

APPENDIX G: Example of Coded Transcript

This appendix comprises the coded transcript of the interviews conducted with Owen (BNPY). This was the tenth interview conducted in the overall process.

The column to the right of the transcript lists the initial codes assigned to the text. Reference to the codes listed demonstrates the style of coding used in the initial data analysis. That is, line-by-line coding using gerunds.

In the transcript certain changes have been made in an effort to protect the anonymity of the interviewee.

Transcript: Interview with Owen

Course: BNPY
Gender: Male
Age: 20

CD: When I say 'culture' to you, how do you understand that word?

Owen: Well, I suppose, culture for me, when you think about it, you think about, ya know, from my perspective anyway, you think about music and...well, national culture, ya know. But you have music and art and things, but also different ways of doing things. And I think everybody has their own wee part of culture. Like my family would be different from other families and that can come across as a culture. It might not necessarily be a culture but ...culture I suppose is a whole range of preferences for different things which can be determined on where you are or who you are. Anything like that.

CD: And would you say that there is cultural diversity in DCU among the students?

Owen: In DCU.....well there are a lot of different cultures. Em...whether or not they are represented, I don't know.

CD: When you say 'represented', what do you mean?

Owen: Well, I suppose, we're still very much institutionally Irish. Like there's a lot more people of different cultures and different countries in Ireland, but I think we still operate in a very Irish way. Or at least, we're quite Irish anyway. It's probably changing. Becoming more European the way we operate in colleges and businesses and things like that, but I think we're still quite Irish. Of course I don't have experience of much outside of Ireland so maybe that's just my perspective. It's what I know.

Defining culture;

Families having their own culture;

Defining culture as preferences;

Perceiving diversity in DCU;

Being institutionally Irish;

Changing Ireland;

Irish society being slow to adapt to diversity;

CD: *And when you say 'It's very Irish', what are the components of that 'Irishness'?*

Owen: Em...I dunno, I just see, the personal, the way people operate. Because of course predominantly people who would be running the college would be Irish, and maybe it's just the fact that I have grown up in Ireland and I've experienced Irish people most of my life that I see these things as being Irish. But I don't get the feeling that, although people are a lot more experienced with a lot more different cultures, it's not affecting the way things are being run on an official level.

CD: *So, there would be... even though they mightn't be represented in terms of the institutional running, you would feel that there are students from other cultures here?*

Owen: Oh definitely, yeah.

CD: *And where would they be from?*

Owen: Em...well, in my own experience, where I'm living, I'm living in an apartment block up the road there and there's a lot of Spanish, German and French people. A couple of Americans, but I'm actually living with two French fellas at the moment. It would seem, it might be just cos of the two French lads I am living with, that I am experiencing a lot more foreign students. So, I mean, it's as apparent on campus I don't think.

CD: *Ok. And when you say because you are living with them you are more exposed, how does that come about?*

Owen: Well I mean, every time I come into the house there is either...you know, there's a bunch of French friends or, you see, they're doing international business, and within International Business there's a lot of foreign students. So have friends who are from China, Japan, Germany, France, Spain you know, Italy, so there's always a fairly diverse group.

DCU being a predominantly Irish institution;

Irish staff dominating DCU;

Living in an apartment off campus;

Living in a very diverse apartment block;

Experiencing diversity through CD housemates;
Living with French students;

CD students mixing with other CD students;

CD students socialising at home;

CD: *This is in your apartment?*

Owen: Yeah. Predominantly though, a group of French people.

CD: *And how do you find that?*

Owen: It's great in one way and it's kinda of annoying sometimes. Eh, it's really interesting talking to these people who grew up in a completely different kinda culture. One of them is from Lille, he's obviously, from Lille, but he is just, you know, similar to a lot of French people I have met beforehand. But, one of the other lads, he is Jewish and French, which is very interesting. I never met a Jewish person in my life before meeting him, so it was really interesting.

CD: *How is he different?*

Owen: Well apart from the obvious culture things, like he doesn't eat pork and things like that, but...him personally, see of course I don't know a huge amount about what other Jewish people are like, but him personally, he's very...he's quite anal in a lot of ways. He has to be clean and everything has to be in the right place and things like that, and he will do things that you have done already cos you didn't do them right. But em, the two of them also have very French traits. Like they eat very late. Like you'll come in at 9 o'clock into the apartment and they got the windows closed and the room is steamed up to the max and there's the smell of cooking onions and chopping onions is killing you. So, it's quite an interesting place to be living.

CD: *And how do you relate with them?*

Owen: Very well, yeah. We get on quite well. As people our age, we have very similar pop culture tastes. We'd be into similar kinds of music. Actually, the first night I met them I was going out to a gig of two French DJs. And they had never heard of them and a month or

French students socialising together;

Being interested in talking with people from other cultures;

Feeling ambivalent about living with foreign students;

Having no experience of Jewish culture;

Feeling judged by Jewish student;

French students eating very late;

CD students having different eating habits;
Feeling frustrated with French cooking habits;

Having common interests based on age;
Liking similar music;

two later, they were playing one of their songs in their room and I heard it through the door and I was like ‘I thought you didn’t know them?’ and they were ‘Oh we just heard them there a wee while ago’. So global culture and everything like that. MTV and all these things, everyone kinda has some base level of culture....or common culture you k now. So you’d be watching ‘The OC’ and they’ll know it under a different name but it’s the same thing. You know? They’ll know the same kinda wee things in cinema, film and everything like that. So you have that in common. But also, eh, I suppose - and this would be specific to us - we both have a good interest in each other’s cultures. I quite often talk to them about Irishness and Irish history and things like that and they talk to me about France and French politics and things like that and I talk to the other fella about Israel and things like that.

CD: And has he spent time in Israel?

