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**Professional development
and
European projects in Education**

Anne Margaret Davidson Lund

APPENDICES

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Ed D

University of Durham

School of Education

1999



23 MAY 2000

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Appendix 1

European Cultural Awareness Learning Journal

Name _____

To be used in respect of your experiences in connection with your current transnational project.

This research is focused on identifying your personal learning which has come about directly as a result of involvement in the project, in particular, learning because of its transnational nature. When recording your experiences, feel free to note even seemingly insignificant issues. Your notes need not be in formal sentences, as long as you express clearly for the reader what you want to record.

(1) Record an interesting, puzzling or irritating event, or anything which has caused you to pause and reflect during the week.

(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.

Date _____

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date _____

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Appendix 2

Letter accompanying the Learning Journal

1 February 1997

Dear

Research exercise: European Awareness Culture Learning Journal

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this exercise. As we discussed, your responses will be entirely confidential. A first draft of the analysis will be given to you for comment, so that you may make any amendments you consider necessary for your views to be accurately represented. The analysis of responses from all participants will form part of my doctoral thesis for the University of Durham. A summary of the findings may be made available in Wakefield College, but no individuals or projects will be named.

You will find here a 'journal' sheet for each week from 3 February to 23 June 1997, 21 sheets in all. Please endeavour to make an entry in the 'journal' each week. The spontaneity of your initial thoughts is important. You are invited to reflect on your initial thoughts some weeks later, to get into the habit of doing this, you may find it helpful to look back each week at the notes you made one month earlier. Your second reflections may however be made at any time after the initial notes. If you wish to record your thoughts about events prior to the beginning of this exercise, please use the back of the 'journal' sheets to do so, and date your entry as you make it.

I shall contact you at the mid-point of the exercise, just after Easter, to ask you how the exercise is progressing, and to arrange to interview you for the same research purpose, at a time and in a place most convenient to you. I will contact you again at the end of June to ask you to return your 'journal' sheets to me. Please be sure to keep them in a safe place in the meantime!

If you have any questions about what you are being asked to do, please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Anne Davidson Lund

Encs.

Appendix 3

Repertory Grid instructions

Repertory grid instructions

During this academic year and your involvement in transnational project work you will have learned a lot about other cultures and ways of working. You will have acquired knowledge, understanding, perhaps changed some of your attitudes, come across things you like or dislike. You may also feel that you have changed yourself in some way. Some of the learning will have been conscious and deliberate, some will just have occurred incidentally in the course of events, or as the result of something unplanned or unexpected happening.

During the interviews in the summer term, I shall be asking you mainly about WHAT you have learned. However, I am also interested in HOW you have learned. A lot of different things - people, places, events, situations, methods of working, communications - will have contributed to the experiences you have had in working on your project. For example, you are now familiar with working regularly with colleagues from at least one other country. Certain people may have played a significant role in helping you in the early stages of the project work, or a particular incident (such as your first transnational meeting) may have coloured your attitude to transnational project work, or the demands of practical arrangements, such as travel, may have detracted from your enjoyment of meetings abroad. Similarly, difficulties with communications may have left a lasting impression. Having contact with colleagues from other projects, or not, may have been important to you. And so on - your experience is unique to you, and only you can say what has been significant.

Here you will find a series of instructions for recording your views.

Introduction

To complement our discussion in the main interview, I should be most grateful if you would spend a little of your time carrying out the following exercises. They are designed to help you think about the learning experiences that have influenced whatever lasting impressions you will take forward, be they attitudes, feelings, skills, knowledge, insights or whatever. You will find it helpful to read through these notes a couple of times before starting the first exercise.

1

Think back over your period of involvement in your current transnational project and make some entirely private notes about anything from which you feel you learned something really significant. As indicated above, include whatever you feel is appropriate - it might be a person, an event, something you did often, your dealings with an institution, or whatever. Write down as many things as you can, without evaluation or comment, until you feel that you have adequate notes to begin a sketch of your 'learning during involvement in a transnational project'.

2

Now look over the items you have noted and pick out what seem the most significant. Select the 9 most significant items and write each on a separate card, using the cards provided, marked A1 to A9. The cards are numbered to help you with the next stage.

3

Next, I would like you to think about the differences and similarities between these items, as learning experiences, using the following procedure:

Procedure

Take 3 cards and think of a way in which 2 of the items are similar, yet different from a 3rd. There is no right or wrong way to group the items, but try to compare them as learning experiences. Take 3 possible items, for example.

Monitoring a budget

Using email

Social event with European partners

You might decide to group them as 'Monitoring a budget and Using email' (associated with formal learning) versus 'Social event with European partners' (informal learning). Or you might group them as 'Using email and Social event with European partners' (communication with colleagues from other cultures) versus 'Monitoring a budget' (communication with colleagues from the same culture and the same organisation). If you think about the items deeply the comparisons you make will say something about what sort of learning has been important to you during your project.

4

You now have up to 9 items numbered A1 to A9. I would now like you to compare sets of 3 items in the order specified down the left-hand side of the enclosed sheet entitled SET A: LEARNING EXPERIENCES. On each line against the appropriate set of 3 numbers, write in

- | | |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------|
| the 2 similar items | in Columns 1 and 2 |
| the way in which they are similar | in Column 3 |
| the contrast with the 3rd item | in Column 4 |
| the 3rd item | in Column 5 |

Here is an example:

Items	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5
1, 2, 3	Monitoring a budget	Using email	Formal learning	Informal learning	Social event with European partners
2, 5, 8	Using email	Organising travel arrangements for the team	Made me feel frustrated	Made me feel competent	Giving a presentation on the English vocational training system

5

For each set of 3 items, think of a similarity, and difference, which you haven't used before. In other words, do not repeat any of the words or phrases you enter in Columns 3 and 4 as you work down the list.

Steps 1 - 5 should take you about 40 - 45 minutes. If you cannot think of 9 items or nine comparisons, don't worry, just do as much as you can. If you want to include more items or comparisons, or both, then please do so, making sure you provide a clear record.

Now I would like you to repeat the exercise (steps 1 - 5), but this time, think of WHAT you have learned rather than HOW. As before, start by making a list. It is likely to be quite varied - it might include things about society in other countries, working practices in other countries, people and their way of life, from day-to-day things like office routine to more general matters such as political and economic affairs - things you have learned throughout your involvement in your current transnational project. You might feel that you have learned things about yourself, having taken on a different role and responsibilities for a sustained period. You might have learned something about England and the English way of life.

You may find a degree of overlap between this and the first exercise. Again, don't worry, just think carefully at each step and note what seems to reflect your experience during your project.

Record the results on the second enclosed sheet entitled SET B: WHAT I HAVE LEARNED, and use the cards marked B1 to B9 for the set of 9 most significant things you have learned. As before, remember that there is nothing special about the number 9. You may decide to work with a smaller or a larger number.

Thank you for your help. I hope you have found the exercise worthwhile and enjoyable. Please keep all your notes and cards in a safe place and bring them with you (even if they are not complete) when we meet for both your preliminary and your main interview for this research study.

SET A: LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Items	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5
A1, A2, A3					
A2, A5, A8					
A3, A4, A8					
A4, A5, A6					
A3, A6, A9					
A3, A5, A7					
A7, A8, A9					
A1, A5, A9					
A2, A4, A9					
A1, A4, A7					
A2, A6, A7					
A1, A6, A8					

NOTE

If you use fewer than 9 items, you will not be able to follow all the groupings shown down the left-hand side. If your list contains more than 9 items, make sure that all of them are used. In either case, add your own groupings so that you get a good mixture of comparisons, and continue until you can't think of any more similarities and differences. It will be clear from Columns 1, 2 and 5 of your record what combinations you have used. Use the extra sheet if necessary.

SET A: LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Items	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5
B1, B2, B3					
B2, B5, B8					
B3, B4, B8					
B4, B5, B6					
B3, B6, B9					
B3, B5, B7					
B7, B8, B9					
B1, B5, B9					
B2, B4, B9					
B1, B4, B7					
B2, B6, B7					
B1, B6, B8					

NOTE

If you use fewer than 9 items, you will not be able to follow all the groupings shown down the left-hand side. If your list contains more than 9 items, make sure that all of them are used. In either case, add your own groupings so that you get a good mixture of comparisons, and continue until you can't think of any more similarities and differences. It will be clear from Columns 1, 2 and 5 of your record what combinations you have used. Use the extra sheet if necessary.

**SET B: WHAT I HAVE LEARNED
CONTINUATION SHEET**

Appendix 4

Letter accompanying the Repertory Grid instructions

1 April 1997

Dear

Research exercise: Cultural learning interviews

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this pilot exercise. During this summer term I wish to interview you, as we discussed, to give you the opportunity to talk to me about the learning you feel you have experienced during your involvement in your current European transnational project.

I shall contact you shortly to arrange a mutually convenient date, time and place for a brief (max. 20 minutes) preliminary interview to explain the methodology and instruments I wish to use, and to answer any questions you may have. We will then agree the date, time and place for the main interview, which may last up to 3 hours. I shall also seek your permission to record the main interview, to assist me in making an accurate transcription of your views. A first draft of my representation of your views will be made available to you for comment, so that you may make any amendments you consider necessary. As we discussed, your responses will be entirely confidential.

You will find here instructions for a Repertory Grid exercise. Repertory Grid technique is a common tool used to assist research respondents in preparing for a semi-structured interview on a particular theme. The theme here is, of course, your learning during your involvement in your current European transnational project. Please read the instructions carefully. You will have the opportunity during the preliminary interview to ask me about anything you find puzzling or confusing about the exercise. You may like to try to draw up a first draft of your list of items, similarities and differences for brief discussion at the preliminary interview. And remember, the Repertory Grid you draw up is only a means to an end, a starting point for wider discussion.

Please keep in a safe place these sheets and any notes you make. I shall be in touch with you shortly, but if you have any questions in the meantime about what I am asking you to do, please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Anne Davidson Lund

Encs.

Appendix 5

Timetable of data collection

Timetable of data collection (all dates are in 1997 except for the final column)

	Pseudonym	Participation agreed	Journal issued	1st check	2nd check	Interview arranged + prep. issued	Date interview held	Journal collected	Data first taken back for comment	Analysis taken back for comment
Pilot 1	Norman	6 Jan	6 Jan	21/01/97	30/01/97	30/01/97	29 Apr	29 Apr	2 June	8 December 1998
Pilot 2	Rita	6 Jan	6 Jan	21/01/97	30/01/97	30/01/97	6 May	6 May	2 June	8 December 1998
1	Betty	3 Feb	3 Feb	20 Feb	14 Apr	18 Apr	11 Aug	11 Aug	8 Sept	8 December 1998
2	Sonia	22 Jan	3 Feb	6 Mar	30 Apr	30 Apr	23 July	23 Sept	30 Sept	- (long-term sick, seriously ill) 8 December 1998
3	Elsie	22 Jan	4 Feb	4 Mar	30 Apr	30 Apr	23 July		23 Sept	8 December 1998
4	Ida	3 Feb	4 Feb	6 Mar	30 Apr	30 Apr	24 June	24 June	23 Sept	8 December 1998
5	Jo	3 Feb	3 Feb	10 Mar	18 Mar	28 Apr	Withdrawn 18 June	18 June	-	- (no longer in contact) 8 December 1998
6	Susie	3 Feb	3 Feb	12 Mar	14 Mar	18 Apr	13 June	13 June	8 Sept	8 December 1998
7	Jack	3 Feb	3 Feb	20 Feb	14 Apr	18 Apr	Withdrawn 18 June	-	-	- (no data handed over) 8 December 1998
8	Gina	3 Feb	3 Feb	20 Mar	22 Apr	13 May	8 July	8 July	8 Sept	8 December 1998
9	Mandy	7 Feb	7 Feb	13 Mar	11 Apr	4 June	7 July	7 July	20 Sept	8 December 1998
10	Lucy	3 Mar	3 Mar	14 Apr	2 June	2 June	25 June	25 June		8 December 1998
11	Jude	7 Feb	7 Feb	20 Mar	22 Apr	22 Apr	2 July		8 Sept	8 December 1998

Appendix 6

Completed Learning Journals - sample

All weeks to
Rep Grid +
cards too.

Name _____ (1)

To be used in respect of your experiences in connection with your current transnational project.

This research is focused on identifying your personal learning which has come about directly as a result of involvement in the project, in particular, learning because of its transnational nature. When recording your experiences, feel free to note even seemingly insignificant issues. Your notes need not be in formal sentences, as long as you express clearly for the reader what you want to record.

<p>(1) Record an interesting, puzzling or irritating event, or anything which has caused you to pause and reflect during the week.</p> <p>(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.</p> <p>Date <u>5.2.97</u></p> <p>• Interestip event: student's excitement + interest when using a digital camera for group photographs + then transferring same to a disc and onto a PC. A learning experience for staff + students. Best Howell joined the group to explain the process + take the first clutch of photos + download onto PCs. Staff amazed at the development of technology but feel inadequate because Best went through so</p> <p>(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)</p>	<p>Re-examine the experience weeks later.</p> <p>Has your opinion changed? Record the change.</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)</p>
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many processes we can't remember the sequence of what to do?!
Will the partners have the technology

Best
(1)

Name _____ (1) _____

To be used in respect of your experiences in connection with your current transnational project.

This research is focused on identifying your personal learning which has come about directly as a result of involvement in the project, in particular, learning because of its transnational nature. When recording your experiences, feel free to note even seemingly insignificant issues. Your notes need not be in formal sentences, as long as you express clearly for the reader what you want to record.

(1) Record an interesting, puzzling or irritating event, or anything which has caused you to pause and reflect during the week.

(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.

Date 12. 2. 97

Frustration - arrangements are in an advanced stage for a visit by Vick, Helen Touber + Shirley Day to St. Idesbald school in Belgium. No reply in 2 weeks from the head re our accommodation + arrival arrangements. He has failed to tell me that he has to cross the school campus to read a Email from me but the fax goes into his office.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date 10. 8. 97

~~Seems~~ Seems trivial now but it was not at the time

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

office. I'll fax him in future.

Why didn't he look in the Email at least once a week or the tutor would ask him when the Email was sent. 10. 8. 97

Name _____ (1) _____

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<p>(1) Record an interesting, puzzling or irritating event, or anything which has caused you to pause and reflect during the week.</p> <p>(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.</p> <p>Date <u>19.2.97</u></p> <p>Helen, Shirley + Vuk have made the visit to St. Idobald. Swedish partners have also. We were made very welcome. Hospitality exceptional.</p> <p>Sharp contrast between preparation for meeting by the English on the one hand + the Swedes + Belgians. They had nothing to exchange in the way of reports or materials. We led the discussions although they offered some ideas. The students on students are corresponding with which added an extra dimension.</p> <p>All students want to do exchange visits</p> <p>(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)</p>	<p>Re-examine the experience weeks later.</p> <p>Has your opinion changed? Record the change.</p> <p>Date <u>26.2.97</u></p> <p>Have spoken to Anne about the anxiety over so many wanting to visit in May. I didn't want to be negative in the face of the Belgian + Swedish enthusiasm. Anne has brought some sanity to the situation by agreeing to discuss the matter + be realistic about the workload of Wakefield College staff in the summer term.</p> <p>(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)</p>
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so that needs to be worked on. (Learning how other people work.)
 Nice atmosphere in classrooms. The teachers have a very easy work load / to
 compared with us. (Crammer) (at least - provision)

Name _____ (1)

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<p>(1) Record an interesting, puzzling or irritating event, or anything which has caused you to pause and reflect during the week.</p> <p>(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>I have written the report this week of the meeting in Belgium. It regenerated for me the enthusiasm from the meeting - the looking forward to student visits, the development & use of 'mother needs' of communication. I'm still feeling inadequate & dependent on others, about the use of all this new technology. If you don't use things regularly you don't develop a comfortable level of confidence. The time involved in coming to grips</p> <p>(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)</p>	<p>Re-examine the experience weeks later.</p> <p>Has your opinion changed? Record the change.</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)</p>
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with it all is frightening. Perhaps I should be happy to be the co-ordinator/facilitator for the whole exchange & leave others to really get to grips with all the different methods of technology, & take advice from them!!

Name _____ (1)

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(1) Record an interesting, puzzling or irritating event, or anything which has caused you to pause and reflect during the week.

(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.

Date 4. 3. 97

Had a meeting with Anne DL & Shirley about the proposals for the further 2 years of the project.

I get swept along with the enthusiasm of all the existing possibilities we and the students can get involved in. We must involve further staff and must make sure we can get students abroad.

At this stage anything is possible

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date 4/97

still great enthusiasm but drawing realisation of the extra time & effort required.

It's all worth it.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

in terms of the amount of time it will take!

Name _____ (1) _____

To be used in respect of your experiences in connection with your current transnational project.

This research is focused on identifying your personal learning which has come about directly as a result of involvement in the project, in particular, learning because of its transnational nature. When recording your experiences, feel free to note even seemingly insignificant issues. Your notes need not be in formal sentences, as long as you express clearly for the reader what you want to record.

<p>(1) Record an interesting, puzzling or irritating event, or anything which has caused you to pause and reflect during the week.</p> <p>(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>Had a meeting with Chris & the Riddlebrook about the finances for the project. I'm very impressed with the orderly and organised way in which she works. I must make a greater effort to keep my files in order and my records up to date.</p> <p>Didn't do much for the project except think about overcoming some of the</p> <p>(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)</p>	<p>Re-examine the experience weeks later.</p> <p>Has your opinion changed? Record the change.</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)</p>
--	--

left after, while washing up! Ideas & thoughts are coming, these, sitting around.

Name _____ (1) _____

To be used in respect of your experiences in connection with your current transnational project.

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(1) Record an interesting, puzzling or irritating event, or anything which has caused you to pause and reflect during the week.

(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.

Date _____

Holiday. Blessed release
into the Cumbrian
mountains.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date _____

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Name _____ (1) _____

To be used in respect of your experiences in connection with your current transnational project.

This research is focused on identifying your personal learning which has come about directly as a result of involvement in the project, in particular, learning because of its transnational nature. When recording your experiences, feel free to note even seemingly insignificant issues. Your notes need not be in formal sentences, as long as you express clearly for the reader what you want to record.

(1) Record an interesting, puzzling or irritating event, or anything which has caused you to pause and reflect during the week.

(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.

Date _____

Great enthusiasm from Sweden for sending students over European Day activities. Also, ^{realising} that they need to do most of the planning themselves because of the on-going pressures on Wakefield staff.

However, it's not so easy because travel agencies don't really have

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date 14/4 _____

organising the accommodation didn't take so long as I feared. I also learned ^{it?} more about how colleges operate its accommodation support for students as well as speaking to some really nice land ladies.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Name _____ (1)

To be used in respect of your experiences in connection with your current transnational project.

This research is focused on identifying your personal learning which has come about directly as a result of involvement in the project, in particular, learning because of its transnational nature. When recording your experiences, feel free to note even seemingly insignificant issues. Your notes need not be in formal sentences, as long as you express clearly for the reader what you want to record.

(1) Record an interesting, puzzling or irritating event, or anything which has caused you to pause and reflect during the week.

(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.

Date _____

Guido + the Belgian students are back at school and they want to send 6 students - 2 draft for European Day. Anne DL has done a good job in making them appreciate the pressures on us. Also, not such great accommodation problems because they don't have the money worries - "there's plenty".

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date _____

Campus Hotel solved the problem quickly. But it's hard making decisions about whether accommodation is suitable when you are booking it for other people.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Oh! to work for a body of brothers !!!

Name _____ (1)

To be used in respect of your experiences in connection with your current transnational project.

This research is focused on identifying your personal learning which has come about directly as a result of involvement in the project, in particular, learning because of its transnational nature. When recording your experiences, feel free to note even seemingly insignificant issues. Your notes need not be in formal sentences, as long as you express clearly for the reader what you want to record.

<p>(1) Record an interesting, puzzling or irritating event, or anything which has caused you to pause and reflect during the week.</p> <p>(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>I feel very inadequate about my inabilities with technology to help with setting up the Chalkit. Very frustrating. I need time to be able to learn the different systems with somebody there to keep me straight.</p> <p>David Curiffe + Bob Howell are very helpful + always willing to</p> <p>(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)</p>	<p>Re-examine the experience weeks later.</p> <p>Has your opinion changed? Record the change.</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)</p>
--	--

just time in to help.

Name _____ (1) _____

To be used in respect of your experiences in connection with your current transnational project.

This research is focused on identifying your personal learning which has come about directly as a result of involvement in the project, in particular, learning because of its transnational nature. When recording your experiences, feel free to note even seemingly insignificant issues. Your notes need not be in formal sentences, as long as you express clearly for the reader what you want to record.

(1) Record an interesting, puzzling or irritating event, or anything which has caused you to pause and reflect during the week.

(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.

Date _____

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date _____

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Name _____ (1) _____

To be used in respect of your experiences in connection with your current transnational project.

This research is focused on identifying your personal learning which has come about directly as a result of involvement in the project, in particular, learning because of its transnational nature. When recording your experiences, feel free to note even seemingly insignificant issues. Your notes need not be in formal sentences, as long as you express clearly for the reader what you want to record.

(1) Record an interesting, puzzling or irritating event, or anything which has caused you to pause and reflect during the week.

(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.

Date 1.6.97

Tremendous pressure preparing for 3 events: European Day, Evaluation meeting → visit to Sweden. I know that the activities will be thoroughly enjoyed, be wonderful experiences But by doing all this how much am I neglecting my other work and are my own students suffering from this?

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date 10.8.97

No change.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Name _____ (1) _____

To be used in respect of your experiences in connection with your current transnational project.

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(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.

Date _____

European Day.

Tremendous experience for students - wonderful to see 3 nationalities getting on so well especially in the rounds game.

Irritating that some of the visiting staff weren't as chued in and helpful as they might have been. Need to organise groups for activities

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

were firmly next time.

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date _____

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

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<p>(1) Record an interesting, puzzling or irritating event, or anything which has caused you to pause and reflect during the week.</p> <p>(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>Evaluation meeting. Very positive from everybody. Aware that all had built on their strengths + contributed something to the success through the year. V. difficult running meeting + looking after visitors when I have no permission from teaching. I left my</p> <p>(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)</p>	<p>Re-examine the experience weeks later.</p> <p>Has your opinion changed? Record the change.</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)</p>
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own students to somebody else again.

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<p>(1) Record an interesting, puzzling or irritating event, or anything which has caused you to pause and reflect during the week.</p> <p>(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>V. interesting visit to Sweden. Where are all the students? I know it was the end of the year but we had difficulty finding them. Hard to work between the Swedes winding down for the summer + Jane Cole thinking I we should be in intense meetings all the</p> <p>(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)</p>	<p>Re-examine the experience weeks later.</p> <p>Has your opinion changed? Record the change.</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)</p>
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time. I felt as if I was wasting money by being there.

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Date _____

Report writing. I need to do the report of the evaluation meeting. It's a battle to be constantly putting what I want to say on paper and in a way which people for whom English is a second language can understand and get the same meaning.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date _____

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Date _____

Charlie.
 I'm beginning to feel more confident with the mechanics of the Charlie. The students have got a buzz from the experience & so have I.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

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No time to write the final evaluation for Central Bureau. That's a task for admin week when hopefully I can set aside a long spell of time to really crack it in one go. Thank goodness I wrote the interim report in February to use
 (Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

as a base !!

Re-examine the experience weeks later.
 Has your opinion changed? Record the change.
 Date _____

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Date _____

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date _____

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<p>(1) Record an interesting, puzzling or irritating event, or anything which has caused you to pause and reflect during the week.</p> <p>(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.</p> <p>Date <u>17.2.97</u></p> <p>Transnational conference in Belgium with all partners. The Belgian partners appear to come put very little effort and no formal structure into their schemes of work - in fact there are no schemes of work or formal structure - I find it irritating that they do not prepare + deliver to our standards - yet they do achieve results? Are we overkill on the paper work? The Swedish partners are more formal and well structured in their work. I hand over to both countries all the work I have prep since Sept - (I get nothing in return)!!</p> <p>(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)</p>	<p>Re-examine the experience weeks later.</p> <p>Has your opinion changed? Record the change.</p> <p>Date <u>March</u></p> <p>Impossible to determine if my Belgian partner has developed work for students - as agreed in Aug 96. I am more able to accept that things are done differently in Belgium, and that the work ethic for projects is different. The pressures regarding deadlines are not evident.</p> <p>(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)</p>
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Date 24.2.97

Students have put a lot of effort into their E-mail preparation. I am pleased that my efforts in making the IT programme are showing some results. So very often students with MHD find it difficult to show enthusiasm.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date March

No. A basic IT programme is essential if students are to have dialogue via E-mailing. It may however be some months before all are able to function in E-block independently. Most students have only have had

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Date 3. 3. 97

I have decided to have all maps colour copied - blow the expense I'm paying for it. The students are responding very well to a search programme of Belgium and Sweden using identical colour acetates for the OHP. I was surprised that colour makes all the difference to their responses.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date March & May.

No. Colour is more stimulating. Colour printers would be ideal. It is obvious that Sweden and Belgian work primarily in black + white worksheets or presentation material. The Swedish + Belgian staff liked our coloured pictorial style plans - kind →

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Date 10.3.97

We have been arranging dialogue in files received by students. I am amazed at the fact that my students had not realised that the Belgians were writing in what to them a foreign language. My students were laughing at some of the words used or we had soap instead of soup.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date May 97 No
 All the students appeared to think that everybody speaks English. They have a very naive view of European languages. Some students criticised the fact that their grammar was poor. There is a possibility that not →

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Date 17. 3. 97

Students have responded well to the visual work sheets showing the different electronic methods of communication. The sheets are at the correct pitch.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date May

No.
Students working at this level need much visual material, as some are not sufficiently stimulated by E-mails as such. After visit to Belgium it was obvious that we are

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Date 7. 4. 97

Students have had their first demonstration of faxing in Business Studies area. They were quite detached and not as enthusiastic as I had expected. I expected them to have the same level of excitement as myself. The faxing was not sufficiently personal or meaningful

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

for them

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date April

It is possible here that as the fax demo was done by other students it was not personal. The fax did not work to Europe so it was a 'damp squib' faxing to Hensworth side. It is obvious that students are only going to have enthusiasm for

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Date 14. 4. 97

We have tried yet again to use the CD Room in the main library. Again the printer is not working - Another session to be arranged. Students are unable to collect the map of Europe. No maps of Europe in the library at all - wall size. I will have to buy one.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date April.

Or. There has been constant frustration at not being able to use the facilities. (It support has been in great demand) & it is hoped that students will not lose enthusiasm.

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Date 21. 4. 97

E-mails returned to students & given out. Some students are finding it difficult to remember their partners - which makes dialogue continuation difficult. This is probably due to the fact that accommodating all the students in their final year was too ambitious.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date April

No - The project must consider working with a small group of student partners and more general group work until IT skills are acquired & confidence to work alone in E Block.

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(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.

Date 28.4.97

Some students have been to E. Mark and spent 3/4 hour there E-mails. The college Dishes that I purchased will not facilitate 'save' so students have to print off and send messages by post. This is very disappointing for them.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date April

Frustration — The dishes have been exchanged but a lot of enthusiasm was lost. The students appear to accept that electronics can occasionally go wrong, and in a business world one would have to use alternative methods.

