

## Appendices E - Transcriptions of interviews

### Liverpool John Moores University – online tutors

#### Tutor A

1 R: First I would like to hear about your experience at University - e-learning as a student and as a  
2 teacher.

3 A: I am in my third year of my PhD I think. As a student I have not done much distance learning at all one  
4 little small course like a professional development (i.e. „continuing education“) course. That’s the only  
5 learning I have done. But you know I have sort of been very involved in our programme here since the  
6 planning stage. In fact it’s my first job at University. Well I was still doing my Masters degree; was about  
7 finding electronic recourses and what have you, before I it could be validated everything and I was at the  
8 validation and helped with the validation documents and all that sort of things. What a students know.  
9 Three years of active teaching.

10 R: That’s the course you have been taught and the only subject so far?

11 A: Well, I also used online tools in some of my other teaching as a I don’t know if you want to know  
12 about that because the Master stuff I do completely online obviously, there is no I never even meet the  
13 students. But then with my second year students, I do ten hours of lectures, five hours of workshops and  
14 then I do a discussion forum leading through their assessment period and up to the exams. Which has  
15 been really, really active for the last three years and the students really like it. I do not know if that sorts  
16 off stuff you are interested in that’s all.

17 R: What about your experiences teaching multicultural groups?

18 A: I did a little bit of teaching in South Africa. There was some emergency teaching in the townships  
19 school - classroom teaching. Some here are helping out of the University a bit with sort of tutorials and  
20 multicultural groups ...that was quiet some time ago.

21 R: How do you perceive teaching as an e-tutor?

22 A: I think it is complex picture. I think that just like in a classroom situation, face-to-face situation, the  
23 teaching has to change meet the needs of the situation. I think sometimes teaching is quiet simple online  
24 and sometimes it’s not really even teaching. And I actually think perhaps there is one example of this in  
25 the course we are in, in the Masters Programme, where you just write material as if it was for a journal,  
26 put it up on a website and then ask people to write an essay about it later. That’s one characterisation of  
27 it. But I think there is a wide spectrum of degrees of involvement from the teacher perspective, from the  
28 student perspective, degrees of understanding how the teaching situation exists, whether it’s sort of  
29 myself and hundred and fifty second year students like on this discussion board which is very quick  
30 question-answer-question-answer-question-answer and very little discussion or whether it’s a small  
31 group of postgraduate students who are arguing sort of quite theoretical points. So it’s very different.

32 R: Let’s talk about your roles as an e-tutor. Can you prioritise them?

33 A: I have formally two different roles on the programme. I have got my teaching role and then I am also  
34 the e-moderator which is I am not even sure myself what that means- but it takes a lot of more time than  
35 I get paid for. So I am supposed to do two hours a week e-moderating and it involves dealing with  
36 student’s queries and all that sort of stuff and sometime community based stuff, dealing with student’s  
37 complaints and then there is my teaching role. My teaching role I think of more as facilitating than being  
38 didactic. For me it’s about creating, spending time very carefully planning and creating a set of activities  
39 and sort of half teaching, half building an assessment and that sort of stuff. Creating an online space  
40 where learning happens. Perhaps not doing so much the teaching myself. Well, I have done that as well,  
41 you know- I prepared material and I have put it out, and (5:08) have what have you and then sort of list  
42 the summary -now look at these texts?. I teach mainly on two modules. One is research methods and the  
43 other is psychology and Buddhism and the approach has been again a little different with the research  
44 method one we worked out a way of doing a group project where all the students shared data and talk  
45 about methodologies and questions, choice and research analysis on their own. They select a couple of  
46 the interviews, for everyone they gather them and then they analyse them and prepare a little individual  
47 report. The thinking behind that was very much about learning by doing. Getting people involved and  
48 also because the big problem I have to teach both undergraduate and postgraduate qualitative research  
49 nobody appreciates so much the time that is involved. In fact I just had a complaint about how much  
50 time is involved even though I spent my colleague [a tutor] and I sort of spent a long time devising a

1 framework for it we got this by this stage, by this stage we want the question chosen, by this stage we  
2 want you to tell us who your participating will going to be, by this stage we want the transcript and that  
3 gives you a month to do the analysis and the report and 'blablabla'. So mean I quite carefully designed  
4 the format of it and given examples and that's quite the learning by doing. And then the Psychology and  
5 Buddhism module is more about learning through discussing. I prepared a lot less material, it was more  
6 about here is the basic overview, here is the text which you need to read and here is the issue you need  
7 to discuss.

8 R: It depends on the course...

9 A: It depends on the e-moderator role. Kind of quite reactive you know wait until a problem basically and  
10 react to that problem whereas the tutor role is obviously more active, more designing.

11 R: Where do you put more time in?

12 A: Stupid amount of time in. For both?

13 R: Yes

14 A: I mean I think for the e-moderator role I get paid two hours a week. I probably do five, six, seven, eight  
15 hours a week. Sometimes I will only do the two hours, sometime I spend the whole week working on  
16 nothing but the programme -you know- and meetings coming up and stuff like that. The trouble of the  
17 course is that students do not see this. I think that one of the problems of our experience is that I do work  
18 very hard on the staff and I do not think the students see it. And they assume, I get the feeling that they  
19 assume, that I just sit there and read what they have written and ask them for comments and spend half  
20 an hour a week on this. You know if I am feeling doing a lot of work I do half an hour which promisly isn't  
21 the case. I do a lot more work on it.

22 R: Do you think the students sometime take over some roles?

23 A: I wish they would. No, I found that the students most of them really need encouraging to get involved.  
24 I wish they would. There are one or two students sort of take more leadership and all that sort of stuff.  
25 And I'd be happy for that. I'd be really happy for more students to be more productive. You know, I  
26 expected that the Masters students would be doing this. In some ways they must be quite isolated  
27 because it's a very specific topic and a lot of them are in countries where you can't study this at  
28 postgraduate level. You know, there are just no institutions who do this, which is why there are doing the  
29 postgraduate programme. And I would have thought that people in that situations sort of really want to  
30 get involved and they don't seem to, more or less the opposite way I expected.

31 R: In this course the students don't see each other:

32 A: Never, hopefully that will change.

33 R: Do you think it would make a difference?

34 A: Yes, I think so. We actually have got an online board of study kind of - a board of study is part of the  
35 quality procedures at the University. Every programme has to have a board of study every semester and  
36 they have to have (10:08) two a year which the student reps (short for representatives) come to and the  
37 student's issues are heard and if there is anything that needs to be told to the students. We do this online  
38 in the discussion forum. One of the issues is having a residential weekend in the first year towards the  
39 beginning of the first year. So that the students can actually come and meet that has to be voluntary  
40 because some students can't afford it. We can't sort of say now you can't get your degree or whatever.  
41 So I am hoping that when students come and meet them and meet us and that that will inform how they  
42 view us and how they see each other and break down some of the social barriers a bit may be and really  
43 enhance communication and interactivity in the course.

44 R: How do you perceive teaching in this environment where student do not see each other?

45 A: I perceived what it's like for everyone or what it's like for me?

46 R: For you.

47 A: I found it very strange actually. We have actually access to student photos and I printed them all out  
48 and I have got them by my desk. So every time one of distance learning students e-mails me not every  
49 time but often I look and say ok that's you. I look at that photo and try ... You have to try to make it more  
50 real sometimes because I think there is the possibility that you can end up being quiet impersonal about  
51 it. And it's interesting if the student has a real passion towards what is going on - So, I have just done a  
52 topic on Buddhism and Psychotherapy and one or two of the students, one particularly is really excited  
53 about it and really got into it. And that was great. And I spent a lot of time and reacting to that student  
54 and sort of started building a discussion. Some of the other students who were not so enthusiastic about  
55 that particular topic and their responses were a bit sort of ...that their contributions in the discussion  
56 forum were a bit bland, a bit uninteresting, not very well thought through you know. I didn't really  
57 engage to them and thinking back that's perhaps the wrong way round. The student who is excited

1 about it and obviously I should engage with her but the students who weren't excited about it perhaps I  
2 should be spending more time. But because it's just words at a screen sometime you lose the student  
3 behind that you know. And there are students who fall through the cracks. And one of the awful thing  
4 that happened is recently I got an email from a student saying "When does the third module start?" The  
5 third module started six weeks ago. And nobody had noticed that he wasn't on any of the electives or  
6 anything like that.

7 R: Do you think this could make a difference when you are integrating a residential weekend?

8 A: We are only talking about them meeting up once. What I am hoping is that that will just that we meet  
9 up at the beginning of the degree. And we have a weekend away. We do this for the attendance students  
10 already. And I went to the last one. And they are quiet intensive experiences. You know there are lots of  
11 activities and that sort of meditations and chanting and playing drums and workshops and they are  
12 doing a whole sort of stuff. And you know that is quiet sort of intense into personal group activities and  
13 very much from the transpersonal psychology stuff. And you do make quite sort of strong bonds with  
14 people on those weekends. I am hoping that that will just be enough just the once to get people to start  
15 communicating. And I think once they have started communicating they will get more out of the  
16 programme and that will lead to the communication to continuing. I think it's just it's getting there over  
17 the first hump. We have the problem to encouraging people to communicate from the beginning on.

18 R: Another topic which I want to mention is the multicultural issue of this group. Enrolled students are  
19 from different parts of the world. How did you perceive teaching in this environment?

20 A: I didn't think that this is gona be a problem. And that's a couple of time where it has been. Ok I mean  
21 first I describe the group when we say multicultural. They are still almost exclusively white middle class  
22 Westerners. But they are from different countries. And again about half, maybe in one class two third of  
23 the classes are from England or the United Kingdom. But there are exceptions and sometimes it's obvious  
24 - we have one student [...] who is a German lady and suffers from being German. But she is the typical  
25 what English people typically think of German people- no sense of humour, very precise, arrogant you  
26 know all these clichéd things she has all of them. In fact once she complained in a letter that myself and [  
27 a tutor] were not spiritually advanced enough to be her teachers... in research methods! But because in  
28 fact that the trouble with [that student] was that in the beginning it started with the language issues  
29 that her English wasn't it was very, very good- but it wasn't perfect and because of most of the classes  
30 are speaking English for their first language, she misunderstood something and then I think her fale [?]   
31 personality took over and instead of saying "sorry that sounded wrong you know I am sure didn't mean  
32 to say that was a whatever" she went on the offence, she went and on the attack. And I perceived that  
33 thing being very out of place because I still think of this course its taking place in an English University.  
34 But of course [the student] doesn't, Priscilla who is a black lady in South Africa doesn't think that this is  
35 taking place in Liverpool and Enrique, is in Mexico City, he doesn't think that this is taking place in  
36 Liverpool. You know, for them it's not taking place in Liverpool, it's taking place in Cape town, in Bremen,  
37 in Mexico City where ever. Sometimes I am sort of jolted out of that feeling 'ouuhh' wait hang on...

38 R: Do you teach differently because some students are from different places of the world?

39 A: In cases of a couple of things quite directly. One is because of they are from all over the place with  
40 different time zones we don't do as much synchronous stuff as we like. I have done a bit of synchronous  
41 stuff, chat room basically, with students. But there were some student who couldn't attend because it's  
42 four o'clock in the morning you know. And as much as I know that committed -they are not that  
43 committed in all maybe. On the level of how we prepare our material, how we construct our work I still  
44 think that we come from a place where we are offering this in Liverpool. And we have the same  
45 requirements for fluency and writing standards and all this sort of stuff as we would for people who  
46 would attend on the campus. And I think with the assumption has been -I don't even think that was  
47 something we have talked about it awful a lot- but I think the assumption has always been that this is an  
48 English University teaching in English to English speakers. And of course a lot of that is the majority  
49 that's not the whole truth. And there isn't any support for people who aren't really English other than to  
50 say go away and do a course in English and then re-apply once you have passed your fluency test. Which  
51 isn't of course we think of a support. But there are And I sometimes find myself when I am writing either  
52 when I am preparing content to put up on the website or even when I am writing responses on the  
53 discussion board I find myself writing quite casually. I try to keep it a little more informal. I am not trying  
54 to make it sound it like a textbook in fact that is most difficultly you know I steer away from that I am  
55 trying to get to immediacy; I want them to experience the person behind the screen; just like I want to  
56 experience them. I really try to write so that they feel that there is a person at the other site. But the  
57 problem with that of course is that then I use colloquialisms and slang and things like this that people

1 and sometimes it's not including people from different countries because they won't get it because it's  
2 English slang. And then also because I have done a bit of travelling I picked up some stuff that sometimes  
3 confuses English people. An expression that I used was "a cow with a musket" And nobody understood  
4 that except a New Zealander because it's an expression from New Zealand. And if you try to think of an  
5 old fashion musket with all that sort of complicated machinery and if you only had cow hoof to use it, it  
6 would be very clumsy and that sort of mean it: You are clumsy.  
7 R: I have never heard that one...  
8 A: No, no nobody ever has. And this is something I picked up from my father-in-law who is a New  
9 Zealander. You know like 'boy you are like a cow with a musket'. And that sort of course troubled some  
10 English people. "What the hell do you mean?" And so I am tempted sometimes to try and get rid of those  
11 colloquialism to try and make the English more standard, more easy to understand for everybody. But  
12 the cost is too great. It cost me that I lose that sense of the person who has typed this out. See - ok the  
13 qualitative research method it is the second year it has run, but I hope to the students doing it this year  
14 [for the first time] it still feels like it's written a couple of weeks ago you know. That it doesn't feel like its  
15 prepared two years ago. That's what I am going for anyway. And the needs are completely opposite. If I  
16 write in Standard English I lose that and then it becomes a textbook and that defied the purpose. And if I  
17 get too colloquial I lose some of the students but I do... And what I have done is I have gone colloquial  
18 and philosophy. What does that mean? Or look it up or make - I don't know. See the other thing is we  
19 don't know how much the students communicate with each other. I have actually done a little bit of  
20 research into this for my postgraduate certificate my teaching qualification. And I know that they do talk  
21 to each other a bit but not a lot.  
22 R: You mean via e-mail?  
23 A: Via e-mail, phone calls as well. I did some research where I spoke to six or seven students on the  
24 telephone and recorded it. One of the things that I ask about is "How much do you speak to other  
25 students?" And the answer was not a lot. But some... so I hope when they come up with stuff they don't  
26 understand - it seems a bit casual. Even they just "It looks like a joke" I can just ignore it or if it looks  
27 simple they can get help from me or even their class. I am trying to think of stuff that's particularly  
28 pertinent to our course. I think one of the things we have had to do is to allow flexibility in things like  
29 assignments and what have you to allow people to explore their own culture within the context of this  
30 programme. And so a South African student of ours is doing his thesis looking at "South African witch  
31 doctors" which is fascinating stuff. It means immediately he is the expert because we have no expert on  
32 witch doctors. But that's ok I think because it's postgraduate that's often the case that the students are  
33 already the experts and it's more methodology that you are assist with. So that sort of flexibility is built  
34 in. I think because of our selection criteria the fluency limits and all that sort of stuff that we do attract -  
35 you know- middle class English speakers. So maybe it's not a big issue I guess at the Open University it'll  
36 be a different story entirely whether they are dealing with trying to be inclusive and trying to make  
37 education more accessible. We are trying to make education more accessible but pretty much only  
38 geographically if you know what I mean. We still haven't sort of played with our entrance requirements  
39 or anything like that. We are not trying to get people into we are not going for non traditional students  
40 like an undergraduate course for instance. So maybe it's not so much of an issue.  
41 R: Did you get supported by the institution concerning teaching online and the multicultural issue?  
42 A: Yes and no. I mean the institution can't really support us in very practical time because nobody has  
43 ever done it in this institution before. At the same time we have always through the whole process  
44 planning and validating the teaching and the assessment of our teaching and quality issue and all that I  
45 have always felt the institution looking over our shoulder -oh that's interesting; it's like they are learning  
46 from us. I mean not looking over my shoulder in a sense of waving a finger at us or telling us what to do,  
47 but out of interest. And you know with the institutions put us up for teaching awards in fact I have run a  
48 teaching award for my work on a programme myself and [the programme team]. That was one award  
49 for innovation in curriculum design. So that has been that sort of support and encouragement but no  
50 expertise you know. That doesn't exist. So we had to make it all up.  
51 R: What about preparation of the module?  
52 A: This is one practice issue where the university just doesn't get what's going on. And if you tell them -I  
53 am not sure they believe me- That when you are preparing the module it takes ages and ages and ages.  
54 And you don't get necessarily paid for that time. You know in fact for the psychology and Buddhism  
55 module this year I have been but that money didn't come from university it came from outside sources.  
56 So there was money there for me but it wasn't coming out of my teaching. So another whole issue is I  
57 don't know if it is gona be relevant to any rather participants you know I am also PhD student. The time

1 involved in that has taken... has knocked my PhD back a year I think easily. I was doing more face-to-face  
2 teaching which is limited in the amount of time. May be this is not the aspect that I should talk about.  
3 Face-to-face teaching you have your time in your class and there comes a bit of marking afterwards, sure  
4 you have some preparation before. But the time is very carefully delineated and very seldom to end up  
5 doing work for your teaching on the weekends and late at night on the distance learning programme  
6 because it's all on the computer, there is very little paper involved you can do it anywhere you have  
7 internet connection. It's every aspect of it. If you look at the time on my postings, some of them are from  
8 one o'clock in the morning. I am working at one o'clock in the morning; I am interacting with the  
9 students at one o'clock in the morning how stupid is that?! But they are too; the students are writing  
10 back, they all work full-time. And it's become that I have often a fulltime job which is here and then I  
11 have a part time job as well; somehow it seems extra which is my distance learning teaching and then I  
12 am also supposed to get a degree at PhD as well; which comes third; which is supposed to be first. But it  
13 always comes third you know...

14 R: It's not easy

15 A: No, it's not easy at all... So that's you know, that's .... I think that's one of the defining characteristics  
16 of what it's like teaching online is that you don't have those normal formal limits you are not working  
17 nine to five. I have taught online chat sessions on Sunday afternoon because that's the only time when  
18 anybody else you know more than one time zone is involved. If you want to get more than one time zone  
19 involved it has to be quiet late in the evening to get the Americans in or which means you are losing  
20 Europeans and the people from the Middle East and the far East or it has to be a Sunday. An afternoon  
21 and you still loose people from California, and you still lose people from Australia, New Zealand and  
22 Honk Kong but you get maybe three quarters of the world. Maybe if you are lucky.

23 R: Did University give you any support/preparation concerning teachers training and the multicultural  
24 issue?

25 A: No they haven't, not at all - in as much as I have done my teaching qualification, my PG Certificate  
26 learning qualification and generally there was some material in there about multicultural support. Not in  
27 any great detail to be fair. And it was very much from the aspect of face-to-face teaching. So again there  
28 are no experts who can tell us about multicultural teaching online in the Institutions because there isn't;  
29 maybe at the Open University as I said but not at JMU.

30 R: What was the biggest challenge for you teaching online? Time?

31 A: Time is not the challenge because I just do it. What's the challenge? I think the challenge is in  
32 creating, it's in making a decision about how you create the learning space. The challenge is about  
33 balancing that distinction between a person in the front who is teaching and everybody sort of else  
34 passively, passively receiving; and that's one extreme. And the other extreme is a group of people all  
35 getting together to learn something with no experts. And I think the ideal is something in between that  
36 because you know obviously in some cases I am the expert, in some cases I am not the expert. So, one of  
37 the challenges is in creating a space that is flexible for everybody to be able to move within that sort of  
38 expert polar type thing. And yet still meet students' expectations because the students expect an expert-  
39 they expect to be told and that's not what I am about. I am not sort of 'You do this, you do that, you'll do  
40 that and here is material and get on with it and come back in three months'. You know I much rather  
41 have discussions and I much rather get things wrong occasionally. And say 'I think this! - and then  
42 someone goes up 'So-and-so wrote this two years ago' and I' Oh, I have not seen that, that's great. Oh,  
43 you know more than me brilliant'. And then sometimes I get communications from students or from  
44 module feedback, what have you. ... Should these people be teaching me? Ok, that was one particular  
45 person wanting more form of guidance than their expectation is different toward what I am providing.  
46 That's one of the big challenges.

47 R: Did any problem occur while you were teaching online which you would like to add or point out?

48 A: One particular thing which is coming up at the moment is the issue of student's expectations. What  
49 you do when two years into programme students have listed 'I don't think you spent much time on this, I  
50 don't think you are very committed to it'. There is one student from Malta who has done a degree  
51 through the Open University and through other distance learning institutions as well she has come to us  
52 and she doesn't think that this is good distance learning, she doesn't think this is quality distance  
53 learning. And part of me wants goes oh well, you have done more distance learning so you must know,  
54 so what are we doing wrong; and the other part goes no, this is good distance learning. It's just so  
55 different towards what you have done because we are not you know this is only supposed to be four, five  
56 hours of my week. I am not a distant educator; I am a student and a lecturer who does some distance  
57 education... That's something how they pay me you know. Even if I see myself more -I do see myself more

1 becoming a distance education in front. One of these challenges is: How do we deal with student  
2 expectations?' I can't remember what I was saying now...

3 R: You were talking about the challenge of students expectations.

4 A: Yeahh, so and I don't know if I know the answer to this challenge yet. One of the things which I do is I  
5 do the student inductions for the new first years. I have liked a two week induction programme where I  
6 do bit how to use Blackboard; how to find resources you know on electronic journals and all that sort of  
7 stuff you know fairly vital stuff. And it takes about a month out off my year. Real turns take about two  
8 week's fulltime out off my year to do that. Just talking about two hours a week and we go relax, relax. I  
9 think some of the changes need to be made in the induction programme so that the students  
10 expectations are set up right at the beginning of this is what you will get, you are not getting any more  
11 than that. The way it's set out is that you get so much of our time but the lion's share of the time that  
12 you are paying for. This is the way that the University is structured actually is independent study time.  
13 The lion's share of time isn't gona be spend online it's spend with books or journal articles, reading,  
14 writing notes and that's sort of stuff. The problems tensions in the class because you are teaching online  
15 and you don't see what's going on. You don't know how well the class is going. You don't get that... if  
16 you are with a group of people you get that immediate feedback from them from body language, from  
17 you know the fact that you have another first year student sleeping on his desk you know. You know it's  
18 not going so well when half of the class is asleep, it's just the usual deal with the hangover that's fine.  
19 But with just a discussion board on our Buddhism and Psychology course there's been a deadline that all  
20 of the students have missed. And you don't know why. Is it because the course is so bad that they are  
21 giving up on it; is it because of we got it wrong, we haven't put the deadline up clearly enough or is it  
22 because they are really getting into the assignment? And so [a tutor] actually put up a post yesterday  
23 saying 'Why nobody hit this deadline yet?' And the response was: 'Busy with the assignment'. Oh good...  
24 you know. But you just don't know what's going on. And everynow and then something will blow up so I  
25 have mentioned two things one was [a student] which was mainly last year again and sometime this  
26 year and then recently there has been a student this lady from Malta, Patricia, who is again happy. Now  
27 the first thing I know about it is the letter of complaint, that's already formal, it's gone through the  
28 Student Representative, it's going to be brought up at the board of study. The first thing I know is formal  
29 complaint because I don't know ...I don't realize that people are unhappy if people are unhappy. So in the  
30 course it's happen twice and I look after a module feedback and all that sort of stuff you know because  
31 one of the things I do is e-moderator. And people tend to be at an anomies [???] module feedback and  
32 people still don't say give the negative feedback. And they get unhappy, and they get unhappy, and they  
33 get unhappy and then suddenly it's all too much and they are criticizing the programme, and blasting  
34 emails are flying around and accusations or even if it is just not with me and the students and the stuff  
35 and the students it might be between two students that there has been tensions, that people are getting  
36 angry. Nobody knows because when you write stuff down and this is the only formal communication is  
37 this writing down on discussion forms you prepare it quiet carefully, you write it like any essay or like a  
38 formal letter. You don't just say something you would in class, it's not like being in a class, and it's even  
39 not like being in a chat room. There is too much time to think in a way. Everything is quiet formal. And if  
40 you are angry you calm yourself down to write and then you write something very reasonable and you  
41 post it. And then it hasn't fixed what you are angry about. And I as an e-moderator maybe read  
42 something and I see something quite reasonable, suggesting a change maybe and I go that's a good idea  
43 I take that up in the next meeting which is in a months' time and maybe next year. And what I don't  
44 realize is that this student is furious and they want to drop out of the course and they want to whatever  
45 you know about this issue. And I just don't know. So that's a problem. That's a problem with this mode of  
46 teaching. And it's for the good stuff as well. You know when it's going done well every now and then I  
47 got an email. I am so glad that I got this email because it's about the same issue Patricia is complaining  
48 about vitally and saying that it was no good, the teaching was no good, the whole system was crap  
49 'blablabla'. I got a wonderful email from another student two days later how much she loved that course  
50 and how much she... yeah it was... I was getting quiet, I was sort of quiet getting down about it 'this is  
51 crap, we don't know what we are doing, we should stop doing this, whatever' so this other student said:  
52 'This is the best thing in her life'. And I had given her a bad mark. And said that she had been angry  
53 about the mark two days and she thought about it and there were lots of comments on her work and she  
54 read the comments again and again and she sees actually the comments were reasonable and what  
55 have you and she wants to say thank you for the course and you know... But you know she had not  
56 written that email the only feedback I would have got would have been negative you know.

57 R: Yeah, I am sort of finished with my question pool. Is there may be anything else you would like to add,

1 you just think of or anything?  
2 A: Ah, sure there is quite a lot. I am sure there is quite a lot that I could say mmh not thinking of it at the  
3 moment really. Oh if I think about the stuff when I read the transcript I can drop you an email and that  
4 stuff and let you know when you got. I am quite willing when you find other stuff for you to answer the  
5 question and so ...  
6 R: All right, thank you.

### **Tutor B**

7 R: First I would like to hear something about your experience at University.  
8 B: I started teaching in 1971. Then I had a number of years out, away from teaching, doing various  
9 qualifications. I started here in 1980.  
10 R: What about your e-learning experiences as a student and as a teacher?  
11 B: As a student I have no experience; I mean, we didn't have them when I was a student; and as a tutor  
12 very little, really. I use the computer essentially for notes of various kinds we can put into the Blackboard  
13 system. You know the Blackboard system that we have for students? And I don't use PowerPoint. And  
14 beyond that, apart from, you know, using the computer for my own purposes, the only things I have  
15 done are in connection with this M.Sc. But I have no training...much. Such bits as I know, I picked up as I  
16 went through.  
17 R: Which subjects are you teaching?  
18 I: My subject is really Philosophy. But I am now in the Psychology department. So, I am not a  
19 Psychologist, I have no background in Psychology at all, really. But I do some Philosophy of Religion on  
20 the M.Sc. and some Psychology of Religion for the undergraduates. And I have a course which I call  
21 'Introduction into Philosophical Psychology', which is basically Philosophy of Mind, which I do with the  
22 undergraduates. Then I have a first-year course which is essentially critically thinking kind of stuff, really.  
23 R: Did you collect experiences teaching a multicultural student group?  
24 B: I did - several years ago I taught a group of Chinese students. I taught them Economics.  
25 R: Just Chinese?  
26 B: They were all Chinese, I think. Yes, it was up at the Language School, the International School, they call  
27 it. They were doing some kind of foundation course. I think partly it was about, [...] I think the main idea  
28 was, kind of, English as a second language; this kind of stuff. But I ended up doing some Economics.  
29 Originally I did an Economics degree, in the first place, but [...] and I did that [...].  
30 R: Now we go to the actual questions. How did you perceive teaching as an e-tutor?  
31 B: What to say as response to that? I suppose that. Well, I was asked initially if I wanted to contribute to  
32 the Philosophy of Religion module on the M.Sc. And that was being taught both to students who attend  
33 and students who are online. The thing was already running when I joined [a tutor] on that Module. So,  
34 the M.Sc. has been running for some time, so the way it would run was pretty much already established.  
35 So I don't suppose that I had any very clear thoughts about, about how it would be done, as it were,  
36 electronically. I think that the way I have contributed to it is not [...] I don't think it makes use of the  
37 electronics in any very unusual way. Because, effectively, what I have done is put in lots of notes. Now  
38 they could be typed out and posted just as easily as sent over the wire. So, in so far as the ..., in so far as  
39 the thing is taught electronically, it seems to me that the only, the only change over it doing by the post  
40 is that the students can respond quickly and we can respond to the students more quickly than you could  
41 do by posting it. But I think the nature of the responses stays much the same. In other words, they type  
42 in some sort of responses to the questions and to the notes that I have put in and then we respond to  
43 those. Now it seems to me you could do that just on paper. And all you have done is shorten the time it  
44 takes. That's the way we are doing it at the moment. So I don't think with what we are doing, I don't  
45 think the electronics does much more than speed things up. Probably it has the potential to do more. Ah,  
46 that is, you meet everybody online at the same time, I think, to get something like much more like a  
47 discussion going. But we haven't done that. Well, I think there are some steps in place to try to introduce  
48 something of that kind but not particularly on the module, just generally. If that makes sense.  
49 R: How did you perceive teaching in that particular online environment where students do not meet each  
50 other at all?  
51 B: Well, again, I am not ..., I am not persuaded that the introduction of the electronics has changed what  
52 we do, fundamentally, in the sense that I think we could do what we do on paper through the post. But it  
53 would just be very slow. I think there is a difference between that and what you would do with people

1 who are sitting in front of you. This seems to me the difficult thing to overcome, whether it's that or  
2 correspondence, is to get people into the situation in which they can respond to ideas and arguments  
3 and so on in the same way as they might if they were sitting in front of you. And that, it seems to me, is  
4 the difficult thing to recreate in this one. Now it might be that my view about this is affected by the fact  
5 ..., rather, the fact that my subject is Philosophy. It might be that for some other subjects which see  
6 themselves more as information-giving that wouldn't be quite such a problem. But it just seems to me  
7 that with Philosophy we try ..., it is essentially a discursive subject. It's very helpful for those who are  
8 trying to learn it to be able to argue with you and exchange ideas and have that kind of interaction, and I  
9 think that's much more difficult to achieve electronically than in the classroom. So, to that extent, I am  
10 not sure that we have overcome the difficulties that you will have with a correspondence course done  
11 through the post. All we have done is to speed up the exchanges. But we haven't, I think, got to the stage  
12 of recreating the classroom exchanges in the same way - if that makes sense.

13 R: How did you prioritise your role in teaching online?

14 B: Well, initially, I think most of the time went on preparing the notes which were to be put in for the  
15 students to read. Well, it took quite a long time to write all those. But once they are done it's just a  
16 question of qualifying, changing bits, or adding bits, or taking bits out. Once that's done, I think the task  
17 which is left is responding to what the students then send back to us, to each of the topic that we cover.  
18 And I think the difficulty there is to ..., I suppose the difficulty there is to pick up all the points which they  
19 are making, respond to them fairly briefly without being able to say - Well, when you say that, what do  
20 you mean? Do you mean this, or that?; and so on - to get them to pursue the discussion further. Because  
21 the one thing which I think I have been rather disappointed with is that for each of the topics they are  
22 supposed to respond to, and we have small number doing Philosophy, we don't have many ..., they  
23 respond to me and then I say something back, but there is very little student-student exchange. And  
24 typically, typically, not in every case, but typically, it's been difficult to maintain the dialogue. So they put  
25 in an initial posting, their initial response, and then you respond to that, but then they have done what  
26 they were required to do, so it tends not to go on, and you might hope that it might go on to more  
27 exchanges. But, of course, because they are doing it part-time, and they are doing it elsewhere, and they  
28 have got all the other topics to move on to ..., I suppose once they have done the one topic, and  
29 completed what they are obliged to do; the dialogue doesn't continue very far.

30 R: Do you have the impression that the students have taken over some of the e-tutor roles?

31 B: I haven't thought of it that way. So if they have, it hasn't been obvious to me. I can't immediately think  
32 of ways in which they have done that. Except in the sense that because they are remote from here, they  
33 are under more pressure to do things themselves than if they were here, and having to turn up to classes,  
34 and so on. But I can't say that I... that it's occurred to me that they have taken over this, or that, that I  
35 would normally do.

36 R: Do you think your role would have changed if the students would meet each other?

37 B: I suppose that as far as learning Philosophy is concerned, concentrating on that rather than the rest of  
38 the course, it seems to me that it's generally easier to do it with other people, rather than to do it on  
39 your own. So if it's just you and the books it's a hard way of doing it. But if you've got other people that  
40 you can try out ideas on, and they criticise your ideas, scrutinising your arguments, and those kinds of  
41 things. So I think that kind of exchange is beneficial for that subject. I am not sure what I would say  
42 about other subjects or all the topics on this programme. I assume that the people who signed up to  
43 do programme online feel fairly happy working on their own.

44 R: And if the students would meet just once?

45 B: As far as the stuff I teach is concerned, I don't think that getting together just once would be a great  
46 benefit, no.

47 R: I am interested also in the issue of the multicultural student groups. How did you perceive teaching  
48 this group?

49 B: The only thing, the only point I have noticed about that, really, is the fact that not all the students are  
50 studying in their native language. So, and particularly with a subject like Philosophy, I think not doing it  
51 in your native language is tough. It's tough enough when you are doing it in your native language. If you  
52 have to do it in another language it must be very difficult indeed. And I think that is a problem for, has  
53 been a problem for, one or two of the students. I think generally they cope with it pretty well. But clearly  
54 it's an additional difficulty that they have to..., have to overcome, and I think that to a certain extent we  
55 have tried to make allowance for that fact. They were not being able to express the ideas exactly as a  
56 native speaker of English would be able to do. Not all native speakers of English, of course... it's just  
57 easier. You would study Philosophy more readily in German than in English, I am sure.

1 R: For sure.

2 B: I couldn't do it at all in German, and not much better in English [!!] -ahm so the only other thing  
3 which I probably noticed, and I don't think this is very important - but the only other thing I have noticed,  
4 of course, is that you get students from countries which have particular religious tendencies. So, I mean, I  
5 think it's pretty obvious that we've had one or two students from Catholic countries. So, of course, they  
6 come to Philosophy of Religion with a particular theology which they are already committed to. And that  
7 probably comes through in their approach to the subject. But that's, I wouldn't hold on that - I haven't  
8 really considered that... I haven't noticed any issue arising from other cultures differences.

9 R: Did the fact of a multicultural student group influence your way of teaching?

10 B: I think that it ought to do, but probably hasn't. But perhaps what it ought to do is make me go  
11 through all the notes I have written for the Blackboard system, which are fairly extensive and just check  
12 on the complexity of vocabulary and grammar. Because it might be that in the early stages I didn't think  
13 enough about how non-native speakers would find ..., how accessible they would find the English. There  
14 is that...which could be done. I think it would be fair to say that in responding to those who are obviously  
15 not familiar with English I probably tended to write in a way which they would find more accessible. And  
16 we have probably, also, tended to read the course work, [...] and so on, in a way which makes some  
17 allowance for the fact that they are not writing in their own language. But that would be... I think that's  
18 probably about it, really.

19 R: Ok. Did you get support/preparation from the institution concerning your new role as an e-tutor?

20 B: Well I think it's difficult to answer that question in a way which would be fair to everybody because, so  
21 far as I can remember I didn't. There was nothing.... I didn't do anything; I just started and did it. But I  
22 don't recall anybody saying to me, well you could do this course or you could go and do that course or ... I  
23 don't remember anything of that kind. Nobody suggested anything of that kind, as far as I can  
24 remember. But to be fair to the institution, I am not very good at going on lots of courses to learn this  
25 stuff. So I am not aware, anyway, whether there were any - or if there were courses to prepare us to  
26 teach online on the M.Sc. certainly nobody mentioned them to me. And I haven't done any. So, in that  
27 sense, no, I haven't been supported, but then I haven't gone to seek support either, so it's, it's not [...].

28 R: What about the fact of the multicultural issue?

29 B: It's possible the University has offered some courses of that kind in the past but I haven't been on any  
30 of them. In general I haven't taught, with the exception of that one course trying to teach Economics to  
31 Chinese students who don't really speak English, I haven't taught what you would call multicultural  
32 groups here. I have taught a few overseas students but not many. It has not been ..., generally, it has not  
33 been part of my experience here that I have had to teach multicultural groups, so I haven't really pursued  
34 any kind of training or preparation for that.

35 R: Can you think of any problems which occurred while teaching online?

36 B: There is nothing I want to describe as a problem, exactly. There are only two things, which I think I  
37 have already suggested: the [...] thing which I didn't feel worked quite as well as I hoped they would. But  
38 that's mainly to do with getting interaction between the students who have done the course; instead of  
39 just writing to me but writing to each other, you know. But I don't think that's a problem in the sense  
40 that you mean it. No, I wouldn't say I have encountered anything which I would say is a problem.

41 R: What would you describe as the challenge for you teaching online?

42 B: Well, I think that the challenge is to find better ways of doing it than I have so far. Because I  
43 approached to it is as I suggested earlier I think in the way we have done it and here I am only talking  
44 about my module, I am not talking about any of the parts of the M.Sc. because I don't really know what's  
45 going on in the other parts, or how they go about it. But I think..., I think it would be fair to say that the  
46 way we have done it is - again, as I suggested earlier- is as a speeded-up correspondence course. Now, I  
47 assume that there ought to be some ways of using the technology which would make it better than just  
48 to speed up the correspondence course. We talked about problems..., the difficulty, anyway, is to think of  
49 ways trying to do Philosophy which makes some use of the potential of the technology. And I haven't  
50 thought of a good way of doing that. Now that might be simply because of the nature of the subject,  
51 because I see it as a subject which is essentially..., I think it's essentially discursive. I think it's essentially  
52 expressing ideas in language. So it's either written or spoken ...there is not much room for pictures or any  
53 other things which you might show on a screen. So, I am not sure how you could ..., how you could find a  
54 way of teaching people essentially. Well, I mean, Philosophy is a series of arguments of various kinds. I  
55 am not sure how you get round doing that in a way which makes more use of technology, rather than  
56 what you could put on a piece of paper. If there is a problem to be solved, I suppose that would be the  
57 major problem.

1 R: Well, that's sort of the end of my question pool but maybe you have got something you would like to  
2 add?  
3 B: Except for writing emails, my experience of communicating with computers is very limited, really. I  
4 think this module has run online ... I think I have been involved in it only twice ...twice, probably. That's  
5 fairly limited experience on from which to draw any firm conclusions. I am kind of wary about making  
6 any assertions about, about... The other thing I have in mind, of course, is that the students on the M.Sc.  
7 programme are Psychologists, with no background in Philosophy, so it's basically introductory for  
8 most of them. So I think that it's quite tough for them, really, to do it - as I said earlier - to do it on your  
9 own, effectively, more or less on your own, anyway. So it's quite a challenge for them. But most of them  
10 are doing quite well.  
11 R: Thank you.

### **Tutor C**

12 R: I want to start with some general questions about your experiences. How long have you been teaching  
13 here at the University?  
14 C: You mean just online?  
15 R: Just in general.  
16 C: I have been teaching since 1976 that's thirty years. That's before University.  
17 R: What about your experience teaching as an e-tutor?  
18 C: Well we have been doing that for three years.  
19 R: And have you collected experiences before this or was it the first time for you teaching online?  
20 C: It was the first time.  
21 R: Have you been studying as an e-learner before?  
22 C: No  
23 R: What subjects are you teaching at the MSc online course?  
24 C: I am teaching Consciousness and Psychology spiritual practice.  
25 R: Do you have any experiences with teaching multicultural groups? With multicultural groups I mean  
26 teaching students who belong to different countries.  
27 C: Multiracial groups?  
28 R: No, multicultural groups.  
29 C: Yes.  
30 R: And for how long?  
31 C: Oh right at the beginning for three years there have been people from different cultures on this course  
32 yes.  
33 R: How did you perceive teaching as an e-teacher in general here in his course?  
34 C: How did I perceive it or how do I perceive it?  
35 R: Both  
36 C: Well I see it in similar ways as I see my tutor role with attendance as well. My role is obviously  
37 supporting students but also trying to extent, trying to draw the students, to draw out ideas and to  
38 enable the students to explore more widely the subject matter that I am dealing with. I mean that's used  
39 to be the role. You know my role is to provide the material –we talk about research, your science of  
40 conciseness or whatever the subject is. My role is to provide the material, the journal articles, the  
41 resources and so on; to give some ideas from my own perspective but in addition to that to try to  
42 encourage the students to think about it, to think about the material in diverse ways and to relate it to  
43 their lives so this is something that is meaningful to them. So as an e-tutor it seems to me that is the role  
44 –hold on- so I was saying that's what is the role in general because that works with attendance as well.  
45 So that covers all of it. The –what makes the e-role different; on the first impression it's the same  
46 because it's to try to encourage students to relate to the material, to explore the material, to relate it to  
47 their lives- whether the students are face to face or online. What's different online is that I try to  
48 encourage, I try to encourage dialog which isn't so easy because we are not face to face. So you know I  
49 try for example when I am responding to students who put something to our forum, to our VLE then I  
50 copy from their own work, I might mention their name just to give that personal, that personal aspect  
51 which if you are not careful because if you are not face to face that personal aspect can be missing.  
52 R: You sort of answered already my next question –Which are your new roles in this environment? And  
53 how would you or can you prioritise them?

1 C: The new role?  
2 R: The roles you have as an online teacher?  
3 C: The roles?  
4 R: Yes, which you were talking about.  
5 C: Yes I think I said it already. I think prioritising – I think the major role has to be -which will be the same  
6 as attendance anyway- major role is to lead students to discover ideas and discover research, discover  
7 things that matter. I mean that's the role like, that's what University is about whether I am doing it  
8 online or not online the role is to bring education. There are other roles you know. There are facilitate  
9 role and counselling type roles; so you know students might have some difficulties –it can have to do  
10 with the content, the academic or it could be their own live and other issues. Their working situation may  
11 change or they have got families or whatever it is. So I have a role to be supportive and to make sure the  
12 students understand what is available to them for example ...they can't write an essay at the moment  
13 because they have got problems or whatever it is. So they need to understand you know –how they can  
14 differ and... There are different ways in which that can be doubt with it; I just can vary the right  
15 information. As far as my role is to make sure the information is available to them. But what I was saying  
16 in addition to that is being supportive. I mean I have been supported by making sure the information is  
17 available but more than that obviously I have been supported hopefully by you know by understanding  
18 their predicament and talking it trough with them even it is not face to face there might be talking with  
19 e-mail or whatever it is. So I see those as roles.  
20 R: And...  
21 C: I guess there is another thing. This isn't one I think over a lot – so I guess in terms of prioritising it it's  
22 down the list- but I am the interface for that student who is our University. I am kind ambassador. So I  
23 represent the University to that student. And again, a student who comes here you know that got all the  
24 facilities and they got connections and so on; the students are just online then what is the University?  
25 Because in terms of learning we provide material, journals or whatever it is. When do they have contact  
26 with the University? What is the University for them? That is what I am saying and you know I  
27 understand that as part of my role as well. They are part of our University as a student – so that's part of  
28 the role.  
29 R: Do you have the impression that some students have taken over some of the teacher's role when  
30 teaching online?  
31 C: You mean students who are learning, you don't mean students which we use as assistance?  
32 R: Exactly  
33 C: Students who are learning on the module?  
34 R: Yes  
35 C: Do they take over some of the tutor's role? Yes, yes I mean I haven't thought about it quiet that way  
36 but –I mean the way we – you probably know our programme – you know we have this forums where  
37 there is interaction. So there will be a topic Neural Science of Consciousness or whatever it is and all the  
38 background I raise some issues, it might be a question or it might be a quotation or whatever and the  
39 students post to them. And sometimes what happened is that students might go into an aspect which I  
40 have gone into. And I assume that I don't know. I assume that the other student read those postings so it  
41 might be that the student has covered some ground which I wasn't intended to go into but I am glad that  
42 they did that because it's an additional input for the other students. So in that sense yes.  
43 R: I have one other question concerning the course design. In this course the students don't see each  
44 other - how did you perceive teaching in this way – because there are e-learning courses where the  
45 students see each other once a while?  
46 C: Yeah, how did we decide to do it?  
47 R: no, how did you perceive teaching in this environment?  
48 C: I perceived it as quiet a challenge. And well –what I have earlier said – this is one area we have been  
49 thinking about changing. I think, I think it's, I think it will be a richer experience for students if they have  
50 the opportunity to meet with each other and with ourselves if only for one week or whatever the time  
51 might be. So that already answers your question in the sense that I you know think it's a challenge, it is a  
52 challenge I think we can't fully meet and I do think – clearly we can put material out there and this  
53 course can run and those students gona graduate also its their first year all without any contact. So it's  
54 possible I think you know we have organized some materials accordingly. I think we have done that quiet  
55 well. But really I think that it's not the best way and I think we should if we can. I mean there are  
56 practical issues from our point. We have got people in different areas of the world and can they get here.  
57 There is a number of issues I think it will be a better experience for the students.

1 R: We just talked about the multicultural aspect before of the course. How did you perceive teaching this  
2 group because a lot of people are from different places of the world?  
3 C: There is an issue of language sometimes. But I think that's fairly [...] because we got criteria for  
4 admission. So you know the language issue shouldn't be too difficult. I think there are issues of  
5 expectations. I don't know its quiet early – We have had some issues with students from a different  
6 country not from the UK and –I don't want to go too much into detail – but I think the two cases the  
7 students who were not from England where I think they had the wrong kind of expectation about what  
8 we offer. That's an issue for us to look at again in terms of are we putting the right material out there in  
9 terms of our marketing which is an issue. But as far as I can tell all the English students have understood  
10 that so there are some European ones who haven't. So maybe the kind of education at this level they  
11 used to might be different. I don't know, I don't know enough about that. I feel I should know but I don't  
12 know. So that's one issue about expectations. Second issue: it came up in one occasion when a student  
13 was talking about an expectation it has to do with consciousness and there were issues of language. I  
14 don't mean whether they had the right English or not. I mean in different languages may be different  
15 words for expressing different ideas. So when it comes to consciousness different countries and different  
16 languages may be emphasising different aspect about what consciousness is or different aspects of  
17 mental function. I can't remember the case now but there was someone I think from South America –I  
18 think it was- and she was describing something – I can't remember the detail – but I think those related  
19 to our point of multicultural – so it's – two things I said– one is expectations and the second is I think  
20 more interesting in some ways because it's about different ways of conceptualising our understanding of  
21 the mind.  
22 R: Could explain that a little bit?  
23 C: I can't remember it very tidily. I don't remember it exactly. I still remember it's not – I can't remember  
24 exactly- but it was as I said it was a student I think from South America – I can't remember exactly- and  
25 this is what I said to you: That he was talking about different aspect of consciousness and it became clear  
26 that he was describing something that we didn't had an English word easily to use for. So it's the way  
27 which language which shapes our thinking to some extent. And wires the vessel – you know the way we  
28 think about the mind has let to hole vocabulary and different cultures have different vocabulary for that.  
29 R: Do you think that the aspect of a multicultural student group did influence your way of teaching at all?  
30 C: In terms of – what about language I don't mean the last one I have making within simply how good  
31 they are in English. Sometimes I have been a bit more careful in trying to explain my words then I might  
32 have been if it was only English speaking people. That influences a bit. That's relatively trivial I mean it's  
33 just a question of being more careful in the way you explain things. I don't think so. I mean there is a  
34 body material and different topics and all of that and that kind of material I make available for students.  
35 Well the case I was just referring to -which I can't remember- yes I did. I you know when it came up  
36 about using language, language and thoughts I built on that it's when I replied to students I made an  
37 issue about how important that idea of psychology and language – how important it is. So yes, it  
38 influenced my teaching in that way.  
39 R: Another topic. Did you feel enough prepared and supported by the Institution teaching in this new way  
40 or other way of teaching online?  
41 C: This are two task what you were asking. One is being prepared in the sense of did I understand how I  
42 would teach online. That's one question. The other is support in terms administrative support? Right?  
43 R: Yes  
44 C: On the first our programme was one of the first that John Moores put together. You know we were  
45 pioneering. I never expected anyone to help me –I knew that I was launching a way of teaching. And I  
46 wouldn't be deciding it for myself. Nevertheless, there has been support. You know there have been  
47 people in John Moores who shared this interest and looked for -example right at the beginning when we  
48 were designing the course it was five years ago or more the decision of the University to buy Blackboard  
49 that was a decision you know I was involved in that encouraging the people that we needed some kind of  
50 VLE in that kind. And yes there was support because the people I have talked to recognized the  
51 importance of buying some software of this kind. So yeah there was support in that kind of way. On the  
52 second issue I got a feeling that's not so much what you are asking. The second issue is: Are there  
53 enough administrative –are the people who can – we need more people in support roles. So our  
54 programme is rather stretched. If issues come up–teaching takes a lot of time- and we should have more  
55 stuff related to it. Not just academic I mean support as well. Well I don't know if that's what you were  
56 asking.  
57 K. Support in administration or organisation or?

