to say well you don't have to pretend that you know something you don't know in fact what we need to be able to do is say I have no idea what the answer is to that question but I can find out yeah you know so it's it's about so it's not just about that I'm doing a PhD on [topic] it's about I'm a researcher in a community and I have a life@ and I have a trajectory and I need to think about the the ethics of all of that and I need to think about how do I engage other researchers and I need to take about what's my contribution but I also need to think about you know how do I keep sane @@ in all of this R: yeah yeah brilliant and so what experience do you have um I’m trying to think of how to phrase this of with students who might be say linguistically disadvantaged either they don' t have English as their first language they might um be vernacular etc. Rose: yep [long pause] I have found that those students tend to be the students who try hardest and do best @@ on the whole yeah they're invested and sometimes it's the students who have maybe sailed through secondary school and got very good grades who think that don't have English as their first language they might um be you know late returners they might be on access program they might um you know speak of vernacular etc. Rose: yep [long pause] I have found that those students tend to be the students who try hardest and do best @@ on the whole yeah they're invested and sometimes it's the students who have maybe sailed through secondary school and got very good grades who think that don't have English as their first language they might um be you know late returners they might be on access program they might um you know speak of vernacular etc.
undergraduates the ones who don't attended are the ones that don't do well the ones who do attend are the ones who do better and that's not just about your coming to class so you're getting but the the content knowledge it's also that you're getting the community and you're getting that buy-in and you're getting that opportunity to collaborate and so if you are gonna miss something you know there the other people are gonna look out for you who you can go to yeah yeah and um you've touched on this a bit as well but um are you aware of any support offered to international students or students who do need help linguistically within your department or within [institution 1] Rose: that's where the wonderful people in [center] come in @ um with the the preterm courses and the during term courses so we have referred a few students in that direction and they found that very very helpful indeed yeah and would you have seen kind of a noticeable difference as being a professor of theirs or a supervisor or would that just be coming more from the students saying that they were very happy with it Rose: the the well I think it's probably combination of both so the students feel happy with it they're more consciously aware of certain things therefore they can draw attention to those things and you can then bring up some of those issues in conversation with them about their work as it progresses so it allows for a conversation to open up about those things whereas maybe otherwise before either they're not aware or they're very maybe a bit embarrassed or fearful about bringing attention to that explicitly yeah okay and kind of going towards international students would you be aware of the type of entry assessments that international students need to take before being admitted to [institution 1] Rose: I [pause] don't they need to do the Cambridge exam they they need to demonstrate is it a B level capacity yeah Cambridge I actually don't know the Cambridge one I know IELTS it would be 6.5 but Cambridge would also satisfy I think it's Cambridge Advanced and which is supposed to be equivalent yeah would you have any particular feelings on it on these types of assessments or Rose: [long pause] I have to say that the international students that I've had have been exceptional you know even Erasmus students that we have coming in fact one of these posters is by an Erasmus student who has consistently been top of the class I had four four Erasmus students in my [module] class this year and they were all absolutely excellent um I have a master's student who's Italian and you know so I think she has really appreciated
some of the input that she's had and we'll see because I haven't had t- have any written
work for which she's been collecting data and dealing with data so we shall see how that
has has helped but it's definitely helped her confidence and I think that's really important
yeah I'm I'm actually I'm trying to think I I think I've been extremely lucky the the
international students I've had have been extremely proficient and extremely organized and
very proactive @ uh in fact my concern would genuinely be some of the homegrown
students who who don't have like writing course that they're required to do and
even though I'll point them towards for example the college counseling have online uhm
course materials to support learning and academic writing I don't know how many of our
students actually go and take up those resources so it's about you know the
resources are there are they used in the way that they should be by the people who should
use them I don't know yeah
so you would have more concerns in terms of writing and that kind of stuff with the
home students than international
Rose: the home students yeah in my experience yeah yeah
yeah and are you aware of the type of preparation that your international students would
have undertaken before coming to [institution 1]
Rose: no okay and what type of pressure preparation do you think the international students
should have before coming to [institution 1]
Rose: @@ wow [inhale] well I suppose because particularly if they're postgrads they
need to be able to write so the you know I think [click] it's about ensuring
that they understand what the required standards are and that they can demonstrate
capacity to deal with complex data effectively in written format um I worked in the States
for a year and in the the college that I was at there they had obligatory writing courses and
I think that they worked extremely well I could very much see a difference for the students
who came in and their trajectory over the life of completing that program um so
those students were required to write maybe 20 pages a week and they got feedback on a
weekly basis and I think you know if you had the resources to invest in something like that
well then you would be doing students a great service because it would help them
move in the right direction yeah
okay and is there anything else that you would want some sort of course preparation
course to have
Rose: [long pause] I'll have to think about that one yeah
R: because I was gonna say like if you could tell us over in the office in your summer course

Rose: could you do this this this yeah [long pause] yeah because yeah you know cuz I'm thinking you know that the biggest thing is of course because they're gonna write something is the writing skills and of course that's the most difficult for them to to be dealing with but I think it's about the the written skills and you know because [pause] the instances of plagiarism are most likely to occur with international students or second language uses of English so [group] students do this too but they're not doing it deliberately or with malintent necessarily but it's just because they're struggling with how do I articulate this in my L2 so you know I would say paraphrasing but understanding the requirements ethically not to you know not to plagiarize and understanding that if you do copy paste that is plagiarism and that is a problem and you can be kicked out you know ultimately so uh you know I think that that's the biggest challenge for them but also the biggest challenge for you @ if you're trying to teach them some of those things um but I mean other than that it's about confidence in articulating questions and I suppose it’s also about the culture you know the cultural engagement with a supervisor with other students you know what's appropriate to ask or not uh I have a colleague in the UK who's gay and he was giving a presentation at a conference and some of I think they gave him flowers actually and uh a foreign student said to him oh that would be so nice you can give them to your wife yeah and he actually he was telling me he was like I don't quite know what to do because I'm not out to them and there’s cultural issues and maybe you know this will have an impact on the relationship um but shouldn't he he be aware that you know the cultural norms here are different and maybe it's not wise to assume that this is the case so just you know packaging that and thinking about you know well how do you engage people and what's expected and you know do you look for poignancy some of those really lower level things but they can help make or break relationships and they can help just smooth out your negotiation through the college journey so it's not the academic piece at all but it impacts on your academic journey yeah

R: okay so that's all the questions that I have for you but are there any questions that you wish I had asked that I didn't

Rose: no they were good questions

R: okay um oh wait no actually I did forget a question actually um what do you hope that your students walk away from when they leave [institution 1] or what do they feel when they leave [institution 1]
Rose: mm-hmm I hope that they feel that the qualification that they have earned has been well-earned that they feel that they have mastery of the key competencies that we tell them that they've secured ehm that they understand that the qualification can open doors for them but that it doesn't mean in of itself @ that they're gonna automatically be you know selected to to get all the jobs that they want in the world you know that that's not the way it works um I would hope though you know in terms of going back to what the the programmatic outcomes would be that they would be able to do things like write an extended piece of work confidently and that they're able to stand over and that we're able to stand over it you know that we're not passing people who really aren't able to do this very well that they're able to stand up confidently and deliver a key message about X Y or Z is that that they're able to know represent themselves well and articulately um yeah you know that they're they're engaged and engaging as a result of the education and that the education that we're providing while it's focused on key topics but that those transferable skills are are going to be there that they can then use to their benefit no matter what they do so you know if you want to go from [discipline] to being an [profession] and that's okay you know or you know you want to go and you want to do I don't know rocket science or you know something completely different that's okay and I think that we're doing something right because we've had graduates go and work in Google than we've had graduates work in the European Parliament and you know go out into the world and be very well received so that's very positive uh but I'd like to do more of that better so for the ones who are not maybe performing as well I would really like that there were the resources available the time available the people available to be able to get them up the chain in some way because like I want them to succeed and I want them to be confident.

Sarah

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

Rose: @@@@@ no that’s good

R: okay brilliant thank you

Sarah: um could could I say a little bit about the school the structure uh my role here as well

R: absolutely yeah
APPENDIX F: FACULTY INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Sarah: well firstly to say I'm the director of postgraduate teaching and learning as you know but we have 200 taught master students and we have about 80 PhD students and the whole notion we're only not that long in the university we're only 2002 through 2021 years old so quite novel really by by other in comparison to other disciplines and international students are a novelty for us as well so prior #2002 we had a homogenous Irish population for the most part whatever random sort of person who wasn't Irish and English speaking so it is very very new to us so the experience that we have that I have even in relation to people whose language um [click] first language is not English is uh limited the other thing says was the the role in the school is broken down into various personnel that's why I’ve asked you to interview other people as well because we have a Director of International Affairs and we have a uhh director who's involved with staff and student development and people who’d have more close working or understanding of the requirements of the modules per say so I wouldn't necessarily have that that detail of requirement of understanding I would say and the other thing that I have that I want to kind of feed in is that I’m an editor of a journal and I've been reviewing and publishing for a number of years and I have particular interest in the way people write whose language is not English first language is not English write you know they have a way of writing that is I think could be addressed you know so to to answer the question can you describe the general structure of your lectures R: yeah your modules yes or the program about um in general what students are expected to accomplish expected to do on their own in the class Sarah: yeah so you mean generally speaking across undergraduate or postgraduate or it all R: um well if you can do the whole program that would be amazing but if you're more closely related to your own modules that would be completely fine Sarah: @ yeah yeah I better start my own modules so we have a [pause] I suppose we have a requirement for a fairly high level of independence >well compared to< well in at least in Irish secondary school we’ll say for example the the students in secondary school here have had an Irish education would be provided a lot of sec- information second level even down to essays rote learning essays to finish to answer exams so what we would require kind of a usual level of in- university independence but they struggle with it eh which is for example firstly each module has a [click] module description and is on the [institution 1] portal so even that is a jump I’ll ask students the first week do you know where module descriptor is ehm so every module descriptor that is a very clear careful guide for the
module at the end of this module you need to know how to explain describe the development of [topic] in the past 15 years or something like that I I so that's one thing if they know what they need to know by the end of the module well then they can actually study for that and get pass the learning outcomes and when I was I trained as a [profession] ehm more than 30 years ago and we had a #unt document and it had the learning outcomes in it and I just weld myself to them and once you did that you got all A's it was easy peasy but I think students sort of come in listen to lectures go away and just try and take it in or something or take notes they don't see the full things that are needed so that as guides so the module descriptor’s a guide so we would expect I would expect and encouraged and tell the students to do this to have all that material available to them the module description the other thing that they require is the um access to blackboard we put a lot of materials on blackboard so we'd expect them to be um able to retrieve um articles look at websites watch DVDs um read study notes um and revise the study class notes from class and they are all provided on blackboard so they need to be able to navigate and understand blackboard read the announcements we big expectation that they attend class as well and listen in class and we try now this can be difficult I suppose think about your non-English we have large lectures if th- up to three hundred undergraduates now at the moment or will have and the students there’s a lot of lectures and they get quite bored in the lecture so they try to ask you to to the school committees to try make them little bit more entertaining don’t be reading off the slides so if you do that you lose a certain proportion of class because you've got students with disability or students whose English is not the first language so but it’s a balance between entertaining and not entertaining but you know explaining around and actually keep the things very very simple but everything is it so for example I suppose imagine somebody with disability or somebody with uh struggling with English they would be obliged to to attend class first and take their own notes and then go back if possible and go back over the notes and there but everything on my notes anyway for certain is needed eh so that's the requirement we would require we'd have each module description would have a certain amount of readings and we would have a requirement that the students would read outside of the [click] a rea- reading list read outside of the lecture notes we struggle ourselves with that because >and it's another sort of whole issue< but um we tend to put too many books on the reading list now I tried to filter mine down as much as possible they made me make it insurmountable for students so there's actually that many I I have a theory myself that actually the academics haven’t even read as many books on that particular subject as they’re expecting the poor undergraduates or even postgraduates
to read you know so ehm I can imagine I suppose as someone who's struggling now that’s
even more difficult so I try my modules to have them filter down to the key books that they
would be expected to read and if they read a little bit with prompts that they would do a bit
to better so I suppose a reasonable level of reading um and in terms of the teaching as lecture
we have some small group tutorials and this will be the same for for for masters as well
really um and then the requirements then >I'm just trying to think< of the the we have we
use like a we use grids learning grids ehm we would expect yeah in terms of their expec-
most of what I teach will be essay based like what hasn't been essay based um we've
actually turned into essay based because the exams are even more challenging for these
types of topics but we would expect very much a sort of a logical flow through through
that the argument would start at the beginning even if it's a basic argument of [topic] has
developed professionally in the last 50 years that it starts and then it weaves its way
logically through so there's a logical flowing unambiguous style that it makes sense that
there's a beginning middle and an end and this is where I'm feeding it to my editor
experience as well my biggest issue with all students is that they don't use their own voice
that they are afraid uh want to sound academic and they have this pattern of uh cutting and
pasting from articles so I know I know the- w- like well a lot of students do it because they
lack confidence certainly the students with disability often that they'd they tried themselves
because they've had to work so hard that the- they’d actually often do a little bit better in
fact but certainly students whose English is not the first language they’d go this I taught-
saw two students last week who had failed and in by the end not my words but their own
words their essay was a bitsa they had just taken bits of this bits of that and bits of th- the
thing actually did not make sense so for an English speaking person to present something
that actually is gobbledygook is unthinkable you know @ what what they do is they
actually take the little bits out of the books put them in think they sound clever maybe don't
proofread it maybe last put it in and students who’s -w a littl- now I notice a similar thing
with with with but students who don't have English the first language to do a similar thing
for the same reason but I actually see the problem equal with people whether they have
English or not in fact sometimes even worse if they have English you know so but we do
expect it to make sense um to be logical the other thing we do have a lot of I mean it's
marks for not a lot of marks for particularly the lower levels is the presentation referencing
so we’d expect a very high standard of you know attention to detail and again my
experience is that those who pay a lot of attention to detail tend tend to do a whole lot
better you know so even ehm so the more the correct the references even a master so I saw
a master’s students recently and those with the the the document that looked more the more
looks like an elephant feels like an elephant smells like an elephant the more fact a chance

