## *Professional development and European projects in education*

Lund, Anne Margaret Davidson

# Professional development and European projects in Education

Anne Margaret Davidson Lund



**Ed D**

**University of Durham**

**School of Education**

**1999**

**Preface**

Having been charged with developing a European dimension in the curriculum in one of the largest FE colleges in the UK, I was responsible for a large number of European transnational projects. The effect which participation in the projects had on my colleagues fascinated me. Despite changes in the sector at Incorporation in 1993, and heavily increased workloads, my project teams came back again and again to take on the additional work. Why?

An early summary which I wrote (Davidson Lund, 1992), expressed my concern to understand the wider impact on the institution and its staff of participation in transnational projects. I felt it clear that there were issues in connection with professional development in this context which were worthy of further scrutiny. This quotation illustrates the intriguing nature of the comments I drew from my colleagues, which played a part in spurring me on to this research.

> The conclusions drawn were that the project had been demanding but immensely worthwhile and had created an observable ripple effect among staff who were not immediately involved in the curriculum area at the centre of the initiative. (Davidson Lund, 1992: 45)

Five years on, and having left FE, I am as intrigued as ever by aspects of professional development in an intercultural context. Implementing and evaluating such activities forms an element of my present work in product and business development for the world's leading multimedia language training company, and I intend that it always will. I feel privileged to have 'stood in the shoes' of my colleagues and am deeply grateful to them for taking part in this study.

**Acknowledgements**

The idea of pursuing studies for an Ed D first came to me when I was fortunate enough to be sponsored for work-shadowing in the USA. My then colleagues David Marshall and Ken Ruddiman, in the UK, and Pete Kellams, in the USA, made the visit possible. The coincidence of that visit with the initiation of an Ed D programme at my *alma mater*, the University of Durham, and under the aegis of my former PGCE tutor, Professor Michael Byram, made it seem inevitable that I should enrol in the pilot cohort for the programme. I am deeply grateful to all the academic staff who have played a part in the Ed D programme, but especially to Professors Frank Coffield and Gerald Grace, whose early advice and encouragement stood me in good stead throughout.

I am also very grateful to the colleagues who agreed to be involved in my study. Their dedication to my requests at a time of great change and uncertainty in our college is something I shall never forget.

Professor Michael Byram eventually became my supervisor. I owe him a huge debt of gratitude for his patience in resolving the muddle of my ideas and exhorting me to be more explicit in my explanations!

My parents, like me, were undergraduate students at the University of Durham. They anticipated my completion of my doctorate there with great pride. This declaration is, however, tinged with sadness. My mother died unexpectedly just before I completed my thesis. She knew how much this achievement meant to me, and it is to her that I dedicate it.

There is one more person who must be mentioned here. Although he has never understood my reasons for wanting to undertake such a mammoth and masochistic exercise on top of a pressured full-time job, my husband David has unfailingly supported me throughout. I place on record here my heartfelt appreciation of his love and care for me during this curious period in our lives together.

# Contents

## List of figures

# Chapter 1 Introduction

> ...When schools take proper account of the European dimension, they may find it a stimulus to development. It may act as a lever to stimulate education systems and to encourage innovation, especially through the meeting of different approaches and teaching methods, and through the sharing of experience in developing teaching materials - all of which contribute to improving the quality of education. (Commission of the European Communities Green Paper on the European Dimension in Education: COM (93) 457 29/9/93 paragraph 16.)

## 1.1 The European dimension in education

In January 1997, in the context of the Inter-Governmental Conference which re-shaped the Treaty on European Union and produced the Treaty of Amsterdam, the European Commission's work plan spoke of a 'European model of society' and initiatives which would complement the strengthening economy and industrial performance of that society with benefits and a sense of identity for all the individuals of the EU. The Commission was promoting 'integration' and the creation of a European identity. Jean Monnet, one of the founding fathers of the European Union, stated of the process of European integration that, were he able to begin again, he would start with education (Phillips, 1995: 8). For some time it has been understood that education has a part to play in the development of an integrated Europe, and documents from a variety of organisations with an interest in the development of European cohesion have referred to education and the idea of a 'European dimension'. However, nowhere is it made clear what is understood by the term, although it is expected to deliver a variety of outcomes.