1 C: Yes, I mean for example I get a lot of enquiries. I mean over the last week I had ten enquiries. And each  
2 one is – they are not all the same. People send me an e-mail they are asking questions and I think there  
3 should be someone in a role – a kind of course administrator, programme administrator – who I would  
4 liaise with but they would pick up those enquiries and if they didn't really know they would ask me. They  
5 should be able to deal with most of it – where as what's happening I have to deal with it.  
6 R: At the moment all this comes to you?  
7 C: Yes all this comes to me.  
8 R: And what I meant also by preparation or support is: Did you get any teachers trainers course?  
9 C: No. that's what I said. Because we were the first we were learning for ourselves. I mean sometimes –  
10 now people from other parts of JMU come to me and ask for guidance. It's a great culture in a way.  
11 R: What about the multicultural aspect did you get some advice or introduction here at the University?  
12 C: Not really. I mean there is an equal opportunity programme. I went on a course equal opportunity -it's  
13 very general; certainly it wasn't [...] online teaching. And the more settled issue in the ways in which  
14 people from different cultures may conceptualizing to use the language and ideas different interests I  
15 was talking about I mean the course doesn't touch all that.  
16 R: So we are coming to the end. One more question I have. Did any problems occur while you were  
17 teaching online which you think are mentionable?  
18 C: Any problems?  
19 R: Yes  
20 C: Yes, yes. I don't know how much detail you want to go into. But for example we have these forums;  
21 the interactive part of the programme are these forums it's like chatroom thing. And they have an  
22 assignment which asks students to draw their experience in the forums and in the first year of the course  
23 operation I did clarify sufficiently what we want the students to do. I mean that was fine; they came back  
24 we discussed it; we had aboard of Study and students discussed it we discussed it and – I mean ... those  
25 kind of problems you know when you are designing a new course –not just – it's not just like designing  
26 you know a new course here that will run here because that's just a question of - you know how you are  
27 gona do it because you are doing all the courses you just bring in new material of the subject. But this  
28 was designing a whole way of learning from the scratch. And you know we got a lot right and I think  
29 there was something we didn't get quite right. Like as I said earlier –I think the student would benefit  
30 from some kind of residential contact. That's in a sense is a problem. We didn't get that quiet right.  
31 Although there are good issues good reasons while we do it as we do but you know it arises. Other  
32 problems, yes there have been other problems. When I talked about expectations when we were talking  
33 about the multicultural side I mentioned expectations before- so there have been students from other  
34 countries who of course are a bit of a problem. They raise issues which – Just an issue rises at the  
35 moment which is in my mind I don't want to go into detail- some issues have been raised in the way that  
36 students engage with each other and the stuff. And in the case I am thinking about there has been some  
37 unreasonable behaviour on the part of students. Now if its email who was an attendance then I take him  
38 to one side and talk to them but it's hard to do that online. And you know may be because students are a  
39 bit unstable. And again – we can always student who attends, not often but occasionally the student  
40 who attends is a bit unstable, and we have to try to make sure that the person, the student is cared for,  
41 is helped. When it's online its quiet hard to do that. So you know someone wants to make trouble for  
42 example –how do you deal with it? It's not easy. So yes there are this kind of problems. And it may be  
43 that some –it may be that the online formatting encourages that kind of students more than attendance  
44 might. Someone who is perhaps a bit unstable, unsure themselves they may not want to go in a class  
45 with a lot of other people. Perhaps there is some, may be some phobia. You know what I mean by that?  
46 Some kind of phobia or paranoia, all this kind of things. And they don't want to come to the University.  
47 But to sit in front of their computer there are ok with that. So may be the online course is more likely to  
48 attract that kind of person. And then that's the question: How do we deal with it? And it's not easy for  
49 example this MSc course, in the attendance we interview all the students, if there is someone who is a bit  
50 unstable or whatever -it may work well ..., perhaps we pick it up in an interview so we can deal with it...  
51 In the online programme we don't interview students. It's not practical if you got students from other  
52 countries may be again we need to look at it, may be need to set up some sort of video stuff for  
53 interviewing. But again as I said we look at all the paper stuff, we don't interview them. So we make it  
54 based on the qualification and so on. So I am saying that could be an issue in terms of picking up  
55 potentially – Well I have really finished that point. Students who may be unstable or not so good in  
56 interacting with others they can course problems in terms of the dynamic of the group and also problems  
57 in terms of the stuff. You know someone is criticising the stuff unreasonably. How do you deal with that?

1 I am saying if you interview them –may be –not every time, but may be you pick it up. If you don't  
2 interview them then you can't pick it up. So if you got students from America, South Africa, in the Far  
3 East how you are gona interview them? So that's an issue.  
4 R: Next to this point I would like to ask you about the challenges teaching in this way. You talked already  
5 about it.  
6 C: I said something to that –  
7 R: Is there may be something else you would like to add or you get inspired from?  
8 C: Yeah, I get inspired by having students from countries –I mean all the things we talked about. You  
9 know the last bit I was talking about are some problems because that's what you ask me. Having  
10 students around the globe it is inspiring, it's great. It's you know it's a good experience to think that you  
11 know the material I teach is going into this country and that country and other countries – I think it's  
12 wonderful. And I think that of course you know – it's never as rich as sitting face to face it's the richest  
13 way to teach. I have no doubt about that. But online teaching is – can be good – it's not quite as good-  
14 but it can be a good way to engage with obviously those who want to learn in this area. And so  
15 spreading that through the world I think it's great, it's a great challenge. And that point earlier I made  
16 about language. Not just that they may not know English so well or whatever but the way which  
17 language is involved in the way we think about the mind. I think it's very enriching. That's enriching to  
18 me. So yes, off course the multicultural aspect is a source of real challenge in this very worthwhile.  
19 R: ok, thank you for the interview.

#### **Tutor D**

20 R: Can you tell me something about your experiences at University. For how long have you been  
21 teaching?  
22 D: Twenty seven years. If you count because originally it was a qualified education and then it was  
23 Liverpool Polio Technic and then Liverpool Polio-Technic became John Moores University. So I started – it  
24 has all been in fact in the same Institution but it has been in three different forms.  
25 R: What about you experiences in online education a teacher and as a student?  
26 D: Non as a student, I have no experiences as a student; as a teacher mainly in relation to the distance  
27 learning version of the MSc. There was some involvement before - there has been some before by e-mail,  
28 obviously e-mail contact with students supervision through e-mail has been happening. In the sense of  
29 formal e-learning in terms of the course it has been since the distance learning MSc started.  
30 R: Which subjects are you teaching?  
31 D: In relation to e-learning or generally?  
32 R: Now we are focussing on the course.  
33 D: On the distance learning course? Ok, I am the JUM programme leader for the MSc and the modules  
34 that I teach, I teach one called Foundations of Transpersonal Psychology which is Parapsychology and  
35 Transpersonal Psychology which is on Psychology research feeds into Transpersonal Psychology  
36 ...psychological research and [...] So there is an option module on that and I am involved -those are the  
37 modules that I am module leader for. Another one I am module leader for is called Independent study  
38 which is another option module that students can take if they don't want to take one of the formal  
39 taught module which is like a - there own investigation or particular area. We have to be empirical as  
40 usual as long as so- I am module leader for that. And I guess we get – hang on how many we get  
41 actually? Because the course has only been running for three years but I would imagine it's something  
42 like one or two students a year who did the Independent study. Those are modules where I am module  
43 leader for and I am also involved in other module on this module. So I supervise what students do - not to  
44 a great extent but there is some involvement. And the administrative side in terms of my role as a  
45 programme leader so jointly with [my colleague], we organize the board of study and so on and  
46 obviously there is also a personal tutor role within – [a tutor] and I are the only people on the  
47 programme who act – so he takes half, I take half... that has to be written for the programme so all this  
48 kind of [...] within the distance learning programme you are focusing on.  
49 R: Could you tell me something about your experiences teaching a multicultural group? Students from  
50 the MSc are from different countries of the world.  
51 D: Well we have students from the United States, from Mexico I think. On the distance learning Master  
52 Programme students were currently registered for it – to say it we haven't actually completed a run

1 through year programme. It's a three year programme and we are in the third year – so the current  
2 students are [...] we are teaching in medium English so all the students have to have teaching English as  
3 a foreign language. .. It mainly about multiculturalism - We have...

4 R: What about your experiences teaching groups with students from different countries.

5 D: Ok, well, only to the extent that in the University we do take students from a wide variety of culture ...  
6 and then to say on the distance learning programme the students are probably 50% are in Britain and  
7 the others are spread through the world - New Zealand, the States, Mexico.

8 R: Ok. How did you perceive teaching online in general in this course?

9 D: Oh we came to it because we wanted to – we had the Masters programme that we have been running  
10 attendance mode which we have been running since 1995. And at experience of that programme  
11 because we realised that a lot of our students from the attendance mode programme were actually  
12 travelling quiet a major distance. There were students who were flying in from Paris, we got a student in  
13 the current year who flies in from ... because we realized the market, it's a very specialized area of  
14 Psychological research the market for it is not huge [...] and therefore we are not gona be able to, to [...] I  
15 realized that over the last ten years or so because students were travelling – The obvious thing to say  
16 would be to set up the programme as a distance learning programme and then we sort of looked at –  
17 how we are going to do that, whether it was going to be entirely online through interaction or whether  
18 we are going to combine it with residency that's the various options. And at that time none of us had –  
19 as far as I know- any particular experience in running an e-learning course. So we were very much sort of  
20 the brain breakers if you like; we were people who were starting of e-learning. In the University there  
21 was very little e-learning going on with the economy programme that has been taught distance– it  
22 wasn't really e-learning, it was based on sending CDs of content. Basically the University didn't have very  
23 much expertise in e-learning. So we were, we were the sort of the first programme of the University  
24 really which started to develop e-learning. And it was a working group setup within the University to  
25 discuss general e-learning things and I was member of that and [a tutor] was a member of that. And we  
26 had various meetings with this working group discussing how e-learning would work. The one we  
27 decided to go with was an inertly web-based e-learning experience for students; we are not sending out  
28 materials by CD, we are not sending workbook, we are not sending out journals. We don't have any  
29 residency requirements; we have not face-to-face contact with students. So it's inertly done through the  
30 meeting of Blackboard. So eventually the University invested in Blackboard which is this e-learning  
31 environment as you know. That wasn't right at the beginning. When we were first discussing it –  
32 Blackboard hasn't been.

33 R: Ok and how did you perceive teaching in this environment?

34 D: Well the course we are running in Transpersonal Psychology it's not a practical training course. So  
35 people are not being trained to become Transpersonal Psychotherapists. So we didn't have to worry that  
36 much about the kind of personal experiential side of Transpersonal Psychology so much. We did  
37 incorporate experiential work into the programme. But it was primary an academic scholarly course  
38 which involved reading books, reading journal articles. I realized that that's the kind of thing the people  
39 could do at distance. As long as they got access to the relevant reading materials and then access to us  
40 and access other students in terms of discussing. But there weren't any reason why they couldn't do this  
41 programme at a distance. The problem that we had at the beginning was the experimental side that was  
42 incorporated within the Masters programme. So the attendance mode Masters Programme does have a  
43 residential weekend. We built that in because Transpersonal Psychology is one of these disciplines that  
44 you have to have an experiential involvement. You can't just do it inertly academic although even the  
45 focus of it is academic it needs to be integrated. In this programme we have the residential weekend to  
46 cater for that – and we did discuss at the time when we were setting up the programme whether we  
47 should try to have a summer school or some kind of residential experience for students. And we decided  
48 against that. Really on logistical grounds so we thought students being in New Zealand and the United  
49 States and Mexico and Eastern Europe and so – it would be unpractical to try and insists the students  
50 come to us. It would increase the costs for students immensely if they have to come for a summer school.  
51 We decided we wouldn't do that. And so we developed a module integral experimental learning –  
52 students do experience work but they do it in the contacts of where they are living. They design their own  
53 experimental learning schedule and then they follow.

54 R: There are other distance learning courses where students meet regular. Do you think this does  
55 influence your role as an e-tutor?

56 D: They weren't meeting. But we had to design in such a way that they weren't require to meet in order  
57 to – they had to be able to fulfil the requirements of the programme without having to meet or having to

1 have a summer school, without having to meet each other to discuss. And so we designed it so that it  
2 would work for the student who was inertly if you like on their own in front of the computer screen. And  
3 they could complete the programme on that basis. That was the way we designed it. But we always  
4 recognized that, and in fact we have always encouraged students who happened to be in the same  
5 locality, to get in touch with each other. And we had the idea of local study groups which in theory is  
6 fine. There is no reason why students who are living in the same part of the country couldn't get together  
7 and discuss things; it's not part of the programme. They don't have to do that in order to complete the  
8 programme. Because if we did this it would be very problematic in terms of the way that we structured  
9 the course. As far as I know there haven't been any local study groups that students have formed. I mean  
10 we leave it to students to organise that. We don't feel it's our role to organise students into local study  
11 groups. And I think the main reason that hasn't happen is that simple that the number of students we  
12 have is relatively small and there aren't that many in the same location.

13 R: And how did you perceive teaching in this pure online environment?

14 D: It's a hard question. We thought it was – the kind of learning experience that some students would  
15 prefer in some way. Some students would feel that it's cheaper doing it this way. They are more  
16 controlled of their learning experience and they can sort of follow it more or less at their own pace. We  
17 do obviously structure the discussion forums and things like that you know [...] It's the kind of thing that  
18 some students would prefer in that way we sort of designed it on the basic we still have the attendance  
19 mode programme going for students who could come here and wanted to come for the attendance  
20 mode could do that. Those who prefer or it would be impractical to study attendance mode if they would  
21 prefer to do distance learning then they study at distance learning. But we designed it really to – to be as  
22 faithful transfer if you like. So we had the attendance mode programme that we had the experience with  
23 over 6 or 7 years. We try to translate that as fully as possible into a distance learning version. While  
24 recognizing there will be difficulties like there is no summer school. So we had to find some way of giving  
25 them experiential learning. So we developed a module to do that. The discussion – I mean the  
26 attendance mode programme a lot of it is based on discussion within a group. So we wanted to find a  
27 way of – I don't want use the word stimulates because it sounds like – it's not antiques as [...] discussion-  
28 but some way of transferring the notion of discussion to an online environment and so we came up with  
29 this idea of the threaded discussion forums which is the –if you like- the primary mode of student-tutor  
30 interaction on the programme. So the learning materials I presented and how we built it and how we  
31 decided to chose materials ... the reading as a learning material they have time to access to and there  
32 are the weekly discussion forums for each module which the students are engaged in. And they post five  
33 hundred words...

34 R: What about your role as an online tutor – you mentioned it already- what do you think are your roles  
35 in this e-learning programme?

36 D: Ok, that's a good question. So it's obviously different from being a lecture in some sort of group of  
37 students. So – My role I don't think – and I think any of us thought of it in this way- my role isn't to sort of  
38 write a lecture on each of the topics as we might do for obviously getting lecture each week to group of  
39 students. Our role is not to provide ourselves the actual content. We are not writing the content as such.  
40 So our role is to collect together a corpus of learning recourses and learning materials and we provide -I  
41 mean different tutors do it slightly differently- the way I do it is I select the relevant readings and as far  
42 as possible I try to make sure that the reading are accessible electronically. So the basic learning  
43 recourses that the students have – there is a, there are books they should buy for each module. So we  
44 have a board part figure they should spend a hundred pounds for each module on textbooks. So they  
45 have to buy textbooks but there are a lot of other journal articles and other resources available on the  
46 web. So our job is to find and collect the relevant learning resources in relations to the topics that we are  
47 teaching. And then to make those available to the students so the students can get access to them  
48 through Athens and Select Wise and the other systems. That's the primary role – is to select the learning  
49 resources. To obviously structure each module to fulfil the learning outcomes of that particular module –  
50 so we obviously we got to design the modules and make sure that we are covering the appropriate. I  
51 have been collected the learning resources to make those easier available to students, so students can go  
52 to the module they can click on topic one and they can find other learning recourses listed there and  
53 usually I give short comments on each of the learning resources so the students know what it is and they  
54 gona read it and then. I mean it has been possible; things keep changing which is one of the frustrating  
55 things. One of the frustrating things about e-learning is that the system, the online system has changed  
56 so that when a link changed – when I first set it up I would set it up so there is a module link and they can  
57 click on that link and go directly to that article. And then off course different systems come in and they

1 change the link and some of the links become dead. So what we are tending to do now is to move the  
2 direct click access to a journal – so we all list it and then however the student needs to find it, they need  
3 to know how to find it. So yes to present all this material to the students week by week to cover the  
4 module content and to structure the weekly discussion forums. So that I have to decide what questions I  
5 can set students in relations to the different topics that we cover each week. And typically the discussion  
6 forums there are two or three different questions each week and the students choose one of those. So I  
7 have to decide what the important questions are and my role is to read the students postings each week,  
8 respond each week to those postings. Then the idea was that the students would make their 500 word  
9 postings and the tutor would respond collectively, we wouldn't respond individually to each student, we  
10 respond collectively to these student postings. And then the idea was after that there would be a sort of  
11 second state where students and tutors could then engage in a sort of general discussion around what  
12 has risen in those particular postings and response. What we found is that that second stage doesn't  
13 really work. They haven't been really many follow up postings. And we think the reason for that is that  
14 students are rushing on to do the next topic. So they complete that topic as it were in that way and next  
15 week they are doing the next topic. They don't have the time to think back and engage in the more  
16 informal discussions around that at that earlier topic. So what the thing we are thinking of doing is to  
17 have a smaller number of discussion forums topics, so that we have a longer period of time when  
18 students can respond to the tutors responses basically and respond to each others.

19 R: How did you perceive your tutor role?

20 D: It's tended to be rather formal. So in the first year students were literally write a mini essay, a five  
21 hundred word essay, and the tutors posting back to. The responses back would tend to be a kind oral  
22 response to those postings. It was all of bit formal. What that didn't really enable just the kind of  
23 informal kind of discussion you might get within a group. It was all a little bit too structured and a little  
24 bit to formal. So we tried to find ways of loosening up really, of making it much more active engaging type  
25 of dialog.

26 R: Did you have the feeling that the students have taken over some roles?

27 D: They, yeah at a side they have. So students have taken over the role of suggesting other things that  
28 students might want to read. Yeah, so a lot of students say 'I have read this book' and 'I recommend this'  
29 and 'this is about this person said and...' So the students have been proactive in increasing kind of the  
30 content, the relevant content, I got quite a few good ideas from students. So they suggest other  
31 resources. And students also comment to some, well I mean they are quiet well behaved, so you don't  
32 get sort of flammers and things like that happening in the discussion forums. But students have carefully  
33 been, they have responded in a valuated way to other students postings, mainly positive but sometimes  
34 has been some criticism from some students to other students. So they have taken on – I am not sure if  
35 it's taking on the tutors role- but they certainly– I mean its, I they suppose the way I see it – is very much  
36 a peer learning environment. But it's not the tutors who have all the knowledge and the student kind of  
37 learning from the tutors. The whole idea is that we should try to develop a peer learning environment.  
38 And so we encourage the students to sort of take responsibility collectively for their own learning and  
39 yeah they have things to offer and all learn from each other I suppose. I have learned as a tutor from the  
40 students.

41 R: How did you perceive teaching their?

42 D: How did I participate or how do you mean?

43 R: How was it for you because it's as you said different for you than teaching face-to-face?

44 D: In a sense it's more demanding I think. Its quiet a lot more demanding because you have – there is a  
45 lot of research that goes into in the first instance in to just to find the relevant course materials and  
46 particular to find stuff that is accessible through the web. Because we can't – here it's much easier  
47 because we know what's in the library and we can refer the students watching the library. It's much  
48 more difficult if we don't know what's available and also there is a huge amount available what we have  
49 to find then. Its quiet demanding in terms of being able to find the appropriate learning recourses. So  
50 that's very time consuming. It's very, it's quiet time consuming to set the module up in the first place.  
51 That took longer than I thought it would take – to actually get the module up, to make them looking  
52 good and being assessable workable for the students. Once the modules are up, probably the  
53 involvement as a tutor is about the same as it would be for the attendance mode. So doing the discussing  
54 forums each week is kind of equivalent of doing a few hours of lectures each week in terms of the time  
55 commitment. Yeah, certainly setting it up was very demanding. The maintenance of it was making sure  
56 that the module remains current it's not as much work as when it was set up first. But you also have to  
57 check that the learning recourses are still there, you have to add new learning recourses, and so on as I

1 said it's the frustration really that different electronic systems change, so you have to find, find where  
2 this article is now –it used to be there but now its somewhere else. Yeah and that can be quiet  
3 frustrating. Some of the other tutors have used electronic text – which means they have scanned in. I  
4 think that's more work and I have avoided that. Mainly in the topics I teach either the readings are  
5 available in book forms so students can buy them or they are available electronically anyway. But in  
6 some of the other modules some of the key readings aren't in print and they are not available  
7 electronically. So students have– tutors have had to scan in these articles.

8 R: How did you prioritise your tutor-roles?

9 D: That was the main thing in terms of designing the module that was the main priority in the first place.  
10 It was to trying all the modules I taught apart from the Parapsychological perspective one which I teach-  
11 I teach an undergraduate Module on Parapsychology then but it's not really Parapsychology in relation  
12 to Transpersonal Psychology its Parapsychology – and the module I wanted for the distance learning  
13 programme was looking at Parapsychology and Transpersonal Psychology. So that module basically was  
14 designed more or less from stretch. So that's a lot of work. The other modules were based on stuff I have  
15 been teaching for many years anyway. So it was a way of finding how to translate it into a distance  
16 learning format. So I obviously had to prioritise modules that came up first. So the module that was  
17 going live first I had to give that priority and then I would take that module and then find a way of  
18 putting the relevant content into a distance learning format and find relevant materials. So I had to  
19 prioritised getting the material ready and then – that was the priority – because it was – I mean we  
20 didn't had a lot of time until it was running. So it was quiet demanding and it was a hell of a lot of work  
21 to get this modules running in time when they first started. Some of the other modules started later so  
22 there was some time to put them up. While I was teaching the priority is while I am teaching is to make  
23 sure that I [...] the discussion forums. So they have to read the discussion forums each week and respond.  
24 These are the kind of things that have to be done by deadlines – so those priorities; and obviously  
25 responding to student's e-mails. I mean the other aspect obviously is that students can contact us  
26 through e-mail individually. That side of the programme as a programme leader there are also the other  
27 things that you have to prioritise to such students who have mitigating circumstances, you know they  
28 have illnesses; they can't produce the work on time and so on. Such students I have been in touch of their  
29 work that they can't do in time, they want intensions or they need to defer of the work – those kinds of  
30 things on a day to day basis take priority students contact me because they are not well you know.

31 R: Within the MSc course the student come from different places from the world. How did you perceive  
32 teaching a multicultural group?

33 D: One of the things we considered was that kind of different cultural expectations that students may  
34 have. So for example in some cultures there is sort of an attitude of the lectures and the kind of the  
35 authorities. But my guess is it hasn't actually turned into that big problem because I think that the topic  
36 we are teaching Transpersonal Psychology that the people are aware from where they are from the  
37 world – I think they are mature and therefore they are less slightly fall into those kind of cultural  
38 expectation that you might get in some fixed curriculum and the tutor is the authority and this sort of  
39 defers to the tutor. I mean, I don't think it has actually been that much of an issue the multicultural. I  
40 think it's because of the topic we are teaching. If we were teaching something like Medicine or more  
41 even straight Psychology it would be more of an issue. We had this I know that with some students on  
42 the BsE programme. Some students from other cultures have come there and there are cultural issues  
43 and there are also cultural issues around Playtheorism for example. I think some cultures it seemed, it  
44 seems the correct thing to do to use very closely the original words of – again it's a way of showing  
45 respect for the authority of the written word - to show respect to the authority of the teacher. And so I  
46 mean sometimes there is -there have been issues with attendance students- not on the MSc programme  
47 but the undergraduate programme where some students from – they seem to have this more differential  
48 attitude to – and it can, sometimes they can be problems sort of [...] kind of playtheorism issue.

49 R: Do you think that the multicultural aspect does influence your way of teaching?

50 D: No so much the way of teaching. I suppose it's, no I don't think it has influenced my way of teaching  
51 particularly. I think the kind of the way we have taught is on the assumption that the people who are  
52 gona do this are pretty self-aware people. And that they – I suppose it comes, it may come more in terms  
53 of selection, selection of students. So we need, we do make sure – I mean sometimes we get applications  
54 from people who really want to do an MSc in Psychology but and they chose ours because they find it  
55 online – but really they have no interest in Transpersonal Psychology. They have no knowledge; they are  
56 not into that kind of approach. And therefore we have to be careful not to allow into the course students  
57 who, who the course would be inappropriate for. So I guess there is a kind of cultural aspect to that. I

1 mean I am not saying that we turn away students because of their -you know- their racial background or  
2 their culture. But we do turn away students who can't demonstrate any interest in Transpersonal  
3 Psychology. Students that we do take on the course do have a clear strong interest in Transpersonal  
4 Psychology. And as I said I don't think the cultural issue has become a problem or seems to be a cultural  
5 or ethical kind of issue. There have been some issues around religion. So I see some students who do the  
6 course are interest in Transpersonal Psychology but they have very strong religious convictions and some  
7 students doing the course have a very strong interest in Transpersonal Psychology but they don't have  
8 any religious conversion. So there is the potential there –obviously in this particular kind of area –  
9 Transpersonal Psychology is you know closely associated with religion and obviously people with very  
10 strong religious believes engaging in dialog with each other if they have very different believes. There is a  
11 potential source of conflict. And there is not –I don't think it's becoming an area of difficulty but its one  
12 potential area of difficult I think. Then we could - students might be students, students with very strong  
13 religious convictions might be offended by something of other students might say; for example with  
14 different religions.

15 R: Did you feel enough prepared and supported by the Institution concerning teaching online?

16 D: Well we have been very well supported by the infrastructure. So we have been very well supported by  
17 the Blackboard learning environment which the University invested in. And if we haven't had that we  
18 wouldn't have been able to do it really. If the University would not have afforded the money to buy  
19 Blackboard then – other than that I think we have been pretty much; I think we have lead the University  
20 rather than the University has lead us. You know we worked out how this thing might work in the context  
21 of our degree. And I think the University has learned from us.

22 R: And did you get a teacher trainer courser or something like this?

23 D: No nothing in relation to e-learning.

24 R: And in relation to the multicultural issue?

25 D: We did. Well I have done. Because if you – there are equal opportunity courses that the University run  
26 on – You have to do this courses if you are engaged in such a procedure for academic stuff. I have done  
27 training on equal opportunity. That wasn't done specifically in relation to the e-learning. That was done  
28 more in relation to... that's something the University does offer but not in specific relation to e-learning.  
29 No, I am picking it up it's an issue link if you want to focus on.

30 R: Did any problems occur while you were teaching online this course?

31 D: Ok, I suppose one of the problems that have arisen is because the students don't know us in  
32 personally, because they don't really have any direct personal contact with us. I mean that some of the  
33 students have felt that they haven't been quiet as immediate as they might do. Sometimes to be fair has  
34 been our failing. I mean it's –we have an agreement that we try to stick to with the contract with  
35 students which says things like 'We respond to all emails', 'We will have the discussion forums done in  
36 time' things like that. I mean there are times when -it's you know we failed on that; it's been more than  
37 three days since, before you know...some times a discussion forums – ok personally I have never been  
38 that timed derived one or two times when I have not [...] One of the problems is that students from the  
39 distance learning programme think that this is all we do. They think all we do here is acting as a tutor on  
40 this distance learning programme and they don't realize all the other things we have to do. And  
41 therefore their expectations are not with manpower –they expect immediate response and I think they  
42 expect more from us. One of the things we were very carefully when we set up the programme was to  
43 protect ourselves. So one of the things we realized we had to do was not giving students the expectations  
44 that they going to have a kind of an e-mail tutorial with us. And I think some students still feel like that's  
45 what they really want. They want sort of sending an e-mail to us one or three times a day and want the  
46 person response to those e-mails –an academic issue two or three times a day. And we were very clear  
47 when we set it up – we weren't able to deliver that and therefore we needed to make it clear that we  
48 couldn't give that kind of [...] We are not there at the end of the phone or the end of the e-mail whenever  
49 a student has a query about something. So we had to protect ourselves from that. So we –when we  
50 wrote the programme was to make clear we would answer e-mails but within three days. So I think  
51 generally it worked quiet well in terms off –I think what we – Well, there is some crush at the moment for  
52 – some students have requested that we should have some kind of personal contact, there should be  
53 some, some of the other members of the teaching group has sympathy with that –I know that [two  
54 tutors] I think they are keen to try and introduce some kind of residency summer school type of thing. I  
55 have major doubts about that myself. So but I know that's something –some of the students and there is  
56 really just one or two I think – some of the students have said you know it would be nice to. I think the  
57 practical aspect... it's time to students expectation – what do they feel that they get value for money I

1 suppose at the end of the day and I think there have been some issues where some students have felt -  
2 that they haven't. But we designed a programme to run in this way and we delivered it in this way. If  
3 students expect something else then you know on the other hand it's not a recite system [...] I am happy  
4 to train things and improve things if they are doable. So you know we have the boards of study students  
5 where they post their concerns and as a group we discuss them.

6 R: What was the biggest challenge for you teaching in this environment?  
7 D: I don't think there are any major challenges. I mean there was at first because we didn't know if it was  
8 gona work and we didn't – and it was a lot of work to get that. But know it s up and running within the  
9 kind of framework that we have established I don't think there are any major – I don't think there are  
10 any major challenges that we kind of surfacing at the moment. I think it works, I mean it works nothing  
11 works well I think it's a good programme; I think it's not any works but it's workable in terms of the stuff.  
12 I mean one of the main challenges we did have at the beginning I suppose which has been addressed to  
13 some extent was whether we have the person power resources to be able to run the programme. In  
14 terms of –because it isn't the only thing we do. So I mean we have been very lucky –I mean I don't think it  
15 would have, I think if we haven't had [a tutors] I don't think, I think we would find it much more set  
16 things up really. So [ a tutor] is coming more involved with [a tutor] on that so there is those, it's just  
17 been the attendance mode programme was basically me and [two tutors]. Just the three of us were  
18 running that and it would have been much more of a challenge if we would have had [a tutor]. And I  
19 suppose one of the challenge, actually I suppose the challenge – there is a challenge at the moment –is  
20 advertising and recruitment in terms of... it's been ok actually for the, I mean we have been getting  
21 about twelve – particular many of them are paying international fees. And so it's been recruiting ok but I  
22 suppose one of the challenges is whether we are going to be able to maintain that recruitment or even  
23 increase it. I mean if we - I think we can maintain it with the numbers we have got with the stuff we have  
24 got if the numbers go down then there gona be questions answered about you know whether we can  
25 really justify the stuffing that we do have on the programme. If the numbers go up then there is the  
26 question of gona be able to cope with the increasing numbers given the stuffing we do have. So there are  
27 all this kinds of issues around advertising, recruitment numbers, stuffing – Yeah I think those are the  
28 main challenges we are facing as a tutor team.

29 In terms of the actual delivery of the programme – I mean there are always niggles and some people  
30 even think things differently and so on but basically I think the programme works well. And it's not  
31 pretending to be something that it can't be. And as I said there are any difficulties within it it's because  
32 of some students expected to be different or more then we can offer. And may be some of the stuff think  
33 they want to be able to offer something different –no –by nature I am not a conservative but in terms of  
34 this programme I think –you know we do have a product as it were that works and you know it's always  
35 a kind of challenge I suppose. I suppose one of the challenges of delivery was when I mentioned earlier  
36 about the discussion forums because one of the challenges is to try to encourage the students to engage  
37 in more peer to peer interaction and discussion around the topics. What I was saying before that hasn't  
38 happened; they have posted and we have responded and then they have gone on to another topic and  
39 there has been no discussion around that. So one of our challenge is to try and find some way in doing  
40 that – as I said our solution I think is just we reduce the number of [...]

41 R: One more question – Do you have anything else to add or did you get inspired by something?  
42 D: You made me think about the multicultural thing actually from your questions. Because as I said it's  
43 something that we kind of considered so it might be any issue but actually hasn't really become an issue.  
44 But there is obviously the question in that of whether - again relates to recruitment whether we really  
45 right kind of – are we only recruiting for kind of Western, American, Anglo American audience. And I  
46 don't think we have any –as far as I know- we have not any other students. So I mean our students  
47 mainly are coming from an Anglo – actually we do have – it is on the other hand we don't have any black  
48 students; so kind of African black students. Oh they are not applying but then there is the question of are  
49 we advertising ourselves in such a way as to be attractive to you know other countries ... Ok, one thing  
50 that I haven't talked about is the personal tutor role because I mean - with the Undergraduate  
51 programme and also with the to some extent with the attendance mode Masters programme one of the  
52 roles we have as tutors is to act as personal tutor for any kind of [...] I suppose I mean we do have  
53 personal tutors, we do allocate students on the distance learning programme to a personal tutor but–  
54 students don't use us very much in that capacity. They use - I suppose they us more in the First Year  
55 programme leaders. So if they do have issues with their own or whatever they contact us as programme  
56 leader or personal tutor role. May be its not needed so much within this kind of programme. But we feel  
57 that we should offer it but it's not been taken up. OK.

1 R: All right, thank you.

### **Tutor E**

2 R: Can you tell me something about your teaching experiences at University – very briefly- and your  
3 experiences concerning e-learning as a student and as a tutor?

4 E: Ok, I started here at John Moores about three and a half years ago closed to three and a half. Basically  
5 my first job as a, first teaching, my first teaching post. Yes, basically before I had two years here at  
6 Liverpool University at the other University and but there I taught very little, more supervision and so. My  
7 experience with e-learning as a student not much in fact, very limited when I did my certificate in  
8 learning and teaching in Higher Education. This was not really e-leaning but there was a little bit of ... I  
9 mean are you just asking about the e-learning thing not everything I teach? I am member of this  
10 Consciousness and Mind programme; the module I am mainly involved in– in addition I think all the other  
11 modules I am teaching I supported.

12 R: Do you have any experiences teaching multicultural groups?

13 E: I think it's difficult to say because I am not completely aware where the students come from. The  
14 students now on this module I am just having at the moment I know they all have western names but I  
15 didn't check. Just because I didn't have time to check. Often within the course not as much as some  
16 others who [...]

17 R: Do you have experiences within other courses?

18 E: In classroom teaching. What do you mean?

19 R: A bit like teaching multicultural groups?

20 E: There are – I mean we have students with – I don't cater for them in special ways. I don't get specific  
21 information about the cultural background; if somebody is Asian looking maybe speaks with an accent...

22 R: How did you perceive teaching as an e-tutor?

23 E: How did I perceive it? I mean, I mean the experience I had was in general it was very positive. I mean I  
24 was very surprised about how easy it is to engage the students. Only to the contributions to the students  
25 about the [...] and great performance as well. I mean this was in fact the first module I really taught  
26 online. In this sense it was a good experience. Before I didn't know how it would work. I just had some  
27 ideas ...

28 R: What are your new roles in this environment as an e-tutor?

29 E: If comparing it to attendance it is -I mean I would - my expectation was that it is more difficult to  
30 engage students then it was. I don't know why in this case it was so easy I can't say. I mean it was an  
31 option so the students decided themselves whether they want to do this module or not. I would have  
32 expected that there is more activity. Well, this is what I in fact expected this would be may be -back to  
33 this- this is the most important thing. I mean may be now I got another idea: the big difference is also  
34 that you have to frontload all the material. So basically this is quite [...] I basically don't like to think  
35 about. I don't like planning in advance to such an extent because I have revisited it all this stuff. And in  
36 attendance I am teaching much better if I just prepare the material. Then all the activities everything  
37 that's all involved. If one compares this I think this is all a big challenge - this was still to the previous  
38 question, wasn't it?

39 R: No, that's fine because one question was concerning your new roles.

40 E: No, I mean I don't think so much about it. Usually I just think about what needs to be done. So I don't  
41 see myself now in these roles. I see this is work that needs to be done.

42 R: Did students take over some of the work that needs to be done?

43 E: Partially this happens I think that where I - this is mainly in - I think what I have observed now on this  
44 module is in when it's the deadline or whatever and then before I reply to it and some other students [...]   
45 Maybe we have built it in that students take over some roles. One of the assignments is that students  
46 write an essay and this will be peer-reviewed by other students. We give feedback and then we write  
47 the article and so on.

48 R: What about the course design- this course is just online, students don't see each other. How did you  
49 perceive teaching in this environment?

50 E I don't know. It is an issue on the programme in fact we are discussing it. We are discussing it whether  
51 if some students would like to meet at least at one residential, they come and we arrange something and  
52 there can be a meeting and so on. First when the programme was planned it was decided not to do this.  
53 Well, there is at least from some students there is the wish. So they also have this experience that

1 something is missing that they would like to [...] it is not required and second another thing is also then  
2 the students want to have it or some want to have it because feel that quiet personally so there is a  
3 certain degree that they open up for each other but I thing its behind it.  
4 R: What do you mean by strange?  
5 E: I mean you know many things maybe about a person. The process would be that it brings, I would  
6 expect that it brings a change that it brings people more together and some students can benefit from it  
7 while others. I do go to this rout probably down this rout it would mean that –we- that some students  
8 will not take the programme. Another thing is also that there are students -I just remember now- that  
9 there are students on the programme who said that they have chosen the distance learning, e-learning  
10 programme and not to have any personal contact. I mean this is, I choose it because then I can [...] a way  
11 they don't have to engage, do it in my way.  
12 R: One more question concerning the multicultural aspect. How did you perceive teaching in this  
13 environment?  
14 E: I mean this – thinking about this module now I just can say not at all. What I see is that the different  
15 students engage with the material in a different way. In different ways so that they are interested in  
16 different aspects and one student may be ... it's obvious that students are different. But I didn't, I mean ...  
17 I couldn't say that this is because... I am in fact not aware that there are huge cultural differences  
18 between. It looks to me may be I am the culturally most different one from all of them - it could be. It  
19 looks it seems to me that all [...]  
20 R: Did you get any support/preparation teaching online from the Institution?  
21 E: Not at all, no. In different ways I think. Because I just did this PG third before so I had a good  
22 background about learning and teaching serious and they applied to online teaching as well. I do aware  
23 of important issues and there was also some focus not too much. Otherwise if one looks at the  
24 institutionally provision what then it's basically it means there is some support available if ... but who  
25 have to look for yourself. That's it more or less.  
26 R: Did you get any preparation concerning the multicultural aspect?  
27 E: Basically every new member of staff has to go ... whatever can be diverse. So there is I mean a little bit  
28 but not to an extent that you really would look in detail what effect it has on teaching and how should or  
29 could it influence it. Another thing is that it is difficult to an extent; I in fact think if people come to the  
30 UK to -you think about the programme like ours... something else... work on their own or something  
31 certain awareness that things can be... of Asian students in terms...  
32 R: Can you think of any problems that occur while teaching this module?  
33 E: The main problem I have experienced and I have seen is that for all the colleagues it's not enough  
34 time. All of us would like to [...] teaching and line this properly to see where the other one are when I  
35 think about it in general. I mentioned it before already. But I really think there is so much work involved  
36 you are not as flexible – we have this in the, I mean the programme has been developed that there is  
37 quiet ... most of the modules follow the same structure. And this means they all have like ...discussion  
38 boards with six topics and three issues, each topic has three issues that are discussed. And basically I  
39 think that students have difficulties dealing really with one topic. Because then they should be posting on  
40 the next already they can't go on that... Also in the same time we want to keep it flexible.  
41 R: Where do you see the biggest challenge in teaching online?  
42 E: I mean so far the biggest challenge is really to [...] the way how we do it is basically that after each  
43 students has posted –the challenge is to provide what we promise to provide in a way and what we  
44 want to provide because we want to have it in a deliverable way. I haven't done so much teaching so  
45 there are probably many other challenges.  
46 R: One of my last questions. Do you want to add something or just got some inspiration while doing the  
47 interview?  
48 E: I mean I don't know if it's different for the different topics and so on. [...] it's something like what we  
49 are doing goes into detailed discussion that goes deep [...] ideas and it's most pretentious more [...]  
50 R: All right – thank you a lot.

### **Tutor F**

51 (No oral interview; answers have been provided in written form)

52 R: Years at John Moores?

1 *F: I have been teaching at LJMU since September 2004 (both in the drama department and the school of*  
2 *psychology).*  
3 *R: Years of teaching experience in general?*  
4 *F: I have been professionally facilitating learning experiences since autumn 1999.*  
5 *R: Years of working with e-learning - as a teacher/student?*  
6 *F: I have worked in an e-learning environment since starting at LJMU in 2004. In this environment I have*  
7 *always been in the tutor role.*  
8 *R Taught subjects?*  
9 *F: Attendance: Drama, Workshop Facilitation, Project Management, Community Arts, Approaches to*  
10 *Consciousness, Transpersonal Research Methods; E-Learning: CTP Research Methods, Psychology of*  
11 *Spiritual Practice, Thesis Module.*  
12 *R: Experiences teaching multicultural groups?*  
13 *F: As an artist I have facilitated learning experiences in almost every conceivable setting (from streets to*  
14 *supermarkets to museums to schools to you name it!) and with many different groups (any age, many*  
15 *different ethnic backgrounds, socially excluded groups and also wealthy communities).*  
16 *R: How do you perceive teaching as an e-tutor?*  
17 *F: I find teaching online more convenient (can work from home and from almost anywhere in the world)*  
18 *– but the experience is also more detached, less personal. This I sometimes find frustrating. Generally,*  
19 *teaching online also takes more time than teaching in attendance modes. I spend so many hours poring*  
20 *over emails and forum postings & posting module contents!!!*  
21 *R: What are your (new) roles in this environment?*  
22 *F: I teach on several online modules. Teaching involves developing module content, designing forums,*  
23 *responding to forum postings and emails and marking assignments. I spend considerable time on one-to-*  
24 *one guidance via email.*  
25 *R: How did you perceive these roles?*  
26 *F: I am unsure what you mean.*  
27 *R: How did you prioritise your roles in this course?*  
28 *F: As a part-time lecturer I put in many more hours than I was paid for ... and treated all areas of my role*  
29 *equally. Saying this, module development took the longest time.*  
30 *R: Did the students take over some roles?*  
31 *F: No. Quite a good idea though. A buddy system would cut down the number of individual requests for*  
32 *guidance I deal with.*  
33 *R: How did you perceive this course design?*  
34 *F: I think that it's important for the students and tutors to meet at least once ... and I have been*  
35 *suggesting that the e-students should join the residential weekend. I think the students feel lonely*  
36 *sometimes and disconnected. I also think that the course could involve more multimedia material, such*  
37 *as online video lectures.*  
38 *R: Do you think that your role as e-tutor would change if the students in this course would meet each*  
39 *other?*  
40 *F: I don't think that the role would change as such BUT I think that the students would feel less isolated. I*  
41 *would feel more comfortable as well ... knowing someone through a face-to-face encounter strengthens*  
42 *the relationship and I think it would make the online teaching experience easier.*  
43 *R: How did you perceive teaching a multicultural group?*  
44 *F: Sometimes there are some language problems – but usually nothing major. Things got tricky once in*  
45 *an online chatroom when a foreign language speaker felt a little overwhelmed by the rather fast*  
46 *exchanges. This is something to consider. My native language is German – so I know what it's like to*  
47 *work in a foreign language. Also, in an e-teaching environment people can easily misunderstand one*  
48 *another, particularly if they don't know each other's personalities. Hence a residential for all e-students*  
49 *would be good!*  
50 *R: Does the multicultural aspect influence your teaching?*  
51 *F: I'm always curious where people are from ... and diverse backgrounds make the whole experience very*  
52 *rich and exciting.*  
53 *R: Did problems occur while teaching online?*  
54 *F: Yes – communication problems, misunderstandings. Technical problems with BB, LJMU server*  
55 *problems, failing equipment at home.*  
56 *R: What was the biggest challenge for you teaching in this environment?*  
57 *F: Having to communicate through an interface and not really knowing the students.*

- 1 *R: Did you feel enough prepared and supported by the Institution?*
- 2 *F: Hm, there could have been some technical training. And there should have been more pay! I worked so*
- 3 *many more hours than I was paid for to make it all work.*
- 4 *R: Did you receive teachers training? Was the multicultural aspect mentioned?*
- 5 *F: No and no.*
- 6 *R: Would you like to add anything else – for example some inspiration?*
- 7 *F: I think personal contact between e-students and tutors and other e-students is of vital importance. I*
- 8 *think that we ought to develop our residential options.*

## Liverpool John Moores University – Students

### Student A

- 1 R: I am having some ahm basic questions just for the statistics first: What is your age?  
2 A: I am 44.  
3 R: 44 – ok, and ahm in which year of study you are?  
4 A: In – I am just about to start the third year of my Master's.  
5 R: Third year of you Master's – and what about you profession? Are you – what have you done before –  
6 so studying, or working?  
7 A: I am actually a business analyst.  
8 R: Business analyst, ok –  
9 A: I work in IT. Ahm, open till ahm about 18 months ago I was working fulltime and studying in the  
10 evenings. But I now just work four days a week and study one day a week, what I was off today.  
11 R: Ok, that makes things easier.  
12 A: Oh, yes  
13 R: And in the IT? Can I know exactly what ahm sort of IT you are working with?  
14 A: Ahm I work for a company called e.on.  
15 R: All right  
16 A: Which is – energy – they have just taken over a company called power gene; so its ahm gas, electricity  
17 R: They are quiet popular in Germany as well.  
18 A: Aha, the name is just getting recognised over here. Ahm, so basically I design the computer systems  
19 for the customer service sort of.  
20 R: Ok, it's interesting. And what about your experiences learning and teaching online. Do you had some  
21 before you started the course?  
22 A: No  
23 R: So it was the first distance learning course for you?  
24 A: Yes  
25 R: Ok, and what about your experiences concerning other cultures? Have you been working or ahm  
26 studying or living together with people with diverse cultural background?  
27 A: Ahm, not really. No, I have got quite a few ahm different nationalities at work, but they have all lived  
28 in England for a long time; so  
29 R: All right. Ok, now I have got just some general topics about learning online. How did you perceive  
30 learning online in this pure online environment; because usually there weren't any face-to-face  
31 meetings?  
32 A: hats right. How did I – sorry I missed the word?  
33 R: Perceive –  
34 A: Perceive – ahm I found it fine. The first year was a lot easier than last year ahm because they changed  
35 the version of the software. And I couldn't get it to work probably on my PC.  
36 R: Ok  
37 A: So it was more a technical problem rather than an ahm social problem, if you know what I mean.  
38 R: Yeah  
39 A: Working online on my own ahm was fine.  
40 R: Yeah  
41 A: That was fine for me.  
42 R: I can imagine you have got lot of to do with IT.  
43 A: I do, yes. But working PC is another thing altogether [laugh]  
44 R: Yeah, yeah  
45 A: When I did my degree ahm part-time at a local University in the evenings and there were only two of  
46 us in the class – so working online on my own, that wasn't a problem for me because I am not used to be  
47 in a big class.  
48 R: All right  
49 A: Does that make sense?  
50 R: Yeah, so in this way you are not used to learn in, in a face-to-face group.  
51 A: Yeah, before it was only me and the lecture and one other fellow who never spoke at all. [laugh]  
52 R: No? [laugh]  
53 A: He was really shy.