Owen: Yeah he’s been there a couple of times and he has family in Israel and I would be very interested, I would also consider myself a bit of a Judeophile, I wouldn’t exactly be – not to get into politics or anything – but I wouldn’t be for the Israeli government’s policies, but I have always been very interested in Judeo culture.

CD: So am I right in thinking, from what you are saying, that having a common, basic commonalities, in terms of knowledge or interests, and also having just general interests in other cultures, helps...

Owen: Oh definitely. You have to have some wee base. Well, it’s not essential. I mean, I think every human being has something they can relate to someone else regardless of whether it is the exact same thing or something. But, you know, it makes it very easy when you have this common thing or things that transcend nationality and borders. I suppose it’s a superficial thing but it gets you in and talking to a person and creates a

Sharing a basic global culture;

Having global pop culture in common;

Both sides being interested in culture;

Sharing culture information;

Being a Judeophile;

Commonalities facilitating mixing;

Commonalities helping chatting;

Needing a common base for relationship to develop;

relationship. But one of the problems also is, often you'd come in to the common kitchen area and there'd be 7 or 8 French people sitting around talking all French, very, very loudly. For some reason, French people seem to speak very loudly. Either that or it's just very distracting, I can't tell. But, so, you are sitting there and you'd like to join in but unfortunately, your French does not really aid that and I'd like to watch a bit of telly but you can't really cos they are roaring in French.

CD: Do they ever try to introduce you into the...

Owen: They do yeah, but I mean I kind of wouldn't expect too much of it... Like I mean, I wouldn't myself. I've been asked a couple of times would I like to come out with them when they've being going out to the pub with a pile of other people but I was kinda, even though I get on very well with them, I wasn't really very receptive to that like. Not in a bad way, just 'Nah, it's grand'. Because I know myself, I wouldn't want to have to be every 5 seconds turning over and saying 'Well, he just said this', and you know, translating away to the person and it makes it kinda difficult and I suppose the reason they all band together is because it's comfortable, you know. It reminds them of home and things like that cos they don't get to go home every weekend so, I kinda don't want to be making them to have to put an effort in when they are going out to have a bit of craic, d'ya know? But I know myself, Irish people seem to band together when they go away. And admittedly English is a bit more widely spoken but...

CD: And when Irish people go away why do they band together?

Owen: Em..I think it's the same kinda reason really. It's very easy. Cos I mean there is cultural differences. I wouldn't eat half as late as they would, and that's not a massive thing, but it can create wee kinda annoyances and stuff like that. And just other little things.

French speaking very loud;

Group size excluding outsiders;

Language as a barrier to communication;
Being annoyed by noise of French students;

Hosts being invited out by French students;

Language barriers hindering easy communication;

Sticking with your group for comfort;

Not wanting to impose on CD students;

Sticking with conational to maintain home identity;

Perceiving IC contact as an effort;

Banding together with conational when abroad;

Sticking together because it's easy;

Differing eating habits causing annoyance;

Looking at things and even though their English is very good, there'd be things I say, turns of phrase and expressions that they just wouldn't have any understanding of and I nearly wouldn't be able to explain what it meant. So it's a more comfortable thing. It's not necessarily a better thing, but it's quite easy to just stay with people who will understand everything you say.

CD: *So there is less effort in some ways?*

Owen: Yeah.

CD: *That's interesting. And do they ask for your help with language or...?*

Owen: Well they do have very good English but they would ask me about a few wee things like that. Cos they'd be in International Business they'd have a lot of Law and things like that and there'd be some terms that they'd wouldn't fully get so they'd be asking me about some stuff, but eh, mostly they are very good at English. Mostly it would be Irish phrases. The colloquialisms they wouldn't really fully get.

CD: *And if there is the three of you do they speak in French to each other or do you all speak in English?*

Owen: The two of them would speak in French quite often, which sometimes I find insulting, but it's kinda of understandable as well.

CD: *I can understand how you might find it insulting as well.*

Owen: Well you don't know what they are saying you know.

CD: *And then, so they're all International Business students, and then in your particular course, are they students from other cultures in your course?*

Having difficulty explaining slang;
Slang hindering conversation; Being easy to stick with own culture;
Sticking with your group for comfort;

Complimenting CD students level of English;

CD students having difficulty with Irish colloquialisms;

Appreciating the need to speak native language;
Feeling excluded due to language barrier;

Owen: Em, there are. Most of them though would have been living in Ireland for quite a while. I'm not aware – it's a big class like – but I don't think there's any European people, outside of Ireland. It's mostly African, Nigerian and around that part of Africa. So...but they have been living here quite a while so they kinda ...they would have quite a good understanding of Irish culture and how we act and stuff like that. I haven't really noticed that much. Now admittedly, apart from a few of the African students, they wouldn't generally integrate very well. Like they'd chat to you and stuff and be very friendly, but they would very much be in kinda a group, but admittedly, they are mostly older so it does kinda change things.

CD: How does that change things?

Owen: Well when you're 25 or 16 you have kind of... or there would be older ones, in their 40s – so you have very different priorities and you don't really have the same impetus to stand around and hang out with these people. You have your own friends. Your own kinda community. Especially since a lot of them would be living in Dublin for the last couple of years as well. So like, while there is the impetus on Irish students who are coming from Cavan or Roscommon or Monghan or wherever, to make friends here and make their own kinda community, it's not as necessary for them, it's more something they go to and get through it to get to their nursing, while for a lot of the Irish students it's an experience in itself and should be taken as much advantage of as possible.

CD: So it's not just an academic pursuit, it's a much broader experience?

Owen: Yeah exactly.

CD: Ok, that's interesting that they don't. And why would you say that's because, and

CD students living in Ireland for several years;

Defining culture based on nationality;

Learning about a culture over time;
CD students not integrating very well;
CD students sticking together;
Having superficial contact;
Age difference influencing relations;

Mature students being busy;
Mature students having different priorities to other students;

Mature students having established social networks;

Younger host students wanting to make new friends;

Mature students having clear objectives;
Younger host students attending college as an experience in itself;
Younger host students taking advantage of college life;

Host students being interested in more than academic element;

apart from the age thing, which has implications for priorities and demands...