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Date 5. 5. 97

The students have enjoyed their preparations for European day but are concerned that the visitors will not be able to understand them when they meet face to face, in spite of having demonstrated a good command of English since Sept.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date May ~~15~~

~~But~~ the students are ^{now} unable to grasp that their partners are so good at writing in a second language. The students all have a theory that seeing is believing & are still sure that communication will be impossible!

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Date 12. 5. 97

European Day. The exhibitions were good but the students did not integrate as well as expected in the college.

They did however mix better in less formal settings away from their tutors.

Some students who appear to have confidence were very shy when asked to show the foreign students around.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date May Yes.

It appears that the Belgians and Swedish students understand the written word better than spoken English. They also found it difficult to understand the Turkish accent. The students were probably correct and their initial feelings have been correct.

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(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.

Date 19.5.97

Some very sad news from Belgium and Martin is not able to attend the final meeting. Christian informs me that Donna (who was painfully shy on the Belgian trip) came to him and initiated conversation. This confidence has come since her exchange visit with social care students.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date May 10

It appears that the exchange visit has done more for increasing confidence than the pre-Voc level 3 course. Donna's progress was noted by the visiting Belgian tutors. Her social skills have increased and she has approached all her work with confidence.

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(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.

Date 26 / 5. 5 term.

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Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date _____

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(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.

Date 2/6. Residential

Indep travel and life skills assessment at Norwich University.

Donna has become very confident and continues to make progress re. travelling and life skills assessments.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date June

It appears that the Belgian Exchange has done more to increase the confidence of Donna. She would have ~~found~~ found the assignment quite difficult normally - but she now shows good eye contact and initiative.

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Date 9 - 6 - 97.

Students have asked if they can continue to keep in touch with their partners. Some of the students are doing an E-mail to ask for addresses. They may not get replies as Belgium and Sweden have finished. This is very ~~interesting~~ -

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date _____

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Date _____

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date _____

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(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.

Date _____

Nothing further.

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date _____

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Date _____

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Date _____

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date _____

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(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.

Date _____

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date _____

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Date _____

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date _____

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Date 3/2/97.

• Communication from Gigi requesting information which I felt was made available in the Netherlands. Felt that she was looking to myself + one other colleague for leadership even when her role is that of moderator. Irritated me in that she basically wanted us to tell her what to do.

• Returned her communication with comprehensive answers + included my feelings about learning outcomes. A colleague compared the reply which I knew would confuse her but I let it go anyway as I didn't have time to re-write. Rapid reply from Gigi requesting further clarification. I replied trying to make the concept as simple as possible.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date _____

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(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.

Date 13/2/97

Communication from Gigi that she hasn't heard from Ron in ages. I'm concerned that he's not prioritising the project as he should. He's undertaken to do a particular task then doesn't update the moderator on progress. However, I am aware that changes in his organisation

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date 30/6/97

How right I was!!

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

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(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.

Date _____

No incidents to report.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date _____

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(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.

Date _____

No incidents.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date _____

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Date 3/3/97.

Not through direct contact with partners - but thought always at the back of one's mind during meeting with Steve look at status of whether partners would be able to absorb what we were discussing.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change

Date 9/4/97.

More positive opinion - if they aren't currently in a situation where they can do this, we can be instrumental in developing them. More positive attitude.

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Date 12/3/97

At long last - Gigi makes contact. Juspicious confirmed that she isn't really doing anything at the mo' and I wish I'd never mentioned Learning Outcomes.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date 18/4/97

In retrospect, understandable given the Swedish situation that nothing was happening. Imitating situation that ~~we~~ I feel that we wouldn't have allowed (or been allowed) to let the situation develop in this country.

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<p>(1) Record an interesting, puzzling or irritating event, or anything which has caused you to pause and reflect during the week.</p> <p>(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p><i>No incidents.</i></p> <p>(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)</p>	<p>Re-examine the experience weeks later.</p> <p>Has your opinion changed? Record the change.</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)</p>
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(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.

Date ^(I think) 24/4 and 25/4

Contact with Wim during his work shadowing placement here.

It was good to see a 'real foreign person' involved in the project as at a distance it gets easy to generalise about the Dutch team or the Swedish team.

Interesting that during meeting on 25/4 no-one in English team was prepared to correct Wim's English or redirect him back on track.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date _____

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No incidents.

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Re-examine the experience weeks later.

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Date W/C 7/4/97

Various communications with Gigi re
 online conference All OK.
 Quite excited about the on-line
 conference.
 The position is becoming clear in
 Sweden + Gigi really is
 disarming in her communications.
 Productive Netforum meeting with
 Henk - once again the breadth +
 depth of his understanding

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date _____

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Date 14/4/97

On line conference via First Class.
Amusing experience. Strange to think
of 2 groups of people muddled around
computers actually talking to each
other via computer from 2 different
countries.

Conference mired out a lot of
semantic problems and also
relieved the Swedes I think (and
Ken). They were happy for the UK
dean to shoulder responsibility.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

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(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.

Date 22/4/97.

Meeting with Hans + Planning group.
I'm still not convinced that Hans is up to speed on what is being achieved here. He seems very happy to let Sharon + Terry do all the thinking.
I keep wondering what Sharon really thinks of the project.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date 20/6/97.

After meeting Hans again, I'm sure that he hadn't grasped what was going on in that meeting.
I think it's fundamentally a language problem but also that he's the kind of person who needs to be the centre of attention all the time. I couldn't see him lasting long in a UK context.

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Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date _____

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Date _____

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<p>(1) Record an interesting, puzzling or irritating event, or anything which has caused you to pause and reflect during the week.</p> <p>(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.</p> <p>Date <u>20/5/97.</u></p> <p>Netform Advisory Group Meeting. Nothing specifically transnational but v. poor representation from advisory group.</p> <p>Merely reflects the arrogance we display when dealing with foreign partners + lack of commitment to development!</p> <p>(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)</p>	<p>Re-examine the experience weeks later.</p> <p>Has your opinion changed? Record the change.</p> <p>Date <u>20/6/97.</u></p> <p>NOT really. I still feel that our advisory group don't place enough importance on the project. Maybe they aren't used to having input/collaboration with WLegees!</p> <p>(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)</p>
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Per.
fair

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Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date _____

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<p>(1) Record an interesting, puzzling or irritating event, or anything which has caused you to pause and reflect during the week.</p> <p>(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.</p> <p>Date <u>3/6/97</u></p> <p>Met ADL for briefing. Looking forward to visiting Sweden. It's not a country I would have chosen to go to but I'm glad I've got this opportunity.</p> <p>(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)</p>	<p>Re-examine the experience weeks later.</p> <p>Has your opinion changed? Record the change.</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)</p>
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Date 7/8/9/10 June

conference in Borlänge.

annoyance that we had to function at a somewhat slower speed than we would do normally.

constant checking & rechecking of how to phrase things so as not to confuse / intimidate.

this with one partner country only. P10

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date 30/6/97

No, it hasn't changed but I can be more tolerant in retrospect.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

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Date _____

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date _____

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Week of
Feb -

Name _____ (9)

This is the only one which
really stands out and is
(With perspective of time)

+ Ref. on page 12

To be used in respect of your experiences in connection with your current transnational project.

Not to make it with theory - more general reflections

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Date 6/2/97

Personal learning because of involvement in trans-national project? Probably had not thought too much about Europe before undertaking this exercise.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date June 97

Work isolated me from the European experience. There is not too much different about the outcome of work though the approach between us (Eng) & the Netherlands / Sweden is different.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

at the time

(9)

Name _____ (9)

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(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.

Date 19.2.97.

Been reading an article about unemployment in Germany. This stuff seen so incongruous with my expectations of Germany. I wonder what it is doing to the German people, especially those who are unemployed?

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date May 97

I have never been unemployed (not yet anyway) so can I only think that I know what it will be like

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Name _____ (4)

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(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.

Date 28.2

Seemed appropriate to have an entry today. Do the Europeans have a 'leap year'?

They do however have many more 'special days' than we do. Many seem associated with the Church & religious festivals - often denoting a family get together

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date _____

I didn't find out about the leap year ... but the family 'connectedness' was very evident. What have we lost by relaxing our ties?

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

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Date 4. 3. 97

BSE! Obviously a British problem, but a wonderful excuse to show the anti-British feeling from the continent. Is the issue made worse by the media (some newspapers are anti-European anyway) or are there shots across the bows to keep the differences alive?

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date June 97

The newspapers can determine a person's view on Europe & presumably a view of England. What responsibility do they have?

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

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(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.

Date 21.3.97

Obviously thinking about
rising again this week
Why do we come on
the left

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date May 97

→ something that I did with
the whole class of course
when I was a teacher
I think probably there
had been a...
in Europe...
(Evidence Trans-...
)

Amusing

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

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(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.

Date 24.3.97

The Farming programme today - talking about Swine fever in Holland & the view that x thousands of pigs would have to be ~~be~~ destroyed. Why have the Dutch not learned from us i.e. the potential for disaster from huge numbers of animals being kept together.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date May 97

Spoke with Hank about this. Obviously just down to making money. So presumably there are similar angles here between British farmers & some European ones.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

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Date 12.4.97.

Monetary union. Heats
(favorite (one of) topics I
can only think in the
immediate & observe how
much "pretty paper money"
would be lost if we all
used the same.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date _____

Much tradition tied up in
money. Used to commemorate
national victories or
celebrations. Which victories
are however truly one-
sided (is celebrated by one
country?) why did we
fight so much & how
can that be regulated by
trade & money?

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

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<p>(1) Record an interesting, puzzling or irritating event, or anything which has caused you to pause and reflect during the week.</p> <p>(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.</p> <p>Date <u>22/4</u></p> <p>Whilst travelling by train in Holland I saw timetables at the station giving details of journey times to Paris / Strasbourg Brussels etc. This probably happens in London, but I was certainly struck by the tranquillity of Europe.</p>	<p>Re-examine the experience weeks later.</p> <p>Has your opinion changed? Record the change.</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>22.7.97</p> <p>This has struck me...</p>
<p>(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)</p>	<p>(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)</p>

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(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.

Date 28.4.97

Remembering what Wim said when I stayed with him & Geert. That he found speaking in English (when workshadowing) difficult and that he deliberately arranged no social events for the weekend to give his brain the chance to only think in Dutch.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date June 97

While in Haarden, I found that I was thinking in French. (The only other language I know) Panic must have really set in

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 (2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.
 Date 5.5.97
 Abraham to record the arrival of a 50th birthday. Acquired in the Netherlands where it is a traditional custom associated with acquiring wisdom. The experience of age is valued and so celebrated.

Re-examine the experience weeks later.
 Has your opinion changed? Record the change.
 Date 10.6.97
 The experience of age definitely not the case (evidence was at college) in England. I remember the dobelled on Heuts face when I was talking him through the age zones in English education. (re: employment in ed.)

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Name _____ (a)

To be used in respect of your experiences in connection with your current transnational project.

This research is focused on identifying your personal learning which has come about directly as a result of involvement in the project, in particular, learning because of its transnational nature. When recording your experiences, feel free to note even seemingly insignificant issues. Your notes need not be in formal sentences, as long as you express clearly for the reader what you want to record.

(1) Record an interesting, puzzling or irritating event, or anything which has caused you to pause and reflect during the week.

(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.

Date 4 5

French elections. What? The French follow suit.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date _____

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Name _____ (a)

To be used in respect of your experiences in connection with your current transnational project.

This research is focused on identifying your personal learning which has come about directly as a result of involvement in the project, in particular, learning because of its transnational nature. When recording your experiences, feel free to note even seemingly insignificant issues. Your notes need not be in formal sentences, as long as you express clearly for the reader what you want to record.

<p>(1) Record an interesting, puzzling or irritating event, or anything which has caused you to pause and reflect during the week.</p> <p>(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.</p> <p>Date _____</p> <p>Following the weather patterns in Poland. Going walking to see the Spring flowers. I am really interested in Eastern Europe because in my (limited) experience the lifestyle seems closer to my roots!</p> <p>(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)</p>	<p>Re-examine the experience weeks later.</p> <p>Has your opinion changed? Record the change.</p> <p>Date <u>10.6.97</u></p> <p>It snowed! Great weather conditions experienced!</p> <p>Poland not as glacialized to same extent as the Netherlands. Much lower standard of living. Interesting to experience different expectations of life</p> <p>(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)</p>
--	---

(more about work)

Name _____ (9)

To be used in respect of your experiences in connection with your current transnational project.

This research is focused on identifying your personal learning which has come about directly as a result of involvement in the project, in particular, learning because of its transnational nature. When recording your experiences, feel free to note even seemingly insignificant issues. Your notes need not be in formal sentences, as long as you express clearly for the reader what you want to record.

(1) Record an interesting, puzzling or irritating event, or anything which has caused you to pause and reflect during the week.

(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.

Date 10.6.97

Why is it called the Euro-tunnel? and not the English/French tunnel?

It does seem a little strange to be flying to a European country when we are part of the same community

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date 4.7.97

France as gateway to Europe - shortest distance across water
Do Brits go to other European destinations via the tunnel
(I've done research has been done on this)

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Name _____ (9)

To be used in respect of your experiences in connection with your current transnational project.

This research is focused on identifying your personal learning which has come about directly as a result of involvement in the project, in particular, learning because of its transnational nature. When recording your experiences, feel free to note even seemingly insignificant issues. Your notes need not be in formal sentences, as long as you express clearly for the reader what you want to record.

(1) Record an interesting, puzzling or irritating event, or anything which has caused you to pause and reflect during the week.

(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.

Date _____

A reading excited about the potential of the project obviously we have to put it, but some any more countries could be involved like (England) and really in the coming year or two are (why have we developed so differently?)

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date _____

The countries led system

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Name _____ (9)

To be used in respect of your experiences in connection with your current transnational project.

This research is focused on identifying your personal learning which has come about directly as a result of involvement in the project, in particular, learning because of its transnational nature. When recording your experiences, feel free to note even seemingly insignificant issues. Your notes need not be in formal sentences, as long as you express clearly for the reader what you want to record.

(1) Record an interesting, puzzling or irritating event, or anything which has caused you to pause and reflect during the week.

(2) Try to interpret or explain the experience.

Date 23.6.97

At the Swedish conference
was really impressed by
Thomas (in particular) and
Eric. The speed with which
they connected to the issues
and contributed to the
practicalities.

Interested particularly in
combining this notion of
"50/50" in a manager to
the other practical (strategic)
issues.

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Re-examine the experience weeks later.

Has your opinion changed? Record the change.

Date _____

(Continue on the back of this sheet if you need more space to record your experiences and interpretations.)

Appendix 7

Completed Repertory Grids - sample

Items	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5
B1, B2, B3	To use fax, Email + Chatline	To use I.T.	Detailed Learning	Personal development dealing with people	Chair a meeting
B2, B5, B8	To use I.T.	Integrates curriculum + project	Receiving different ways of using the same materials	Recognising student outcomes	Recognise student pleasure
B3, B4, B8	Chair a meeting	Plan + run events	Being organised	Listening to students + their wishes	"
B4, B5, B6	Plan + run events	Integrates curriculum + project	Having a plan but being flexible + open to opportunities	Researching information	Learn about Bel + Sw. ed. systems
B3, B6, B9	Chair a meeting	Learn about Bel + Sw. ed. systems	Be open to explanations + input from others	Important in teaching group decisions	Negotiating skills
B3, B5, B7	"	Integrates curriculum + project	Invite contributions from others	Must pay attention to detail	Budget the money
B7, B8, B9	Budget the money	Recognise student pleasure	Record outcomes	Encouraging people to make valid points	Negotiating skills
B1, B5, B9	To use fax Email + Chatline	Integrates curriculum + project	Use our command of technology	Interpersonal skills	Negotiating skills
B2, B4, B9	To use I.T.	Plan + run events	Careful planning required	Skills can resolve difficulties in planning	"
B1, B4, B7	To use fax Email + Chatline	"	Maintain contacts with people so you know what is happening	Better controlled by an individual	Budget the money
B2, B6, B7	To use I.T.	Learn about Bel + Sw. ed. systems	Increase knowledge + understanding	Follow rules	"
B1, B6, B8	To use fax Email + Chatline	"	The one is a key to the other	Increased understanding of others	Recognise student pleasure

NOTE

If you use fewer than 9 items, you will not be able to follow all the groupings shown down the left-hand side. If your list contains more than 9 items, make sure that all of them are used. In either case, add your own groupings on the continuation sheet so that you get a good mixture of comparisons, and continue until you can't think of any more similarities and differences. It will be clear from Columns 1, 2 and 5 of your record what combinations you have used.

SET B: WHAT I HAVE LEARNED
CONTINUATION SHEET

1. Technological advances in communication.
- Lack of enthusiasm + interest in other nationalities from some ^{students} managing a project with our colleagues.
- Negotiating with colleagues
- Negotiating with colleagues abroad who come from a different base.
- Dealing with meaning + understanding in English as a foreign language.
- Learning about internet, chatting + mechanisms for accessing packages.
- Making presentations to groups of colleagues in college + inspectors.
- Gained confidence from all experiences
- I'm more assertive in college having seen how others work + realising I'm doing O.K.
- Copying with limited correspondence skills of students.
- Being organised so that visits + events happen as planned.
- Learning from working with others eg. Christine Middlebrook
- Handling a budget.
- Realising where my next training should come from.
- Understanding the requirements of a national body (Central Bureau) + meeting them.
- Different staff from diff. centres have varying work loads + that can create unrealistic expectations.
- Learning about different ed. systems.

Speakers of Foreign Languages

SET A: LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Items	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5
A1, A2, A3	Working with SoFL. A1	Time / distance frustrations. A3	Cultural / Geographic	IT - formal training A2	Use of 1st class & video conf A2
A2, A5, A8	Accreditation A5	L.O's A8	Technical to development of modules.	IT - technical to life in general A2	— " —
A3, A4, A8	Time / dist frustrations A3	Differences in working & learning A4	Cultural	Accreditation is a 'teaching thing' A8	Accreditation
A4, A5, A6	Working & learning methods. A4	Enjoyable conferences A5	Social.	L.O.s. A6	A method for expressing aims of learning
A3, A6, A9	Frustration of time & distance A3	Int. Mgmt styles A9	Communication & common understanding	Enjoyable social side A6	Flip side of the coin!
A3, A5, A7	— " — A3	Learning about colleagues in UK A7	A study in life !!!	Formality of ... →	Learning outcomes.
A7, A8, A9	Mgmt styles A9	— " — A7	Learning how people cope & their attitudes & knowledge.	Need to document thoroughly →	Accreditation
A1, A5, A9	Working with SoFL A1	Mgmt styles in 3 countries A9	Reflection of cultures being used IN	Imposed by strictly defined rules.	L.O.s. A5
A2, A4, A9	Diffs in wkg / learning methods. A4	— " — A9	Cultural issues.	Culture vs 'techno' learning.	Use of IT. A2
A1, A4, A7	Working with SoFL A1.	Diffs in working & learning. A4	'Foreign' issues !!	Internal dimension	Wky with own colleagues A7
A2, A6, A7	Use of IT A2	Transnat. conferences. A6	Pure experiences of external sort	Learning about "us"	— " — A7
A1, A6, A8	Working with SoFL A1	— " — A6	The international dimension	Technical stuff (but also internat.)	Accreditation A8

NOTE

If you use fewer than 9 items, you will not be able to follow all the groupings shown down the left-hand side. If your list contains more than 9 items, make sure that all of them are used. In either case, add your own groupings on the continuation sheet so that you get a good mixture of comparisons, and continue until you can't think of any more similarities and differences. It will be clear from Columns 1, 2 and 5 of your record what combinations you have used.

Repertory grid instructions

During this academic year and your involvement in transnational project work you will have learned a lot about other cultures and ways of working. You will have acquired knowledge, understanding, perhaps changed some of your attitudes, come across things you like or dislike. You may also feel that you yourself have changed in some way. Some of the learning will have been conscious and deliberate, some will just have occurred incidentally in the course of events, or as the result of something unplanned or unexpected happening.

During the interviews in the summer term, I shall be asking you mainly about WHAT you have learned. However, I am also interested in HOW you have learned. A lot of different things - people, places, events, situations, methods of working, communications - will have contributed to the experiences you have had in working on your project. For example, you are now familiar with working regularly with colleagues from at least one other country. Certain people may have played a significant role in helping you in the early stages of the project work, or a particular incident (such as your first transnational meeting) may have coloured your attitude to transnational project work, or the demands of practical arrangements, such as travel, may have detracted from your enjoyment of meetings abroad. Similarly, difficulties with communications may have left a lasting impression. Having contact with colleagues from other projects, or not, may have been important to you. And so on - your experience is unique to you, and only you can say what has been significant.

miss
K10:
no pos.
becom
its a
commo
occur

Here you will find a series of instructions for recording your experiences.

Introduction

To complement our discussion in the main interview, I should be most grateful if you would spend a little of your time carrying out the following exercises. They are designed to help you think about the learning experiences that have influenced whatever lasting impressions you will take forward, be they attitudes, feelings, skills, knowledge, insights or whatever. You will find it helpful to read through these notes a couple of times before starting the first exercise.

1

Think back over your period of involvement in your current transnational project and make some entirely private notes about anything from which you feel you learned something really significant. As indicated above, include whatever you feel is appropriate - it might be a person, an event, something you did often, your dealings with an institution, or whatever. Write down as many things as you can, without evaluation or comment, until you feel that you have adequate notes to begin a sketch of your 'learning during involvement in a transnational project'.

2 language - eg. won & tariff points; use of 1st class; video
learning about research; learning about learning/teaching - eg. L.O.s; learning
about accreditation; learning about mgmt styles; learning different ideas

Now look over the items you have noted and pick out what seem the most significant. Select the 9 most significant items and write each on a separate card, using the cards provided, marked A1 to A9. The cards are numbered to help you with the next stage.

3 learning about not taking
3 things as read, eg. underfunding colleagues; eg. Ellen, TB; enjoyableness of trans
national
work.

Next, I would like you to think about the differences and similarities between these items, as learning experiences, using the following procedure:

Procedure

Take 3 cards and think of a way in which 2 of the items are similar, yet different from a 3rd. There is no right or wrong way to group the items, but try to compare them as learning experiences. Take 3 possible items, for example.

Monitoring a budget
Using email
Social event with European partners

X finding amazing differences in
work/learning methodologies!
X Trustat.
at dist.
and time

You might decide to group them as 'Monitoring a budget and Using email' (associated with formal learning) versus 'Social event with European partners' (informal learning). Or you might group them as 'Using email and Social event with European partners' (communication with colleagues from other cultures) versus 'Monitoring a budget' (communication with colleagues from the same culture and the same organisation). If you think about the items deeply the comparisons you make will say something about what sort of learning has been important to you during your project.

4

You now have up to 9 items numbered A1 to A9. I would now like you to compare sets of 3 items in the order specified down the left-hand side of the enclosed sheet entitled SET A: LEARNING EXPERIENCES. On each line against the appropriate set of 3 numbers, write in

- the 2 similar items in Columns 1 and 2
- the way in which they are similar in Column 3
- the contrast with the 3rd item in Column 4
- the 3rd item in Column 5

Here is an example:

Items	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5
A1, A2, A3	Monitoring a budget	Using email	Formal learning	Informal learning	Social event with European partners
A2, A5, A8	Using email	Organising travel arrangements for the team	Made me feel frustrated	Made me feel competent	Giving a presentation on the English vocational training system

5

For each set of 3 items, think of a similarity, and difference, which you haven't used before. In other words, do not repeat any of the words or phrases you enter in Columns 3 and 4 as you work down the list.

Steps 1 - 5 should take you about 40 - 45 minutes. If you cannot think of 9 items or nine comparisons, don't worry, just do as many as you can (using the continuation sheet). If you want to include more items or comparisons, or both, then please do so, making sure you provide a clear record.

Now I would like you to repeat the exercise (steps 1 - 5), but this time, think of WHAT you have learned rather than HOW. As before, start by making a list. It is likely to be quite varied - it might include things about society in other countries, working practices in other countries, people and their way of life, from day-to-day things like office routine to more general matters such as political and economic affairs - things you have learned throughout your involvement in your current transnational project. You might feel that you have learned things about yourself, having taken on a different role and responsibilities for a sustained period. You might have learned something about England and the English way of life.

You may find a degree of overlap between this and the first exercise. Again, don't worry, just think carefully at each step and note what seems to reflect your experience during your project.

Record the results on the second enclosed sheet entitled SET B: WHAT I HAVE LEARNED, and use the cards marked B1 to B9 for the set of 9 most significant things you have learned. As before, remember that there is nothing special about the number 9. You may decide to work with a smaller or a larger number.

- Accreditation is a complex issue!
- People in other countries learn in different ways!
- The importance of clear, comp. instructions (eg finance)
- Building modules isn't simple!
- More TACT! (?)
- Value of taking fresh inputs.
- how to use 1st class
- how int. a lev

Thank you for your help. I hope you have found the exercise worthwhile and enjoyable. Please keep all your notes and cards in a safe place and bring them with you (even if they are not complete) when we meet for both your preliminary and your main interview for this research study.

SET B: WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

Items	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5
B1, B2, B3	More in common with Swedes than Dutch.	Diff. perceptions of 'being busy/stress'.	Cultural perceptions (mine)	Academic understanding	I understand more about mgmt theory
B2, B5, B8	"	Foreign (Dutch) Acs were more supportive.	Cultural perceptions (mine + theirs)	Personal realisation	I appreciate being at home
B3, B4, B8	I understand more about mgmt theory	I understand more about my colleagues' roles	Professional Development	Personal realisation	"
B4, B5, B6	Dutch Acs Foreign Acs gave more support	Dutch Acs had a good attitude	Cultural perception.	My institutional professional development	I understand more about colleagues' roles
B3, B6, B9	Acs attitude.	Colleagues' perceptions of jaunts.	Colleagues' perceptions + attitudes.	My professional development.	I understand more about mgmt theory.
B3, B5, B7	Acs support for foreign partners.	Dutch are good at enjoying themselves.	Cultural perceptions	"	"
B7, B8, B9	Colleagues' perceptions of jaunts.	I appreciate being at home	One disproves the other' Attitudes.	Cultural perception	The Dutch are good at enjoying themselves.
B1, B5, B9	Acs support	Perceptions of 'stress'	Partners' perceptions	UK opinions of jaunts	"
B2, B4, B9	UK colleagues opinions of jaunts.	Roles of colleagues clearer to me	Greater understanding of my own institutional.	Cultural perception	Academically English have more in common with Swedes.
B1, B4, B7	Dutch are good at enjoying themselves.	Different perceptions of stress.	Cultural perceptions.	My professional development	Roles of colleagues clearer to me
B2, B6, B7	"	Attitude of Dutch Acs	Cultural perception	Academic understanding	Academically more in common with Swedes
B1, B6, B8	Perceptions of stress.	Acs attitudes.	Cultural perception	Personal realisation	I appreciate being at home.