1 R: All right [...]  
2 A: Doing it online wasn't really that different for me.  
3 R: Yeah, all right. And ahm can you maybe think of any problems which occurred while you were learning  
4 online? So you recognized already – or you mentioned already the technical issue.  
5 A: Yeah, I suppose it would be interesting to be able to discuss things with other students. But because I  
6 have never had that anyway, I haven't really missed it.  
7 R: All right, Yeah and  
8 A: The interaction, ahm [pause]  
9 R: So, there weren't - that's nice if there weren't any problems apart from the technical thing; which –  
10 can be quiet annoying as well, I know.  
11 A: Yeah.  
12 R: Ahm – focusing on the multicultural aspect of the course, because I mean there are a lot of students  
13 coming from all over the world – and ahm how did you perceive studying with a group of students with  
14 diverse cultural background?  
15 A: I found it really interesting. Ahm and I would have liked to really have the time to find out more about  
16 them.  
17 R: Yeah, in which way?  
18 A: Yeah  
19 R: You mean ahm meeting face-to-face, or you mean ahm also online in a way?  
20 A: Also online, yes – emailing or through the forums. It would have been nice to do that but off course  
21 you don't get the time, do you?  
22 R: Mhm, I can imagine. I can imagine –  
23 A: I met another German girl, she was actually working in London and we sort of emailed each other but  
24 very rarely until we went to the residential weekend.  
25 R: Ok  
26 A: And now we email each other quiet a lot.  
27 R: Ja  
28 A: Yeah that was – seeing someone face-to-face did make a lot of difference.  
29 R: Yeah, I can imagine. But for some people who are from overseas and I can imagine that, that it wasn't  
30 easy for them to ahm participate. I mean from South Africa or from Asian countries they probably didn't  
31 come.  
32 A: Yeah, there was a lady from Dubai.  
33 R: Oh did she  
34 A: Yeah, but she was lucky. And like you say, it makes it a little bit unfair for those that can't make it,  
35 doesn't it.  
36 R: Yeah  
37 A: I was very interested to learn about peoples other cultures, although I haven't.  
38 R: Mhm, and did you have the feeling that this multicultural issue influenced you learning in any way in  
39 this course?  
40 A: Ahm, no I don't think so.  
41 R: No  
42 A: Well, I suppose in the forums you are getting other people expressing their views.  
43 R: Yeah  
44 A: So, ahm so I think for me it's, it's more other people rather than being from other cultures. Does that  
45 make sense?  
46 R: Yeah, definitely  
47 A: Other people have their views, which is ahm influenced by their own culture  
48 R: Yeah  
49 A: And that comes across in the forums.  
50 R: Yeah  
51 A: So it does broaden my perspective.  
52 R: Yeah, all right. And ahm can you think of any issues or problems which occurred while you were  
53 learning in this environment - so in this multicultural environment?  
54 A: I can't think of any – there may have been ahm times when perhaps we have misunderstood each  
55 other.  
56 R: Yeah, but you did -  
57 A: In the forums, when someone said something in a particular way because they are having to write in

1 English  
2 R: Yes  
3 A: *May be the, ahm something has been lost in translation. But it's easy to misunderstand each other*  
4 *when you are face-to-face as well, isn't it?*  
5 R: *It is, definitely – it's always easy [laugh]*  
6 A: *[laugh]*  
7 R: *So, but in particular probably when you are online and when you don't see each other I can imagine*  
8 *that it's even quiet –*  
9 A: *Yes it is harder, because if you can see each other you can tell when the other person is joking or, or*  
10 *being light hearted or sarcastic or something like that which you can't tell on the forum.*  
11 R: *Yeah*  
12 A: *Perhaps we take people a bit too literally sometimes.*  
13 R: *Yeah. Ahm concerning the course design of the Transpersonal Psychology programme – how did you*  
14 *perceive the design of this course?*  
15 A: *Ahm what do you mean by design?*  
16 R: *So the structure or*  
17 A: *It's been fine. I have surely enjoyed it I have ahm not felt that it was too much or nothing off ahm or*  
18 *the pacing was cracked ahm*  
19 R: *Yeah*  
20 A: *It has been a pleasure.*  
21 R: *Was it for you - but maybe you have got some, some suggestions or ideas for improvement?*  
22 A: *Ahm, mhm [pause] that's one you need to think about a little bit, isn't it?*  
23 R: *Yeah, sure and always if an idea pops up later on you can always come back to it –so*  
24 A: *Yeah, ok*  
25 R: *If you can't think of anything at the moment.*  
26 A: *So the ahm, getting together and meeting the other people was good, but I can understand the*  
27 *drawbacks with people living ahm a long way away ahm*  
28 R: *Mhm [pause]*  
29 A: *And I – they introduced this year ahm a conference course it was, or online but I couldn't get it to*  
30 *work. So that might have been something that was very useful. So you could actually converse at real*  
31 *time.*  
32 R: *Yeah and you couldn't get it to work?*  
33 A: *No, my PC wouldn't work with it.*  
34 R: *All right*  
35 A: *So maybe the only thing I could really say would be ahm a little more technical assistance perhaps.*  
36 R: *All right – so nobody was able to help you with this issue?*  
37 A: *No – but I will think about other ideas.*  
38 R: *Ok. And, in the next instance I would like to focus on the tutor role now. Through your opinion where*  
39 *the online tutors helpful for you?*  
40 A: *Yeah, ahm they responded promptly to any questions.*  
41 R: *Yeah and what did you like or dislike or miss while you were learning online from you online tutors?*  
42 *Any ideas you have?*  
43 A: *Again, it was a lot better once I met them in person.*  
44 R: *All right*  
45 A: *I went to the Transpersonal Psychology conference last September and met them. And then it seemed*  
46 *easier to be able to talk to them.*  
47 R: *Yeah, yeah*  
48 A: *I think face-to-face meeting is, is useful.*  
49 R: *And, and before you actually met them it wasn't so easy for you to talk to them, to ask questions or*  
50 *what do you mean?*  
51 A: *I was a little bit nervous – ahm these guys are doctors [laugh] like you will be*  
52 R: *[laugh] I try*  
53 A: *Yes – it's a little intimidating because I left school with sixteen and I have done all my studying in the*  
54 *evening and I just found that everybody would be so much cleverer than me.*  
55 R: *All right*  
56 A: *And then when I met everybody I realised that you know they are just normal people.*  
57 R: *Exactly, that's the point.*

1 A: Yeah  
2 R: [...] title or anything  
3 A: That's right  
4 R: But you had to find out first?  
5 A: Yes, although I am 44 I am still a little naïve [laugh]  
6 R: Yeah, yeah [laugh] why not in a way?! And so what did you expect from the online tutor -  
7 A: Ahm  
8 R: In a course like this?  
9 A: Well, ahm just to be there if I had any questions and to point you in the right direction of what to  
10 learn; so pretty much what they did, really.  
11 R: Yeah, ok. So in this course the tutors had different, different tasks; so you had a personal tutor, you  
12 had somebody who was ahm teaching the actual module, and ahm  
13 A: I have not had a personal tutor.  
14 R: No?  
15 A: Just a tutor that was doing the module.  
16 R: Ah, you didn't have a personal tutor? Maybe they changed it because I spoke to other students from  
17 different, different years and ahm – may be they changed it?  
18 A: Or maybe I have got one and I didn't know? [laugh]  
19 R: [laugh] usually they gave you his name, or her name at the beginning of the course; but yeah  
20 A: Well, if I have one ahm I haven't used him. I have just talked to the person who is doing the module.  
21 R: Yeah, and then probably not about personal aspects; then more, more really concerning the stuff of  
22 the curriculum.  
23 A: Yeah. I went in hospital earlier in the year in February. And so I had to ahm, I only delayed some  
24 assignment by a week but I just talked to the course tutor. So I have –that's been enough.  
25 R: Yeah, and also – but maybe you have got some suggestions for improvement concerning the tasks of  
26 the online tutor for this course?  
27 A: I think one other thing ahm is that I wasn't sure what was going to be happening next. So maybe ahm  
28 a bit more information or, or a personal tutor would probably filled this role. So when I was doing my  
29 first year I found myself worrying about what the integrated experiential learning was all about. And  
30 then when I was doing last year I was starting to worry about my theses.  
31 R: Ok  
32 A: And I suppose if they, if I had a personal tutor – those are the sort of things I could have ask him or  
33 her.  
34 R: Yeah. And so in this case there was nobody to ask?  
35 A: Well, I didn't know who to ask.  
36 R: Yeah  
37 A: I suppose I could have asked the, the module leader at the time; but I didn't feel that it was  
38 appropriate.  
39 R: Ok  
40 A: And I suppose I could have asked other students in the following years.  
41 R: Mhm, ja  
42 A: But I didn't do. I have only just thought about.  
43 R: Probably or maybe there weren't any discussions around this topic or no one else was asking ahm ad-  
44 hoc questions like this?  
45 A: Yeah, I am sitting there thinking well if you need to know then somebody would tell you; and perhaps  
46 it's just me worrying.  
47 R: Yeah  
48 A: So I didn't do anything.  
49 R: Yeah, you weren't sure who to ask and yeah  
50 A: Yeah, yeah  
51 R: Mhm; maybe ahm you can just put it in a few words or describe it: Ahm what is through your opinion  
52 the role of the online tutor in this - one the one hand pure online environment and on the other hand in  
53 this multicultural environment?  
54 A: Mhm [pause] the role of the tutor – to  
55 R: Yeah just do brainstorming, you know whatever comes up  
56 A: Well it's to provide assistance and support I think to the student in their learning; but also to the  
57 students in relating to each other.

1 R: Yeah  
2 A: Is that sort of thing you mean?  
3 R: Yeah, yeah exactly – whatever you think of.  
4 A: Yeah  
5 R: Ok – if you have any – that was about my question pool already. And I mean if you have got any ahm  
6 other ideas or maybe you want to add anything ahm now or also later on just feel free to it  
7 A: Ok  
8 R: Because, this are questions they go quiet – maybe you need some time to think about some issues or  
9 whatever.  
10 A: Yeah, yeah sure and if you want to know anything else give us a call or drop me an email. I hope I  
11 have been helpful.  
12 R: Yeah, definitely – I stop recording now.  
13 A: Ok

### **Student B**

14 R: First I would like to ask some basic hmm question. So what is your age?  
15 B: I am 34  
16 K. 34 – just for the statistics. And ahm do you have any experiences learning and teaching online?  
17 B: No, it's the first time.  
18 R: This is the first time, the first course you are participating?  
19 B: Yeah  
20 R: All right, and ahm do you have any experiences with other cultures; so working or studying together  
21 with other cultures?  
22 B: With other?  
23 R: Other – ahm – people from other, from overseas, from other cultures, from Germany, from  
24 B: No, no  
25 R: So this is also the first time that you are in a group with people from –  
26 B: Ahm, yeah  
27 R: You have got students from Africa -all right- So, some general question about your learning, learning  
28 online: How did you perceive learning in this pure online environment?  
29 B: It was really good. I mean, I think I, I found it quiet good. I am very good with computers. I was ten  
30 years in the IT industry for a long time. So in times of communicating and using the chat rooms – you  
31 know and that sort of things  
32 R: All right  
33 B: So, I found it quiet easy. I am quite familiar in working and communicating with people in that way.  
34 R: Probably this helps a lot. I think when you are familiar with computers. And can you imagine, or did  
35 any problems occur while you where learning online? Can you imagine any issues that appeared?  
36 B: Ahm, well the only difficult I suppose I had – first me and general learning, I needed much more self  
37 discipline.  
38 R: All right  
39 B: You know what I mean by that?  
40 R: Yes, yeah I  
41 B: I mean there is nobody to encourage me to say, you need to go and study tonight, you need to go and  
42 write an essay or to read a book.  
43 R: Yeah  
44 B: Ahm, and also I think –there is little contact with other students, you know that there is no discussion  
45 after class or, you know getting to know people in the same way.  
46 K. Yeah, if you are not face-to-face  
47 B: Yeah, I mean we did ahm – there were optional every two weeks during terms, every two weeks there  
48 were a chat room session, which was optional.  
49 R: Yes  
50 B: And I did almost, I went to almost all of them  
51 R: Yeah  
52 B: Because I thought it was really good to get to know people –outside of contributions to official  
53 discussion boards and so on – just in general – you know to talk and get to know people [...] So I found

1 that difficult – ahm and also I suppose it was the first time that I have done a course like this, you know a  
2 course at post-graduate level. But at the beginning I really didn't know when I was writing my first year  
3 essays; I really didn't know before that what I was writing was of – was good enough standard  
4 R: Mmh  
5 B: Ahm and I think it would have been easier if I would have been in a classroom environment. That  
6 maybe I could just you know just turn to somebody beside me and ask, you know – we could talk about  
7 that a bit more, you know. I am not sure if I answered your question?  
8 R: No, that's fine, definitely, definitely, it's quiet open so  
9 B: Yeah? Ok  
10 R: You think it would have been easier if you, you would have been in class and also would have been  
11 easier if you would have met the people regularly?  
12 B: Yeah  
13 R: Or local study groups or may by a sort of Summer University or something like this?  
14 B: Yeah, I mean I didn't – I would say, you know I wouldn't have been able to do the course; I wouldn't  
15 have been able to Liverpool and do it.  
16 R: Yeah  
17 B: This is the only way for me to do this.  
18 R: If it is face-to-face  
19 B: Yeah  
20 R: So you are probably working next to it also?  
21 B: Yeah. I am working here in Dublin ahm and I have commitments here, so I wouldn't be able to go to  
22 Liverpool to study.  
23 R: I can imagine  
24 B: Yeah at the moment - I mean not able to go to do the attendance based course in Liverpool but I just  
25 can't do it right now. If only the attendance based option was available I would have had to wait a  
26 number of years to do it  
27 R: aha  
28 B: And [pause], and there was, I mean there was a residential weekend, too in February for the course. I  
29 mean, some people did go, I wasn't able to go, I was unfortunately I had other commitments that  
30 weekend.  
31 R: Yeah, I can imagine a lot of people not  
32 B: Yeah  
33 R: Ok  
34 B: Ahm  
35 R: Yeah?  
36 R: And one more issue about the multicultural aspect of this environment. How did you perceive studying  
37 with a group of students from or with diverse cultural background?  
38 B: Yeah, I think it was one of the benefits doing the course online.  
39 R: All right  
40 B: It was because you know people are from different places of the world you know from Australia, from  
41 Canada,  
42 R: Yeah  
43 B: USA, and Europe, and Africa even, and  
44 R: Yes, I know  
45 B: And somebody from Israel I think, too. So I think this was one of the good benefits and people are  
46 bringing their own experiences of working and living in those countries.  
47 R: Yeah  
48 B: And, so I think that was one of the – each that was really one of the part benefits. Ahm, and also I  
49 think the cultural differences, you know because of the nature of the course that we were doing – ahm  
50 there is a big focus on, on spirituality  
51 R: Yeah  
52 B: And religion and I think you know the different cultures bring a very valuable ahm make a very  
53 valuable importance to the course.  
54 R: Yeah  
55 B: May be if we were studying in Liverpool it's probably more likely that most of the students would be  
56 British.  
57 R: Probably, yeah

1 B: Or living in Britain  
2 R: Yes, British and I think they have got lots of from India and Malaysia and South Africa  
3 B: Yeah  
4 R: But not a mixture like this, definitely  
5 B: Yeah  
6 R: And did you have the feeling that this multicultural issue influences your leaning in any aspect?  
7 B: Ahm  
8 R: Working, learning or working in this environment  
9 B: Yeah, I think definitely I would be more sensitive to cultural differences and you know to, not to  
10 assume so much. And [pause] and I think that's probably a big part of my work as a psychotherapist, I  
11 work as a psychotherapist.  
12 R: Ok  
13 B: Ahm so its particular important for me to be aware in sense of the different cultures and so on. But I  
14 think it was particularly important also in the course because ahm you know that – it wouldn't  
15 necessarily be as easier and I wouldn't be able to be aware so much that somebody might be of a  
16 different tradition or a different religion;  
17 R: Yeah  
18 B: And because I am not meeting them face-to-face.  
19 R: Mhm  
20 B: So when I am may be writing something in the chatroom I might need to be more sensitive to that. I  
21 will be more aware culture includes everyone.  
22 R: Mhm. And can you, can you think of any problems that occurred while learning online – concerning  
23 the multicultural background? [pause] so any  
24 B: No, I didn't see any problems – ahm I suppose, I imagine that people who don't have English as their  
25 first language probably have a lot more difficulties.  
26 R: Yeah  
27 B: And I know – a friend of mine in Ireland ahm he is from Holland and he was thinking of going for the  
28 course – and he has got pretty good English – but I think he might, he might find it difficult, because  
29 English is not his first language. And he has very good English I suppose and the standard of English is –  
30 even for native English speaker - is quite challenging. You know the terminology that gets used; the  
31 language that gets used is very academic.  
32 R: Yeah I can imagine; this is what I heard from the teachers as well. That it must be hard stuff especially  
33 for non native speaker also for native speaker ...  
34 B: I know when I get my essays corrected ahm it reminds me of being in school – that there have been  
35 spelling mistakes you know I don't have too many, or may be a mistake in the grammar, may be a very  
36 tiny mistake in grammar that there will be a kind of a red mark but I imagine people who may be haven't  
37 got English as their first language they probably have a lot of red marks.  
38 K: Yes, I can imagine.  
39 B: Yeah  
40 R: Yeah and how did you perceive the course design of the Transpersonal Psychology programme?  
41 B: Yeah, its, I really like it. No its quiet different to the attendance ahm programme. The structure is  
42 different and the module is different. It is very good, it was at the beginning - I found it very difficult, the  
43 first module was incredibly difficult.  
44 R: Yeah  
45 B: I think most people - thought that way. And so I ahm I think that made everything quiet hard for me –  
46 ahm and I think having so many essays to write; which I think they are changing now. Ahm – but the  
47 structure is good and I think you know it's although it was difficult I can see the way the reason why they  
48 have it structured the way they have.  
49 R: So the structure good for you, also the mean the course and learning online is challenging in the first  
50 instance – this is what I guess ahm- but the course design for you was clear or do you have any  
51 suggestions may be for improvement?  
52 B: Ahm well, I think we had a discussion with the tutors recently that we had six assignments to do. And  
53 you know in the first year and that there was a thought to change it to three. But there were the two  
54 essays for each of the three modules. And I think they have changing that to one essay for each module.  
55 So may be that makes a big difference because ahm the way it was structured I am not sure if there is an  
56 easier way around to fix this. The essay will be at the end of each module.  
57 R: Yeah

1 B: When we were writing the essays, the next module will then have started. So at the end of – you know  
2 the module overlap. So the end of – the first module end ends about two weeks after the second module  
3 starts. So we all had to spend the last two weeks of the module writing essays by which point a new  
4 module had started  
5 R: Yeah  
6 B: But I think ahm it had a negative impact on the second module because we hadn't got the time to  
7 really get involved until we were half way through.  
8 R: Mh. Ahm ok, now I would like to focus on the role of the online tutor. And were the online tutors – so  
9 [one tutor] and whoever was teaching – were they helpful for you?  
10 B: Yeah, very helpful. I didn't have too many, too much to ask, too many questions – or – and difficulties.  
11 Ahm but when I applied for the course there was an issue that I was still studying on a distance course  
12 R: Yeah  
13 B: And and I didn't finish until a week before you know ahm I was starting in Liverpool and that created  
14 ahm a problem because I needed to have results to supply to Liverpool – so they were very flexible,  
15 flexible and helpful with that. Ahm also I had some questions around a 3<sup>rd</sup> party who wanted to publish  
16 one of my essays on their website. I asked my tutors for advice. They were very helpful and they were  
17 giving me some suggestions how I could change it – you know. I mean not outside the marking. So they  
18 were helpful to me outside of ahm not just the course. You know there were some issues that were you  
19 know indirectly related to the course. And they were helpful with that too, yeah they were very helpful.  
20 R: Ok, and can you think of any issues which you liked or disliked or missed while learning online? So  
21 concerning to the tutoring of this course?  
22 B: Yeah specifically about the tutoring  
23 R: Yes  
24 B: No, I don't have any strong ideas about that, I think it has been pretty good. Ahm and I think it's you  
25 know there are limitations because it's online. And I think anything that I would like to change I don't  
26 think can be changed because it's online.  
27 R: Mhm  
28 B: And, and some people have suggested maybe we could do video conferences - you know – we can  
29 meet each other there – may be it might be helpful. I don't know – I don't have any strong feelings about  
30 that.  
31 R: Yeah  
32 B: Strong ideas around that.  
33 R: Mhm. Also because you are, you are very familiar with computers, but ahm you don't  
34 B: Yeah I worked in the computer industry for nine years.  
35 R: Ok. That's a change.  
36 B: Yeah big change  
37 R: I mean but it can be combined yeah definitely  
38 B: Yeah, it has been very helpful to me in doing this course. That I am so familiar - and I think too that  
39 maybe some of the technical problems that other people experience, you know how to do things and had  
40 to find the way around blackboard and so fare. Ahm I didn't really have any of those difficulties because I  
41 am quite good at learning at a distance. Well, I guess that's probably not the case for most of the people.  
42 R: Yeah, I think so, definitely. And maybe you can just put it in a few words. So, ahm what do you expect  
43 from the online tutor? If you just brainstorm, just - what do you think?  
44 B: I think ahm guidance.  
45 R: All right  
46 B: Ahm you know to be, [pause] to make up, ahm to some extent the lack of being in a classroom that  
47 people are being in a classroom with a tutor or a lecture. And  
48 R: Yeah  
49 B: And that be, keep in regular contact and be open to regular contact from me and their students.  
50 R: Mhm – And guidance?  
51 B: And guidance, yeah because I suppose to say about that is – I mean particularly at the beginning I  
52 didn't really know, I – the essays I used to write when I was studying Psychotherapist were quite  
53 different. They were very 'practically' oriented or in others words they were about putting theories into  
54 practice in one's work as a therapist. IN the CTP programmeme in LJMU, it's about discussing the theory  
55 themselves, the arguments for or against a particular theory. I hadn't really done much of that writing  
56 and also it's a lot more academic. And the academic standards are much higher.  
57 R: Mhm

1 B: And, so I really didn't know at the beginning I have written my first two essays and I have given them  
2 in to be marked but I had start after my second, my third essay, without knowing how I did in the first  
3 two. So maybe I was concerned that I did really badly or I made some big mistakes. And it would have  
4 been helpful to know this  
5 R: To have them back earlier you mean?  
6 B: Yes, if possible, or if there were some way during the year of giving some helper guidance around that.  
7 It wasn't a problem I did fine in the end. What I could see that if I made major mistakes or maybe if my  
8 referencing wasn't good enough, or maybe I wasn't developing arguments or I was making some big  
9 mistakes – it would have been helpful for me to know as soon so that I can correct this.  
10 R: Yeah  
11 B: You know, ahm it was maybe ahm it was January before we got ahm [pause] you know the first two  
12 essays back and we were nearly finished, we were coming up close to the end of the second module at  
13 that point. And I know that what they would say is – the way it would normally work is that you write all  
14 the essays and you wouldn't get any results until the end of the year  
15 R: Yeah  
16 B: You know I think it used to be that no-one got results until the end of the year. So I guess this new way  
17 is more helpful for us. But if there were any others ways to further improve that it would be great  
18 R: Ok. And ahm can you think of any other expectations you have? Or maybe also some suggestions for  
19 improvement concerning the tutoring of the course?  
20 B: Ahm [pause] I think ahm we have you know kind of discussion boards you know and I am not sure if  
21 you know how it is gona structured?  
22 R: Yeah just roughly I know  
23 B: And I think if there was some way that they could encourage more interaction. And I think they have  
24 been trying – or may be its more of student's problem then the tutors. Ahm but I think particular at the  
25 beginning where happen most - we were all- the first module was so difficult and the module leader and  
26 his co-leader are really experts in the field. You know ahm and I think we all contributed to what we had  
27 to say. And then the two of them said what they thought; which was a lot better than any of ours posts  
28 of course; and then they had a kind of debate between themselves and I think that kind of - was a bit  
29 intimidating for us because they were talking at a different level to us - I mean you know – the idea was  
30 that we were audience of the discussion but it would have been very hard to contribute at the same level  
31 as the tutors. I think that kind of – but some of the discussions to an end and particularly at the  
32 beginning we very probably all very much in our brilliances – tutors how wonderful they were and how  
33 intelligent they were – that is kind of very hard to kind of debate with a tutor, who really knows so much  
34 more than us and have been experts in the field for years  
35 R: Yeah – I can imagine. Especially because you have not met him also  
36 B: Yeah  
37 R: Something totally different.  
38 B: Yeah, and I think going back to something earlier to- I think that was an issue. It's you know to stand  
39 up and to make a point in the class – it's very easy from to know from somebody's tone of voice that they  
40 are not meaning to offend or they are not insulting one of the students or somebody else ideas. I think in  
41 writing it's a lot more difficult. Sometimes I fear, I could write something which might be interpreted very  
42 differently than I had intended. Somebody might read it and think maybe that I meant something  
43 offensive or I mean to say that their opinions aren't important or devalue them in some way. So I think  
44 that may have caused us to be overly cautious in our discussions.  
45 R: Mhm  
46 B: You know nobody wants to offend anyone. And so it kind of, it was less spontaneous then it might  
47 have been. But I think may be in a classroom environment it could be easier to say something. And it  
48 would be obvious – that – not that I mean anything offensive or I don't mean anything to say that  
49 somebody else's opinion aren't valuable or unimportant.  
50 R: Mhm. Also when you see the body language all this, it's just easier –  
51 B: Yeah  
52 R: Or different I can imagine. Just maybe again I want to ask something about the tutor role. So could  
53 you just describe in your own words – I ask again the same questions sort of – but ... Ahm to ask, put in  
54 your words: where do you see the role of the online tutor in this online and multicultural environment.  
55 What do you think?  
56 B: The role of the tutor?  
57 R: Yes exactly – in a pure online environment – this is one aspect and also in the multicultural

1 environment  
 2 B: I think to, to lead the group of students and to guide the students because we were so far apart and  
 3 there isn't a sense of us all being together you know in a room in a lecture hall and for one purpose. And I  
 4 think one of the important roles is for the tutor to generate, to create a sense of ahm [pause] you know  
 5 that we are together there as students for a common purpose and to encourage people, to ahm [pause]  
 6 to contribute to make it as easy as possible for the people to contribute; ahm and to recognize that you  
 7 know that we are all of different standards and abilities, experiences. So I think particular being aware of  
 8 that- that students are perhaps struggling with a part of the course, with certain theories, with certain  
 9 ideas. And that is not as apparent online as it might be as in a small classroom environment because I  
 10 know on the attendance course there were only 15 students in the courses  
 11 R: Fifteen students only  
 12 B: I think it's only fifteen yeah or twenty  
 13 R: I don't know  
 14 B: I could be wrong but it's a very small number. So I imagine that these people get to know each other  
 15 very well. And also I guess the tutors get to know the students pretty well too. So I think probably the  
 16 difficulties, if students are having difficulties it's probably a lot more easier to for that to be recognized  
 17 by both the students and the tutors. You as during the year I think it's a lot more difficult online and I  
 18 think  
 19 K. Mhm  
 20 B: I think the tutors role to compensate for that in as much as possible [pause]  
 21 R: Yeah – thanks a lot so fare. That was my question pool; but maybe you would like o add anything?  
 22 B: No I think I have said the most important –  
 23 R: That was great – I stop recording now.

### **Student C**

24 R: Just some basic information I would like to know from you: What is your age?  
 25 C: I am 36.  
 26 R: You are 36. And ahm you are in your last year of study so you finished...  
 27 C: Yeah I am just finishing, I am handing in my thesis a few weeks.  
 28 R: All right. Can I get to know as well: What is your profession?  
 29 C: Ahm I am Marketing Consultant.  
 30 R: All right – so a quite mixed background from students  
 31 C: Mhm  
 32 R: Interesting – and do you have any experiences teaching and learning online before you have  
 33 participated the programme?  
 34 C: No, nothing.  
 35 R: So, it's the first time  
 36 C: Yes. Yes  
 37 R: What about your experiences being with other cultures studying, working with other cultures?  
 38 C: I have got quite a lot of experiences working with other cultures because my ahm I used to work and  
 39 represent kind of Europe for various things. So I was always ahm -on a European level in and out of  
 40 different cultures quite often with my job.  
 41 R: Ok, yes some general questions concerning learning online. How did you perceive learning online in  
 42 this pure, in this environment? So pure online environment without...  
 43 C: Pure online –  
 44 R: Yeah  
 45 C: Ahm it was – ahm I mean it's such a long journey, you know there have been so many different phases  
 46 of what it was like. And to begin with I was delighted to be able to do it because my circumstances. I was  
 47 going to go, wanted the version to attend and but because I had a Baby it was going to be impossible. So  
 48 was absolutely delighted I could do it at a distance. Never the less it wasn't my natural inclination to  
 49 want to do it that way.  
 50 R: Yeah  
 51 C: But I really, really enjoyed it. And, and having because there is a lot to learn about being online in  
 52 itself. And, and it made me a lot more self-reliant then I think I would have been when attending a class.  
 53 R: Mhm, I can imagine. And can you think or remember any problems which occur while you were

1 learning online?  
2 C: Ahm, gosh [laugh]  
3 R: [laugh]  
4 C: No, no big ones, no big issues - there were - it was an interesting period to trying to get to know the  
5 group.  
6 R: Yeah  
7 C: And particularly when ahm to try and understand that a lot of people where using second language.  
8 So the new nuances were very different all people kind of appeared abrupt. When that contrasted my  
9 experience in being in a culture physically because you have all the other signals.  
10 R: Mhm  
11 C: You know the smile or what it might be. And it was interesting watching the group and trying to take  
12 part in that kind of getting to know each other. [And questions, and the seems very direct and personal;  
13 and it is a lot more kind of fast way in getting to know someone in some ways its non of the nuances  
14 there. You know it was quite direct in those words. You know there were a couple of problems in the  
15 group in the first couple of weeks.  
16 R: All right  
17 C: And, and then someone left and as a result. And, so that was you know an interesting kind of - we had  
18 to kind of learn how to communicate  
19 R: Yeah, so problems- were this like, could you say the cultural background or just because it was  
20 because it was online or?  
21 C: I think it might have been a mixture actually. I think ahm the, the people involved were from different  
22 cultures. And as I said so we had people working in second language. [...] so may not [...] that needed to  
23 be there to navigate the conversation. And, and also there is this strange sense when you are online you  
24 don't know who else is looking. So I wasn't part of the disagreement and never the less you kind of  
25 thinking it is the whole class is watching if this happen. Where if you are actually physically together you  
26 would take yourself out of the way to have this discussion. So I think in that case people it might feel a  
27 bit more under pressure or their relationship for the entire group was affected. And actually it was just a  
28 debate between two individuals. Somehow it all - everything happen in the group context you know on  
29 the online boards because people then go into hand and have private conversations you know via e-mail.  
30 R: All right. Focusing on, I would like to focus on the multicultural aspect a little bit more – How did you  
31 perceive studying in a group with students with diverse cultural backgrounds?  
32 C: I thought it was fantastic.  
33 R: All right  
34 C: It really was amazing. We had some people come and go and because you can on the course; there  
35 are different levels of the course like different qualifications. But we had people you know that were out  
36 in ahm you know the mountains doing stuff, for charity or they just come down from the Amazon. And so  
37 it was amazing. Particular because I am quite isolated at home with the baby [laugh] you know to have  
38 these amazing rich inputs and very much on the transpersonal culture of those different cultures as well,  
39 if you like the more daily cultures.  
40 R: Yeah  
41 C: And to, to be brought to the group, it was fantastic.  
42 R: Ahm did you have the feeling or impression that this multicultural issue influenced your learning?  
43 C: Ahm it did in terms of, ahm the, the different perspective; we learned about the different philosophies  
44 and [...] philosophies and transpersonal psychology and things like that. And actually you kind of live that  
45 a bit more. And because you know you learn about cross-culture and things like that. And you are  
46 actually living it in the group itself; people were reflecting on different things. I found it very strange ahm  
47 at Christmas time.  
48 R: Why this?  
49 C: I didn't say Happy Christmas. And if someone from a different culture was with me you know a work  
50 colleague or anything I would have probably just said Happy Christmas and not really thought much of it.  
51 But in a group that – whose subject matter was if you like to do cross-cultures and things – I was very  
52 aware of much [assertive] and I would have to qualify that I know that not everybody is a Christian and I  
53 know that they might not bother in their culture and [...] and it would have been such a big thing  
54 whereas if I would just spoke to someone they had the week of and the happens of Christmas in our  
55 culture I wouldn't have had any qualms about it. I would say Happy Christmas, Happy Holliday or  
56 whatever or would have comfortably enquiring what they were doing over the holidays. None of that –  
57 kind of [...] you know I don't, you know [...] so I think it was strange. You know but they kind of enhanced

1 my understanding why that might have been wrong to even to say it. So there are interesting things like  
2 that.  
3 R: So instead of this you didn't say anything then?  
4 C: No [laugh] – it's amazing  
5 R: [laugh]  
6 C: Because I thought too much about it at that stage. Oh no is just going, I don't want to offend or  
7 anything.  
8 R: Yeah  
9 C: So some of the social niceness I thought too much about it and steered away from them.  
10 R: And ahm can you think of any problems which occur while you where learning online in this  
11 multicultural environment? I mean you just told me some things before but ahm may be something else  
12 where you perceived some issues or problems?  
13 C: No, what did happened, what did happen it kind of came off a more geographical, and a cultural thing  
14 I mean you know how you differentiate between the two, was when the group was trying to form there  
15 was a suggestion to people meeting up.  
16 R: Yeah  
17 C: And  
18 R: You mean a face-to-face meeting  
19 C: Yes, just to get to know each other. And it didn't happen because ahm you know the cost elements  
20 and people are having to travel and things like that. And then there are people because I am UK based,  
21 there are others in the UK; you know I think people were more local to each other in other countries but  
22 the group didn't meet up on the reason basis for – the consideration of not wanting to exclude anyone  
23 who couldn't come. So it was a bit you know ahm I think now on reflection we were a bit over sensitive  
24 about that.  
25 R: Yeah  
26 C: You know it happens in other areas of live; people who are local get to know each other  
27 R: Yeah  
28 C: A natural friendship. So it we very much did the course on the online basis and then kept it there. I  
29 mean I met with one person. She happened to be flying into London. And so I made the effort to go down  
30 to London just to meet, you know to have something to eat and say hello because it was such a nice  
31 opportunity. But as a group we didn't meet.  
32 R: You didn't meet at all?  
33 C: No. apart from in the third year, recently in February, the course organized that the distance learning  
34 students and the attendance students had the opportunity for a weekend. So that happened in our third  
35 year.  
36 R: And did you, did you go there?  
37 C: I did, yes, it was great.  
38 R: All right  
39 C: It was excellent. And people from my year and you know flew in from various countries. And it was  
40 excellent, very strange meeting someone when you have known them for three years online.  
41 R: Yeah  
42 C: Very, very strange. You have images what their voices are like.  
43 R: And the way they look also  
44 C: Yeah, well we have photographs – so we know what they look like – also if they are since three years  
45 out of date. Ahm and but even the sensibilities what it is like to physically to be with some – you kind of  
46 know them really well on one level- but you don't know, you don't know ahm what their energy levels  
47 are like. You know you don't know – it's very strange  
48 R: Mhm I can imagine. Ahm so now I would like to focus on the course design of the Transpersonal  
49 Psychology programme. How did you perceive the design of it?  
50 C: The design of the course?  
51 R: Yes  
52 C: Ahm I thought it was really good. I thought it was excellent actually. And the –as ever as we discussed  
53 it – the fact that the consciousness theory is really hard because I think most people come to it because  
54 they are interested in the transpersonal and consciousness; you know you do quantum physics one week  
55 and neurophysiology the next weeks and [laugh] philosophy the next week. I know what they think. So  
56 that comes at times when you are learning how to be online. Everyone writes these mini essays, when  
57 really later in the course you settled in you just choosing what you are interested in. So the tutors have

1 done a lot to try and help people understand you don't have to be so formal you know every week.  
2 R: Mhm  
3 C: So they have mended it a lot to that kind of approach. And the only thing really is, is ahm structurally  
4 with the course I think is that the theses preparation and the –what do they call it – seminar presentation  
5 happens in the first terms of the third year, and that's very much when catalyst things are coming  
6 together. And maybe that would be useful to happen at the end of the second year if it is at all possible.  
7 R: At the end of the second year?  
8 C: Yeah, then you have got the summer where is, my own experience was ahm I made a lot of changes  
9 around doing the seminar, you know focus my thinking because of the task which set is really good task.  
10 And as a result of that is you are already kind of – I think it was November or October, October or  
11 November my seminar and we were already several weeks into the third year – if that would have been  
12 at the end of the second year I wouldn't have so much to panic. [laugh]. Because, because the seminar is  
13 a great thing, I think the earlier the better. Yeah – I think it's a good thing and I know that they have all  
14 you know it should be possible to do it by the time. I don't think it's particularly badly planned. I think it  
15 could be nice to have some, even a chat about the thesis, a group chat or something about theses in the  
16 second year – it really should start earlier.  
17 R: Mhm  
18 C: Apart from that we do the ahm integral experience learning right across the second year, which is  
19 great, because it gives you the change to get away from the computer. And do stuff in your life and then  
20 bring it back [...] [cough]  
21 R: Oh  
22 C: Sorry, I just got [...] – right now [...] No, I think it's really well structured you can do it ahm, literally I  
23 was doing you know post at bed time for my little girl and [...] you can just really fit it around, around  
24 your life. And ahm if you, because I don't have first degree in Psychology, ahm I think I have benefited  
25 from the course structure; then when I didn't understand something I could just go and try and  
26 understand it and then come back. So you know there was a, they built flexibility to do that.  
27  
28 R: Yeah, interesting  
29 C: Because you get all the terms in forums in advanced. So if I knew that forum 5 I hadn't got a clue what  
30 so ever [laugh] about  
31 R: Mhm  
32 C: what was coming at least I knew it was coming. You know that usability then to kind of do some extra  
33 work and preparation to understand it.  
34 R: Mhm  
35 C: Is there anything else you need to know about that – it's difficult to kind of think about things?  
36 R: Yeah, if you don't have anything – may be some suggestions or something for improvement. But you  
37 can always come back to it if you think of something later  
38 C: Yeah, I think, I do think it's, it's really good actually. You know there are lot of works put into it. And  
39 they introduced the chat – you people can have a chat – so it would have been good for contact you  
40 know for actually increasing contact between the groups. Ahm but still get a little, little [...] you are  
41 supposed to bringing any queries and I think people are just grateful for the opportunity to have a chat.  
42 So, it's difficult – to know which direction you should bring with that.  
43 R: Mhm. I am just focusing on particular the tutor role now. Where ahm the tutors through your opinion  
44 ahm helpful for you?  
45 C: Yes, absolutely but different for different things. And at different times in the course really. Ahm [one  
46 tutor] – you know the people involved?  
47 R: Yes, I have interviewed all of the already.  
48 C: Ok, [his tutor] role is absolutely crucial. I mean I really can't even think of a word bigger than crucial  
49 and I would if I could. And at the beginning there is a real sense that he is always there. And you need  
50 that sense of that being someone there. Ahm you know he post a little query and he answers it. And you  
51 know you are learning about things and the induction that he does. You get to know [the tutor] very  
52 quickly. And he, he is obviously lecturing the course. You, you come more exposed to him as a tutor and  
53 all his great abilities in that. But at the beginning you less explores him as a tutor then as a real friendly  
54 welcoming presence. And that's fantastic. And then later he teaches the research module, and the  
55 relationship is slightly different but he is still very good. And he kind of, he is very important. Ahm then  
56 [two tutors], because they do the, you kind of, your relationship is very based on your tutor how is doing  
57 the module really, we do have, we are described to personal tutors and but its ahm pretty much you just

1 kind of have the debate with whoever is doing that term because you opt for electives.  
2 R: What is the personal tutor?  
3 C: The ahm you get told, like I was told that [a tutor] was my personal tutor. If I had any problems in  
4 particular that laid outside the immediate and then [a tutor] would be the person who – I am on his list  
5 to rely to him. Other people may have [a tutor], I don't know if any of the other tutors are personal  
6 tutors. And they don't teach you know anything particular they are the personal, your first point of  
7 contact if there is a problem.  
8 R: Mhm  
9 C: And but really you tend to just deal with the person who is you know teaching you. I think then  
10 because you choose the electives and based on your personal interest like [that tutor] pretty much did all  
11 my electives. So ahm he, you know I probably more had to do more with him throughout the course then,  
12 because the person is doing my elective, although both tutors grade your work which I think is really  
13 important. And so [a tutor] will still have seen all my work and I still had his input and comments you  
14 know throughout all the other things. Ahm so they were all really important people and the, the  
15 exception [...] and they do have a policy that you mail, if you email and you haven't heard within three  
16 days, you re-mail them. And it's taken you know, it's taken to the third year for me to feel comfortable  
17 with that because you feel like you are hunting them. So now if I re-send email now I just kind of say ahm  
18 just 're-emailing' you know I just send a little note and resend it on. And you understand it more simply  
19 because of the absolute ahm you know [...] amount number you don't forget. Literally you might have  
20 dropped off the screen you know. [laugh] So it's just a, an efficient thing to do but from the students  
21 perspective that can become be- oh my goodness I don't want to be think to be being rude, or I don't  
22 want to seem hassling but I know it, that's not how it's perceived but it has taken me three years to get  
23 to that stage with confidence for that.  
24 R: Mhm, can you think of any aspects you liked or disliked, or missed while getting or perceiving the  
25 tutoring?  
26 C: Ahm, on an online course I suppose to if I had gone to the course you mean?  
27 R: I mean online – just the tutoring of all this, of all the instructors – so you had the feeling, you  
28 mentioned already a few aspects, but may be you would like to add something, you liked or you disliked  
29 particularly?  
30 C: Well, it's interesting because you get the term in advanced. So it's a very different relationship to,  
31 what you usually have to your work. You know if you are having a tutor you get involved with it – you go  
32 through. So you have them, you kind of relate to all that content that they have put up and the delivery,  
33 the electronic delivery; and its very thorough, it's fantastic. And you kind of go through there but then it's  
34 the forums come and go – that's the personal work. And [a tutor] – ahm in the very first term was  
35 excellent that ahm – recognizing everyone's contributions. It must have taken him ages. You know how it  
36 works? We all put postings up, everyone would post 500 words.  
37 R: Yes  
38 C: And then the tutor would comment and then everyone else would comment things. But he, it meant  
39 such a great deal – he commented on something everyone said. And that happens less and less  
40 throughout the course. I think the people are ahm you know they are more comfortable. So I think he  
41 does it intentionally and it's a great thing that he does it intentionally and he comments on everybody.  
42 So he really kind of brings people into the group. Ahm he did that very well. I don't think its necessary  
43 ahm to continue at that level but it was really good that he starts with that at that level. Ahm because  
44 you know later in the course we kind of comment on each other's work a little bit more as the confidence  
45 grows. And  
46 R: Mhm  
47 C: Its, it's in terms of the role of the tutor its ahm I think they do it very well. I think that it's a different  
48 dynamic because you kind of get everything in front and then you go back over it together. And, and I  
49 just think that it must take them forever. Really one of these things – actually you find that ahm a couple  
50 of minute conversation you could cover so much stuff of. And when typing it in terms to make a sense of  
51 it, and you know all of those things ahm I am not suggesting that they should have conversations instead  
52 as I think it might actually be easier for them if they did because you know you can clear something up  
53 very quickly. And in words well it can be quite tricky to do it. You know tricky to do things right.  
54 R: Mhm  
55 C: And, so I think it must be a quite challenging thing for them, but they are so enthusiastic, and their  
56 enthusiasm and passion for the course you feel it, you sense it. And that's very important in telling your  
57 own enthusiasm into the, into the course.

1 R: Mhm. That's sounds very positive. But still may be you have got some, some suggestions as well for  
2 improvement.

3 C: Ahm I didn't, I have been very, very talked out about ways to improve things. But I think the thing is  
4 that they do – we talked about this on the away week-end- they do a really, a really good job of the core  
5 [...] supposed to doing, teaching us, helping us, grading us. And then there are all these other things that  
6 you think that might be a great idea for them to do too. You know so that really ahm, their extra, you  
7 know so I think it would ahm it would be nice for example but very much in the context of being an extra  
8 rather than something to criticise. And if you could have a conversation ahm say in, at the end of your  
9 first year, or the second year – if you just had a chat; you know what, what brought you to the course,  
10 what kind of thing you are interested in, what ahm are you thinking about, about your theses in any way.  
11 Ahm because we actually do kind of follow through the ahm we follow through the ahm what was I gona  
12 to say – the curriculum. And then it comes up when it comes up. There is none of that presumption or if I  
13 think if, if you are actually with someone, we have those, they call them water cooler moment,  
14 something of that. You know when you just catch someone get together for just having a cup of tea  
15 there is none of that kind of ahm stuff like 'Oh I have just been thinking about this' that [...] into a one to  
16 one relationship and the value. But the people who have signed in for the course have signed up for  
17 distance learning. So it's not really criticism it's just a ahm, it would be nice to have, to have some time  
18 early in the course just to get [...] Ahm you know there is no place in the course where your really kind of  
19 say – I kind of thinking about this. It's all [very answer of this question like this I say.]

20 R: All right. That's interesting definitely. You can sometime really improve the way of learning, or the  
21 way of following one direction or another one

22 C: I think from very little things but it, what kind of, that shows itself even into groups so – when I saw  
23 the seminar presentations for the theses taken I was really surprised of people topics. Because they ahm  
24 hadn't, we hadn't as a group discussed what have brought people to the course. So you get to the end of  
25 the third year and you see what they are going to spend in the next year studying. You think my  
26 goodness! You know I never knew you were interested in that because we have been discussing the facts  
27 of the curriculum. I mean, you know, that may be – imagine if one of the things you did was ahm –  
28 because there are all these forums – but you know what is the forum what students set? You know  
29 because the tutors set a few questions and you chose one. Well, if a student said these are the three  
30 things are I that really interest me and then everyone posted 500 words about the things that interest  
31 them, what they think about that. I mean there is, it's not a criticism, it's a - just one of those things that  
32 three years down the line you learn so much at the end [laugh] It's such a shame you know. That ahm, if  
33 that's the role of the tutor I think is questionable but it's about that course in general.

34 R: Yeah, that ahm, that was very inspiring. One last question I have. Maybe you have, maybe you can  
35 just put in a few words, or describe it again – you mentioned already some aspects- so 'How would you  
36 describe the role of the online tutor in this environment; so that means in a pure online environment and  
37 also in a multicultural environment.

38 C: Ahm, I think the role of the tutor in the online environment is that - bizarrely - that he is always there  
39 in your mind, that there are always there. Because there are none of those allocated classroom times.

40 R: Mhm

41 C: Ahm yes, say there kind was always there they may not be aware of that. But you don't know you  
42 know there are always kind of present. I think that they ahm, they, they obviously impart knowledge

43 R: ok

44 C: And they, you know they provoke debate. And then there is a different role and in this case it's played  
45 a great deal by [one tutor] which is the formation of the group, and the team, and the more light hearted  
46 site, the personable site. And he is really important role and in this particular kind of format – because he  
47 does the induction. He leads the way with that. And kind of, he is always in due with that quality then.  
48 You know it seems you feel like if, you know him and to a great extend. And in terms of the multicultural  
49 – its difficult I feel – it's a little difficult for me, it's a little difficult to comment because I am in the same  
50 culture as the tutors.

51 R: Yes, but

52 C: Yes, I would say, I don't know how they react, you know differently to kind of the other cultures. It's  
53 just been very inclusive because I say the different experiences that are people bringing in ahm they  
54 comment on them and they are more knowledgeable about them as the students. They kind of, there are  
55 interplay there. They kind of show an appreciation and an interest in the other cultures and how valuable  
56 the other things are to the course.