The more that that thesis looks like three nice paragraphs on a page

Excellent referencing the chances are it's actually better work and I actually had to explain

That I don't know why that is you know when I ask the students even in class why do you I know the essay that comes in with coffee stain in the front and two dog ears and I say to the class what grade is that I say do you think I failed it because the coffee stain no no because those who don't pay attention to detail tend to the whole they lose you know and the opposite then they those who pay attention to detail in general I only ever saw one thesis that was perfect looking but had failed and it was a student who is a Indian in fact and she lived in London and I was given her as a master's tutor she'd failed and what she had done was she was getting a proofreader to proofread her work so she was actually wasn't even finishing her work she did when I worked with her she wouldn't even put the full stops in she just said oh I don't need those right now my proofreading will do them I said please please put in a full stop at the end of your sentences just you know so this business so she was the only person I saw perfect looking thesis just you know so this business of so yes it was modular based eh we'd have quite a lot of content we were actually bound we have a professional for the [discipline] degree programs anyway at least um and a lot of our programs we've professional guidelines and standards so we're teaching to a bunch of standards um so we incorporate those standards into the modules and then we expect the students at the end to achieve the learning outcomes so we've a module descriptor we've a range of didactic and online teaching methods we expect engagement uh and my I we expect to sort of an essay based for master students I work with the masters students in their research proposal uh for the first year and second year dissertation so a similar sort of requirement they'd have a module descriptor they're expected to attend class they're expected to read and the same challenges they don't read they try and click the notes together in some way that you know and they don't use their own voice so sometimes you'll have something that actually again doesn't make any sense at a master's-level again it's just regurgitate it out of the [discipline] board you know so that's um and the expectations are similar but maybe higher we wouldn't have as many points for presentation and referencing at that point they're expected but we would expect this logical flow and critical analysis this business and what uh really amazes me the more I teach is actually eh humans do this naturally you actually very naturally sort of analyze I say this to the students you know you walk up Grafton Street and you
determine you've got to get a dress for for a wedding and you think you go here you go down TK Maxx and getting it there and I'll keep my old shoes like we do this as humans @ 
and yet sometimes when they come to writing or in our case it’s always writing [pause] they don't trust themselves to do that because #it’s #really #unique so I think the biggest issue I have our biggest expectation is that you where use your own voice read think interpret write it back down create an argument pr- present the argument support the argument with the beginning middle and end and a logical flow and the biggest challenge I have is that students often b- without encouragement don't do that because they don't trust themselves ehm and they have a heavy leaning on academic literature ehm because they're lacking confidence and their own voice 
R: and do you have any practical component so would they have placement or
Sarah: yeah yeah the undergraduates have uh 52 weeks uh 36 weeks of placements so in first year the students come in usually at the moment we’re changing the structure next September but they come in September till December in class and then they would have two months in placement or so and then back to class and two months so over the three years we have this incremental and they they move from the undergraduate students move from a situation of a junior so we call it eh assisted and supported and then we move to kind of independence by year four and then year four we have a eh very large component of internship um we call it but it's quite working quite closely with a qualified [profession] and almost becoming a qualified [professional] and you get reach independence level so by the time you get to the very end of the program they're they're independent so quite a huge now the ehm master's programs they vary but we do have [placement] in the modules in in quite a lot of them and sometimes their employed already by the people by the [employer] and they do on the course they keep their placement other times they're going to various places so that's a lot of our courses would have a [placement] component on it 
R: so in the so the modules are more essay based how would they be evaluated in the placements
Sarah: they would they have what's called a competencies document so that again the [profession] regulatory board usually in the placement it's a #pressure requirement um it's not like work experience or anything like that it's a requirement of the EU and also the Board of Ireland so they would set down the amount of weeks that are required a well but also there’s sort of a document j- wh- standards and requirements document it says by the end of program the [professional] should be able to reflect on
practice should be able to critically analyze to be able to monitor [discipline specific practices] and [discipline specific practices] should be able to uh perform [discipline specific practices] so there’s a set of required competencies and we've interpreted those at a level basis across the the four years of the program um so what they have is like a is a paper document actually so it’s like a document it would have an introduction would have your competencies and would have place then students usually have an interview at the very beginning of the placement with the they have an assign- assigned mentor in the practice not paid but they work with the teaching [place of work] it's called preceptor the preceptor would meet the student chat them but their learning needs the student’ll identify their particular learning needs and then they would move to the competencies have a middle interview explaining how they're doing with that and at the final interview sign off on those competencies so say for example communication would be one main core competency and are you able to communicate in a professional way maintain confidentiality etc. eh- eh in first year the expect you to be assisted with that that you're doing but you're being supported by the the [professional] and the first the the first placement and then as you go on you can do it under supervision so you're doing it but the [professional] is kinda at the back watching you or picking up if you if you make any any errors with that and then like by fourth year then you're expected to communicate you know in a confidential way and if you don't well then you would be then sort of failing would be >so actually the competencies< are it’s a written document with evidence they wrote evidence for some of these things submit it to the school and it forms part of the assessment of the exam board and it's pass/fail it's not getting an actual grade but how they actually measure that sort of ultimately is visually so they're visually looking to see when I'm working with alongside the student I'm seeing are they being pleasant are they being professional you know or if I hear you know then you know I’m on the bus on the way home and hear a student talking about a patient well the I report that and that goes so it's very much um no- it's not subjective but it's very much eh experiential and monitoring with clear criteria that they can map it back to you know so um [click] yeah R: okay and and if you're able to what's what kind of feedback are you getting from the placement so are there any issues that have been identified in terms of the placements Sarah: you mean around language in particular

R: yeah yeah Sarah: yeah um that's a much our undergraduate students we don't have um a large number of international students but we have an unusual cohort insofar as we have a lot of non-Irish students who would have maybe refugee I we don't know a lot about them they may
have refugee status maybe ehm but we’ve first and second generation Africans for example

uh a lot of Eastern Europeans so students who are not necessarily register- it’s an issue

really in terms of college students may not be registered as an international student but still

struggle with English but overall to my knowledge we’ve never had I mean major issues

with I mean generally speaking we we have the central applications system so people self-

select and I guess in a way [profession] not that there’s requirements for [profession] really

but you know there’s an expectation that coming on to a program like this with a practical

element that you are supposed to have some type you're determining yourself that you've

got some of those competencies so you're pre-selecting yourself as a good communicator

may be or pre-selecting yourself as a as a compassionate person or you know so far in

general that pre-selection remarkably it works because [company] for example they're

doing um and now they’re interviewing to test that the students have compassion before

they start so we’re actually fortunate the people are self-selecting so but to get back to the

English language we haven't really had as far as I know anyway I mean maybe other

people might have different experiences but I was director of the undergraduate program

for six years and I never came across a language difficulty the difficulties we would have

are in terms of practice but I suppose it all maybe they all feed into one another are um

certain- one of the biggest issues is communication but that generally speaking it's not

about uh because even talking to you there communication is much more than verbal so

even if somebody were say uh uh [click] uh just uh think of being abroad where they can

kind of you might you can communicate some without using any words you know in fact I

worked in London where all the [customers] were German none of the [profession] could

speak to the [clients] in their language absolutely not it was in a [area of work] they were

having a [professional] from a German [work place] and yet we managed the [profession]...

managed to explain everything so [profession] is that sort of theater actually now

obviously needs a sort of you need to you need to get the competencies whatever those five

core competencies are and if the [professional] is satisfied but I wouldn't necessarily

think that it would be based on particular words and language or certainly no one has come to

my attention during those years and then also a few years ago that eh struggled with that

ehm and like I say some a lot of our communication happen can happen in a nonverbal

domain but the opposite is that actually when we have a difficulty which is a very small

number that tells us you can see well if a thousand students go to the program when

students have struggled with their competencies may be failed or maybe got not fit to

practice it has been very much focused around their contact communication but not that

they couldn't say pass me the tea cup it was actually that they were rude eh not professional
eh aggressive eh not not communication something very important like a [professional practice] you know uh to a [professional] which you wouldn't need a full comp-