NOTE
 If you use fewer than 9 items, you will not be able to follow all the groupings shown down the left-hand side. If your list contains more than 9 items, make sure that all of them are used. In either case, add your own groupings on the continuation sheet so that you get a good mixture of comparisons, and continue until you can't think of any more similarities and differences. It will be clear from Columns 1, 2 and 5 of your record what combinations you have used.

SET A: LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Items	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5
A1, A2, A3	Local The individual	Local Attitude to work	Made me feel nostalgic	Slight envy of standard of living	Local standard of living
A2, A5, A8	Standard of living	Local environment	Made me want to change jobs	Made me want to move countries	Feeling of space
A3, A4, A8	In Haarlem real learning	Attitude to work	Could see that development had taken place	Wonder if the standard was there there anyway	Local environment
A4, A5, A6	Feeling of space	Genuine hospitality	Saw an obvious pride in their country	Are they able to take the best from anywhere	Local learning
A3, A6, A9	Attitude to work	Value of education	I saw the way things could be	I saw the way things are	Genuine hospitality
A3, A5, A7	England as leader Attitude to work	England as leader	Perhaps this is why there was a feeling of pride	England Is this why things don't change	Feeling of space
A7, A8, A9	England as leader Local environment	Educational valued	The real worth was obvious	is it worth it? in England	England as leader
A1, A5, A9	Educational valued	The individual	Genuine respect	Distance makes anything possible	Feeling of space
A2, A4, A9	In Haarlem real learning	Educational valued	The goal is worth the effort	is the effort worth the goal	Standard of living
A1, A4, A7	England as leader	In Haarlem real learning	Don't reinvent the wheel	Perhaps is it worth re-inventing	The individual
A2, A6, A7	Overall standard of living	England as leader Genuine hospitality	Perhaps sometimes is given to living	How time given to work	England as leader
A1, A6, A8	Local environment	Genuine hospitality	Pride in nationality	Interest in self	The individual

NOTE
 If you use fewer than 9 items, you will not be able to follow all the groupings shown down the left-hand side. If your list contains more than 9 items, make sure that all of them are used. In either case, add your own groupings on the continuation sheet so that you get a good mixture of comparisons, and continue until you can't think of any more similarities and differences. It will be clear from Columns 1, 2 and 5 of your record what combinations you have used.

SET B: WHAT I HAVE LEARNED

Items	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5
B1, B2, B3	interactions	Speak more precisely	Confidence	Wider range	Self Sufficiency
B2, B5, B8	Speak English	Interact ^y	Similarities in cultures	Differences Culture	Central Govt
B3, B4, B8	Self Sufficiency	Speak English backtrack Present ^y	Insularity	Openness	Present^y Present ^y
B4, B5, B6	Electronic Common ^y	Present ^y	The next millennium	The last millennium	Central Govt
B3, B6, B9	Self Sufficiency	180° backtrack	One-to-one interact ^y	Country to country interact ^y	Electronic Common ^y
B3, B5, B7	Manag ^t devel ^t	Self sufficiency	Personal effective uses	Personal ineffective uses	Central Govt
B7, B8, B9	Speak English	180° backtrack	Europe is shrinking	But not in every aspect	Manag ^t devel ^t
B1, B5, B9	180° backtrack	Speak more precisely	Effective common ^y	Ineffective common^y common ^y	Central Govt
B2, B4, B9	Present ^y	Interact ^y	Making the message count	Relaxed interact ^y	180° backtrack
B1, B4, B7	Speak more precisely	Present ^y	No room for ambiguity	Ambiguity often happens	Manag ^t devel ^t
B2, B6, B7	Interact ^y	Electronic Common ^y	2 Social interact ^y net needed	Social interact ^y a deliberate requirement	Manag ^t develop ^t
B1, B6, B8	Electronic Common ^y	Speak more precisely	Unusual medium	More & more common as the medium	Speak English

NOTE

If you use fewer than 9 items, you will not be able to follow all the groupings shown down the left-hand side. If your list contains more than 9 items, make sure that all of them are used. In either case, add your own groupings on the continuation sheet so that you get a good mixture of comparisons, and continue until you can't think of any more similarities and differences. It will be clear from Columns 1, 2 and 5 of your record what combinations you have used.

How to analyse?

Pilot - RITA. (10)

Received 25.4.97
 No opportunity to discuss.

SET A: LEARNING EXPERIENCES

Items	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5
A1, A2, A3	#2 working with finance in college	Discussing finance with partners A3	complex, difficult to understand	Very enjoyable	A1 using transport
A2, A5, A8	working with finance in college #2	Family organisation while away A8	complicated & hard work	good fun	Social events
A3, A4, A8	Discussing finance with partners A3	" A8	requires careful analysis & understanding	new experience	using international fax/phone
A4, A5, A6	Social events #5	Transnat. meetings A6	Frustrating at times - requires patience	Frustrating at times - perseverance needed	"
A3, A6, A9					
A3, A5, A7	Discussing finance with partners	College Project Manager	increased awareness of broader issues	tiring	Social events
A7, A8, A9					
A1, A5, A9					
A2, A4, A9					
A1, A4, A7	Using transport A1	Project Manager (college) A7	annoying at times	efficient + rewarding occasionally	using international fax/phone
A2, A6, A7	A7 working with college finance	" A4	team work	Chaotic, tense at times	Transnat. meetings
A1, A6, A8	Transnat meetings	family organisation while away	- a diplomatic approach sometimes needed	useful	using transport

NOTE
 If you use fewer than 9 items, you will not be able to follow all the groupings shown down the left-hand side. If your list contains more than 9 items, make sure that all of them are used. In either case, add you own groupings on the continuation sheet so that you get a good mixture of comparisons, and continue until you can't think of any more similarities and differences. It will be clear from Columns 1, 2 and 5 of your record what combinations you have used.

SET A: LEARNING EXPERIENCES

What I have learned

Items	Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4	Column 5
B1, B2, B3	Complexity of financial records B2	increased awareness of financial constraints of partners B3	Complex to understand	promoted a greater wish to travel	Ease of B1 travel internationally
B2, B5, B8	A sense of humour is important B5	the family can cope well without me B8	important to cope with difficult situations	annoying	Complexity of financial records.
B3, B4, B8	Ease of communication B4	" B8	A relief	interesting	increased awareness of financial constraints of partner. B3
B4, B5, B6	A sense of humour is important	Transnational meetings have increased awareness of other cultures	increased confidence through good working relationships	surprising	Ease of communication.
B3, B6, B9					
B3, B5, B7	A sense of humour is important.	Complex nature of paperwork	frustrating	dopressing	increased awareness of financial constraints of partner.
B7, B8, B9					
B1, B5, B9					
B2, B4, B9					
B1, B4, B7	Ease of travel	Ease of communication	satisfying	stressful	Complex nature of paperwork
B2, B6, B7	Complexity of financial records	Complex nature of paperwork	difficult	greater understanding of economic issues	increased awareness of financial constraints of partner.
B1, B6, B8	Ease of travel internationally	The family can cope very well without me.	enjoyable	increased confidence	transnational meetings have increased awareness of other cultures

NOTE

If you use fewer than 9 items, you will not be able to follow all the groupings shown down the left-hand side. If your list contains more than 9 items, make sure that all of them are used. In either case, add your own groupings on the continuation sheet so that you get a good mixture of comparisons, and continue until you can't think of any more similarities and differences. It will be clear from Columns 1, 2 and 5 of your record what combinations you have used.

SET B: WHAT I HAVE LEARNED
CONTINUATION SHEET

Appendix 8

Interview transcripts - sample

11 August - Interview with Candidate No. 1

Betty

- A Thank you very much for participating in the project and participating in the research, I know how busy we all are. Have you done the repertory grid exercise?
- B Yes.
- A How did you find it?
- B Quite testing. Yes, I could see where it was leading to and I think from those other things that I have put down and the grid I have completed there will perhaps be a lot of things you can pull out of it.
- A That would be very helpful.
- B Quite difficult at times trying to differentiate between the two things and not repeating myself on the basis of the differentiation. Yes, I think I also learned something from it, you know, by having to ask myself questions which I haven't perhaps asked in that way before.
- A Is there anything in particular that you think stood out when you completed that and you thought "Ooh! I wouldn't have thought of that"?
- B Yes, there was, but I can't think where it is at the moment. So much depended on what you actually chose for your numbers and how they fed against each other.
- A That's an interesting comment.
- B Mmm, There were other things but I would have to really study it and it would take a bit of time.
- A We will probably be talking about
- B Yes. Perhaps one was here, in set A, 'learning experiences'. I'd got "negotiating with a busy Nusquam colleague" "learning about modern means of communication", I had to pull out what was common to those. And I came up with frustration, because I can't do either properly OK and that was set against 'learning about the versatility of the computer'. And I'd sort of identified that as part of a start of a continuous learning process which is fairly obvious but when you actually have to write it down, it does make it stand out a little bit.
- A It does, doesn't it. You've filled in your cards, would you like to pick out a couple of cards which are particularly significant for you, and tell me a bit more about them.

B OK. A1. "One of the things I find about" ... this is 'how I learned', isn't it?

A Mmm.

B "... from negotiating with colleagues from abroad who come from a different base". I found that sort of challenging all the way along and still do find it challenging because you can make comments, you can make statements, you can appear as if you all have an agreement, but then if you don't have a full understanding of the base and the background of where the other people have come from, which in many ways is quite different, you can end up with different outcomes.

A Yes, I would agree with that entirely.

B And that's an on-going continuous process. It's not just the language either, it's ... the sort of different environment in which in all its connotations, in which we operate and it takes quite a lot of working at to make sure you're all talking the same with the same understanding.

A Yes. Go on, is there another one

B I mean, for me, the other big thing is that I have really had to get to grips well I still haven't, but I've had to start to get to grips with technology.

A Right, go on.

B It's something I haven't had to do before, it's something which you're aware you need to do to keep abreast of current sources of information.

A What kind of things are you talking about specifically here, having to do?

B Perhaps things in general, being just generally more confident in trying things, remembering things, and being aware of what a computer can do, and how to access different packages, programmes of the computer. So it's all been mixed in not only with the means of communication that we've used, where you've had to be very conversant with the computer, but also supporting the students in using the computer within a learning resource centre to get work ... to get information from whatever packages we've got available. And then a spin-off from that would be my being more confident at doing that so perhaps I could handle our MIS [Management Information System] system with more confidence, you know. Because if you don't use the computer very frequently you forget and it just becomes a hassle every time you want to use it. We don't have access to our own personal computer in college. Next year we've got a new staffroom, two new staffrooms, and each of those will have a computer where I can have my own personal account or whatever. So hopefully [sic] I will use it more and perhaps

actually can link in some of the emailing and some of the other facilities from the project into the into my own staffroom. Because that's been another

A That should be possible.

B Because that's another thing which has been very frustrating about the project, the fact that it's been very difficult to get hands-on machines that we and the students can use.

A Yes, those of the sort of things when you are writing a project application sound fine, and you know there are masses of machines, computers in the college, and you think well it must be easy to gain access to them, but of course it's not.

B No. And if you don't do it regularly it doesn't become part of your regular life and then it becomes a bigger issue and a hassle.

A It's like any skill, like driving or reading or speaking a language or whatever, if you don't do it often enough it goes rusty.

B Yes. So I have had to do that and I certainly learned a lot from that. Oh, and the other thing as well, actually integrating that knowledge of what you can use the computer for, actually into the everyday curriculum, we really have done that a lot and that I think it has been very successful. As A9, I put "be more confident and assertive in my work dealings" and I suppose that's because of the confidence gained with sort of dealing transnationally and doing things I've not done much before. Yes, I've run team meetings for the teams on my own course, but to actually handle that with three nationalities in a foreign environment, I found challenging but I think I've dealt with it OK. And certainly, Sonia, my AD [assistant director - line manager], said to me quite out of the blue a month or two ago, "haven't you come a long way, Betty, in the past two or three years?!". So you know I think that fits it, ties in with that.

A I'm sure it does. Why have you picked these experiences in particular to talk about, do you think? What is particularly significant about these for you?

B Perhaps because of the impact I feel they've had on my work and work practice over and above anything else.

A Can you describe the impact ... in terms of what the project forced you to do, enabled you to do?

B I think it's given me a buzz at a time when things have been difficult career-wise, work-wise within FE [further education]. I haven't wanted to apply for promotion, because I didn't feel that was what I wanted, but this has given me the extension and the buzz to maintain an interest across the whole of my professional practice which I might not have got if it wasn't there.

- A That's exactly what I see as one of the implicit aims of these projects. I do now. It would never have occurred to me six years ago, but now, having seen what happens to people, how people react in these projects, not only in this country but in other countries too, it's one of the things that you can almost say will happen.
- B Yes, I'm sure. I mean it may to some extent have happened with the fact that I took on board setting up new courses, but I think the two actually, in terms of time, have come hand-in-hand and perhaps the one has enhanced the other as well.
- A That's interesting. Can I have a little look through your Rep. Grid sheets, not so much your cards, the sheets
- B Can you read my writing I did sort of 'concertina' what I'd put. The cards are a bit more
- A It seems to me, just from what you have been saying already, that there's a paradox there in the way that you're describing your learning experiences in the project. That on the one hand it's been a very frustrating experience to date, but on the other hand, it's also been a very worthwhile and rewarding experience.
- B Yes.
- A Is that a fair description?
- B Yes. And some of the frustrations, they have been there but they've not overshadowed the ... the buzz and the sense of achievement, not only for myself but the other staff and definitely the students, and perhaps in some ways we've had these problems and there have been challenges to overcome, and by having to overcome them it's actually taken me into contact with more and different people. To have come into contact and worked more closely with people like Andrew Jackson in the Library, Emma Hodge in the Library at Allsworth, Eric Stevens. I've had to discuss things more closely with yourself, with Marina Waters and what's the name of the (don't repeat this!) the name of the Assistant Principal in charge of IT John Purdue. Yes, you know? So it's actually made me have to go out and about in college and across the airways to Sweden and Belgium to see how we could resolve the problems.
- A It's interesting just looking again at these Rep. Grid sheets, there are a lot of things in here that seem to me to be to do with building confidence
- B Yes.
- A ... in areas that you might not have otherwise tackled.
- B Yes.

- A If we'd been talking about a national project, would there have been differences do you think, if your partners had been say in Milton Keynes and Bradford?
- B Having not having done a project like that that's difficult to comment. I can only speak on the basis of the kinds of links, the informal links I have with other people in other college. For example, like the consortium of staff delivering the pre-vocation foundation course for Open College is one scenario. And the other potential scenario is buddying up with Blandbury College to support each other in delivering Skillpower. You would have been addressing different issues. I would have thought perhaps this is difficult more practical day-to-day delivery issues. You wouldn't have had the in-depth discussion of to try to understand where those people were at, and why they were doing what they were doing and how it fitted into their system, because I know each college is different, but there is an overall national approach and national approach to systems, and I think they would have been there. Whereas we have spent a lot of time trying to understand each other's position and where we're coming from and why were thinking and working as we do.
- A In the different countries?
- B In the different countries.
- A It just crossed my mind then, do you think, if you are working with say people from Blandbury, that there might be some merit in having that kind of in-depth discussion? Do you think you are missing out on something by not doing that?
- B We could well do, yes.
- A I don't know, it was just as you were talking that I was thinking, if you don't have those sorts of in-depth discussions with colleagues who may just be working down the road, there are then implicit assumptions that you're working within the same framework
- B I think no, I'm not sure that that is a real no. I think that's not necessarily the relevant issue. I think because we come together for different reasons. We come together to support each other, whereas and to perhaps sound ideas off each other and perhaps Blandbury might describe how they're doing something and I might say "oh, that's a good idea to incorporate into my practice". I think across transnationally we are trying to set something up together, so I think the reasons for coming together are slightly different.
- A I'm interested in that as well, because a couple of other colleagues who have made a rough comparison between a transnational project and a UK project ... in particular the type of projects promoted by the FEDA network, and they brought out the element of competition between UK colleges

- B Well, yes I mean certainly that could possibly be between us and Blandbury, highlighted by the fact that this last week a student applied for Skillpower here, they'd put down to have an interview with me but it had been arranged while I was on holiday, and they are actually a Blandbury College student who don't want to do a Skillpower at Blandbury even though they have been offered it.
- A Goodness.
- B For various reasons. So, yes, that can be a problem. If it was Milton Keynes, it would be different.
- A Yes, because there is the element of distance.
- B Yes.
- A Do you think there is,..... do you think distance is a significant factor in your project? Does it make a difference?
- B You mean as opposed to doing a project with somebody else elsewhere
- A Yes, like Blandbury
- B I don't know whether you can make a comparison there because the point of the distance with us is the transnational bit, isn't it? And we are an island, so inevitably to get the transnational bit we are going to have distance involved. That might be an interesting question to ask somebody who lives in Germany and is on the borders of France and Luxembourg or somewhere else.
- A Yes, indeed. I hadn't thought of that. Because a transnational project could actually be taking place in a very small triangle somewhere on the European continent, couldn't it?
- B Yes.
- A Mmm. I think I'll have to leave that for somebody else.
- B That's the Geographer coming out in me!
- A I shall have to leave that as somebody else's question! I'll leave that as one of the questions at the end of the thesis, you know, 'further research is required on the point of
- !' Meetings with just your UK colleagues, and meetings that you've had with the transnational partners, have there been differences there, that you can think of, say an example of a meeting with the team in the UK and an example with everybody together, are there any differences?

B Inevitably the meetings with my own colleagues are more relaxed, because we know each other better. Possibly you could say that there might be more challenges within that, in terms of professional rivalry, perhaps a bit of scoring, coming up with ideas, doing things, presenting things which might be seen to be better than say da-da-da-da-da. I haven't had that feeling with them in the meetings with the Belgians and the Swedish people altogether. I have actually said somewhere, either in here [log] or the cards, that I have felt no, it was where I changed the report, I think [external project report to sponsors] I have felt that everybody played to their strengths, and that

A In the transnational group?

B In the transnational and that we actually played to our strengths and what's come out has been an agreed project, which has been inputted by everybody but not in equal parts all the way through. I think I and Nusquam College have kept the whole thing going, have kept the momentum, have maintained the pressure to keep the timetable going. I think the Belgians have been far more instrumental in working at getting the IT systems going, they may not have actually resolved the problems for themselves, but they've kept the ball rolling and kept at it. And I think the Swedish people have maintained difficult to say this without sounding patronising a 'giving' on a very very nice personal level. They've sussed out the interests and habits and things of the people, perhaps in the exchange of presents have been very perceptive as to other people's interests, have shown a great deal of enthusiasm - not that the others haven't, but they have really sort of shown it. And have often said, "Oh, that's interesting, I must do that" and they have listened and taken on board and have produced I mean the booklet they produced as to what happened on their European Day was much nicer than anybody else's because

A It was very creative, wasn't it?

B Yes, it was, because they sort of listened and taken on board what it was possible to do and then put it into And it was just the sheer sort of pleasure and joy of doing it, I felt, with them, whereas I sometimes felt with some of my colleagues, that it was scoring points, "and at this point Betty just licked her finger and did a "one" in the air"!

A Yes, yes I mean that's a very interesting point. Do you think that's got something to do with the working environment in which we operate and the one that they're operating in in Sweden?

B Could be. It is more competitive, yes. We are more compet..... I think also it has come at a time when people are aware that their jobs are not as secure as they used to be and that other staff have been scored and rated by their ADs according to how competent they are, so we must try to maintain the highest levels of competence at all times and show and prove that this is happening.

- A Well that must have an impact in all kinds of ways that people may not even be conscious of at times.
- B Oh,..... yes.
- A Whereas in Sweden that process hasn't quite got there yet.
- B No. And in Belgium I think there is such a lot of job security there that that isn't an issue either, there isn't the competitiveness to be they've sort of got their job for life.
- A There's always the issue of the moment in time, isn't there? The sort of snapshot, and I often think what would this have been like if we'd had this conversation five years ago, or three years from now it would undoubtedly be different, but at the moment
- B And always sort of not a total sharing of ideas at this end
- A The UK end?
- B Yes. Perhaps it's because people couldn't commit themselves to actually giving time to meetings and were only giving half-hearted thought processes in the meetings. So even though I did want, and asked for, a common approach, it wasn't taken on board and it wasn't what was wanted.
- A Do you feel that's part of the frustration, your frustration within the project?
- B A little bit, yes. Because it would have been nice I mean, Ida came up with some lovely resources and it would have been nice if she could have said where she'd got them from and shared them. And then the resources that we came up with which equally were good and were the ones that the [FEFC] inspectors commented on, she wasn't interested in using at all, or even trying to adapt her circumstances.
- A Mmm. That's a shame, although I've come across that before with colleagues here in the UK, it seems to be a 'wanting to safeguard' things that you've created yourself, a 'that's mine'.
- B That's right, yes.
- A An automatic disparagement of something that somebody else has created, as being "well, I didn't do it so it can't possibly be as good".
- B Yes. "So I won't use it". It doesn't have to be anything ... like "I'm not bothered".

- A Yes, which is well, very difficult to understand in these days when time is so short and we're all pressed for ideas.
- B Absolutely. I mean if she had wanted to take that on board there were four or five or six plus lesson plans there.
- A Well, never mind, you can only make the offer can't you?
- B You can.
- A Forget the project work itself for the moment and think instead about the important aspect of the project, the socialising when you've been to Sweden and to Belgium or indeed when the Swedish or Belgian staff have come here. What do you feel are the significant factors about a European project, the things that have happened through this project that would never have happened if you'd just been working with folks in Blandbury or whatever.
- B Significant European things
- A Mmm.. I know I'm talking to a Geographer here
- B Yes, I know! Inevitably, just the sheer fact of travelling to another country, but not just of visiting and looking at the country, feeling as if you are part of a small bit in that country.
- A What does it take to reach that level? Because you've never been there for very long have you?
- B No, but I suppose constant and regular contact makes you all much more relaxed with each other, so that you're confident in what you're doing, you understand what the other person's doing, what their strengths and what their weaknesses and what their difficulties at work are. I mean the last time we went to Sweden they allowed me just to wander round the school and knock on and go in any classroom, because I think also they were confident in me, that I was there to be interested, to look and see what I could learn, realising that it was different from England, not better not worse, but just different and there was value in finding that out for the difference's sake.
- A That's a point that I haven't heard anybody else make yet, the fact that you can be almost a non-critical observer of what's going on. You're not there as an inspector or a monitor or an evaluator or a senior member of staff or whatever, you're just
- B No. And you're constantly being able to say "oh, we don't do it like that - we're different". Whereas if perhaps if that was somewhere in England, there would be an instant thing to think "well, is it better or is it worse?" and by just saying

“it’s different”, people could feel challenged by that. But transnationally I don’t think the other people feel challenged by that. I have, I must admit, felt more comfortable with the Swedish people, they are more relaxed. Both in Belgium and Sweden they have made me feel very very welcome but perhaps partly with the time I’ve had with the Swedish people, I have got to know them a little bit better. We also have spent some leisure time together, I have been walking with Björn and Martina, you know, when they’ve had a free day here I have said to them what would they like to do, they’ve said they’d like to walk, and that happens to be my hobby and so we’ve enjoyed really good experiences together and I have actually been invited to go and stay to have a holiday in Sweden. I’m just wondering when we go at February half-term, whether I could extend it to a week

A Why not? It would be wonderful, Sweden in February.

B Well, yes, I wonder if I could do that. The Belgian people have made us extremely welcome, in fact perhaps in many ways at the moment it’s going a bit overboard! Because to start with they made us very very welcome but the day finished at five o’clock but because the Swedish people don’t and we sometimes haven’t, now they feel they have to entertain us until nine or ten o’clock at night, and it suddenly has become very tiring. But they have thought about things we’d be interested in. Peeter, the Head, is a little bit more ‘correct’. The whole system in Belgium is a bit more correct. The staff even haven’t even got the amount of freedom to walk round their own school as we have. There are times when Lieven and Jos say “you can’t email us then or have a chat-line then because I don’t have the key and I can’t get into the computer room”. So their whole school system is not as free and easy.

A No, sounds quite rigid.

B Yes. Peeter has relaxed a tiny bit. Lieven the school administrator, we see more of him, and he has become more relaxed.

A Do you think it’s a case of getting to know you more, or to trust you more, or is it that Peeter feels he has got to keep a distance because he is the Head?

B I don’t know. I think it’s just the different way they are, because there’s a lot of trust. There’s tremendous enthusiasm. I know a lot of the I’m sure the enthusiasm from Peeter is genuine, in terms of the benefits of the students, but it comes also an awful lot more from him as to how it’s for the benefit of the school and the publicity it can get for the school and he really goes hammer and tongs at things to make sure that it gets on the television, it gets in the newspapers, it gets on the governors, it gets to all the other schools in Belgium. And that is more obviously paramount with him than it is with the other staff. I think another thing which has perhaps been a little bit of a barrier has been that the Belgians have

taken their wives with them more, that does make it a little bit of a difficulty in getting to them.

A Tell me a bit more about that.

B Because there is yet another agenda there. There are people there who are not involved with the project.

A Right, so you can't talk about project things to them?

B Perhaps you feel a bit uncertain about doing that. And also that Lieven and Jos are then sort of slightly with divided loyalties when their wives are there
.....

End of Tape 1

Tape 2

A it's difficult to know whether it's the person or the circumstances.....

B It may just be a combination of both, the fact that those people are happy to work in those circumstances, but they suit their circumstances, they're happy there, it might drive them having got used to the way we can work in Nusquam College it would probably drive us mad to work in that kind of constrained environment.

A And it never occurs to me for example, just going back to the point you raised about the Belgians taking their wives along, it never occurs to me to involve Mike [interviewer's husband] in any of the project activities I am involved in, very very rarely do I invite him along. Precisely for the reason you said, because of the issue of divided loyalties, I feel I can't give him my attention and on the other hand the project people are only there for a short space of time, so I really do want to spend time with them.

B Yes. And even with the leisure time, I mean they've never ever come into meetings [the Belgian wives], they've never intruded there, but it can affect the leisure time.

A Why do you think the leisure time is important?

B Because people are more relaxed and because through the general conversation about how people's lives are run, their leisure interests, the way they run their homes and their families is an insight into how they think as people and it's very interesting.

A You've almost answered a question I've got written down here which was to say, what do you talk about when you're not talking about project issues, what kind of topics of conversation are there.

- B Everything and anything! We discuss opinions, we have differences of opinion. To some extent it's within the constraints of the fact that they're speaking a different language to their native language. It's asking questions about different customs and ways of the country. But yes, and then you suddenly find you have common interests, like Martina is very very interested in nature. She goes out into the woods collecting food for free. That's something I'm interested in. She goes out mushrooming and any other berry foods, and I find that very very interesting and so we've instantly got a common point there.
- A Does that make it easier for you to work together?
- B Yes. Yes.
- A And particularly on a project like this where most of the time you're at a distance and you don't have very many meetings.
- B No, but because we've had quite a lot of meetings now, it must be coming up to ten or twelve times we've actually met together.
- A Mmm I suppose you will have done, won't you?
- B Well no, perhaps not that many, certainly nine or ten, because I've been to Sweden now five times.
- A Right, in the space of
- B Three times to the school.
- A About eighteen months isn't it?
- B Perhaps a bit longer if you think of the first time we went with Ruth Ardron. And then the times we've met here and in Belgium.
- A It does build up quite.....
- B Yes. Now I haven't found the same topics of interest quite with the Belgium people and perhaps that is like a little stumbling block.
- A Again, as you say, that's down to the individuals isn't it.
- B Yes, and the way they smoke, I'm not sure they'd have the puff to do some of the things we do!
- A That's an interesting one. When you are talking to them, do you compare things?