57 R: Mhm

1 C: So they just kind of you know embrace it really; that they, that there is no kind of associated issues  
2 really from the tutor perspective what I was want the tutor to do differently anyway.  
3 R: Mhm. Can you think of any other roles you were just – you could describe in this course? You  
4 mentioned [one tutor] –  
5 C: Mhm  
6 R: Or was this it?  
7 C: Ahm I can't think of any other roles because there is this – there might be [a tutor] who was of, have  
8 the more you know formal lecturing and they do a lot of the content, depending on what your electives  
9 are. [one tutor] also has this role but has this other kind of dimension that he brings. [a tutor] ahm is  
10 fantastic. She comes in like an ahm you know she comes in to teach the research module. And her  
11 mannerism, her online mannerism is very different. She ahm  
12 K. I think she is German as well, isn't she  
13 C: Yeah, I think so but she is very warm, very warm online and appreciable a chatty. But she comes in for  
14 one thing and goes again.  
15 R: Mhm  
16 C: So she is kind of you know guest tutor if you like.  
17 R: Right  
18 C: I don't know the proper name for it. And so it's nice that there is a mix of people. You know that these  
19 people do come and go. Ahm but it's, it's quite a different experience of having a tutor then it is then  
20 having one that you meet. Ahm because you have less opportunity for the small nuances of chat here  
21 and there or you know are feeling what they are up to. It's been naturally because you – you know you  
22 don't know what's going on or if they are doing something of interest. What I, I tend to go to a lot of  
23 those conferences.  
24 R: Yes  
25 C: And because I think it's great to see what he is doing out and about. And if he is at a conference and I  
26 see it as marked as a really good conference and similar things. I went to quite a few conferences. And so  
27 it's a bit of a thought there.  
28 R: Mhm  
29 C: But we don't, he doesn't really talk about that side of his life on the course. You know say, ahm, if you  
30 are going to a course where he was you probably know about it more. So I am not sure how much of help  
31 I have being [laugh]  
32 R: [laugh] Oh that was definitely my last question or if you like, if you get inspired by something or if you  
33 would like to add something at this stage? But always – if not now, you can always send me an email  
34 and say I had this idea and want to add this or  
35 C: I think of the thing that I have, because I wasn't the first year through or the second year through and  
36 what I have been always happy with is the fact that they have constantly ask to see back along the way  
37 about how things are done, if that is all right, how could we do it better what do people think? They have  
38 been so open to that.  
39 R: Mhm  
40 C: And they have a sense of shaping the course together. And that has been really helpful and useful. And  
41 I wouldn't have wanted to be the first course through. [laugh]  
42 R: [laugh]  
43 C: Being the second course through is really, really good because there is still kind of changing and  
44 forming formulating for improving and there is you know they allowed the students to be witness to  
45 that.  
46 R: Mhm  
47 C: They haven't kind of just gone off and had that private conversations, it's been quite, quite public  
48 debates about improvements. So, so there is kind of - a tutor as shaper of the experience you know kind  
49 of [...] along the way as well.  
50 R: Mhm  
51 C: Ok  
52 R: OK, thanks then I stop recording now [laugh]  
53 C: [laugh] ok

## **Student D**

- 1 R: Just some basic information for the statistics. What is your age?  
2 D: Ahm 46  
3 R: 46 all right. And you are in which year of study?  
4 D: I just completed my first year postgraduate now and I am just about to start the second.  
5 R: All right you finished your first year. So you are probably in class with Barry from Dublin?  
6 D: Yes, yes I haven't actually met him though.  
7 R: So haven't met him but I interviewed him as well.  
8 D: Ah good  
9 R: And ahm what is your profession, what did you do before – study or work or?  
10 D: Well, I am qualified as a lawyer, but I worked ahm mostly in publishing, in legal and business publishing.  
11 So its publisher I suppose.  
12 R: Publisher ok  
13 D: Yeah, reference publisher because it wasn't, it wasn't like ahm novels or anything  
14 R: All right. And ahm do you have any experiences learning and teaching only before you participated in  
15 the course at JMU?  
16 D: No, no  
17 R: So it's the first time  
18 D: Mhm  
19 R: What about learning or studying also working together with other cultures?  
20 D: Ahm yes, because I am in my publishing life I ahm, I ran a business start-up then run a business in  
21 Germany for three years in Frankfurt. And I also reported into New York; that was where my boss was.  
22 R: Ok  
23 D: So I spend a week a month for seven years ahm working in New York. And I had an IT team working in  
24 India and in South Africa.  
25 R: All right  
26 D: So I hadn't any experiences online learning, a lot of sort of collaborative tools that I have used online  
27 and worked with people in that way, too.  
28 R: Ok. Ahm just some general questions concerning learning online now. How did you perceive ahm  
29 learning in this pure online environment in the course?  
30 D: Ahm I think my initial perception is actually, it's very solitary. Ahm and so its, it means that ahm you  
31 know sometimes you feel that you are the only one who does not understand [laugh]  
32 R: [laugh] yeah  
33 D: Ahm and it requires a lot of ahm an awful lots of discipline. Ahm yeah, I mean I think the discussion  
34 board were absolutely excellent ahm and perhaps we could make more use of those I think.  
35 R: Ok. And can you think of any problems which occurred while learning online; just what pops up in your  
36 mind?  
37 D: [pause] Ahm I think, no technology problems what's however. Ahm I think the only, the problems are  
38 mostly ahm sort of personal psychology based, in the sense of you know the, the insecurity, the feeling  
39 about writing you know something down, you know, it feels like a much more formal process.  
40 R: All right  
41 D: Ahm then, then just speaking  
42 R: Yeah  
43 D: So I tended to spend more time you know thinking about what I wanted to say rather than going into  
44 much more of a kind of consciousness kind of mode which you would in a conversation. Ahm so I guess  
45 the problem with this is my, you know with myself, perceiving the process is much more formal then it is  
46 in reality.  
47 R: Mhm, I can imagine  
48 D: Mhm  
49 R: And what about the multicultural aspect because ahm a lot of people or a lot of students in your class  
50 they are from different places of the world. That's also the whole idea of this online environment also.  
51 And how did you perceive studying with a group of students with diverse cultural background?  
52 D: Well, first I think it's, you know, it's fantastic. I think that there was actually the views were in a way  
53 much more homogenous then I thought they would be. [...] and people seem to be very much a long, a  
54 lot of the same sort of [wavelength...]. I know we had some, an anecdotal input from [a tutor] – ahm  
55 which gave us great sort of ahm cultural, you know to think about things [...] Ahm so I think it's definitely  
56 adds to the, adds to the richness ahm of the experience. Ahm in a way, in a way if it was possible to be

1 kind of more, more anecdotal input rather than the meet, because it's a very academic course. Ahm you  
2 the academic course means that people try to express themselves in an academic way. And probably add  
3 it out certain experiences ahm because it's not, it doesn't seem to fit between that perceived formats.  
4 The kind of thing that you would obviously get in a sort of much more face-to-face class like environment  
5 where all that kind of interaction, which is below the immediate academic type of structure, would all be  
6 there and so you know you kind of ostensive working underneath the surface but it only emerged know and  
7 then.  
8 R: And did you have the feeling or impression that this, the multicultural issue influenced your learning at  
9 all?  
10 D: Oh, of course, because ahm all the time it broadens perspective. It makes one realise that ahm that  
11 there are other realities, that there are other ways of looking at, at the world, at problems ahm of course  
12 that actually has a direct impact of improving one's ability to actually be able to deal with problems  
13 because you realize that, actually I could look at it in a different way. And mostly that's what it is all  
14 about. So ahm you know it's, it's extremely beneficial.  
15 R: Yeah and this happened quiet sometime you just had the feeling; you got another perspective about  
16 an issue?  
17 D: Yeah, yeah, I mean that comes actually quite early in you know in the course I think when ahm yeah  
18 because initially on the first, on the first sort of interactions on the discussions boards everyone's impact  
19 is actually quite different.  
20 R: Mhm  
21 D: And then rapidly everyone you know becomes much more the same but then at a point you realise  
22 then – oh there are other – you know – go on, I never thought that way [laugh]  
23 R: All right  
24 D: And you can feel, you know, when penny drops I think it is immensely valuable.  
25 R: Mhm. Can you think of any problems which occurred in this multicultural environment or where you  
26 had the impression that this was the reason for any problems?  
27 D: [pause] Ahm I didn't perceive any, any you know problems. Ahm, ahm [pause] no I honestly didn't  
28 perceive any problems. I mean I guess in some cases you know the – some of the online, ahm you know  
29 the chatroom sessions, obviously timed frame [mended] - you know with difficulties for many people to  
30 participate in different time zones. So there is a very logistical ahm you know issue. Ahm you know  
31 otherwise I didn't perceive any problems at all but then it's been probably in some way, my culture was  
32 the dominant one in this course?  
33 R: Yeah  
34 D: So it probably would be less of an issue, you know  
35 R: Yeah, I will see later on [laugh]  
36 D: [laugh] yeah Ahm I would imagine language would be one because I struggled with the fact that I am  
37 not, I am not a psychologist by training, and I am not a philosopher by background. And just the whole  
38 new kind of technical language that you know I need to learn. And the kind of ahm, you know just to be  
39 able to understand some of the reading material, [...] to discuss and then put an argument on them I  
40 would imagine that, if English isn't a person's first language ahm that really would make it very difficult.  
41 R: Mhm  
42 D: You know in that very basic sense. I can imagine [...]  
43 R: Mhm. Ahm focusing on the course design ahm how did you perceive the course design of the  
44 Transpersonal Psychology course?  
45 D: [pause] Ahm what do you mean by course design? You mean like the structure?  
46 R: Exactly – the design ahm in Blackboard?  
47 D: Yeah, Blackboard is great. You know I think it's, you know I think it's really easy to use, its ahm you  
48 know it's great that you have got access to the whole web from there. I think ahm, I think if, the think  
49 that might have made it ahm you know add it, to the value – if we had more links to either ahm online  
50 lectures or audio material to supplement some of the reading.  
51 R: Ok, online lectures, you mean really ahm synchronously meetings  
52 D: Sorry?  
53 R: Ahm do you mean meetings, recorded meetings from the university or are talking about really  
54 meetings in a virtual classroom for example?  
55 D: Well, I guess I was thinking more you know recorded or live webcam lectures or something which  
56 don't necessarily have to be from the university directly in the sense that, I mean I found some quiet  
57 useful ahm an online lecture from – somewhere in the States I think it was the ahm Maharishi University

1 of Management Strauss, experienced in qualitative studies, introduced the symbolic interactionism to  
2 the Grounded Theory.  
3 ] Institute – and it was, and there was another one I was sent to. I think it was an Allen Watts lecture  
4 link. And just to be actual to link on to a lecture that somebody else has done that's on that subject,  
5 that's directly relevant to our learning and just to be able to watch and listen ahm add to, well add to the  
6 learning experience ahm it just gives you another way of taking on information because it means  
7 otherwise you really out of head down constantly of sort of reading. And being able to listen you know is  
8 another way I think. So  
9 R: Yeah, that  
10 D: That would be useful to be able to have that.  
11 R: Mhm  
12 D: Ahm the, otherwise all the, I thought the material were very well presented. Ahm I liked the way they  
13 – ahm, there was enough time really - without pressure, you know they gave a lot of reading materials  
14 to go through and then, then to you know discuss them in the discussion board and then to write an  
15 essay ahm presenting a particular you know answering the question or particular argument. I think it's a  
16 very, very good way of learning. I must have met, I, I mean I have always been a great reader, I love  
17 reading, but I haven't realized until ahm I sat down to write my first essay  
18 R: Mhm  
19 D: How different it is and how difficult it is to write an essay in an academic way, presenting arguments  
20 R: Yeah  
21 D: Ahm and the level of detail and the referencing that's needed. I hadn't realized how difficult that is.  
22 And also how, how you learn so much from that. It's like a you know much deeper way of learning. Only  
23 my you know sort of reading, and writing, which have been in a business contact where you read a bunch  
24 of material and write the exact summary and put the numbers in you know; everyone just wants a  
25 snapshot. [laugh]  
26 R: Yeah [laugh]  
27 D: And this was very, very different. So – mhm  
28 R: Ahm so I was just about to ask you about some suggestions for improvement but you – I think you  
29 already gave me a few really;  
30 D: Good  
31 R: So in the next instance I would just like to focus on the role of the online tutor. And do you think:  
32 Where the online tutors helpful for you in the course?  
33 D: Sorry could you repeat the question?  
34 R: Ahm do you think that the online tutors were they helpful for you in the course?  
35 D: Helpful? Ahm, I think they were, I mean certainly in the sense of the feedback on essays and the  
36 answers they provided on, on the discussion boards or not just the answers, the kind of ahm – it was on  
37 the discussion board it was probably much more stimulating much more ahm asking questions and  
38 getting us to think about it. Ahm I think that that was great, I thought that was top note – I mean I was  
39 incredibly impressed by the depth of detail in the responses to the, in the critiques of the essay. Ahm I  
40 really was impressed by that. I guess I didn't – may be this is my reticence but I was, I didn't really feel  
41 that when I was struggling with ahm the - you know reading something and actually understanding it. I  
42 didn't really feel that it was appropriate to ahm ask a direct question about something you know at that  
43 point. Ahm you know so I don't know whether that was me but I kind of got the impression that was  
44 what was done because I couldn't see anybody else doing it. [laugh] So you know it perhaps would have  
45 been useful if possible to be able to, to -I don't know- just have an expectation that there were a certain  
46 amount of time allocated to the [...] ask adhoc question as you are going through the course.  
47 R: Mhm  
48 D: You wouldn't expect the tutor to be there at your back and call the whole time you know; but if you  
49 knew that throughout a term that there was forty minutes allocated or something to answering adhoc  
50 questions then I would certainly have used that.  
51 R: Mhm. So you mean in real time?  
52 D: Yeah, it wouldn't basically I am thinking about – I know that there are quiet pressed time-ways. I don't  
53 mean it has to be as I ask it. But that you know you feel that it is possible to ask questions and within a  
54 week or so you get an answer you know.  
55 R: Yeah. And sometimes it took much longer than three days or when you ask a question?  
56 D: Well, I didn't ask any adhoc questions because I didn't, I didn't see anybody else doing it. Ahm and I  
57 kind of got the impression that that wasn't you know I never saw anywhere that there was a direction

1 that this was expected or to be done. So I kind of you know I thought it could be just my, my own  
2 personal reticence or insecurity or whatever you want to call it. That kind of thought that that was not  
3 what we were supposed doing. So I struggled alone on a few things. I did actually ask, discuss a couple of  
4 things with fellow students but it would have been nice ahm to know ahm you know explicitly, that it's  
5 possible to do that kind of think; to ask direct questions about reading a few of these textbooks that I am  
6 reading I really find it difficult.

7 R: Mhm. And how did you talk with your fellow students? Did you just ahm e-mail yourselves or did you  
8 talk via phone or in the discussion boards actually?

9 D: Ahm well I had quite a few interactions in the discussion boards. Ahm actually Barry and I had a  
10 discussion going at one point. So also I found very luckily ahm there were two, two students who live not  
11 fare from me. Ahm we all live in London and so we were actually able to meet up.

12 R: Yeah

13 D: And so that was actually quite useful.

14 R: Yeah I can imagine.

15 D: Yeah, I mean it was only a couple of times you know that we have met. But ahm you know certainly it  
16 took away that feeling of – I think this is the main thing about online learning – is ahm you do feel quite  
17 alone, quite a lot of the time. And you know I am quiet self managed and comfortable with that's a lot  
18 but when ahm things get very difficult ahm you know you need to find some other kind of support I think.

19 R: Mhm. And your local study groups they helped you quiet a lot?

20 D: Yeah, yeah. Ahm and I think it would have been fine to actually ahm you know set that up ahm as a  
21 some kind of phone call or conference call. I think well what actually happens that was really helpful –  
22 we had ahm, we had the weekend experiential weekend I think February of this year. And so that was a  
23 good, you know that was where we met up. We all met with each other and it's just amazing how you  
24 know a physical face-to-face meeting ahm just provides another level of, of comfort you know? [...] you  
25 feel you can, you can have more informal discussions you know with people.

26 R: Mhm

27 D: So, yeah, so that was great.

28 R: Yeah, I can imagine; especially after one year nearly, and the actually meeting each other. Ahm what I  
29 was about to ask you – you already said some issues to it: Did you like or dislike anything or miss  
30 anything ahm from the online tutor while you were learning?

31 D: Well, I think I have already mentioned the, the explicit knowledge or the ability to be able to send an  
32 ad-hoc ahm question. Ahm I think that was the only think ahm really

33 R: Mhm And could you may be put just in a few words: What do you expect from the online tutor in your  
34 course?

35 D: Ahm well I think my expectation is to be guided and to be ahm prompted, guided and prompted with  
36 the right ahm – to be guided and challenged in equal measure.

37 R: All right

38 D: I think that's what I am looking for.

39 R: Yeah and can you think of any suggestions for improvement – except from the ad-hoc answer you  
40 already mentioned?

41 D: Ahm, that might be something I need to ahm; ah well the ad-hoc first ahm, definitely any links to ahm  
42 – They do a lot of preparation in providing links and sources and I would imagine that there are you  
43 know things that, that come up, you know throughout the term and sort of any sort of, anything that  
44 sounds useful just to keep it, keep it fresh. Ahm I think we could, I think we could all of us do more of  
45 that. And as you are doing, I think there was on the discussion board at one point I think one fellow  
46 student mentioned the ahm a sight that I have not encountered before and I found it really useful sorts  
47 of information. And I am sure that is happening all the time. So, yeah but we don't really know about  
48 that.

49 R: Mhm

50 D: And I would imagine that the tutors are especially informed on that kind of stuff. But they are kind of  
51 limited in the structure and they have to do the preparation and put it all together. And then they might  
52 be think that comes afterwards so – that's the only thing I can think of really.

53 R: Mhm. May be you can just put in a few words again: How would you describe the role of the online  
54 tutor in this environment – so on the one hand in a pure online environment or on the other hand in a  
55 multicultural environment?

56 D: The role of the online tutor? Ahm –

57 R: Sorry for always repeating some aspects but...

1 D: Yeah, I think it is definitely as a guide in a sense of ahm you know guiding us to the, guiding us to the  
2 right sources of information and you know prompting us to you know to think about things in a, different  
3 ways. Ahm so I think that's definitely the role of the online tutors, it's not to, it's not too kind of – ahm – I  
4 mean it's not to try to make you do anything. There isn't, it's very much a kind of hands of kind of thing.  
5 Ahm I think sometimes it might be possible to be more challenging; but I think it's actually quite hard to  
6 do that on any one-to-one basis in an online environment. So you have to have guard to meet the need  
7 of the whole group I think a little more. So  
8 R: And what do you mean by challenging?  
9 D: Well, sometimes, I mean in this sense I mean challenging ahm preconceptions. Ahm I mean I you know  
10 I could often find myself ahm – gosh I can't think of an example – but know thinking about something in  
11 a particular way that a while later having finally understood you know somebody else's perspective I  
12 realised only I needed to you know adjust my own. Ahm and that sometimes, if you are in a – I remember  
13 this from a you know when I was studying law- when you are in a seminar and you are expressing an  
14 opinion someone could actually say to you directly: Well, why do you think like that? Where is your  
15 evidence? You know: What is this thinking based on? And then you realised that it is actually mostly  
16 based on assumption. Ah you know it's based on conditioning. Ahm and it's that kind of challenging  
17 that's very useful that makes you look at, why you think the way you do. Ahm this is part of the benefits  
18 of the multicultural environment, because quiet often we think the way we because that's the dominant  
19 you know social cultural way of thinking where you grew up with your parents, so and all the rest of it.  
20 R: Mhm  
21 D: But you, it is only when you, you know when you are confronted with that ahm that you can actually  
22 you know put that again as I said in that perspective – so I guess that's what I mean by you know  
23 challenging. It's quite interesting we had some discussion which were inconclusive in the sense that really  
24 we weren't able to develop [...] were people some of the, some people in the class had quiet strong  
25 Christians perspectives; ahm and you know these were being challenged by a more sort of ahm  
26 participatory perspective. You know, sort of it was interesting and I would have liked to see that you  
27 know gone further without, without causing anybody discomfort, or offending anybody.  
28 R: Mhm  
29 D: But it really was belief – You know it's - how you deal with belief in this context?  
30 K. Ja, that's interesting  
31 D: Mhm very interesting  
32 R: Ahm, well can you think of any other aspect or role, any other think you would like to mention or add  
33 as well - because this was now my last topic?  
34 D: [pause] I think that we should perhaps being encouraged to ahm find ahm study-buddies.  
35 R: What is this?  
36 D: You know somebody of the – ahm – early on someone; and perhaps it would be useful to ahm  
37 randomly assign them, or perhaps not through randomly assign them: Look, this is you study-buddy;  
38 someone that you can talk to on the phone about, you know as a fellow student. ahm  
39 R: You are not talking about a tutor; you are talking about a student?  
40 D: I am talking about a student. So you know, you find a way to you know initially sort of kick off your  
41 learning together and it might be that you drop it, or you might find somebody else who is more  
42 appropriate. But I think in an online environment ahm if you know something like that doesn't require  
43 any more efforts or work from the University itself whether it is just something that you know require to  
44 do, will actually have enormous benefit to ahm you know to students. Ahm it's starting out in the first  
45 term.  
46 R: Ok – so because you had a personal tutor and but this was probably something, something else – so  
47 you mean more peer interaction?  
48 D: Yeah, yeah, I think personal tutors are necessary and useful. But I don't think that they are people, you  
49 know ahm you know within the first few weeks of starting your course, you are going to phone up and  
50 say 'Oh my god I can't understand any of this; what does this mean - you know - how are you finding it;  
51 Have you found anything useful?' – you know  
52 R: Yeah – probably not  
53 D: Yeah I mean it's a kind of - you do when you are – what they call in attendance mode; you know you  
54 kind of find your group of people that are, that you can discuss informally and share with. If there, if we  
55 can find a way of actually providing that level of support ahm in an online environment without creating  
56 an additional burden, administrative burden on the you know on the university itself, which would you  
57 know add to staffing and [...] and all the rest of it, I think it – I think it would be hugely beneficial.

1 R: Mhm  
2 D: Same time students are lazy that's why I think its allocate some of the study body you know and say in  
3 your induction where you make contact and then you know we are lazy, it's there and done; you will  
4 follow up with them.  
5 R: Yeah, that's a really interesting aspect actually. Really, I have never thought about it. I am working in  
6 this business also like doing online moderation and developing courses but this – I have never really got  
7 inspired by something like this.  
8 D: Oh may be its just me and nobody else would think of this thought... [laugh]  
9 R: I don't, I don't know, but I don't actually think so – it's really – especially in the beginning when you  
10 get more confident and so on.  
11 D: Yeah, and the [...] available now. [...] certainly from a multicultural perspective we could you know  
12 make sure that you, that you know somebody who is different –different background, or different  
13 country or you know whatsoever. That I think would be great.  
14 R: Yeah, but then definitely also not to put people together who are living at the same place, or am be  
15 mix it really.  
16 D: Yeah, because if you are living in the same place and you want to, you will find a way you know meet  
17 up in person. You know what we did and that was good. And I think that there is an additional level,  
18 another level of interaction, another level of benefit; that could be there if you are not in the same place.  
19 Otherwise you know what about people that are stuck somewhere you know fare away and there is  
20 nobody there [laugh]  
21 R: Yeah  
22 D: I would find that useful anyway.  
23 R: Yeah that a good point definitely. So that was about my question pool. If you don't want to add  
24 anything I am going to stop recording now.  
25 D: Mhm nothing to add  
26 R: ok

### **Student E**

27 R: Just some basic questions before: Could you tell me what is your age?  
28 E: 57  
29 R: 57 ok. And you are in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of study?  
30 E: Right  
31 R: This is what you wrote. What about your profession? What did you do before? Because I know a lot  
32 of students – they just have a very diverse background  
33 E: [laugh] yeah. I think I am one of those.  
34 R: Yeah  
35 E: Basically I have been in publishing.  
36 R: All right  
37 E: Do you mean the whole of it?  
38 R: No, just what you think is your main profession you are working in at the moment.  
39 E: Ahm I suppose I am in the ahm ah information business  
40 R: Information business – that's a little bit similar to e-learning, may be  
41 E: Not too similar, yeah  
42 R: Yeah  
43 E: But I also do ahm NLP and therapy work with people  
44 R: Ok that quite similar to you study  
45 E: Yeah  
46 R: And what was the reason for choosing this course? This pure online course?  
47 E: Ahm the first reason was that I wanted to go beyond the ego ahm [...] if you like of therapy work.  
48 R: All right  
49 E: I wanted to get an ahm cognitive overview, an intellectual overview of the whole area; working with  
50 people and [...] and things like that  
51 R: Mhm  
52 E: Ahm and I felt that just going on and doing lots of different courses ah experiential courses – you see  
53 something on the web or hear about something and that's sounds interesting I go off and do that. But no

1 do have any kind of structure within which to put all this information – I think ahm that’s what I was  
2 looking for. And the online bit  
3 R: Yeah  
4 E: I looked at quiet a lot of courses in the States of this nature –  
5 R: Ok  
6 E: But there was very, very little in Europe – if anything  
7 R: yeah  
8 E: And the only one I came across was the Liverpool one. Ahm and being in Liverpool, I am in London you  
9 know necessary not to – It would have been nice honestly – if it was in London I would have done it live  
10 R: Attendance mode  
11 E: The attendance but ah as Liverpool were the only place remotely near me ahm I decided to do that.  
12 R: Ok. And did you have any experiences before in learning or teaching online?  
13 E: NO  
14 R: So it’s the first online course you are participating?  
15 E: mhm yes  
16 R: What about your experiences with other cultures because this is a course where quite a few people are  
17 from other countries participating. Did you have any experiences before working or learning together  
18 with other cultures?  
19 E: Well, in my business, it’s a very international business; I deal with all kinds of people with many  
20 different cultures. And I travel a fair a bit – [...] so ahm but that was not a problem so yeah  
21 R: Ok ahm now some general questions about learning online. How did you at all perceive learning in this  
22 pure online environment?  
23 E: How did I perceive it? Ahm before I did it?  
24 R: No, now while you are doing it.  
25 E: How do or how did I perceive it? Before I was doing it or?  
26 R: No now that you are in it? Sorry  
27 E: How do I perceive it?  
28 R: Yes  
29 E: Ahm [pause] I guess ahm I perceive it as something which is very ahm very, very practical. In the sense  
30 that when running around doing a lot of different things and its great being able to have access to the  
31 resources when you want them.  
32 R: Ok  
33 E: So that’s one huge advantage of the whole thing.  
34 R: Yeah  
35 E: The ahm however ahm you are talking particularly about the JMU course?  
36 R: Yes  
37 E: Because my particular ahm perception of this course is that the media, the media approach could be  
38 used in a much more effective way in this course  
39 R: Mhm  
40 E: Then it is in the moment. Ahm you know  
41 R: For example?  
42 E: For example ahm I think there could be more visual ahm material. So you know video lectures or talks  
43 ahm that kind of thing, or even just audio, audio interviews on important subjects which are relating to.  
44 [... [a tutor] was ah you know being interviewed on radio or giving important lectures...] have that even  
45 just the audio of the subjects. Video or go beyond that – I mentioned this to [a tutor].  
46  
47 R: Yeah  
48 E: And there may be resource issues and so on but; then there is the Blackboard system. It’s quite difficult  
49 I find to find your way around it. Find material that I was looking for. For example I was - I will probably  
50 go to a residential this year like I did last year – and ahm [a tutor] sent an email in which he said: “push  
51 the residential button in Blackboard”. Well it depends where you are (in the system). You know it’s  
52 actually not that easy to find.  
53 R: Yeah  
54 E: I spent about 10 minutes looking around to find that thing.  
55 R: Mhm  
56 E: So ease of use is certainly an issue.  
57 R: Yeah ok

1 E: Ah I think my main point is: – I think it could be much more multimedia than it is and obviously better  
2 organised. I think part of it is the Blackboard system. I wouldn't criticise [the tutors] or anybody's abilities  
3 to organise the material.  
4 R: It's more technical?  
5 E: I think it has more to do with the media which they are actually using. I think Blackboard is actually  
6 not that good - anyway  
7 R: Yeah, it's the biggest one but I mean this doesn't mean that's it's the best one.  
8 E: Yeah  
9 R: And can you think of any problems which occurred while you were learning online?  
10 E: Ahm, I think the main problem is wondering who do I ask. I mean I have this feeling that ahm the  
11 tutors are very busy and I am not sure if I have a question where to put that question to, who to address  
12 that question to. Ahm and you know whether to post it up on a forum and hope that somebody is going  
13 to answer it.  
14 R: Mhm  
15 E: There is no, I think that the lines of ahm it's not clear to me exactly who I would talk to if I had, had a  
16 specific question of a subject matter.  
17 R: Ja  
18 E: Ahm so  
19 R: You don't – I thought that you are having a, something like a personal tutor?  
20 E: Yeah, that's correct – yeah. Though I don't make use of that I, I feel that ahm I don't wanna bother  
21 him.  
22 R: Ok  
23 E: Certainly, put it that way, I don't think interaction is being encouraged.  
24 R: All right  
25 E: That will be, that will be one point I think. Ahm in various – I mean if you read the manual there is kind  
26 of – whenever they talk about personal tutors, and they talk about ah working with the staff – it's always  
27 hedged around some sort of ahm you know limited language which doesn't exactly say – if you are  
28 having any problems please call me you know. It's nothing like that you know.  
29 R: But did you have the impression that the online tutors were helpful to you?  
30 E: I haven't really used them – I have just basically kept my head down and had minimal contact on a  
31 personal basis.  
32 R: Yeah  
33 E: with the tutors.  
34 R: But, also if you, if you haven't used it – there wasn't much interaction or encouragement of  
35 interaction – did you - what would you general expect from the online tutors?  
36 E: Ahm ok – I guess just personal support I suppose. I suppose if I did have a problem or a question – the  
37 ability to just drop a quick email of and say: Look I am thinking this ahm there is a problem with that or  
38 ahm you know. I suppose it has more to do with the way I feel. Ahm and view is [...] I feel to approach  
39 them.  
40 R: Ok  
41 E: And send an email. And you were talking impressions here I suppose the fact so – ahm that worthy a  
42 lot.  
43 R: Yeah, can you may be remember any example what you liked or disliked when you were learning  
44 online?  
45 E: Ahm [pause] I think there is I like it when they give details and extensive instructions on what to do so  
46 for example– this is what we are looking, this is what we are marking against, here are the criteria, here  
47 are what we expect from you ahm bam, bam, bam, bam, bam I think that's very, very helpful - the more  
48 explicit instruction available the better.  
49 R: Mhm  
50 E: Ahm I think [pause] I found the forum quiet difficult in a way; in the sense that, that – last year, in the  
51 first year –what you are interested in?  
52 R: Ahm just it's quite open – really if you have something to say concerning the forum – yeah  
53 E: OK [pause]  
54 R: You found them quite –  
55 E: The first year forums I found it quiet difficult to understand ahm sometimes I found it, most of the  
56 times I had a great difficulty to understand what people are writing about. And this partly because you  
57 know they come from such a diverse background.

1 R: Yeah  
2 E: They come from so many different perspectives that – you just have five hundred words come out of  
3 nowhere you know, and they are very carefully selected 500 words you know  
4 R: Yeah not many.  
5 E: It's quite difficult to know the context within which some of the stuff is being written.  
6 R: Yeah  
7 E: And I find it quiet difficult to understand a lot of the stuff that's being written in those, in those 500  
8 words forum thing in the first year. Ahm so that's another thing. I think I do not find, on a whole I do not  
9 find the ahm environment, the online environment, particularly something that I enjoy.  
10 K Oh, you are not  
11 E: No. Its – I don't sort of go; my attitude is very much that I got – Oh I got to go to Blackboard to get  
12 some information and find out what's going on.  
13 R: All right  
14 E: Rather than I wonder what's happening you know; let's go and find out some new stuff here, you  
15 know its gona be really great.  
16 R: Yeah  
17 E: I love the, I love the books we are reading, I love all that stuff, and I love writing the essays and it's all  
18 very, very stimulating. The actual online environment is not particularly contributing to the overall  
19 enjoyment of the learning experience. As I said, I don't think it is very good, I think – it could be done a lot  
20 better I am sure.  
21 R: Yeah  
22 E: Ahm  
23 R: You mentioned –  
24 E: In a sense is more kind of necessary tool for me at the moment rather than something that I am  
25 thinking of this is something I actually, I really enjoy doing online.  
26  
27 R: Yeah  
28 E: Much prefer to be in classroom, talking about the stuff, than I would do being online.  
29 R: Yeah. Ok and the main reason what you mentioned before - the missing interaction and may be not  
30 enough mhm the content doesn't provide video and audio or other stuff.  
31 E: Yeah, I think this would help? I wouldn't – I would still complain obviously you know [...]  
32 R: All right. You mentioned it already – you were talking about the diverse background in this course  
33 from the students  
34 E: Yeah  
35 R: Ahm how did you perceive at all to study with a group of students with diverse cultural backgrounds?  
36 E: How do I perceive that?  
37 R: Yes  
38 E: I think it's extremely valuable, extremely valuable. I really, really high value that. When I went to the  
39 residential to meet all these people from different backgrounds and the way they are integrating  
40 transpersonal with the personal, their commercial and family life – that's fascinating.  
41 R: Ok  
42 E: I think its hugely, hugely valuable  
43 R: And did it influence your learning in any way?  
44 E: Probably yeah. Ahm in that I see so much of this is about getting new perspectives on, on life and the  
45 meaning of life and the people being involved in this ahm course have really contributed to that, that  
46 aspect of it.  
47 R: Yeah  
48 E: Ahm just to, you know, just to realise there are just so many ways of, of approaching a subject. I think  
49 it really reinforces that learning.  
50 R: Mhm and can you think of any problems which occurred while you were learning in this multicultural  
51 environment. So were you had the impression- oh this is, the reason might be the diverse background?  
52 E: Ahm [pause] no, I don't think so.  
53 R: Ok, ok. And may be just to put it in other words – we were talking about the role of the online tutor  
54 before. And when you would have to describe the role of the online tutor in your own words in this on the  
55 one hand ahm pure online environment and on the other hand the multicultural environment – how  
56 would you describe this role through you opinion?  
57 E: You mean what it should be?

1 R: Yes

2 E: Well, I think, I guess the first thing is the personal tutor should be there at a minimum, the personal

3 tutor should be there to answer any major or relatively minor questions [...] Ahm just quickly and easily

4 you know, with a quick email.

5 R: Ok

6 E: I think that's – to be available I guess and to be ahm yeah to be available that's one thing. And then in

7 a more positive – the other extreme I suppose - you like to think the personal tutor would also be

8 someone that when you talk to ahm would – you would have a personal relationship with in the sense

9 that he would really support you in ahm and inspire you to continue with your studies and encourage you

10 to go forth with your studies in a direction that makes sense for you.

11 R: Mhm

12 E: If you like a sort of a counsellor – counsellor [...]

13 R: Mhm.

14 E: Yeah

15 R: And does this happen in the course? Is this your impression?

16 E: No. I mean may be its partly my fault because as I said earlier ah I have been holding back on really

17 making use of that.

18 R: Yeah

19 E: I don't really know whether that's would happen if I did ah take up – I think it's probably unfair to be

20 suggested it not happens.

21 R: So it's just your impression at the moment. Yeah – you mentioned already some suggestions for

22 improvement concerning the course design. But in general how did you perceive or how do you perceive

23 the design in this course apart from the point you mentioned already?

24 E: Ahm [pause] well I [laugh] its, its I think it's an incredibly difficult course to design. Ahm because it can

25 go in so many different directions. And I think that – my experience was that the first module, the

26 consciousness, the approaches to consciousness I suppose it was, was really, really, really hard.

27 R: Mhm

28 E: And that – you were being asked – in my case – being asked to learn about philosophy, to learn about

29 ahm you know etymology, to learn about all about new words as well as learn about psychology and

30 transpersonal psychology and [...] cognitive behavioural psychology [...] and you know I think it was a lot

31 stuff in order to – the way I think anyway – in order to make sense of the stuff I really thought I would

32 have to have a very, very wide ahm you know number of disciplines under my belt.

33 R: Yeah

34 E: Before I could really, really write and think the way I want to think. So you know I found it very hard.

35 On the other hand the good thing I found was, that it did made me work and think it started to kind of

36 loosen up a lot of the old ways of thinking about this. And that was certainly extremely valuable. So you

37 know on balance I would say that ahm [...] in the first term it is a good thing. [...] [a tutor] would be, [

38 atutor] would be chuckling yeah you know thinking let's really stretch them. so it seems to work quite

39 well.

40 R: Mhm

41 E: And then in the second term was ahm I found much easier. Because we are talking about things which

42 ahm were more in English ahm you know Michael Daniels shadow self spirit ahm and stuff. It's much

43 easier to understand [...] more practical ahm and less scientific [...] than the first term. Ahm you did say

44 an open question – I am rambling around

45 R: That's fine

46 E: So to design the course – so I think it's as good a design as it can be probably.

47 R: All right

48 E: I couldn't suggest something that could be better. I think it's so diverse in terms of ways you can take

49 it.

50 R: Yeah

51 E: And I am finding that ahm there is plenty to getting on with, within the ahm within the framework

52 that's been offered.

53 R: Yeah. Yeah ok – that was about my question pool already now and but maybe you would like to

54 add anything or got inspired by any question or yeah?

55 E: Ahm [pause] No, I mean it has been helpful talking about this stuff because to either sit here and say

56 that the personal tutors are you know, there is not much communication [laugh] you know it's like I am

57 not the one [...] that was useful so really. Yeah, no I think that's – I said enough I think

1 R: Yeah that's great thanks a lot – then I stop recording now.

### **Student F**

2 R: Some basic question first. What is your age?

3 F: 47

4 R: 47 ok.

5 F: Yeah

6 F: And you are in the second year of study, is it right?

7 F: That's right.

8 R: This is what you wrote I remember and what about your profession? So what did you do?

9 F: I am a social worker as a profession.

10 R: A social worker?

11 F: Yeah

12 R: All right, and what about your experiences in ahm learning and teaching online?

13 F: Online? Ahm this is my first I have not done anything, other education online.

14 R: Ok. And your experiences learning, teaching or also working with people from other cultures? Do you have any experiences in this area?

16 F: Working with people from other cultures?

17 R: Yes

18 F: No, not really.

19 R: Not really ok and you are from England definitely.

20 F: Yes, I am English but I live in Scotland.

21 R: You live in Scotland. Ok. But the number I dialled

22 F: Yes, that's my work number I am at work at the moment.

23 R: Ok, but you are

24 F: But I live in the Fife in Scotland.

25 R: But you are English.

26 F: Right from Nationality.

27 R: Ok. Some general questions concerning learning online: How did you perceive to learn in this pure online environment?

29 F: Ahm I think ahm obviously it depends a lot on the information on the Blackboard.

30 R: Yeah

31 F: So, everything you kind of, you direct it through the quality of the information really, and on the course this has been good. I think Blackboard has been really good. It kind of links you to kind of online journals and Athens and so on.

34 R: Yeah

35 F: So that's been very good. Ahm I think the quality of where that takes has not been a problem. I think the difficulty is more around in terms of you feel quite isolated and you don't have a kind of day-to-day contact with other students which I kind of recall from when I was studying in a normal kind of degree, living near and visiting the university.

39 R: Mhm

40 F: Which you know quite of a positive ongoing experience you kind of miss that a bit when doing an online course. There are the forums to a degree help- but ahm there are a little bit more, more ahm they are a little bit more forced I think than naturally kind of conversation like what you have with people as a fellow student socially and the forum is quite a public domain. If you are putting something into a forum ahm, it's formal, so you know so that's the kind of the more the down side of studying online I think, you miss the more informal interaction.

46 R: Mhm. And in this case I just have to think about one think I didn't ask you.

47 F: Yeah

48 R: Why at all did you decide to choose this course; so this online course?

49 F: Ahm its availability basically. I mean the course isn't available near to home. I am not in the position to move to - you know I have got work I have got a family I am not in a position to move to Liverpool. So I was interested in the course and the fact that they did it online was a bonus really.

52 R: All right

53 F: If it wasn't available online I wouldn't be able to do this course.

1 R: And if you would have had the choice to do it face-to-face or online if you for example would have  
2 lived in Liverpool what  
3 F: I really would want to do a course you know face-to-face with fellow students and tutors. You know I  
4 think that's the you can't really substitute that.  
5 R: Yeah  
6 F: I think the reason you don't [...]  
7 R: Ok. And can you think of any problems which occurred while you were learning online? You mentioned  
8 already that you felt [break/internet connection]  
9 R: Hello it's me again.  
10 F: Ok  
11 R: I hope this works know. I don't know what happened sometimes it's just the internet connection or  
12 something like this. I have no idea.  
13 F: Ok  
14 R: Ok. You were talking about some general issues about learning online and if any problems occurred.  
15 So, next to the issue you felt quiet isolated you mentioned the discipline issue and all this sort of stuff.  
16 Ahm so focusing on the course design or do you want to add anything because I had to interrupt you  
17 sorry?  
18 F: Yeah, well I guess the deliverable thing is something in an online course is to know whether its ahm an  
19 [...] or with an online course I am gona feel like that way. I guess you could say that with an online course  
20 people still have the, you know their own initiative to contact and make links to other students. And I  
21 guess that is something I haven't particularly done; I just think it's this kind of a matter of time basically.  
22 Ahm I think when again you are studying full time on a course you, you have the time to really engage  
23 with other students as well. And I think some of the problem with doing online is probably coping with  
24 the demands this is about the working full time and doing a part-time course. In current course the time  
25 you allow yourself for study tends to be study time rather than kind of engaging with other students you  
26 know. But it's not impossible for example kind of email or phones other students if I wanted more of  
27 contact. But it's just something I haven't really materialised for me then.  
28 R: Yeah  
29 F: So you are left with this kind of sense you are working on you own a bit you know.  
30 R: Yeah  
31 F: Yeah  
32 R: And did you contact other students sometimes via telephone or?  
33 F: I haven't by telephone; I have emailed a few. I have, have to pick up on a point in a forum if because  
34 with a forum you kind of are aware the issue applied. I mean in the forum it's -everybody sees it, you just  
35 want to kind of clarify a point with other students so its maybe just very occasionally that I have done  
36 that. And I found following the residential week there was some contact which I made with students,  
37 they were on the same year of course, people from my year or the second year. And I made some contact  
38 with them at that point and emailed with that kind of intention but the contact isn't sustained ahm but I  
39 think in the sense that, that demonstrates the importance of meeting people face-to-face because when  
40 you meet people face-to-face you do make a connection. And that kind of generates further contact out  
41 of that in a way which probably you know online contact doesn't tend to do that you know.  
42 R: Ok. Focusing on the course design of the programme: How did you perceive the design of it?  
43 F: Ahm I think it's just been very good. I mean - You mean in terms of content or you mean in terms of  
44 times scales and -  
45 R: Both  
46 F: All right. Ahm I mean from a content point it's been really interesting. You know its ahm you couldn't  
47 really hope for more in terms of what they are providing, the substance what you need to know and the  
48 direction of giving you kind of references and sending you in directions you need to investigate; that's  
49 really good. I mean, I think some of the in the first year I found some the ahm assignments, the timing of  
50 the assignments was, could have been a bit more staged. Ahm we would have one assignment during  
51 one week after the next. Although you had a long run into that period it was sometimes hurried. And first  
52 I had you know I needed to get some extended time on a couple of the assignments. Ahm because there  
53 were both issues around, there was part of it was I think the fact you couldn't do one assignment justice  
54 really; because you couldn't do an assignment a week.  
55 R: Mhm  
56 F: Ahm so part of the times it goes and I guess I'm reflecting now coming back to the new term this year.  
57 I mean the, the you know the think ahm you know the course closes over the summer really. In some way

1 when you enter college full time the kind of, the ahm the sense of the school over the academic year is  
2 you know you are more aware of that timescale. But it's not in a sense consistent with non academic  
3 calendar. I would think that it stretches online courses. It might be better to stretch it over the year; not  
4 restrict them to the ahm necessarily to the, to the University terms. I mean there is a lot of time over the  
5 summer. I mean if you incorporate over the whole year in a sense you could ahm you could stretch the  
6 work over a longer period, if that makes sense?  
7 R: Mhm  
8 F: So it is not demanding any particular point of time. And you continue, so you have, you have continued  
9 exposure to the ideas and stuff. You kind of over the summer what happens, I mean nothing happens. I  
10 think I can imagine from May to October if it were or to the end of September really you can just switch  
11 off you know. Ahm and you know there is no need to engage in the course at all. And that kind seems a  
12 missed kind of time really.  
13 R: Mhm  
14 F: But I understand it from the University and I mean that's not the way, they're not going to operate like  
15 that.  
16 R: Yeah that's the point probably.  
17 F: Yeah  
18 R: And what about the multicultural issue in this course because I mean there are participating people  
19 from all over the world. And how did you perceive it studying with a group of students with diverse  
20 cultural backgrounds?  
21 F: Ahm I mean its, its not something that kind of strikes me straight away of ahm I think everybody is  
22 bringing their own experiences; and whether that's from their different culture or from the different work  
23 experience or whatever. It's all kind of ahm quite useful and you know to learn from as well you know.  
24 R: Mhm  
25 F: Ahm I mean one of the guys on the course is a Sikh. And he brings a very pacific agenda it's very  
26 informative you know. Ahm it's open to kind of idea and language and a way of a framework of thinking  
27 which I would not be exposed. I don't think probably anybody who is teaching the course would be right  
28 on that. So that kind of diversity is really going to be useful and helpful too you know. And when I, I don't  
29 I mean may be other people across the world, I never actually think where I think we have got some  
30 people from Canada, some people from Eastern Europe. I actually when I read the, the forum  
31 contributions I don't tend to be aware of, of kind of time differences when they are engaging in the  
32 course or whatever. Maybe I should be in the chatrooms that's another issue but I have not been  
33 thinking oh it's for somebody three o'clock in the morning or seven o'clock in the evening. Ahm I think  
34 that's the advantage of all the technology it kind of takes, it brings everyone together.  
35 K: Yeah  
36 F: You know you are not really thinking of, of this kind of differences.  
37 R: Mhm. So that was sort of my next question: did this issue influence you learning at all in any way?  
38 F: As a course?  
39 R: Yeah, the multicultural issue  
40 F: Well, yeah, I mean I sort of ahm yeah I think I'm keen to learn. I have taken this on or that on I think it  
41 has been more kind of sense of knowledge that I gained from people with other experiences; not like its  
42 ahm gona have some profound differences for me. I think the relevance of the course which that had and  
43 the experiences I had before I came to the course which made me want to do the course had a profound  
44 influence for me but not necessarily particularly things to the different multicultural aspects.  
45 R: Mhm  
46 F: Though having said that, but I don't think that is necessarily taken from other students necessarily I  
47 think I had become more, more aware of kind of, of a more ahm not just sympathetic but more ahm,  
48 more empathic perhaps, more, more ahm recognizing what kind of eastern tradition, eastern perspective  
49 alternative to the western you know scientific model if you like.  
50 R: Mhm  
51 F: But I don't think it's just been about students. I think that's more been about the reading I've  
52 undertaken. I had or that been exposed to the ideas I have been discussing.  
53 R: Ok. Can you think spontaneously of any problems which occurred while you were learning in this  
54 multicultural environment?  
55 F: Ahm  
56 R: Or any particular issues -  
57 F: Ahm I don't think so. I mean, I ahm, I can't think of any problems like - I think you are always dealing

1 with your own ahm responsibility to the situation. I think of a guy who is a Sikh ahm what he brings to  
2 the course. I guess in the sense you are always having to deal with your own cultural values about you  
3 know about how ahm your culture had related to Sikh culture and be conscious of those things.  
4 R: Mhm  
5 F: So I am kind of my background is kind of with middle class British and I guess I am aware of how that  
6 might impact upon my own beliefs and my impact on my interaction with that guy. But I think, I mean, I  
7 don't think it's much of its kind of heightened awareness about what you bring to the situation. How is  
8 the person that you are and so on; and the person you are meeting?  
9 R: Mhm  
10 F: So it's not sort of a problem.  
11 R: It's more about awareness. Ok ahm I would like to focus now on the online tutor. Where the online  
12 tutors at all helpful for you in this course?  
13 F: Ahm they have been helpful in much of those ahm when I needed to contact them they have been  
14 helpful. It's some of the issue is to deal with my tutor about I need more time to do an assignment or I  
15 needed to phone because I had this kind of issues around you know to support me in that task. Ahm I  
16 think [break/interruption from customer] what was it again? The tutor yeah - in terms when I needed  
17 assistant kind of practically in those term, I think what I have been surprised at or I expected there to be  
18 more at the beginning at the course, the tutor would take more initiative in [break/interruption from  
19 customer] ahm yeah I expected them to take more initiative in checking out how you know things were  
20 going when you begin the course. You know what I have you found the module you know. And there  
21 wasn't any of that initiative at all until we got to the residential weekend within February with those  
22 kinds of issues really discussed.  
23 R: Ok  
24 F: And I understood from the point of view the tutors they just don't have time to do that.  
25 R: Yeah  
26 F: But I think that could have helped a lot in some ways in terms of helping students who were distant  
27 learners engage in the course; just check out how it is going. But there again, I mean to be fair, there was  
28 they have these chatrooms regularly every Tuesday it is. The problems with those is for myself there are  
29 in times when I have other commitments around and I can't get to they are often on a Tuesday and I  
30 have other commitments on a Tuesday.  
31 R: Ok  
32 F: They don't, they have not been flexible for arranging those really which I thought you know I like to do  
33 that. Because those students sign in as well as the tutors hosting those chat-rooms that is not tutor time  
34 free from other students. But I don't think they have particular well attended by students generally.  
35 R: I don't know anything about it.  
36 F: Sorry?  
37 R: I don't know exactly  
38 F: That's what I hear from other students [break/internet connection]

39

## Additional online tutors

### Tutor ExG

- 1 EXG: zu meinem Hintergrund: Ich mache seit über zehn Jahren E-Learning im internationalen Kontext,  
2 mache noch länger Fernstudium und ahm mache internationale Projekte, moderiere aber auch selbst z.B.  
3 in dem Bereich interkulturelles Management.
- 4 R: Das ist ja klasse, dann habe ich hier ja quasi ein Experteninterview.
- 5 EXG: [Lachen] Versuchen wir es mal.
- 6 R: Ja, was ist Ihnen das lieber wollen wir es auf Deutsch oder auf Englisch machen?
- 7 EXG: Machen wir es doch auf Deutsch, Sie sind ja Muttersprachlerin.
- 8 R: Genau.
- 9 EXG: Das überlass ich Ihnen, das zu übersetzen.
- 10 R: [Erklärung zum Interviewablauf] Erst einmal ein paar Informationen zu ihrer Person.
- 11 EXG: Mhm
- 12 R: Dürfte ich Sie einmal fragen, wie alt Sie sind?
- 13 EXG: 61 werde ich dieses Jahr.
- 14 R: Das ist nämlich so - Ich mache bestimmte Kategorisierungen.
- 15 EXG: Mhm klar, ich kokettier nicht mit meinem Alter.
- 16 R: [Lachen] Ok. Zu Ihren Erfahrungen haben Sie schon eben gerade etwas gesagt. Und allgemein und wie  
17 sieht das aus mit Ihren Erfahrungen im Umgang mit online Kollaboration und Internet. Wahrscheinlich  
18 haben Sie da auch die ersten Ansätze miterlebt?
- 19 EXG: Also, das muss man zweigeteilt beantworten. Ahm seit Mitte der 80er Jahre bin ich eigentlich  
20 involviert auf europäischer Ebene, ähm was so Neue Technologien im Bereich Fernstudium angeht. Das  
21 fing damals an mit Sateliten-Fernsehen.
- 22 R: Mhm
- 23 EXG: Und ähm in der zweiten Hälfte der 90er Jahre, da habe ich das erst, also für mich das erste EU  
24 Projekt im Bereich E-Learning koordiniert. Dass war dann aber ähm internetbasiert.
- 25 R: Ähm und haben Sie jeweils irgendeine Form von ähm Trainings oder speziellen Kursen zu dem Thema  
26 in Anspruch genommen?
- 27 EXG: Nein, ich habe mir alles und das ist glaube ich typisch für die, die erste Generation, ähm on-the-job  
28 beigebracht.
- 29 R: Ja
- 30 EXG: Ich bekomme zwar jetzt noch hat mir ein Kollege eine Einladung geschickt zur, zu einer  
31 Veranstaltung der Fernuniversität Hagen, wenn ich das jetzt mal als Beispiel nehmen kann. Muss ich  
32 sagen, da steht jetzt nichts drin mit dem ich nicht schon konfrontiert worden bin in meiner Praxis. Ich will  
33 mich damit jetzt nicht so darstellen, als wüsste ich alles.
- 34 K. Mhm
- 35 EXG: Da gibt es sicherlich Kollegen, die mehr wissen; aber in den Trainings finde ich im Allgemeinen  
36 nichts, was ähm was ich nicht selbst schon, schon erfahren hätte. Wo ich allerdings gern hingehge, ist auf  
37 Konferenzen wo so ein peer-to-peer Erfahrungsaustausch stattfindet. Das finde ich gut.
- 38 K. Ja, bestimmt. Und ähm welche Fächer unterrichten Sie online?
- 39 EXG: Wir haben begonnen meistens sind das interdisziplinäre Angebote. Wir haben begonnen in dem  
40 Bereich ähm European Studies.
- 41 R: Ja
- 42 EXG: Da sag ich gleich noch etwas zu; und gegenwärtig mache ich das habe ich ja schon gesagt- im  
43 Bereich Intercultural Management und ähm Globalisierung. Das mache ich hier an der Hochschule. Ähm  
44 ich versuche aber auch das im Bereich Knowledge Management einzusetzen.
- 45 R: Ja
- 46 EXG: Ich sag des deshalb auch mit dem Wort des Europe oder Interdisziplinäre Fächer eigentlich für den  
47 Ansatz den ich vertrete, nämlich vor allem internationales Fernstudium, weil sich diese Dinge sehr zum  
48 Diskutieren eignen. Reines Fakten-Vermitteln, da habe ich jetzt nicht so gute Erfahrung gemacht.
- 49 R: Mhm
- 50 EXG: Das kann man wahrscheinlich besser mit schriftlichen Studien erklären.
- 51 R: Ja. Ich habe sie jetzt richtig verstanden: Fernstudien, das sind auch reine Online-Kurse?
- 52 EXG: Das was sich jetzt ähm ja diese Bereiche Knowledge Management, Globalisierung das ist Blended-  
53 Learning würde ich sagen. Das ist eine Mischung aus Präsenz und, und E-Learning.
- 54 R: Mhm. Ok. Ich konzentriere mich zum einen auf den internationalen Aspekt und zum anderen gerade

1 dann auch auf Kurse, die wo gar keine Präsenz stattfindet. Weil das auch noch mal so eine Besonderheit  
2 ist.