*competency* in English to actually do something like that @ @you @know because you

so it’s more kind of oh what would you call that that ahh you know professional

communication you know it’s something that you actually so and the other >so that's very rare< but actually that's one of them and it's the same in the UK that it's often this sort of fit

for [profession] in terms of your personal not personality but having good

communication skills so that can but or even that it's a student for oh yeah it-it- that's

where students can run into difficulty but it's around the affective um the the whole

interpersonal domain as opposed to actual language it it can we’ll say is be incrementally

and you could have a student um who say in year one who would happen to be shy perhaps

but again we're teaching and they’re being mentored and you know that they can develop

in that way so ehm that could be an issue not an issue but that that certainly needs

support the other group that would come into difficulty generally speaking but also could

affect the communication is people with eh disability we’d have about ten percent of our

students have disabilities so we'd have two big versions of issues of not issues but

challenges one is student dyslexia who’ve obviously a difficulty writing and all of that

we've over the years we’ve developed a great relationship the disability services and we

have good reasonable accommodations in place everything is working pretty smoothly in

the initial phase because this whole program is new in 2002 the [place of work] really were

a little bit frightened they didn’t really know how how to manage something like that and

the second is people with mental health issues so someone with severe anxiety depression

would find it very difficult can find it very difficult to communicate with people so that's

literally that you are just not speaking um I actually had a student w- uh I gave her great

support@ well@ I uh gave her great support and the disability service helped me as well

she actually failed in fourth year and was almost gonna lose the program and they felt she

was just not communicating the way that they would have liked in the competency you

know she was a very pleasant girl and but actually when it turned out when I spoke to her

and I ended up speaking to people around me well she actually had [cut for confidentiality]

and she actually had it all through but don’t I don’t want to identify her but em and in fact I

kind of worked out that actually she just had difficulty now then there was no sort of

diagnosis I don’t think as such but I managed to get her registered with disability on her

doctor’s letter and we spoke to the practice about it but it was just she had a r- a difficulty

kind of expressing and so once that was understood and once she understood at once

disability came in she was able to manage to get through and pass so so the communication
as far as my experience anyway ehm has not being around English in particular but but I
suppose worth noting that maybe even some like yourself you're working with these
students it's it's uhm you know you know how would you say you know you need to
communicate you need to express you need the best thing we talk about reflective practice
we would encourage students now ehm and [professionals] will say that th- no one is
perfect but what you need to try to say is to reflect back in your practice think what I do
what could do better so if you had a student like that maybe you've encouraged not to be
perfect English but be able to say to the mentor the preceptor can I talk to you you
know about my practice this morning I felt a little nervous speaking to Mrs. Brown I am a
bit nervous about my English well how did you think I went how do you think I can
improve so if you can encourage students I suppose to be reflective and to be open to
communicating about their learning needs I need to communicate more with [clients] and
you know so I think if they can learn to be open about themselves you know as much as
possible ehm and selectively open because um getting back to the disability thing as well I
would have coached students in the past about this they tend to kind of go all out and tell
everybody everything you know typically [professionals] because the- they're like carrying
it no- you know you don't go into the [workplace] and tell them all your personal details
even from a perspective of health and safety but then you go in and say I attempted suicide
or they have to act on that you know so just be @careful you know so I would encourage
them to disclose but carefully disclose ehm ehm their needs and of course don't this sets
them up for failure don't go into it like I can't speak English this is dreadful help me you
know do it very discreetly use this mentorship scheme to say look you know I'm this you
know and within that competency document actually have reflection and very often
students can use it in a very superficial not often but commonly in a superficial way so I
spoke to this [client] this morning I was a bit nervous now I'm better you know but they
could really use so they're expected to do one reflection in each of the six week periods
they could use that reflection for something like their English language you know I mean
I'm English is not my first language I'm a little nervous around dealing with [task] with
regard to this spoke to my #unt that's what #unt is next thing I felt really embarrassed but I
couldn't explain the classroom okay what did I do I spoke to mentor afterwards she gave
me good article she gave me a list of language terms and I was doing fine so if they could
do that reflection and piece to actually help um express their needs and the second thing
yeah I suppose to have the confidence maybe that's that [profession] communication
[profession] is much more than verbal it's much broader than verbal it's eh eh um well
profession is its own language as well in a way because you get into some language terms and all of that so it is in that regard

R: right and um in general what do you think that students need to succeed at [institution 1]

Sarah: yeah that’s a big question

R: yeah it is

Sarah: lots of things so you mean in English or generally speaking

R: not just actually in general yeah

Sarah: general um yeah God that's a good question um [click] I would say the biggest thing they need is to engage and for example um I mentioned to you I’ve seen students I've seen students who failed um this is one of the tips I give them when they’re preparing the essay I say still I could not go into a room and write the same essay I’ve given a first year or write a research proposal that a master’s student or write a thesis I couldn't go as you know 25-30 years of writing I couldn't do it in isolation you know it's not just an isolated task the first job I do before I write a paper is engaged with the blackboard materials read all the documents read so I suppose there’s two level engagement that- this is for a failed student I suppose but also starting from the beginning of program is that they need to be in the class and this is another big tricky sort of ehm you know it just point uh lecturers with me and I brought in an attendance monitoring policy this year not on my own and it wasn't even my own impetus uh but I did actually drive it and champion it eh but a lot of university lecturers are very against that no it’s a freedom humans University you can't be in a program without being in the program @ you know okay if you have an online program that's different but we actually have a program where you're supposed to be in class so that's the way that's the teacher pedagogy that’s the we so whatever that pedagogy is for the program is you need to engage with it and that's my absolute eh and I have I've two three undergraduate university degrees myself and two of them are from open university so and they’re recent my last one was 2014 so I’ve actually had experience of being in a in an environment like that even I wouldn't be so what is the word now but so arrogant as to just suggest I could go off and write an essay about engaging without actually engaging in the materials of the open university even down to the most basic thing so I've sat through tutorials where they tell use full sentences use a full stop and I’m like yes okay really great doctor Tim you know great Dr Tim is like even me with a PhD I wouldn’t and writing I have 137 publications I would never ever be arrogant I would always engage and I would always take and lap up absolutely everything that's available so and I think that's an issue the moment not to do anything with the language or anything else actually people are so bombarded with
23930everything in our lives that they're they actually turn a blind eye to all of the you know that
23931material even at uh engage in the class level you’ve in the class on Facebook all the time so
23932they actually can’t be on Facebook and listening to the class at the same time so there’s
23933that but or tuning out generally generally and then materials yeah they're all there but tell
23934me how to write the essay but li- you know it's now I really really force is too strong of a
23935word but I really encourage the students to engage like but the other side of it too I have a
23936responsibility to make sure what's on blackboard is is useful concise relevant you know if
23937the student engages and realizes that we have way too much on there and half isn't useful
23938and well then they’ll disengage so engagement is it's very topical it's very important
23939ehm I suppose being realistic both their about the program and you can't start a
23940[profession] program say for undergraduate and have a part-time job at Brown and Thomas
23941as the manager you know this is an intensive program so commitment timewise and being
23942realistic and I mean some students run into difficulty because they they work and they’re
23943trying to work to pay their parents you know ehh you feel guilty you know you know
23944even if the parents have money they’d still feel obliged and then they fail and then they fail
23945again and then they're obliged to be a success and you know they've wasted the money so
23946committing yourself to the hours the program requires I think early intervention is a big
23947thing as well so if a person has eh whatever it might be you know and they are looked into
23948those happening more and more now say it’s a disability that you disclose as quick as you
23949can see a tutor get input an actual plan in things that you might need so I think my I was a
23950tut- a personal tutor for ten years and I would have initially it was like a baptism by fire I
23951didn't know what was hitting me you know I still thought
23952thirty years ago @@and they’re a whole different you know not different but they're not
23953me you know you always think everybody's like you you know so they're all different
23954different needs but initially was it was firefighting but once I got used to it I realized a
23955pattern to this you get people in early you get them to prompt you with what their
23956particular challenges are and then you put in a plan and say well actually well and there's a
23957lot of flexibility in the university for the whole cohort of course you need to have the
23958deadlines and everything else but for someone with difficulty there could be all kinds of
23959things done from extensions and #unt rules so utilizing those systems sometimes students
23960don't do it because they're afraid in our particular profession that if they disclose something
23961whatever it may be that it could go against them in practice but that's not the case and that's
23962getting better and better uh again our master students have been difficulty with this they
23963are obliged to work because they’re already in the practice and they they're coming in
23964juggling very senior jobs they're coming in very long distances ehm and the finding
engagement very difficult but thinking that they can kind of partly engaged partly engage
and then manage an essay and what we've you know we actually would have quite a lot of
failures you know because people are just not either engaging or committing ehm and I
think beyond that then the engagement with materials reading is a big thing I don't mean
reading 20 books I mean reading even even you know the cover of a book you know som-
some students not some but you know it's actually you know and again because maybe the
internet I mean you can read a book on the internet now but I think my own personal
experience is people are not reading as much as they as they were because they've been
bombarded with so much information so that if they were to get a lecturer’s notes and say
pick this out of it and put it into an assignment or exam you may not do that well where as
if you just got one or two texts and tried to interpret them read them and so independent
reading people would be very important even at a very basic level and the big thing
trusting and using your own voice I mean I know it's well it's not maybe not in the sciences
well I don’t know I can only speak for my own profession I suppose anyway but there's a
lot of writing in in our um in our um program so being able to use your own voice and put
a logical argument forward that's evidence-based and it does translate very often the
students who are maybe diffic- who are having difficulty but they say things like oh that's
you know ehm that I'm a good practical [profession] you know and I'm just not good at
writing but for me the two go hand in hand because writing is actually presenting a
coherent argument and critically analyzing something and presenting it ehm you need
those skills for practice it’s why we're doing the degree so that actually you could say for
example that the [clients] seem to be very bored in the afternoon is there no way we can do
something about this I go off I search the literature I prepare an argument I present it I fight
I bring about the change process whatever barriers are there those skills are argument
and those skills it has to be logical I’d often say to the students you wouldn’t call your
manager out and just haphazardly talk about what's needed you'd actually put down well
this is the problem this what the literature says about it this is what we need to do this you
know those skills of logical clarity and arguing are critical and what are they [click] they
are critical personal- graduate attributes yeah eh they’re critical to to to being a to being a
human I suppose but to being being eh being a [profession] but also being an academic so
yeah thinking critically thinking creatively understanding a- and being able to analyze
and synthesize ehm and that all comes from from eh and I think this business of trusting
your own voice and that's the biggest thing I think with students I mean @they said to me
in third year recently you know it’s so different we've been learning academic writing up
until now we don't think we've been doing it quite right we didn't do it this way @@ at
I said this is the only way the way as you read think interpret write down you you analyze it it's in here it happens in your brain it's not actually you know but what they've been doing is taking bits out of books sticking them on the page paraphrasing and then hoping it all mixes together or something and sometimes they get away with it but as you go on in the in the course it's harder and harder to get away with that so it's lower level you know

R: and so how much of a factor do you would you say that language plays in academic success or