Owen: ...But it's definitely not completely age, because there are other students who are Irish who are around that age and would interact with us a lot more. But I mean they do their own things as well and it wouldn't be like they are all 'pally pally' with us, like the same people our age. But, no, they would integrate a good bit more. But the older African students would have their own group as well. Three or four students they would hang out with. So it's kinda difficult to say whether not it's based on the fact they're not Irish or the fact that college can be quite cliquey. And I suppose, it's a very unfortunate thing, but I think the colour barrier has a kind of...you're drawn to what you know. I really....I find it very difficult to say this cos I hate the fact that it might be the case but I think it's probably true that because it's such an obvious difference that I think people are generally drawn to what they know and what they see in other people that is themselves, and I think people are more drawn to the Irish students if they are Irish because that...that difference is so obvious. I hate to say that but I think it's probably true.

CD: *And where do you think it comes from? I mean the opposite to 'being drawn' is....*

Owen: ...Repelled?

CD: *Yes, but I don't want to say repelled.*

Owen: I know. It's not a nice word.

CD: *Is there a certain barrier there between them and where is that coming from?*

Owen: There to a certain extent a barrier, like I mean with some students it wouldn't be but I think it's definitely on both sides. Like....because...I mean, they wouldn't make any huge effort to integrate with us and we wouldn't make any huge effort to integrate with them. I mean definitely we talk with them regularly and be friendly and everything

Age not being the only factor in low interaction;

African students having their own group;

Being uncertain about reasons for not mixing;

Being drawn to groups with common characteristics;

Skin colour influencing relations;

Being drawn to similarity;

Both sides facing barriers to contact;

Neither group making an effort to interact;

Perceiving IC contact as an effort;

like that, but they would be their own group. I mean there would be a few African students who would integrate very well with the Irish students and....em...they would be younger as well, so that kinda changes it.

CD: *And those ones who integrate well, and those ones who don't integrate quite so well, how is their behaviour different, how does it make them integrate better?*

Owen: Well the younger ones would be more...not just because they're younger, they are more outgoing. One of the lads I can think of who would best integrate with us is very loud and he always has a comment to make and he's a very funny guy. So I mean, you get to know him, you know his name and things like that and you might have a bit of a laugh with him in one of the practical classes. So it makes it kinda easier to integrate with him then. But the rest, the rest of the group would be more quiet and....more pay attention. Really that's one of the things now I think about it...they would be – part of the age thing as well – they just take it more seriously.

CD: *The study part of it?*

Owen: Yeah. The lectures. They'd be down the front taking notes while to a certain extent we'd be up the back having a laugh. Well, not so much any more but that was very much the case in the beginning, which is of course when you kind of form your groups. So that's probably one of the reasons why because also mature students, they would be all kind of integrated...

CD: *Amongst themselves?*

Owen: Yeah. So they would be much better integrated.

CD: *So they have a kind of group themselves within your larger group?*

Owen: Yeah. Well no, what I mean is within the kinda...if you want to divide it between the Irish and the African group, you could

Age difference influencing relations;

Young students being more outgoing;
Sociable nature facilitating interaction;
Humour facilitating integration;
Knowing foreign students names helping contact;
Mixing in practical classes;
CD students being more serious;
Mature students being more serious;

CD and mature students sitting at the front;

Forming friendships at the start of college;

Irish students sitting at the back of lectures;

African and mature students having common work ethic;

kinda divide the mature almost from the Irish and they integrate better with the African group. Admittedly mostly because most of the Africans are mature students as well, but I think it's also because they have a shared interest in knuckling down and paying attention and doing well. You know the younger ones take it a bit less seriously.

CD: So it's a question that maybe academic priorities could be a factor?

Owen: Yeah. I think also from my limited experience with African people, and it's a massive continent so this is a massive generalisation, but they seem to be a more serious people and possibly coming from the fact that they haven'tyou know... they would see themselves as possibly lucky to be here. This could be my incredibly overly white idea of what Africa is like, but to be here and to have an opportunity to get a good steady job I suppose for mature students in general as well, while we, the younger students, wouldn't be as long-sighted in that. It's just, they want to do this and they are doing it now and they haven't experienced unemployment or hardship really, especially young people today like. The 80s...very little of my memory is made up by that.

CD: And you were saying you might do practical work where you might meet them, do your lecturers encourage mixing in class or is it just totally ignored and you just make your own groups?

Owen: Some lecturers do but some lectures would have involvement from the students...we'd split up into groups and we'd have a bit of a workshop and then come back to whatever we were talking about, stuff like that, but generally it would be, for ease sake, you know, 'This group here', and 'All these people in this corner', so generally who are you with you are in that group with them anyway.

African students being mostly mature also;
Mature Irish students mixing better with international students;
Mature students being a different culture;
Younger students taking study less seriously;

Having limited experience of African culture;
Perceiving Africans to be more serious;

CD and mature students having long-term aims;

Younger Irish students having short term focus;

Irish students having no experience of unemployment;

CD: *So it's just who you are sitting beside?*

Owen: Yeah. Really generally in the lectures the most chance you have of mixing with somebody new...somebody new who is African, somebody new who is Irish even, cos cliques form, eh, is if you are late for a lecture and there's not seats.