3 EXG: Ja, das habe ich auch gemacht ähm in einen gerade abgeschlossenen EU-Projekt. Da gab es  
4 folgendes Arrangement: Da haben Hochschulen aus Litauen, Polen, Ungarn der Türkei, Deutschland und  
5 der USA teilgenommen.

6 R: Mhm

7 EXG: Und da ging es nicht so in einen klassischen E-Learning Kurs, da ging es darum ähm das wir ähm  
8 folgendes arrangiert haben: Wir haben die Studierenden in den verschiedenen Ländern den haben wir  
9 folgende Aufgabe gestellt: Ihr müsst eine virtuelle Beratungsgesellschaft gründen, eine eigene Website  
10 erstellen und dann bekommt ihr eine wirkliche Fallstudie das kam tatsächlich von einer existierenden  
11 bzw. von mehreren existierenden Firmen und die müsst ihr in virtuellen Teams bearbeiten. Das heißt die  
12 Studierenden ähm, soweit sie aus den unterschiedlichen Ländern kamen, kannten sich nicht.

13 R: Ja

14 EXG: Das war ein reiner online Kurs

15 R: Das ist ja spannend. Und wie haben Sie so wahrgenommen, in einem Kurs zu unterrichten, wo gar  
16 keine Präsenzlehre stattfindet?

17 EXG: Ähm, das ist eine gute Frage. Ähm, ich persönlich mache das gerne, mir macht das auch relativ  
18 wenige Schwierigkeiten, obwohl jede Gruppe unterschiedlich ist. Man kann auch mal Pech haben. Und,  
19 und ähm, es findet nicht viel statt. Aber wenn sie mich fragen, wie ich das erfahren habe, dann hängt das  
20 sehr stark mit kulturellen Unterschieden ähm im Bereich der Lehre und des Lernens zusammen.

21 R: Aha

22 EXG: Zum Beispiel in Litauen, die haben ein sehr stark hierarchisch geprägtes ähm Hochschul-  
23 Verständnis.

24 R: Ja

25 EXG: Und mit, vor allem mit den Kollegen, weniger mit den Studierenden, mit den Kollegen dort ist es  
26 nichts so einfach. Ähm die Kurse wurden ja in Englisch durchgeführt und im internationalen Kontext, das  
27 wissen Sie ja, da hat man sich dann mit dem Vornamen angedet ähm und die Kolleginnen dort, waren  
28 witziger weise alles Frauen, die hatten Schwierigkeiten damit, wenn z.B. Studierende Sie mit dem  
29 Vornamen anredeten.

30 R: Mhm

31 EXG: Das war und das hemmte dann sehr stark die Kommunikation. Das ging jetzt nicht nur um den  
32 Vornamen, das wäre ja ne Formalie gewesen, sondern das hemmte auch die ähm, die Kommunikation.  
33 Das ging soweit, dass als so auch ähm die in Reutlingen studieren sich bei mir beschwert haben über  
34 diese Art. Bei den Polen und den Ungarn, da ist die Moderation von sehr jungen Kollegen gemacht  
35 worden, so 24-25, da war das kein Problem. Diese Generation kennt sich da glaube ich im  
36 internationalen Kontext wohl ein wenig besser aus.

37 R: Ja, war das so ihr Eindruck, dass es da einen Unterschied gibt zu den einzelnen Generationen?

38 EXG: Ja, ja, ich denke wobei ich allerdings sagen muss, ähm, also die Frage kann ich nicht eindeutig  
39 beantworten, weil ich jetzt die konkreten Verhältnisse in Litauen, da in der Fakultät, auch nicht gut  
40 genug kenne.

41 R: Ja

42 EXG: Ähm es kann natürlich, das wissen Sie auch, so- es kann auch so eine spezifische  
43 Kommunikationskultur in einer Fakultät geben; die muss nicht typisch für das Land dann sein.

44 R: Ja

45 EXG: Ähm, aber es war schon auffällig, dass da auf Hierarchie großer Wert gelegt wurde.

46 R: Ja

47 EXG: Während in Ungarn und in Polen, da haben die Kollegen, die dann so Lehrstuhlinhaber waren und  
48 sind, die haben an ihre jüngeren Assistenten dann weiter gegeben -

49 R: Mhm

50 EXG: diese Moderatorentätigkeit und haben sich eher auf so wissenschaftliche Fragen fokussiert im  
51 Hintergrund. Während dann in der Türkei wiederum, da geht es auch sehr hierarchisch zu.

52 R: Mhm. Und ähm, Sie haben da ja auch moderiert, wenn ich das richtig verstanden habe. Und hat das in  
53 irgendeiner Form ähm zum einen die reine Online-Umgebung und zum anderen auch das multikulturelle  
54 ähm Umfeld, hat das ihre Art zu Lehren beeinflusst?

55 EXG: Also, ich weiß nicht ob ich Ihre Frage richtig verstehe wenn ich sie richtig verstehe, bin ich  
56 wahrscheinlich nicht der richtige Interview-Partner; ich kann die Frage nicht unbefangenen beantworten  
57 weil in diesem Kontext bewege ich mich seit über zwanzig Jahren.

1 R: Ja  
2 EXG: Also mir ist dieses Umfeld mit andren Worten etwas vertraut. Ähm, das heißt ob mich das jetzt  
3 beeinflusst oder nicht ich mache es gerne in diesem Umfeld. Es geht, es geht witzigerweise um Ihnen ein  
4 Beispiel zu geben: Die deutschen Studierenden bewegen sich in einem solchen Umfeld viel sensibler, als  
5 wenn ich jetzt ein online, also Blended Learning auf dem Hochschulcampus nur mit Reutlinger Studenten  
6 mache.  
7 R: Ja  
8 EXG: Da bewegen sie sich sensibler. Das fällt mir auf; sind vorsichtiger mit dem was sie sagen, bis hin das  
9 sie sich bemühen auch grammatikalisch richtig im Englischen zu sein. Da ähm, das fällt mir schon auf. Bei  
10 mir das weiß ich nicht, da ich zu lange dabei bin.  
11 R: Ja, das kann ich mir vorstellen. Und macht das ein Unterschied für Sie, wenn Sie beispielsweise eine  
12 Gruppe von Studierenden haben, wo halt lauter verschiedene Kulturen vertreten sind oder eine Gruppe  
13 mit rein Deutschen Studenten? Das war die Aufrichtung ob sie hier einen speziellen Focus auf gewisse  
14 Dinge legen oder ein gewisses Bewusstsein das haben Sie wahrscheinlich automatisch nach den Jahren  
15 an Erfahrung? So etwas, was Ihnen da konkret einfällt, wo Sie bewusst drauf achten?  
16 EXG: Also, wenn ich das im Deutschen Kontext mache: Deutsche Studierende sind so, wie sie halt als  
17 Deutsche sind sehr direkt. Ähm und sind erst mal, das Semester fängt immer an mit dem Ende, nämlich  
18 was haben wir bei der Prüfung zu erwarten, bei der Klausur? Also, diese, die, ja was mir manchmal ein  
19 bisschen auf den Keks geht, dass ist so diese fehlende intrinsische Motivation an einem, an einem  
20 bestimmten Thema; es geht nur um den Leistungsnachweis.  
21 R: Ja  
22 EXG: Klar, das kann ich verstehen irgendwie. Deshalb studieren die ja, die wollen einen Abschluss  
23 machen, aber irgendwann ähm möchte man einfach als Dozent auch, auch die Rückmeldung bekommen,  
24 das ist ein interessantes Thema, deshalb sitzen wir hier.  
25 R: Ja  
26 EXG: Da sind deutsche Studenten ähm sehr direkt. Und deutsche Studierende neigen dazu, aber das  
27 hängt glaube ich mit unserem Umgang auch mit der englischen Sprache zusammen, enzyklopädisch zu  
28 antworten. Wenn sie in einen online, in einer online Umgebung sind, möglichst und sei die Frage noch so  
29 detailliert, um die es gerade geht, möglichst ihr gesamtes Wissen auszubreiten. Ähm Engländer haben da  
30 ähm aufgrund ihres oder Amerikaner, aufgrund der Tatsache, dass sie nativ Speaker sind, die können mit  
31 Ihrer Sprache ganz flexibel umgehen und können knapp und präzise zu einem Punkt antworten. Da sind  
32 deutsche Studierende oft weitschweifiger.  
33 K. Mhm, das ist interessant.  
34 EXG: Also das fällt mir so im Unterschied auf; und humorlos sind sie meistens.  
35 R: Ja. Und wenn Sie jetzt beispielsweise unerfahrene Moderatoren, online Moderatoren einen Tipp geben  
36 sollten ähm, wie sie sich verhalten müssten in einem internationalen online Umfeld? Was würde Sie da  
37 so raten?  
38 EXG: Also, ähm ich stell das jetzt mal zurück, das jemand fachlich natürlich kompetent sein sollte; das ist  
39 ja klar. Ähm in dem Gebiet in dem er sich bewegt und ähm jemand sollte, ähm was man so nennt,  
40 ‚cultural intelligence‘ haben. Also, dass man sich so reinfühlen kann und reindenken kann in diese  
41 Kommunikationssituation. Also manche sagen ja auch, dass man so eine Kommunikationssituation dann  
42 lesen kann ähm wie die ist und dazu gehört ein Grundverständnis der ähm, der Bildungssituation  
43 derjenigen, die aus anderen Ländern kommen.  
44 R: Mhm  
45 EXG: Zum Beispiel, wenn man - ich vertrete ja die Meinung internationale Seminare mit Chinesen kann  
46 man nicht machen weil die haben eine Kommunikations-Technik. Ähm die hängt, die hängt mit der  
47 besonderen Situation des Lehrer Schüler Verhältnisses in China zusammen. Auch dass Chinesen in ihrer  
48 Sprache, also wenn sie kommunizieren, ähm so gut wie nie nein sagen und das muss man wissen, sonst  
49 kann man mit denen nicht kommunizieren. Das waren jetzt so kleinere Beispiele.  
50 R: Aber bestimmt nicht unwichtige-  
51 EXG: Das man sich so reindenkt in so eine Situation und dann kann man auch besser was rausholen; ähm  
52 aus, aus so einer Situation, also aus so einer online Situation.  
53 R: Ja, also so ein Form von Bewusstsein erst einmal für die Situation.  
54 EXG: Wir würden, ja, wenn wir uns jetzt physisch treffen würden, würden wir von Empathie sprechen, ich  
55 zögere jetzt aber so ein bisschen, weil ich nicht weiß, ob es auch eine online Empathie gibt [Lachen]  
56 R:[Lachen] Mhm  
57 EXG: Aber so meine ich das. Also, das man fast schon einen fachlichen Leistungsanspruch hat; ich glaube

1 *der ist global, der kommt auch, das erwartet auch jeder, der an einen internationalen E-Learning Kurs*  
2 *teilnimmt, dass er individuelle Leistung zu erbringen hat in einer Lernsituation.*  
3 *R: Ja*  
4 *EXG: Dazu gehört dann eben auch die fachliche Kompetenz. Ähm, aber wie ich jetzt Lerne in einem*  
5 *bestimmten Kontext, da wäre so eine Empathie notwendig.*  
6 *R: Ja.*  
7 *EXG: Ich weiß nicht, präziser kann ich es gar nicht.*  
8 *K. Nein, das ist schon super. Ich würde noch einmal gerne auf den Punkt von reinen online Kursen*  
9 *zurückkommen.*  
10 *EXG: Klar*  
11 *R: Halten sie es für sinnvoll, dass prinzipiell, wenn machbar, Präsenz Seminare stattfinden sollten?*  
12 *EXG: Also, das kommt immer drauf an. Ich denke, so allgemein lässt sich die Frage schwer beantworten.*  
13 *R: Mhm*  
14 *EXG: Zum Beispiel im undergraduate Bereich machen wir so gut wie keine reinen Online Seminare weil*  
15 *einfach die soziale Komponente beim Studieren, also gerade im undergraduate Bereich auch eine*  
16 *wichtige Funktion hat, persönlichkeitsbildende Funktion hat.*  
17 *R: Mhm*  
18 *EXG: Ähm, im postgraduierten Bereich, da denke ich, da kann man das schon machen. Wenn es einem*  
19 *gelingt. Ich mache das gerade bei einem Seminar im Bereich interkulturelles Management, wenn es*  
20 *gelingt auch so persönliche Dinge, also wenn ich mich zum Beispiel vorstelle: Ich bin ein Fußball*  
21 *Liebhaber, unterstütze den VfC Stuttgart usw. oder ich sitze gerade auf meiner Terrasse und schreibe*  
22 *diese Mail oder irgend so was von mir ähm persönlich freizugeben, preiszugeben, das motiviert dann*  
23 *auch die anderen Teilnehmer, etwas von sich zu sagen. Ähm und ich glaube, die berufliche Situation ist*  
24 *heute bei vielen so, dass sie auch im geschäftlichen Bereich sehr viel mit E-Mail verkehren, mit Leuten zu*  
25 *tun haben, die sie überhaupt nicht kennen. Also von daher fällt es ihnen nicht so schwer, das jetzt auch*  
26 *auf eine Lernsituation zu übertragen.*  
27 *R: Mhm*  
28 *EXG: Da kann ich mir das, im postgraduierten Bereich habe ich da weniger Schwierigkeiten.*  
29 *R: Mhm. Ähm und können Sie sagen, noch mal ganz spontan in ein paar Stichworten, ob Ihnen besondere*  
30 *Herausforderungen in einen reinen online Kurs bzw. in einen internationalen Umfeld ähm Sie haben ja*  
31 *schon viele Punkte dazu genannt- ob Ihnen da noch etwas zusätzlich zu einfällt, ob Sie mit gewissen*  
32 *Herausforderungen konfrontiert waren?*  
33 *EXG: Es gibt immer Einzelfälle von, von problematischen Verhalten bzw. messages die sehr grenz- die*  
34 *manchmal sehr grenzwertig sind. Wo Studierende oder auch ein Kollege ähm sich nicht bewusst ist, das*  
35 *man, das man das Gesicht nicht sehen kann.*  
36 *R: Mhm*  
37 *EXG: Da muss man sehr vorsichtig sein. Das habe ich ab und zu erlebt. Und das zweite ist, was*  
38 *witzigerweise, habe ich das bei den Kollegen aus den USA negativ empfunden, es muss unbedingt*  
39 *kommuniziert werden. Also keine online Fragestellung spricht für sich selbst. Man kann Studenten nicht*  
40 *lange alleine lassen. Man muss kommunizieren oder moderieren, wie sie [...] ich würde aber eher den*  
41 *Begriff Kommunizieren in dem Kontext bevorzugen. Ich denke als Moderator ist man dafür*  
42 *verantwortlich eine bestimmte Kommunikationssituation zu schaffen.*  
43 *R: Ja*  
44 *EXG: Das sind so Dinge, die mir aufgefallen sind [...].*  
45 *R: Ja. Ähm ich würde noch gerne auf einen Punkt eingehen. Und zwar aus vorherigen Interviews ging*  
46 *teilweise hervor, dass einige Tutoren, native English Speaker, besondere Schwierigkeiten empfunden*  
47 *haben im internationalen Umfeld; das sie den Eindruck hatten, dass ähm sie sich nicht so ausdrücken*  
48 *konnten wie sie es gerne hätten, beispielsweise einen ironischen Witz einfügen oder ein wenig 'Slang'.*  
49 *Haben Sie damit Erfahrung gemacht, oder?*  
50 *EXG: Also Humor ist immer grenzwertig im internationalen online Kontext.*  
51 *R: Ja*  
52 *EXG: Das würde ich bestätigen; hantiere ich auch sehr vorsichtig. Also, das was man so in der Benimm-*  
53 *Schule gelernt hat, das kann man also auch hier 100% anwenden. [...] motivierte Bemerkungen sind*  
54 *problematisch. Ähm das sagte ich ja vorhin; wahrscheinlich ich auch -tendiere zu einer, sagen wir mal zu*  
55 *einer gewissen Weitschweifigkeit, weil uns diese Slang-Ausdrücke oder - also wenn man perfekt im*  
56 *Englischen ist dann kennt man ja vor allem Redewendungen, die sehr verkürzend sind. Und die fehlen uns*  
57 *oft, als Non-native Speaker. Und ähm das stimmt. Manchmal war ich auch schon, jetzt wo Sie es sagen,*

1 überrascht, manchmal überrascht bei englischen Kollegen, die schleudern da so etwas rein, so eine  
2 Bemerkung, die besteht nur aus 7-8 Wörtern. Da weiß jeder Engländer, worum es geht. Aber ein Nicht-  
3 Engländer muss da auch erst mal genauer hingucken. Und das wirkt dann oft schroff.  
4 R: Mhm  
5 EXG: Und, ja so rausgerotzt und ähm, aber da muss man sich erst dran gewöhnen. Was für alte Hasen  
6 vielleicht nicht so schlimm ist, aber für Studenten ist das schon da ist erst mal ‚Schweigen im Walde‘.  
7 R: Ja. Ja, das ist halt so ein schmaler Grad zwischen auf der einen Seite natürlich ein wenig informales mit  
8 zu integrieren, was es auflockern kann, und auf der anderen Seite ähm, Missverständnissen  
9 vorzubeugen.  
10 EXG: Mhm. Also, es ist, das Problem ist, sie werden manchmal von Kollegen, so gerade auch aus Mittel-  
11 und Osteuropa angesprochen, und die sagen, die fragen dann: ‚Mensch, warum überlasst ihr dieses Feld  
12 jetzt gerade im Kommerziellen Bereich der E-Learning Kurse, völlig den Engländern. Wir buchen die, wir  
13 schreiben uns da ein, weil das oft die einzigen Kurse im internationalen Kontext sind, aber wenn es ein  
14 entsprechendes Deutsches Angebot gäbe, durchaus in Englischer Sprache, aber von einer Deutschen  
15 Hochschule, ähm, da hätten wir durchaus eine größere Affinität zu‘.  
16 R: Aha, da ist ja interessant.  
17 EXG: Ja, das ist, weil diese ähm Engländer haben eine, eine spezifische Art, eine Service-Kultur, die wir  
18 nicht haben. Und in Mittel- und Osteuropa ist man oft gar nicht so sehr an der Service-Kultur interessiert,  
19 sondern an den Inhalten. Und da gibt es, das nimmt ja gerade zu, wenn ich so Umfragen richtig  
20 interpretiere, da hat so deutsche Bildung einen relativ hohen Status. Und da könnte man sich vorstellen,  
21 wenn man das kombiniert mit, mit entsprechenden online Angeboten, gäbe es dafür auch einen Markt.  
22 R: Mhm  
23 EXG: Also, das finde ich auch eine hochspannende Frage, aber ich bin da auch noch nicht weiter  
24 nachgegangen.  
25 R: Ja, ja. Wie gehen Sie eigentlich damit um, wenn Sie mit verschiedenen ähm Zeitzonen konfrontiert  
26 werden? Also, wenn es bei Ihnen im Kurs vorkam, dass Sie beispielsweise synchrone Treffen haben  
27 wollten und ja ein Amerikaner trifft auf einen Chinesen und einen Deutschen?  
28 EXG: Mhm. Das ist eine schwierige Sache. Also, bei dieser Arbeitsgruppe, was ich Ihnen eben gesagt  
29 hatte, wo die Studenten an einen Fall arbeiten sollten, da ist es ein Problem. Ähm, wenn es jetzt ein  
30 reines Diskussionsforum ist, ist es ärgerlich, aber kein Problem.  
31 R: Mhm  
32 EXG: Ähm, aber wenn Sie an einen bestimmten Fall arbeiten und haben eine bestimmte Frage und die  
33 fällt einen deutschen ähm Studenten morgens nach dem Frühstück ein, um was weiß ich 8 Uhr, dann wir  
34 haben da mit Cant University kooperiert dann war es dort nachts um 2. Und bis ein amerikanischer  
35 Student sich vor den Computer setzt um 9 Uhr morgens, dann ist es bei uns schon wieder 3 Uhr und [...]  
36 R: Ja. Ich sehe jetzt gerade, wir haben jetzt schon eine halbe Stunde, aber ich jetzt noch zwei  
37 abschließende Fragen, wenn dass für Sie in Ordnung ist?  
38 EXG: Ja  
39 R: Und zwar wirklich abschließend. Vielleicht einmal noch mal kurz zusammengefasst, wenn Sie mir  
40 sagen könnten: Wo sehen Sie den ‚benefit‘ im reinen online Lehren Sie oder die Studenten?  
41 EXG: Also, ich will Ihnen da auf zwei Ebenen antworten. Ich, ähm, für die Studierenden ist die ähm  
42 Bekanntschaft mit online Angeboten für Ihre spätere berufliche Tätigkeit von großer Bedeutung, weil sie  
43 später im Beruf, wo immer sie auch studieren, wo immer sie auch landen im Beruf, wird online  
44 Kommunikation ein konstituierendes Element sein. Und ähm ich denke, darauf sollte eine  
45 Ausbildungsinstitution vorbereiten.  
46 R: Mhm  
47 EXG: In sofern ist E-Learning kein Selbstzweck. Die Studierenden lernen einfach mit Ihren Kommilitonen  
48 und Kommilitoninnen überall auf der Welt über ein bestimmtes Thema zu kommunizieren, erhalten  
49 Zugang zu interkulturellen Sichtweisen usw. Ähm aber das wissen Sie mit Sicherheit alles, dass will ich  
50 auch nicht wiederholen, diese Vorteile.  
51 R: Mhm  
52 EXG: Ich sehe den Haupt-, geradezu die Verpflichtung einer Institution wie einer Hochschule ihre  
53 Abgänger - ein Moment, es hat gerade geklopft [Pause] Ähm das denke ich, sollte eine Hochschule  
54 bringen. Das zweite ist, das ist jetzt eine andere Ebene. Ich denke, dass Hochschulen, für die Hochschulen  
55 ist es auch ein Geschäft.  
56 R: Ja  
57 EXG: Es gibt ja gerade auch in Großbritannien auch diese Hochschulvereinigung zum Thema Borderless

1 *Eduaction ähm da geht es eigentlich darum, Inhalte weltweit zu verkaufen. Und da bietet sich E-*  
2 *Learning einfach an. Also, es sind zwei unterschiedliche Ebenen, aber da sehe ich die*  
3 *Hauptrechtfertigung.*  
4 *R: Ja. Abschließend noch mal ganz kurz wenn Sie die Möglichkeit hätten in der Präsenzform zu*  
5 *unterrichten, also was ziehen sie vor: Online zu unterrichten oder in Präsenzform?*  
6 *EXG: Ich weiß nicht, die Frage lässt sich glaube ich so nicht beantworten, denn wenn sie sagen, e-*  
7 *learning, internationale Kurse usw., dann ist es ja praktisch nur online möglich.*  
8 *R: Also wenn Sie beispielsweise es geht es also wenn Sie ganz normal die Möglichkeit hätten, oft gibt es*  
9 *ja Kurse die parallel als reine online Kurse angeboten werden und dann auch in reiner Präsenzform.*  
10 *Wann Sie da die Wahl haben, was bevorzugen Sie für sich selbst?*  
11 *EXG: Ich würde mittlerweile das online bevorzugen.*  
12 *R: Mhm, interessant. Es ist sicherlich schwer das so zu beantworten, es hat alles seine Vor- und*  
13 *Nachteile, aber es geht mir um das spontane. Ja, vielen Dank, das war es dann auch schon von meinen*  
14 *Fragenpool aus, es sei denn Sie möchten noch etwas hinzufügen.*  
15 *EXG: Nein [...]*

### **Tutor ExH**

16 *R: Erst einmal noch ein paar Grundlagen Informationen zu Ihrer Person. Ich mache auch so eine Form von*  
17 *Clustering und deshalb ist es auch für mich wichtig: Dürfte ich einmal ihr Alter erfahren?*  
18 *EXH: 57*  
19 *R: ja. Und Sie sind auch aus Deutschland, richtig?*  
20 *EXH: Ja*  
21 *R: Mhm. Und zu Ihrem Hintergrund im Bereich E-Learning online Teaching oder auch Learning wie lange*  
22 *unterrichten Sie schon und was haben Sie da bisher für Erfahrungen gesammelt? Vielleicht nur so, dass*  
23 *Sie mir das einmal kurz schildern könnten.*  
24 *EXH: Gut, unterrichten tue ich schon seit den 70er Jahren. Ich war zunächst einmal Berufsschullehrer, bin*  
25 *dann in die Wirtschaft gewechselt, war Personalentwicklungsleiter einer größeren Bank.*  
26 *R: Mhm*  
27 *EXH: Und habe in dem Rahmen natürlich auch sehr viele Bildungskonzeptionen entwickelt und war dann*  
28 *ab 1990 bis, bis Ende 2000 war ich dann Professor an der Berufsakademie. Hab' da die Fachrichtung*  
29 *Bank aufgebaut und habe in diesem Rahmen dann auch ein sehr umfangreiches Projekt zur Entwicklung*  
30 *wie es damals noch hieß: eines hybriden Lernsystems dann entwickelt. Und in der Zeit habe ich parallel*  
31 *sehr viel Bildungsberatung gemacht, insbesondere bei der damaligen Bankakademie in Frankfurt, wo*  
32 *wir von der privaten Hochschule für Bankwirtschaft ausgehend bis hin so ab Mitte der 90er Jahre auch*  
33 *neue Medien entwickelt haben. Damals natürlich noch als reine CBT, also Computer-Based Training. Und*  
34 *im Jahr 2001 habe ich den Status wieder verlassen und habe dann im Rahmen der Klettverlagsgruppe ein*  
35 *E-Learning Unternehmen aufgebaut, in dessen Rahmen wir innovative, E-Learning Lösungen zunächst*  
36 *einmal für den Finanzdienstleistungsbereich, aber später auch für andere Unternehmen, entwickelt*  
37 *haben. Und seit 2004, habe ich mich unter dem Dach der privaten Steinbeis Hochschule in Berlin*  
38 *selbständig gemacht.*  
39 *R: Mhm*  
40 *EXH: Und da habe ich heute noch mein Institut. Und über dieses Institut sowie nunmehr über eine*  
41 *GmbH, die ich zusammen mit meiner Tochter dann gegründet habe, vertreiben wir*  
42 *Qualifizierungslösungen innovative Lernsysteme mit dem Ziel der Kompetenzentwicklung. In dem*  
43 *Kontext, den sie untersuchen, ist vielleicht noch interessant, dass wir vor knapp 3 Jahren noch in ein EU-*  
44 *Projekt eingestiegen sind, wo es darum ging, internationale Studenten online zu bestimmten*  
45 *Themenstellungen zusammen zu führen und online Kommunikation und Diskussion zu initiieren.*  
46 *R: MH*  
47 *EXH: Das war ein Projekt, in dem Kollegen aus Großbritannien, Deutschland, Türkei, Ungarn, Litauen,*  
48 *Polen teilgenommen haben, teilweise waren auch noch ein paar Amerikaner dabei.*  
49 *R: Ja*  
50 *EXH: Das ist in etwa so der Hintergrund, das heißt ich habe also, insbesondere was das E-Learning*  
51 *betrifft, von Anfang an alle Phasen hautnah miterlebt.*

1 R: Das ist dies auf jeden Fall ein Experten-Interview. Und wie ich gehört habe, haben Sie dann auch  
2 Erfahrungen sammeln können im Bereich Unterrichten von internationalen oder cross-cultural  
3 Studentengruppen.

4 EXH: Ganz genau, ja.

5 R: Ja. Und haben Sie jemals schon einmal eine gewisse Form der Vorbereitung oder Training in Anspruch  
6 genommen hier zur online Lehre?

7 EXH: Nein, wir haben uns mehr oder weniger selbst weiterentwickelt. Dabei haben wir aber in hohem  
8 Maße auf den Erfahrungen eines Projektes aufbauen können, das wir Ende der Achtzigerjahre, in meiner  
9 Zeit als Personalentwicklungsleiter, mit IBM und der Pädagogischen Hochschule Weingarten,  
10 durchgeführt haben. Dabei ging es darum, Experten aus unseren Unternehmen zu ermöglichen,  
11 selbstorganisierte Lernprozesse zu gestalten und zu begleiten. Letztendlich geht es beim Blended  
12 Learning im Kern genau um diese Herausforderung. Seit vielen Jahren führe ich Training in diesem  
13 Bereich durch.

14 R: Mhm. Und dürfte ich noch einmal fragen, welche Fächer Sie unterrichten. Also, dass hörte sich so ein  
15 bisschen an wie zum Thema Globalisierung?

16 EXH: Ja, also gut, ich bin von Haus aus Volkswirt, habe aber im pädagogischer Psychologie promoviert.  
17 Die Schwerpunktfächer decken eigentlich zwei Bereiche ab. Also ich mache immer mal wieder  
18 Betriebswirtschaftliche, Volkswirtschaftliche Themen; aber die Schwerpunkte sind vor allen Dingen  
19 Human Resources Management und alles was mit dem Thema Mitarbeiterentwicklung, Qualifizierung  
20 sowie, Kompetenzentwicklung zu tun hat.

21 R: Ja. Ok, gut dann hätte ich erst einmal noch ein paar Fragen zum Thema reinen online Lehren. haben  
22 Sie denn auch Kurse gemacht, die wo es nur um die online Lehre ging? Also, nicht Hybride oder jetzt  
23 Blended-Learning Angebote?

24 EXH: Ja, also gerade dieses EU-Projekt, das war zunächst einmal als reine online Lehre angedacht. Aber  
25 auch im Bereich AGG Allgemeines Gleichbehandlungsgesetz oder Abgeltungssteuer.

26 R: Ja

27 EXH: Aber es hat sich dann sehr schnell gezeigt, dass die Qualität dieser online Kommunikation  
28 entscheidend davon abhängt wie gut die realen Meetings dann jeweils in den einzelnen Universitäten  
29 gestaltet wurden.

30 R: Mhm

31 EXH: Also, letztendlich hat sich dann dort, ich würde es jetzt nicht gerade Blended-Learning bezeichnen,  
32 aber zumindest eine Blended-Learning-ähnlichen Struktur entwickelt.

33 R: Ja, also es wurden Präsenzseminare integriert in das reine online Lernarrangement?

34 EXH: Ganz genau.

35 R: und wie haben Sie das aufgenommen, in einem sag ich jetzt mal- zunächst einmal in einer reinen  
36 online Umgebung zu unterrichten?

37 EXH: Also, wie ich das empfunden habe?

38 R: Ja, genau. Sie müssen sich nicht wundern, ich stelle so sehr offene Fragen entsprechend können Sie  
39 auch sehr offen antworten.

40 EXH: Mhm. Die Problematik in reinen online Lernszenarien liegt darin, dass sie im Prinzip zwei  
41 Anforderungen erfüllt sein müssen. Das eine Element ist das Thema Verbindlichkeit. Wenn ich  
42 erfolgreiche Lernprozesse online initiere möchte, dann benötige ich ja sehr viel Selbstorganisation der  
43 Teilnehmer.

44 R: Ja

45 EXH: Und es klingt zwar ein bisschen paradox, dass weiß ich, aber je mehr Selbstorganisationsspielraum  
46 ich den Teilnehmern überlasse, umso verbindlicher muss ich dann die einzelnen Meilensteine  
47 vereinbaren. Also, ich muss sicherstellen, dass jeder exakt weiß, welche Aufgaben er bis zu welchem  
48 Termin zu erfüllen hat.

49 R: Mhm

50 EXH: Und wir kombinieren das dann nach Möglichkeit mit dem sogenannten Tandem-Prinzip; wir  
51 versuchen also Lernpartnerschaften zu initiieren, weil wir gelernt haben, dass Lernpartnerschaften diesen  
52 Aspekt der Verbindlichkeit enorm verbessern. Das ist der eine Punkt. Und der andere Punkt ist die  
53 Flankierung, d.h. die Begleitung der Lerner in Ihren individuellen Lernprozessen.

54 R: Ja

55 EXH: Aber wenn ich die Menschen, mit denen ich kommuniziere nicht persönlich kenne, dann habe ich  
56 natürlich relativ wenig Möglichkeiten, flankierend einzugreifen, weil die Kommunikation einen doch recht  
57 formalen Charakter hat.

1 R: Ja.  
2 EXH: Und aus diesem Grunde sehe ich rein online basierte Seminare skeptisch. Skeptisch in dem Sinne,  
3 das man die Lernziel nicht zu hoch setzen darf.  
4 R: Ja  
5 EXH: Wenn es Ihnen darum geht, online Wissen zu vermitteln, vielleicht dann auch noch in einer  
6 moderierten Diskussion zu hinterfragen, dann geht das. Aber weitergehende Lernziele oder gar  
7 Kompetenzen können Sie auf diese Ebene in der Form nicht vermitteln.  
8 R: Mhm. Darf ich noch mal fragen, was Sie mit Lernpartnerschaften genau meinten?  
9 EXH: Wir fordern am Anfang im Kickoff die Lerner auf, sich einen Lernpartner zu suchen, mit dem Sie  
10 während dieses Lernprozesses gemeinsam arbeiten, mit dem sie auch Vereinbarungen treffen, vielleicht  
11 gemeinsame eine Diskussion vorbereiten oder eventuell auch mal eine Präsentation ausarbeiten, die sie  
12 dann zur Diskussion stellen..  
13 R: Mhm. Und das wurde so auch ganz gut angenommen?  
14 EXH: Ja, wir haben gute Erfahrungen gemacht. Im Blended Learning gestalten wir keine Lernprozesse  
15 mehr ohne Lernpartnerschaften, weil sich dies enorm bewährt haben.  
16 R: Mhm  
17 EXH: Im reinen online Lernen ist erheblich schwieriger. Deshalb sind wir jetzt auch in diesem einen  
18 Beispiel dazu übergegangen, dass sich zumindest auf regionaler Ebene die Gruppen vorab treffen und  
19 sich dann wird dort eine Art partnerschaftlichen Lernens vor Ort entwickelt.  
20 R: Mhm  
21 EXH: Wir wenden hier eine Methode an, die ein Kollege von mir mal als die Aquarium Methode  
22 bezeichnet hat. Das heißt, in jedem Standort, in jedem Land haben wir dann vielleicht 20-30 Studenten.  
23 Da aber dann nicht 150 Studenten online kommunizieren und diskutieren können, habe dann  
24 stellvertretend für die anderen jeweils zwei bis drei Studenten aus jeder Gruppe mitdiskutiert, so dass  
25 man dann eine Gruppe mit 20-30 Leuten hatte.  
26 R: Ja  
27 EXH: Und die anderen, die konnten die Diskussion verfolgen, also praktisch wie in ein Aquarium  
28 reinschauen, aber nicht sich selber in dieses Aquarium mit einbringen; das konnten nur quasi die  
29 Vertreter der einzelnen Gruppen machen.  
30 R: Ja  
31 EXH: Damals hatten wir trotz einer sehr hohen Teilnehmerzahl sehr gut strukturierte und vernünftige  
32 Diskussionen. Gleichzeitig wurde die Diskussionen in der Gruppe mit einem großen Ernst und Disziplin  
33 vorbereitet.  
34 R: Mhm. Das ist ja interessant. Noch eine Frage zum reinen online Lehren. Können Sie sagen, dass das in  
35 irgendeiner sie haben nun ein paar Punkte genannt die sie ergänzt oder hinzugefügt haben in dem  
36 Lernarrangement aber hat das in einer gewissen Form ihre Art zu unterrichten beeinflusst?  
37 EXH: Grundsätzlich glaube ich nicht, dass Frontalunterricht dadurch besser wird, dass man diese  
38 Unterrichtsform in das Netz überträgt.  
39 R: Ja  
40 EXH: Ich bin fest davon überzeugt und das zeigen unsere ganzen Projekte, dass es nicht sinnvoll ist, das  
41 notwendige Wissen über Personen zu vermitteln und schon gar nicht dadurch, dass man dann irgendwo  
42 mit einem Conferencing-System oder Virtual-Classroom Systems vorne einen Trainer hat, der dann seine  
43 Powerpoint-Präsentation dann halt online runterspult. Das kann man sehr viel besser mit Web-Based  
44 Trainings machen, weil wir ja wissen, dass wir die Lernen mit sehr unterschiedlichen  
45 Lerngeschwindigkeiten und sehr unterschiedlichen Lernmethoden das Wissen aufnehmen.  
46 R: Mhm  
47 EXH: Also wir wissen zum Beispiel dass die Lerngeschwindigkeit von jungen Erwachsenen mit dem Faktor  
48 1:9 voneinander abweichen.  
49 R: Ja  
50 EXH: Wenn man diese klassische Lehre dann mit Hilfe der neuen Medien ins Netz verlagert, dann wird  
51 das Manko der klassischen Lehre, dass ich als Dozent nur einen Bruchteil der Teilnehmer wirklich dort  
52 abhole, wo sie sich, nicht aufgehoben.  
53 R: Ja  
54 EXH: Deswegen bin ich fest davon überzeugt, dass man den Lernprozess aufteilen muss. Die reine  
55 Wissensvermittlung wird primär über die Web-Based Trainings; die von Lernpartnern gemeinsam  
56 bearbeitet werden, sicher gestellt. Man kann unterstützend einen Themenspeicher einrichten, in den die  
57 Lernpartner dann ihre offenen Fragen einbringen. Hier kann auch der Tutor sinnvoll eingreifen, indem er

1 offene Fragen entweder sofort online klärt oder, wenn sie sehr komplex sind, dann in den  
2 Arbeitsgruppen bespricht.

3 R: Mhm

4 EXH: Was ich aber online machen würde, wäre dann, die Verarbeitung dieses Wissens. Ich würde mir  
5 dann überlegen, über welche offenen Fragestellungen Aufgaben, Fallstudien oder Reflexionen das  
6 Wissen gemeinsam verarbeitet wird indem es dann diskutiert und kritisch hinterfragt wird. Dann besteht  
7 eine gute Chance, dass die online Diskussion effizient wird.

8 R: Mhm, interessant. , dann schwenk ich jetzt einmal rüber zum Thema multikulturelle  
9 Studentengruppen. hier auch einmal ganz offen gefragt: Wie haben Sie das wahrgenommen oder  
10 empfunden, in so einem internationalen Umfeld zu unterrichten? Also, ich beziehe mich jetzt natürlich  
11 auf diese online oder auch Blended-Learning Arrangements.

12 EXH: Ich habe das als sehr positiv empfunden. Wir hatten türkische, osteuropäische, deutsche und  
13 britische Studenten, also sehr unterschiedliche Kulturen, zusammengebracht. Die Diskussionen verliefen  
14 sehr offen und positiv. Man muss am Anfang gewisse Spielregeln vereinbaren, die man auch am Anfang  
15 offen diskutieren muss. Wenn der Tutor dann entsprechend drauf achtet das diese Spielregeln  
16 tatsächlich eingehalten werden, dann kann das sehr gut funktionieren. Also, ich habe das als  
17 Bereicherung empfunden.

18 K. Ja. Auf diesen einen Punkt wollte ich auch noch ner drauf eingehen: Und zwar in welcher Art hat das  
19 Ihre Art zu unterrichten beeinflusst? Sie sagten eben schon, dass Sie auf gewisse Punkte achten sollten  
20 oder gewisse Spielregeln vorgeben. Vielleicht können Sie das noch ein wenig ner erläutern?

21 EXH: Gut, also zunächst einmal zur Rolle des Tutors. Der Tutor ist mehr oder weniger zum Moderator  
22 geworden. An den Stellen, an denen er gemerkt hat, dass entweder inhaltlich oder vielleicht auch einmal  
23 vom Umgangston oder von der Art der Darstellung in die falsche Richtung geht, hat der Tutor dann  
24 immer reingegriffen

25 R: Ja

26 EXH: Ein Kollege von mir hatte in einem Fall auch mal sehr deutlich Position beziehen müssen.

27 R: Aha

28 EXH: Aber das war die Ausnahme. Im Regelfall hat das wirklich sehr gut funktioniert.

29 R: Ja, trotz so ja

30 EXH: Ich glaube es hat geklappt, weil im Vorfeld dafür gesorgt wurde, dass ein gewisses Niveau an  
31 Wissen vorhanden war, dass sich die Gruppen auch schon vorbereitet haben und dann ihren Vertretern  
32 entsprechende Inhalte und Richtlinien mitgegeben haben. Deshalb konnte dann die Diskussion auch  
33 wirklich mit einer sehr guten Qualität durchgeführt werden.

34 R: Mhm. Dieser Kurs ist mittlerweile auch schon abgeschlossen?

35 EXH: Wir hatten zwei Runden gemacht.

36 R: Ja

37 EXH: Und beide Runden sind abgeschlossen.

38 R: Mhm

39 EXH: Also, wie haben gelernt, dass wir mit unseren Vorbereitungsaufgaben sehr viel präziser sein  
40 müssen. Deswegen haben wir dann in der zweiten Runde Fallstudien konstruiert, die dann im Vorfeld zu  
41 bearbeiten waren. Auf der Basis dieser Fallstudien wurden dann die Diskussionen online geführt.

42 R: Mhm

43 EXH: Ich glaube eher, dass es im Regelfall nicht gelingt ohne gezielte Vorbereitung bei solch  
44 unterschiedlichen Lernergruppen, eine vernünftige Diskussion zustande zu bringen. Haben sich aber alle  
45 vorab mit dem Thema, ob mit einem Web Based Training oder in einem Meeting vorher intensiv  
46 beschäftigt, bringen sie einfach mehr Sachlichkeit und Zielorientierung in die Diskussion.

47 R: Ja, das ist interessant. Dann noch ein paar Fragen ich will Sie jetzt auch nicht überfordern mit der Zeit  
48 hier, die vergeht immer so schnell...

49 EXH: Kein Problem

50 R: Können Sie vielleicht noch mal ganz allgemein sagen, bezogen auf den online Unterricht oder auf die  
51 Lehre im internationalen Umfeld was haben Sie als besondere Herausforderung hier empfunden?

52 EXH: Eine Herausforderung ist sicherlich die Sprache. Man nimmt als kleinsten gemeinsamen Nenner  
53 immer die englische Sprache. Und die Sprachkompetenz war schon unterschiedlich ausgeprägt. Die  
54 Amerikaner und Briten haben natürlich immer einen Vorteil

55 R: Ja

56 EXH: Aber gerade wenn ich an osteuropäische Studenten denke, die haben sich zum Teil schon schwer  
57 getan. Die Sprachkompetenz ist sicherlich eine große Herausforderung, gleichzeitig aber die

1 Voraussetzung für Kommunikationsprozesse. Man darf deswegen nichts dem Zufall überlassen, sondern  
2 muss durch eine entsprechende Vorbereitung und Planung Kommunikation ermöglichen.