Sarah: hmm good question um [long pause] now I suppose I’d have to pro- give the pre-idea that we don't have a large number of international students and I don't have experience with la- with large numbers of international students so I couldn't say for certain but my own view on students that I mentioned to you that are in class that are from other countries and English is not their first language but they are EU students ehm I don't see the difficulties that I see in my classes anyway at least are the same difficulties that English language speaking students have it's actually it so I don't see a particular um I haven't seen a particular challenge that isn't it's not there for someone who’s lang- first language is English um I don’t know if that makes sense like the reason I’m talking about the copying and pasting I mean I've seen it I'm an editor and we have now um plagiarism protection software in the um journals and some of the and it just doesn't just happen in non-English speaking countries @ it happens in English-speaking countries too um copying you know so that it's that's my biggest eh challenge and it's for people who don't have English and who do have English you know and I suppose [pause] yeah and I suppose there’s two things in that yeah so in my perspective the challenges around expression are poor practice I guess rather than actually lack of confidence lack of trust in your own voice and maybe that other side of the proofreading or whatever that doesn't have to be oneself if you know that you are poor English or if you know that you struggle with this that's what I did myself you know not the struggle but I want to get a higher mark so I asked someone else to read it you know mostly I know not everything is essays but it we would have a huge portion of essays and dissertations there's nothing to stop you from having somebody else to read I mean I had a student actually who failed recently and she's African English and I I asked her actually you know you English doesn’t seem to be but again that her issue is not it was I think thirty percent was copied from other texts and she actually ehm uh did it last minute @ the same issues uh by own admission and usually she gets her neighbor to read it I said look that's what you do for the future you know you don't rush it make sure you get someone else to read it so I'm saying is the the bits that
are not perfect around the English language certainly in essay assignments at least can be resolved by by other means you know um I do find I I work with uh colleagues in another international country I’m encouraging them to actually use the English [pause] how do I say it now [click] use the turn of phrase some other countries have a turn of phrase that they don't feel fits with English so they wouldn't you know and in France we say this and in Portugal we say this just say it put that into your actual paper because that's what you say or even Google Translate I mean there’s so much available now ehm so if you have a a a Portuguese paragraph write it down in your essay and google translate and then put it in y-y-you know that maybe that sounds simplistic but they are actually so reluctant to to chance their own English that they pull out I was working with a group who don't speak English in another country and we were working on a paper and I said right we just think about this point the reviewers have come back to us we need to explain this point and the girl was ah I have a line I have a line here have a line from a book I said @go away @with @those @lines @from @the @book you know and I've been sort of working with them to just you know tell me in your own voice you know tell me in you know discuss in Italian I'm br- in a l- a lot of these students actually have pretty good English really I mean they they’d have school English you know they have it somewhere you know and so it’s unp- unpicking some of that um now what was I telling you at the beginning R: that’s fine that it's more you're seeing that what they have difficulties with is the same as the home students Sarah: yeah R: it's not much different Sarah: no not incredibly different ehm no no and yeah let me se- sometimes I think even about it but I mean I have quite a few essays from from students who who uh uh you know I’m trying to visualize there wasn't a particular trend somebody who w- we have students who are educated through Irish and I’ve seen a couple of those as well so people can have a turn of phrase that’s maybe too long-winded or >but again it's something< that they yeah so I mean maybe expression but it's not something that is particular to people whose second language ehm I would think one student I did have ehm and again you're picking it and unpicking it as as an issue rather than in telling you necessarily and I got this person to register with disability bec-bec-because the exams he just need more time and then that was an issue now I just felt and I got him over the line but literally it was @sort of hinting to him ah now I think you could register disability I think you've got this @disorder and he did have um you know and it was so I don’t know maybe maybe I'm sort
of saying the personal tutor support active personal tutor support is probably you know an
individualized case-by-case basis this person was struggling probably just academically but
was struggling an- and once he got the extra time allotted from disability [snap] flew you
know he just was fine and yeah I can't remember the first language but English wasn’t it
but he was good just ex- the stuff he was producing was pretty good he just need a bit more
time you know so um
R: so having that also maybe like the self-awareness from the student
Sarah: yeah
R: but then also the support system in within their department or the wider college being
able to recognize and kind of intervene
Sarah: exactly yeah the intervention the the early intervention um and I'm just I'm just
thinking about this @my @hobby @work of reading and interpreting it's probably tricky
for students if if we overload them bombard them and we leave them at the notes and they
try and copy the notes and if for someone whose English is not the first language that must
be even more challenging you know ehm the brighter students can sometimes do a bit less
and do a good get away with and do a good essay the students who are less able or else
maybe don- have other challenges like English might struggle with that so maybe it’s about
us putting concise resources and having good >and this is another thing we're not< well
sometimes not great at is actually we're teaching but we're not actually teaching them how
critically analyze for example we’re not teaching them how to be assessed I mean if the
students had their way which I I perfectly understand it we would spend the whole time
talking about the assessment but actually what I don't know is that the assessment should
be in the learning outcomes like say for example at the end of this assessment you need to
write clearly an argument you need to argue you that should be the learning outcome the
assignment shouldn't be at the end of this module you need to be able ehm to list the
I don’t know how to describe it now but the the what you’re expecting from the
assignment if it's reflect it should be the learning outcomes you need to reflect on if it's
critically anal- and I've seen this a lot actually this is a good point I @thought of you
expect them teach 10 hours and then the assignment is critical reflection and I say as an
external examiner as well I say where do you teach the critical reflection I don't think we
don’t teach it we expect it so how can you expect something you don't teach so actually
that’s some of it as well is actually whatever skills are required in their actual assignments
is actually clearly facilitated in the actual classes that's part of the requirements that should
be part of the teaching and secondly some type of scaffolding and support for students uh
we’re a bit of allergic to that sometimes I would provide examples like some of my
modules I've written the assignments out myself that's a good tip as well because you can actually explain to the students how long it takes them you know it takes 20 hours for me to write an assignment ehm and then you've an example up there some people are not keen on that but I think it's a great thing like that for a student just just to see what it looks like and then you've an example up there some people are not keen on th something look like quite like this because it looks different over there you know so to see it ehm to for students to be given the ehm rubric for marking so you say this is what we're marking on because they're sitting in class thinking oh what is going on what does she want they often say well wh- what do you what do you want I don't want anything here's the criteria here's the here's the assignment guideline here's the examples you know so I think what am I trying to say so part of that support is scaffolding them to be successful in assessments

R: yeah so would you have a tendency um when you're teaching a module personally would you give the sorry the rubric and whatnot in the first class the first couple of weeks

Sarah: @@good question and in fact I've done both and wh- I'd li- I’ve had to change my style I’ve had to be personally reflective as well I've done my student evaluations ehm I’ve started to increase the pass rate in a couple of the modules you know so don't I’ve done it like I start front loaded but funny enough the students ehm okay it's two things one is if you do it first the students so some portion of the students in the evaluations will say eh it was too too early and then you do it last and so a certain proportion will say it's too late so we’ve we’ve bunc- we’ve groups of 230 to 300 so it’s difficult to please everybody and certainly the evaluations you’re only getting people who really felt one way or the other probably secondly how you actually approach that as well uh I would start saying I didn't I wasn't even aware of this uh but they wrote in the evaluations that I was obsessed with failure and @@thought it was completely the opposite I mean I was trying to help I did improve we’ve one of our modules with a twenty five percent failure rate and I’ve got that up to ninety-nine uh sorry one percent now hardly anyone fails it um so the language you use with large groups is very important so what I go in now and I say this is a really successful module ninety-nine point nine percent and they’re like whaatt this is crazy @it's funny it's just psychological so I kind of do but now I do a bit of both so I do the- I don't mention anything don't even use the world failure but you know unsuccessful you've got to be very the mood in a big class can change very quickly but be very careful about how you manage that ehm and yet at the same time the reality say for first years it doesn't even dawn on them that actually they could fail and then fail again and the mothers would be and fathers billed for six thousand doesn't it's completely over their head so how do you
sneak that in that if you fail this one little module you're going to be trouble so I I I usually start with a background introduction to the module and the assignment and actually mention that good success rate ehm and tips for success rather than ways to avoid failure and then I do another full session then towards the end and I also do a question and answer session so and I might have a lunchtime optional question and answer session that they would ask any questions because it's actually it's it's yeah ehm there's a whole other you know we write assignments whatever ehm assignments in particular and the way students interpret them can sometimes be different and groups can be different you know they can read into things and all of that so I use that and I bring a student in to get their experience a past student and that they like that it's very helpful as well ehm does that answer the question?

R: yes it does

Sarah: the rubric yeah the rubric is up on the blackboard for example yeah and I also would again they need to be it literally we need to even be better we always need to be texting them and you know for them to look on these th- you know they don't I think it’s just so much going on in their lives that they often don't see or they don't value and that's another point that shows up in [discipline] profession is I’ve come to think is that we've a very high emphasis on verbal you know the particular areas of the #unt is verbal and nonverbal it’s you know kind of talking to one another and hearing and we would’ve it’s been documented actually the [professionals] often learn from the master that’s what the consultant would be so we're not a very visual or written profession so these students arrive from practice everything’s gone verbally and visually and they've in the class they want to know what [name] what do you want but actually it's actually not going to come from me personally it's got to come from the material so I suppose maybe that dichotomy between being a practical hands-on professional and actually having to come and wade through you know like an ac- an administrator almost it's a bit it's a bit challenging for them but yeah everything is up there for them

R: okay um so I'm gonna kind of shift towards now from the general to the international students and since you don't have too much experience just you know if you don't know that's fine um so what would you say that um are you aware of any support that's offered to international students in your department or at the wider College

Sarah: umm not I don’t think in our department but I am aware of the English language developments ongoing at the moment in the center of English and I report them widely to the school the pre-session and the in-session which I think is really fantastic uh learning support I mean all the students that I mentioned to you that run into difficulties we
R: okay and so if you could give advice to that support specifically English what would that advice be in terms of preparing students for your department
Sarah: yeah I think um like I mentioned earlier on the uh we do have a mature students day
building confidence and reassurance if that was possible or even engaging maybe with somebody from the school to to to um help them understand what [discipline] practice is about I mean one issue we used to have years not years ago but students often come into [profession] not often occasionally you know maybe looking at television or whatever not realizing the reality of [profession] we weren't good about you know advertising on the internet well these are the gory thing we do but the [professional board] a few years ago come up with a survey and it was it asked you know even things like [topic] do you do you know actually at the end we give you an estimation about whether you’re really suitable or not which is really useful so the point I'm making is actually if there was some way of engaging with ehm you know a concession where someone explains what [profession] is about or about the communication in [profession] is about they they might reassure them then actually I don't need to have absolutely perfect English in in order to function as and now we do have a requirement of course the the English language requirement but beyond that if they're insecure about it I suppose that the that the communication is much more
than verbal and much more than language secondly then I think um I would I would have not to labor too much but the academic writing goes beyond the language and the issues people are having of cutting and pasting is literally I marked essays two two years ago for somebody else and the first few I came across were brilliant I said my God these are really good then I got this bunch that were absolutely horrendous I thought what is going on here then I got to the next bunch and suddenly I realized they're all saying the same thing exactly the same thing now it was an exam [module] exam they got the question beforehand I thought hang on how could every one of your students have the same words I just could not get over it so I dug out my my colleague’s notes who wrote my classes and what had happened was the students have copied the notes now it was a very open title about something very open you know could have been something you know something like eh describe you know systems available for people you know [topic] in Ireland I mean something that could literally be very creative about with all those skills and yet they have chosen to take the lecturers notes because that’s probably what they do and whatnot and taking actually the word for word out of it plus the references now what I concluded in the end was the bright students did it really well cuz they were cute enough to know exactly how to put piece it all together it was pieced together very well in the in the slides by the way the weaker students just made a really bad job of it so they just took the words word for word ehm and I also noticed actually the students [pause] even though they were very good some of them they were capped at 70 so what am I trying to say here if people continue to take other people's words and now don't trust themselves to use their own voice and their own brain no interpretation well they will never ever achieve the high levels and if they're in any risky areas such as not having English as the first language they will end up very seriously you know out of the so I think em encouraging [pause] uhh confidence in writing confidence in your own language as well as English so I think example if somebody's writing about a you know um communication in [profession] I mean or or write it out in in in French you know first write in French and then translate it back you know the they they just the colleagues I've been working with internationally they just don't see that as a sort of their actual- I I and in fact you know what I’ve @done @recently I've looked at articles in the in another language the person gave it to me recently and they it showed me and they didn't realize it was still in the same language hadn’t been translated and I was able to determine the problems with it in a different language that I don't even understand because they cut and paste from articles I actually knew straight away that they cut and paste I know I’ve gone over so what I'm saying is a good essay in your own language is a good essay in English eh
if you have a whole sentence you read your you know you well maybe reading is another
thing as well but if you have a whole sentence structure in your head about for example
support for [topic] in a community and you think about it in French or whatever put it
down ehm you know you still can get marks for that or if it's an essay you essay you could
you could try to google translation it or you know I don't I'll be much more encouraging for
example my colleagues who I'm working with who um I've a few colleagues now who
don't speak English and I just say well you know what would you say in your
language and sometimes it’s beautiful you think that’s really nice put that down
you know some some academic you know in France we have a word like for
example reflection I mentioned to you um one of the things often mentioned is porter
is to carry in French so in French they have word #porter means to carry and your portfolio
is carrying your you know so you can sometimes actually even within your essays bring
your own language into it and say well you know in India we have a word called you know
this in [profession] and it can be very profound you get right up the higher level because
you're thinking you’re thinking that this is what [profession] do this is how you
communicate in in India we have a you know the older people you revere them and you
know eh and then we have a certain word there are words other languages that are actually
very let me see um for example um eh education [pause] yeah it means to give manners so they’ll actually turn around to
people say they're not educated because they don't have manners they’re not mannerly in
the restaurant so actually there’s a whole discussion about education goes beyond teaching
and learning to actually values and you know so what I'm saying is
R: drawing upon their their language resources basically
Sarah: yes
R: not just saying this is English and I can only use English
Sarah: yes yes yeah yeah and even say within our profession that you know a sort of a
style then develops everybody everybody copies the previous you know so that everybody
copies the for example this portfolio portfolio is to carry then someone else says you know
can we not have something different than this you know an-another chap we had [name]
reflection he talks with you swampy lowlands and the amount of students the swampy
lowlands the swampy highlands you know that was his metaphor or whatever similar you
know [pause] you know the point evidence reference and you explain it as best you can in
your own expression how that would be and drawing on not always but I mean [deep
inhale] me and the copy and pasting it's a road to nowhere like it's either to scratch it and I
feel with that group I mentioned you who had copied the the notes that if I we had put
those students in a room without any notes they would have performed better that's my gut feeling that actually had they used that they're English speaking I suppose which might be slightly different thing but yeah if you could encourage them to use their own voice and it's becoming very common in the journals now as well use your voice ehm speak and draw on their own languages and and be confident as well and seek help