- B When I'm talking to?
- A When you are talking to your project colleagues, Jos and Martina and so on, do you compare things in the different countries or the different cultures?
- B To what aim? To compare
- A Just as part of your general conversation, do you compare house prices or?
- B Oh yes, salaries, income tax, cost of living, cost of housing. Yes. We also discuss the law, rules, regulations, driving, employment law, equal opportunities - oh, yes, they would come out in general conversation, yes.
- A Is there anything that's come out in those conversations that's made you think in a different way about any aspect of your everyday life?
- B That's a big question, isn't it?
- A It is a big question.
- B I'll have to come back to that one, I think. In fact, I've almost forgotten what the question was, go on, ask it me again.
- A When you have been talking to them and you've discussed and you've compared things in different countries and you've had the opportunity to go to Sweden and to go to Belgium perhaps and observe things for yourself. Is there anything there that has made you think in a different way about something that you do, or something that you like to do? I'll give you an example, somebody else that I've interviewed for the research project said that when she came back from Sweden she started sorting her glass and paper out and taking it down to the bottle bank and paper bank and she'd never done that before. And it was talking to one of the Swedish colleagues and actually going with them in fact to the bottle bank in Sweden that made her think, "gosh, I really ought to do that" and they had quite a profound discussion about the environment.
- B No, I already do that.
- A I'm sure you do. Is there anything else where it just brought you up short and you thought "Ooh!"
- B One thing not quite like that, no. I don't think not that I can think of at this point in time. I very much sort of respect the Swedish people's response to the weather and how they cope with whatever the weather throws at them. And the way they just like going out into the countryside and just being in the countryside, how relaxing that must be. And I it's not quite answering your question, is it?

- A It's an interesting point in itself. Do you think that's because the countryside is a bit more accessible where they are?
- B Yes. And even though it must cost them quite a bit, relatively. I mean they all have summer houses and I just think sort of a little bit more awareness of nature, I mean, yes, the countryside is more accessible, it isn't as heavily populated a country it's much more on their doorstep. But perhaps it's just the people I've talked to, I just feel there's a much more affinity with the weather and the changing seasons. Let's face it, there have much more there are far more extreme differences than ours but somehow they have sort of they feel relaxed and I think that would be good for a lot of people in England to take on board.
- A That sounds like a sort of cry from the heart. You spend a lot of time in the countryside, don't you?
- B Yes, and I set aside time for that because that is my relaxation and that is the time when I switch off, and then I can start up again and cope. And I've just been thinking I mean, this weekend, I just did that also in the garden, because Lieven [son] and I went walking yesterday. But I've actually had a very interesting holiday, I've had three weeks in America, and it was a fly/drive with a friend and we did 2,500 miles in three weeks, which is not a lot for America, it's not a lot for that kind of holiday, but it didn't give me time to sit and get to one with the countryside. I also went with somebody, I mean I hauled her back from what she wanted to do, I don't know if she realises this because she ended up tired as well but I insisted on having four days, four nights in Yosemite, and she said "why can't we just have two nights there and then go on to Lake Tahoe" and I was saying, "no, we need time just to sort of settle". And I suppose I haven't had the time this summer when I've just 'settled', because even when I've done the walking holidays in the past I've gone somewhere for a week, or I've gone somewhere for a fortnight and I like that.
- A And really got to know the surroundings.
- B The little ins and outs, the little nooks and crannies, yes. And I think that is one of the ways they [the Swedes] switch off. I'm not sure about the Belgians, they're just not in school! I can't get hold of them! There's more happening around them, they tend to drive a bit more, they go off to London or Paris, you know, and I'm not sure exactly how they spend their holidays. I think they go to the coast a bit. But it's not a part of their way of life that has come out so far, as it is with the Swedish people.
- A It is a fairly different thing with the Swedish, that affinity with nature.

- B Yes. Sorry, I can't think of anything else that I've come back and really sort of changed my ways, no. I don't go a bundle on Belgian chocolates, I think they're a bit of a disappointment!
- A Do you know, I'm inclined to agree with you, I think Marks and Spencers do a pretty good chocolate, the ones over there are no great shakes.
- B And if you want a Belgian chocolate - Aldi is 99p for quite a big box!
- A Oh, well, there we are then.
- B Absolutely.
- A You learn these things too, don't you?!
- B Yes yes.
- A You mentioned that one of the things you thought might hold them back in discussion was the fact that they were operating in a language which isn't their own language. How do you feel about the fact that the project is run in English?
- B Humiliated, humbled not perhaps humiliated, that's a big strong. Humbled, that they can operate very effectively in another language and that they can jump from their native language to English in the middle of a conversation.
- A Because these are not linguists that we are talking about, in the sense that they are specialists in their own field
- B They're not, no. I feel, yes, and also they are among the few in the their school who wanted to be involved in the project. When we decide to open up the project a little bit more and look at involving more vocationally-orientated staff it may be that that might not come about as much, because the people in the vocational areas which we've identified haven't got the confidence in using English. They may not have the confidence to come.
- A That would be a pity, wouldn't it?
- B Yes.
- A Well, we'll have to try and think of a way
- B And every time I've come away I've sort of thought "I must learn a bit more of the language" and it's the time and if you don't use it you forget things so quickly.

- A And to reach a level where you can actually operate in a language takes more than just taking a few tapes home.
- B Yes, it does. But having said that, it would be good to do a bit more. But perhaps if I do this language and culture option I might say, well, I've got to do a bit more there to help my students, so if they could use the chat-line with the other students they can at least say a few words in their language.
- A It would certainly be a way if finding more time to do it, wouldn't it?
- B Yes, and it's the incentive you need, to have to do it.
- A It certainly is
- B Because there have been so many other things to do that it's just got put on the back burner all the time.
- A Do you find when you are talking English, in the meetings with the transnational partners, that you modify your language?
- B Yes, and in some ways that is as tiring for us to be constantly thinking of "how can I best put this?" in words that they are really happy with using and don't have to think too hard about, and to explain things in a way that they will understand, given the language difficulties and the differences in their working environment, and that is quite tiring.
- A Yes, so it's quite an actual achievement to do that, to be able to put across what you want to say.
- B Yes.
- A What about outside the meeting group, how does it work then? When the whole groups together with the three nationalities. Do you find that they all intermingle, or are there separate groups?
- B No, there's much more intermingling now.
- A Right, now?
- B Yes. Perhaps you have to work towards that, don't you?
- A Yes.
- B Yes, it's much easier, much freer, people are more confident to go and talk to somebody from the another country, whereas perhaps they might have held back a little bit before.

- A Right. And it helps that you know one another better now.
- B Well, yes and I was probably part of that process and hadn't really realised how much I've changed as well.
- A Well I mean you're the co-ordinator of the project quite a lot rests on your shoulders, doesn't it?
- B Yes. I feel much more relaxed about that now. I mean the first time I went to each of the countries as project co-ordinator, I soon realised I needed to have an agenda, I needed to have something to put on the table, because nobody else would have. I found that quite daunting to start with but now I just do it as a matter of course.
- A It gains its own momentum
- B It does, yes, it picks up its own momentum, yes, and one meeting follows on from another.
- A And you found well I don't know with your project, but I've found with mine a very similar sort of position, that as time goes on the other parties begin to think "Ooh, I really wanted to say ..." and it begins to be a more even process.
- B Yes. But so long as that doesn't happen when they are wanting to ask for twelve students to come to visit from Sweden, and from Belgium! So long as that's brought out earlier than it was last time! So we'll handle it better this time!
- A I suppose in a sense it was tribute to their enthusiasm and commitment to the project?
- B Oh, absolutely, that they actually got it through.
- A But it was also an organisational nightmare at this end.
- B Yes, it was. But we've planned the programme differently this time, we've concentrated on different things so there is some flexibility in that third term.
- A I think that's the thing to remember, isn't it? I mean, this project is only just a year old.
- B One year old, yes.
- A There's been an enormous amount of achievement in that time and an awful lot of lessons learned.

- B Yes, although there is still going to be quite a lot of work because we're involving different students, a new group of students, we're still making technological waves, breakthroughs.
- A How do you feel about that? I mean, you said at the beginning of the project
- B Excited. Oh, yes, excited, really keen, very much wanting to get going but knowing that I must have deadlines. I must have a deadline when I know that if I haven't got something done, Jos will be.... and Lieven, Lieven Broeders will be on the other end of the email saying "why haven't you done this and why haven't you done that?".
- A How would you feel if it was one of your colleagues here that was doing that to you?
- B If I'd agreed to do it, no problem. Because if I've agreed to do something I've made a promise, a commitment, and yes. It would depend on what it was. If it was totally out of the blue and was unreasonable
- A But the transnational partners, I mean they did that, didn't they?
- B Oh, yes, but that was reasonable because I knew oh no, I'm taking your question in a different way. I thought you were still talking about 'why isn't the deadline being met?'. Because I knew how important it was to Peeter's school to have these things happening [the student group visits to the UK] and as they'd put a lot of work and effort into things it was not fair to hold back.
- A That's interesting. So you feel a loyalty to those people?
- B Yes. Yes. So that I mean if he he obviously has a different agenda from me, because he's a manager and I did not think anything that he requested was unreasonable and he was so thrilled with what was happening and what his school was doing that he wanted to publicise it. And as it would have been sad for him to have this refused there and for things not to happen.
- A Interesting.
- B Haven't other people expressed that?
- A Not in such an explicit way, I don't think. I feel that in my project, although I'm not sure I would have said it if somebody had asked me, I'm not sure it would have sprung to mind, maybe it's something that I take for granted, but there are times when I think I feel a much greater loyalty to people out there in the other countries than I do to the whole organisation here. I don't know why. Maybe it's to do with levels of commitment, the sort of relationships that you build up with those people

B Yes, and perhaps also there's aa feeling of over the past two or three years of having been let down by college, and the systems in college, you know and

A whereas your colleagues on the continent by and large

B I know we're a different kind of relationship and they've not always come up trumps with what they've said they would do but you can appreciate that they are equally having difficulties with their systems or timescales or whatever.

A That's an interesting one. I'd be intrigued to pick that one out a bit more. What were your expectations about working on a transnational project when we first started discussing this and it became clear that it would be your project?

B "Oh, heck, what have I let myself in for?"!

A What about the partners abroad, the Swedes and the Belgians? I think to a greater extent in your project than in some of the others we were able to control who the partners were, as much as is possible in projects that effectively arrive out of the blue.

B And we set them up, didn't we? I mean we instigated it very much. They perhaps wouldn't have had a transnational project if we hadn't have really gone for it.

A No. Certainly in Belgium, I don't think they would. What did you think, what were your expectations of working with the Swedes and the Belgians?

B I definitely wanted to continue promoting the preliminary visits and preliminary links we'd made, because I'd found what I'd learned interesting and stimulating and I knew there was a lot more to learn.

A What kind of things?

B About their systems, about their practices. And we were aware that certainly in the vocational training they were doing things very different from us and there was certainly a lot of mileage to be made from discussing and looking at at our system and their system and that there had to be a system in between which could be good and workable. I suppose I had thought about what somehow, when you initially said "you've got the money, go ahead, it's yours", my initial feeling was "oh, heck, how am I going to fit it all in and what responsibilities and decisions am I going to have to make" and I must say to start with, that was overpowering. Then when I started moving on it and I started sitting down with colleagues and we started looking at schemes of work, what we could do, how we could integrate it into the curriculum, it became very exciting.

- A Right.
- B Yes, I was a bit afraid of the technology because of my of the lack of time and my lack of and the lack of availability regularly on computers and systems. Not working closely with anybody who I could say "hey, Bert I don't know how this works, what happens here, what have I done wrong?". The thought of having to spend hours getting stuck. The excitement and challenge and thought of travelling. Some anxiety about my colleagues thinking I was being selfish by sort of hogging it in a sense or appearing or feeling that I was hogging it, because some of them have never been abroad at all, except for that one trip that Sonia took.
- A But she's been abroad in connection with other projects.
- B No, I'm talking about Lesley Gordon, Neil Jeffreys a bit, Alison McKegan a bit
....
- A But they've had opportunities
- B Well, they have, I know they have, Brian Evans particularly I know Brian was desperate to get abroad. does anybody know anything about it, did he?
- A Well, no, I was going to say he came to me with at least three different ideas for projects which dutifully researched and discussed with him, and said "this is how we could apply for funding, now have a look at it and see how you could meet that criterion" and so on. And he never came back to me.
- B But I've always sort of felt a bit guilty about even though I knew he..... you know I do play that down, I do keep fairly quiet about that. I mean it's a bit better now that Ida and Elsie are sharing it. I'm not sure it will be better for me with that, having my group of students involved, because you see the two groups of students have been their groups of students, although they have left me with the bulk of the managing
- A Indeed.
- B So I suppose fair do's, but still.
- A Well yes.
- B It's so difficult, isn't it?
- A Tricky.
- B Yes, it is. So yes, a mixture, just "oh, heck".

- A What about working with those two nationalities, in particular. At first we hoped that there'd be a Portuguese partner too.
- B Yes, I'm glad there wasn't. I think that would have created a lot of extra work because they obviously didn't have any comparable systems.
- A I think you are right.
- B And I think their language would have been a big barrier.
- A So it certainly would have added yet another layer to those kinds of issues.
- B Yes. I think three has been enough.
- A What about the countries themselves, Sweden and Belgium? Are they countries that you would have chosen to work with, do you think?
- B A Scandinavian country, yes, because in terms of special needs in the past 15 or 20 years they have certainly had interesting reputations, as having done things and from what I have now learned, initially ahead of us, but then they seem to have 'stuck on that laurel' and they haven't having had an initial burst of progress, they haven't made a lot of progress in the last few years and I think they're now ready for the next 'heave'. In terms of Belgium, I didn't know anything about Belgium and the Belgian special needs system so that has been a constant learning process. And you learn in a positive way, and whatever you learn you can sort of compare and contrast with your own practices. I suppose if we'd been absolutely and utterly honest perhaps a link with Denmark might have been a top priority, on the basis that, from what little I understand Denmark has a very good special needs attitude and good special needs education.
- A Right. I don't know anything about it other than theory.
- B Yes, I don't know enough about it either.
- A And I wonder to what extent, in Scandinavia, there's a lot of talk about the theory, but that what you find in practice
- B Yes, is years out of date.
- A That's one for the future.
- B Well, that was where I started. It was me applying to do an exchange in Denmark that got my name in front of your nose. Don't you remember, years and years ago about four or five years ago, Central Bureau sent well memos went all

round the staffrooms inviting people to apply for a two-week exchange in special needs.

A Oh, that's right, UK/Danish teacher exchanges.

B Yes, because I applied and I didn't get anywhere. In the meantime I went to Ireland and France, and then you had some spare cash at the end of a financial year and you and Maureen Elmshurst were going to Borlänge and you asked if I wanted to go.

A Was that how it started?

B That's right. And that was where it all started.

A These things that you do, without knowing what it's going to lead to!

B And you see the whole scenario of where I am now, professionally, is because when I was at home having the children, I listened to a Woman's Hour play or an afternoon play on Radio 4, about a girl teaching her motor-biking boyfriend to read and then, about four months later, the adult literacy scheme started.

A Oh, gosh, and you got involved in that?

B Yes and sort of moved up through basic English and literacy, basic Maths and moved into special needs.

A I always wondered how you had gone from Geography to Special Needs. And of course, you've had an interest in working abroad, or at least, with people from other countries?

B Yes.

A One or two people have said when they've been working on projects of this kind, particularly, I have to say, people who aren't linguists, and haven't really had any contact with the continent except for family holidays, have said that they feel more 'European' when they've been involved in a project like this. Does that make any sense to you?

B I'm not sure I would have used that sort of phraseology. I feel more 'cosmopolitan'.

A That's interesting, go on explain.

B Because I've sort of picked up experiences and understandings from quite a lot of countries now, I mean Ireland, France, Germany, Belgium, Sweden.

A All European countries.

B Yes. I had my holiday in America, but I've worked there, I've worked in those countries. And yes, I know this is perhaps going against the whole aim of your thesis, but I'm not sure if I feel more 'European'. I feel a sort of (this is a bit trite!) a sort of buzz, of being a woman of the of European countries, a bit cosmopolitan, with a bit her and a bit there, and a bit of culture here, a bit of understanding there, a bit of food from here, a bit of language from there, a bit of fashion, a bit of you know, how the education works, how the employment market works..... Yes, I wouldn't say I feel more 'European', but 'cosmopolitan' might be the word.

End of Tape 2

Tape 3

A Yes, it's an intriguing one, one of the things that's always there, a one of the underlying aims in European-funded projects is almost a requirement that people working together like this should acquire a veneer of 'European identity', as it were, and in my experience, that is not always the case. And the people that I'm interviewing,, well, I think you're comments come closer to the mark.

B Yes, I mean the way I feel is I feel quite British. I feel quite protective for the sort of British identity but I don't feel as frightened, as a lot of other people feel, by amalgamating more some of the things with Europeans.

A Right. What do you feel is your British identity?

B I think perhaps a way of thought, the way of living. To an extent it wouldn't worry me losing the pounds, shillings and pence, because I can see an advantage in that I think also you meet..... and I think, a certain sort of cultural identity, you know, to do with food and music and leisure activities, things like that. But I think in terms of business and commerce and things like educational systems, it doesn't worry me about sharing more and becoming more identifiably European, because I think that would, because I think we've got barriers still and I think they're counterproductive in a lot of things. I mean just as an example, was that the one of the Sunday newspapers, a few months ago, said "Right, you've got £100 pounds here in British money, let's go and visit several other countries, we won't spend anything, how much have you got left?". I mean, it's crazy, isn't it?

A It is crazy.

B That's right.

A I think there are some things that, commercially, probably need ironing out and that's what the Common Market was originally set up to sort out.

B That's right, yes, and that doesn't worry me.

A No, that doesn't worry me either. Backtrack a bit though, for a minute, because you mentioned food and leisure activities, specifically, cultural things in the different countries becoming more intermingled. Does that worry you?

B Yes, I wouldn't want to lose that, because I think that is part of the richness of people and I wouldn't want it to be subsumed by..... like we have sort of - now I've gone off now and I'm talking off the top of my head - now we've gone off and in a lot of places like Africa and Australia, and we've totally sort of ridden roughroad [sic], ridden roughroad over local people and their customs and things and imposed something else. And I wouldn't want that.

A Imposed?

B Yes. And I think it would be good to share our sort of cultural specialisms, but not to get rid of them.

A What about language?

B Mmm. Yes. It's easy to answer if you're English, isn't it?!

A Isn't it just?! That's the thing that has been very clear to me, and has only really become clear recently. I think without exception all of the transnational projects that we're running at the moment

B are conducted in English.

A In English. Because when you have got people there, say from Greece, from the Netherlands, the UK, whatever, there is no other common second language. But it seems to me that that's going right against what the European Union founders were actually thinking about when but I don't know.

B It's expecting an awful lot, though, isn't it, of people whose specialism is in another vocational area, or an educational area to [sic] also be totally conversant in another language.

A In this country, but they seem to be able to do that abroad.

B No, but you see I mean even, I mean just supposing you chose another language to expect the Greeks to sort of learn Dutch in order to become part of a European project, that's unrealistic.

A It's not very sensible, is it.

B No. Whereas I mean at the end of the day, English is sort of seen as one of the main international languages, I mean, isn't it?

A Yes. There are people who might who might have poor English who have probably got a vested interest in improving it, just as you have had an interest in improving your IT skills, because it's going to have a wider application.

B Yes, having said that, I mean, for the Belgians, that's not obvious, because for them for a lot of them their second language is either French or German and English isn't so important.

A For the team members?

B Oh, no, I'm not talking about those people, I'm talking about in the education generally. (Oh, it's warm in here, isn't it?) So in the schools, the secondary schools, there's still a choice between English or French or German, it's not fairly obvious that if someone's going to do another languagethat it would be English.

A I wonder if that is the case in countries like Germany, for example, I just happen to know my best friend's German, and her daughter has just reached the age where she has to choose which language to learn and she was offered English or French or Spanish. She's chosen to do French, reasoning that she can always learn English by coming to stay with us!

B Yes. But then on the other hand if she's good at languages she could enhance it by coming to stay with you and become absolutely super-duper!

A I suppose so!

B Whereas you see, in Sweden, the second language obviously is English much more obviously

A It's all to do with geographical factors, historical loyalties and goodness knows what. In what way, would you say, you've changed since taking part in the project?

B I have become more confident and slightly more assertive because of that confidence. So I I think, partly because of this and I think there are other things as well which have all been contributory factors, I am much more prepared to stand my ground and to say what I think, even though I may be in a hostile environment. I think it's been partly this, and partly hand-in-hand with setting up a new course and becoming part of the consortium and generally meeting people outside college, which has given me the confidence to realise that I am as up-

to-date as anybody, have got as good ideas as anybody and deserve to be heard as much as anybody. Whereas I perhaps I mean that's one of the reasons why I would never apply to be a manager of a special needs department in a college because and I probably still wouldn't because I'd feel I wouldn't have the confidence to be able to hold my own sufficiently in curriculum development, other discussions, and be able to go home and think I I held myself well and could sleep happily.

A And that's very important.

B Yes.

A Have the partners commented in any way on you or the college in a way that's made you stop and think?

B We've had a lot of compliments because we have thought about the agenda before we've got there and we've put a lot of things on the table for discussion, things like monitoring and assessment procedures, staff work targets and things like that. And on the whole they've been only marginally adapted. I hope I've made it obvious that they were for discussion purposes, and they weren't *faits accomplis*, and I think that's been the case, because they have been added to and people have felt free to say "we can't do that" or "I don't like that" or "that doesn't fit in with what we're doing". But I don't think they [the overseas partners] would have even known where to start. I'm not sure whether that isn't kind of I don't know how to put this without it sounding really pompous I think I think because we succeed in at least keeping our heads above water, can cope with the stress, cope with one year after another, doing everything, getting it all done, putting it all in, coping with the discipline and everything else, because we've been able to do this in a wider, bigger environment, Nusquam College, I think it gives us a greater confidence when we come to deal with small schools, where it's much more introverted.

A That's interesting.

B I feel I'm challenged more by the variety of colleagues I come into contact with and they can't [be] because of the insular nature of their school.

A Yes, small communities, really.

B That's not to say that we haven't got things we can learn from them, because we have, and from their opinions and from the systems they've put into practice. But I think coming from a wider environment we have been challenged before we get to them more.

A I think that's also an interesting comment.

- B Yes. And I think also they have looked to us for our expertise because of the I mean people like Karen who's been doing all the Finance and so on, and other people like that. Have we got a replacement for Karen, who's doing her work?
- A At the moment I think we're advertising again, because the first advert
- B Did anybody apply or was
- A Nobody applied internally, then they advertised externally and they didn't get a very good field of applicants and the short list is not wonderful and I think they're going to have to advertise again.
- B Why is this?
- A I think it's a mix of salary levels and the level of responsibility
- B Have they lowered it from when Karen was here?
- A No. Karen was just not very well paid at all for what she was required to do. One last question. If you were advising someone, someone who'd never been involved in a project of this kind before, particularly thinking of the issue of working with foreign countries, what would you say to them? What would your advice be to them?
- B To assess their own work commitments first, to have their feet on the ground first and to realise that it would be quite a lot of extra work and to make sure that they did have the energy and the space to do it and then just go for it!
- A And why go for it. What makes it
- B Because of everything we've said before. Because it gives you a buzz, it benefits the students, you benefit from it, it adds an extra dimension to you and your work, which you do incorporate into your work. It's exciting, it's interesting, you feel as if you're making innovation, because you're bringing a team together the likes of which hasn't happened before. But you've got to see it as something that you really want to do for doing it's sake, and for your sake. It might not necessarily be a good career move, it might not be some yes, I mean it would look good on a CV, and there's a lot of spin-off to your personal development but if you were thinking of a career move and wanted to go up, up, up it might take up more time than you might want to give. You might if you were very ambitious you might want to give your time to something I don't know, do you agree with that or not?
- A I think that's very probably the case.

B You know if you were very careery-conscious, it might not be something that you would see would be a worthwhile use of your time, when there could be a lot of other things that you could do, you know, like being GNVQ co-ordinator or..... do you know what I mean?

A Yes, I do know what you mean. And it is, it's a very time-consuming thing, and having got into it, it's very hard to get out of it.

B Yes.

A Once you've made a commitment to it and got other people involved.

B But you gain an awful lot from it, yes. And for me, what I've got from it far outweighs the work that I've had to put into it.

A That tends to be the case. I haven't heard anybody that I've interviewed actually say that they wish they hadn't done it.

B No.

A Erm, I mean, yes, of course, we're working very hard, and having to add on top of the amount of time that these things take but I think, even so, it's worth it.

B Yes, absolutely.

A Is there anything else that you would like to say, to add? Anything I haven't asked you, or?

B I don't think so. Because are you taking the booklet?

A Yes, I'll take the booklet [log].

B Do you want the

A Yes, I'll take your Rep. Grid and the cards and so on

END OF INTERVIEW

Gina

A Right, so the Rep Grid, that's what we're actually going through?

G Yes, I completed the first grid, sorry about my scribble everywhere but I thought that might be... if I wrote it on here and then you don't have separate pieces of paper. And then when I came to actually looking at what I'd learned I was concerned that there was such a very [sic] similarity with my learning experiences from the A Grid.

A Right, from the sort of experiences that you'd had.

G Yes and I'd found it very difficult to actually differentiate between the two grids and what was on the two grids. Because I thought then 'oh, I seem to have mixed it all up', I think I probably wanted you to look at what I'd done on the A grid before I did the B grid to see if I'd done it wrong.

A OK. In some respects there isn't a right and wrong. It is difficult to separate the 'what you learned' from the 'how you learned it'. It's a complex process and we need to keep this in perspective as well. The repertory grid is a way for you to explain what you've learned and how you've learned but it's only a means to an end as a means to our discussion today to discuss. So whether or not you've completed the B grid is irrelevant in some respects now, you've done what you've done and through that you will have clarified some of your thoughts about some of the issues and thought through some of the experiences that you've had in recent times with the project. And that in itself is a valuable exercise without necessarily going on now to complete a B grid - it need not.....

G Right. I have certainly put down quite a few things that I thought were actual.... what I'd learned perhaps in more simplistic terms than I had done on the A grid, so there are slightly different ideas.

A What sort of things do you feel you have learned from the project?