3 R: Mhm, und was kann man da machen, um die Kommunikation zu ermöglichen?

4 EXH: Es gibt mehrere Möglichkeiten. Im Prinzip läuft es aber immer darauf hinaus, dass ich den Lernen  
5 oder den Teilnehmern vorab die Möglichkeit gebe, sich mit dem Thema vorab zu beschäftigen und sie  
6 über Reflektions- oder Leitfragen zu aktivieren. Stelle ich online überraschend die Frage: Wie haben Sie  
7 diese Situation empfunden? sind viele überfordert. Wenn ich aber vorab einen kleinen Reflektionsbogen  
8 mit folgender Struktur verschicke, bekomme ich sehr differenzierte Antworten: Überlegen Sie sich, wer  
9 die letzten drei Dozenten waren, die Sie erlebt haben. Zweite Frage: Wer war der beste davon. Dritte  
10 Frage: Warum haben Sie gerade diesen ausgewählt. Auf dieser Basis kann man in der Gruppe die  
11 Merkmale eines guten Dozenten entwickeln.

12 R: Ja

13 EXH: Diskussionen müssen über solche Fragestellungen, Reflektionen oder Gruppenaufgaben gut  
14 vorbereitet werden. Und dann haben sie eine echte Chance, dass die Lernprozesse erfolgreich sind.

15 R: Ja, das ist interessant. Noch eine Frage zum Thema multikulturelle Studentengruppen. Ich hatte in der  
16 Vergangenheit immer wieder wahrgenommen, dass sich Lehrende davon ein wenig beeinträchtigt  
17 fühlten, ihr Englisch nicht voll ausschöpfen zu können, weil sie halt auf Grund der vielen Nicht-Native-  
18 Speakers Einschränkungen machen mussten. Sie konnten zum Beispiel keinen Slang verwenden, sie  
19 konnten nicht viele Witze machen, was Engländer ja sehr gerne machen, weil es häufig dann nicht  
20 verstanden wird oder auch missverstanden wird so gar. Das war ein Punkt Sie sind zwar deutscher  
21 Muttersprachler, aber haben Sie da ähnliche Erfahrungen gemacht? Und wie sind Sie damit  
22 umgegangen?

23 EXH: Also, ich bin da vielleicht eher ein schlechtes Beispiel. Gut ich mache so etwas auf Englisch, aber ich  
24 würde mein Englisch nicht als wirklich gut bezeichnen. Insofern geht es mir vielleicht ähnlich wie meinen  
25 Studenten.

26 R: Ja

27 EXH: Es hat sich bei uns ein eher einfacher Sprachcode eingebürgert.

28 R: Mhm

29 EXH: Ich habe das nicht als wirkliches Problem empfunden; aber in den Rückmeldungen haben einzelne  
30 Studenten dann zurück gemeldet, dass die Sprache für sie dort doch ein deutliches Problem gewesen ist.

31 R: Ja. Aber es gab doch sicherlich auch so, wie sagt man, Voraussetzungen für diesen Kurs? Also im Sinne  
32 von Toeffel Test oder so, oder in dem Fall jetzt gar nicht?

33 EXH: Nein, das habe wir nicht verlangt, weil dies in der Eigenverantwortung der jeweiligen Universität  
34 vor Ort lag. Wir sind davon ausgegangen, wenn eine Universität z.B. eine Gruppe mit 30 Studenten  
35 zusammenbringt und diese wiederum zwei bis drei auswählen, die sie online vertreten, dass diese eine  
36 ausreichende Sprachkompetenz besitzen.

37 R: Ja. , dann habe ich einfach noch eine letzte Frage an Sie. Und zwar prinzipiell, können Sie von sich au  
38 sagen, was bevorzugen Sie: Die online Lehre oder die Präsenzlehre, wenn Sie die Wahl haben?

39 EXH: Diese Frage geht aus zwei Gründen völlig geht am Kern vorbei. Wenn ich einen Lernprozess für eine  
40 Gruppe gestalte, dann muss ich mir am Anfang erst mal überlegen, welche Ziele ich erreichen will.  
41 Danach beantworte ich die Frage, mit welchen Inhalten ich diese Ziele exemplarisch am Besten erreichen  
42 kann. Erst dann kommen die methodischen Überlegungen, was sind die richtigen Lern- und Sozialformen,  
43 welche Medien und Kommunikationsformen nutzen wird. Die Frage und dann kommt auch die Frage:  
44 Präsenzunterricht und Online Kommunikation usw. Im Regelfall werde ich eine Kombination von  
45 Präsenzphasen und selbstorganisierten Lernphasen entwickeln. Die Frage muss also nach dem  
46 bedarfsgerechten Lernarrangement gehen.

47 R: Ja

48 EXH: Sie fragen gezielt nach Online Lehre versus Präsenzlehre. Die Frage ist vielmehr doch, ob die Lehre  
49 den heutigen Ansprüchen überhaupt gerecht werden kann. Insbesondere in der betrieblichen Bildung  
50 genügt es nicht mehr, nur Wissen und Qualifikationen zu vermitteln. Das Ziel ist die  
51 Kompetenzentwicklung, d.h. die Fähigkeit zur Selbstorganisationsdisposition, damit ist die Fähigkeit,  
52 komplexe Problemstellungen selbstorganisiert zu lösen, gemeint. Dies kann man aber nicht über die  
53 Lehre erreichen. Wir benötigen vielmehr eine Ermöglichungsdidaktik, die den Lernern die Chance gibt,  
54 ihre Lernprozesse selbstorganisiert zu gestalten. Das dafür erforderliche Wissen können sich die Lerner  
55 sehr viel gezielter über Web Based Trainings aneignen. Die Dozenten wandeln ihre Rolle zum Moderator  
56 der Seminare, zum Tutor der selbstorganisierten Lernphasen und zum Coach im Praxistransfer.

57 R: Ja

1 EXH: Möchte ich eine lebendige und zielorientierte online Kommunikation haben, dann muss ich nach  
2 unser Erfahrung mit einer Präsenzveranstaltung, mit einem Kick-Off beginnen. Dabei lernen sich die  
3 Teilnehmer kennen und bilden Lernpartnerschaften und Gruppen. Am Ende des Tages vereinbaren wir  
4 sogar in schriftlicher Form Meilensteine und Arbeitsaufträge.  
5 R: Ja  
6 EXH: Geht man auf dieser Basis dann in mit der Gruppe einen virtuellen Raum, hat dies sehr gute  
7 Erfolgsaussichten. Wenn ich aber auf diesen Kick-Off aus Kostengründen oder Zeitgründen verzichte,  
8 dann ist das Risiko, dass diese Online Kommunikation nicht zustande kommt, sehr groß. Vielleicht kann  
9 man durch Prüfungsdruck einen begrenzten Austausch erzwingen  
10 R: Ja  
11 EXH: Mir ist natürlich klar, dass Ihre Fragen stark durch das universitäre Umfeld geprägt sind. Sie denken  
12 in vorgegebenen Curricula und an bestimmtes Wissen, das man dann in einer Klausur abfragen kann,  
13 was immer man damit auch beweisen kann. Deshalb passen meine Antworten wahrscheinlich nicht  
14 immer zu dem was Sie jetzt im Auge haben.  
15 R: Ja  
16 EXH: Ich bin mittlerweile sehr stark durch den Bedarf der Unternehmen geprägt. Dort spielen  
17 vorgegebene Curricular kaum mehr eine Rolle. Es stellt sich vielmehr die Frage: Was habe ich für  
18 Probleme bei meinen Kunden oder am Arbeitsplatz zu lösen. Daraus leite ich dann die Ziele, die Inhalte  
19 und das Lernarrangement ab.  
20 R: Das ist bestimmt das Optimum, denke ich auch.  
21 EXH: Ich denke, dass sich auch die universitäre Lehre in dieser Weise verändern muss und auch kann. Wir  
22 praktizieren diese Blended Learning Konzepte bereits seit Jahren in berufsbegleitenden Blended Learning  
23 Studiengängen zum BBA und zum MBA mit großem Erfolg.  
24 R: Ja  
25 EXH: Es geht im Prinzip darum, die wertvollen Präsenzveranstaltungen dafür zu nutzen, die  
26 Gruppenmitglieder zu einem Lernteam zu formen, verbindliche Vereinbarungen zu treffen und  
27 selbstorganisierte Lernprozesse zu ermöglichen.  
28 R: Mhm  
29 EXH: Wofür ich die Präsenz möglichst wenig nutze oder immer weniger nutzen werde, das ist die  
30 Wissensvermittlung.  
31 R: Ja  
32 EXH: Ich würde die Wissensvermittlung in den Universitäten in die Eigenverantwortung der Studierenden  
33 legen und die Präsenzzeit dafür nutzen, selbst entwickelte Lösungen zu präsentieren und zu diskutieren  
34 oder Übungen zu bearbeiten. Über Themenspeicher können online offen Fragen sofort geklärt werden.  
35 Ich hoffe, ich habe Sie nicht zu sehr verwirrt?  
36 R: Nein, nein überhaupt nicht. Also, ich komme ja auch aus dem Bereich und ich arbeite in dem Bereich  
37 und ich weiß wovon Sie sprechen, auf jeden Fall. Und finde ich sehr spannend, wie Sie das angehen und  
38 aufbereiten und nach dem Muster machen Sie auch Ihre Bachelor Studiengänge?  
39 EXH: Ja, Praxis-projektorientierte Bachelor- und MBA Studiengänge. Dies bedeutet, dass jeder  
40 Studierender vorab mit seiner Führungskraft ein komplexes, reales Projekt bearbeitet, welches eine  
41 wirkliche Bedeutung für das Unternehmen hat. Das kann zum Beispiel ‚Einführung einer Balanced-  
42 Scorecard‘ sein oder ein Kostensenkungsprogramm. Die Projektergebnisse landen nicht in der  
43 Schublade, sondern werden umgesetzt, wenn die Studenten gute Arbeit geleistet haben.  
44 R: Ja  
45 EXH: Und dieses Projekt wird dann parallel zum formellen Lernprozess bearbeitet. An diesem Beispiel  
46 kann man auch zeigen, wie online Kommunikation initiiert wird. Wir vereinbaren im Kick-Off, dass jeder  
47 Teilnehmer zu seinem Projekt ein Projekttagbuch in Form eines Weblogs nutzt. Alle Gruppenmitglieder  
48 sind verpflichtet, diese regelmäßigen Projektberichte zu lesen, zu kommentieren und bei Bedarf  
49 Unterstützung zu geben.  
50 R: Mhm  
51 EXH: Der Tutor schaut auch drüber, greift aber nur ein, wenn, wenn er meint, dass er darüber hinaus was  
52 Sinnvolles machen kann. Und so entsteht eine sehr intensive Kommunikation mit gegenseitiger  
53 Unterstützung und Hilfestellung über diese Praxisprojekte. Und das funktioniert sehr gut.

## **Tutor Ex1**

- 1 R: May I first ask you some ahm general questions about your person? Could you tell me: What is your  
2 age?  
3 Ex1: Why is that relevant?  
4 R: Ahm, if you don't want to say this, that's fine also.  
5 Ex1: I didn't say I don't; I just want to know if it is relevant to the research?  
6 R: Yeah, because I am going to cluster also in a way- you know- to see if there is some, if I can analyse  
7 ahm based on the age may be I don't know yet some interesting information. It's just a question I ask  
8 everybody.  
9 Ex1: Ok, I would have well; I come back to that question later perhaps [...]  
10 R: Ok, that's fine. And may I ask you about you cultural background? You are from England?  
11 Ex1: Yes  
12 R: Ok. And what about your experiences in ahm learning and teaching online? So I know you have got a  
13 lot and when did you begin to teach?  
14 Ex1: Well, I became a teacher in 1988 in the first Open University course that used large scale online  
15 networking.  
16 R: All right. And do you have any experiences for sure you have but for how long, to teach multicultural  
17 groups?  
18 Ex1: Ahm, yes probably since I have got to the end at the Open University in 1989 when I was responsible  
19 for, for all of East and West Europe and as the business course was expanding into Western Europe. So  
20 and also I suppose since then worldwide since I have had my own online training company which was the  
21 year 2000.  
22 R: All right. And just very briefly could you tell me what subjects you are teaching online? So, e-  
23 moderating ahm for sure -  
24 Ex1: Ahm, right - well staff development that covers all disciplines teachers coming from a whole range of  
25 disciplines. But are you asking about teaching of students in formal University courses?  
26 K. Yes, exactly.  
27 Ex1: Ok, well in Leicester everyone uses Blackboard and we cover Science, Medicine, ahm and we have  
28 Humanities and Social Science, and there is a 100% uses of Blackboard based on campus and distance  
29 students.  
30 R: Yeah - ok  
31 Ex1: And all the academic have been trained as moderators.  
32 R: Yeah. Thanks, ahm now I have some questions about teaching online in a pure online environment;  
33 ahm so you had some experiences there at the open University. And how do you perceive teaching in a  
34 really pure online environment?  
35 Ex1: Well, the Open University does not teaching in a purely online environment.  
36 R: Ok  
37 Ex1: It has methodology that includes generally print material and face-to-face meetings.  
38 R: Also face to face meetings. I didn't know this.  
39 Ex1: Yeah, it's an online University as such, also it uses it extensive.  
40 R: All right  
41 Ex1: In fact my there are very few programmes in the world -at least at University- level that [...] either  
42 print or face-to-face. Ahm, however, the work with my online training company which it called 'All things  
43 in moderations' I think you have seen the website, have you?  
44 R: Yeah  
45 Ex1: That ahm that is entirely online. So we do not use anything other than the virtual learning  
46 environment to deliver that. But that's obviously more a training and development level.  
47 R: Yeah  
48 Ex1: And it's not a qualification based course.  
49 R: Yeah, and -  
50 Ex1: But we have trained over 2000 people that way now.  
51 R: All right, that's a lot.  
52 Ex1: Mhm  
53 R: And how do you perceive generally when you are teaching in this pure online environment. So you  
54 never see this people face-to-face? How is this for you?  
55 Ex1: How is it for me as an individual you mean?  
56 R: Yes, exactly

1 *Exl: Ahm are you asking how do I feel about it? Or, or what?*  
2 *R: Yeah, how do you perceive it? You have -*  
3 *Exl: How do I perceive it? Ok, well prefer teaching online because of the flexibility of my own time. I*  
4 *prefer not to be able to see people. Well, I don't ask for pictures, and I haven't got preference for*  
5 *working through video. Ahm I believe that the majority of discriminators without seeing people face-to-*  
6 *face get in the way of focusing on knowledge. And I believe that socialisation can happen in a lot more*  
7 *ways than being able to see people.*  
8 *R: All right, that's interesting. So, so probably my next question was: If you think of a residential within a*  
9 *pure online environment is necessary but from what you just said, I would suggest you don't think so?*  
10 *Exl: Ahm, well, it depends on what you are teaching. I mean there are a few things I think where you*  
11 *would need to be face-to-face. Ahm but as far as I am concerned you choose the technology including*  
12 *that of the classroom most appropriate ahm for - you know for what you are trying to do with; whether*  
13 *its teaching, learning, or any other sort of knowledge construction.*  
14 *K. Yeah and where or when do you think it is necessary?*  
15 *Exl: Well, it's not something I consider necessary any time, but I mean I suppose if somebody is teaching*  
16 *me to drive for instance - at some point I have to get in the car.*  
17 *R: Yeah, ok. Ahm and have you been teaching before face-to-face also?*  
18 *Exl: Yes, I mean, largely at the, what the UK population calls the 'Further education and training' and I*  
19 *was also a corporate trainer for a number of years.*  
20 *R: Ok*  
21 *Exl: Before I became a University academic.*  
22 *R: Yeah, ok so and did the pure online environment influence your teaching in any way? So for sure you*  
23 *are teaching in a different way but did it had some influence where you just said ok I am acting totally*  
24 *different here?*  
25 *Exl: You mean when you move to the online environment?*  
26 *K. Yes*  
27 *Exl: All right, did I change what I was doing?*  
28 *R: Yeah*  
29 *Exl: Is that what you are asking?*  
30 *R: Yes*  
31 *Exl: Yeah, yes I researched the first module that enables people to do it simply because ahm in the early*  
32 *nineties there was no way of knowing what we were supposed to do. And so people evidently did what*  
33 *they have done in the classroom. And so at that time the people who have been good at learning in the*  
34 *classroom some of them turned out to be good in doing it online as well some of them didn't. So, so there*  
35 *obviously were additions. I mean if you transfer your knowledge to a certain aspect with your*  
36 *competencies of teaching a face-to-face group*  
37 *R: Yeah*  
38 *Exl: I am not talking about doing presentations because that does not particularly transfer into*  
39 *asynchronously work online very well. And I don't know if you are covering the whole range of that? But*  
40 *if we are talking about acting as a group learning teacher, rather than convolved information which is a*  
41 *different skill - ahm then - for instance your knowledge of how groups need to be build up and that sort*  
42 *of thing is valuable. However, you need a range of new skills that you didn't have before; to be able to*  
43 *operate in the online environment.*  
44 *R: Mhm, ok*  
45 *Exl: Ahm, which I have written about quite extensively really; so I mean I can list some of it but it's*  
46 *probably easier to read about those.*  
47 *R: Yeah, I mean I read some of your books actually.*  
48 *Exl: I mean, the one that does make some direct comparison is the book that was - I produced it with*  
49 *David Jacques - at the end of 2006; it's called 'learning in groups'. If you haven't found it, the website is*  
50 *'learningingroups.com'*  
51 *R: Yeah*  
52 *Exl: The thing about this book is that David Jacques is an expert teacher's trainer facilitator in face-to-*  
53 *face groups. And the 'learning in groups' book was first adjusted in 1984; so obviously before people*  
54 *started working online in this way. And ahm with him I produced a book in 2006 that took the best of*  
55 *what he has been doing and also put in those similarities and differences ahm between that and working*  
56 *in the online environment.*  
57 *R: Yeah*

1 *Exl: So you know if you want to sort of look at it, at least what our opinion was on that, that's the best*  
2 *book to look at.*  
3 *R: I will, definitely.*  
4 *Exl: Ahm because we sort of say all the way through - I didn't write a separate chapter - to say: Ok if you*  
5 *wanna do it online: do it this way. Instead I went through every single page and said: That works online,*  
6 *and that won't. So, I think that would be helpful, too if you are interested in that particular area.*  
7 *R: Yeah thanks that sounds very interesting. Ahm now I am going to switch to the topic of teaching in a*  
8 *multicultural environment.*  
9 *Exl: Right*  
10 *R: How do you perceive again teaching in a multicultural environment and multicultural online*  
11 *environment?*  
12 *Exl: Right - are you asking me: How do I perceive teaching face-to-face compared to online?*  
13 *R: No, just in an online -*  
14 *Exl: Just online. Ok, if I take the model for teaching in the online environment using asynchronous bulletin*  
15 *boards, has been developed pacifically to work across cultures ahm the second addition of the e-*  
16 *moderating which I produced in 2004 has got very much more about culture in it then the original 2000*  
17 *edition. So I was looking through on that - and there is a lot of crossing people for who - from the*  
18 *learners you know how they experienced it and from the moderators of how they have developed*  
19 *understanding but if you - the quickest response to that would be at stage 2, which is online*  
20 *socialization; what you seek to do is to enable each individual to express his or her identity which of*  
21 *course includes their culture and to show interest ahm in that of others. However, by the time you get to*  
22 *stage 4, you should be looking to expose differences and for people to seek to understand and to build*  
23 *new alliances rather than to admire or ahm seek similarities in differences. And what you need to do in a*  
24 *relatively ahm learning group across cultures - I mean I think from a week to a week, I am talking about*  
25 *that - is to trying to get everybody to fully understand everybody else's cultures if possible. So the two*  
26 *things that you can do: One to build what we call a third culture; actually if you got 20 people in the*  
27 *group from 20 different places it might be a 21st culture. What I mean is to built a special culture from*  
28 *that into a cross-cultural group within that environment at that time; so in fact you create your own*  
29 *norms, ways and values how you are going to operate as a group that goes on the best of what people*  
30 *are bringing to it, rather than ahm looking at differences. And the ahm the other aspect of working*  
31 *cross-culturally when you are doing it for learning or knowledge construction and to a certain extend for*  
32 *come into the practice is - is that people - when people are leaning - they - the culture of how and where*  
33 *they learn is often more powerful than their national religious ahm identity. So in other words: I mean if*  
34 *you draw, to give you an example, if you have got people from the Caribbean or a certain part of Africa,*  
35 *they will have been brought up very much in the old School British system at schooling. And the way they*  
36 *have been brought up will be similar at school; the way they have been told at school will be very*  
37 *familiar to someone if they are coming from a British private school.*  
38 *R: Yeah*  
39 *Exl: And there will be more similarities between those people, then there would be between you and I*  
40 *brought up in different European countries and different learning, educational systems. Ok?*  
41 *R: Yeah, that's really interesting. And do you think that students and also tutors, do they need a*  
42 *particular preparation when they have to learn or to teach in a multicultural online environment?*  
43 *Exl: Yeah, ahm they need all the skills of working online and through my view no teacher should be let*  
44 *anywhere near the online environment without the benefit of training and development; and that*  
45 *happen far too much and should never happen again.*  
46 *R: Yeah*  
47 *Exl: [...] because what happen is that it takes people far, far too much time to archive very little; while*  
48 *when they are trained in the confidence of e-moderating which is beyond technical learning and*  
49 *presentation skills then they will spend very much more time and it worked very much better; and it can't*  
50 *be done by face-to-face trainers of course. You need to do it in the environment itself. And if they gona*  
51 *work across cultures it will inevitably include how to accommodate diversity which is in a productive way*  
52 *the learning. Which is essentially I think what we are talking about when you discuss cross-cultural*  
53 *learning.*  
54 *R: Yeah*  
55 *Exl: And [...] diversity of those kinds only.*  
56 *R: And did you perceive in the past any particular challenges when you were teaching in this ahm*  
57 *multicultural online environment?*

1 *Exl: Ahm, I think the challenge is that those are working asynchronously and remotely are probably more*  
2 *powerful in working cross-culturally ahm and I have to say I don't perceive things, I research them based*  
3 *on practice; so you know I mean if you ask me for an opinion really mine is based on research rather than*  
4 *a perception of something which is a question more appropriate if you like for a teachers got you no*  
5 *limited experience on that research. But ahm the particular problem of those of managing time ahm I*  
6 *have been showing people contributing and so on and I have gradually building up a draft and after the*  
7 *point where the learning activities are appropriate. And when you are working online you have to design*  
8 *for that to happen. It doesn't happen by chance as it does in a face-to-face environment. And the*  
9 *facilitations skills are very different then they are face-to-face when you have got a well designed activity*  
10 *in the online environment. And that takes quite a lot knowledge and skill to do that. Ahm I suppose what*  
11 *you might find out is that some leaning cultures expect a different role from the e-moderator.*

12 *R: Yeah*

13 *Exl: And it takes time to understand that. There have been typically people, I tell you for instance:*  
14 *Somebody from a Chinese culture is used to the teacher or the professor being the fund of all knowledge;*  
15 *and that even they know they are wrong, they expect you to contact with that person. And this degree of*  
16 *this - isn't there all the way trough different learning cultures. And as I say it is more about learning*  
17 *cultures then national countries in my view. So for instance in Scandinavia the reason that they have*  
18 *done very well online is because the learning culture is very much about you know conversational*  
19 *frameworks and communities, contribution and the admiration from one person to another is given*  
20 *because they contribute not because of the content of what they say. Where is in some but not in all*  
21 *Asian cultures - ahm learning cultures - you know it's very much about delivering content what the*  
22 *teacher says is the absolute truths. So, obviously it will come across all of the in the online environment*  
23 *and that has to be brought with in the early stages before you get onto the information and exchanging*  
24 *knowledge construction work; otherwise it might get in the way of the group working effectively.*

25 *R: Yeah. And one more question because from other interviews I, I found out that a lot of tutors had,*  
26 *were unsure about informal communication; for example slang because they were aware of the other*  
27 *students are non native speakers won't be able to understand this slang or informal communication.*

28 *Exl: All right, you mean the actual nature of the use of language?*

29 *R: Yes, exactly, how do you handle this?*

30 *Exl: Well, I actually when we are training e-moderators ahm we put a lot of emphasize on ahm how*  
31 *important it is to use clarity of meaning. Ahm part of the way language is used is part of this third culture*  
32 *that you need to build up on each individual learning experience. Ahm so I think that everyone, including*  
33 *the students not just the e-moderator, has a responsibility to use the best of the software for that sort of*  
34 *purposes. And this is a lot to do with threading and the title line, teaching people to use one topic per*  
35 *message, making sure making clear what you are responding to; just as much as actually avoiding you*  
36 *know putting a lesser view instead of my own view in. Ahm personally I am not paranoid about this. If it*  
37 *is obvious people understand what I am saying - fine; if it isn't then I have the responsibility to make*  
38 *myself clear. Surely that's the same whether you are online or anywhere else you know. But on the whole*  
39 *I think in asynchronous bulletin board work ahm people don't shorten as much as the do in text*  
40 *massages I think; people have realized that's not appropriate. Ahm but I am personally not worried*  
41 *about spelling mistakes or anything like that as long as it is understandable.*

42 *R: Ja*

43 *Exl: Speed is better than that I think so -*

44 *R: Ja. Ahm and what do you think about local study groups? So ahm in the past I heard a lot of tutors,*  
45 *they tried to arrange like, something like local study groups when they were teaching a purely online*  
46 *programme.*

47 *Exl: I don't see the point of it really; that's probably [...] laugh Probably it was a good idea at the time but*  
48 *in fact if you start of face-to-face it will kill the online - I do it at the end of the programme rather than*  
49 *at the beginning if you want to.*

50 *R: At the beginning of the programme?*

51 *Exl: No, at the end, I never do it at the beginning. I don't see the point myself but you know if people are*  
52 *signing up to being online; what you do is make the online experience very good and so on, you don't try*  
53 *to substitute for something else. But that is not something I would [...] very much about; but in the early*  
54 *days when people were [...] they used to think in order to get the online group work it will be a good idea*  
55 *to meet at the beginning. And that was actually wrong. That wasn't a good idea, that didn't work.*

56 *R: Yeah. That's really interesting because I hear so many different views concerning this aspect and ahm*

57 *Exl: But I think not as many people have trained as many people online as I have, so -*

1 R: Yeah  
2 ExI: And also you need to know how to make the online experience work. I mean what happens is that  
3 we know a great deal about how to make a face-to-face group work; and then people go online with  
4 very little knowledge of how to do it and things go wrong. But they naturally with what they actually  
5 know however if they go online with a lot more knowledge then they won't need to go back to an old  
6 style of technology in order to make the learning experience work. And that may be - in the early days for  
7 that.  
8 R: Yeah. And just - you mentioned already a lot of things I have to watch the time it passes so fast and  
9 what would you recommend online educators when teaching online in a multicultural environment? I  
10 mean you mentioned already a lot of things but maybe you have got - you would like to add something?  
11 ExI: All I think is the main things is that they do understand phenomena of training and development in  
12 the online environment so and a lot practice. I don't think that is something that I haven't said. I mean -  
13 what I have written about it is what I believe in based on research; almost [...] developed. Ahm I think if  
14 you look in the back of my tutor's book which was 2002 ahm that's good a huge list of the common  
15 design issues that need to go in that kind of development trainings for people working cross culturally.  
16 R: Ok, that was about my question pool now - I wanted to ask you. Ahm may be you would like to add  
17 anything or you got inspired by any question?  
18 ExI: Yeah, I think the other thing is we have only been talking asynchronous bulletin board is that what  
19 you meant by ahm moderators teaching online? Or you are thinking about synchronous and other kinds  
20 of technologies as well?  
21 R: Yeah, definitely  
22 ExI: Ok  
23 R: But I know from your background - so with focus on the e-moderating course which I know - there is  
24 the asynchronous communication  
25 ExI: Yeah, that's where I have got the most knowledge of. But if you look on my website ahm you will see  
26 that we are now doing 'pod-tivities', using podcasting for the group work; we have got quite a lot going  
27 on, on that; which obviously is a completely different medium. But we are still designing for that and a  
28 lot of the lectures and professors at Leicester are turning into podcast-group-moderators not just e-  
29 moderators. And typically the podcasts are linked with the 'e-tivities' of bulletin boards. Ahm we are also  
30 doing quite a lot on 'wiki-tivities' too; and the e-moderators are using those. And I suppose [...] that we  
31 are working on at the moment is that we have a Second Life island. And I have just produced training  
32 material for ahm second life moderators. This is where obviously the moderator is represented as an  
33 avatar working with groups of student's avatars. Ahm and this is a very different environment; obviously  
34 multi-user virtual environment. And we are doing quite a lot of group work with students on that. And I  
35 have got a set of competencies for that now and training material as well. So the - they all took the five  
36 stage model and the notion in second life 'e-tivities' in just the same way then they are in the other  
37 environments.  
38 R: Mhm  
39 ExI: And we are finding too a large extend that the basic principles do transfer even though the  
40 experiences are very different [...]

### **Tutor ExJ**

41 R: First I would like to ask you some general questions about your person and your experiences. Your  
42 cultural background you are English?  
43 ExJ: I am English, yes.  
44 R: All right. And what about your experiences in learning and especially teaching online?  
45 ExJ: We have I have noticed from your questions you ask it's a pure online environment. But ahm I have a  
46 lot of experience in using online sources, what we call e-learning facilities. But I have never used a pure  
47 online environment. That's sad, ah I do communicate with students and we have a thing called  
48 Blackboard here. Do you have Blackboard in Germany?  
49 R: Mhm  
50 ExJ: So I used Blackboard to extend, to contact hours with students, because I only see certain students  
51 for about three hours a week. And that for I use Blackboard exclusively to expand that. So I do use  
52 discussion boards, and I do use we have blogs; so I encourage students to use blogs and in that way I am

1 expanding my role, expanding contact hours with students. So that's the nearest I come to teach online.  
2 But it's very, very useful, definitely.  
3 R: And ahm what subjects are you teaching?  
4 ExJ: I teach imaginative writing and but based here in Media we teach across a lot of subjects. I teach  
5 popular fiction, popular culture, I teach modernise -  
6 R: Mhm  
7 ExJ: Ahm visual cultures, we teach media ethics. So we actually teach across a lot of disciplines. But they  
8 all come within the idea of media, critical and creative arts.  
9 R: And your experience about, in teaching international students you already mentioned some?  
10 ExJ: Yes, I also teach ahm for the learning development unit here, which is across all students across the  
11 University. So I teach students writing skills, academic writing skills, research skills, referencing skills, but  
12 they are mainly international students. So ah, so that played, that plays a big part. Also here in the  
13 School of Media every summer we have a lot of ahm Indonesian, Chinese, and Malaysian students that  
14 come here. And so we teach them as well.  
15 R: Mhm. Ok, and this are people probably who come here, but have not been living here for a long time?  
16 ExJ: Some live here I would say it is half and half. Some live here for purposes of their study but some, like  
17 the summer students we get, they come here two or three months a year and then they go back. They  
18 are looking for a very English experience, some of them you know.  
19 R: Ok, then I has got some questions concerning teaching online. Ahm how do you perceive teaching  
20 online? Usually I ask in a pure online environment but here it is more or less teaching in a blended  
21 learning environment. And so you already said that your experience was quite positive?  
22 ExJ: Yeah, I think it is. We have it is positive. And the University has also recognised that this could be a  
23 positive ah aspect; both the teaching and learning experience. So the University is actually insisted that  
24 all tutors use Blackboard more. My own experience is ahm, is that students actually like that facility.  
25 They like that, to be available and they often complain if tutors don't use that. I use it quite a lot. But  
26 some tutors don't. It seems to vary from school to school. But the feedback that I have from students is  
27 that ah they find that a very positive aspect. And I perceive, the way I perceive it is, it supplements  
28 teaching and learning; it's not to be replaced the event. It's actually an add-it.  
29 R: Yeah. And could you imagine to ahm offer, to do a course just online?  
30 ExJ: I just do work in a further education college many years ago and they used to offer that to certain  
31 students. And, but the reason for that was that these students ah had disabilities and couldn't travel. So  
32 most of those ahm, so they were taught basically online. But that required special training to do that.  
33 And I don't think it's a bad thing. But one interesting thing about normal teaching this year is that I have  
34 been guiding students through ah they call it independent study projects. And those students who have  
35 had more contact with me personally, have benefited, have done better than those students who had  
36 not come and seen me just on very rare occasions.  
37 R: Mhm  
38 ExJ: So, I would think the elements of contact with a tutor are important.  
39 R: And you said that it might require special training? You mean teaching disabled people?  
40 ExJ: No, teaching online, yeah.  
41 R: Teaching in the online environment.  
42 ExJ: Yes, I think it is a skill because if I am writing something on here [Blackboard] for students I had to be  
43 very, be careful anyhow. It seems to become more focused in the way you said. Oh, we also had debates  
44 here ah in the University. Some of my colleagues have expressed a worry that, what they are putting on  
45 there, means that they are accountable. I personally don't understand that because I think we are  
46 accountable anyhow. And, but for some other reason [...] they think it makes differences.  
47 R: Ok  
48 ExJ: I personally don't understand that [...] it's validated either way. But I think, I think there is so I have  
49 been told some of my colleagues have to use Blackboard and they ah have found it ahm an extra skill;  
50 they actually see this as a very different skill then teaching in the classroom. So I think there is a skill that  
51 needs to be acquired, definitely.  
52 R: Ahm, focusing on the multicultural aspect now how do you perceive teaching in a multicultural  
53 environment?  
54 ExJ: Well, personally I think it's been, it's been a very positive experience. Professionally I think it's been a  
55 very positive experience because ah I think, I think in some ways its requiring a new skill, you know.  
56 R: Mhm

1 *ExJ: And ah were I previously worked it wasn't, there was not so much a multicultural environment,*  
2 *whereas here in University and in the classes that I teach there is a learning development union ah it is*  
3 *an extremely multicultural environment. Ah, so I feel that professionally it required very positive*  
4 *beneficial skills, but I also think personally it's made me more ah aware of how I can come across and*  
5 *how I am speaking. So, yes a positive experience.*  
6 *R: And ahm did the multicultural environment influence your teaching in any way?*  
7 *ExJ: Yes*  
8 *R: And how?*  
9 *ExJ: Ah, I suddenly realised I started saying things three times; I would say the first time I would say how I*  
10 *would normally say it, and then the second time I would rearticulate it say it very differently and then I*  
11 *would say it differently again. So, ah and that was because ah in some classes I have lot of ah Asian*  
12 *students; half the class were Asian and half the class were say Spanish, or French, or German. And I*  
13 *would, as a teacher I looked for non-verbal cues; I looked for responses from students. So I would say it*  
14 *how I would normally say it, engage how they respond to it and then I would say it again; I would alter*  
15 *the way I have said it because I would be conscious that I may have included slang. And it's the same*  
16 *think with my PowerPoint slides. After a while I sort of went back to them and had a look at the*  
17 *language that I was using on them was it clear, was it jargon; some jargon is important, they have to*  
18 *learn terms ahm but that what it forced me to do. So I took that into consideration of thought, does that*  
19 *make sense, and will that make sense to students who have a different understanding as well as a*  
20 *different language.*  
21 *R: Mhm. And you just said you are looking for ahm just some visuals -*  
22 *ExJ: Yes, we call them non-verbal cues, or visual feedback.*  
23 *R: But imagine you are online!*  
24 *ExJ: Well, you can't do that. And it's the same for text messages, you know. For instance sometime I*  
25 *receive a text message from a friend and because I don't, I can't see his face, and I don't know what tone*  
26 *he is using; I don't know whether he has been funny or if he has been serious or that is also the specific*  
27 *language because English language, we can there is different meanings, we can pass a lot of different*  
28 *meaning, whereas in German you say something and it is direct, it specifically means something. It can't*  
29 *go anywhere else, whereas in English it's more open to interpretation.*  
30 *R: Mhm*  
31 *ExJ: So, yes. That's a good point that about online, yeah, it's a very good point.*  
32 *R: In which way*  
33 *ExJ: Well, you can't engage with reactions of students, you don't have a visual reaction when you are*  
34 *working online. So ah, but my own perception is, has it changed this works in a multicultural*  
35 *environment? Has it changed the way I teach? Yes, I think it has but I think that has been a very good*  
36 *thing actually because it forced me to be more clear, it forced me to re-examine how I come across. And*  
37 *ah I think it's about communication skills, you know. Its, I think if you communicate an idea well, then*  
38 *your students will have a better chance. And I think that applies to all the international students as well.*  
39 *If I am teaching a class of English students I think you have to be a good communicator. And I will use*  
40 *everything, every trick to communicate with students; I will use expressions, I will use voices, I will use*  
41 *visual aids and so I think communication is a very good point, very positive aspect and working in a*  
42 *multicultural environment as, as made that even more important, definitely.*  
43 *R: Mhm, and definitely something quite different when it's just online.*  
44 *ExJ: Very different, yes, totally. Some English, some international students ah have difficulty writing in*  
45 *English, and, and that can be that can be very difficult to overcome, really. They can talk, some like*  
46 *talking to you would rather talk to you then write to you, you know. And yes, some would rather write*  
47 *then talk, you know. For instance I can write using an example; I can much easier write in German and*  
48 *read in German then speak in German or hear in German. Ah, and I think, so yes, I take my own*  
49 *experience and think about it in terms of the students and they might have the same difficulty, yeah.*  
50 *R: And did you can you think of any particular challenges? You were talking about the communication*  
51 *part*  
52 *ExJ: Yeah, ah the feedback I have had from students, because especially teaching the international*  
53 *students, we have to get, we give them a feedback form were they can put their comments down, they*  
54 *can write comments on how they found the lesson; was it effective, was it useful. The feedback that I*  
55 *have received, I have been told is the most positive feedback. [...] So the feedback from the students*  
56 *would suggest I am doing ok.*  
57 *R: Mhm*

1 ExJ: Personally, ahm it had, the main challenge has been, my main challenge - but this is for all my  
2 students, it's to make sure they understand the message, they understand what I am talking about. And  
3 that's why I say things three times, you know [...] not everything, but individual points.  
4 R: And what do you think about the idea of preparing students and also tutors when they have to teach  
5 and learn in an online environment, particularly focusing on the multicultural aspect?  
6 ExJ: Preparation?  
7 R: Preparation, meaning before or also within the actual programme  
8 ExJ: Yeah, ahm I don't really I sort of I don't go into a class and think this is a multicultural environment;  
9 it's only when I come out of a class, that I think what I was saying before I changed the language in my  
10 PowerPoint displays. But that was a post classroom not post environment [...] I think of, I don't know I  
11 think you just have to be prepared when you go in a class anyhow. You have to be prepared for any class  
12 really.  
13 R: Mhm  
14 ExJ: Communication, difficulties, it's common across all classes. So, I don't know about preparation. I  
15 have changed things definitely before now, but ah that's just the communicative or the hand-out, sort of  
16 teaching aids or learning aids I use, you know that's it.  
17 R: And what would you recommend online educators when they are or educators in general, when they  
18 are teaching in an international environment? You mentioned already a couple of things -  
19 ExJ: I don't know. I tend to use a lot of, I tend to use a lot of ah imagery, pictures ah; but I think that's  
20 stimulate students anyhow. Personally I am trying to find something here [in Blackboard] yeah so I tend  
21 to use [pause] yes, I will ah always place images.  
22 R: Ok  
23 ExJ: And I think, I do that with my normal students, my English students and it works very well. I think  
24 that could be an option, really. It's very difficult. I mean you can't compromise the language, you know.  
25 You can't, because I am also aware that a lot of, a lot of time we have international students they are  
26 looking for a very English experience. And so it's ahm we don't do anything, we don't offer sort of  
27 translations or we don't offer anything like that. We just say I think it's a very English idea as well. [...] I  
28 think it's terrible. Well, a lot of English people think, well everybody speaks English.  
29 R: Yeah  
30 ExJ: So, you know I don't, there is we deal with a lot of international students here. And we ah, we have a  
31 lot of services, for instance for international students, but as far as written stuff is concerned, the  
32 actually curriculum is concerned no effort is made, as far as I know, to provide any kind of translation or  
33 services. So I tend to use visual aids. But I would do that  
34 R: Ok, yeah, that was about my main question pool concerning the ahm online and multicultural  
35 environment. And ahm you said already were you see the benefit in teaching online and maybe you want  
36 to add anything or you got inspired by anything?  
37 ExJ: Ahm, I think, I think what is interesting about using it, is, is, I don't think it's ah purposely or  
38 exclusively with international students. I think a lot of the students that we have now grew up in a media  
39 or an IT world. Every student has a computer. I did my own research this year. We found that a lot of  
40 students tend to watched on the internet more then they watched television. So ah, so that is a natural  
41 sort of function or whatever. Ah and so therefore this is why I make the most of those. In fact when I am  
42 designing these and building these, I always make sure there are web pages, because I know students  
43 recognise web pages. So ahm I think ahm I have seen colleagues who don't like that. But that is  
44 changing. And I think that has to change, that has to become, that will become more and important  
45 because it's the world we live in.  
46 R: Mhm  
47 ExJ: I am never of the computer. And I know a lot of my students they watch films, they watch television,  
48 they play games, they communicate purely through this. This is why I put the ahm blog area on there.  
49 Just to get students to see I wanted to know how they use it.  
50 R: Mhm  
51 ExJ: And actually I want to use it for the ahm some of the international students this year because ahm I  
52 want them to share the learning experience that they are having here. But they could do that in their  
53 own language because you set languages for them on here [Blackboard]. So ahm so I wanted them to be  
54 able to do that.  
55 R: Mhm, and they are actually using it also?  
56 ExJ: They should be using it; it doesn't start until a month time, so hopefully they will take advance to it.  
57 That was my idea, well let them have that. I was talking to a colleague, who is Malaysian, and he was

1 telling me I ask him 'What difficulties they have?', 'What is the thing they really don't like or find  
2 strange?'- and he said: 'They don't understand, we acquired we let them become very independent'.  
3 They have to rely on their own initiative here. And they are not used to that apparently. In Malaysia it's a  
4 lot more directed learning. They were going in the class for three or four hours and they were told  
5 exactly; whereas here they will be in a classroom for two hours and then they will go away and do their  
6 own research. And that is something they find difficult to adjust to do. So, I said, why don't we set up  
7 something here [on Blackboard] where they can share their experiences and say, well help each other  
8 out.  
9 R: Mhm, interesting.  
10 ExJ: So that's to start. That will be interesting, yeah.  
11 R: Ok, thanks a lot

### **Tutor ExK**

12 R: First some questions about your person. What about your cultural background? You are from  
13 England?  
14 ExR: I was born in the United States and I began living in other countries since 1965; you can see I have  
15 been here for a long time. I lived worked and travelled in many, many, many other countries. I have  
16 actually lived in about ten different countries. [...]  
17 R: All right. And ahm what about your experience in teaching or learning online; because usually you are  
18 talking about face-to-face education?  
19 ExR: I have created online courses, I have taught online courses and I have taught other people how to  
20 write online courses. I participated many times as a student in online courses both within the UK and also  
21 ahm I attended as a student in courses that are based in America and in China.  
22 R: Ok. And ahm did you perceive any particular training or preparation to teach online and also teach or  
23 to work in a multicultural or international environment?  
24 ExR: Particular for the online thing?  
25 R: Yes  
26 ExR: Only once I participated in a course which specifically was about the cross-cultural aspect of online  
27 learning. And that was a project last year, I think it was last year, maybe it was the year before,  
28 organised by the University of Lancaster in where half participants were UK academics and half  
29 participants were Chinese academics. And the purpose of the course was to experience and explore  
30 cross-cultural issues in online-learning.  
31 R: It's very interesting.  
32 ExR: It was; it was also completely disasters, absolutely fell apart. Because even though they said that  
33 this is a course about online and cultural differences no one ever did anything specific about identifying  
34 or discussing cross-cultural communication or cross- cultural sensitivity. And as a result the whole course  
35 completely collapsed.  
36 R: Yeah, ok. I come back to this issue later I think  
37 ExR: Ok  
38 R: And ahm how did you perceive ahm teaching in a pure online environment?  
39 ExR: Right when I taught one course in an online environment I had students on the course from New  
40 Zealand, from Saudi Arabia, from the United Emirates, from Ireland, ahm from Norway, from the United  
41 States, from Canada. So I had many students from many, many different places.  
42 R: Yes  
43 ExR: And that was very interesting because the contact was do different and people could bring their  
44 contacts as students into the discussions.  
45 R: That's very interesting.  
46 ExR: I have also taught in a blended learning environment where students also met face-to-face but also  
47 had online tasks to do. And as a teacher in this environment it was very interesting because the students  
48 were often very quite in face-to-face meetings and were able to contribute much more extensive,  
49 comments etcetera. when they were online. So there was a notable increasing willingness for those  
50 international students to contribute. However that didn't mean that the UK students didn't actually  
51 responded then any better. There still was very little response to those students.  
52 R: Mhm

1 ExR: Because often their contributions were slightly awkward or unexpected for the UK students even  
2 though the international students in that blended learning environment had the opportunity to really  
3 work on their language. They still didn't deliver the languages in the way that it was culturally sensitive  
4 to the UK students need to receive it.

5 R: Mhm. And in this context do you think that ahm students and also teachers who are working or  
6 teaching in an international environment do they need to be prepared for it?

7 ExR: Of course! Both students and teachers.

8 R: And ahm in which way? Maybe before the course or within the course, particularly I am talking about  
9 University courses.

10 ExR: Right. Well, the first thing is before the course there should be some protocols; there should be  
11 some explicit established way in which people should interact. Then the tutor should, as it goes along,  
12 should begin to name and comment on in a positive way, how students are interacting, what students  
13 are doing. So it should become a topic of discussion in its own light as well as the content of what is  
14 being discussed. So that students can begin to talk about and comment on. So for example, in the  
15 Chinese course that I participated in fell apart, it was very, very obvious that the Chinese students  
16 needed [...] and as students in the course, needed much, much more social interaction and chat before  
17 they could get down to the work. Whereas the UK students just got right down to it and went to work.  
18 And it was very, very aggravating, you could feel the aggravation of the UK students with these Chinese  
19 students endlessly greeting and chatting away about social things rather than getting down to the work.  
20 And so what happened was that the UK ahm postings got longer and longer and longer and more and  
21 more work focused and the Chinese postings got shorter and shorter and shorter and finally disappeared  
22 altogether.

23 R: Mhm

24 ExR: So, there should be protocols at the beginning that describe and talk about how this kind of  
25 difference is going to be managed. And for example should say to the UK students: 'You should not post  
26 long postings. You should post short postings and so forth.'

27 R: Mhm

28 ExR: And then as these things come up the tutor should be sensitive to it and name it and begin to work  
29 with it.

30 R: Mhm. And to be able to act in this way the tutor probably does need some preparation?

31 ExR: Of course.

32 R: What would you recommend and online educator who has to teach in a multicultural environment?

33 ExR: Well, first they should have the experience themselves [...] in courses with people from many places  
34 with many faces. Secondly, they should have already developed cultural sensitivity in face to face  
35 communication or at least started to do so. ; these kind of cross-cultural sensitivity and communication  
36 strategies are very well known. So you know what happened in a face-to-face world also happens in the  
37 online world. And they should see some models of effective on line tutoring, they should see some  
38 examples and they should work with experience as teachers.

39 R: Mhm. And ahm I got from other tutors the idea ahm such an online course that tutors and students  
40 should be able to express their own culture in the first instance, in the second instance they ahm or in the  
41 second step they should be able to get an understanding of each other's culture and also educational  
42 background. But how do you think that this could be realised?

43 ExR: Right. The first thing is that the word culture is a very difficult one. So for example in my Chinese  
44 experience the Chinese people took the word culture to be what I would say as a very small set of thing  
45 that has to do with culture. They thought it would be things like food you eat and the decoration that  
46 you put in your house and kind of clothes that you wear Whereas for me culture is about everything you  
47 do and how you communicate and how you see the world. Everything that helps you makes sense for the  
48 world So the word culture has to be ahm defined and dealt with it in much more detail. So that we know  
49 when we are arguing with the world culture we are using the same word to mean the same thing. Ahm

50 R: And what do you actually think is more important: The cultural background actually or the educational  
51 system where a student or a tutor grew up?

52 ExR: Well, we all learn to be who we are in our own cultural context. And who we are, are in our own  
53 cultural context, is everything about us. So we can't bring everything but we can, we can for example  
54 online then, you know it's important in online can be to get to know the person as an individual who are  
55 you? And what kind of things would you like to present? How would you like me to know you? What kind  
56 of things would you like me to know? How did you ahm become aware of your own cultural rules and  
57 functions? What kind of things is important to you? Those kinds of things that are ways in which people

1 can get to know each other. Now if you are online, because you are learning, then there is also the  
2 academic culture that is important. And how you study? Its sounds like if you are German? Are you  
3 German?