CD: *So you have to sit down the front?*

Owen: Yeah, you have to sit with somebody you have never talked to before possibly. So at this stage with lectures that is how you get to know people. But the practical ones, because you'd be forming groups, which are not generally of your own choice, you will be formed into groups with people who you wouldn't have talked to before, and it kind of encourages integration. But unfortunately we don't experience that much of that. But on placement like, you have no choice over who you are with on placement. Quite often you would be with another person on the ward. And my first placement I was on with a mature African student and we got on very well. There was no major differences. She was kinda of....she was very eager to prove herself but also I think it was partly, possibly, that she was mature, she also felt very independent in what she was doing so she'd go in and make the beds and stuff while I'd be waiting for one of the nurses to tell me what to do. So, I think that kinda created a little bit of animosity between us, because...I was kinda feeling that she was going ahead and not really following protocol and maybe even possibly making me look like an eejit because I wasn't doing it. So, she then in turn kinda responded a little bit like I thought she was an idiot of something, so, but I mean that makes it sound like we didn't get on. We actually did get on very well when we weren't like that, but em, that was a bit of difficulty. And I'm not so sure if that was national cultural difference or... based on our age, or even just, I wouldn't be a person who would jump in and get flying at something. So, it's kinda difficult to say what was motivating that and I think that, coming back to the fellas I live with, I might say

Cliques hindering meeting new people;

Sitting beside a stranger because you're late for class;

Course offering chances to meet new people;

Meeting new people in lectures;

Meeting new people during practical classes;

Being forced to mix with others on placement;

Getting on well with African student during placement;
Mature African students wanting to prove themselves;
Mature students being more independent;

Young Irish students waiting for instruction;

Different approaches to work causing animosity;

Concern over being made looking competent;

Cross cultural clashes during work placement;
Being unsure as to the causes of conflict;

French people are kinda anal and they don't particularly take notice of other peoples' ...they don't....like the fellas I'm living with, they don't pay much attention to the fact that other people are living there. So they'll take the bins out and leave them beside the bin and put another one in and close the window so it will be stinking! Now that could be because they are just messy people, or it could be because that's what French people...I mean it's a very difficult thing to say because it's like, you could meet a person from Italy who is obnoxious and incredibly unfriendly and rude. But Italian people in general from what I have met are not like that. But if you only met one or two...so it's kinda hard to know what is personality and what is culture.

CD: And when it comes to little niggles or issues, or even more serious issues – like you were saying that there was a bit of a misunderstanding between the mature African women or even with the French guys and the bins – would the fact that they are from a different culture in any way impact upon whether you would bring it up with them or not? Like if it was an Irish person would you talk it out with them?

Owen: I think possibly it would. I think especially somebody who is a black African person. I would be probably more hesitant because I would be afraid of looking like a racist. Yeah. I think it's something that actually...I mean I don't think I have to say it but I absolutely hate racism, but I'd hate to be considered, or for people to think that I was. For a person to think that I was thinking something about them based on their race.

CD: That would really upset you?

Owen: Yeah, even though basically what I am doing is thinking about their race in doing that! So like I mean, I might look at an African person on the bus or something. I might look at them just like I look at any person. And they'd see me looking at them and I'd look away and I might be worrying that they'd think I was looking at them cos I

Criticising French food hygiene;

Trying to separate personality and culture;

Avoiding conflict for fear of being seen as racist;

Fearing being seen as racist;

Being afraid of being perceived as racist;

think ‘What are they doing in my country taking my jobs?!’. So...it’s a weird, weird thing, but yeah I think I probably would talk it out more with an Irish person. Probably also because....I find it easier to be more...informal...just, ya know, get down to it and talk the way you would talk at home with your mates you grew up with all your life, while I wouldn’t do that so much with somebody from a different culture because, first of all I’d be worried they wouldn’t understand what I’d be saying in some cases...but I just know I wouldn’t really get to that.

CD: That’s really interesting. What has come up a bit from talking with other students, and I want your opinion on this – I’m not trying to lead you or anything – but when it comes to mixing with students from other cultures, a lot of Irish students talk about being scared or fearful or afraid. I mean, ...a ‘I wouldn’t know what to say’ kinda thing, ‘I’m afraid I’d say the wrong thing’ type thing. Do you think that’s a valid or common concern?

Owen: Yeah, no, I can understand that. I mean, certainly, when I was speaking to my Jewish roommate about Israel, I was....personally, I would be quite brash when it comes to politics, I will come out and say what I want to say... but I was still very kinda hesitant about just saying it exactly. And I wouldn’t with him necessarily come out and say exactly how I feel about things. I would be kind of, more diplomatic than I would generally be. So I think people do get kinda worried about saying the wrong thing and maybe insulting somebody’s culture or something like that. It’s like....there’s all these misconceptions about different cultures. And you might think that...you might know a tiny, tiny bit about Hinduism and you’ll know that they think cows are sacred. But you mightn’t understand that whatsoever. You might think some kinda weird thing about the whole cow thing, and you may be terrified, you might be worried that you will say something wrong. It’s a very, very different

Being more comfortable managing conflict with conationals;

Common language and approach facilitating conflict resolutions;

Worrying about not being understood by CD students;

Being hesitant talking with CD students;

Being more cautious talking with CD students;

Changing speech styles when talking with CD students;

Not saying what you think to CD students;

Irish students being worried about insulting CD students;

Worrying about possibly offending CD students;

thing from our culture, even though we have our crazy religion thing here as well. But eh...there's so many massive differences. At least, superficially they're massive differences anyway, that you do get worried about your own ignorance. And while you might have an interest in finding out what that is, you're not fully sure how to ask about it without sounding first of all like an idiot – cos you don't know, cos they know more than you and you don't want to look like a fool – but also you don't want to insult that person. And there's a terrible fear, I think, among people of looking like a racist. I think that's something that really – now maybe it's just me – but I think people are quite afraid of coming across as culturally ignorant because it has become kind of 'light racism' almost. You know, it's a different thing altogether, but it can manifest itself like that.

CD: So it could happen with a French or a German or a white Caucasian person just as easily as a black African person for example?

Owen: Oh yeah. Yeah.

CD: And the fact that you have students from other cultures on your course, do you think that makes any difference to the educational experience? Like do different perspectives come up more?