R: right and so you mentioned on the language requirement and do are you aware of the entry of assessment that international students have to take

Sarah: yeah, the IELTS 6.5 yeah

R: yes and do you have any type of feeling on that requirement on the test on how well it predicts

Sarah: ehhmm no I really wouldn’t have enough experience with people generally speaking ehm well I suppose [pause] yeah now I wouldn’t have a but I suppose it's a kind of a standard I I would trust that it’s it’s sort of a standard requirement but I think actually when it boils down to it it's probably much more more complex than that but I don't know whether something more sophisticated would um uh [pause] yeah I mean I don't we have a thought at the moment and one my other colleagues might talk to you about that but you know that the requirement it may need to be higher I think it's six point five on average we take but we'd like six point five in each of the actual

R: the bands

Sarah: the the bands and the [professional body] take it at six point five I think in each of the bands so I suppose overall what I'm hearing is it may not be actually quite sufficient but I don't really have enough experience with it

R: okay alright um also a remaining conscious of time but and you've covered quite a bit and so basically are there any questions that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask

Sarah: um [pause] no I squeezed them all in myself @@

R: @@ and is there anything else that you'd like to add

Sarah: um [pause] no I think that’s it

R: brilliant thank you

Sarah: thank you so much you

Ted

R: okay and so my first question is can you tell me about the work required of your students in your modules so that would be across all of your modules undergrad postgrad
Ted: wow okay so that's a very big question and obviously the workload as such will change from module to module from year to year and then of course between undergrad and post-grad it's going to be a significant uh difference uh I can speak first of all in my capacity as director of postgraduate teaching and learning here in school of [discipline] and say that our students all take a structured Ph.D. program so they in their first 18 months uh take a number of modules sometimes maybe one just one module [inhale] uh the ECTS values for those modules can vary because it again it depends on who's offering the modules at five or ten but usually t-ten would be the max for a module um so I have found uh both as post-grad level and undergrad level that the ECTS assignments to modules don't always reflect the workloads um and this can be an individual matter I mean about you know for students because you might specify that a module requires a student to do a certain number of hours of reading for example but there's nothing stopping a student from you know exceeding that or often also doing much less than what is recommended or even required so uh workloads vary you know really quite widely I would say between um you know among students in terms of how they perceive what is expected of them and this happens at undergrad and post-grad levels um but on the whole I think there is some balance in terms of how modules are pitched to students um by lecturers at undergrad and post-grad levels in terms of what they expect students to do right so if you're looking for are you looking for a kind of specific datas

R: yeah so like so what would the professor expect in terms of the amount of reading the amount of writing etc.

Ted: Gosh I mean again it's such a it's such a difficult question to answer without reflecting on particular examples so for example I teach at undergrad level I teach at fresher level and at sophister level um in the sophister years I teach um a couple of seminar modules these modules um meet uh once a week over the 11 weeks of the term so there's a reading week so it's 11 weeks of class contact uh we would meet uh for two hours per week so an hour and fifty minutes per week so one one two-hour seminar per week so there's a basic basic expectation that students will attend those classes so that's a time commitment on their part so that's two hours per week of attendance in class um then for those classes they would normally be expected to read a certain amount of material now this could be a novel of you know some length 200 300 pages or it might be something much shorter it might be three short stories so the amount that they would be expected to read for class can vary um but I suppose you're talking about maybe anything between an an hour two hours up to 10 hours per week of reading time again that's very subjective it depends on how quickly a student can read um they would also be expected to do some um additional reading for every class
but on average I would say that I would expect my students at undergrad level to be putting in around four to six hours of preparation for a two-hour seminar in the week at post-grad level with MPhil seminars it might be more maybe up to eight hours of you know preparation time and I think this is reflected by eh to some extent also by the work that I would put in in preparing for a class I'm not saying that I would ever put in eight hours of preparation for a class but it's a certain it's a number of hours per week per class that you would you know how do to prepare um for a meeting so it can vary so there's kind of reading time then kind of secondary reading or you know general preparation time expected of the students um I guess there are particular times during term when this could could increase when assessments are due or if they're doing a presentation in a given week then the you know they would have to put in more effort um so this is not a question that can be answered with a kind of a single number um it depends on undergraduate or postgraduate it depends on maybe fresher or sophister level um it can depend from the students point of view in terms of how quickly they can get through the material uh during term it might increase during the week when say they have to give a presentation um so it varies but um I like to think that it's it's fair [pause] it's you know depending on the level that they're at and the difficulty of the material I think that's there's a there's a sense of balance there R: yeah and so you mentioned that they would be reading see novels or short stories um so the assigned reading what is the purpose of the reading is it analysis is it theory is it a mixture Ted: so in [topic] um the purpose of the reading in the first instance is to you know make sure that students are acquainted with the primary literature that they are here to study so they're studying [discipline] and in my case their focus is going you know usually going to be on [topic] so if we're talking about a particular poet it's important that they read a fairly generous selection of poems and you know that they read those texts in advance of class so that when we get there uh we can all begin to discuss you know the material um now of course this is positive on the idea that these classes I'm talking about are seminars because there are other kinds of class right so there are lectures and @there are tutorials@ and one can so in a seminar environment at sophister level for example um you can tell I think fairly quickly who has read the material and who hasn't equally a post-grad level where you might have a class of ten students you can tell very quickly who has read the material and who hasn’t but in a lecture of a hundred twenty students even though you have flagged that this week we're gonna be looking at Whitman or Dickinson next week you can't really tell who has read the stuff and who hasn’t read the stuff so that's it I should have clarified that there is a different there there may be an expectation there that students will have read
Material before a lecture but you can never be sure that they've done it for a seminar there. It's important to check if they've read the material and equally important to check if they've done the preparation for tutorials where even there are small groups. It's much easier to tell if they've done the preparation when you have small groups. Does that answer the question?

R: Yes, and now for your research students, so your masters and your PhD students. What's the work that would be required in terms of research for them?