G Well the things I have got down here. One of the things I've learned about.... on my A grid I'd said there were things like accreditation which obviously coming from a non-academic background I'd not even.... you know I had no concept of how accreditation would work. So when I'd come along to say what I'd learned I've said things like 'accreditation is a complex issue'!

A Which is fair comment.

G Well if I'd have thought the difference between how and what before I might have said that how was through going through the process of trying to accredit the module. I learned that accreditation of the complex issue work. I kind of.... perhaps I should have done the whole thing in trial and then gone back and done

it, which I didn't do. I thought, 'right, this is the first step, I'll do the first step first and then I'll do the second step', which might not have been the best way of doing it.

A Well I don't know, there isn't a best way necessarily. It's different for different people and as long as you've thought about it that's all that really matters.

G Well I've certainly got a long list of things that I've learned and ways and what I've learned so.....

A Go on, what other things have you learned? I'm intrigued.

G Starting from.... these are in no particular order. I think that the.... I mean some of them were amusing as well as frustrating. I think the one thing on the language side was the day that Rob mentioned about the tariff points when we were really talking about CATs points and we were all stunned by the fact that Ian had told him about CATs points and nobody could understand why, and they were tariff points. And at that point I thought "Oh no, it's such a fundamental misunderstanding, Oh God, I don't know where we go from here!"So I think that was..... whether that's a how, a what or a why or a when but.....

A It's quite a significant one, isn't it?

G Oh yes. Just that so struck me as being.... he'd [Rob] either not understood about accreditation which I can... you know not being an accountant too I can relate to that, when the whole accreditation issue started coming up and they were talking about CATs points, I mean you could have been talking Mandarin or Chinese for me, it was just completely incomprehensible.

A And that's just among a British team.

G That's right, yes, given my understanding of most of the words that were spoken and I could understand Rob not understanding that. But the fundamental difference was so unbelievable that it really, really hit home how somebody can just completely misunderstand, and somebody who we thought had a very, very good grasp of English could be so misled or mis-..... I don't know but it was just unbelievable. So I think that was a salutary lesson almost, although it was amusing at the time.

A Salutary lesson, what.....?

G Because we're sat there firing all these words at these Dutch people and these Swedish people assuming, perhaps a little arrogantly that they understand everything and if they don't they damn well should be, but yet we'd let Rob get so misled into what his understanding was that I thought that is really arrogant or rather presumptuous of us that he'll always understand these things. And it's very

difficult to strike a balance without being patronising and keep saying things over and over again slowly in words of one syllable but I don't think we ought to always take for granted that these people should and have understood us. So....

A What do you feel about the whole issue of the project being conducted in English?

G It's very difficult with something like that. I mean if it had been conducted in French or Dutch or Swedish or anything it would have been impossible obviously because we... well I certainly couldn't have taken part, I would have struggled with French or German and I'm supposed to have a working knowledge of those two. But I think it just underlines the whole issue about how we as British just always expect these things to happen in our language and that seems to have happened. I know it's a historic thing and it's not something we have in our control and the world commerce language is English, but it makes me feel it makes me cringe, it makes me a little ashamed that there's no way I could have done anything like Rob has done and like everybody else has done in a foreign language.

A It's very humbling, isn't it?

G Humbling. That's a very good word, yes.

A And do you find when you're talking to people like this that you modify your own language?

G Possibly slightly. I do try not to. That's sounds strange but I try not to.....classic English people, 'he's foreign not deaf, you know', but I try not to do that and I think it's quite good for people to hear the words that we use and not the words that are in textbooks and things. And it was funny, Rob was in here one day when we I can't remember who came in and I said to whoever it was (it was a member of Finance staff) and I said "somebody's taking the Mickey" and Rob was highly amused by this and since then I've had umpteen e:mails on First Class, what does he say? "you are having the mad Mickey" or something, I don't know, he just gets it slightly wrong. But I think it's really nice for them to hear how we use language so that colloquialisms and the words that we use are there to build up their vocabulary, otherwise if we always spoke in the Queen's English and I don't know, it wouldn't be English as spoken, it would be English as taught.

A There is a colleague in Denmark at the moment whose research is focusing on what she called "inter-language" and the fact that in these projects where, for practical reasons, a language is chosen as the language for communication and so on for everything in connection with the project, people end up speaking a very quaint form of that language, 'inter-language', which isn't real English at all, but is something that everybody assumes everybody else will understand.

G Oh that's really interesting. It's funny because I think it's really nice if you're listening to people on the TV or on the radio or whatever and you get I mean I like English accents and I like American accents and Australian accents and I think it's really nice to hear somebody from another country speak with an Australian accent or an American accent. I think that's really..... 'amusing's not the right word but I think it's really nice to hear how naturalised they feel with that language. And I know..... we had a German assistant at school that came and we all ended up speaking with Bavarian accents, the German teacher was horrified at all these 'isch's and so on. But I think it's really nice for them to hear the language as spoken.

A What else have you got down here.

G Oh yes. We digress. Video-conferencing, which was a big landmark experience for me and also.... I hope this doesn't distort your findings, this business about, because I'm not an academic, learning about things like research. One of the things I said in.... I think it was in here..... was something about, you know I don't have a university degree, I did Accounting Technician before I did my accountancy exams so I've never actually come across a person called a research assistant before, which was really odd, and sort of thinking "how do they fit into it?" and "what would this person do?". So I've got that down. I've also got the thing about the.... it fits about the accreditation things, things like learning about learning and learning about teaching, because obviously I've not got an academic background or that teaching background, so things like why you would want to sit down and come up with a learning outcome and how you go about that process and the thing about accreditation as well. I mean I know I've examined for the Institute, the accountancy institute that I belong to, but that's always kind of been the end of the process whereby we've set questions and things and we've sort of said "that's what we're aiming..... we're testing this element of the syllabus" or we are doing that". But we have never kind of gone a stage before that where you are actually almost setting the..... setting the syllabus or whatever. And so seeing that process was very interesting, and seeing it in different countries. One of the things that struck me about.... that I can't quite sort out in my mind on that particular issue is, we talk a lot in the team meetings here about the Dutch and the Swedish not understanding the idea about portfolios and accreditation and flexible learning and blah, blah, all these different things that are obviously second nature almost to the likes of Jude and Bert and the other Jude. But what I can't quite and it's obviously in depth, in millions of theses about teaching, is that when we went to Holland we, nonetheless, even though they don't understand about accreditation, prior learning and blah, blah, blah, all these things that we talk about over here and we tend to think of them as a bit behind, but you know who's National Advisory Group are absolute wizards? - theirs. So, the fact that they're all 'behind in all these things, well, it hasn't done them any harm! So I can't quite sort that 'out in my mind.

A It is interesting because there's a view in the group that the, that's to say, it's not particularly my own view but there is a view that's been expressed a couple of times, that the Dutch team themselves are 'behind'. But I'd be interested to know what you mean by that.

G Well yes.

A But that the Advisory Group is quite the opposite.

G That's right. And it just seems so incredible that the two different sort of ... I mean I think we are at the forefront in this country with a lot of things, with management, practice and theory, with you know they've been very painful but the changes that have gone on in, not only in FE but in the NHS and in local government, a lot of it's been reformed and maybe the Americans are a bit in front of us but I tend to think that we are addressing the issues that we have to address and looking at.... you know we have a very good business sector, but I can't help thinking that, you know, the Dutch economy is probably as good as if not slightly better than ours and they have business leaders who can easily rank with our business leaders. So even though the colleges are perhaps where we were five or six years ago, and certainly like in Sweden a lot of local authorities seem to be, then I don't knowthere just seems to be you know, why is there this perception that they are behind? It's really odd. I cannot.... this is the sort of thing I got myself into a knot with when I was trying to do this, but why do we think they are behind and who necessarily says that the way we are doing it is at the forefront, but yet we think it is, don't we? I don't know, perhaps I've started thinking about it too deeply.

A I think one of things that became clear, I mean, why we chose, ... why I chose the countries, it was my decision to choose The Netherlands and Sweden to work with, was precisely because we were following the American model in vocational education, introducing market forces and we're that quite a way down the road with that. The Netherlands I knew was looking to the UK very much to follow in the UK's footsteps and consequently also adopting the American's market forces model and in Sweden, although they haven't pushed it out as far as the schools yet, they are certainly moving power and decentralising to local authorities, was adopting something of that model and all of this was driven by policy changes at government level, as a reaction to a tightening of the economic belt. That's what drove the beginning of it. And I suppose if you think of it in those terms then logically the UK is 'ahead' (for the want of a better word), The Netherlands is slightly behind and Sweden is a little bit further behind still, but only in terms of one model.

G Yes.

A That's it. And I think because of the way this project is focused it makes it very easy for us to lose sight of the fact that there are things within the Dutch system

and the Dutch way of working in the broadly equivalent sector, and in the Swedish system in the sector which are probably streets ahead of what we are doing, certainly very different, and from which we could learn as well.

- G And I mean if you were just to draw one element of that out, the idea of the connections with business and just to see that National Advisory Group and their..... dedication's the wrong word, but their willingness to turn up every time and to do the business and to put some real input in there. Then they've obviously got it a hell of a lot more sussed than we have. You know we ought to be able to do that, not just for this but for lots of other things. And I don't think we're there.
- A No, when we set this project off it was at the back of my mind that I would also have liked our Board of Governors, governing body, or some part of it to have been involved in it and I was just told outright that there was no way that they would give their time to something so relatively insignificant.
- G I think that's a great shame. Because I'm sure that the benefit that the college could derive from..... I mean I know we think of Bart, but his input into a whole raft of things, well, not just him personally but his organisation and organisations like his, into training students and giving them an opportunity. In fact things like work experience which has been it's endless and I think if you're looking at it in terms of just that element, well we're miles behind them and I don't think we are ever likely to catch up with them.
- A No, whatever it is, whether it's the ethos or whatever, dealing with a governing body certainly here in Nusquam - and I don't think it's just Nusquam from what I've seen in other colleges as well - it's very much to protect them from the college at large and not to involve them in anything other than their formal meetings
- G Yes, or they come in and cut a ribbon or something and then go away. Yes. No, I think it is very sad. Whether their legal status is slightly different to ours I don't know.
- A Yes, well this is what I wonder as well but having looked at the Instruments and Articles, for the governing body here, again it's a very different beast from the governing body pre-Incorporation, and there are good reasons for that. But I think a lot more of it rests on the actual individuals themselves.
- G Oh yes, I think that's bound to be true. But I think it's very sad but..... what else have I got? Oh yes, I put down as well learning about working with my own colleagues. Things like... people like Mandy and Bert who, I mean I do work with them but not ... how can I put this not in their own spheres, so I meet Mandy because she's on the Quality Team and so am I, and I meet Bert, because he's on the Quality Team and so am I, and because he's a budget holder and I'm the

Financial Analyst. But I never actually see them operating in their own subject. I think that's not quite the right word but you know what I mean.

A Yes.

G So this was quite an amazing thing to see. And like Jude, I work with Jude because she's the Clerk of the Corporation and previously Staff Development Officer, but I've never seen her do things with accreditation and do things and it was just really.... I don't know I didn't know that they did those sort of things if you know what I mean and so that was really interesting.

A What did it do for you in terms of them, when you saw.....

G Well there were two sort of aspects really, the first one was that it was really enjoyable to get into those discussions with them and I know we've had well, we keep having the on-going rows about various things but it was nice to be able to feel that I could input something and have that input listened to, even though they might go away and do something totally different anyway. But there was the other thing about just knowing what sort of things they did and, you know, I don't have an academic background so it was very I don't know, it's nice to know what other people do for their jobs, other than the bits that you see them do. I do work a lot with Mandy but I only see her in the context of "right, we are writing this Quality Manual", or 'right, we're on this Quality Audit Team and we're doing this particular exercise". I don't get to see her going away and doing her own thing other than that and I certainly don't get to see Bert you know I've never seen Bert teach at any staff development sessions, I've never seen him I'm singling out Bert but obviously you can apply it across the board, I have never seen anybody work on a module before or And it was really nice to kind of get an appreciation of what work they might do other than the work that I see them do.

A Right. And you say that you keep having on-going rows and so on, what do you think is at the bottom of the rows?

G I think it's this business about 'academic and non-academic'!

A Really?

G I do, yes. Yes. I know I am a very non-academic person and I find that theory gets in my way but I don't know the thought sometimes crosses my mind that, I keep mentioning Bert but I don't mean to particularly single him out, I'm sure it wouldn't be only him if it wasn't only him involved, but I think he sort of thinks "oh, what does she know, she's an accountant" sometimes. Sometimes. But I can't blame him, probably when he's doing his budget I think, "well, he's a bloody academic"! And I do, honestly! But yes, I think some of it is certainly to do with this sort of..... "you are treading on my patch" almost and maybe that's

not I mean we've worked around a lot of that and I've been really pleased with what we've done, you know, but I think there is that kind of you know I'm sure it has been waltzed into this office and started telling me how to do a budget, I wouldn't be too chuffed, you know.

A There's a sort of a 'cross-cultural wariness', isn't there?

G There is. That's a very good way of expressing it Anne.

A Oh, I don't know about that. I've felt that too because working with the team of people I'm working with I'm conscious that everybody, including you, has more experience of management than I have, management from different points of view. And certainly a number of the team has far more experience of management development, management training and so on which I know relatively little about, other than as a recipient periodically, and at times I have felt that I was treading very much on thin ice saying "well, this is how I think it should go" and I've just sat back and waited for them all to explode at my feet. But sometimes I've found I've got to be the devils advocate or whatever because otherwise things won't move on.

G I mean I know it's a problem and I do I think I can't remember what it was the other day that I thought about, I shut up really because I don't know anything about accrediting MBAs so I other than the small part that I've learned, but I really am a strong advocate for the fact that I don't know, I think it stems partly from the management paper I used to mark when I used to mark exam papers for CIPFA and it's this idea (and I know I sound very boring!) but it's this idea of the paper that we did was called 'Management in Practice' and what you had to do, the questions were all scenarios where you were writing reports, briefing notes, analyses, it wasn't theory it was very, very much "in practice, this is what happens in practice". And anybody whose essay started with "this management theory said that" when they were supposed to be writing a briefing note to their superior just got no marks - well, we weren't allowed to do that, but no marks in my book because I thought that was just so ridiculous, you wouldn't sit down and do that, you wouldn't even think it because at the point where theory becomes practice you are applying it it's that business about unconscious competence again which I won't repeat. But it's that idea that you don't sit down and think "oh right, how do I tackle this problem - such and such a theory probably says this and such and such a theory probably says that" you know it is, it's second nature to you, you sit down and think it out in that [sic] terms. And I find it very.... probably irritating beyond anything reasonable in a person but this idea that nobody's in need for underpinning knowledge and you need to study the theories, etc. but for it to come out so strongly when people are actually applying it I think is wrong.

A Mmm. It's a bit imbalanced?

G Well I think so, yes.

A I shall have to show you my Chapter 3!

G But then yes, that's the difference between writing a thesis for an academic outcome and actually implying the thing. I mean it is different, I mean I wouldn't expect you to sit down and say "when I was doing....." you know if I said to you "when I was doing my thesis..." I'd think "God, get on the real planet woman" you know, come back from Mars!

A [LAUGHTER]

G On the sort of more positive side there was the idea that how wonderful the transnational I've put "enjoyableness of transnational working" and perhaps I don't mean that, perhaps I mean enjoyableness of the social side of it more really, although as you know I spent some time as a college student in Germany I think the idea of forming professional contacts with international colleagues when you're 16 and you go abroad and it's a real happening and you've got other things on your mind ... I'm not saying you can't form relationships but I think it seems more valuable this time around because you realise the valuableness of it, perhaps it's more to do with age.

A It might well be to do with age. Other research done by other people working on cultural issues have found that older participants in exchange programmes and things of that kind tend to get more out of it on balance than younger participants - not always, there are always individuals for whom it is an absolutely marvellous experience and changes their lives and so on, but generally speaking when you're more mature, you're more able to learn quite quickly what you can get out of it and what potential there is for the future.

G We were talking about coming to the Languages Day and I think that was.... "you might not appreciate it now but, believe me, in ten years time"

A What does that say, the informal aspect of the project, the socialising, the travelling, the contacts that feature other cultures and other countries. What do you think are the differences in terms of contacts between working with colleagues from other countries and cultures, and working with the UK team on this project or a UK

End of Tape 1

G I'm not sure I know what sort of angle.....

A Let's just think..... let me see..... thinking about spending social time with people from other cultures and countries as part of this project as opposed to spending that kind of time with people from the UK. Are there differences?

G I think it's difficult to say really because we did spend, especially with the work-shadowing exercise and I think.... I was looking back at this last night and at one point..... and we seemed to go out to tea with somebody every week and it was driving me nuts and I think, I thought..... how Anne ever copes with this, it just drives me nuts, always having something to, not 'organise' but always having to ... I think I put "on parade" or something. You feel like there's always that you've always got to be formal. But I'm not sure that's something to do with the fact that they're from another culture, another country, it's to do with the fact that they're over here and they've got to stay there and they don't have anywhere else to go, in the same way as somebody visiting from London would and you'd feel obliged to entertain them and there's like this obligation. So there was that aspect of it but I'm not.... like I say I don't think that was anything to do with them being Dutch or anything or Swedish or whatever I think it was just that you kind of, you know, enjoyable as it was and I've really really liked talking to them and it was really interesting but this idea that you've always got to keep turning up and being on parade and the formal idea of it.....

A What do you mean by being 'on parade'?

G Well I suppose it's difficult..... I think it's to do with the fact that like if I went out for a drink with Julie and Co. downstairs you would switch off that.... because you know something about their personal life, you know them a hell of a lot better, you know you'd get talking about their sisters and what did you do at the weekend and you'd have 'in' jokes with each other and it would all be a lot less formal. Whereas with..... and as I say I don't think it's to do with the fact that they're from another country because I know like when I've been on courses, I used to spend an awful lot of time away from home when I worked for the accountancy firms because you got sent on two or three-day courses and you've always got to sort of sit there with people that you OK, you know a bit, but you don't know very well and you feel like you've got to be sometimes you're struggling for things to say because once you've talked about the project and you've worn that one out and you don't know their families and

A Mmm, you end up talking about the weather and

G Yes, and the weather..... oh God, talk about it being cold again I'm going to freeze. And it's that kind of idea that there's a formality that's always there with them and you don't have 'in' jokes - well you do a bit, there were 'in' jokes to some extent but we laughed about when we were in Holland, laughed about Jaap's driving. But I suppose it's because you don't know them as well as you do your friends that you feel like you're "on parade".

A I was making sure that I understand the same thing as you understand by that before I go writing it up somewhere and completely misinterpreting what you

were trying to say. When you're together with other people from the other countries what are the topics of conversation?

G Oh, blimey. I think that really to some extent was defined by their ability to speak English. For example, Elli, we talked about everything from the leaky roof and her landlord, which might be the sort of things.... well it wouldn't be the sort of things that.... but it might have been the level of conversation that I have with colleagues out there [wave of hand to indicate Finance team beyond the door]. And oh God what we didn't talk about, this dog, and there was no limit to this conversation. Whereas I don't think I really passed more than about two words with Göran because his English was.... maybe he was a shy person as well but his English was not as good as other people's. And it was funny because Rob said to me when he was over here that he was a bit annoyed because whenever he got in a car with some of the Swedish they would talk Swedish in the back of the car, which irritated him and I don't blame him. So the topics of conversation really did vary. I mean with Rob we'd talk about motor cycling, holidays in Scotland and we talked about the Dutch [project] team, bitched about them a bit, you know which seemed to reflect Rob's personality as well as his ability to speak English. But it really did vary, you know, like I say I don't think I really spoke to Frank very much and I didn't speak to Sepp very much either. But like Jaap, you could have talked to Ron about literally anything because you knew he'd understand it because his personality is very ...

A Outgoing?

G Outgoing, gregarious.

A Do you find yourself of discussing or comparing things in different countries and different cultures?

G Well as I say in here [rep grid/learner diary], and as I've mentioned a few times before, with the Dutch, to a bloody degree that would drive me nutty! I mean again it's difficult isn't it that perhaps that.... that all these sentences started in Holland were because maybe we couldn't think of anything else to discuss. Don't get me wrong it wasn't all the time and I wasn't irritated all the time, 99% of the time I was really interested. I think perhaps it was to do with the fact that really I would have liked to have sat down and done a budget or done something, I don't know, whatever it was that I was happened to be involved in at the time and I really wanted to do that instead of listening to how very.....interesting though it was but I really didn't want to listen to what the Dutch did about this, that and the other. But that possibly could also have been a factor, ... that so much was squashed into such a short space of time and you've got somebody there all the time, whereas perhaps over the space of a few weeks that would have been very interesting how things worked here, there and everywhere.

A Yes, with a bit of a breather in between.

- G That's right, yes.
- A I don't think the bureaucrats in Brussels have any notion of what they are sentencing people to do when they talk about two week work placements for professionals.
- G No. On both sides.
- A On both sides, yes. I don't think they have the foggiest idea.
- G But I mean looking even further back when we've had..... when was it that they came over all of them and we had a meal down at ...?
- A Oh, gosh, that would have been in June [1996].
- G When Ole was ill and the guy that came over who was the Chief Executive of the local authority
- A Axel Sandqvist?
- G Axel. I mean listening to the things he was telling me about, the way local government worked in Sweden was absolutely fascinating, you know it was really thrilling and interesting how their systems worked , how the transport system worked. It was really brilliant doing that.
- A Was there anything that he said or that Rob said or any of the others said that encouraged you to think differently about aspects of your everyday life?
- G Oh, blimey. I don't know about differently but things that they said made you reflect on it. I mean certainly things like the way the two systems are in Holland and Sweden and the difference between our system made you certainly think about "that's not the way it works here" or "we wouldn't have done it that way". So maybe I didn't think differently about it but I certainly reflected on it. And I can't honestly say that anything caused me to think about something differently. That's a profound question to ask somebody to answer straight away!
- A Keep thinking about it. What were your expectations about working on a transnational project?
- G Well my original expectations were to do with preparing budgets and monitoring budgets and when I became more involved a bit more deeply I don't think.....yes, I kind of didn't have expectations really I kind of lived through it and it kind of built up and built up and developed as it went along. So I wouldn't like to say that I had any expectations from the project side or the research side of it, I wouldn't like to say I had any expectations on that side. It appears to have been a kind of

door opening exercise “oh look at that” “look at that” and I didn’t have any kind of pre-conceived expectations on that side at all. I didn’t really know what it would involve so it’s been very much like... “opening lots of doors” has been quite a good description of it.

A How do you feel about that, a ‘door-opener’?

G Oh it’s been marvellous, absolutely marvellous. Not just learning about ‘accreditation’ and ‘learning outcomes’ and what research assistants do and how you build up a module and all that sort of thing and learning about what my colleagues do, but the aspects of video conferencing and all these things that I’ve listed down here [in the learner journal]. I can’t remember Why have I written that? ‘The importance of clear and comprehensive instructions ...’, I don’t know there’s just so much of it that I’ve learned that it’s been really good, and in such diverse fields, there’s no kind of one theme to it, it’s just very very..... I think I’ve somewhere put “I’ve learned how friendly and hospitable the Dutch are”. You know there’s just so many dimensions to it that it’s fascinating to sum up really.

A If at the beginning I had come to you, just speculation, saying “I want you to come and join the project and you’re going to be working with Woolwich College and Halton College” or something, would you have had a different feeling about the project? Was the fact that there were Dutch and Swedish people more significant at all?

G *Long pause* What a terrible question. *Long pause*. Yes, in the fact that I think it would have been more interesting because you’re learning more things because you know we meet a lot of Finance people from all sorts of colleges around the country and it’s really nice to meet them and I get on with them and we network and blah, blah, blah and that’s always good. So I wouldn’t have been bothered if it had been anything, just if it had Halton or somewhere else or whatever. But I think the international dimension involves more interesting aspects, if you know what I mean. I wouldn’t have had the chance to go abroad, I wouldn’t have had the chance to learn about the Dutch and Swedish systems. So I would have found it a valuable experience and I wouldn’t like to say it’s got less value even though I learned more things with it being international. You know I wouldn’t like to say “oh no it’s not as valuable”, it would have been, it’s just differently valuable.

A Yes. Some people have said after these sorts of projects that they feel somehow European. Somebody came back from Italy from a project meeting and said (it’s a wonderful quotation) “whenever something comes up now on television about Italy or in the newspaper about Italy I read it and I’m interested in it even though it’s a part of Italy I’ve never been to” but it still makes some sense to them. Does that apply to you?

G I'm not sure whether it applies more. I mean I like to think that I'm fairly European anyway, I mean it irritates the hell out of me that there is such an insular view in this region [West Yorkshire], in this country, that the idea about Europeans and "what do they know", "we're not doing that because they're French" and the whole xenophobic attitude of the English annoys me intensely. So I don't know whether I'm more European as a..... well it's not just with Europe are you, you can have Americans, Australians, I think that's pathetic [xenophobia]. But I think it can't fail to give you a deeper understanding of the countries that you work with so you kind of do take a more..... you know if there was an article on the news now about the Swedish or Dutch local authority system or education system you're bound to pick your ears up a bit more and think "oh yes, I know something about that" and relate to it and think..... you know if you were talking about a college in Holland, how that relates to the people at Frans Hals or.... "yes I know that because I know....." If they were talking about the Swedish political system Eva's bound to pop into your mind, isn't she? But I don't think it's made me more European or more international in any way.

A What about communicating with people on the continent? How do you feel about that. You're one of the people within college I would say at the moment who is having most success, in purely technical terms, of being able to communicate reasonably regularly and frequently with people in other countries. How do you feel about that?

G How do I feel about it generally? Well there's another aspect to that as well in that.... this is really awful..... you get people like Bill [Finance Director] who speak marvellous French - he's not likely to agree with that but he does speak French ... and maybe have 'European leanings' but as far as technology is concerned doesn't know where the plug is! So you know I like to think of myself that if there's something there that we can learn about from the Internet then and there then I want to learn it, I want to know how it works, even though ninety-nine times I never learn the whole story and I have to teach myself to some extent. But I feel like I would have done it anyway, I would have had a go at the Internet anyway and I might have had a bash on John's machine going even if I didn't know anybody, I'd have had a go at First Class at some point where I'd have wanted to know it existed. But I mean I think this really has opened my eyes in some ways as to how it can work with work, you know it's all very well going on and 'surfing the net' and looking at the Mars landing website and doing it for pleasure and for actually applying it in a work situation. I think this has given me the opportunity to do that, that I might not have otherwise have had. You know I could always e:mail people in, you know people that I know and friends and things and I know people in Scotland and in Weatherfield that I send e:mails to, ha ha ha, but to actually apply that in a working environment and send people spreadsheets. One of the things, I don't know where I wrote it [learner journal] but it was really funny to see Excel spreadsheets in Swedish, you know, Blad 1 and Blad 2 and.... golly, this is Swedish is! You know to actually apply that. And how international a language I.T. is was quite amusing.

A Yes, it's fascinating to think, isn't it, that it's the same package, software package, is doing the rounds all over and with the odd few words' difference we can all use it.