Owen: Well....the non-Irish in our course, or at least they weren't born in Ireland, they wouldn't be as...put forward their opinions as much. So, I mean, you would get that. But when they do there is a bit of difference and you do, but also with our course, it's very much now focused on – because of the changes in Irish society – on being culturally aware. Respecting other cultures. Like last year one of the modules was intercultural communication...but it was very interesting. I can't remember, I think there was two African students there and they talked a bit about their experience of Irish people and that was very interesting and we got an understanding and also we were talking about our experience with non-nationals, so that was good, kinda

Worrying about your own ignorance of cultures;

Not knowing how to asking culturally appropriate questions;

Not wanting to insult other cultures by accident;

Not wanting to look stupid;

Perceiving racism as cultural ignorance;

African students not being as vocal in class;

Curriculum engaging with diversity issues;

Advocating facilitated dialogues to help understanding;

Discussing culture in class;

Learning about others' perspectives;

understanding where both sides were coming from, which is something you don't generally get because you might experience a person from a different culture and then you go back to your mates and say something about the experience while you mightn't actually say it to a person of that actual culture. So that was kinda...there was a few things where there were misunderstandings and things like that. One of the stories the lecturer had was she went to Japan and there was a point when she went into a shop and the man couldn't understand what she was saying in her Japanese. So he started laughing. And she thought he was laughing at her, which would be the typical thing for us to think, but in fact he was laughing at himself because he was embarrassed, he was ashamed he didn't understand. So next time she went in she was ashamed because she thought he was laughing at her and he was ashamed because he had embarrassed himself by not understanding ...so that was a good thing for people to come together and iron out their misunderstandings. Of course it's a difficult thing to do but....

CD: And was that module optional?

Owen: No that was optional module unfortunately because it was very interesting and we learnt all about what you would do with a dying patient from different cultures like. Islamic patients, Jewish patients, Hinduism, everything. And working with people as well, because there would a lot of Filipino nurses as well and an increasing number of African nurses as well so...

CD: And when it comes to...my main interest is how students perceive difference or diversity. Now what's coming up a lot actually is what you spoke about – mature students. And what comes up a lot is nationality – German, French, Nigerian – and what comes up is religion as well. But also what is coming up an awful lot is 'maturity', as in age as a barrier to mixing perhaps. And my second interest area, which is a broader one, is really on things that either facilitate mixing with other cultures or things that are barriers. Now

Recognising culture as a barrier;

Seeing intercultural classes as practical;

Valuing courses in intercultural communication;

we have talked about, you have brought up a lot of really relevant stuff, but being a bit more focused on this, for you what are the key things that help Irish students mix with students from other cultures? Now they could be structural – as in just having students in your class – or they could be more ‘facilitating’ type things.

Owen: Well I suppose it’s kinda difficult to think of a way you could organise that in an official way because it would be very artificial. But em...I think generally the best way to do that would be to do it the same way you would do with any group of people who are formed into different wee bits, because there are people in my class that I would talk to very, very rarely. It’s not because we are in any way particularly culturally different, it’s because we formed into our wee group...

CD: From the outset?

Owen: Yeah, exactly. Like there was a couple of people I met on my first day and a couple of people they met on their first day and we all kind of banded together, so I think,with our own courses like... a good way of tackling that would be just to have group assignments and things like that and making it so that you can’t choose who is in your group so you’d always be ending up with your friends. So, em, I think it probably one way of doing it. I don’t know really. It’s a difficult question. And it’s important, yeah. But em...I think...probably just maybe educating people more in general. Not just like with my course where it’s very practical, but in general, on different – not necessarily different specific cultures but understanding how they... I mean, it would be very hard actually to come to a way of actually educating people how to come to people and speak to people from different cultures. I can’t even imagine how that would be, but I think probably it will emerge somehow in our education system because of the rise in different cultures. And I mean of course, the thing is, I think it’s something that any society that has experienced – I mean there’s still plenty of space in the country –

Seeing institutional interventions as artificial;

Groups structure hindering mixing new people;

Forming friendships very early in college;

Advocating assigned groups to facilitate mixing;

Advocating intercultural education as part of curriculum;

Perceiving communication as complicated;

Identifying IC education as important to successful communication;

but experienced a rise in immigration no matter what the cause...I mean I remember when I was a kid, coming to Dublin and seeing one black person was amazing. It was brilliant. You'd go home and tell your friends about it. [laughs]. So I think it's something that will come up in primary and secondary education and not even as an official thing but hopefully something that develops in our society, because I mean, at the moment, it takes years to do anything in this country. So we're not going to be perfect at integration just yet like. But em...hopefully it will be something that will develop from people themselves like and we're all going to be living together at some stage and we're all going to come in to contact with each other and especially in primary school and secondary school where you do form your entire basis for forming cliques, that's where you first get your wee group of friends. So I think that's really where people are going to learn to deal with different cultures so as long as we kinda have akeep it so primary schools are open places where every culture is represented in every primary school. Or at least a large variety of people. I mean we will become more able to deal with cultures and people my age and people a bit older and people even older than that have become better dealing with cultures. But I think to really have a properly integrated society it's got to be based on very early age development where difference isn't a bad thing and developing interests as well and...

CD: You know the way you were saying that if they had structured work groups, is that good because you are just forced to mix with them, or is it because you have common objectives or...

Owen: Yeah I think it's good because ...I don't like to use the word 'forced', but yeah it's good to put people in a situation where they have to talk to people and understand their perspectives and things like that. But also working to the same objective, you'll get different ideas with any group and to understand all these people...you don't know

Diversity being a novelty in childhood;

Growing up in a monocultural society;

Ireland being slow to adapt;

Predicting greater cross cultural contact;

Becoming socially conditioned in primary school;

Emphasising importance of primary education for cultural integration;

Advocating IC education at an early age;

Positive views of difference facilitating contact;

Advocating forced mixing;

Common objective helping develop relations;
Dialogue facilitating understanding;

Defining culture based on appearance and language;
Minimising difference;

them, they might look a bit different, they might speak a bit different. They are just the same...you know I don't think there is any... I don't Ireland is a racist country or anything like that, but developing just an understanding of the absolute...lack of danger of people who are different you know. Like these are just exactly the same as me or you. They just have a little bit of a different perspective maybe and they look a different or whatever and I think when you work together with people like that you realise that.