Ted: Yeah, so this is this is maybe an easier question to answer in some ways because you know my experience in my experience at least working with PhD students with research students, you establish or at least I establish a fairly clear timeline and schedule at the beginning of the project so you have a sense of what you want I always have a sense of what I want the student to have read or to have done by a certain date so that when they come to see me to discuss the work I know they will have done that preparation so I mean just to give an example, I'm currently supervising a student who is working on the fiction of John contemporary writer and so we can identify very easily the primary texts that need to be read and the secondary material and so I knew at the start of term that I could say to this student look by the end of the term you should have read all of this and looked at all this and then we meet up we can talk about it so you know there's a it's much easier in a way I think to direct the reading and the research for a PhD student um or at least have a sense of what they've done you know when you're dealing with a classroom full of people it can be harder to guarantee that everybody's on the same page as it were you know I often find that even in uh fresher tutorials that somebody might say well I read half the book and some of the others are saying well I didn't get a chance to read it at all and somebody else will say I read this book and another book you know so it's it is actually much easier to be sure that the person you're dealing with is on the same page if they're a PhD researcher um. With MPhil students again when you're supervising their dissertations, it's a similar situation the timeline is much shorter because they might be working on an MPhil dissertation over a summer period but it tends to be on a similar model um in terms of directed reading and directed research um. I think sometimes that kind of approach can work with advanced undergraduate students you know the undergraduates doing dissertations or sophister students writing extended essays but in the earlier parts of the undergraduate program especially it can often be difficult to be absolutely sure that students are doing the required reading um and to be convinced that they've done it well. It can be a challenge yeah.
and so the dissertations that your students are writing um would it be more of an analysis a lit review or would they be doing primary research that kind of yeah most of these so I have supervised eleven PhD’s at this point um and the majority of those are what I would call fairly kind of traditional literature PhD’s in the field of [discipline] um and the first thing that all of those students would have done um would be to become acquainted really intimately with the primary materials so you know if somebody's working on a particular poet they will need to go away and read everything this poet has ever written um and then what social scientists sometimes call the lit review kinda can be done in tandem with with that or can be done after that where they would then having read all of the primary material that's available they would then go and read all the critical work that has ever been published on a given author and that can be done either simultaneously or or you know slightly later um I suppose the expectation nowadays is that when somebody comes in to do a PhD on a given writer or writers that they already have a really strong sense of the field when they come in and that they kind of hit the ground running um so again and and the volume of the material that needs to be read can vary I mean if somebody's doing a multi author study then they're gonna have to look at not only all of their works but all of the secondary on their works whereas if they're looking at a single author who's dead I mean a sense of a complete corpus again it's much easier to kind of rein it in um I would say that for me as a supervisor it's often easier to be dealing with the latter kind of project because I know that there are no kind of other books to be like I know one friend for example friend in school for example who's been working PhD now for about 12 years wow one of- for lots of reasons and well one of the problems is that um the author she's working on is very much alive and well [name] and she seems to bring out a book every six months and keeps publishing yeah yeah yeah so you have to keep adding it so it’s you keep on adding on and on or even if you don't even if you do say look I'm only going to look at the books up to 2010 you're always going to be worried that this next book is gonna just undo your whole argument @ @ or you need to add it it's gonna really change things so it's um I think the doing research in the humanities doing doctoral research in [discipline] can be really challenging for this reason that you really you're defining your your kind of domain of analysis can be really uh challenging um but it's one
of the key things that people need to do early and to draw those parameters and then that
gives you the focus you know yeah I'm possibly rambling a little bit [name] now don't be
afraid to rephrase or ask again so I'm on target
R: yeah no no no this is very useful so um would you be able to describe the general
structure of your lectures and modules so like what happens inside of the classroom
Ted: sure sure yeah so again I mean it varies from context to context um you know I teach
junior fresh tutorials junior fresh lecturer lectures senior fresh tutorials and lectures and
then sophister seminars um and MPhil seminars and then the one-on-one supervision that
happens so what happens in in those classes I mean I have to be honest that I'm one of
those teachers who always feels a certain amount of nervousness before class always even
though I've been doing this for 20 years I whether it's just a tutorial or a big lecture with
people I always get a bit nervous before them but in terms of preparation I always
have um I won't call it a script but I always have uh text that is gonna lay out you know the
things that I want to deal with so if it's a tutorial for example I will have um a number I
mean you know 50 it might be a 50 minute class which is you know fairly short actually
with with say 10 or 12 students um and I will always have a sense of where I want to start
where I want to end by th- you know where I want to bring the students by the end of that
session um because we will all r- always have an assigned text you have a clear sense of
what material you're going to be working with in the session and what questions need to be
raised so it's often for me a matter of um shaping a discussion around a number of kind of
very clear questions that's how I would structure my tutorials these are classes where
there's conversation between myself and the students and you know one of the things I
really try to facilitate there is conversation between and among the students at sophister
level it's a little bit different because there you often have two hours to play with um so
normally these classes say you know [click] we're meeting on a particular week and we're
looking at a particular writer um normally in those classes I might give a brief kind of mini
lecture at the start to contextualize the author to say you know why we're reading this
author why they are important um for about 20 minutes take a few questions um and then
begin to get a sense of how the class responded to the material for that week um I don't
do group work but sometimes I find it's useful especially if the text is difficult and I
might break a group a class into maybe five groups of four or four groups of five and give
them maybe ten minutes each just to kind of pull their responses and then we'll take the
responses take a spokesperson from each little group and kind of feed those back into the
general discussion so but you know I always um go to those tutorials or seminars with
a list of key questions I feel like we need to get through right and it's it's never more than
maybe five things you know um and a similar idea I suppose informs my sense of what
you can do in a lecture I’m I’m not one of these people who feels you can go into a lecture
or a seminar and do you know a huge amount of work you know I think it's more important
to get maybe three four five key points you know across and to be sure that these have
been understood so in a tutorial or in a seminar you know once once you've you know and
again these are over over the course of a a term so by the second third week you know the
group pretty well and I've been very lucky that you know m-m-mostly the kind of class
dynamic you know is is is positive and feels good so students really are I think happy uh to
to speak you know to talk and participate um and I think we're really lucky here that you
know our students are good and uh they want to most of them want to talk um so that's my
kind of way of doing things um in terms of a kind of [click] um you know I’ve got a
structured approach to how I teach in that seminar or tutorial environment with a lecture
where you might have anything from you know 50 to 400 students um I use a script you
know I have a lecture written um now over the years again just from giving so many
lectures um I find that I don't need to just stand there and read it out but I but I need it there
and it's very clearly structured and it's in fourteen point double-spaced you know so that I
can see it um and I I need it there I do also use PowerPoint you know to just uh for the
main points in the lecture so that they have some visuals or some quotations and usually
then I’ll put the PowerPoint and you know a summary of the lecture on blackboard but uh
so there's that kind of aspect to it as well which is I think the students really really like that
you know yeah
R: yeah and so in terms of assessment um so what would be the form of assessment for
your modules
Ted: @again it varies so much um okay so traditionally there have been two main modes
of assessment used in in the school of [discipline] I mean there's the timed examination so
uh at the end of in fact up until this year at the end of the academic year students would
take you know a timed exam so for a five ECTS module they would sit a two hour
examination where they're expected to answer two questions from among a group of 12
questions um and then there are also um there have also been three-hour examinations in
the past but now now it's mainly two hour examinations so exam timed examination based
on material um I think that's extremely challenging for students I think uh it's very
stressful in all kinds of ways I've just come from the exam venue this morning and I’ve
another one this afternoon so @I @know @how stressful this can be um and then the other
be- the exam the traditional exam or examination timed examination then we also um get
to do essays right so and again this varies the the length of essays varies from year to
APPENDIX F: FACULTY INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Ted: year from from you know from fresher to sophister our fresher students write essays in between two and two and a half thousand in length um and sophisters write essays up to 5,000 words in length I think it is so these these are quite long these papers I mean it's almost like the length of a an article that you might submit to a journal right so it's a proper research paper um but again there's some variation terms of what's required for those assessments um so exams essays and then um from quite early on in my career um I've been kind of advocating for more diversity in assessment more innovation in assessment um so [click] I used to be the um [general] curriculum lecturer in [discipline] and way back 15 years ago we um trialed uh journaling is a way of assessment you know amount of assessment for our students which they enjoyed um and we allowed a certain degree of creativity so the students could you know illustrate their observations and kind of do it as a kind of diary format um and include all kinds of materials it was really tough to assess them though you know because somebody kind of puts in a really colorful detailed journal or scrapbook and it's like well clearly it's maximum effort but what's there in terms of comprehension it's kind of hard to evaluate but we have done that and also um I used to teach a module on [topic] which this book came out of it and um the for that module the students did uh kind of um a kind of a reflective journal week on week and an essay um and you know so that was that was it in a way that was it was easier because it was a more focused kind of set of reflections that they offered in their journals so but on the whole um essays exams um and uh then kind of journal journaling I've looked into the possibility of some online assessment activities but I've never actually taken them up R: right yeah and so how would you assess academic success so when you're looking at these essays what are you looking for

Ted: yeah yeah yeah well um I'm looking for a whole range of things um and again the criteria I mean so we the the school of [discipline] has um kind of grade descriptors you know so what we're looking for in a first what we’re looking for in a two one or what we're looking for in a two two and a third um but I would say um in general what we're looking for is evidence of [pause] understanding you know comprehension clear engagement with the material delivered um uh so evidence that they've engaged with the material and that they've understood it right or at least they've made an attempt to understand what's going on in a text and so if they can convince you that they've done this um convincing engagement with primary material uh convincing engagement with the relevant critical materials so the secondary material and the kind of debates around that text so they need to convince you that they've actually you know understood the material that they've engaged with it and with its critical reception um so that's a key thing but in
order for those things to come through in an assessed piece of work they also need to be able to express themselves well so they need to be able to write clearly uh they need to know how to create how to structure how to build an essay um that's a really important skill I think that we uh try to develop with our students all the way from junior fresh through to um seniors sophister so it’s a combination of um understanding and articulation you know these are maybe for- in general terms these would be two two of the main things for a student of [discipline] um and then you know it varies between the students who's getting a two two who has some level of comprehension h- you know shows a very you know a very basic level of engagement with the text some minimum amount of critical reflection um there may be problems with expression there may be problems with scholarly formatting um this is you know the kind of two two low two maybe low two one essay on the other end of the scale you have very high-performing students who are getting first class marks in the upper 70s and low 80s and this material would be almost publishable and I would say often you know the very best of it um I should say I should have said actually if I could add to what we're talking about different types of assessment presentations too I've often um um included a component for presentations um in terms of assessment so part- as part of the assessment that students might do in seminars especially again with a lecture module that's impossible but with a sophister seminar class? uhm you know it can be useful I think as well and you get a sense of their engagement a very good sense of their engagement from those as well as their kind of understanding uhm yeah but I would say that understanding and comp- uhm expression being able to express the ideas these are the two key key issues R: yes so how would those expectations be communicated to the students would it be through like a printout would it be on blackboard verbally in class Ted: uhm so the grade descriptors are given in the handbooks so there's every year has a handbook there's junior fresh handbook senior fresh handbooks sophister handbook each MPhil program would have its own handbook and so the grade descriptors um which state very clearly what we expect from students performing at every level um they would state what they need to do so that if a student isn't achieving a certain grade we could say look this is what you need to be doing to achieve that grade uhm and those points would be fleshed out you know much more clearly there yeah I can actually send you the descriptors if that’s helpful R: yeah that would be great yeah very helpful Ted: yeah yeah
R: yeah so do you present the assessment in the class and give time for questions etc. are they equal to come you know one on one and ask you questions

Ted: yes um actually so for our fresh modules the coordinators of the modules circulate the questions [pause] so the questions are set and the questions are circulated before the end of the semester usually so they have a chance students have a chance there's usually a window where students can come and ask questions look for clarification and discuss how they might approach essays I almost invariably have this with students of mine who will come and say look I was thinking of doing this question and I was gonna do it in this way this almost always happens um and especially at sophister level now the only difference I guess is that some colleagues may do things differently but I always encourage my students these are third and fourth-year students and I always encourage them to set their own questions right so this is a real challenge actually um for the students especially for the juniors officer sophister students because it's the first time that they've been asked to do this why do I do it this way it's partly because I actually believe that um [click] what I'm interested in as a researcher and also as a teacher and when I try to stimulate and you know promote among my students is the idea that you know we're not here to give answers but rather to get them to ask interesting questions um so I usually encourage my students at sophister level to set their own questions to come up with good interesting questions that they might then ask in relation to certain texts and they come to me with the question for approval we talked about it a little bit usually they'll go away to a biographical research put something together and we’ll take it from there and they can they can usually send like um an outline for the essay I suppose >and this is a really really challenging thing< for them to do especially as I say in in third year um at the MPhil level we do both so we set some topics and we also get them to you know suggest their own questions

R: and how long would those essays be the MPhil

Ted: umm well okay so for the MPhil that I've been mainly involved with the MPhil in [topic] we get them to write four 1,500 to 2,000 word essays these are really short um but we always say well they're getting experience in writing what might be a kind of a book review let's say or a conference paper like a 20 minute paper is what 2,500 words so they do those and those essays for those essays the topics are given [pause] and they're really focused and then for the longer research papers they come up with their own topics they’re five to six thousand words at MPhil [pause] yeah and they write two of those um so there’s such variety actually and when you go from junior fresh to PhD there’s such a range of stuff umm yeah
R: yeah and so in general what do you think students need to succeed at [institution 1]

Ted: what do they need to succeed at [institution 1] my goodness there's a big question this

Ted: is like this is like a graduate attributes question um so I mean I think they need [pause]

openness um [pause] a willingness to and related to this openness so when som-

Ted: talking about openness I mean an intellectual openness is really important um that when a

student comes here at postgraduate level or undergraduate level even I think um to have a

sense that there are fields of inquiry before them there are things to be learned that they

may not have encountered before and that there is no limit to this right so that sense of

openness that sense of #unt expansiveness I think is really important um you know you can

as a teacher as a lecturer as a supervisor you know or as a course director your job is partly

to help that help students then to direct that kind of curiosity but they have to have that

kind of open mindedness that curio-

intellectual curiosity from the beginning I think

that's a really key thing um I think also um our students need to have a sense of ambition

you know which is related it's intellectual ambition but you know they want to know

things they want to use what resources we can offer them um creative resources intellectual

resources you know material resources um to really pursue that ambition I think that that's

that for me would be important if we have interviews for our students I'd be looking for

intellectual curiosity a sense of ambition a sense of openness a sense that um of

you know never really being happy with you know yesterday's conclusion always wanting

to push it even further which is maybe also a kind of energy and enthusiasm for for what

we do you know that’s that’s I don- and I think actually that is something that our

students have you know I think they are we're very lucky to have great students here yeah