G Yes, yes, it's quite amazing really. It did strike me how funny it was that you know, there were these people, OK their menus say different things, although I think the Dutch ones say the same as ours us but.... but there it was, there's Excel, 'and they've done it over there and we've got it here' and it's just come down a wire and, blimey, it works! I mean obviously there've been frustrations with the business about "had we downloaded this file" and I'd asked him to check back, all those frustrations but the actual..... this business about the translation of theory, 'in theory you can go on here and some people will work with the same spreadsheet' and blimey, then it works. And 'I'm working on Rob's spreadsheet that he was working on only seconds ago over in Vrierlem'.

A Amazing, isn't it?

G Oh, it's fantastic, really. So that's been really good.

A It seems, I haven't looked at the categories on your Rep. grid, but it seems to me that there are a couple of things coming out of this, even as we talk, you are mentioning frustration a bit and you mentioned that when you were talking about computers and learning things but you also mentioned a lot of opportunities and enjoyment that have come out of the project. Are those the right sort of words to be using to describe your experience of the project?

G Yes. I mean when I was reading through the examples, just going back to the frustrating thing it said..... 'you mentioned some difficulties with communications may have left a lasting impression' and I have put "no, but possibly because it's a common occurrence". I mean I think it would be wrong in some ways to play up the frustrations too much and that's why I said if you read this it just looks like I'm a grumpy box and I'm only writing down something that got on my nerves. But taking the sum total I think they are much less important than the sort of things I've learned about, how it all fits together and working with people abroad. I don't know, when you think "bloody hell, I'm sick of this, that and the other not working" then writing it down. That is a big pity that that overshadows the other things that you've learned since. And when I read back over this [learning journal] I thought I just seemed like a completely grumpy person who, you know, who only writes negative things down but that's not the way I want it to come across.

A I'd be interested to see when I've looked through more of the learning journals, to see whether, ... like I said before, they do seem to lend themselves to that kind of expression from people, and people are asked to go back over them, so that on reviewing them it does give you an opportunity, either to balance that up or to reinforce it or change it, or

- G I think that with lots of erm..... sort of 'I didn't really mean that' [entries].
- A I'd be really interested. I will go away and talk to some more people who have used this as a research tool and see if more of them have found this kind of phenomenon, I suppose, in the way that people fill these in.
- G Whether it's a way of venting your spleen?
- A Yes.
- G Yes. I mean there were obviously some guilty pangs in here as well - 'I didn't really mean that, honest!':
- A Don't worry about it. *Pause*. If you were advising somebody and they were taking on a project of this kind, for example if one of my project managers wanted one of your staff to get involved, what would you say to them?
- G I think it depends, because of this kind of dual aspect of the role, it depends which bit you mean. I mean if you're asking me..... it sounds really awful, it sounds as if I didn't want to do some of it. I think it depends on the role that they're going to take on. I would certainly, if it was something similar to what I have done my advice would be "get on and do it". I'm always trying to encourage people downstairs [Finance staff] to get more actively involved in European projects and, you know, they'll come back and they'll.... like only Julie, the other day, came back from the National Advisory Group when Karen and I were out somewhere, I can't remember where we were, and Julie went to the National Advisory Group ...
- A Oh yes, she came to our COMPASS project meeting.
- G And she came back and she said, "I've never been to one of them before, it was really interesting!"
- A Did she?!
- G Yes. Yes. And I think, "oh God" you know. Normally I have to force her out of the door. So that I would never discourage anybody from getting involved in anything like this - ever.
- A Why? Why do you think they should get involved in that sort of thing.
- G Because you learn about people and so on and so on, and what Jude does and what the other Jude does and.... you know, you can never.....you know 'lifetime learning', 'lifelong learning', you should never let an opportunity go by. If I was talking to somebody who might get involved in the financial working of it then I'd say "right, you need to do this, this and this first and you need to get this

clarified first” and I think that the other side of it is a whole lot more.... I don’t know....what’s the way of expressing it - it’s frustrating because of the bureaucracy . If I were advising somebody to get entangled in the bureaucratic side of it then I think I would.... I wouldn’t advise anybody not to because obviously that’s our role in college, you know we’re here to provide financial advice and help, but I think you and I have learned a lot of lessons about the way that these things should be done and, you know, things about invoicing and payments and making sure people know what’s in the budget and all that business we had with Sweden when Bengt went off ill, you know. Oh that side of it was..... and as I say, it’s not that I would say to somebody don’t do it because of this but I think we would approach it a whole lot differently now if we were to do it.

A What do you think of the additional problems that have been thrown up by the project? I mean, it has been a huge headache that Ole went away ill and I feel to a large extent he wasn’t taking much notice of the financial side of the project even before he was ill. To what extent is that a function of the transnational project or could that happen in a national project?

G I think that could happen in a national project. I don’t think that’s necessarily..... the frustrations, one of the things that I did put down [in the learning journal] was this business about distance and the fact that you’re so far away and even though we’ve got faxes and even though we can use the Internet, telephone, fax, First Class any.... you know there’s lots of different ways you can communicate with each other, the fact that you’re not actually sat next to somebody and are talking to them and you can’t sit with them and go through things and have that common understanding that’s aided by ‘nearnesses’, what a silly word, but the fact that you’re not next to somebody, can’t help you go through with them, does create additional problems. But if I were doing it with somebody in London the same thing would apply, you know, we’d still have problems with the Internet, we’d still have problems with First Class probably, you’d still have trouble getting on the fax machine, I can’t make international phone calls from my machine [telephone], so I’ve got to go down to Julie’s. And it’s that kind of thing that happens I suppose with any kind of distance project and not just transnational.

A That is interesting.

G I mean I think the same thing happens you know if you want to ring FEFC for a query and in fact that’s why I’m going to see them this afternoon because you end up with a list of things that you need to discuss with somebody and the only way to do it, to actually resolve it, is to go to see them. You can’t keep picking up the phone. You want to put things in front of them to show them and go through them with them and say “well, where does it say that?” and then they show you because they’ve got the documents there. You can’t..... there’s always frustrations when you’re doing things at a distance. One of the things, I don’t know whether I wrote it down in there [learning journal], was to do with “I wish to God I could have

been in Sweden”. And even being among the famous film stars [on video-conference from the UK] it wasn't the same as being there.

A That's really interesting. I'm intrigued. I mean, I've found the project managers' meetings in between the transnational absolutely crucial. And there's been my little file that's gone with me each time, it's had different things in it and we have literally done as you said, we've sat there and gone from point 1 to point 2 and point 3, and it's all been done in two or three hours. Whereas trying to do it at a distance.....

G Oh yes, the sort of speed of progress when you're kind of coming along on a very slow line and doing little bursts now and again and it goes off here and it goes off there and then you have to chase people to get things back. And then when you all get together the sort of progress that's made is off the scale in comparison.

A I'm intrigued to see when we get to the video conferencing next year when we can get documents on screen and we can actually sit at opposite ends of the machine and say “look, here's the spreadsheet, I'm pointing to.....” and you can actually see on the screen the pencil pointing to.....

G Yes, things that you want.

Asay, ‘this is the figure that was causing me concern, this is the abbreviation I don't understand’

G And we're not quite there yet, are we?

A We're not quite at that point yet, no.

G No, I think we're still at some kind of in-between stage where you write it down on a separate piece of paper or on a separate note and that goes off and then they've got to pick that note up and compare it to the original document. It was a point..... a case in point, I know I was jet-lagged, but when we were doing the video conferencing and Rob was reading to me the changes to the Aims.

A That's right.

G And I thought..... “yes, so what's different?” and I couldn't for the life of me.... unless you've actually got it in front of you and you're comparing it. And really, unless you've been involved in the discussions beforehand it's very difficult to see what the difference is. I couldn't sit there, hand on heart and say “oh yes I know where you're coming from”. So I ended up saying to him “now look here.....”

End of Tape 2

- A Is there anything else that you would like to say?
- G No, other than just to emphasise the point that I think that the learning curve by miles outweighs the frustrations but I don't think that's what comes through from this, from the journal. And saying that, I did read it, I read it back through last night.
- A How did you find the Rep Grid?
- G That Grid? It drove me barmy.
- A That's interesting. I'll have to study it more in due course.
- G That was the business about thinking about how our colleagues worked. Because I think one of the things we haven't discussed was about.... we touched on it to some extent, the sort of management styles and the way people work in different countries and I think that was something that really came through. And also, the way different people work in the UK. I think it was.... maybe some of the projects, I don't know to how as to how much of interest this is to you in your research, the fact that we had the work experience exchange, how that used to impinge on the project, because that did make quite a difference really. And I think again, if that hadn't have occurred maybe some of these frustrations and crossnesses wouldn't have happened. But then maybe I wouldn't have learned so much, you know, like Rob and I one afternoon where we just talked about mainly people and the Dutch [project] team. And probably, I can't remember, but probably said something about the UK team as well!, but yes, it's a sort of..... I got very annoyed for Rob, because..... well, things happened that I promised that I wouldn't repeat.... but "well, that's disgraceful" and "that wouldn't happen here" and you do tend to kind of think about experiences and learn about the way people work and the way people are managed and manage their people, which really was a study of life.
- A One of these bits that you've put here [in the learning journal], cultural issues, 'reflection of cultures being used', 'foreign issues and the international dimension'. What do you mean by things like that?
- G This was where I was saying how they were similar. For things like working with speakers of a foreign language.... I can't remember now. 'Differences in working and learning'? Yes, it was the idea that these are the things that occurred because we were dealing with people from abroad.
- A Right.
- G Obviously the foreign languages was. And this idea that we were working with people who..... you know we talked about this idea that they didn't do their accreditation like this and they didn't know what accreditation or prior learning was, and that's to do with the fact that they weren't in our systems in the same

way that we were. And then like the things about..... I don't know why, whether it was supposed to do but the top bit seemed to be easier to do [Rep Grid] and when I got back the last few I was having a nightmare because these things didn't seem to have any similarities. The two that were supposed to be similar weren't similar and so I was really struggling to try and think about the words, the way they were similar. Things like using I.T. and going to transnational conferences was sort of 'experiences of a sort that were not within my normal working way', if you see what I mean. I wouldn't have otherwise had the opportunity to do that. And then, yes, the idea about 'working with colleagues in their own spheres' was learning about the way we work in the UK that I wouldn't have otherwise come across. But I still feel as though I've got my 'similarities' wrong and I don't know.....

A Oh I don't know. I mean that's something I'll look at.

G It was pretty difficult, Anne, apart from the fact that I kept putting things in the wrong boxes and the boxes weren't big enough!

A What do your abbreviations mean because I shall come a cropper if I don't have at least an idea of what you meant.

G Right. SOFL was "speaker of a foreign language".

A Right. [I'll just take this little lot away - marginal scribbling.]

G LO was "learning outcomes" and I put that the AA I think that I probably ought to explain it to you, I can't remember, no, it says 'accreditation' on that bit, oh, that should have been A5.....

A Oh that's A5?

G That came together, yes. But I mean I think those were quite similar sorts of things where like learning outcomes and accreditation were the sort of academic bits that..... that accountants don't get involved with.....

A No, well you wouldn't normally expect to know about that sort of thing, given your professional role - you're an accountant, and this is very specialist stuff in education.

G Well no, quite.

A I must just say, I find it strange that you keep saying that you're not academic and I think you are very academic, that's just an extremely personal opinion. I don't know whether the academic divide is frustrating in Education but I think you have come up through a very different route, not the teaching route....

- G That's right, yes and I don't have a university degree, I don't have whatever kind of academic qualifications..... I know I've got my accountancy qualifications but they're my sort of 'tools of the trade' if you like, rather than.....
- A Mind you a university degree is only a tool of the trade.
- G Well maybe it is, yes. But there's also, with a degree if you've gone through that, you've also gone through something to do with learning about learning and.... I don't know.
- A Don't you believe it!
- G Don't you think so? What do I know, I'm an accountant.
- A Any question of a teaching certificate, yes, I won't argue that kind of education at all, I am just speaking purely from my own experience. I know nothing about learning to learn through my university degree.
- G Really?
- A Not at all. I learned an awful lot about languages and literature, and history of language and medieval literature and whatever, but I only started learning about different learning styles, a little bit during my teaching certificate year, and then, I suppose, only really when I started examining, for examining boards and doing the process that you were saying about, going back a stage and not just looking at marking exams, but setting the questions and looking very closely at the syllabus.....
- G At the aims and objectives of the subject.....
- A And other than that it's only really been since I started work here.
- G Oh right.
- A on a sort of mini research and development project which at the time were really before I did my Masters degree so I had no experience of research prior to that.
- G But I mean that whole thing..... the whole thing about learning outcomes and accreditation was.... well it was just completely alien.....
- A because I've worked for examining boards I've worked on very different examples, different formats from the ones that most of the UK [project] team have been talking about so ...
- G So I hope you can make sense of all this.

A I will do my very best.

G Obviously, if it doesn't make sense. I can't guarantee I can remember why I've put what I've put, but you're very welcome to come and ask!

END OF INTERVIEW

Transcript of pilot Rep Grid interview 1

29 April 1997

Norman and I sat side-by-side at his desk (tel. diverted, interview sign on door). Process took 1 hour 30 minutes.

Note: (Cards and the Rep Grid I filled in by hand as we spoke are in the envelope marked NORMAN.)

1 Norman increasingly defensive as the questioning required more personal answers (body language, arms folded, no eye-contact, flippant comments).

2 My questioning a bit haphazard at first, got better at probing as we went on. Was thrown initially by Norman's not having completed the Rep Grid, and only one set of cards, and some of those 'incorrectly' labelled as A when they were B experiences.

3 Questions seemed to go in circles at times, not at all sure I pulled out the comments I wanted re: awareness, attitude and identity. Is that because of my questions? The Rep Grid itself? My questioning technique? Must look at questions again after 2nd pilot interview.

4 As time went on I become more anxious, not Norman, and I started to words into his mouth. I was also increasingly anxious about the amount of transcription to be done, and for both Norman's sake and mine, to bring the interview to a close reasonably speedily.

Interview (Italics = me)

Thank you first of all for doing the Rep Grid exercise.

But I haven't done it!

Well, you've done it in part. So, can you explain for me, as in, well, you've filled the cards in, the difference between Learning Experiences [Set A] and What I have learned [Set B]? In your own words?

Well, I think, a lot of the things you do, you do without realising it, in such a 'learning' or 'developing' way. It's probably using skills that you already have, but in a different concept [sic - context?].

That's helpful for me, because I have my own interpretation of what I see are Learning Experiences, and I need you to explain what you see by that, so that I'm not trying to put words or concepts into your mouth. The Repertory Grid exercise is a research tool, a means to an end. In this case it's a stimulus for our conversation about learning experiences and whether you've learned. We'll keep your cards to hand, and we'll refer to them, and we'll work through the grid to a certain extent, but we might not get all the way through it, because that's not the point of the exercise. The point of the exercise is the conversation.

OK.

So, on with the Set A, the Learning Experiences. You've got your cards filled in here, with various ideas.

Yes. I've already divided them into sets of 3.

Excellent! Can I ask first of all: how did you arrive at the things on the cards? What made you pick out those ...?

I didn't choose them in any particular number [order?]. What I thought about from the first meeting, of meeting partners for the first time, how that meeting went, what skills I used, from my own experience. But not necessarily working with language barriers. And from there on, all of the last, you know, one or two years, of being on the project, and the different situations and the different developments that we've been involved with, as a partnership. And then I used, well, what skills I have used.

As a defining ...?

As a defining line. Which would be quite relevant, I suppose!

Right. Let's have a look at them and then

Do you want them in order, or do you want them ...?

Well, ...

Because the ones I've put together are relevant to one another.

OK, well, if you keep them in the groups of 3 for the moment.

Er, ... number 1 I put down as Interpersonal Relationship Skills.

Alright, so we could fill that in. Now, if I'm very blunt,

And that is what I think I've used, what I've developed.

Now, I think I might return to your Set B sheet, and

So that would be a B rather than an A?

I would think so. I mean

I mean, you see, I've used that to develop. I think.

Yes, it's a tangible thing, in that sense, rather than a context.

Yes. You see, so what I developed was good working relationships.

OK, and I would see, and perhaps here I am putting my own ideas forward, I would see the Learning Experience that would go with something like that, as the context in which you did that.

So, the context in which I used those skills? Would be the initial meeting when we were going through the transnational plan.

OK. We'll come back to that in a moment. Let's put B1 on that. So we've got Interpersonal Relationship Skills. Right. So, what else have you got in the list here?

I've got Leadership Skills.

Right, I think we definitely need to be in the Bs rather than the As. So, Leadership Skills would be B2.

Yes, but relating that to an A again, would be that, being the lead in the project meant that one had, erm, to set initiatives right from the word go.

Right. So that you would say that A2 could be, erm, Being Project Team Leader?

Yes.

OK. And A1, you defined as, ...

Participating in transnational meetings.

And under Leadership Skills ...

I didn't put them as 1,2 and 3.

No.

Just sort of looked at what was relative to one another and tried to put that down. Because that wasn't 2, that was 7 [referring to the numbering I'm giving the cards as I write them up on the Rep Grid.] So it's 1,7 and 6.

Can you break that down a bit for me? And say what you understand by Interpersonal Relationship Skills and Leadership Skills?

Well they do link into one another, it's obvious, it's having the ability, if you like, to take things forward. To chair, er, meetings, and to have the skills to take the initiative. And planning, and sticking to an agenda. So that at the end of it you have achieved what you set out to do, the aims and objectives have been reached. It's mainly leading people towards that goal.

Right. And is there any significant difference between the Leadership Skills and the Interpersonal Relationship Skills, or anything different that you think?

Yes. I think Leadership Skills should be pure, business Leadership Skills, without having any Interpersonal Relationship Skills. I think it's the, erm, the friendliness, that got us to where we wanted to be, from the early stage. It wasn't pure, a business meeting, it was a friendly, get-together discussion, with a group of people that obviously had the same aims in mind.

Right. So you would say that the ...

The social side, that's what I linked, the importance of socialisation, [sic] and mixing business and pleasure, and that was the next one [indicates a card] ... Pleasure, using the word lightly. You know, the drink, the coffee breaks, the getting to know each other, the pleasurable side of it. And, you know, regardless of languages, because, you know, we had two different languages. An I think, to do with that, that also links into having the ability, and the knowledge of Interpersonal Relationship Skills. That's why I linked those, that's why They're quite important, I think that's quite an important aspect. So that's why I linked those.

OK. Let's go on. Let's have a look at this group.

And I put Interchange of Concepts and Ideas, which I felt was quite important.

Interchange of Concepts and Ideas, can you ...

Elaborate a bit on that? Yes. Concepts and ideas in relation to the project. Erm, it's quite enlightening to think that our concepts and ideas had, again, erm, had the outcomes that we were looking for, were very similar in content, to be able to bounce off one another, directly, what they were doing and what we were doing, and how did it marry up into a partnership. At first I thought one [partner] was a little bit difficult, it was more related to a HORIZON project than to actually ours, mainly because of the smallness of their organisation. And how could we benefit [sic] them, and get benefit from them? You know? And I think by interchanging or exchanging ideas and concepts of what training is for, and about, was good from the first start-up.

How did you find that, in terms of, as you say, the language barrier?

The language barrier ... I was very fortunate, in as much that the partners that we had, Elke in particular, spoke English very well, with living in this country as well, coming across to Scotland that often. And Mieke, in Belgium, certainly had erm, a basic knowledge of the English language, so they really acted as translators to their group. And it seemed to flow quite easily. I think the problem was remembering to shut up! And to let them translate, and let the concepts and the ideas sink in. And, pauses, .. quite important.

Yes. Did you find those pauses frustrating?

No, funnily enough. They were handled in a pleasant way, because, you know, Elke would laugh and say, .. you know, it was done in a nice and friendly way.

I often find the pauses in those kinds of transnational meetings to be quite helpful.

They give you time to get your own thoughts together, and where you're at in that particular part of the session. I suppose, with my management background, pauses don't bother me. Some people think pauses are dreadful things, you know, they hate them, so they tend to rabbit on, but they give you time to think. So, erm, that aspect, I thought, when I put it down, it wasn't, as I said, in any, you know, particular format, I thought the exchange of concepts and ideas And that led into Understanding Demographic Trends. Because I was probably fortunate enough, because of doing a degree at Leeds University, of course, on policy areas, and of course, I did a European, erm, year, as part of my degree [not a year abroad]. I got a good understanding of European social policy issues, and, erm, it was nice to have that

reinforced, erm, that the demographic trends and the problems in the partnership countries were very similar to the UK. I know, they had to be, to have formed the partnership, but sometimes that's just a concept that we have, and sometimes, unless you actually hear from them themselves, just what the problems are, and to have them identified and the demographic trends, and the realisation of how similar, in concept, the areas were.

It brings the theory ...

It makes it more alive, doesn't it? More realistic? That they have ethnic groups that have the same problems that we do, in relation to sub-groups in society, and with industries, housing problems, the elderly population, child care, the whole issues [sic] are very similar.

Alongside the learning about the theory in practice, as it were, would you say, and to what extent would you say that gave you some knowledge about your own role, your own expertise? The work that you do?

I think it updated it, and it made it more realistic. You can talk to our students about European input, and you're talking from a more knowledgeable base, with more down-to-earth factual information, rather than just straightforward giving a lecture.

You seem to be implying that giving them information in a lecture isn't as appropriate for students?

I would think that, if it's straightforward legislation, it's boring to most students. Even English legislation is boring. So if you don't have European policy, a lot of the students we have, they're not aware of Europe, they have no European awareness. And I think, by being able to relate it to more down-to-earth issues, and relate it to the similar problems that they would recognise within our society, made it more relevant and more interesting, for those students to grasp the concept of what's happening within Europe.

On to the next one. What's this one? European Social Policy?

Well, that's linked to Demographic Trends, basically. Demographic trends is what is happening, and of course, policy should meet demographic trends. And the policy issued should address the problems within demographic trends.

So you would say that you have learned more about European Social Policy issues.

Yes. The more down-to-earth issues, rather than the straight, issues, ... 'yes, we have large unemployment', 'yes, we have unemployment'. Their benefit system is different to ours, they ... how their systems work. It was very beneficial that, because a colleague at university in Leeds was going out to Germany, and, going to visit various, erm, workshop situations for unemployed people, and they were not up-to-date on any of the benefit systems, so I actually got Elke to send him a lot of details. So, I disseminated that information to Dr ... I can't remember his name now, at Leeds, whose German is very good, so he translated all the documentation, because it came across in German, obviously, ..., not to do with the partnership, it was just an offshoot, if you like.

What do you feel about an offshoot like that? How did that make you feel?

I think it gives you a good feeling, that your relationships are strong enough to be able to ask a partner to send you some information that isn't necessarily a part of the project, and to take time out to do that for you, and be happy to do it.

And in relationship to Dr Whatever-his-name-was at Leeds?

He was very pleased with what, ... because he could have got it himself, but it was taking quite a while to come through. And that at least came directly from an area where he was going to be involved in visiting. That again is going back to development of Interpersonal Relationship Skills, and the attitude to working together in the partnership, that you can call on one another for extra information, over and above what is in the plan, if you like.

Yes, and then pass that on to other people.

Yes, and pass it on as well. It extends the network, because if I want anything from Keith, at Leeds, I can ask him! I always have an ulterior motive! I may need a favour from you one day!

Right. What have you got now?

I've got Market Trends and Selling the Concept of Learning. Very early on in the discussions we had, it was clear that they were OK on, you know, the demographic trends, the interchange of ideas and concepts. But it was clear that Germany, in particular, were having one or two marketing problems. Erm, selling the concept of learning. And again, it was a language problem [note - Norman makes no distinction between language problems as between Western European languages, and language problems involving languages from Asia and elsewhere outside Europe]. They were dealing with people whose first language was not German, with the immigrant workers, Polish, Russian, etc., and because of the regime, - this links back to policy again - the social policy and the legislation in their own countries made them very distrustful of governments, or any authority. So trying to sell the concept of learning to them, you know, Germany were initially having major problems in, in getting them to accept that it was beneficial to them. Better for them to attend, and they would get Benefit because they were doing the programmes. I had long discussions with Elke and various people and, ..., said that 'the best publicity you will have, is when you've achieved the first group, and you could go on through that community, by word of mouth, rather than doing a hard selling job on them. And that's how it evolved, actually.

It sounds as though you taught them, effectively. What would you say about your learning experience there? Would you say that it went beyond the concept ...?

Yes. Certainly in terms of concepts, ideas. Again, it's keeping them on the right track, not getting too disheartened at poor results from the early stages. In relation to numbers of beneficiaries, difficult to get beneficiaries in, they weren't believing what they were saying to the beneficiaries. And that was very much political, a refugee, mental attitude, because of the background and the countries that they'd come from. In relation to trusting people, basically. And sort of reinforcing that, 'don't worry about it, it will come right'. Whether that's using marketing knowledge, or interpersonal skills, or however you like to wrap it up, but they were getting very concerned that the project was going to lose its impetus, and it was like going to fall apart. Because of this business of language, its being a barrier.

I have used my experience, I have used my skills, if you like, from previous jobs.

Have you learned anything new from doing this?

I suppose every experience that you go through is a learning experience, adding to your skills, so yes, in relation to, when it works, it's confidence-building. In relation to running a project. So therefore the learning part of it gives you a kick. It's pleasing, it's rewarding, that your ideas, your concept of the situation has been adopted and that it's worked out.

And would you see that as applicable in a different context?

Yes, I think it's ongoing, because you're passing on experience quite a lot of the time. And I think with us being a college and me personally being involved in training, in relation to the 'outside of the college' concept of learning, and marketing, etc. I think in that context, you can offer a lot more, often, than the partners can. So it tends to be a one-way street, that one. Then there are the things that you develop through the project: you pick up different techniques that they're using, that you can utilise as well.

On to the next one.

Developing programmes? Yes. We had quite a number of programmes, because I've been involved in developing training courses, not only in my own area of work, but in areas that are related - in relation to your Special Needs categories, so a lot of the programmes that I had were interchangeable or adaptable. So again, that's developing the programmes. And I have taken things from their programmes and used them so it was a good interchange. It's going back to concepts and ideas again, but in a more practical sense. So I would photocopy my programmes and send them to Mieke, and she would pick out various aspects of that that she could use and utilise in her own teaching areas. For example, in NOW, her next round, she's looking at extending to the elderly. Well of course, we have a lot of expertise here on the elderly and social care, so a lot of the information that I can now pass on to her will be applicable to what she's trying to develop, so that, I suppose, has been helpful and rewarding, because you're helping somebody else progress as well. And the same with Germany. I think that helped me a lot in developing more awareness in relation to language and titles, and what's in a title. The first concept I had of the German partnership was that they were running actually nurse training. Nurse training in the UK is entirely different to Germany. And it's 'what's in a name?'. Their care workers [undergoing training], they are looked upon as being nurse training. And we would consider that, as I say, as social care, not nursing care. So their short-term programmes have nothing to do with nurse training, they're actually taking on a programme that's ours, looking at residential care worker.

What do you think you learned through that? Could you encapsulate that?