CD: And you know this idea of perceived danger, where do they get that from?

Owen: It's probably something to do with colonialism! [laughs]. I mean....colonialism... 800 years is going to have a huge effect on you. So, I think...that is probably a fear of different people, the threat of coming into the country you know. But eh, I mean...I think it's also just a lack of it happening on any kind of scale for the last 50 years and most peoples' lives...they've never experienced any kinda of racial...it's just come on in the last few years now. Cos Irish people have always been good travellers and stuff. They always integrated quite well. Certainly there were incidences of racism and that in America, in Irish American communities, but.....I don't.....just trying to think for a second here.....I don't think there is any really major racism in this country. I think we are just scared. A fear of difference. And it's probably also to do with a village mentality. Ireland is a tiny country. You can't go anywhere without meeting somebody who knows somebody you know! And to meet someone who does know anybody you know, or anybody belonging to you, or anything like that, could be kinda scary. In a kind of subconscious way. You wouldn't really think about it that way but like to have somebody who is completely outside this thing that you have always experienced. You could go anywhere in the country and they will know where you are from and probably know a town near you or somebody or you have heard the name of at least. So that is something very new.

Not fearing difference (facilitator);

Learning about people by working with them;

Colonialism affecting host receptivity;

Ireland not being used to diversity;

Denying racism exists in Ireland;

Ireland society being afraid of difference;

Having a village mentality;

Fearing the unknown;

Being subconsciously afraid of difference;

CD: *Why? Because it's comfortable to know somebody who knows somebody who knows you? Or...*

Owen: I mean it's comfortable. But it's also, it's something that has always been like that. And when you go meet someone and they just don't know anyone you have ever met like. You can be like 'Jesus!'. Cos I know, whenever you meet an Irish person they will always say 'Where are you from?' 'Oh do you know such and such?' and you kinda get started like that.

CD: *Ok. So is it a kind of barrier to what else you have to talk about?*

Owen: Yeah. I know myself, I always meet more people with this one lad I hang out with cos he knows everybody. So if he meets somebody he'll say 'Oh, do you know...anyone from Mayo? And they'll know someone...everyone knows someone from Mayo for some reason! And he will know them. So he'll get talking like 'How do you know that person?' and all this and it's a great way of getting to speak to just random people. But em...so that can become a kind of a barrier. I don't think it's a huge barrier but it can create...

CD: *It can facilitate it if you do know someone?*

Owen: Yeah. Exactly yeah.

CD: *That's really interesting. Degrees of separation. And let's say you are in a group, a mixed group. And there might be one Irish student who is mixing very well and there might be another Irish student who isn't, what, in your opinion, would they be doing for that to be the case? Or would they not be doing?*

Owen: Well, if they're in a group themselves...like they're in a group with people from a different culture and that Irish person is on his own....em...I'd imagine it would be either of two things. That they are

Starting conversation by seeking commonalities;

Building conversation based on commonalities;

Lack of commonalities hindering IC interaction and friendship;

Interest in other cultures facilitating contact;

either being very much about themselves and so the other group is interested in them, or they are being very much interested in the other group. I know myself when I am talking to the lads, they are very happy to be talking about their own culture and they are very interested when you are talking about yours. So I think, it's possibly, I dunno, I could be hugely, massively wrong here, but possibly complete disregard for the differences could kinda hinder it as well. I don't know...

CD: Why would you say that?

Owen: It's just it's a very good way of talking to people I think.

CD: Comparing differences?

Owen: Yeah...comparing differences. I know myself, you could have a half hour 40 minute talk on bread with a French person, cos they hate Irish bread. And they kinda go, 'French bread in Ireland isn't French bread'. 'Yeah, it's Irish French bread though!'. So you could go with this for about an hour. But if you come into it just disregarding that and trying to completely avoid it, I think probably communicating with anyone you need to kinda celebrate and respect differences, otherwise you will just talk about the same thing over and over again and the wee bit you might have in common, and then it's pointless. The whole point of interaction with other human beings is to learn from them and for them to learn from you and you'll never do that by talking about the two things you agree on. So, I mean, I think that could be part of it. Em...it all depends on how open you are as well. I mean there are some people who are just less open to speaking to people. I mean there is kind of a slightly...I think, where I find, if you have an accent people turn off. I have experienced that in some places. People not from that country. Like Irish people. I don't have experience with any other culture because I suppose they wouldn't come and say 'I didn't understand a word any of you were saying'. But like you do get that. We had a lecturer last year who was Russian and it

Not advocating ignoring differences;

Comparing differences helping IC dialogue;

Learning by engaging with different perspectives;

Learning from interaction with others;

Needing respect in order to communicate with others;

Needing to acknowledge difference in order to learn;

Needing to be open to talking (facilitator);

Accent hindering conversation;

could be difficult sometimes to understand what she was saying. And I think it's possible she actually threw in a few Russian words every now and again by accident. But there would be people who were like 'I couldn't understand a word she was saying' and they'd be talking away about how they couldn't understand!