R: yeah and so how much of a factor would you say in language plays in academic success

Ted: well I mean it's a huge factor um not just so I think [long pause] we need to be

able to communicate our ideas right we need to be able to communicate our findings um as

researchers no matter what field we're working I mean even the most esoteric branches of

physics you know you need to be a good communicator in order to deliver your results to

specialist audiences and non-specialist audiences and I think more and more universities

are under pressure to actually make that connection with non-specialist audiences beyond

the walls of the university so I think language is essential language use is key to academic

success you know clarity um in particular just being able to be clear about what what you

have done what you're doing where you want to go in the future um now I think at the

same time so obviously English is our first language it’s the language of instruction most

of us work in English I think is hugely important but I think we also need to be aware of

other languages and possibly even begin to pay more attention to the necessity to >as a as a
university as an institution< to be more fluent in other languages um global languages I mean Chinese obviously you know perhaps Spanish you know um so and I think this is also something that maybe we haven't quite tuned into um and that's that's something I would also uh support yeah yeah

Ted: yeah well I can speak I guess primarily here in terms of my role as director of post-graduate teaching and learning so applications come in from students from all around the world all the time people interested in doing PhDs here um and y-you know there is a level that they're expected to achieve in terms of the IELTS score and if they don't achieve this um they're not going to get um it's not going to come to my desk okay the registry would already uh flag this as a problem I think at the moment it's six I think is the six po

Ted: six point five yes at six point five that's it yeah so but so if the student if an applicant is not achieving this level it's not I don't think it's even going to get to me for consideration um there are I think though there are other ways I mean you know and it's not only the students coming from kind of you know non-European non-Anglophone backgrounds I mean sometimes students coming from Ireland you know the UK the US might not have the the level of you know communication skills that you would want um and you can see this so we ask students applying to do PhDs here for a writing sample and you can often tell very quickly whether somebody has the required kind of communication level in writing just by looking at the sample um and so it's so the IELTS score of six point five whether you know especially say for a student from you know from Asia or wherever um it's not it's not a it's not a an absolute way of determining somebody's ability um a writing sample can be useful um and also you know maybe on a Skype interview or something like that if the person is not in the country um I think you kind of do need to have the face-to-face verification you know for for lots of reasons um but what was the question again I don’t know if I’m answering it

Ted: how we evaluate yeah so we don't have a so the school of [discipline] does not have a kind of a separate evaluation mechanism I guess there's a college-wide one which is posited primarily as far as I can tell on the IELTS score and then secondly then once we receive an application whether it's through the writing sample or following up with a Skype interview or uh you know often a referee will say well they're very good but there
were some issues you know so there are a couple of kind of ways in which we can attempt
to gauge it but I have had experiences where everything seemed fine all seemed okay and
then somebody arrives and the writing can be poor um but then as we know um it's not I
mean people don't write how they speak and sometimes somebody is just you know on the
nuts and bolts of grammar and written expression they can they can be they can need a lot
of improvement yeah so it's I think it might be impossible actually to find a an absolutely
flawless system for evaluating this in advance and sometimes you have to work with
students [click] um in terms of their writing style and ability all the way through yeah
R: and what do you find much of a difference between international students and home
students because you mentioned that even Irish UK American students
Ted: it depends I mean it depends again um so what we call Irish students I mean let's not
forget that a lot of [institution 1]'s undergraduate population is made up of people from you
know from all over the world um so and it's often the case that students who've just come
uh I-Irish students who were born in Cork or Kerry and coming to [institution 1] having
gone through the Leaving Cert system they're often not better than students from say the
US or Canada or Germany who you know so it's very hard to say I wouldn't be I would not
be too quick to suggest that Irish students are all okay they're fine they've come through the
leaving cert with six hundred points and they're gonna be grand I wouldn't be so sure about
that [pause] it really there are so many factors at play um we have excellent students from
India from China from Asia you know excellent students from the United States often
doing a lot better than students in their classes who might be from Dublin or what-
whatever so I wouldn't be at all I think it's a case-by-case basis and um background often
has nothing do with it there are all kinds of ways in which people who are educated you
know their educational backgrounds family backgrounds um you know they are so various
so it's very hard to just make a kind of blanket judgment about uh a call you know a call on
this I mean I as I say I have had students from who have come through the Irish school
system done the leaving cert done very well got in and they have have problems with
writing equally I've had students from China who have come here you know and really
worked hard to get here yeah and and have done @exceptionally @well so it's very hard to
kind of make a call on this yeah
Ted: yeah um so I would say are you //aware of
R: can I just say| it's almost in a way to say it’s in a way this is as if to suggest that all
students should be doing the pre-sessional @@not just @not just @not just @ you know
we can't always assume that just because the student is coming from a non-English non-
Anglophone background in Asia that they need to do the pre-sessional it's often the case
actually that a student very high achieving student in the leaving cert 600 points comes in and doesn't really know how to write an essay at least an essay as it's required by us here in university yeah that's that’s yeah that's been my experience

R: and well are you able to identify kind of the so when you're saying that it's a very apparent very quickly if a student is able to communicate well are you able to identify kind of the general short fallings of the communication

Ted: hmm yes yes [pause] you can identify very quickly you can say to a student look this is not a complete sentence this is not a paragraph where your paragraphs you know um you can you know when there are problems with writing in terms of grammar in terms of punctuation in terms of structure you can point these things out now that doesn't guarantee that the student will get the message [pause] and I'm not a language teacher you know I'm a [topic] scholar and um and can be very challenging then for me uh once I’ve pointed out the problem to begin to do the kind of remedial often remedial work that's needed to get somebody to be able to write well and then so that's a really dif- we don't teach composition here um I have taught composition in an American University um I thought it was really excellent I thought it was really really valuable even for students who were majoring in [discipline] I thought it was great but we don't do it here um I know that a lot of colleagues would be horrified at the thought of introducing it but I I feel in a way that composition is something that that all students should do especially when it comes to writing academic papers which is a different thing from writing kind of impressionistic prose um so you know I have had many situations where with undergraduate students or postgraduate students and even PhD students working with me where I’ve said look there's a problem with the writing here you're gonna have to improve on this and I have asked them to go to you know yourselves or to other offices in college other departments in CAPSL and so on and said look you need to get help with this you need to improve this you can't and sometimes it has worked you know and it's often it's just a minor stylistic thing that is just being done incorrectly I just point it out and it's corrected but I have had a situation where on um at least two occasions where where um I've had you know very good students full of ideas full of the kind of openness and energy that I talked about earlier but they couldn't write yeah and I mean in one case it was a lot of a lot of anxiety a lot of stress uhm tears and uh the student withdrew in fact because it was clear to me that he was never going to write a PhD thesis he may have written a wonderful 400 page study of whoever the writer was @@ [name] um but he was not going to write a PhD and that's the key isn't it I mean they need to the students need to realize that what here to write is...
academic [pause] prose critical prose it's not it's not that impressionistic um there's a place for that but this is not what we're in the business of teaching at least I'm not yeah R: yeah and so what it means we'll be like say structure and grammar argumentation coherence
Ted: yeah all-all of those so um well structure is is is structure can be a problem um structuring an argument um knowing the knowing how important it is to you know to appreciate the connection between the form of an essay and what it is you're trying to say in an essay so between the form and the argument if you like the idea of paragraphing for example which is that's a common one um students not really appreciating the fact that you know when you begin an an essay that it needs to have an introduction it needs to move from one stage to the next and that these stages somehow should reflect the development the elaboration um the kind of trajectory of your argument that the thing needs to have a conclusion so they need to be this needs to be um spelled out sometimes there can be problems with with structure but it's it's often also just a question of style you know and sentence length inappropriate use of punctuation grammar um strange kind of archaisms creep into the prose um I have a particular problem with students who write whilst and amongst you know this is one of the things you don’t need this st- @ but you know so it's often about style um inappropriate use of punctuation um there is some anxiety often with the use of first-person you know in English prose we used to completely ban it but but now you have it use sparingly it's okay you know um but yeah questions of style grammar as well yeah R: and so you mentioned some support offered to students in terms of academics and writing etc. um would you say that these supports are adequate within the university Ted: no absolutely not I mean and I think we do need to invest more in this I mean I know that there are structures in place and I think that you know the university has come a long way in the last 20 years I think the development of CAPSL maybe 10 15 years ago or so was wonderful um and you know the people in in in there [name] and others have been doing amazing work um but I do think that um uh you know we needed a dedicated Center and I mean I know that there are peer supports for example as well but we could do more with that uhm no I think as a university we should be doing more with this um it's difficult because it chang- it varies so much from subject to subject to subject you know the requirements vary so much from subject to subject but I think that most um academics when they're grading work um they might point out errors but they're not going to really give the kind of detailed explanations about these problems that students need and even if they give the kinds of detailed responses that students need there's no guarantee that the
students are going to learn from those responses so you know for example if I'm if I mark an essay and I underlined in red a grammatical error and try and explain why there is an error there and I sit down with the student and I said look there's a problem here usually what I do in this kind of situation is I get them to read it out to me and they can hear the clunkiness then when they read it out loud and I'm like so do you hear something funny going on here but then they go off after five minutes and but there's no guarantee that they've really learned it so I think um it would be great if we could have a better system for uh being sure that our students are learning from their mistakes no matter how small those mistakes are um because it does infuriate me often that from year one to year four students often make the same mistakes year after year even when they've been pointed out to them now you might not be able to eliminate this completely but I think if we had a more structured system in place where we could say the students look you need to attend this module in in junior fresh or senior fresh um which would be a kind of prerequisite for other kinds of work I don't know what the answer is but I don't think we have um I don't think we have enough uh in place to help our students yeah

Ted: and um so focusing kind of more on the international side on this point um are you aware of the type of preparation that your international students currently undertake before coming to [institution 1]

Ted: uhm unless they spell it out to me in their applications I'm usually not [pause] massively aware >well I mean< so they'll often say well I've done this program or done this diploma um in the covering letter they might say that they've done it but I'm not often aware beyond what they tell me you know and I and apart from you know I mean with PhD applicants I'm very interested to look at the CV to see where they're coming from what grades they have what level they've achieved if they've done a master's how well that went what their references are like what their writing sample is like that's a really major piece for me um but beyond those things that come in the application package I'm usually not um looking for anything more than that

Ted: right okay yeah and so you've talked a little bit about IELTS and the entry assessment at the University imposes on international students um can you kind of expand on your feelings about this entry

Ted: yeah yeah [sharp inhale] well I think it's important to have an internationally recognized you know language competence [pause] bar set I wonder if it's low at six point five? I'm not sure that all colleagues are clear what that means exactly so I can say to you well I believe at six point five but I'm not actually sure precisely how one is assessed to
achieve that level so and I would say that goes for most colleagues that they’re not they

don't actually know what that means it's like saying well somebody has to get a first well

what's that mean um so the reason I wonder if it's the right level is because um I think that

the level probably it probably vary you know maybe maybe the level of requirement varies

from discipline to discipline but also because it worries me a little bit that you know some

students uh international students have come in obviously on that level or higher and there

are still problems when they get here so it's not a kind of fool safe way of of doing it there

there have to be other safeguards I think in place yeah yeah

R: yeah and so what type of preparation do you think students should undertake before

coming to [institution 1]