I think I learned that the procedure there is not to take on first value the title, but to actually analyse [sic] that title, to see what exactly does that mean? What is the content of the programme? What is [sic] the outcomes? What qualification have they actually got? Where can they work when they have done their particular training programmes? And it was Orderly, Residential Care levels, what we would have called Orderlies, they were called nursing orderlies, whereas we would just have classified those as orderlies.

How do you find that process of teasing out what lies behind the terminology?

I'm good at jigsaw puzzles! And crosswords! And anagrams! I think it's just, initially, until you build up the relationships, and get on better as individuals, you tend to take everything on face value. So what you are hearing is what you are believing, or your interpretation of what you are hearing, which might come across incorrectly in the translation. So apart from translation and interpretation, yes, it does teach you to listen more carefully. And don't just jump to conclusions. Have you got all that? It's a bit different from ordinary conversations about the project.

Yes, it's all on tape here. And yes, it's not the same as the usual discussions we have about the projects, whether they're on target, whether they're meeting their objectives or not ...

Well, it's personal development, isn't it? I think if I had not had the background I had, I might have found it a lot harder, running the project, because I wouldn't necessarily have had the skills, that were needed initially. I would have had to develop them, and I think I probably had a lot of those. It's going back to the learning process, isn't it? You should not forget what you've learned, sort of thing, even though you don't necessarily use it for a while, you still have that skill that you have developed. So I suppose that running the project, rather than just being involved in a project, I may be more consciously relating back and using skills that I wasn't necessarily using over the last number of years.

For example?

For example, the line management skills, the leadership and interpersonal relationship skills.

And is that an opportunity you would not otherwise have had?

I wouldn't have used them to the depth that I have if I hadn't been involved in transnational working partnerships.

How do you feel about that?

Good, because I enjoy that kind of involvement. It's a challenge.

If you hadn't had that kind of background, would you have been able to enjoy the project so much, do you think?

Not as much. Because it would have been a lot harder work and more frustrating. Getting your head round the whole concept and idea of transnational working relationships.

What do you think are the hardest parts of those relationships?

I think once the submission's in, and you've read and re-read it and re-read it, and you have quite a fixed, or a good idea of what the aims and objectives are, and try all the time to remember what they are and relate back to it, ongoing, and 'are you going down the right lines?' and 'is this meeting the objectives?', that you submitted, you know, you could lose track a bit with that. Self-discipline? To a certain extent. And evaluation. Constant evaluation of what you're doing, and always trying to relate it back to the issues. And running some of the meetings as well. You tend to get side-tracked, and you need that, leadership skill, if you like, to bring people back into focus. So that's again, self-development, isn't it? Self-development, self-discipline, to be able to do that. Otherwise you lose sight of your goal.

To what extent would you say that that's different from running a national project? Where do the difference lie between that and your project?

I don't think it's any different, the operational things that you would have to do, whether it's a national one or a transnational one, or just an initiative in the college, the same rules should apply. In relation to the focusing. I think the only difference is, when you are working with transnational partners, initially, their background and experience is of an unknown quantity, and so it's learning about where they are, within their own organisation, and their own skills areas and their own ability. I think once that has gelled, it does make life easier.

You've got one last card here: Cultural Awareness.

Cultural Awareness. That could have been linked also to Demographic Trends, actually, because, if you're looking at a society, or a group of people within a society, you're not necessarily aware of the cultural differences. You could be aware of the social class differences, because of the job or situation, and houses. I think what struck me, going to Germany in particular, was the cultural problems that also came about, for the people on the training programmes. There was this cultural ..., the expectation of the woman's role. We're back to sex and inequalities. She was not seen as someone who should go out and look for work, or work. She was seen as the homemaker, the mother-figure, as we probably had it in our society 30 or 40 years ago. And their ..., the conditions of living were more cultural, mainly through lack of opportunity probably, the reason. Where you might have had 6 or 7 in one room, so because of the cultural expectations of the mother-figure, ... study time. Where did she study? How did she study? How could she get her assignments and things together to progress? Down in the laundry room, watching the washing machine go round. And that was the peasant culture from some of the countries that they had come from, into Germany, so they had, it was very much a cultural problem rather than anything else. The support was not being given to these women wanting to do training because it was not thought to be needed to be given. And the priority, the cultural difference. And with the ethnic ..., some of the ethnic groups in Germany, the cultural backgrounds.

Do you think you might have found that out if you'd been involved in a national project in this country?

In a superficial way.

Why the difference?

The difference is that you get it from the horse's mouth, by being there first-hand, spending the day with these people in the project, and these things come out in a conversation. We had workshops, and these were discussions in the workshops, of the problems of learning, that our students in the UK have similar problems, but certainly not as severe as those that were coming out in those discussions. So again, when you're looking at European Awareness and putting it into our programmes, you can talk more confidently about the problems that people from different backgrounds and different cultures experience in learning, and relate it more to, well, the re-unification of Germany, for example. You could talk about that in a superficial way, that in 1989 the Wall came down, and that the eastern sector and the western sector sort of merged and people flooded across the borders, and that's fine. That's superficial. And a lot of people have that awareness, but they don't take that a stage further and say, 'what kind of problems do they have when they stop walking?'. Or when whatever, 'what happens to them?'. What kind of housing do they get? and it's very, very poor. It's like being, probably, in camps, or ... How do they get a job? How do they claim benefit? What does the benefit system mean to them? How can they get employment? Back to going through the DAA, getting these people into training programmes. How do they cope with training programmes? Because they don't speak German. So the cultural awareness of all the problems, that it made me more aware of, was good, because, you read about it in the paper, and you can do it under Social Policy, and you can do it under European projects, you can do it at university. But you're reading about it, you're not experiencing it, not getting the nitty-gritty, down-to-earth, day-to-day problems that these people are experiencing. So - developing knowledge, realisation of other people's problems, or acceptance of the problems that they're having - other people shrug their shoulders and think 'so what?', particularly if they're from different cultural backgrounds. Within our society, we have them [ethnic minorities], we accept that they're there, but do we really appreciate the differences? And the problems that their differences might present to them? I think we're aware of them, but do we really help to try to stop, well, the implications?

To what extent had you anticipated this aspect of work on the project?

Very little. I'd thought that there'd be one or two cultural differences, because I was aware of the post-war situation of Germany, in relation to the influx of Turkish workers, you know, the title for them originally was 'guest workers', so I was quite aware of that particular system, and how long they'd have to be there before they gained citizenship, and everything else around their social problems. But they were just, like, 'social problems', they were just identified as, well, that's the social policy, and you have to live in Germany for 40 years before you can apply for citizenship, and even then they might think And the problem was with Turkish workers, might be that they were still related very strongly to their native country, so they were caught in this trap of being unemployed and disappearing back to Turkey for 3 months in every year, and every time they came back into Germany they were starting from scratch again, so they were never going to qualify. So - I had some cultural awareness of the religious differences in Germany in relation to training. And the involvement of the Church in relation to hospitals and child care facilities.

How has your work on the project enhanced that, do you think?

How has MY work enhanced that? It's given me a lot more first-hand knowledge and a lot more information to make my programmes, if you like, in relation to European Awareness, more enjoyable. I mean, where it's not enjoyable to listen to other people's problems, it's more interesting, for the students to tune into, rather than just straightforward issues and just dry, factual information.

You've grouped these into groups of 3. Within this group, which 2 of these would you associate? What do they have in common? What makes that one different?

That's the Interchange of Concepts and Ideas. So they are ... just concepts and ideas, basically! What could happen, what may happen. Theory. Demographic Trends are there. They're happening. They're not ideas, they're just what is happening within society. So if you like, there are needs, so I need to do Social Policy, because, so Social Policy should be meeting those needs. So policy decisions, whether European, or German or Belgian or UK, should be addressing the issues that are arising from the demographic trends. You know, from statistics, the trend is that there's a huge change in industry, because of the unskilled labour force, it's no longer required, and if we have 3 million unskilled workers in the area, then we need to do something to 'up' the skills of those workers to gain employment into [sic] the new industries. So policies should be, that should lead policy decisions.

Can I ask you now to look at those cards again from a different point-of-view and say what your learning experience was?

Understanding the demographic trends and the problems, and if they're similar - which they are in Germany compared to the UK - and from that understanding come the concepts and ideas, and how to meet that identified need. Making the policies more realistic was a learning experience. Making them much more realistic. Relating them to first-hand information on the situation as it is.

To what degree do you feel that working on the transnational project has given you new opportunities to learn?

A large degree. New opportunities to be more involved in budgeting, managing a European project, as well as running it, the administration that's required, and being more involved in submissions. Monitoring and evaluation, writing the reports, giving feedback, disseminating information to colleagues.

Could you have done all of those things equally well under a national project? Is there anything that sets it apart from a national project?

I think the interest would not have been as rewarding in a national project, because of the opportunity to travel. And to see how other people operate in an entirely different concept [context?] to the UK. And that's not just travel for the word 'travel', because none of it's a holiday. It's all hard work, and you take the opportunity to stretch yourself and so on. Mentally. When you're constantly doing something all the time, it gets very repetitive, and it becomes less of a challenge. For example, being course tutor on the same programme, and running and organising it, delivering it, timetabling, and advertising and the whole issue of being a course tutor and a course co-ordinator. Repetition becomes boring. Whereby doing something totally different, because it is a different concept to being face-to-face in a classroom, lecturing, it therefore becomes more challenging, just in its concept. Every situation that is new, and challenging, if you meet the challenge, it's rewarding. So you must learn, and you must develop. I know you a lot better since I got involved in transnational work. When I first came to the College you were 'Anne Davidson Lund - who's she? Oh, she's the International Manager. Right'. And more people are aware of me and my abilities, than they were, probably, 3 years ago. The consequences of that are better working relationships. And that rubs off onto other people, like, Karen [Finance manager]. If I hadn't got involved in this I would never have got to know Elaine, and I wouldn't have had any discussions, or anything to do with the Finance Department. And, like, Maude, and the people at Blackburn, and so on.

Have you learned anything which has affected your understanding in relation to Europe in any sense?

Geographical. Yes. A lot of the places were just names on a map, and didn't relate specifically to areas that might have been working class areas, industrial - heavy, light industrial - rural, and areas, that I visited, I got a better concept of their ... exactly, what kind of area. So a geographical awareness. And distance. It just proves yet again how small the world is. What else? Sampling different beers! It was the social aspect. Not Mieke's 'til-five-o'clock-in-the-morning, and going on pub crawls and discos and that, I didn't go for that part of it at all, but the Belgian beer was very good. I think it's part of the whole, isn't it? You can't have one without the other, basically. You can have a pure business attitude towards the work, and not get involved socially, well, not get involved in the social aspects in the same way.

What do you think the consequences of that would be?

Well, you would not get as good [sic] working relationships with the transnational partners. I think it's got to be a 50-50 friendship, a partnership in relation to what you're trying to do in working together.

Do you find that that relationship has come about solely because of the visiting?

No, because we haven't done that much visiting. In the 3 years I've visited Belgium, and I've visited Germany, and I've visited Ireland. Just once each time, for 2 days, 3 days.

So how would you say that your awareness and your relationship with the transnational partners has developed if it's not just through the visits?

Obviously through the use of technology. Fax, telephone, keeping in touch with them on a very regular basis. And having a friendly attitude towards whatever discussion you're having at any particular time. And fulfilling what you say you're going to do, making sure it happens. Not just talking about things. The follow-through.

Talking about your enhanced awareness of European issues: what consequences does that have for you personally?

I could quite happily work in some of those other countries. And not find it shocking or daunting. Because of having more awareness of the cultural side. The whole area.

Would you say that your attitude to Europe has changed?

That's a very difficult one at the moment, because I'm quite a political creature [day before the UK General Elections]. And this shouldn't get political. I must admit, that within the transnational partnership, we do not get involved in political arguments, about European policy, the Single currency, Maastricht, or anything.

Is that by common agreement?

No, I think it's just that perhaps the people that are partners with us are not politically-minded creatures. So therefore, it's not important, and an issue, or they don't feel strongly enough about the issues to let it affect what we try to do in the partnership. But to ask me that question at the moment, with what Labour is saying, and what the Conservatives are saying and what the Liberals are saying ... I'm very pro-Europe, I mean, being pro-Europe for a kick-off made me interested in meeting the challenge of a European project, because they are pro-Europe.

Has running the project altered your attitude to Europe at all?

No. I'm still very pro-Europe.

What aspects of the project have helped to reinforce that?

I think mainly the hard work, and the attitude, and the determination of the participating countries. In making what they're trying to do, trying to achieve, into good outcomes for the students. We're all on one footing. We're equal professionals, despite the cultural differences.

Has your attitude to other countries changed as a result of your experience in the project?

People tend to think that I'm biased against certain ethnic backgrounds, but I'm not. If that has come across to some members of staff, which I'm sure it has done before, that I have a colour-bias, I don't. I have a work-shy-bias. And it just happens that the bias came out against a member of staff who just happened to be coloured. So, I do have a slight reputation for being a racist. But I would have made the same remarks about a Chinaman or an Englishman, or whatever colour their skin was. I think their attitude to work, [the German project beneficiaries] has made a difference. I'm probably more understanding and more tolerant of the problems that face different backgrounds, regardless of skin colour.

What about your attitude to the transnational partners you've been working with, and their cultural backgrounds?

They were just people, for me. They weren't German, they weren't Belgian, they weren't, you know, ... I didn't identify them as like, sort of Germans, or Belgians, or Irish, etc. To me they were people with the same sort of working ideas I tend to see them as people first, and then as race, or colour or whatever, later. You have to be open-minded.

Because if you go in with some pre-fixed concepts, ideas, they would be identified, they would be subconsciously picked up. One could have a relation to Germany, because of the two World Wars, etc., and the Irish issue, we've been indoctrinated by our parents. If you like, they have a great deal of difficulty to have a relationship of respect with a nation that you have a great deal of hate for. You know, a nation that you have no respect for because of what has happened in the past. I think you've just got to divorce yourself from having those kind of reactions, because if you have, it will make life very difficult for you, because you won't be able to hide them, no matter how hard you try. And I think people can sense likes and dislikes of a nation or culture, even if you don't dislike them as an individual.

How do you think that might be expressed?

Just in attitudes, being in that particular country, just attitudes towards people, even in a hotel. I've not seen that within this project, but I have experienced it first-hand before. In France. The attitude towards the British. IN Holland, the attitude towards the Germans, they dislike the German.

Would it have made a difference to you if you'd had a French partner in this project?

No. No, no. I don't dislike the Frogs at all! Even though they ran away in two World Wars and let the Germans take over their bloody country! [Very tongue-in-cheek!]

Different identities. Would you say that your identity has been affected by your involvement in this project?

In the eyes of other people? Or in my own eyes? No, I don't think so. I think I've always had a healthy attitude towards my own identity in relation to what I'm doing.

And in terms of Europe. Would you say you've acquired another layer to your identity?

No, I don't think so. I think I've learned a lot, and I've experienced a lot, and I've added to my knowledge, considerably, and my awareness. But I don't think that it's changed my identity. I think I had that awareness anyhow, and the attitude, anyhow. All it's done is enhance that attitude. I don't think I've acquired a European identity, because I was quite pro-Europe, you see. As I said. So, probably more so with friends and colleagues, you know, 'Norman's involved with Europe', but that's other people's concepts. I've never felt that I think that it's probably given me more awareness, countries that benefit in relation to Europe, and the categories they fit into. The Objective 1 countries, and how the UK fits into that, and Portugal and Ireland and various places like that. But I had that knowledge before. Probably more awareness. Much more awareness. Enhanced the knowledge that I had.

How do you feel, as a result of the project, in terms of your professional capacity?

I would say it's enhanced my professional ability. The attitudes. Planning, preparation. My communication skills. Use of technology. Anything else?

Would you say that you're better placed now to function more effectively in your professional role?

You'll just have to arrange for me to have the assessment [for redundancy] and see how far up the scale I come now for adaptability and flexibility! Yes, of course I do. Why? Joking apart, about flexibility and adaptability, I think the knowledge gives you more than classroom situations. Budgeting, managing finance, talking to Finance, being involved with other people within the college, I suppose it gives you another string to the bow, rather than just being a straightforward (straightforward, that sounds very detrimental [disparaging?]) lecturer. I think it gives you additional skills.

And is there anything specifically from the transnational side?

I think more and more, as we get towards the year 2000, more and more courses are going to need the European input, in not only policy, but all levels of courses. From management courses downwards. It gives you an additional skill, to have that knowledge and working experience, to be able to teach better on those programmes.

If you were offered the opportunity to participate again in one of these projects, would you?

Definitely! Yes. It creates a vast amount of extra work, it can be tiring, exhausting, but having said that, it's very rewarding. In the particular way, that it gives you a sense of achievement, using other people's money - especially Blackburn's! - no, I find it gives me a good deal of job satisfaction, because it takes out the boring routine. It's part of my working life that's different to that of some of my colleagues, and I find I need a challenge.

And do you find that it's different in terms of being involved in the project - as you have been before - or running it?

Erm, it's more challenging to run it than just to be involved, so therefore the feeling of satisfaction is even higher. But only when it's going right!

Yes - it's nice to come to Anne Davidson Lund's meetings, well-prepared, and get a nice little pat on the shoulder, in front of other people in Nusquam College who aren't as well-prepared! Yes, joking apart, that is a point, the recognition, by other people. Again, that's to do with their concept, isn't it? But even more, I would recognise people like yourself, and to get the occasional thank-you for the effort, because so many people in this organisation don't have the ability to do that for others. And I do think that's quite rewarding, for somebody to turn round and say, 'thanks, Norman, that's great', even if it's just over the telephone.

Do you think running the project has made you more able to cope with other initiatives?

No. Mainly because of my background, I had those skills anyhow. I would say the project has effectively brought a lot of those skills back into play. It's enhanced them, and made me use them.

If someone were to ask you if they should get involved in a project like this, what would you say?

The answer's got to be 'no', because I want to continue to be involved with them! I don't want some person coming along and taking this away from me! In general terms, I would encourage people to become involved in European development, most decidedly, for all the reasons we've discussed. I mean, I am often on the receiving end of some snide comments, because I'm involved in Europe, you know the 'why can't I have all these extra hours off my timetable?', 'how do you manage to get these hours?', 'where do you get them from?'

What would it take to counteract these sorts of comments, do you think?

Involve them more in what you're doing, give them more feedback, try to get them to understand, more awareness of just what's involved in European development work. We haven't got the time to sit staff down and explain what it means, explain that I may be allowed 6 hours on the project, but I'm actually spending 12, 13, 14 if you're prepared to do that They might understand more what's involved. It's just human nature, everyone's going through a hard time.

Anything else you want to add?

No, except that I've really enjoyed the discussion, and I hope what I've said has been useful for you.

Sonia

A So, go on, you were saying you haven't

S I haven't done it because it was daunting. It's one of those things that you open and think "gosh, that looks as if it needs some reading and I haven't got the brain at the moment, I'll look at it later on" and then it stays on your desk and you fail to find your brain for long periods and you get distracted and move offices and I haven't done it. But I have tried to think interestingly, you'd sort of outlined the general areas that you were interested in and many of the things that you've just flagged up there were things that have actually come through when I've been thinking about it. I was trying to keep the diary, I haven't succeeded in keeping it all the time but I've picked out because I'm not the main administrator of the project, obviously, that's Betty, isn't it?

A That's right, yes.

S My involvement to some extent is peripheral but its been flagged by events and meetings and things, they're the bits that I've circled in this [log]. The writing of the journal bit which started off do you want me to go through the journal?

A You can if you like, it's as good a starting point as any.

S It started off being quite sterile really about frustrations with the fact that systems s weren't compatible with Sweden and Belgium and the whole idea was for the kids to get competent with the new technology, not to see it as something that was totally flawed and it never worked because they couldn't get the right systems and Allsworth [a college centre not connected to the Internet] didn't have it and they had to go ten miles away to use it, you know. And there was all that and it seemed to be defeating the object which was to make them feel familiar and comfortable, not uncomfortable and not able to use it. So they are those sort of frustrations which were a bit insoluble because it all depended on College being able to get the right sort of equipment and budgets that went with it in the timescales and things. So it started off with the sort of things that Betty would come to me and say "oh, we still haven't got hooked up to the" whatever it was and "how can Elsie's group do this at Allsworth when it's only available here". And Ida would say to me things like "how is it they've got us going to somebody's room to do the email and so that inhibits them and I can't send big groups in there and so I've got to set it up and so they're not controlling their own learning in that they're making the contacts" and it was all a bit like that. Then, (I am struggling to work out when this was actually) probably about half-way through the project, some time around March/April time Betty went to Belgium and I thought that this had a sort of it sort of highlighted their staff/ student ratios and the differences in pressures in their institutions and ours because when she got there they suddenly came up with "oh, we've decided to bring the group over to see you in May" and she came back and said "oh you know, this is really nice, and it's

wonderful that they're able to come ... but how can they just at the drop of a hat say oh, we can let two members of staff disappear out of the working situation to bring them over" I don't know, they brought over about six or eight students

A Yes, I remember seeing about half-a-dozen.

S It wasn't many anyway. And they just kind of like appeared and they didn't seem to have taken on board the fact that that had had a massive impact, because also the Swedish people did the same thing at the same time, that this was going to have a big impact on even the logistics of size of groups for the rooms and the fact they obviously didn't understand, although some of them had been before, that we were on three sites, and so it wasn't like being in a small school building where you could perhaps mix and match groups easily. That it meant people being moved about in mini-vans and it was a massive logistical exercise, and Betty came back to sort of sort it out within a very short space of time - about three weeks or something.

A It was the Easter holidays in between too

S Yes, she didn't have very long. And that kind of highlighted their lack of pressure in many ways, that they hadn't foreseen this as being anything that was probably overburdening somebody in their day-to-day work. I can only assume that they must have student/staff ratios that mean that they can free up people to take on something and replace them with somebody else.

A Yes, I suppose so, they are a very small institution, so it's an advantage.

S Mmm. They're not terribly big in Sweden, are they?

A No.

S And so that sort of like emphasised the massive differences in the type of provision and the working practices and the sort of stresses that people are under in that they have been just floated in that way and they had to come back and sort it all out. And this was a stereotypical thing as well that I've seen the Swedish people and to a greater extent the Belgian people as being extremely organised and so forth. And I know that Betty was saying to me "they still haven't confirmed how many people are coming and how do they expect me to book accommodation" and "I can't book them in at such a place because I don't know who it is and what time they're coming and how many rooms for what mix of people". There was just it's a very *laissez faire* attitude and yet my stereotypical view of particularly the Belgian/German people was of this great organisational skill and you know, things being firmly in black and white.

A Where does that view come from?

- S Where does that view come from? I formed the view because of visiting the institutions and looking at the teaching schedules and their outcomes which are very defined. And having sat in on some of the lessons and found that I suppose it was from a knowledge of their curriculum that such a thing is meant to happen at such a time on such a day and it jolly well does and that's the outcome. Now this has had a bit of a
- A That's in Belgium?
- S That's in Belgium and it is my stereotypical view of the German people as well and I've also heard that about the French curriculum but that's by the by. But this has also had a spin-off in the working with the people in that and it is a critical thing to say, because we did go to look at their outcomes, which were very very impressive in the vocational areas, in a way to motivate our staff, for them to see that such outcomes are possible from students with learning disabilities. And it is very structured and it is very well-organised but this is such a dynamic culture in further education, certainly in this working environment [Nusquam], that we expect our staff to pick up an idea and develop it and run with it and score and get the outcome. And it's been exemplified through the meetings that we've had with them that they don't seem to have that it's certainly not something that you're used to doing - I'm not saying that they haven't got the ability if it were something that they developed, but they don't do it. Very much all of the innovations have had to come from this end and at times it's beenI think I have put in here "like wading through treacle" trying to get them to come up with something that's not like "yes, yes, yes, that'll be fine, we'll do that" and come up with something original, innovative, an idea to develop. Because it's been very difficult and it's not a criticism, it's just an observation about a very different way of working, in that they seem to devise something and it stays there and perhaps it's refined, we don't know that, and the outcomes are usually good. But certainly the head of school has said to me that he wished that he had staff like I had who would pick up something and run with it and make it happen.
- A There seems to be a dichotomy of the way people are talking and thinking back to the period when the team, the delivery team here in Nusquam, went out to Belgium to see what was going on. What do you think it is? Why were you as a team particularly attracted to the Belgian way of doing things, to want to go and have a look at it in detail then, and then at the same time, to say that although, yes, it was attractive, the way that Belgians do it or the results that they achieve, or the way that the staff tackle the curriculum delivery is something that we could copy and bring back? Have I understood that correctly?
- S There is a mis-match.
- A It's not a criticism, I am curious to find out a bit more about it because it intrigues me.

S The reason for that visit wasn't to have a transparent model, because it could never be a transparent model because of the difference in the institutions, the length of time that the students were there. They take their students over about a seven-year ... in effect, 'apprenticeship' system and we typically have ours for well in special education it seems like we have them for a year or two and then hopefully we are able to get them along to an appropriate level of mainstream. The reasons for taking the staff to look at that [in Belgium] was that we were required by external validation funding, so the FEFC were asking us to have tangible outcomes that we didn't have. At that time we had a system which was about developing the individual, his basic advocacy, the individual making choice, personal development and ... independence. And we were successful at doing that but it didn't have a measurable outcome because it's very difficult to measure an individual

A Yes, how do you measure that kind of

S Yes, you can't do that. So, not at the back of our mind was the fact that we're about to be inspected [FEFC]. And also, because of the changing and funding in the FEFC and the infamous Schedule 2, which was obviously going to be reviewed and we knew that if we didn't get our courses funded by the FEFC then we would cease to exist. So it was essential to get some funding and obviously to get the funding we had to have a measurable outcome and the measurable outcome had to be very tangible. And we were also looking I was looking to give our students currency in the mainstream world. They might have educational needs and they might be 'special' (in inverted commas), but out there they've got to exist. And you do get people who are sensitive to meeting them and they make allowances but by and large if they're fighting along with everybody else in addition well, in what still is a very difficult economic situation so they need currency and they need hard currency in terms of their qualifications. Now the kids in Belgium were getting that through this very long period, they were coming out at skilled workers. You've been to Idesbald, haven't you?

A I haven't.

S You haven't, oh, because ... oh, it's actually been put on the back burner. If you do go and you see what they do, it's absolutely stunning. The final project, they have to select a vocational area to through the first couple of years of this project, which starts when they're about eleven or so, but then they allocate [sic] to become a joiner, a plumber, a bricklayer, whatever - it's mainly boys. But the outcomes are so impressive, the final project for the final year and a lot of them are from backgrounds where they don't have a home to go to, so it's anticipated that they will be living in shelters or independent situations, but that they actually make the furniture for their apartments. And the furniture that they make for their apartment you would have in your apartment because it is very very high quality stuff.