CD: *So it's a vicious circle then?*

Owen: Yeah exactly. It was more like they actually closed their ears as opposed to they actually couldn't hear. So I think, it's not because they have any dislike for Russian people or even for people outside of Ireland or anything like that, I suppose, it comes back to it being easy. You know? And I know myself, sometimes you meet someone and you don't want to talk to them. You'd just rather walk on – like I wanna go home. You put the head down and you don't say 'Hello' and 'Howya' you just walk on, so I think that probably sums up...like those people probably don't pay attention in the lecture. So, they kinda have that as an excuse – 'I can't understand, I don't want to listen!'. But...I know obviously you just don't want to communicate with people and sometimes.... I think it comes back to the ease thing – it's just easier not to! It's easy just to talk to some people you've know all your life, who speak the exact same and use the exact same sort of words as you and a similar accent that you kind of understand. You know? I mean, I experience the same thing with people from the North. Like if you have a real thick Northern accent, you can kinda – I mean I wouldn't be too bad because I am around the border so I would have a bit more experience with it – but it definitely puts people off from the South. I have heard some awful things being said about people from the North. And I have also heard people say 'Ah I couldn't understand a word they said. Wasn't even listening to them!'. People from the same island ya know! So I think it's just about difference really, ya know. There's people from Cork who could be the same. People could turn off from them. Sometimes it's just easier to go with whatever

Using language issues as an excuse not to talk;

Closing one's ears;

Deciding not to make an effort to listen (barrier);

Being easier to avoid people from other cultures;

People opting for what's easy (barrier);

Being easier to communicate with your own culture;

Defining culture based on background and language;

Strong accents causing people to avoid others;

Being easier to communicate with your own culture;

is the most recognisable to you and easy to understand ya know.

CD: And when you were saying it helps when you are 'open', how would you understand 'open'? What does 'openness' mean?

Owen: Just in general, there are some people who are more open and approachable. Their whole body language – crossing your arms and stuff like that. You know, there's lots of different things that make people open and I suppose ... what makes people not open I'm not fully sure on. Possibly because I'm not a fantastic communicator myself. I wouldn't be the most approachable in all cases. So maybe I don't recognise what I'm doing that makes me unapproachable!

CD: But why do you think you're unapproachable?

Owen: Em...it's my own perception really. It's my own perception that I'm not the most approachable person so, em.... what makes people more approachable?...I dunno. It's a difficult question.

CD: That's ok. There is no right or wrong answer. Some people have totally different perspectives on what makes people open or not. 'Oh if you smile all the time that makes you open', while in some countries, if you smile all the time you can show that you're angry, so you know, it depends. Going back to the student composition in DCU, in your course am I right in thinking that it's mainly Irish and Africans and there wouldn't be other Europeans?

Owen: That's right.

CD: And in DCU, outside your course, or outside your school, would you be aware of students from other cultures even though they are not in your course?

Body language affecting IC communication;
Communicating with body language;

Self-criticising;

Self-criticising;

Owen: Apart from the lads I'm living with, yeah you would. Like there's like the Spanish students are very apparent, you see them...I'd say they are the most cliquey of the different nationalities. Yeah they very much seem to stick together. I have never spoken to any Spanish students. And they have these fantastic parties in the place. Just above from me, across from me, everywhere and I've never seen an Irish person or heard an Irish voice as I passed and like we were up on Youtube recently and searched DCU and there was this video of all these ones having this massive party out in the courtyard where I live and they seem to be all Spanish and they were cooking paella and having a big barbecue and everything. This must have been one of the weekends when everyone was going home like or something, because I never heard it or never seen it. I'm sure there are people who are gonna have parties and I'm not going to be at it but they would just seem to be a group that doesn't seem to encourage people to approach them even, ya know? Not necessarily actively do it but it's probably because there's a lot more Spanish students than French or German as well.

CD: *And do you reckon if there is less students from a certain culture, the likelihood of them mixing with Irish students is better?*

Owen: Well I think they probably band together quite tightly, but I think also they would – through necessity probably – branch out as well and make friends with people on the course as well.

CD: *And when you say by necessity, what would be the 'necessity'?*

Owen: Well I know myself I wouldn't ...I would get on with a lot of people, but I'd have a core group of people that I always really hang out with. And if one of those people is not around, you kinda have to come out and talk to people and that's why I know in my course, 200 hundred people, and I know them all quite well like. So I mean, I think that's probably part of it. You're not always going to

Spaniards being cliquey;

Spaniards sticking together;

Sticking together being a barrier to interacting with others;

Spaniards having parties;

Not being invited to Spaniards' parties;

Nature of a group deterring others to engage;

CD conational students banding together;

Mixing with other cultures by necessity;

Students needing social contact and friendship;

have this wee group of people around you, so you are going to have to talk to people. So there might be only a few French people, they mightn't all be doing the same course. They'll be sitting in lectures halls with different people and doing assignments with different people, so I think that's probably part of it.

CD: And would you be aware of any Asian students on campus?

Owen: I wouldn't be terribly...I know there are and I have see them but I wouldn't be terribly aware of them. ...I think they would seem to be quite organised together like the Spanish students. The Chinese students' society and things like that. But I wouldn't be terribly aware of them. I know there is a lot of ones doing Japanese and business and things like that, but I haven't really met any. Actually, there was a Chinese lad over in our apartment once with the French fellas and he was sound enough like. We got on well. Very interesting country to talk about but I wouldn't be are of too many.

CD: And is that simply because they wouldn't be in your class?

Owen: Probably, yeah.

CD: And do you socialise in DCU?

Owen: Oh yeah. I go to the Hub very regularly.

CD: And are there students from other cultures there?

Owen: There would...there would be sometimes a good amount of foreign students. The French, the ones I know are quite often in there whenever I'm in there. But I suppose it would be generally Irish. It would be a very Irish kinda place so I think it's generally Irish. I have seen people of other nationalities in there like but it could be just a reflection of the fact that the majority of the students are Irish in DCU of course. No I do see a good few foreigners in there alright.

Having a small conational group encouraging mixing;

Being somewhat aware of Asian students;

Not having contact with Asian students;

Having little contact with Asian students;

Not having Asian classmates;

Socialising on campus;

Some CD students socialising in DCU;

CD students not socialising in pubs as much as Irish;

CD: And if you were in the Hub now and you say the lads you are living with for example, having a couple of pints, would they join you or would you join them or would it be a case that...