4 R: Yes, I am German.

5 ExR: It sounds like you are German and I know because I have lived in Germany and I speak German and I  
6 went to German schools and so forth. What happened in a German school is very, very different from  
7 what happened in our schools. So maybe if we are doing learning together we should have some chance  
8 to say: 'Yeah, when I say learning What do you mean by learning? What do I mean by learning? And that  
9 will be very different in different academic cultures. Yeah, the interesting thing is about all this is, it takes  
10 time. It always takes time. People think that cross-cultural communication is instantly rich and  
11 wonderful. In fact it takes much, much longer, it's often much, much more difficult, it often causes great  
12 deals of difficulties, it's also interesting, very interesting and I think it's worth a trouble. And you  
13 probably think it's worth a trouble, too.

14 R: For sure

15 ExR: But I know its trouble. And to pretend that isn't trouble is not, is not helpful. So we need teachers  
16 and courses [...] to help us to be, to know each other, to know how to communicate with each other and  
17 to become what I call 'meta-aware'. [Meta-awareness is a state of understanding about your  
18 understanding. You sort of stand outside your awareness] So I am aware of, so even as I am talking now,  
19 I'm aware of how I am talking and what I am saying a bit I am thinking ok 'This woman is a German, she  
20 probably has different ideas from -you' etcetera, for example if you look at you now German culture is  
21 supposed to be a 'high context' culture [That's what Hofstede says..... who knows if he is right!!] and so  
22 forth. And so all this things can become discussable, but they will take time discuss. And if we are  
23 supposed to do some task online with each other, then it will take us longer to do the task because these  
24 things [cultural discussions and understandings] will have to happen as well.

25 R: Mhm

26 ExR: So maybe we have to do less of the tasks or less good tasks or less perfect but along the way we  
27 also benefit from the cross-cultural thing.

28 R: Mhm. What do you think Perceptions teaching and learning online  
29 k about the idea ahm of building something like a third culture when being or teaching in an online  
30 course?

31 ExR: Do you think it's possible? I don't think it's possible.

32 R: I don't know

33 ExR: I don't think, what I like about the word 'cultural perspective' is that it always has a place where you  
34 stand. So everybody has a cultural position. So my cultural position is very complicated because I have an  
35 extremely complicated cultural background. Many, many people do, a lot of people have complicated  
36 cultural backgrounds. But they always have their own position, their own place. I cannot become a  
37 Universal in some way that is outside of culture. But I can stand within my culture and talk to other  
38 people in theirs and have a relationship. I don't believe there is such a thing as an international culture. I  
39 don't believe that.

40 R: Mhm

41 ExR: I think there are everybody who is individual stands it but they can become beware of other people's  
42 differences and communicate across that.

43 R: Yeah, it was more like, I got the idea from another tutor ahm here he was more or less talking about  
44 something like a third culture individually in every course, not internationally but from time to time really  
45 very different but ahm

46 ExR: Yeah, what you usually find when people think that is happening is that the one dominant culture  
47 has won the argument.

48 R: Yeah

49 ExR: I mean probably those are western cultures where they say we are all going to do that like this  
50 because it will be neutral and actually it isn't. It's just the dominant culture that's won the argument  
51 really.

52 R: Mhm that's possible. And through your opinion are there any, any cultural combinations which are not  
53 workable, which won't it's [laugh]

54 ExR: [laugh] it's a very interesting question and it's a very dangerous question, you know.

55 R: I know

56 ExR: People don't like this question but the answer is every single person will find some kinds of cultural  
57 communication easy and some hard. So if I speak personally for myself: I lived in Africa for four years, in

1 West Africa. And I really enjoyed it being in West Africa. I enjoyed the culture, I enjoyed the  
2 communication, I enjoyed the music, I enjoyed everything. And for me it was an easy and very exciting  
3 and interesting place. If I go to China, I don't feel any of those things. But I work with a woman who loves  
4 going to China; she is an Australian. She loves China and she really doesn't like going to Africa. So in  
5 every person there are some places where you feel comfortable and some people where you don't.  
6 R: Mhm  
7 ExR: And some places where you really love what you see and what you experience and how other  
8 people behave and some places where you don't. And you have to work hard actually. So for myself I  
9 have to work very, very hard to communicate with Chinese people, very hard. And they have to work  
10 very, very hard to communicate with me.  
11 R: Mhm  
12 ExR: I don't have to work hard to communicate with Africans. And maybe they don't have to work hard  
13 to communicate with me, they don't seem to. Ahm and I am sure, I can make many other examples like  
14 that. It took me a long time to figure out how to communicate with Germans. Ahm but in the end I was  
15 much more comfortable. I also lived in France for a long time. And in the end I found it much easier and  
16 more comfortable with Germans than with French people.  
17 R: yeah  
18 ExR: So, it's just personal, you know.  
19 R: Personal. Coming back to the  
20 ExR: Oh I just want to say one more thing about that. And that is I do not think that it's ok for you to stop  
21 trying to communicate with people even if you find it hard. So it's no good for me to say: 'I can't  
22 communicate with Chinese, I give up.' I say: 'I can't say I can't communicate with Chinese, I have to try  
23 harder', you know, ok. Anyway you next question.  
24 R: Yeah, coming back to teaching online, teaching in a pure online environment. Do you think that a  
25 residential or face-to-face contact is necessary or at least helpful?  
26 ExR: Yes and no. The answer on the yes side that face-to-face contact is helpful is because all you have  
27 online is typed word. And we know that that's a very small part of the language. I mean even now you  
28 are talking [on the phone] like this we lost this deeper sense of our message to each other. We lost half  
29 of what you can know from seeing each other. But we have a lot more when we can talk like this, if we  
30 were communicating by typing.  
31 R: Mhm  
32 ExR: So face-to-face is much richer, but on the other hand when we are learning a language and we are  
33 learning to speak to each other what we learn is the language that we type. So, in some ways it's easier  
34 to be more straight forward and clear in a language that you learn; if there is you know, the non-verbal  
35 stuff, the stuff [we communicate] when you meet face-to-face is very, very cultural. So for example I have  
36 lived in this and this country and the UK now for thirty years but I still don't have the face-to-face  
37 communication style of a British person I just don't have it. I can be pretty close if I really try. But I don't  
38 have it. But online people can't tell if I am British or American. They don't know, you know. So that's the  
39 sort of arguments for and against it.  
40 R: Mhm. This is also what I find out.  
41 ExR: Mhm I think that there is a wonderful, also saying that goes, it's a Gambian saying and that is: 'No  
42 matter how long the log stays in the river, it never becomes a crocodile.'  
43 R: Mhm  
44 ExR: And I think that online, if you are a log, you can be much more like you pretend to be a crocodile  
45 then face-to-face. I mean online people don't know what nationality I am. But face-to-face they always  
46 do.  
47 R: Mhm. Just one general question about mhm, yeah, how did you or do you perceive teaching in a  
48 multicultural environment?  
49 ExR: How do I perceive it?  
50 R: Yes  
51 ExR: I wrote a book about it, Kerstin.  
52 R: I know  
53 ExR: And it says so many things about it, ask more specific questions.  
54 R: Yeah, I know but it's  
55 ExR: I can give you my general answer  
56 R: Yeah  
57 ExR: How I perceived teaching in a multicultural environment.

1 R: I read your book, I know [laugh]  
2 ExR: [laugh] Well, the sort answer is, I think because, I think that everything that you do by absolute  
3 intuition and habit you have to re-exam. You have to start thinking about everything and that's very  
4 hard, nothing can be unconscious it always becomes conscious and that's hard. But it's so interesting; it's  
5 so potentially rich and exciting that for me it's worth the trouble.  
6 R: Mhm  
7 ExR: And also it's the future. We don't live in a world now in which we have cultural boxes where  
8 everybody stays in the same place. So, it's the future, it's absolutely how the world is. And so we have to  
9 work with that.  
10 R: So one more question about communicating in an international environment online. How do you  
11 handle something like I call it informal communication? So when you are talking about slang on the one  
12 hand, it makes the environment more informal, but on the other hand it might be very hard, especially if  
13 English speaks especially for me as a German I don't understand a joke for example. How do you bridge  
14 this aspect, what do think?  
15 ExR: Well, sometimes you I have done it online here people begin to explain their assumptions. So  
16 example I remember once being online where people use the inverted commas. You know how people  
17 make these two fingers where they go on either side of a word and don't really mean the word; you  
18 know the expression I mean?  
19 R: Mhm  
20 ExR: And they were doing it online. And then they explained because they knew that there were lots of  
21 other students who might not use this convention. They explained what this convention means. So that  
22 everybody knew. And that was very useful because then everybody in the course began to explain the  
23 assumption behind what they were going to write about. In general I think there should be protocols  
24 about not joking for example. Because I think, I think especially online, when we know it from blogging  
25 and so forth, and discussion groups, we know that it can very quickly be misunderstood if you make a  
26 sarcastic remark for example. And I don't care how many smiley faces you put after your sarcastic  
27 remark. It's still a sarcastic remark.  
28 R: Mhm  
29 ExR: And so I think you can have protocol that say, we don't do these things or we explain, you know.  
30 R: Some sort of guidelines for the students.  
31 ExR: Yeah, yeah. And the two things its [...] that, without becoming like a policeman, so that the students  
32 don't feel that they are so worried that they might do a mistake that they don't do anything, you know.  
33 R: Mhm. Yeah, I did the interview quite fast. That was about my question pool. And but may be you  
34 would like to add anything or you have got additional suggestions?  
35 ExR: Yeah, first I think it's very good that you are investigating this. Because I don't think this is ahm an  
36 area that people have really ahm made visually and discussable. And I think that's very good.  
37 R: Mhm thanks.  
38 ExR: I think there is no way to make cross cultural communication easy because it's always hard. And I  
39 think the most important thing is to remember that if you are working online in a multicultural  
40 environment you will archive less of the task, because the process becomes so important as well. But you  
41 will learn some other things for example, about the process. So, that's just another important learning.  
42 But if you have, particularly if you have people, I don't know Koreans for example, Koreans are just so  
43 straight forward, they just get down to it, you know. And if you have Koreans and I don't know some  
44 other people who Mexicans, Mexicans love to chat and [...] and carry on, that's a generalisation, I am  
45 sure there are Mexicans who don't, but just for a, for the example; but if you have for example Koreans  
46 and Mexicans trying to collaborate the they are going to really struggle with it. But they also might find  
47 it interesting. Ok  
48 R: Yeah, thanks a lot, it was really interesting!

### **Tutor ExL**

49 R: At the beginning I have just some basic questions about your person. Could you tell me what cultural  
50 background are you?  
51 ExL: I am English.  
52 R: You are English, all right. And what about your experiences in learning and teaching online?  
53 ExL: Ok, I have been running an online course for four years.

1 R: Pure online or?

2 ExL: Yes, almost 99% are online. One day the students come in and I explain the course.

3 K. At the beginning.

4 ExL: At the beginning. We go in one of the labs I show them how to logon and help them to navigate

5 through the, the virtual learning environment we use.

6 K. Mhm

7 ExL: That lasts for half a day. I have two cohorts, we have thirty students in a cohort and so because the

8 lab only takes seventeen students and we have some in the morning, some in the afternoon. Ahm but the

9 rest is purely online.

10 R: And what subject is it?

11 ExL: Right, my background is nursing. And so I have my area [...] is teaching mentors in nursing in the UK.

12 We have a system that is known as mentoring. So every qualified nurse ahm – a student nurse [...] must

13 have a mentor and the mentor is a qualified nurse who has undergone a programme of preparation.

14 Now for about fifteen years I have been teaching this course. I have written a textbook on it. I have been

15 teaching it ahm in a conventional way. Four years ago I have developed an online version. And so, the

16 course is teaching qualified nurses how to teach and support student nurses.

17 R: Ok. And for how long is it running?

18 ExL: Fifteen weeks.

19 R: Fifteen weeks. And ahm – what is your role there? You are teaching as a tutor and you have designed

20 this course as well?

21 ExL: Yes, I designed the course. And I am teaching you know.

22 R: Ok and what about teaching international students? Students with different cultural background? Do

23 you have any experiences?

24 ExL: Not really on this course, but I am just trying to think. We had few students from ahm, oh yes; we

25 have a few students from the Philippines, one from Africa –

26 R: South Africa?

27 ExL: No, ahm gosh I can't remember ahm not South Africa, Zimbabwe.

28 R: Ok

29 ExL: A few Chinese students but they have been in this country for a long time and small group of Spanish

30 students.

31 R: In face-to-face classes?

32 ExL: No, in online. And, yes, so I have obviously taught international students but for this particular

33 course you know as I said we have African and Spanish students.

34 R: Ok, ahm and focusing on the online teaching course, teaching in a pure online environment – how did

35 you perceive this?

36 ExL: When I first started you mean?

37 R: Ahm, particularly now.

38 ExL: How do I perceive it now?

39 R: Yeah

40 ExL: All right. I love it. It's very challenging. Over the four years I have changed the way I do it and I have

41 developed my own insight I suppose. Ahm initially the course was as if I was a teacher, teaching a class. I

42 give the students information or asked them to read some things. And we had a discussion board some

43 students use and most students didn't. And, and it was ok at first it was ok. And then I thought it needed

44 to be improved, it needed to be more interactive, more dynamic.

45 R: Mhm

46 ExL: So I inserted some exercises. So said that I wanted students to ahm do certain tasks and they have

47 two weeks to do the task. And then they receive information back and all the students will be able to see

48 what they have done. And want the students to get a discussion going so that they would talk to each

49 other. And obviously I would join in on the discussion board. And that was reasonable successful but a lot

50 of students didn't engage. So we have basically as you always have some really highly motivated

51 students and those students who didn't do anything. And the assessment for the course was that they

52 had to write a three thousand word essay.

53 R: Mhm

54 ExL: And – quite a large amount of students did nothing on the course and then submitted the essay. This

55 isn't learning all they are doing is focusing on an essay. So I changed the assessment format and so they

56 would be given marks for every exercise they did. So this remained them engaging on the course. So

57 basically what I am trying to do is to change from the teacher, somebody who presents something, ahm

1 to someone who was challenging the students to think of, or to engage with the course material. So we  
2 have you know [...] activity and learning. So by giving the students that activity I am trying to stimulate  
3 and motivate them. For example I put an activity on the discussion board which is [...] you know – lets  
4 exchange ideas, has anything worked for you, has been successful within your role as a teacher student,  
5 as a mentor for students nurses? Has anything been successful you like to share with everybody else in  
6 the course? So some students said: Oh, yes, I do this and I do that ahm and one student said oh [...] I  
7 don't teach them anything, I just tell them to get on with it and they have to see they can swim. So I have  
8 been watching these discussion, then I tell them: Well, this is an interesting way of doing it, I have to be  
9 very diplomatic- because you know face-to-face I can say something to you but you are aware of my  
10 facial expressions but online it doesn't happen. So I have to be very diplomatic as I said in this case. Yes,  
11 one way of doing it. But it could be not very helpful to the students; if they can swim; if they can't swim  
12 then they think they are losing. Then I was able to bring in some learning theories. I sort of introduced  
13 ahm the [...] I was able to actually say: Ok, think about this. You want students to be at this high point  
14 ahm but at the moment down they are down the bottom floor. So we need to build a framework so the  
15 students gains experience and expertise and knowledge. So they actually get up to that level. So by doing  
16 this by getting this discussion boards I am not just watching that discussions happening, I am actually  
17 taking the role of the facilitator. Ok, this isn't my idea. I haven't started off by saying we are going to  
18 teach you 'scaffolding theory'. As you have introduced a particular notion I think it is relevant to  
19 introduce this to you; so I see my role as being one of the facilitator and motivator and a stimulator.  
20 R: Did you get any preparation for this, any course or any teaching how to teach online?  
21 ExL: No, not of this.  
22 R: Because what you are saying, just focusing on all these different roles and – it's exactly what you also  
23 read in literature.  
24 ExL: No, when we started the online learning in this University – are you familiar with Blackboard?  
25 R: Yeah  
26 ExL: That's a virtual learning environment. So this is introduced about five years ago. And it was simply  
27 there, it was – here it is use it. And nobody really knew what to do with it really.  
28 R: I am sure.  
29 ExL: And, we had some, some students where brought into the department to teach us but very basic  
30 things about how to post material on to Blackboard. But that was it, there is nothing the, the Psychology  
31 online learning or how to use the technology and so – a lot of that I have learned through my own  
32 experience. But more recently I am doing a course called 'embedded learning technology'. And this is  
33 really good because the tutor from the learning development unit here is- he knows different ideas for  
34 example using videos and how to obtain some material online, using different – basically using different  
35 technology; and also behind them. What we have to do is just use it and reflect on our experiences. But  
36 initially no support, not teaching, just the case: there is the technology use it.  
37 K. Yeah, ok. And what do you think about; I mean you had a residential at the beginning. Do you think it  
38 was helpful or is it necessary to have one at the beginning at a pure online course?  
39 ExL: For my particular students you mean?  
40 R: Yeah  
41 ExL: It's not a residential they just come here for one day. Do I think it is helpful?  
42 R: Or is it necessary? Because I am focusing also on international groups, with students for instance from  
43 Africa, from China...  
44 ExL: Yes, at first I; the very first time I did this course I didn't have anything, the student didn't come in. I  
45 simply send them out written information, and hard copy and said this you how you get online, this is  
46 what you got to do. And the student's feedback at the end of the course was – we found it very difficult  
47 at first and we would have appreciated it online, something face-to-face. Which is why I have built in  
48 face-to-face. But I understand what you are saying. And I, I think it should be possible to do pure online,  
49 but the problems we have, the problems that I have experienced is that not all students are very familiar  
50 with the technology they are not very happy. And some people are, are very happy – I mean I had  
51 students who say: I can only go online when my son comes home from school because I don't know how  
52 to use the computer.  
53 K. Mhm  
54 ExL: So why have they chosen to do an online course I don't know. So, but those students who are ahm  
55 good in going in the internet, good in using the technology they don't really have problems. The first  
56 week or two they find little difficult to navigate through the system. But once they have done they really  
57 get going. So dint think it's necessary, I don't think it's essential to have face-to-face. But for some

1 students it's helpful. So I think the criteria are how good people are, how comfortable they are with  
2 technology.

3 R: And I mean the environment hasn't been to multicultural, but at least there were some, some different  
4 cultures in you study group. So how did you perceive this? Did you realise this in any way or did this  
5 influence in any way your way of teaching?

6 ExL: Ahm, I knew they were from different cultural backgrounds because of their names. And one of the  
7 first things I do is – if I have a group of thirty students I break down in smaller groups, so we have  
8 seminar groups, online seminar groups. So we had to introduce each other. So they say: My name is so  
9 and so and I am from the Philippines, I have worked in Liverpool for – so all the requirements most of  
10 actually work in this area. And, so I only know from their name or from what they say, whether from –  
11 does it influence?

12 K. I mean it is a different situation because this people, they live in Liverpool, they have worked here,  
13 they are familiar with the English culture and also the English culture possibly.

14 ExL: Yes, and because it's a, a vocational course, it's about teaching nurses ahm I don't – well, I suppose  
15 to be honest I don't make any allowances for cultural differences.

16 R: Yeah

17 ExL: And it doesn't seem to be a problem, judging b the results of the students. They have passed, they  
18 have passed. May be I am wrong, I don't know. Well, I haven't had experience in teaching students who,  
19 well that's not quite true; some years ago I was teaching, I run a module which students in Malaysia  
20 took. I never went, one of my colleagues went out and delivered my material in a face-to-face – and  
21 students had to write an essay, gain a 1000 word essay. So from Malaysia they would e-mail me a draft  
22 and I would have spend time looking and sending comments back and they keep sending this stuff back  
23 and the end I wrote the essay I think.

24 [laugh]

25 R: [laugh]

26 ExL: [...] But that was my only experience of really engaging with people who are literally in a different  
27 country. And that was purely by e-mail. But, you know that's the only experience I have done really.

28 R: Yeah, something different probably. And ahm did you perceive any particular challenges when you  
29 were teaching in this pure or nearly pure online environment for you as an online teacher?

30 ExL: Did I experience any challenges?

31 R: Yes

32 ExL: Yes, keeping the students interested that was the challenge. Ahm this course is one which, people  
33 don't necessarily come because they want to do it. A lot of them do want to do it but it has extrinsic  
34 values. How to say, if nurses want to get promoted, they have to have this qualification. So if they want  
35 to get promoted and they earn their own money they got to do this course. And sometimes it's quite  
36 clear, they are not interested. And of course they want the certificate and my belief has always been as a  
37 teacher that students in the classroom –if real or virtual classroom – it's my job to excite them to  
38 motivate them, to want to learn for heaven's sake. Sp that's my challenge. And if I have got a class full of  
39 students you know face-to-face then I can show my enthusiasm and I can talk to them, engage them. But  
40 if they are online, but not online at the same time; that's the challenge to me to stimulate and make it  
41 interesting. So that's I have to redesign my course material to stimulate the students. One other  
42 problems I had initially was ahm what we call student [...] students leaving the course –

43 R: Ok, dropout rates

44 ExL: Drop-outs, I hate this word drop-out but it's a drop-out rate. So, what I really tried to do to reduce  
45 the drop-out rate by stimulating and engaging the students. So that was my challenge.

46 R: Mhm

47 ExL: So I can say, yes, the drop-out rate has reduced now.

48 R: And how did you do this?

49 ExL: By ahm ok, in the very first few weeks of the course I make sure I have contact with every student at  
50 least once. And I do this by ahm discussion board. If a student makes a post on the discussion board I  
51 give some reinforcement. Ahm and I will say 'That's an interesting point!' and I will try to get them to  
52 develop a discussion with people. They know that I have read their comments. If they are not common  
53 with the discussion board I might send them an email. Because I don't want to embarrass students by  
54 saying you are not saying anything. Some of them I send an e-mail ahm you work in such and such area  
55 perhaps you could go to the discussion board and say something. So I give them hints or clues. Ahm if  
56 because I can see whether students are going online because it's a facility to see if they are online. And if

1 they are not going online there is no point to email them, so I write to them. So after two weeks if they  
2 have not been online I will send a hard copy, a letter.  
3 K: All right  
4 ExL: So it's a nice letter, something along the lines, you know 'I noticed you have not been logging on, do  
5 you have any technical problems because if you do we can help you out.' So I never make it seem if it's  
6 their fault. So I just say 'Look I would like to help you to get you going to this course.' So I always in the  
7 first few weeks of the course make a point, of having regular weekly contact with the students and so  
8 they feel that is me talking to them not me talking to the whole class. I am talking to you as a person.  
9 Ahm and that has been affected in times I don't know if this is [...] this is my job of teaching for the first  
10 month of a course and so you see this is the first few days as well when the course started ahm and these  
11 are my sort of activities of the course. So ahm I have to be active every day, I only get paid for it one day  
12 a week. I am a part time lecture because I retired nearly two years ago. They kept me on to do this  
13 course because I was the only one who could do it. So I go online every day. And I have some help from  
14 full time staff, this are people here and you can see how little [...] I have to make sure I am talking to the  
15 students all the time.  
16 R: Mhm  
17 ExL: So to me that's the challenge. The challenge of being a part-time teacher and  
18 R: And one day a week and going online every day –  
19 ExL: I discussed this with my boss my manager and she said well, if the students would do the taught  
20 course, they would come in to the University one day a week. And there expectation would be they  
21 would see and talk to the tutor one day a week. Let's say every Tuesday. [...] but behavioural  
22 Psychologists say it differently: If a student hosts a comment online from a discussion board then they  
23 want feedback. If you make a comment or ask a question you don't want to wait a week [...]. So one of  
24 my problems is that, and I think it's not just a problem of mine, anybody who is engaged in online  
25 learning don't think managers understand the pedagogy. It is not simply delivering information. It's very  
26 different, it's very complex and [...] of teaching.  
27 R: Mhm  
28 ExL: So for me the challenge is to keep the students stimulated, to keep them engaged and as I say I do  
29 initially by going online every day if the students isn't online and write to them and not generally is  
30 affected, find that those students who were slow in starting do generally come on board.  
31 R: Yeah, great. Just two more questions. How did you – ore where do you see the benefits in teaching  
32 online, teaching purely online?  
33 ExL: Well, I think - I can think of two benefits. One is if a student is willing then they interact with the  
34 learning material, they engage with it ahm it's too easy to sit in a lecture theatre and just absorb or  
35 listen to people talking. So, I am developing material which is making the students actually do something  
36 and they have to seek information and present it, if I give them information they have to ask question on  
37 it. So they are engaging and interacting with the material all the time. Sorry what was your question?  
38 R: The benefit of doing a purely online course –  
39 ExL: Yeah, so I think one benefit is you can for those students who are willing, you can make it far more  
40 interactive, learning is more interactive. And another benefit of course is that its, because it's  
41 asynchronous, its ahm the students don't have to be in a particular place in a particular time. It's quite  
42 often more convenient social convenient to do it. So the students do it whenever they wish to do it. And  
43 something working in the health service we do in this course, it suits managers of the health service  
44 because they don't have to send their staff to the University. Ahm so they don't lose the staff for a day.  
45 They just say the course is online - do it. They don't pay the course, the [...] pays the course fees and they  
46 expect students to learn when they have time.  
47 R: Ok  
48 ExL: I am not sure if this is a pure benefit but for me the benefit is that you can challenge the students  
49 you can make it an interactive course and they don't have to be in a particular place in a particular time.  
50 R: Mhm, and one more last question base don you experiences so fare: What do you prefer: Teaching  
51 online or teaching face-to-face?  
52 ExL: Yes, I enjoy both. Now I don't do very much, I do very little face-to-face teaching because I am  
53 employed purely for the online course. But when I did teach ahm I taught the nursing degree course I was  
54 quite happy to go to a lecture theatre and talk to students and again that's again for me the challenge  
55 not to give a lecture but make an interaction. And get people to engage. But for now if you ask me for  
56 this moment, of this time of my life, I am very happy doing the online teaching yeah. Because it presents  
57 to me lots of challenges. I thought having being teaching for thirty years that I knew all there was about

1 teaching and then when I came to the end of my careers and this online learning came I thought wow  
2 this is really interesting. And that's why I am continuing to do it because I [...] stay at home and dig the  
3 garden who know got out with my wife or whatever. But I am really challenged by this and I find it very  
4 exciting. So, I think online learning at the moment gets the edge.  
5 R: Yeah. Ok thanks a lot.

### **Tutor ExN**

6 R: Sie haben ja bereits einiges an Erfahrung im Bereich der Lehre online als auch im internationalen  
7 Umfeld. Vielleicht könnten Sie dazu noch etwas sagen; was Sie ähm hier für Erfahrungen haben?  
8 ExN: Ja, also ich bin seit 2004 als „Associate Lecture“, dass ist die offizielle Bezeichnung, als Tutor für die  
9 Open University tätig.  
10 R: Ja  
11 ExN: Ich bin, ich habe da einen Kurs momentan der nennt sich „Professional Certificated Management“;  
12 der dauert zwölf Monate, ist Blended Learning, das heißt das wir uns also fünfmal im Jahr auf freiwilliger  
13 Basis face-to-face Treffen.  
14 R: Mhm  
15 ExN: Und ansonsten findet das Ganze online statt oder per Telefon wird zum Teil auch betreut.  
16 Teilnehmer sind – also das ist je nach Gruppe verschieden – da ist jedes Jahr natürlich die  
17 Gruppenzusammensetzung verschieden, aber die– im Regelfall habe ich Teilnehmer aus mindestens sag  
18 ich mal fünf Ländern. Ähm das sind zum Teil native Speaker, die aus irgendeinem Grunde gerade nicht in  
19 England wohnen; zumeist aus arbeitstechnischen Gründen. Zum Teil sind es aber auch einfach, ja nicht  
20 britische Ausländer, die ähm als Muttersprache Englisch haben oder aber einfach eben an einer  
21 englischen Universität studieren wollen.  
22 R: Mhm  
23 ExN: Und die, das ganze findet statt entweder in Deutschland; also mit deutschen Teilgruppen in  
24 Deutschland, die werden immer zusammen gepackt, je nachdem wie viele Studenten den Kurs belegen.  
25 Und man versucht dann ähm in diesen Blended Learning Kurs [...] die dicht beieinander wohnen, damit  
26 die Reisekosten günstiger ausfallen. Dieses Jahr werden - normalerweise betreue ich eine Gruppe von  
27 Wien aus, ähm dieses Jahr ist es so, dass die Gruppe zusammengefasst wurde mit der Gruppe in  
28 München; d.h. wir wechseln. Wir haben drei Tutorials in Wien und zwei in München. Und momentan sind  
29 es siebzehn Studenten aus, ich denke dreizehn verschiedenen Ländern.  
30 R: Ok, und aber primär aus Europa wahrscheinlich?  
31 ExN: Nein, nicht unbedingt, zum Teil ähm kommen Sie aus Süd-Afrika, Indien ähm Kenia. Es sind auch  
32 zum Teil Frauen von Diplomaten, die die Zeit nutzen, die sie in Wien sind zum Studieren. Ja, aus Trinidad  
33 und Tobago habe ich eine Studentin letztes Jahr gehabt, die ist mit einem Österreicher verheiratet. Also,  
34 es ist ganz verschieden. In Wien sind viele Inder auch, ähm weil da eben große Organisationen sind,  
35 große Internationale Organisationen.  
36 R: Und haben Sie zur Vorbereitung, also zum online Unterrichten und auch zum online Unterrichten in  
37 einem internationalen oder multikulturellen Umfeld, haben Sie da eine besondere Vorbereitung für  
38 erhalten? Also, oder irgendein Training oder entsprechende Guidelines?  
39 ExN: Ja, also die Open University [...] also zum einen hat man ähm ein Einführungswochenende sag ich  
40 mal, wo es darum geht, wo das unter anderem auch Inhalt ist. Dann ist es natürlich so, dadurch – also  
41 der Interviewprozess überhaupt, da wird es eigentlich schon angesprochen oder man wird drauf  
42 angesprochen und da auch sag ich mal getestet, ob man einfach die ähm das man weiß, dass alle  
43 gleichberechtigt behandelt werden müssen und dass da keine ethischen oder rassistischen Hintergründe  
44 oder sonstiges – also da wird schon wert drauf gelegt bevor man eingestellt wird. Es gibt auch eine  
45 zweijährige Probezeit. Denn während der Einführung, also es gibt ähm verschiedenste ja „staff  
46 development“ nennt sich das, wo das auch Bestandteil ist. Dann gibt's die Online-Trainings. Zum einen  
47 was das System angeht und dann ähm ein Bestandteil dieses E-Moderating Kurses von der Gilly Salmon  
48 konzipiert –  
49 R: Ja  
50 ExN: Ja, sie war früher an der Open University.  
51 R: Ja  
52 ExN: Also das ist noch Teil des Einführungsprogrammes für neue Tutoren. Und es gibt dann auch ähm  
53 verschiedenste Materialien, also die man dann zugeschickt bekommt, die sich damit auch beschäftigen.

1 R: Gerade auch dieses Thema des ähm multikulturellen Hintergrundes der Studierenden, das auch?  
2 ExN: Ja, also „diversity“, darauf wird Wert gelegt. Also es gibt dann verschiedene Materialien bzw. es  
3 wird eben auch in den ähm Einführungs-Tutorials drauf hingewiesen und damit auch gearbeitet.  
4 R: Ja  
5 ExN: Es wird sehr viel Wert drauf gelegt, ähm auch in Bezug auf das Material. Das kann ich jetzt sagen,  
6 da ich als „Critical Reader“ engagiert bin neues Kursmaterial zu lesen für den Kurs, den ich betreue. Also,  
7 da wird auch schon viel Wert drauf gelegt, dass eben aus verschiedenen Ländern überprüft wird, ob das  
8 Material auch in dem Land Sinn macht;  
9 R: Mhm  
10 ExN: Bzw. ob da irgendwelche kulturellen äh, sich irgendwelche Fehler eingeschlichen haben, die einem  
11 Briten nicht auffallen, ja. Und da gibt's zum Beispiel auch so Sachen, wenn es zu viele Beispiele sind [...] bis  
12 hinzu eventuell negativ aufgefassten Sachen, die man vielleicht als Brite nicht sieht, die aber dann  
13 gegenüber den Ausländern auffallen. Also da wird auch so ein Team von Leuten engagiert, die dann von  
14 außen das lesen, als Ausländer.  
15 R: Sehr spannend, da komme ich, auf den Punkt komme ich später bestimmt nochmal drauf zurück. Ähm  
16 vielleicht nochmal zu Ihnen: Wie haben Sie denn das allgemein empfunden oder wie erging es Ihnen  
17 damit, online in einem - also speziell in dem Fach an der Open University – in einem online und ähm auch  
18 multikulturellen Umfeld zu unterrichten?  
19 ExN: Also, für mich ist beides ein optimale Kombination. Zum einen muss ich dazu sagen, dass ich schon  
20 immer so eine Affinität zu Sprachen auch und sehr ähm zu England habe und – ja ich habe ursprünglich  
21 Fremdsprachenkorrespondentin gelernt bevor ich studiert habe. Und von daher wollte ich schon immer  
22 gerne international arbeiten. Was mir jetzt die Geschichte mit der online Zeit ermöglicht ist, dass ich hier  
23 ähm in einer Gegend wohne, die mir sehr gut gefällt und sozusagen auch halt nicht flach aber auf dem  
24 Land wohne, in einer Kleinstadt aber international arbeiten kann. Und das ist natürlich sehr  
25 entspannenden, wenn man sich vorstellt ich wohne in einem Dorf mit 500 Einwohnern und habe aber  
26 meine online Sitzungen, wo ich mit Leuten aus England, Süd-Afrika und sonst wem live hier arbeiten  
27 kann. Und das macht sehr viel Spaß! Noch dazu, also ich empfinde das online, ich habe für mich das  
28 Modell gefunden, das mir sehr gut gefällt, weil es eben das ermöglicht. Egal ähm ja auch für Leute, die  
29 aus irgendeinem Grund eben nicht entscheiden können; sei es aus finanziellen Gründen oder vielleicht  
30 einfach aus zeitlichen Gründen oder anderen. Das da trotzdem die Möglichkeit besteht ähm gemeinsam  
31 zu lernen und eben gerade auch interkulturell.  
32 R: Mhm, ja. Und haben Sie den Eindruck, dass Ihre Art zu unterrichten – also hat es Ihre Art zu  
33 unterrichten ähm beeinflusst? Oder tut es das beeinflussen?  
34 ExN: Ähm ja, also ich habe jetzt hier zweierlei Erfahrungen: Zum einen habe ich viele Kurse gegeben,  
35 nicht an der Uni, sondern an Instituten, für die Handelskammer, also mit einem Klientel, das nicht  
36 studiert hat und war gleichzeitig auch an der Universität Duisburg tätig als Fach-Tutorin. Und ich, also  
37 die internationale Arbeit eröffnet einfach Horizonte, also für einen selbst. Es ist unheimlich spannend,  
38 weil man eben immer wieder neue Leute trifft, die einem immer wieder aufzeigen, dass man vielleicht  
39 doch bestimmte Eigenarten hat.  
40 R: Ja  
41 ExN: Also, es ist unheimlich spannend, weil man immer wieder – also ich bin sehr viel offener und ich  
42 merke das auch, dass ich ganz viel Möglichkeiten haben diese Art wiederum meinen Deutschen  
43 Studenten, die an der Deutschen Uni studieren, weiter zu geben. Ja, also einfach dieser Blick nach außen  
44 ist sehr viel offener, ja. Und es ist sehr – also ich merke aber auch den Unterschied der Studenten, dass  
45 sie mit Situationen zum Teil ganz anders umgehen und das es viele rein deutsche Probleme gibt; die  
46 anderen – zum Beispiel ich habe Englische Studentinnen, die studieren hier im MBA Programme und  
47 haben derweil zwei Kinder. Ja, was bei uns sehr äh schwierig ist – im Gegensatz nehmen die Engländerin  
48 das Baby mit ins Tutorial. Ja, die schaffen das ohne äh ohne sich zu sagen, jetzt muss ich mich fürs Kind  
49 oder das entscheiden.  
50 R: Mhm  
51 ExN: Das wird alles etwas lockerer genommen und ja, man merkt eben auch es geht, man kann auch so  
52 etwas machen. Ja, während in Deutschland wird das eher als Problem gesehen –  
53 R: Ja, wird als Problem wahrscheinlich gesehen. Und haben Sie irgendwelche speziellen ähm  
54 Herausforderungen empfunden, wenn Sie in diesem Umfeld unterrichtet haben – im Speziellen?  
55 ExN: Ja, also, die Herausforderung ist einfach immer eine offene, eine Atmosphäre zu schaffen und auch  
56 so sag ich mal wenn Vorurteile der Studenten untereinander, also Konflikte aufkommen, also wenn sie  
57 aufkommen da, da so als Balance ja sag ich mal als Mediator dazwischen zu stehen. Also ich hatte – da

1 ist eine Deutsche Studentin und eine Schottische, die sind sehr – fast aneinander geraten. Die waren  
2 einfach zu der Zeit in ganz verschiedenen Entwicklungsphasen. Und, also da war es auch immer wichtig  
3 darauf hinzuweisen, wir sind hier in diesem internationalen Umfeld um zu studieren. Und wollen ja, die  
4 Andersartigkeit als Chance sehen, ja. Und im Studium an der Open University da wird sehr viel Wert  
5 darauf gelegt auf dieses „open your mind“. Also das man eben keine Vorurteile hat, das man immer  
6 wieder neue Ideen an sich heran kommen lässt und das es sehr viel Sinn macht, miteinander zu  
7 diskutieren, neue Perspektiven zu bekommen usw. Und das ist zum Teil eine Herausforderung, weil  
8 natürlich auch die Studenten bei mir, auch sag ich mal im Regelfall, so um die dreißig sind –  
9 R: Mhm  
10 ExN: Die haben schon ihre eigenen Urteile auch, ja. Und das ist dann die Herausforderung, falls wo was  
11 aufkommt, da die Vorteile raus zu filtern.  
12 **Systemabbruch**  
13 **Hier habe ich nun einige Aussagen aufgeführt, die ich noch in Erinnerung hatte!**  
14 R: Ist es Ihrer Meinung nach sinnvoll, Studierende und auch Tutoren speziell mit einem Training auf das  
15 unterrichten bzw. lernen im internationalen Umfeld vorzubereiten?  
16 ExN: Die Studierenden nicht unbedingt. In dem Fach, das ich unterrichte, ist seitens der Studenten  
17 sowieso eine generelle Offenheit oder Interesse für das Thema.  
18 ExN: Ich selbst arbeite sehr gerne mit Humor.  
19 R: Ihrer Aussage entnehme ich, dass es ggf. in anderen Fächern, wie z.B. Biologie anders sein könnte.  
20 ExN: Ja, das könnte ich mir gut vorstellen.  
21 R: Und wie sieht es aus mit „guidelines“, die Studierende zu Beginn des Kurses erhalten; beispielsweise  
22 zum Thema der Sprache: ein einfaches Englisch zu verwenden, keinen Sarkasmus und keine Witze, um  
23 das Risiko zu vermeiden, dass Nicht-Englisch-Muttersprachler etwas missverstehen könnten?  
24 R: Gibt es Ihrer Meinung nach kulturelle Kombinationen, die besonders schwierig sind oder so gar nicht  
25 funktionieren. Ich weiß, dass ist eine gefährliche Frage und niemand will sie so richtig hören... [lachen]  
26 ExN: [lachen] Ich selbst habe noch nicht, aber eine Kollegin vor mir hat ähnliche Erfahrungen gemacht.  
27 Hier gab es Schwierigkeiten mit Südländern, die Kritik gegenüber eher verschlossen waren.  
28 R: Was würden Sie Lehrenden an der Universität empfehlen, die zum ersten Mal online und in einem  
29 internationalem Umfeld unterrichten raten?  
30 ExN: Mit Spaß dabei zu sein. Humor setze ich wie gesagt sehr gerne ein.  
31 R: Und noch eine letzte Frage: unterrichten Sie lieber online oder face-to-face? Ich weiß, die Frage ist  
32 nicht unbedingt einfach zu beantworten...  
33 ExN: Ich bevorzuge die Mischung aus beiden, also ein Blended-Learning Szenario.  
34 R: Ok, vielen Dank!

## Appendices F - Transcription of focus group

1 R: Since all of you do not know each other I would like to ask you to introduce you adding a few words  
2 ahm concerning your experiences with online education and ahm maybe also teaching in an  
3 international environment?  
4 FA: My name is [FA]; I am Head of Learning Technology Team of John Moores University. Ahm I don't  
5 have experiences of teaching international students but I have taught in the past only locally. But I am  
6 responsible for the Learning Technology, so Media for Learning Technology which we have at JMU and  
7 also for providing support and advice to those using technology in different sorts of environments. So I  
8 have a team of people who work on that as well. And we keep bring in new technology. I hope to  
9 encourage people to use them. Some should be very relevant to international students who are doing  
10 distance learning types of programme or environments I think.  
11 FE: Right, I am [FE], I am at the Business School and ahm I have relatively little knowledge or perhaps  
12 interest in technology but I have taught on a whole range of distance learning programmes; for  
13 Business School in terms of a Master Courses which we ran which was pulled a few years ago. And also  
14 for all the companies like NCC [...] the whole range of providers. Ahm I think the - if you want an initial  
15 point of contentious point- I think the technology is advancing. I think what you could do is advancing. I  
16 think there are still problems with online tutoring [...]. So you know [...] there have been a lot of  
17 problems. So you know, [I retire hurt, and would not unbound]. Ok?  
18 FD: Fine, my name is [FD] from the Business School at John Moores. Ahm I have been developing courses  
19 since 1998 probably developed about half a dozen courses at Masters Level. And earlier than that I have  
20 done a Graduate course, worked for the Open University to leave it online for them, probably for two or  
21 three Masters courses; headed up a Masters in enterprise which was produced as a North-West initiative  
22 from five Universities and taught in online situations in about twelve countries.  
23 FB: I am [FB] from the School of Psychology. And I am e-moderator for the online MSc programme in  
24 Consciousness and Transpersonal Psychology. And my role is about teaching and support. Ahm I have  
25 induction and ongoing support for our cohorts of students who can be from anywhere in the country,  
26 anywhere in the world sorry and don't necessarily ever come to the UK. Somebody came for their first  
27 trip to the UK to graduate.  
28 [laugh]  
29 FC: [FC], also from School of Psychology. I am programme leader of the course that [FB] has just  
30 mentioned. So it's a Masters programme in Consciousness and Transpersonal Psychology. We run  
31 such a programme for, for about fifteen years now. And about six years ago it was, we wanted to  
32 respond to the media, we knew the interest it was out there worldwide. But setting up that  
33 programme as a distance learning course and at that time, it was about six years ago, the technology  
34 was very coming on screen and I thought it will be a good idea to work it out as an online  
35 programme. So I was involved way back then with [FB] but also [two other colleagues], in not only  
36 setting up this particular course but really kind of working with this kind of people working for the  
37 general guidelines at JMU about distance learning in that way. So I got, since I started five years of  
38 experience running and interacting. And as [FB] said quite a number of these students we only meet  
39 online.  
40 R: Mhm. So I send you already some basic information concerning the aim of this focus group. I want  
41 continue there - or from what I have, I have investigated through the interviews I have done. Based on  
42 these interviews I came to the conclusion that there is or there was often the wish or the thought of  
43 having a particular training or preparation or something like this; especially for online tutors who have to  
44 teach for the first time - especially the first time online and in an international environment. Some tutors  
45 said for example 'yeah I would never ever let ahm a new tutor near to an online environment - it takes  
46 very little to archive very little'. This is just a phrase I want to notice. Based on this thought and this idea  
47 I would like to discuss, also based on your view and different perspectives, whatever you think: Ahm how  
48 online tutors through your view working in traditional face-to-face Universities, should be effectively  
49 prepared, trained - whatever- to teach in an international online environment? What do you think, what  
50 is your view? It's very open -  
51 FA: I could probably say, on - I can say things based on a theoretical perspective; is the idea well, what  
52 you like to happen. I think there are two things that you got there in mind. It's not just the fact that it is a  
53 different way of teaching and different mode of teaching but there is also the differences of international  
54 students, so this cultural issues. I think there are two aspects isn't it? It's not just the fact that ahm you  
55 are preparing people in a learning environments but different types of student as well. And I think that

1 we can perhaps give advice and try to encourage people to think about it in different ways. And we don't  
2 actually do subjects around that. We do subjects in using different ways or different approaches to  
3 learning and teaching which was perhaps be done by ahm members of staff who teach on postgraduate  
4 certificate on learning on Higher Education. So there are differences of - so there is the training and  
5 approaching teaching and learning that would be for my perspective but then also time, having  
6 technology might helpful or whatever you are trying to archive whether it's to support students at a  
7 distance. But that's for me but I can see that - from my theoretical perspective not from of [FB] doing it  
8 practically.

9 FD: I think there is something quite fundamentally that you need to ask. And that is: Is the role of the  
10 tutor to actually teach or is the role of the tutor to guide and support and direct and be a consultant. In  
11 other words: How do the students learn online through the online environment? Is it from learning  
12 materials? Or is it from the tutor? Is it from both the learning material and the tutor or is the tutor just  
13 giving guidance and support and consultancy based around the materials. And you need to ask that for a  
14 number of questions and that would guide you what the tutor needs in terms of support.

15 R: You mean based on the course design?

16 FD: Yeah it is based rarely around what you have got for support. Because it could that some courses  
17 which don't have any materials, and I have seen courses where it is like that; or there are courses which  
18 are heavily focused on materials. And the aim of the learning process is that the students learn through  
19 those materials. That are then half way [...] which says that the tutor guides them, ahm counsels them,  
20 gives them support around those materials but then part of their learning does happen online is through  
21 the engagement with other people who were in that group and they learn through each other.

22 FC: Can I pick up on that? And I put into one word: clarity.

23 FBC: Yeah

24 FC: There has to be probably greater clarity then it is normally the case within attendance teaching. Ahm  
25 clarity as you said - 'What is the educational approach that is going on here?' Clarity about that for the  
26 tutor and also for the students. I had a case ahm just on Friday, this Friday that was gone; one of our  
27 online students came to visit. She is in London, it's not another country but still a long journey, ah  
28 basically she came to say that she wanted to leave. So I thought that was strange you know. Why can't  
29 one go to the phone - anyway- ahm I am not advertising the fact that we have students [...]. But it was  
30 quite interesting discussion we had. Ahm and - I keep it short - but she could, she is mature, she is sixty,  
31 ahm are the factors, ahm she wanted to be able to do her own thing within the framework of studying  
32 that particular area. And she found it in a way we were being too proscriptive for her. Now, you know I  
33 am not discussing or course [...] that's a whole issue but what I am saying here clearly there was a  
34 mismatch: You know her expectation and what we are offering. Now I think the fault was with her, and  
35 she agreed because we actually put it very clearly on the web, you know, it's there and students can see.  
36 So you know in this particular case she didn't look at the right things or whatever. We don't want to  
37 discuss this in particular. But it just raises this point you know. A student comes here to an attendance  
38 kind of course it is always taken for granted. So they know what they are doing, they know what's gonna  
39 happen here. And I think with online it's not exactly like that. And the other point about clarity, and then  
40 I keep quiet, is technology. And I think it's really, really important that ahm, that the tutor and the  
41 students have very clear ahm understanding of how to use the facilities that we have. And I think this  
42 needs really a kind of targeted approach. It's not good so you know 'there is a manual here', 'look at the  
43 manual' you know. I mean [...] we in our course use Blackboard, or Fronter, or whatever the technology  
44 is. It may be actually different to the way that you use Blackboard. So you know it's not overall a  
45 Blackboard induction if you want. It's really targeted in the way we are setting up our course. And I think  
46 - the point about cultural expectation, if there are cultural differences is another issue, maybe I come  
47 back to it later.