- A I've seen the furniture in Peeter's office, furniture which the students had made.
- S It's very very impressive and they go out with skills and a means to earn money. And so you can't measure it, but it would seem that they have a range of the same problems that our students have, and so I was saying to the [UK] staff, "look, OK, we've got happy happy people here, we're sending them out hopefully better balanced than they were when they came to us and they've got a lot more interpersonal skills and so forth but you don't have the currency in this big world outside of although it's not a transposable model because of the timescale and because of the size of the institution and so forth, I think that we can aim towards those more structured outcomes". Now because they have been doing it for a long time and because it is very structured they've got these sort of 'learning sets' - or whatever you want to call them - and they pull out the lesson plans for you for every session, you see, and so it doesn't flex with the individual. For example, at the moment, I don't know if you know, Nusquam College is going to be one of the lead colleges in the staff development on the new funding round and what was worrying me a bit was because our programmes are so very much geared towards, not just the individual within the group but that flavour of that group in that particular year. We don't have a filing cabinet where you open the thing and say, "right, for September, we do this, this and this", it will vary a little bit depending on the needs that we see and that the students present to us. It might change if we think that we need an input on a particular theme. Now that doesn't happen over there and while the product that they are their own product is very very admirable and I think that the learning that goes on within those sets is very admirable, it may be that it's narrow when it relates to the individual.
- A I have a concern about that as well in that while they're producing skilled craftsmen, they haven't looked in terms of labour market research to see whether the skilled people they're producing can actually become employed. I'm not at all sure that all the youngsters leaving St. Idesbald can find work.
- S No I don't think there's a bit of a problem with their certification in that if it's very frustrating for both the students and the staff, Peeter was telling us, but if they actually certificated as I don't know what their phrase is, but a Class 1 Craftsman or whatever it is, equivalent to our NVQ whatever level, then it precludes them for ever having the supported living allowance, as in, you know, the grants that they're able to get from the social system.
- A So it's working against them.
- S Almost does. Because they may have a certification for a technical skill but it may be that they've got social or interpersonal skills that maybe then don't preclude them from the labour market but make it quite difficult for them. And so they are almost handicapping themselves by being successful in a skill area. And I know that Peeter and the students and the staff sometimes have to ask themselves very

difficult questions about whether or not some should or shouldn't succeed in that area.

A For the wrong reasons.

S For the wrong reasons, yes. Because they do work with local companies and they have the cultural thing that interested me was that they have soirées of the nature that we don't have that people come into school and are royally entertained and are interested sort of local business people. Now I suppose we have to a certain extent but not in the way that they do.

A I wonder again if that's a function of the size of the institution and its place in the community?

S It probably is, yes.

A It must be much easier to have a defined identity for that institution in that area.

S Because there are obviously certain industries that are viable or not viable there, because they did have an upholstery department which looked very good, but apparently there wasn't an awful lot of people interested in it and I don't think the area could provide a lot of work, so they are running that down and changing it. And it all sort of indicates that they do look at the market and they don't stay the same for ever and ever, they do change from time to time.

A Although you seem to be indicating that you're a bit surprised by that?

S I am and that'll come

A Laughter.

S Well, yes. Some of the things that I've written later, I mean one of the questions that you just read out to me was about the and you were laughing at the time you said it, for reasons that we know, about personal relationships and the depth of personal relationships. Can you just recap. on that little bit of

A Yes, just to talk about the personal contact outside the project, well, outside the meetings

S Yes. Well, in this particular project that became quite large actually and it wasn't something that anyone could have ever anticipated being. But you remember that I yes, you did know about it at the time that Jos's son committed suicide and the timing was very pertinent as well, the staff had been with the students and it was during the time that Jos and the students and Lieven were travelling home [from Nusquam to Wendelare] that this event actually took place. So he transferred himself from Nusquam to his son's suicide and that had a big impact

on both the project, Jos as an individual, and Lieven as a supporting member of staff. The subsequent week it was the 'Euro-evaluation' week and so Jos and Lieven were down to come again, together with different Swedish staff actually I think there might have been one that was the same but I can't remember, but anyway and there was some kind of debate about whether or not Lieven would come or whether he wouldn't. But Lieven did come in the event because Jos had said that he wanted him to come and so he did come but over dinner in a restaurant we had an opportunity to talk about Jos's situation and what had happened and this kind of like illustrated both the kind of degree of developing relationships within the three different nationality groups and also it gave me an insight into the Belgian institutional situation. That within the restaurant the conversation was very much about Jos and how it had affected him, but Lieven and Jos had actually been at college together and had got their first job at Idesbald together and were still at Idesbald together 20-odd years later.

A Oh, good gracious!

S This has got a sort of bearing on how it sounds rude to say 'undynamic' but how undynamic perhaps career pathways are or an institution is. Anyhow, this had happened and Jos and Lieven had known each other over a lot of years and so Lieven had been very involved in Jos's disaster and had been staying at Jos's house with him and his wife. And him [sic] coming out of that situation into a foreign country, into a different set of people, but albeit a supportive set of people, gave him the opportunity to have his own catharsis and he obviously very much needed to talk to a group of people who weren't directly or intimately involved with this tragedy. Because he had been involvedthere's a lot of contact between Jos and his wife, because Jos had been here when it happened, he had a lot of guilt that he wasn't there at the time, and he'd turned the guilt into aggression towards his wife and the two of them had been unable to resolve this ... tragedy between them because they were separated by these conflicts. And Lieven had been very much a part of trying to help them in this. So he came over to us a very emotionally exhausted person really, and it was very good actually how the Swedish people and the English people and he were able to spend quite a lot of time talking about the situation. And being involved enough with to know Jos and to be able to understand the situation - and interestingly all the people round the table had two boys and Jos had two boys - I think the one Swedish person had a younger daughter as well, but we were all potentially in that situation that Jos had found himself in. And we were able, I think, to help Lieven really, because to go on to what I was going to say about the institution (I've written it down here) that the differences that I then perceived about the two institutions was that Lieven and Jos had spent the whole of their working lives, since training the whole of their working lives together and that the whole school was almost like an extended family. But the weakness of that was because it was based in the Catholic religion and there was a massive stigma attached to suicide.

A Of course.

S And because Jos had found himself in this situation he wasn't, at that point, able to project ... to go back into that situation because of the stigma that he thought that he would carry. And the support network of cultural differences and the small institution had almost backfired. What I was saying was that an English institution is so, by comparison, (I've written it down in better words than I am thinking of to say let me look what I've put) "the Belgian environment is very warm, it's almost an extended family situation but it might be claustrophobic in that it's so closely associated with the individual that it provides no escape from - in fact a distraction - from one set of problems to something entirely separate, whereas the English work environment disassociates itself from the individual's intimacies and so in doing so, almost by default, offers an opportunity to escape from it" and that doesn't. It's got enormous strength in that Peeter, the head of the school, had been sleeping at Jos's house and I was speaking to Peeter on the 'phone and he was so choked about the whole thing that he couldn't say very much about it. And I'd written back to Jos saying that I know that he associated Nusquam as being like the end of a part of his life which didn't have problems, the end of a part of a period of happiness, and Nusquam was kind of like the moving to a very dark and difficult part of his life. So that was sort of exemplified by the fact that when Lieven came over here he'd also associated it, very much Nusquam, with this kind of thing that had evolved as soon as Jos got back. But what had interested me was that a group of people who'd had a professional contact were able to associate so closely about a disaster. And I thinkwell because I have written since and they've written since ... they actuallyit's very formal, again a cultural difference that the funeral situations are very formal and it

A They sent a letter of notification

S He sent a notification. And the invitations as well. And he sent a death picture of Benny, who was the son, and a poem which I can't understand, you might be able to understand it, actually that was written by his younger brother. And that was very very different culturally. And I can't make up my mind about it, because part of me thinks "how wonderful to be part of a situation where it is almost an extended family" but I can see that because they have got their sets of values that are very very well, rigid and strong, that have the strength to support the individual, it also then becomes very stifling and also put barriers against him being able to resume a degree of normality, which he would have found difficult - in this institution he would have found it difficult to do it, but it wouldn't have been the same here as it is there. Very different.

A I wonder if that is obviously there's a cultural difference, I wonder if it's one to do with different countries or just different working environments.

S I think it is to do with different countries actually.

- A It makes me think of a private school I used to work in, a boys school, and on the staff there were at least four people who had been at the school from prep. days, then gone up through the whole secondary system, gone away to university for three years, admittedly, and then come straight back in again as teachers and never gone anywhere else - which had led to a kind of stagnation, almost. And again it was a tremendously supportive environment, provided you agreed with the ethos, and it was in a small market town, which meant that if you lived there as well - I didn't - very quickly you knew everybody, you either taught them, or you had taught them, or they knew somebody who and you couldn't have any kind of life anywhere in the town without falling over someone who knew you
- S Yes, I think that's a good parallel but I do think that's a good parallel with the sort of institution we're talking about here, although I do think it's cultural as well because I might have said this to you before, we used to import cars from Belgium, a long time ago, you get ... you get off the boat - that was when the pound was better than it is now.
- A That's interesting.
- S But you'd have to go to the tax office to sort out all the paperwork and formalities and I'd observe them coming into work in the morning and everybody in the office would go and kiss people twice, each cheek, when they arrived in. So the lack of distance the phrase "arm's length" is very true for us isn't it, you keep people at arm's length, literally at arm's length, you don't have a physical contact
- A What about the Swedes, what do you find about them? Have you been to Sweden?
- S I have been to Sweden, yes. Yes, I think they don't keep people at arm's length, there's more physical contact. And the Swedes, in this situation that I was describing in the restaurant, were very supportive. Interestingly, the guy was very supportive - I can't remember his name - and he didn't find it difficult to talk about the issues ... with another man, or in fact with the whole group. I don't find ... I'm going to be stereotypical, aren't I, but I don't think that many Englishmen would have done.
- A I was just about to ask you, what do you think would - and I'm asking you to speculate here - what do you feel would have happened in the same circumstances, but if it were an English project, just English people involved?
- S It depends on the people doesn't it? If they were people from the social care background, possibly, certainly some of the male staff within that field here, you would have that type of conversation without any barriers. But generally, I think it probably would have been different. I don't know that someone who had been supporting someone through that situation would have been as open about their own needs for counselling as as Lieven was.

A I'm intrigued by this. It seems to me, over a number of years with projects, that people working on transnational projects build up, very quickly, very close relationships, on a certain plane, with their partners in the other countries to an extent that certainly never has never in my experience would never have been the case in a project with UK partner colleges.

S Nor mine, no. Another for example of that was, when I was working on a social care project and we stayed in Bruges In a restaurant, someone came over to us and said "oh, you visited our school today, didn't you?"

End of Tape 1

Tape 2

S someone came along to me in a restaurant in Belgium and said "oh, you came to our school today on a visit with a group of students, didn't you?" and I said "oh yes" "oh, you must come back with us, we live just down the road, you must come back with us for a drink". And he was with his wife and young child and it wasn't a group it was just a member of staff. We went back for drinks and if they know that we're there because they see the [college] van outside the apartment [in Bruges], they'll come and knock on the door every time and say "do you want to go out with us tonight" or "come and have a drink", you know.

Phone rings

S And so, now, I feel that they say things to me like they've got children a similar age to mine "send your son over in the summer he can stay with our son" and this kind of thing. And I've been over with my family and, just coincidentally, because they're down the road from where we stay, I know that when I go there I'll just knock on their door and they'll all the time. I don't actually think that would have happened in England. I think what would have happened is that the person in the restaurant would have said "oh, you see those two women over there, they came to our school today" but I don't think somebody would have gone over and said "you must come back with us to our home".

A No, I would think at the most in the UK - well, I don't know, but I'd think most people would just say hello, and then just walk out.

S Very much so.

A Curious - is it something to do with the British phlegmatic character? People who don't fit that pattern are very much regarded as odd. I'm interested in the fact that you've used a number of adjectives as you've been talking through your different experiences and there are two that stand out, one is 'frustrating', when you were talking earlier about the equipment for the project, and the other one was

“interesting”, the ‘intriguing, the interesting’ side of things. Would that be a fair description of your feelings about involvement in these projects in general? And if not, are there better words?

S The projects that I’ve been involved in that haven’t involved and actually - not that she’s not a friend of mine! - really haven’t been frustrating at all. I’ve found that the partners have been very very accommodating and supportive and there haven’t been frustrations. There have been frustrations with our students and when we’ve taken them over there, and all this, they’ve been unco-operative or things like that, but the actual European transactions haven’t been frustrating. The frustration here was the technical side of it.

A Interesting.

S Yes, ‘interesting’ does sum it up because’..... when I started to write these things up for you, I had logged them in my mind but I hadn’t put them on the paper until quite recently, and my phone kept ringing in my room and I was quite annoyed with it and thinking, “you’re interrupting me I just can’t” you know, I’m really getting to a crux of this thing and it was the cultural working environment that had been so interesting that, that I was (to use a fairly simple phrase) ‘our cold working environment’, I hadn’t realised, had by default offered opportunities. I would have seen a cold environment as being negative, but now that I’ve examined it a little bit I can see that by default it offers opportunities to be different people in different places, and I wonder if that opportunity is there in the sort of environment that we are talking about and that you are talking about earlier, that you don’t have an opportunity to be to have different hats on, to play different roles.

A Give me some examples.

S Well, in Jos’s situation he had been at the school at college with his colleagues and they saw him as ‘Jos the family man’, respectable, had the same religious beliefs as them, they made assumptions, I suppose, about his moral standards and coping say. Here, I mean there are people who you are particularly friendly with who know what happens outside Nusquam College, but I don’t think that people make judgements about my values or moral standards because they don’t know enough about me to do that. And I don’t think particularly ... they have a need to do that. I have a role within the institution which is defined on my job description and people either like you or don’t like you, depending on their interaction within that role, but they don’t have a concept of you as what you would think of as the ‘real me’, the real individual.

A They only see one facet

S Yes. And I would have thought that was bad, but having gone through this experience I’m not sure but it is that bad, perhaps it allows you to preserve or

perhaps that's the cultural thing, that we feel the need to preserve a degree of privacy from other staff. It certainly offers you more opportunity to behave in different ways in different situations, doesn't it?

A Yes. I've thought about that sometimes, when I've been with people abroad, people who are very warm, very welcoming, particularly in Finland, the colleagues welcome you into their homes and send me pictures of their family celebrations, it's wonderful! I really enjoyed that but I also find personally that I can't reciprocate in that way unless I really take a liking to an individual, and I couldn't do that on a sort of blanket scale, to a whole staff room full of people, which is what they seem prepared to do.

S Do you think that sort of ... commonality of experiences diminishes the quality of it?

A Commonality? How do you mean?

S Well if you're having those..... (in inverted commas) 'intimate experiences' with a lot of people, does that diminish the quality of it? Like having a lot of acquaintances or having your friends doesn't it?

A I think it does in my experience ... why I try to..... I don't know whether I do it consciously or consciously try to limit overseas contacts with whom I do develop a special relationship, because I know I haven't got the time or even the resources to be able to do that for all of them, so I've got to be mean and selective. But it intrigues me that you can work on a project within the UK, with British people and you would never ever, very rarely develop to the point where you'd say "you must pop in, you must come and stay with you family". It doesn't happen, does it?

S Do you think that's because the general British working experience is that you have very separate compartments, and so they're not even thinking in those lines?

A Well it certainly is for me personally. It's been quite a struggle to get away from it and think "it wouldn't actually be too much trouble to invite these people round and I might actually quite enjoy it". I had another question noted down here: is the difference between this particular project, the COMENTUS project, and national projects, is the difference to do with distance, the difference between the cultures, do you think, or is it just the people?

S Come again?

A Is it a difference between the COMENTUS project and a project in the UK, is the difference distance, cultural difference, or is it just the people who get involved, from whatever nationalities they are?

- S I think it's cultural, I don't think it's particularly distance. I think it's the different cultural experiences that we were talking about, and separating parts of your life and the pros and cons of doing that.
- A You've probably answered a couple of my next questions already, I was going to say, forget the project and think instead about the social contacts which take place outside the project, you've talked a bit about that already. But it was to ask you really what are topics of conversation when you are together with the partners, and are the same as or different from topics of conversation you'd have with friends back at home?
- S I think that initial conversations tend to be work-based, about the institutions and the students and the practical things and so forth and then, if the relationship develops and it becomes more intimate in circles that you're discussing.... I am trying to think about.... there was a thing that you mentioned earlier about language and we're very unfair because most of the time we expect people to speak to us in English.
- A What do you feel about that?
- S I feel bad about it, but it is a common language. If you're looking at the Belgians and the Swedes they're both sort of minority languages, aren't they? You'd be unlikely to be using one of those languages, wouldn't you? So, it's just the way things are in language but I feel that it reflects on us as not making enough effort in international terms ... to be ignorant about languages. I am trying to sort out someone to teach me French at the moment for obvious reasons.
- A I was talking to someone yesterday in London about the whole languages issue and the transnational project because it seems there are two well, I suppose, three things pulling in different directions, on the one hand you've got the European Commission putting a lot of money into transnational projects, aiming to get people together. Within that you've got a very strong emphasis on getting people together for the purposes of language learning, making use of languages, promotion, minority languages, even languages like Flemish and Swedish or whatever else, but at the same time, as soon as you get three nationalities together in a group, particularly if they are fairly well-scattered across Europe or from the minority countries, inevitably the common language is English, even if there isn't an English person there, and it just seems that there's a paradox there, that they're trying to get people together for linguistic purposes, but
- S A sort of Esperanto isn't it? English I suppose.
- A Well it's interesting, do you find when you are talking to the Belgians and Swedes you are modifying your language?
- S I do, yes.

- A What do you do?
- S Well much as you would if you were talking to I don't mean it in a patronising way, but as if you were talking to a child, you'd think quite carefully about how you say it and then you'll say it in another way as well, you'll say the same thing in three different ways, if you can see that they're probably not quite understanding it. You'll repeat it in a different using different words. And probably speak more slowly and you'll probably use more body language than you would do, use gestures much as you would to a small child without the high-pitched voice, and the being patronising, I hope!
- A When you've been together with the partners in a meeting has it been your experience that any of the partners have gone off in their national groups at any time and not mixed in with the general part of
- S I don't think they do that socially because people generally tend to try and mix, but when you're looking at work aspects, then people do tend to work in their national groups because they're very much relating whatever potentially you're discussing to their institutions, so they have to talk to each other about how viable things are. For example, we've developed some learning materials and methods of measuring for the next phase of the project and that will have had to be discussed within the country groups to see how it would work in the different situations. Probably work-wise it is but not not work-wise in that if you're being taken around somewhere and given information about something or if the students were here and they'd were being taken to various places within the area, that wouldn't be the case. But if it's something that's paper-based for the project, then I think people do work within their own country groups.
- A And the partners have talked a lot and talked very openly about all kinds of things. There have been plenty of opportunities for that. Have they said anything at all that's made you stop and think about your everyday life? Your working environment?
- S Nothing that springs to mind, Anne, I can't think of anything at the moment.
- A It's probably not the case, in that case. When you first started work on this project what were your expectations of working with the Belgian partners and the Swedish partners?
- S I'd worked with the Belgian people a lot, [before] so I expected that it would work well. Sweden were an unknown quantity and at the beginning it was meant to be Portugal I think, and that never happened. And it seemed a bit of an eclectic mix, did that, Portugal, Belgium, Sweden and us! I think that probably my preconceptions about Swedish people were that they would alsono, my preconceptions about the Swedish people would have been that they were very

much into integration [of students with special needs] and possibly, to use political terminology, more 'left-wing' than we were, with the Belgians being further right of centre than we were. I don't actually think that is the case, in fact, I don't think that they're as integrated as their publicity would have us believe.

A That's intriguing. I was going to go on and ask were your expectations fulfilled?

S No, because having visited the Swedish situation it's very much a separate building I think ... it's linked, I mean, have you been? I think it's linked to the high school, but it's very very distinct and have you been to the Swedish school?

A Yes, I have.

S A couple of hundred yards away, isn't it, down the road?

A Yes, it is.

S It's a separate institution, isn't it? Yes. So although we hear an awful lot about Norway and Sweden having I mean when I mention it to people they will say "oh, yes, the Swedish have got really good models", well I don't see it happening over there.

A This is what we would think about Scandinavia and education for people with special needs. I've been surprised, when I've been over there, again having assumed from television or whatever else, because I don't read in that area, that the Swedes would be streets ahead and doing wonderful things. I get the feeling that maybe that was the case until the sixties, when they would have been quite radical, but that they've rested on their laurels since?

S: It's interesting that we never ever saw any students with what we would classify as severe learning difficulties, they weren't even in the learning difficulty situation were they?

A I had a very interesting discussion with two of your colleagues to try to work out some means of getting the project off the ground and the first key obstacle to that was finding students with severe learning difficulties in any country elsewhere in Europe, and it was impossible to find these people! I couldn't find anybody willing to tell me where in the system their needs were catered for, where they were educated, who was responsible.

S I wonder how you can backtrack that if you ever wanted to backtrack that. The place where you were meant to be visiting, but didn't in Belgium, I'm trying to remember the name now

A That's terrible, that

S It's not Dominic Savio

A Marienstede?

S Yes. Marienstede have adults with severe learning difficulties. Now they've obviously been educated somewhere before they came to Marienstede. Dominic Savio have some, but their learning difficulties tend to stem from physical disabilities there not just pure like, our students are mainly ambulant, but with quite severe learning difficulties. There might be the odd few in Dominic Savio, but they would be able to direct us to where ... they must know. Because they do categorise people, well they have seven categories in Belgium

A Yes?

S and people well, goodness knows what happens to people if they have got three of the categories, I don't know where,.... maybe they flip a coin about where they're going to send them but and there seemed to be a fair lack of parental choice about where they go, it seemed to be decided by boards in Brussels or something, where they were actually going to allocate places to.

A Which to a certain extent they probably think, well, in such a small country, it doesn't really matter. Some people say, after they have been involved in a project like this, that they somehow feel a bit more 'European'. You know, looking at layers of identity and different aspects of personal identity. Does it apply to you? In any way? Do you feel more 'European'?

S Oh, yes.

A In what way, I mean, can you

S Give you an e.g.?!

A Yes!

S Well, because you actually know the people, the colleagues as individuals and you know that you can have conversations about students and you know that the students are presenting with the same problems whether they are in Sweden or Belgium or wherever they happen to be, and that to a large extent the strategies that you employ to try to help them to overcome the problems are very very similar, although the institutions are probably quite different. The actual personal interaction between the staff and the students in order to try and resolve whatever needs to be resolved to move the students forward is very very similar. It then 'shrinks the difference' really. We also did a project with Spain, a long time ago, Paul Taylor, I don't know if you remember making a video, in Spain?

A Yes.

S And I often use that with parents because the content of the video was about independence and how worried parents are with people with disabilities about it's called "Letting Go", about giving them an opportunity to try and be an adult without having someone with them all the time. And interestingly, some of that being video-ed in Spain and I think it really exemplifies how the problems are the same probably the world over, certainly in the countries that we have had contact with and the problems are the same and the solutions, apart from cultural or geographical limitations, are very very similar as well. But yes, I think ... because you know the individuals in the situation and you know the problems and you know the strategies you identify very strongly with the similarities as well.

A If you were advising someone on a project of this kind, who'd never done anything like this before, what would you say to them?

S Go for it!

A Why? We all know how much extra work it creates and how much pressure people are under at present. What so special about these projects?

S Well, all the things that we've talked about the opportunities you get for reflection about other individuals' experiences and their ... life and how that reflects on your perspective about your institution, about your life, about you as an individual, about well, what I've just said about often the problems and the obstacles are very similar and often the solutions are not that different. So it's an opportunity to look at differences, there's also an opportunity to look at similarities and opportunities for you to ... erbe introspective and use the experiences that you've had to extend your own development. It's a bit of a cumbersome way of putting it, but there is a lot of 'navel-gazing' in there really!

A Well, that's part of this whole process, the interview process. How do you find this has been for you?

S Well, I said to you that I haven't had time to do very much of this, but I knew that there were probably three things that stood out. One was this frustration about the technology, one was the fact that they appeared to be able to pick up and go and I was saying to my staff "you've got to tack it on to either end of half-term, I don't have I can't replace you for a week at a time, you know, if you leave the rest of the group" and they seemed to be able toso there was a certain amount of thinking "Oh, God they're better funded than we are". But then it all came about because of the tragedy that was in there, but then there was a lot of reflection about the quality of the relationships that had developed and then a lot of that led to other the cultural reflections. And while I was doing that, because I knew that there were like three benchmarks that I would make some notes about and have a think about, and I had certain interruptions while it was happening and I

really it was almost like when I was university, and you think yourself into an essay and, for me, because I was doing literature, and it was almost like giving birth you know, you kind of like it was this genre and you grew it and it kind of like had to come out in the right way and in the right words and I was resenting the fact that my 'phone kept ringing and I was thinking "don't interrupt my thought process, I'm really getting involved in this and it's moving me along life's way, I suppose, in my own development" in quite ... quite a small way in the length of time that I'd had to do it, but the quality of the reflections was rewarding for me.

- A That's interesting. It as my research supervisor who prompted me to ask how people were finding the actual research exercise, and I said, "well, so far, touch wood, interesting, challenging, a bit difficult to fit in because of their work commitments"
- S Well, my negative comment that came out at the beginning was that I couldn't cope with the extra paper that it meant, and I didn't have the space in my head or anything, the time But looking being able to have more of a free reign, and I suppose this is a reflection on the how research has to be conducted with a certain structure, but being given a free reign to mentally [sic] flag up the things that seemed significant to me and then unpicking them a little bit to try and give it a little bit more interpretation or structure had been more rewarding than I would have thought it would be, because it was something that had to be done because I knew that I was going to see you and I had to have a think about it before I saw you. But when I started thinking about it there was a lot in there, and I wouldn't have thought that you would go take part in a European project for other than professional benefits, or benefits for the students or the institution. I wouldn't have thought that that might be a really naïve thing to say, but because everything that we're doing, all our interactions have an effect on us as an individual. But if you start to look at it a little bit beneath the surface then it has potential for a lot of personal growth really. Did you want to hear me say that?
- A I did!
- S Because I didn't say it because I thought you wanted me to say it but
- A That's exactly what I wanted to hear. I mean that's why I'm doing the research in the first place, because, well it's been six years since I started doing this kind of work here at college, but also from being involved in exchanges and so on, where people have gone and taken students abroad, year in year out and they've come back And not just the linguists people from the vocational who, by and large, wouldn't have had any incentive to go abroad in any connection with their work, and yet it's been really fascinating
- S Have you found then that a lot of people are coming back with this kind of perspective?

- A Yes, they express it in different ways, some find it very difficult to express, but you can tell, in the way that they talk, the body language that they use, just the very fact that they come back a year later and say "I really want to do that again" It says it all, given the constraints of the workload that people have these days, to find that they're saying " I want to do that again, despite the extra work". It's made me think that there must be something in there that makes it sufficiently rewarding for people, individually, and I wanted to try to tease that out.
- S It certainly it particularly evolved because of the situation we were in at the time. It wouldn't have evolved to the depth that it has done if there hadn't been that need there at the time. But having said that, good friendships have been established with this person that I was telling you about that just came along to the restaurant and said "oh, you must come to my house" in that way. And there again, that's being unfair actually, because this person has a daughter who has quite a serious kidney

END OF INTERVIEW