Owen: I wouldn't really join the like. I'd go over and say 'Howaya' and stuff but I wouldn't really join them because my group of friends and their group of friends, we are all speaking English, they are all speaking French, it's just...it wouldn't really work d'ya know. It's putting more strain on our enjoyment of the situation than is necessary. When you are out and are taking a bit of relaxation from study and all that, you don't want to have to put a lot effort into enjoying yourself so I think that's kinda part of it.

CD: And would any of your mates ever say 'Yeah we should go out with them sometime' or...

Owen: Em, that wouldn't really happen now. Admittedly there was a bit of interest at the beginning of the year which I mentioned to the lads how many French women there were around the house, but unfortunately French women, again, speak a lot of French!...but the other Irish lads I am living with as well, like me and him have again and again said 'Right, we need to go out with the lads sometime', because they have a massive group of friends.

CD: That you should go out with the French lads?

Owen: Definitely, yeah. But it hasn't really materialised yet but we plan to do all these things but someday we'll cook a massive meal with them as well cos they're always cooking these brilliant meals for themselves and we were thinking to ourselves, we really need to start cooking proper food ourselves, so get some lessons off them or something. But em...never really made any plans, ya know, to go out with them. I have been offered a few times, as I said, but the effort....I didn't want to put their friends through that or myself ya know.

Language as a barrier to communication;

Language differences straining conversation;

Perceiving IC contact as an effort;

Romantic possibilities motivating IC contact;

Having good intentions of mixing;

French students being great cooks;
Perceiving French students as learning resources;
Not wanting to impose on CD students;

CD: *In general do you think Irish students are motivated to meet students from other cultures?*

Owen: I think we are interested, but we are possibly not motivated enough. Possibly we are lazy socialisers, I dunno. But I think we'll get better at it. I mean I know myself I didn't really associate with any people from outside Ireland last year – not through choice or anything like that. It just didn't happen. You have these things, living with these French lads, and you get into these groups and you talk to them about the differences and their culture and where they come from and stuff and I think I probably will be better from now on talking with people from different cultures as well.

CD: *Let's say an Irish student meets another Irish student. And let's say an Irish student meets a student from another culture, to communicate with the student from the other culture does that Irish student need to have a different type of communicative skills let's say, than they would need to just talk with an Irish...*

Owen: I think they need an awareness of the...to be self-aware about how these express themselves.

CD: *Self-aware. As opposed to an awareness of the other culture?*

Owen: Yeah cos there's lots of things Irish people will say that when you break them down into basic English, don't make a lot of sense. So you have to be very aware of that. Because I mean, people who have just learned a language, they will be just the same as anyone who is not 100% on something. They will be afraid or nervous to question it. So you might say something and they don't have a clue what you said but they'll say 'Oh yeah' and hopefully you'll explain yourself with your next sentence and they'll be very polite. I mean I've experienced that with the lads I am living with. They will not understand

Irish students not being motivated to mix;

Improving IC communication skills from experience;

Meeting CD students by living with them;

Needing self-awareness for IC communication;

Needing to be mindful of how you speak;

Being afraid to ask language question;

something I have said and they will just wait for it to become apparent from whatever else I say. So I mean, I think awareness of how you express yourself is important. Em, I think probably more of a motivation to actually really communicate as opposed to kinda going through the same thing you go through with everybody. When somebody has such a different experience – it might not be that different but could appear to be different or whatever – you kind of need to be more motivated to actually get into new ground instead of running over the same thing over and over again.

CD: Ok, I think that's about it. Have you any questions for me?

Owen: No I don't think so really. That's grand yeah.

[Recording stops]

[Recording restarts]

Owen: ...your own personal culture like. Because first of all students want to integrate and meet with students from Ireland so they will possibly take on something to aid that. So it is in effect the way they act as well. It's a culture in itself. Immigrants from all over the world, whenever they come to a country, they are not the same as the way they acted in their own home country because of course everyone around them was essentially the same, ya know, along cultural lines. So, you're living in a bit of a microcosm of your own society in another society you will take on differences.

CD: And do you think Irish students ever create a barrier, either consciously or subconsciously, or is it much more subtle?

Owen: I don't know about a 'barrier' now. I think...I'd like to think not anyway. I'm not sure. Em...possibly just out of laziness really. Just like the thing of not hearing them because they have an accent as an excuse. They don't want to make an effort so they use that as an excuse.

Engaging ambiguity;

Prioritising self-awareness for IC contact;

Motivation underpinning mixing;

Needing to me motivating to 'get into new ground';

Prioritising the role played by CD students in developing relations with hosts;

Immigrants adjusting to Irish culture;

Irish students being lazy;
Irish students not wanting to make the effort to mix;
Perceiving IC contact as an effort;

*CD: And where does laziness come from?
Or the inclination not to make an effort? Is
that just a human characteristic.*

Owen: It doesn't have to be a human characteristic, but it's something that the whole culture of you know, you're happy and we've got to that stage now here we have a certain amount of affluence. 'Cultural contentment!' that's it. And em...it probably leaks into every aspect of our lives. We don't care about politics anymore, we don't care about community and things like that and to a certain extent we are possibly not motivated to learn about people, because a certain amount of society these days has kinda reached....a certain quality of life where they're content for that to be it. Sheltered.

CD: The Maslow hierarchy kind of thing?

Owen: It's unfortunate saying that cos I really believe in Maslow's hierarchy but yeah I think that might be a possibility.

*CD: They believe they are self-actualised
but they actually mightn't be?*

Owen: Yeah.

CD: Ok, great. I will stop it now!

Owen: Ok.

Irish culture being lazy;

Irish culture becoming
materialistic;

Self-centred tendency
hindering contact with other
cultures;

END.