Ted: what kind of preparation so this assuming now they've been offered a place

R: yeah offered or they're preparing //to apply

Ted: to apply

R: or say| they've gotten a conditional offer or something like that

Ted: yeah okay so there's three different categories there right so if somebody is actually

applying we um say that we you know they need to have their transcripts ready they need

to have their references ready the- one of the key things for us is the um the writing sample

um [pause] you know that there are there may be problems with verification @@with

this sometimes I lot depends on where a student is coming from you know if a student is

coming from Cork um then preparing to come to [institution 1] the challenges are gonna be

that much you know they're not gonna be as as um kind of difficult as they would be if

they're coming from you know from from from um Washington or or or Beijing um

certainly so I think that there are [pause] big you know cultural kind of uh differences say

between how you know it depends where you're coming from but there are big cultural

challenges in going to Ireland certainly and coming to [institution 1] itself now what

should they do to prepare [pause] gosh [pause] it's a really tough question to answer you go

on kind of on a case-by-case basis and I’ve dealt with students I've said to them look you

need to look at this look at this I mean it's very very hard to say I mean one thing I always

say is it's very expensive here right and you can't be guaranteed umm you know

accommodation on campus um I think um students who are coming in to do PhDs in

discipline] in terms of preparation I mean I do I am pretty frank with them about the

expense of living here um if they're coming from outside Europe just to kind of kind of

cultural differences involved um I I I I try as well to encourage students to be you know to

do a certain amount not not not an orientation in advance but to be ready when they get

here so if they're start going to start a PhD to actually use the summer beforehand to get up
to speed so that when they get here they can kind of move pretty quickly um it's a really
difficult question to answer because it change- l-li- you know it's so different for every
different applicant you know I think um like if there's somebody coming here who is very
comfortably off financially um has travelled a lot before or is able to speak English
fluently has done a master's and got a first-class result in the masters they're probably
gonna just fit right in but if somebody's coming from you know Shanghai has never been
outside China before um their family is helping them financially to get here it's like you
know a big dream come true um it's a huge challenge so how do you begin to prepare
something for that yeah especially when you can't I can't say to them we're gonna put you
up in this wonderful place we're gonna you know give you a stipend you know I I I have
had last year I had one afternoon here I had four Russian students knock on my door in a in
a state because they had they were my tutees so I was uh college tutor for these students
they knocked on my door to say they'd just arrived that early that morning from St.
Petersburg to find that the accommodation they had paid for in advance did not exist

Ted: it was a scam

R: ah it was a scam so how do you prepare for somebody for this right now if this was
somebody from I know from from Cork where they can get the train back home um or if
it's somebody from a very you know well-to-do background they can you know make
calls and check into a hotel and Airbnb or something but these these students were
really distressed so how do you prepare them for this so it really does vary from student to
student in general maybe we can be do maybe maybe I mean wouldn't it be wonderful if if
we could guarantee all of our international postgraduate students accommodation on
campus in their first year or even in their first term while they settle in I think that'd be
amazing but you know it's it's not likely to happen anytime soon um for on the academic
side of things as a director of teaching and learning the best I can do is to make sure that
the student knows what they're getting into reassure them that they got through a very
competitive process that we are really happy for them to be here make sure they're in
contact with your supervisor in advance of arriving as soon as possible when they arrive
meet the supervisor and the supervisor then becomes the first point of contact in terms of
just making sure that they're they're doing okay you know it's a really tough question

R: yeah and so you've kind of mentioned these other factors such as accommodation the
expense in Dublin etc. um how much of a factor does this play on academic success
Ted: huge yeah it's huge I mean I I I think it's [pause] very unusual to find a student who is
dealing with stress in those areas to be performing well academically I think it's almost
impossible I mean I I again as director of post-grad I have had meetings with lots of
students who've been struggling financially or in bad accommodation or dealing with
difficult personal circumstances trying to juggle a job with uh research and it's it's always
the same whereas the students who are doing well generally tend not to have to worry
about accommodation they're not worrying about money they're not worrying about these
other things so I think we you know I don't know what we can do [pause] to make things
easier for our students I think actually the most responsible thing is simply to put up you
know to put out there at the point of application that Dublin is expensive being a PhD
research um if you don't have funding you need to think twice about whether this is for you
and that's a really hard thing to say because there're great students coming through every
year who wants to PhDs can just about do it without funding but you're always going to be
worried about those students that they're not that I mean you know it might just you know
get too difficult for them um you know I'm coming more and more on to the view that it is
irresponsible to take on students who do not have funding [pause] yeah you know it's it's
tough very tough I think um yeah uh it's a constant anxiety I think for people you
know you're basically doing a full-time job for nothing yeah yeah @
R: yeah so if you could make suggestions for the course for the pre-
sessional course um what would you like to see
Ted: well your focus is on language [pause] and academic writing is that not no
kind of yeah um I mean I can basically give you a rundown of what does happen um we
focus a lot on //building confidence first of
Ted: good good
all um reading writing speaking listening so the major skills but also study skills like

taking notes and whatnot um but also culture so taking them around [institution 1]

introducing them to //Dublin so that

Ted: good good wow wow

R: would be kind of what our focus is

Ted: yeah yeah yeah that sounds great I didn't realize that it had a kind of context your

component where you know I think it's important that you're doing stuff around

communication but not only in terms of academic communication but just meeting the

locals as it were I think that's really important for them to have a sense of your location and

maybe even to visit the schools where that means so I don’t know how many students are

on in a class on average

R: not many we have the whole program usually has about thirty to forty

Ted: yeah so and are they divided up by faculty so there might be some from pharmacy

some from medicine and some from

R: um yes but they're all in the same class okay but generally we have more more business

and science

Ted: I think it would be good so what you're doing already I know is is wonderful and I

know that it's really positive for the students and maybe it would be good to uh you know

introduce them to the schools I don't mean to be bring them along to a school meeting and

say hey everybody this is but maybe to reach out to um certain points of contact in the

schools like myself if they're postgrad or undergrad directors just to come and say hi and

for them to see that there's an arts building this is where they do this and you know to be

aware of each other's uh to be aware to be aware where other things are happening in the

college so they don't feel they're just in pharmacy or they're just in business uhm the fact

that you're bringing them out into the community I think is really good uhm and maybe

even to do more with that would be would be useful um you know maybe even through

[institution 1] access program you know link up with the [institution 1] access program and

I don't know maybe bring them all out to a school or something for an hour just to meet

some kids you know so to get a real sense of the city within which they're gonna be living

for a few years as students um confidence yes absolutely I would hope that at some point

in their pre-sessional they have to stand up in front of the group or with a smaller group

and give a presentation or make a pitch really tough but it has to be done uhm I think uhm

giving them some s- I mean they are probably undergrad and postgrad students so I'm sure

you involve the unions GSU and the Students Union in these meetings if not maybe they

could be involved in some kind of you don't want to become an orientation office either I
mean that’s not not your only job but I suppose program specific training is really important so that if somebody does this uhm [pause] you know they're part of the school of business that they're preparing work that would be really relevant to what they're going into I think uh that might make it very challenging for you guys if you have to try and meet lots of different requirements yeah um I’m I'm not aware that our students have taken the pre-sessional I mean I hope that they have I do have a couple of international students at the minute and I wonder if they've did it I have one guy uhm
Ted: from Lebanon in first year but it's the kind of thing that I think he would have benefited from yeah
R: yeah no I don't think we've had any school of [discipline] students
Ted: yeah as a module as part of the structured Ph.D. program I think that would also be great I'd recommended then to people coming in R: that's actually our our application is in so it should be credit bearing next year
Ted: I think that's fantastic and if that is available next year I'll be yeah on one of the first people to recommend it I think it would be really uh beneficial yeah
Ted: uhm I think the in-session is great that idea and I think that um if that could be offered as a module as part of the structured Ph.D. program I think that would also be great I'd recommended then to people coming in R: that’s actually our our application is in so it should be credit bearing next year
Ted: I think that's fantastic and if that is available next year I'll be yeah on one of the first people to recommend it I think it would be really uh beneficial yeah
R: yeah it should be so I'll put a bug in [name]’s ear to kind of tell everyone once it’s approved um so my last question or my second to last question is um what do you hope that your students walk away with when they leave [institution 1] so how do you hope that they feel what do they take with them
Ted: @ they feel good you know um I hope they have you know obviously a sense of achievement I mean it is a huge sense of achievement even if you're walking away with a degree that you feel you could have done better I think it is still a great achievement to come through after four years of post-grad or four years of undergrad or the whole whole thing no I mean a sense of achievement but a sense that you've made a contribution I suppose at postgrad level uh at postgrad level I think that's the key thing that I would like my students to walk away with I mean a sense that they have made a contribution to knowledge that's the key requirement for a PhD as well uhm and so I would like them to feel confident that they have achieved that and to know that if you get a PhD from this place you you should be confident about the fact that you have actually made that contribution so a sense of confidence a sense that you've made a contribution to knowledge uhm and that this cannot be taken away from you you know I think also um it's important
to feel like you're part of a community you know part of you know there's you know the
place has a really rich uhm heritage and that you belong to to this you know that you've
kind of earned your place
R: and do you think that students are walking away feeling that way
Ted: yes uh I I think the majority of our PhD students do feel that yeah I think so because
it's tough it's really tough and uh if you have done three four or five years here researching
PhD you've written this thing you've defended it I think afterwards you feel wow I've
I've done this I'm confident about that now [pause] a few months out of the experience
you might think well I don't have a job @where @is this gonna get me and then a certain
amount of disillusionment might you know begin to creep in and that's understandable uhm
but I think I think the sense of achievement is one that most people feel even when they're
thinking why did I ever do that @ @ you know uh I made this you know so
R: um so is there any question that you wish I had asked that I didn't ask
Ted: [long pause] you asked a lot of questions
Ted: and they were and they were all they have all made me think and I suppose um I can't
think of anything offhand uh but I will say that you've given me a lot to think about
Ted: brilliant
Ted: and that my answers should be thought of by you as maybe the beginnings of answers
you know so do feel free to get in touch if you want me to go back if you have a transcript
uh you can send it to me yeah I'd say look you h- you gave this answer uh could you be
clear I'd be very happy to clarify it because I thought all the questions were very interesting
and kind of open I'd be happy to follow them up and clarify and be more specific if that's
needed
R: brilliant yeah definitely I can do that yeah so is there anything else you want to add
Ted: nope that's it that's very good I wish you every success with the research
Ted: thank you
### APPENDIX G: STUDENT INTERVIEW CODING TABLES

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## APPENDIX G: STUDENT INTERVIEW CODING TABLES

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APPENDIX G: STUDENT INTERVIEW CODING TABLES

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## APPENDIX G: STUDENT INTERVIEW CODING TABLES

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- Essay: 1
- General: 13
- Literature reviews: 1
- Opportunity for elaboration: 1
- Organization: 2
- Proofreading: 1
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- Synthesis: 1
- Written exams: 3

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- Pre-masters: 1
- Pre-sessional EAP: 3
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