48 FE: Many of our courses there is cultural expectation tangibility. And they, particular in the Far East, you  
49 can do an online course and they expect still to get three hours sessions with a local tutor. Ahm because  
50 you know they don't belief that you can actually, they need to see somebody actually teaching them, or  
51 actually supporting them what has been online. They need you know to physically see someone. [...] so  
52 actually for the tangible fact that there is somebody teaching three hours just go through the notes with  
53 them. We found it impossible to accept ahm the online experience was backed up to what is traditionally  
54 the way they have been taught. Say you find it quite the same in India. The idea of online teaching is very  
55 much a Western idea, you can actually learn and actually be taught and actually get as much out of it,  
56 it's very much a Western idea I think.

1 FA: We do [...] do online classes you know with a tutor being there, talking to students. The issue then  
2 came to me everybody being there at the same time because they are all around the world you know.  
3 FE: Whatever you need to check the different times.  
4 FA: Yeah but probably we should know we are, we can see our type what it does [they are not all there,  
5 they can come along and see the session and then they have not mostly ...] interact when students can  
6 actually engage with the classroom session as well. But again also we have not been there online in our  
7 time we are missing an opportunity. So there are differences and you do have to think about it in a very  
8 different way in terms of not only the way we could deliver but also the support and how often you  
9 gonna be available. I mean I am not sure with [FB] and [FC] you know. How long are they there? [...]  
10 FB: Too much  
11 FA: Because they are all a t different time zones -  
12 FB: You got our planned programmeme sessions which are [...]  
13 FE: You have synchronous and asynchronous sessions. But when you have even ten or fifteen students  
14 online at the same time it is hell you know. You just, it's just unmanageable because, just the first time  
15 they say hello to each other: Hello Jack - and then they are answering to Jack. You need to go back three  
16 times. It doesn't work [through my opinion], it doesn't work I am sorry.  
17 FB: Let me come on something I was talking about earlier which was where course design and delivery  
18 meet in distance learning. I find that, I am really resent ahm teaching online sometimes because I know I  
19 have to type it again next year. So why don't I paste it now and put it in the course design? So I make the  
20 material there a priori rather than standing there you know half an hour again next year delivering the  
21 same material in real time when I could you know copy and paste it now and have it there forever. Ahm  
22 and [FC] talks about clarity and I think one of the character, one of the things we need to be clear about  
23 is, is the teacher role and how much of that you can get away with and how much of that then does  
24 detract from the students experience? Because they do want some sort of presence even if they are  
25 Westerners and are happy to have an online presence they do want an online engagement with you. And  
26 managing that ahm is really important. And then sometime you say stuff oh I want to say that, because I  
27 want to say that because I have never want to say that before you know. [...] I won't want to lose that  
28 [...] that should be in the material or whatever happens to be.  
29 FE: Isn't it all about initially defining expectations? You define what you expect from them and then you  
30 find out what they expect from you - so you are both clear.  
31 FB: We had huge problems with student's expectations.  
32 FE: For sure  
33 FC: And just a very simple example for what you alluded to there is, is time you know. What's the  
34 student's expectation of my availability to them? I mean obviously they are using e-mail. We had a lot of  
35 problems with this. Ahm I get large amounts of e-mails and my colleges get a large amount of e-mails.  
36 Not just on this programmeme, all sort of it. And sometime I don't reply to one of our students e-mail as  
37 soon as I should. May be not even at all you know. It flips of the screen and then you know what it's like.  
38 So those issues need to be very clearly said at the beginning and managed as you go along.  
39 FD: I mean there are some people with different roles. I mean there is one role which says on a weekly  
40 basis the questions are answered on a Friday and they are answered on a mail base which is, everybody  
41 gets the answer, and everybody sees the questions. That's just e-mail. And you know it's a case of what  
42 happens in the sessions which are online? And you know Blackboard is great because it all keeps a record  
43 of everything that has been said. But there are other alternative methods which - we use things like  
44 Skype [...] again it's the complex about not only time zones but also the allowances because some of the  
45 courses were in Saudi do not allow using Skype.  
46 FA: That's right.  
47 FD: And do we ever then use it in the end. And what we got to do is split the groups. [...] and the  
48 advantage of that is you get a nice voice, you don't get images and, and you know [what we are  
49 exploring next these images as well] is the issue of what with images. But again it all comes back to:  
50 What is the role of the tutor in these sessions? And certainly I find more and more it is not to teach. It is  
51 to feel questions where you act as a consultant. And they are consulting you about their learning  
52 materials or their learning processes. You are not actually teaching them anything. And if there is a need  
53 for that, it's usually not directly in that session. It's usually the responses we will give you that  
54 information, we post it on the side.  
55 FE: [...] to have some sort of podcast to give the kind of initial earning. So you have half an hour lecture  
56 you can download or do whatever you want to do. And then as a result with that they can feed in -  
57 FPM: Create a podcast based on what they are asking for.

1 FE: Yeah  
2 FC: We have to remember subject differences here.  
3 FD: Yeah  
4 FC: I think in our area ahm. It is subject specific. I mean I think we use interactive forums, asynchronous,  
5 and ahm I think that is in the sense the teaching.  
6 FE: Do you find it works? My impression is it can't?  
7 FC: Yeah no, well I do find it works. The point is to finish that one, the point is a subject like ours, ahm you  
8 know it's more discursive and you know, in a forum I might raise a question about something about  
9 [Neuroscience-Psychology let's say] yeah and there is not that, you know they need to read article a, b,  
10 and c which are there you know in the Blackboard content area. But the real learning is debating or  
11 getting into look at the article or so. So I think that makes a difference in a distance area, I don't know.  
12 FD: But in that particular situation what is the role of the online tutor? Facilitator? Does he facilitate the  
13 discussion?  
14 FC: No, in that situation the role is the same as it is - my role is the same as it is when I am teaching here.  
15 FD: Aha  
16 FC: You know I mean again its postgraduate level and we are dealing with psychology which is you know  
17 -  
18 FD: Doesn't it come back to the fundamental question which is: What is the aim of what you are doing?  
19 And what you were saying is that my role is- because you never said teaching when you said my role  
20 here - what your role here might be a facilitator in classroom. It might not be teaching, it might be to  
21 facilitate and consult and-  
22 FC: My role here and there is to facilitate the students getting to grip the material and being able to  
23 draw the appropriate kind of conclusions. I am not saying 'right ok ahm I am teaching 1st blablabla, 2nd  
24 blablabla. But I think as I said earlier that it's an issue of subject matter and the level of tuition.  
25 FE: It's also an issue of the culture which we are dealing with or the cultural mix we are dealing with.  
26 FC: Well, that's another issue.  
27 FD: An understanding in the absence of a face, or in the absence of not necessarily something tangible,  
28 but something they can relate to depends on because they are not necessarily getting that in an online  
29 environment. And that might be an issue because some students at the way they learn, at the way they  
30 pick things up relies on that sort of situation. But whereas in an online environment it can just be passive  
31 and they can not engage and that can hinder the way that they pick things up.  
32 FE: The other point here of course is the shared economics of it. These things potentially come out of  
33 reaction, but potentially we will have a small numbers. If you have a hundred people online and you are  
34 having a synchronous session you can't have it, you can't. It doesn't work. Do you have ten synchronous  
35 sessions in which case you [...] or do you I mean, I don't know what the answer is. But I mean we all talk  
36 about a Masters degree and you know there are relatively small numbers but I know, and this is what I  
37 worked out, when you start with bigger numbers and we are 22-30 it does not work, it does not work.  
38 The whole idea here is that you are dealing with very small numbers to make it work, to make it a useful  
39 experience.  
40 FC: Well, there is a whole discussion for the next terms. We have say 20 in one year maybe, the course is  
41 three years. To manage 20 online I find that is ok. The issue, and you are right, is about resources. How  
42 much time I am allowed to, in terms of you know hours you put in models, I mean that's a whole other  
43 issue. I have a lot of dissatisfaction with the way that the University recognizes what I am doing. You  
44 know that's, that's the worst specific issue. I don't think that the University understands the demands  
45 they make on my time by distance learning.  
46 FD: That gets us back to the initial question which is about the support of the tutors.  
47 FC: Yeah  
48 FD: So, and you know are there any, what are those - and what do you need, what skills you need to  
49 actually do this?  
50 FC: And who is gonna make that decision? I mean I do not know if this is really relevant to this discussion  
51 but ah you know my line manager, sort of director of the school, right. I mean he is very supportive and  
52 all that kinds of stuff. He does not really understand, it's no criticism, he doesn't really understand the  
53 demands of this way of teaching. You know it means there needs to be some central point in the  
54 University where the recognition of what it means for staff to be enrolled in this way comes down  
55 through you, to the School, through the line manager.

1 *FA: I just want to go back to the comment you were making. Well, could you do what you were trying to*  
2 *do without any technological support? You couldn't do it at all, could you? You still need to have you*  
3 *know -*  
4 *FE: You need a basic minimum technological support. But the point I was making different cultures*  
5 *require different levels of tangibility. And some are quite happy with very low levels of tenure; the others*  
6 *actually physically want to see somebody there. As far as the fact that they, they sign up for an online*  
7 *course but they want to see somebody every Thursday night at six o'clock to go through the notes with*  
8 *me you know.*  
9 *FD: You didn't necessarily have to have technology because that only comes later. You know you have*  
10 *materials and you sort it on a regular basis. A person provides an interpretation of those materials in*  
11 *terms of facilitation, work together, get people to stand in as a group, and you didn't [...] technology*  
12 *then.*  
13 *FE: People are the people if we are dealing on a global basis, the people who you personally see it's*  
14 *culturally assumed to what you want and somebody in another country [...]*  
15 *FD: Yeah, it's the chicken and the egg situation or it's the tail of the dog and the dog. Which is there in*  
16 *the [...]? Because all we are actually saying is, when we have distance learning in the old scene without*  
17 *technology it was done within the country. Right? And there were some from overseas as well. All we*  
18 *saying because have got technology we are getting wider because of the technology.*  
19 *FA: No I don't think it should be -*  
20 *FD: Well, we are cheating because half of the technology enables us to go wider or are we going wider*  
21 *because we got we got the technology?*  
22 *FA: To me, one of the fundamental things when you are going out there [...] it's a running*  
23 *programmeme. And this is where I made an issue for me because maybe some of the people are going*  
24 *out there agreeing to do this programmemes at a distance don't have a good understanding of what is*  
25 *the technology is capable or [...] when people are start teaching on that modules, when they are doing it*  
26 *from a distance here. Because I think it's a [...]. For me I can see that, my feeling is that technology has a*  
27 *role as an enabler. It's not there to dictate how a programmeme should be run. So it needs everybody*  
28 *involved in the process to have a good understanding of what technology might do. And then design it in.*  
29 *We talked about the course design. So it's the fact that it will come into will be what types of students*  
30 *you are teaching, the subject matter, and your sort of prepared mode of delivering which might be very*  
31 *much you know that we discussed earlier, a totally different types of subjects requiring different*  
32 *approaches.*  
33 *FD: [...] because the issue then becomes, if a person doesn't want to engage with technology, I mean*  
34 *there might be a good teacher, there might be teaching on Masters programmemes on the right level,*  
35 *but they just don't want to get so they don't engage with distance learning because they don't want to*  
36 *engage with technology right. And then is it the case that the people who engage with technology are*  
37 *not necessarily good at the subject but they are good with the technology. So the perfect situation*  
38 *doesn't necessarily -*  
39 *FA: Coming back to Kerstin's original: How do we develop people to be -*  
40 *FD: But the, you have got this thing which is called development and that becomes an issue.*  
41 *FA: Yeah*  
42 *FD: Because people say 'I need to be developed', 'I need these skills'. And what are those skills?*  
43 *Kerstin: I would like to point out - you mentioned it a couple of times, the cultural aspect again. And you*  
44 *were saying ok, some cultures have this background, they need this and - I mean the particular situation*  
45 *in a course like this is that you have got all the time people with changing cultural background. So how*  
46 *do you handle this? Would it be possible to get to know everything about their or all information, basic*  
47 *information about their backgrounds? Would this be helpful or is it possible? Or how would you discuss*  
48 *this in class may be? How would you -*  
49 *FD: Well, there are many issues there as well because in our situations. I am saying this in some of my*  
50 *courses I don't know about you - where you have got several cultures, from several different countries all*  
51 *at the same time. And that can be a major issue because - and certainly within a course which we run*  
52 *primarily from Bahrain [...] but we have people coming from Kuwait from Saudi and from Bahrain and we*  
53 *got women on the course who are from Saudi. And what we have got is this mix where there are*  
54 *particular cultural things that we need to be aware of. Things we can't say and there are religious things,*  
55 *there are all kinds of things that we need to take on board. And that is a nightmare. What - I think what*  
56 *your suggestion is - that there are all the same culture. How do you deal with all the same culture? When*

1 it is different to your own? But what happens when you are dealing with several cultures all at the same  
2 time? That's another dimension.

3 FE: What happens when you are dealing with culture you don't give up.

4 FD: Yes

5 FD: We had a case - and you better ahm not put this in you notes - but we had a case some years ago a  
6 Nigerian and a [...] were in the same class who were not the best of friends to say the least. And we got  
7 to the point one day, the Nigerian was extremely [...] to the missionary system, relatively poor and they  
8 virtually ended up fighting. I won't repeat it here at the table - it was pretty nasty.

9 FD: All these issues are multicultural environments which, it's not just cultural it's multicultural.

10 FE: And now you have the case of an Israeli and a Palestine on the same distance learning course. And  
11 they are fighting with each other and e-mail snippy you know.

12 FA: [...] when I have been asked to give guidance for, for people and we have got several examples of  
13 people were they are using wikis across, not international ones but certainly ahm all the students were in  
14 one particular programmeme area on an external wiki. We sort of had to give or conduct a news advice.  
15 I think that's what you got to do. I think you got to be up there in front and say this is what we are expect  
16 if you engage in a discussion board or whatever you know this is how you - and in fact in certain  
17 conditions or drawn up by legal advisers but I think you have to give, I think you can't assume that  
18 people know how to be. And I think it's probably getting worse now that the - perhaps in this country we  
19 have got lots of people who stay in Facebook and social networking sites and there they are very  
20 informal [...] if you are going into a multicultural environment then you will have to talk very carefully.

21 FC: With the situation here, the second year it was running, were there was a dialogue of particular on  
22 the forums between two students and - it got, it got a bit sticky, unpleasant. Ahm but I think one of the  
23 parties didn't realize that, that it has been unpleasant. You know and I think they were different  
24 nationalities or maybe it wasn't. I think it was just a human issue not a cultural issue as such. But that,  
25 that's stimulated me to, to put some rules up about netiquette by [FB]. I never heard that word - ahm but  
26 I mean that makes me think that you know what you just said about what was there from the legal  
27 advisers; I need that. I mean I needed it-

28 FD: It is always round now. I mean one of our issues with Saudi group of people; we got Saudis in a  
29 hierarchy. Saudis are actually [wait to] those more important to those people who are from Bahrain, who  
30 are more important than people who are from Kuwait. And what we got is somebody who works in the  
31 Ministry in Saudi who actually always has to go first in presenting his situation and his research. And  
32 then begins as part of the dialogue during the session to tell people of. If you know they have not  
33 delivered or if they think that their research is particularly poor because they are all doing [...]. But the  
34 thing is we got another person who is also very [...], who works in a banking in Saudi and there it is  
35 exactly the same. We have got this dynamic of male and female who are very [...] to everybody else in  
36 sense of a hierarchy of their communities. And they actually - they do act as a tutor.

37 FE: Oh yes, very useful.

38 FD: [...] we also got situation, where nobody drops hands. We also get in situations where this dynamic  
39 which is created because of the environment is - you know you got hierarchy which is based on cultural  
40 things. And that, that is something that you need to comfort as well within you know the environment  
41 [...].

42 FB: How do you become aware of these things?

43 FD: Well, it is very obvious because they are talking. I mean that is, it is not in written form. This is in  
44 voice form. So you can pick it up from the intonation. The other thing as well is that we do have a  
45 physically contact aspect to this course, although its distance. We actually go over there. And we see  
46 them in action. [...]

47 FE: In general you pick up the nonverbal.

48 FD: Yeah, that's right.

49 FB: I wonder also, I wonder also when you picked up on that I mean what else is there going on. Ah my  
50 father worked in Middle East for a few years and ahm he came up and reckons to the day left he was still  
51 learning stuff about Middle Eastern society. So ahm what are you not picking up as well. I mean how is  
52 this [...]

53 FE: [...] you never get down to the core you know.

54 FC: But the question is to what extend do we have to be aware of that? I mean it is not, I mean of course  
55 they are different cultures. I mean I give you an example. The first year we run we had a student from  
56 North America. And he was a very capable student. The first essay he wrote I gave him the mark - I can't  
57 remember over seventy somewhere - but he was almost [...] through the forums, sulking in the corner

1 you know. And then I realized that the Canadian marking scales are different. And yeah, as a very simple  
2 example you know. There is an example we presumably we could have through [FA] or some other  
3 facility at University you know [centrally mounted resource which is just delist] these kind of things. But  
4 some...

5 FA: Yeah

6 FB: Being a distance learner in the UK -

7 FC: You then you know as I said that it's easy done, you can deal with it very easy. What things you are  
8 talking about - what actually aren't you picking on you can't deal. I can't tell that we would. And you  
9 know I - my view is we are a resource you know, they want to do this course great, we want to teach  
10 them great. That's all very good. And this is the way it operates you know. And if I see that there is  
11 something I don't like going on in the forum then hopefully I have the regulations that I [...] in front of  
12 them. Beyond that it's - I mean the other thing I say it is enriches. I mean it is very enriching to experience  
13 cultural difference. That's good but in terms you know what steps we take to respond to it I think there  
14 are limits to it.

15 FD: And where do we prepare the tutor for this?

16 FA: That's a good question.

17 FC: That's what I said. You know they should extensible remain resources which is you know, which is  
18 ahm someone like [FA] set things up but also we feed it - so the resource grows, so that's how you  
19 prepare tutors -

20 FD: Fine. But we have staff handbooks. Whoever reads them? It's the same sort of thing. It's about I think  
21 what, what will be effective. I mean because we can document everything, we have rules and regulations  
22 and that all -

23 FC: The reason we don't read things is because one half or three quarter of it I don't need. Lets back to  
24 where I started. What we need is something really, really well targeted so that you will read it.

25 FA: Yeah

26 FE: But the point is shortly you join, if you join an online course based on a series of cultural definitions - I  
27 an English definition, but if you got forty you pass; whereas if you got forty in Middle East cultures that's  
28 an abject failure you know. But in our culture we define forty as passed. Not good passed but passed but  
29 the point is if you come along an online course set up based on cultural definitions which is based in the  
30 country where the course is emanating then you are, you base on that and you store it. And you know, so  
31 you know you accept that and you [...] upset you know. He hasn't been told that seventy is actually a  
32 bloody good mark. [...]

33 FD: [...] even though you are an online tutor you still do what you do in a Northern University  
34 environment.

35 FE: The person might be [...] - but the structure of their course is based on the country where the course  
36 comes from.

37 FC: That is cross-communication I mean in that particular case we got a handbook, a student handbook;  
38 maybe that gets read or not I don't know. And obviously there is a sort of marking scale and all that  
39 criteria. It's all there.

40 FA: Yeah

41 FD: I am talking about the tutor. I am saying in all these rules and regulations for online tutoring are they  
42 gona read them?

43 FC: And I am saying in the answer to that, that the reason we get into a culture who is not reading these  
44 things is that so much crap comes our way, right? And that's what it used to be look like. You know and I  
45 recon from my experience of work within this online programmeme, I reckon that - sorry I reused the  
46 word - I recon from my experience that I could put something together which would be really targeted  
47 you know. And I wouldn't include a [...]

48 FA: It's almost like a very short list of things you need to know about your students from which part of  
49 the world -

50 FE: A request report -

51 FA: Yeah I mean a part, because we thought a huge amount of distance learning institution that we do -  
52 maybe your own Institution do a lot distance learning maybe it does have more common knowledge  
53 about these type of thing. Maybe it's a pocket through, through the University, isn't it, in terms of what is  
54 going on. And maybe that come -

55 FC: This comes, you know we have got this distance learning forum. We were discussing and I think this  
56 point came up there you know.

57 FA: [...] If we got students from here then this is what they, this is what their expectation [...]

1 FE: What I like to bring up is: The whole question is scalability we talked about. You know the fact that  
2 you can maintain twenty. Ahm if they become successful do you have a whole series of teachers, do you  
3 have separate sessions for South-East-Asia, another one for America, another one for India or whatever?  
4 I mean and do you then have a cultural tutor? Or a tutor that is attuning to one culture? Or - just by  
5 definition, well you twenty [...], you got everybody and you got a complete mix you know and it's - but is  
6 this kind of thing scalable? Or is it just, I would just talk about a very small number.

7 FC: That's a rather particular point. I would have smaller groups obviously but I would not break up  
8 geographically or culturally. Because I do things actually that the integrated cultures can be a valued  
9 thing to do. Perhaps again [...] hold on that's one thing, but in addition I would build in, I would  
10 encourage to build up local groups which is another thing. You know I mean at the moment I deal with  
11 twenty students a year which is fine but yeah I could envisage ahm a situation where we are managing a  
12 hundred students a year. When we got the resources - I can envisage that, right? And I can, I have ideas  
13 about how we could do that. And I wouldn't break down the cultures in that way but I would encourage  
14 the people to get into little groups. So let's say there was a group - North America let's say, that group  
15 that get together might include people from different forum sessions because [...] that what I am saying  
16 but I mean this takes particularities how to handle.

17 FE, FA: Yeah

18 FB: But there is another important thing, too. Ahm considering scalability is that ahm we know when we  
19 hit certain thresholds and things slightly become unmanageable. So I had a session last Thursday online,  
20 a chat support session, we had about nine people. And that was really a good number. [The previous  
21 time?] it was four. And then there was certainly a threshold after which things sort of become  
22 unmanageable. And I think the most I had in a session with maybe fourteen or fifteen and it becomes  
23 difficult. There are I mean perhaps, there are things we don't know about: You know should we ahm be  
24 using ahm techniques like getting ahm you know a group of five students to split off and discuss  
25 something in a different chat and then report back or using some of the more sophisticated chat tools  
26 where you have that sort of crowd management facilities and things like that. But the other side of that  
27 is that with the more asynchronous stuff, when you hit those thresholds the effect is more positive. When  
28 you have smaller numbers in the asynchronous settings you can end up with formal settings where there  
29 is not much going on. We fought against this, ahm successfully sometimes, in our online forums where  
30 become you give a point for discussion and we have minimum requirement to post five hundred words  
31 on it and then you let me sit back and see what goes and then all eight students post five hundred words.  
32 And the tutor sort of ties things together and says 'What about this?' and they go 'That's a good point,  
33 go to the next'. If you get larger groups when you cross these thresholds with larger groups you get, you  
34 end up ahm [...] with more people who are prepared to get involved several time ahm be controversial  
35 ahm irritating people you know or whatever it takes to get this online discussion to go. So it's about ahm  
36 knowing what techniques work at which scales and that sort of stuff. The Open University run huge  
37 discussion boards ahm they get students to become students moderators as well, and involve people like  
38 that.

39 FE: But how do online tutors get to be online tutors?

40 FB: Ahm by default [laugh]

41 FD: The thing is ahm you know they are not developed necessarily. They are not developed at all. So  
42 what is it that someone becomes an online tutor? Is it because they are innovative and they demonstrate  
43 that?

44 FE: I thing through [emersion].

45 FD: There might be [...]. But I mean why should somebody be chosen to be an online tutor? What do they  
46 have to demonstrate? In [...] I think they don't have to demonstrate anything. They just have to, have an  
47 attitude for innovation and, and talk that through in order to become an online tutor. I mean there is no,  
48 as far as I can see, there is no training for online tutors, there is no guidance for online tutors as such and  
49 because each course is different the guidance might not be relevant. You know its gona be generic. So,  
50 what is it that, what is the frame that allows somebody to become and online tutors. Is it because they  
51 are seen as being innovative and therefore they get that role? And therefore - you know they know  
52 obviously there subject area. But on top of it, they are innovative.

53 FA: You sometimes see other parts as for example health where somebody is going out there and sold  
54 the programmemes and then we get people who perhaps are not online unless they have got their  
55 particular programmeme is interested in that particular county. And we find that quite a lot of sport  
56 people who are teaching in terms how do I approach in a slightly different way and [...] effort. I think it  
57 depends on, on the subject area as well and where the demander for is in the world I suppose.

1 FD: Yeah but it's presuppose the question. I mean if I, if you are going to become a lecturer you get  
2 interviewed and you have to substitute some [...] - and people might say give us a presentation or do this  
3 or do that but how do you become an online lecturer because that's, I mean I think that would be a (...).  
4 How is that supported?  
5 FE: Are you suggesting that there is a generic [...] an online tutor is respectable specialist?  
6 FD: No, what I am saying is that how do people become online tutor? Obviously they want to do it, right?  
7 But there is no interview process as such as fare as I am aware off. You have to demonstrate that you are  
8 innovative.  
9 FC: Over the last couple of years where I have been interviewing for new posts in Psychology one of the  
10 question I will ask is about how they use electronic resources.  
11 [...]  
12 FD: The thing is those people you employ in a few weeks, if you - if we run an online course and you want  
13 them to teach non it how do they become online tutors? You ask them?  
14 FE: Yeah, you say do you want to become an online tutor?  
15 [laugh]  
16 FPM: What will allow you to make that decision? About if they become an online tutor?  
17 FA: Yeah  
18 FB: If they say no -  
19 FPM: How do you assist, how do you assist tutors anyway?  
20 FD: Because only that can be [...] what the needs are of the people who become online tutors.  
21 FC: Our situation is not like that, right.  
22 FD: Ok  
23 FC: We teach courses that are based on Psychology; and basically anyone who is in the School of  
24 Psychology who wants to be, to teach that area of Psychology -which aren't a lot of people, it is very  
25 specialized- it's just, it's inevitable [?] they will teach on that programmeme because that's the main way  
26 we are teaching it. There is no, there is no training as such, but we, you know, we train each other.  
27 FD: Yeah  
28 BLL: You know.  
29 FB: That's what it does- it is the culture. And it's probably always programmeme-specific that you learn  
30 how to be an  
31 electronic tutor [e-moderator?] because the person who is doing it before you ahm leaves you a set of  
32 notes or -  
33 FD: Or shows you [...]  
34 FPM: [Let's get a perspective] In terms of JMU it ain't a huge problem. Because the number of online  
35 courses is very small but you know. If you go to outside companies and you know recommend to the NCC  
36 and RDI [...] a national computer course. They are two colleges based solely on distance learning. Now,  
37 they scarp round of people [...] of tutors on their courses. And let a junior tutor goes 'This is right' - there  
38 is no training there is no nothing. You start next week.  
39 FD: The criteria are from the University?  
40 FPM: The criteria is not from University, the criteria is that you get some relatively specialist knowledge  
41 in the area that they wish they have a course in moderating. They have done it. I mean you get paid a  
42 reasonable amount of three hours a week whatever and that's it. There is no question of training. I mean  
43 you might think he is a crap, crap Institution as well you deal with something [...]  
44 FD: What I am trying to point out is that the, the reason somebody comes to a position of being an online  
45 tutor is because it's already been decided without having to demonstrate it that you have the attitude to  
46 do it. And that you are innovative enough to run those sessions. There is no - so in other words the  
47 training might not be necessary because you have demonstrated those skills otherwise you wouldn't  
48 have been ask. And therefore -  
49 [...]  
50 FPM: You are asked because you have an expertise in the area that an online course requires.  
51 FC: Yeah, that's right.  
52 FPM: And the story.  
53 FD: So there is no training required?  
54 FPM: No, the question is whether there should be. But the point is - there isn't. Should that be?  
55 FD: Yeah.  
56 FC: Hold on this is a broad area. When I, I mean told the University many years back, right. And I was  
57 interviewed right, and I think I passed I can't remember -

1 [Laugh]  
2 FC: Yeah and it was just part of the culture and that's it you know. I mean you - I have done my first  
3 degree and then done some research and that was the kind of level and you must be able to do it. Here is  
4 the class of students do what you do.  
5 FD: Right  
6 FC: And now things have changed since then. So, someone like [FB] does the PG-Cert, right. And I imagine  
7 I have done no but I imagine that online teaching could well be part of that. It should be part of that.  
8 FA: Yeah, I mean I was saying that to start with it perhaps needs different approaches. Actually a lot of  
9 these approaches to start with come into Universities anyway but people are not in a face-to-face class  
10 and are not doing everything in the same traditional way. So people who might find out one aspect for a  
11 module or a programmeme is being taught in a Blended Learning way. You know, you do part of it here  
12 and part of it online. I guess expectation evidence comes into distance learning teaching. It's [...] about  
13 different approaches rather than just standing up giving a lecture in a couple of tutorials.  
14 FC: Yeah, that's right.  
15 FA: And I think that was coming in and I think students are [...]. Because you may go back and say there  
16 are people told stuff you know in a lecture, you know people can only have attention for twenty minutes  
17 and then that's it. That's - unless you do something interactive with them. You, if you just do it in a  
18 didactic sort of way; after twenty minutes then you have lost most of them. I guess people are coming in  
19 with different approaches or - and are, in some areas do a lot; they actually do use technology [...]  
20 FC: The point I made belongs to [FD]. Is that, the question of what training someone gets, is kind of two  
21 factors which are compounding it. One is that traditionally there wasn't training for anything at  
22 University. And that's changing. And the second thing is specific to online tutoring or teaching. And  
23 because of the first that's also changing. So it is - I mean if you employ someone, you are interviewing  
24 tomorrow and you employ someone who is you know brings with him a University degree, is forty years  
25 old or whatever it is. Probably hasn't had that kind of training. But you employ them because they got  
26 the [...] record; they have this or the other -  
27 FD: Yeah  
28 FC: Fine. You know. But the culture is changing because the ones comes -  
29 FD: It is not usually delivered before you go into the job. I mean I will imagine the majority have done the  
30 PG-Cert that people have been already in the job they wouldn't be able to jump through those [...]  
31 FC: No, no that's what I am saying. No because you know, when we employ someone now. Let's say it's  
32 their second position, right? You know so they are twenty eight. So they have been in one place, done the  
33 PG-Cert.  
34 FD: But what you are doing is [...] to the ability to the online course.  
35 FC: Yes. Not exactly, but it's not a view it's a changing culture what I am talking about.  
36 FD: Ok. My issue which was going on: What I try to reflect is that notion of that there is no training,  
37 right? Online course delivery and the people appointed to those positions is based on, all the academic  
38 judgments about availability to be able to do this online tutoring row. It's not based on any - having to  
39 evidence the fact to be able to do it. It's based on whether or not somebody else thinks you can do it  
40 because of you subject knowledge and your probabilities in technology or whatever. So there is no you  
41 know need for you to demonstrate this. And then for those people who do go on to that, more than  
42 might be, the person who makes the judgment is correct. And the person who goes on to do it has some  
43 sort of skill or availabilities [...] they are innovative in some way, there is no training. And that's the  
44 reason that there is no training because of that process. Take that ones that further into cultural  
45 dimension because that person has not necessarily received any training, and it's in that position  
46 because somebody else believes on their capabilities to deliver, then that person [...] with their own  
47 judgments about the cultural sensitivities. And you are right to say before about the fact that you all  
48 learned from each other. So the people who are delivering online courses share that knowledge about  
49 possible cultural issues. And that's the way it is done. It's not done through any process of training and  
50 the question is: is there any need for training? Because that's the way the process works.  
51 FB: I would like some training I think. Necessarily, I am one of this people who did the PG-Cert and I got  
52 actually quite a lot out of it. I know there are lots of [people who think] what a waste of time it is and  
53 only their boss make them come to this course and then you rather like it at the end. Ahm and but I  
54 rather, I enjoyed it. I guess because it was at the right sort of starting my carrier to go and do it. I learned  
55 a lot of different ways of being taught then I have ever experienced. I was always taught by you know  
56 [elderly sleep ...] [elderly men sleeping at a lectern - or something like that!]  
57 FC: Oh excuse me; you have done a course that I taught.

1 *[Laugh]*  
2 *FB: Apart from that [...]. And so it was a real bonus to find out about it; a whole toolbox of techniques*  
3 *and ideas and theories that I have never heard of, I have never come across before. And then we*  
4 *launched ourselves into that programmeme that I was involved in from the first cohort and ahm there*  
5 *was very much you know of notes about 'Well, here is your material, here is what we decided to do'. How*  
6 *the hell do I get them to talk to each other? How do I manage this synchronous chat session? How do I*  
7 *get students to get to engage with each other? How do I manage group work? How do I this? And*  
8 *because we were all completely new to this, to distance learning because it was [FC]'s idea that we did it,*  
9 *ahm we had no one to learn from. So I would have liked to have access to that sort of ahm ideas about a*  
10 *toolbox of techniques of ideas, of approaches ahm that we could have involved in both in [...]running the*  
11 *sessions and also in the design of sessions. Because the modules that we have designed since the*  
12 *programmeme launch, because you know we designed a whole bunch of modules in a months' work.*  
13 *And then a couple of years later we designed a couple of more modules on top of that ended up being*  
14 *quite different. Ahm but the original modules haven't changed because we haven't been paid the*  
15 *amount of hours that would require to -*  
16 *FD: Isn't that based on your group learning? It's not based on a course; it's based on your group learning*  
17 *from what you know about the course.*  
18 *FB: But what don't I know? What, what else is there up there what I don't know and I should be involved*  
19 *with?*  
20 *FD: Well, this is what I am saying about people being innovative and developing it from their knowledge-*  
21 *base themselves. There is no training. I mean if you think about the fact that you are running this course,*  
22 *I run some courses, you run some courses, you setup programmemes with distance learning - who is*  
23 *gonna tell you what to do? [Because he has done it]. And therefore, and its learned on the job and its*  
24 *developed it and the developments and the way things go forward is what the institution can manage*  
25 *from the knowledge base of the people who are delivering it.*  
26 *FC: Yeah, but it's a question of sharing.*  
27 *FA: But it's not a formal course it's sharing.*  
28 *FD: Yeah it's sharing, yeah.*  
29 *FA: And as much sharing about what didn't work or what did work; all the things that go wrong and*  
30 *things that -*  
31 *FB: Well, there is something happening [...] [A colleague] and myself have a module which we get*  
32 *students to produce an online peer reviewed journal. That was based on an idea from somebody in ahm*  
33 *Pharmacy and they have done it with their third years and we sort of translated it into Blackboard*  
34 *environment with Master students. And that worked really well because she gave a talk in one of the*  
35 *Teaching and Learning conferences a few years back and, and [...] [we wouldn't have thought about it if]*  
36 *not for that sort of sharing. So maybe formal training on the PG-Cert module isn't the way to go but sort*  
37 *of sharing, some sort of making available, availability of good practices.*  
38 *FD: Best practices, cases*  
39 *FB: Cases, ahm*  
40 *FA: Well, we do have this distance learning forum [...] the problem when we are trying to get them*  
41 *together is to find who could do distance learning, you know. It's really difficult to know; we are trying to*  
42 *get the right people to this particular group.*  
43 *FC: It's the wrong forum - I mean it's good; I am not criticizing the forum. But it is, what you just said the*  
44 *problems is of not knowing who is doing it, because it's not sent through top down kind of presence*  
45 *about this. And I think you know we want, we need the top down presence and we need the sharing that*  
46 *will happen along with that.*  
47 *R: What do you mean by top down presence?*  
48 *FC: I mean there will be ahm individuals*  
49 *FD: Institutions for a distance learning forum. What the institutions, I think what he was trying to say,*  
50 *what the institution doesn't do is doesn't give guidance from above to everybody.*  
51 *FC: I don't think there are resources. [...] We don't get the resources we need and then you know there is*  
52 *a forum. So I can make it one time but next time I can't make it because I haven't got the hours to do it.*  
53 *FD: Your course existed when the MBS course was validated and set up. Did anyone from the MBS course*  
54 *come to you to get any information? [...] So there is another distance one that we are setting up now.*  
55 *FC: Yeah, over the years I had a few people come to me and ask - I don't know whether it was through*  
56 *you, through you or - but you know that raises the same point that there should be a central*  
57 *organization and they would know.*

1 FE: Let me just put something to because as I just said the MBS course was set up as a distance learning  
2 course I was [...] by the BC. Ahm before [...hit the road] you know and the reasons we could not get rid of  
3 it was the fact that in ahm certain countries they had this four tutors. And they thought it was passing on  
4 the actual qualifications it wasn't effectively a distance learning course, [...] You know that was the  
5 reason it was given [...] The point I am making is that you do have these problems I suspect why you  
6 trying to fit in a different types of cultural expectations. And where in many cases you do have to employ  
7 outside people to fill in the gaps, provide the [...] blogs of knowledge, ok? And you know that runs far of  
8 regulations here based on what is and what is not a distance learning programmeme. So you know when  
9 you talk about ahm a distance learning programmeme being global it's very difficult to actually make it  
10 global without running fault of [...]. That's been my experience you know and that was the way it was  
11 chopped. And ahm -

12 FA: I mean [...] lots of different sorts of administrative things you have to take on board for distance  
13 learning that you don't have for setting up a normal programmeme. [...] and I think it's partly, I mean we  
14 don't have any students who do find out what online or distance learning courses we offer. That's why  
15 there should be some people who are [...] and so hardly find out around the world that you are doing this  
16 particular course. It would be quite difficult unless you get reputations for them and it's a very niche area  
17 isn't it. Whereas the programmeme you are offering I suppose could be offered by anybody. So it's, it's  
18 quite difficult to do that sort of marketing and selling what we are doing on sort of meaning to identify  
19 it. So even that's part of a bit tackle.

20 R: I would like to bring in one, one more point I found out through an interview from a very experienced  
21 online tutor living in different places in the world and teaching online and face-to-face. And she, she told  
22 me that her experiences in teaching in an international environment is really challenging, it's great, it's  
23 fascinating, all these things but she said also that it is sometimes very difficult and she also said that it  
24 often takes more time then when you are teaching in a group with people who are more homogenous,  
25 who are closer to your culture or to the way the course has been created. So, do you have similar  
26 experiences or similar ideas, thoughts?

27 FB: One of the first illusions to be stripped away from us was I think was that distance learning is not a  
28 time-saving device. And I think, I certainly went to it 'Oh this will be great we will be able to you know  
29 deal with a class in the same size you know and all this happens in the background and you sit there you  
30 know, stick your head in occasionally and go'. And it turned to be out to be a huge time thing.

31 FC: There seems to be two issues in which you said. One is the one that [FB] just said, that it takes a lot of  
32 time. And that goes back to what I was saying before about recognition and the central thing about  
33 resources and all this. But the other thing I think you just seem to saying is that not only it takes a lot of  
34 time because its distance learning but it takes more time because o the cultural mix. Is that what you  
35 were saying?

36 R: Yes.

37 FC: I haven't found out. I mean ok there was one case which I mentioned earlier where I felled I need to  
38 step in because there was a cultural thing and maybe not. Generally I didn't find that a problem. But the  
39 issue is the one that [FB] just said. But it simply takes a lot of time to maintain the material - just  
40 something simple. You know I have done a module, right and, and it got a huge amount of content which  
41 have been build up on Blackboard. So its gona start running again this year just checking all the links as a  
42 function takes ages.

43 FB: [...email students if you find the one that you miss.]  
44 [laugh]

45 FC: Yeah and then I mean that's before we even get to the forum reading all the stuff and writing to  
46 them. It does take a lot of time.

47 FE: Another point I am [having] in my mind is we are talking about distance learning as a generality. I  
48 think it depends very much on the degree to which the material is culturally bound. If you deal with a  
49 Science subject maybe something like Biology [...] you know and you can get away with that I am sure.  
50 No problem. You can talk to everybody in the same language about a virus whatever you know. But  
51 when you are dealing with business, probably your subject, it's very culturally bound. And different  
52 people have different perspectives on the same material. With Science subjects I suspect things like  
53 Math, Computing this kind of things -

54 FD: Yeah

55 FE: I would imagine. I have no experience but I only imagine it is.

1 FD: Anything with cultural context is an issue. In you know what you said before it's subject specific. I  
2 mean you know accounting completely different rules in every function, International business  
3 completely different and so on and so on.  
4 FC: Well in this country you can cheat in this country -  
5 FD: Yeah, that sort of things.  
6 [laugh...]  
7 FD: The issue is, you are right, it depends -  
8 FE: [...] math is the same everywhere. But -  
9 FD: The difficulties depend on the role. I mean course tutoring for example, when you are managing the  
10 programmeme it's a nightmare. I mean you know people at a distance it's a nightmare to manage its all  
11 that word: preparing the materials, or updating websites; it's not your traditional sort of thing. And  
12 therefore because it's different to your normal run of the job, you are doing this over and for it's not part  
13 of what you routinely do. So that's difficult. And then what we are failing to appreciate is through the  
14 online process explanation the things are an issue sometimes. Trying to explain to people, you know  
15 what might be a simple thing in your own cultural environment is you know very difficult to explain to a  
16 different cultural environment you know. And that you know in an online environment it takes two to  
17 three times longer to do that you know and you don't get through that what you want to because of  
18 that. And that could be an issue.  
19 FB: You only have a problem with teaching online that most of your students will be this - [a colleague]  
20 and I experienced it will be their first experiences of being taught online, maybe their first time back at  
21 University for a long time as well and. Yah maybe their first time since computers have been invented.  
22 And they have got a huge set of technical issues and that gonna be different. I mean [...] they have just  
23 finished a distance learning Psychology degree or whatever happens to be. Ahm and then you have  
24 cultural issues on top of that. I think I disagree with what was he saying about a certain way about  
25 teaching Math or Biology because education itself is a cultural context because you are dealing with  
26 people. Ahm -  
27 FE: Yeah the subject matter is [...]  
28 FB: No subject matter is gonna be contentious but I think dealing with student's expectations about,  
29 about how education works is still gonna be very difficult. We have to deal with it on top of teaching all  
30 about technology, teaching about how Higher Education works ahm you know how it is changing since  
31 thirteen years when they got their BA or whatever happens to be you know; all that sort of stuff.  
32 Another start of a degree it's a really hectic time for students.  
33 [...]  
34 FA: [...] discussion forums but it's all there, isn't it. Things just said reminds me by someone in a group  
35 might be there you know for a short while and then it's gone, the conversation is over. I think may be  
36 things are more persistence aren't they? You have to be more careful and then you might to defuse more  
37 things -  
38 FB: And it stops people from debating as well. I would like it if you could set an expiry time at discussion  
39 posts.  
40 FA: Yeah  
41 FB: This post might be visible for a week and then so you might [...]  
42 FC: The other thing which might be more time demanding are the things that occur around teaching like  
43 you just alluded to induction. Ahm I, at the moment we have this AMR, annual monitoring review, so it's  
44 written this thing and we need to get students involvement. That's the way it works. So the induction  
45 process for our course is two weeks. Here attendance its one afternoon may be. The board of study is  
46 two weeks maybe; I mean not two weeks, solid two weeks but in all that you have to set up time for the  
47 agenda to be build and if you get a comment you need to give feedback to the comment [...]. It takes  
48 time and a board of study who attends turns up and an hour later you go.  
49 [...]  
50 FB: Maybe more than an hour.  
51 FC: Yeah  
52 FB: You can go to sleep after  
53 [laugh]  
54 FD: Just a simple thing. Time passes in the University or lecture every week at the same time and you go  
55 to your tutorial or workshop at the same time. Within online discussion, right we know in a week about  
56 what we gona have for a discussion and the amount of time involved in organizing this specific day and  
57 time that we gona have it takes up so much time in terms you know write around e-mails, when people

1 are gona be available, to get the exact day; just a simple thing like that. Whereas in the University we  
2 know you go to this lecture at that time and that day. And just a simple meeting online it could be a  
3 nightmare.

4 FE: The other point of course is online teaching provide great [...] to students to learn in their own time.  
5 What, what it does through my experience is that you get this huge tail of people who just learn in an  
6 incredibly slow pace or they get shopped of or whatever you know. And the retention rate or the  
7 completion rate is whole-

8 FD: and a drift

9 FE: and a drift.

10 FD: The potential for a drift could enlarge in an online environment because they insist there [...] and not  
11 engage. It's very you know you can't have that unless you are really on top of the game it's an issue. So  
12 again these are the things that add to the time. In fact that you want to engage everybody, you wanna  
13 get round everybody.

14 FE: You wouldn't deal with all that in class.

15 FD: Yeah, people can be dynamic in a class and you can point and say come on you know what you  
16 think? You can't do that in an online environment in the same extent. You actually got to notice, it isn't  
17 engaging -

18 FB: [...] that's the first thing that seems to go I have noticed is that, that continuing monitoring of people.  
19 I think in the first year maybe two years ahm tutors were all very concerned you know to have the  
20 definitive classes who has posted this week, who has posted that you know, if they haven't posted a  
21 week an email going out 'What's going on'. And now people are a lot more relaxed about it. People want  
22 to lurk, you can't stop them from lurk. I actually e-mailed a student once to say 'Why haven't you got  
23 involved?' An e-mail came back 'Listen if I want to get involved with sort of thing I would have gone to  
24 University. And I want to do distance learning. I want to read and send in my assignments [...]'

25 FA: Yeah that's right.

26 FC: I have mentioned this concession on Friday.

27 FA: [...] because they not really want to get involved

28 FC: Yeah

29 FB: I wish I would trying people to engage and, and they [...] for all his pressure to be a part of the class.

30 FE: The reason is they don't want to be engaged.

31 FB: Yes.

32 FE: It's the people who go to the cash-machine when they saw the bank when there is nobody queuing at  
33 the cash-machine. They don't want to actually engage with somebody.

34 R: The time is running, it's nearly four o'clock. So I think we are coming to an end of the discussion and -  
35 but maybe you have got some point which inspired you, which you want to add, bring up additionally?  
36 We had so many different points: the cultural aspect, the training aspect, the sharing aspect, the-

37 FB: One key point can be that comes back the last five years again is managing student's expectations  
38 and ah awareness of, trying to understand what students expect of you ahm, because you don't often  
39 think about that by yourself. And then were their expectations and your expectations don't meet is  
40 where drop outs happen and that stuff.

41 FC: One of the things I talked of, I mean it's very obvious, I talked about the time it takes, the resources  
42 and all these issues. One of the reasons that I am involved instead involve because I find it very exciting, I  
43 mean it's interesting it's great to be involved in you know cutting edge in all that technology and  
44 students from different culture. For all just said it's exiting. And the other thing, it's kind of selfish but it's  
45 true: For all the issue the time, for one thing that is important to me is that the time I put in I put it in  
46 anyway. In other words you don't have to be here in Liverpool. And you know I travel a lot and I can be  
47 teaching when I am somewhere else completely. That is a great advantage [...].

48 FB: Flips out the laptop on holiday courses

49 [laugh]

50 FC: Well, probably not when I am on holiday.

51 FB: That's true.

52 FC: You are right. There is an issue about time boundaries and staff, but that's [...]

53 FA: I think we are making this particular conversation up to pick up on sharing and trying to encourage.  
54 Not sharing theories but practical tips and things that need to be passed on to different people practicing  
55 at the moment. I mean that could help to help other people. So how do we do that? I don't know we  
56 need to think about it.

57 FE: A forum.

1 *FB: There is a distance learning forum. I haven't posted on it for about two years.*  
2 *[laugh]*  
3 *FA: [...] but it's not used as sort of interactive sort of discussion area. It's more about we arrange a*  
4 *meeting and come along to it. But we need to think about some other way of sharing then. We got a*  
5 *new [...] in Blackboard that we can put things on, it's something very early.*  
6 *FE: No I have nothing. I think, I think it has been an interesting development and I think the technology is*  
7 *wonderful. I am not sure about the scalability issues. I think it has to be ahm dehumanized to scalable.*  
8 *Ahm in the sense that you know if you are going to have one to ten in the classroom you know. Ahm so I*  
9 *didn't, I think it can be very efficient but it probably has to go [...] logical to be very efficient by definition.*  
10 *And there are huge issues in terms of experience and in terms of assessment which hasn't been practical.*  
11 *FD: I think technology is not the issue of online learning I think its people's factors. I think it's worth going*  
12 *online and working in critical situations which cause students to stop being online learners or move away*  
13 *from it or bring tutors to the online learning or you know make - what is a good tutors. It's all these*  
14 *things which are critical so how do I identify which critical incidents are I think will need to be better*  
15 *understood. I think they are human factors I don't think there is any technological issues. I think people*  
16 *are just enthusiast to use technology with the personal thing and the way people manage or the way*  
17 *students learn. It's those process about involvement.*  
18 *R: Yeah, thank you a lot*  
19