In this study I shall be looking at what the 'European dimension' may mean for some education practitioners.

With respect to describing the European dimension, the Resolution on the European dimension in education of 24 May 1988 of the Council of Ministers of Education saw

> ... enhanced treatment of the European dimension in education to be an element contributing to the development of the [European] Community and achievement of the objective of creating a unified internal market by 1992. (88/C/77/02)

Here, then, the emphasis is on the economic dimension of European integration.

In the same Official Journal it was reported that the European dimension should 'strengthen in young people a sense of European identity', although no definition of the same may be found in official documentation. So, there are a number of associated phrases in the documents, sometimes with implicit or explicit causal links, but often with no overall rationale.

The references above are from institutions concerned with the European Union and its current fifteen member states, but the European idea is a term also used by larger and more inclusive European groupings. The Standing Conference of Ministers of Education in the Council of Europe, 16 - 17 October 1991, pronounced that young people should be 'conscious of their common European identity' and went on to say that their education should be 'preparing young

people to be citizens of Europe'. This links the European idea to the debate about 'citizenship education', a separate topic of discussion in England and Wales and related to the discussion about the European idea at a time when racism and xenophobia appear to be on the increase (Bonney-Rust, 1995; Bell, 1996; Morrell, 1996). These issues are addressed in the statement made by Heads of State and Government *inter alia* on education for democratic citizenship (Council of Europe, 1997) and the report (September 1998) from the Advisory Group on Citizenship on education for citizenship in England. However, citizenship education, whether European or other, is a separate issue which I will not address in this study.

The European dimension in education is to be understood as distinct from 'Europeanisation' of education, or a 'European curriculum'. Early promoters of a 'European curriculum' sought homogeneity of systems, syllabuses, assessment and qualifications across the EU. However, their efforts were frustrated by the complexity of the task, and regulations which, until the ('Maastricht') Treaty on European Union in 1992, prevented the European Commission from having any say in the national educational systems and syllabuses of any EU member state. Efforts, for example, on the part of CEDEFOP[1], to work towards a homogenous curriculum, assessment and accreditation system in the subject of architecture, took seventeen years to accomplish.

[1] The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, an organisation created in 1976 to promote and develop vocational training of young people and adults, primarily through Europe-wide co-ordination of analysis and research activities.

It was conceded that this approach was unlikely to prove successful for all other subjects. Nonetheless, legacies of other initiatives premised on harmonisation remain, such as the European Schools, the International Baccalaureate and a complex framework of inter-institutional agreements in the Higher Education sector concerning mutual recognition of the constituent parts of a degree.

Although this work continues and produces much of value in terms of the mutual recognition of qualifications and professional status, and support for students and employees moving between EU member states, it is clear that a homogenous 'European curriculum', common to all EU member states, is neither realisable nor, for many, desirable. Even after the advent of Article 126, first enshrined in the Treaty on European Union, and which accords some powers to the EU in respect of the shaping of education at a supra-national level, the principle of subsidiarity prevents the Commission from having substantial influence in the sector. It may be seen that there are two forces pulling in opposite directions in the European Union: on the one hand, forces for integration, union, common structures, a common 'European identity', and on the other hand, forces for the preservation and strengthening of national, regional and local features and identity. There was and remains a need for a more pragmatic approach to the European dimension in education.

In the UK the then Department of Education and Science produced a policy document on the matter. The Green Paper circulated in 1992, *'Policy models: A Guide to developing and implementing European dimension policies in Local*

*Education Authorities, schools and colleges'*, promoted, among others, the following aims:

- encouraging awareness of the variety of European histories, geographies and cultures;
- promoting a sense of European identity, through first-hand experience of other countries where appropriate. (1992: 2)

The Paper sought to encourage a European dimension integrated into the curriculum at all levels, and the European dimension as a cross-curricular theme. At this time the European dimension appeared in the first version of the English and Welsh National Curriculum for students pre-16, but it was not included in the final version. Morrell (1996) discusses the rationale for this, saying that the European dimension was too vague and ill-defined for eventual inclusion, it had no powerful lobby supporting it, even that its inconsistency with the dominant Anglo-centric framework for the National Curriculum made it a candidate for exclusion. The DES Green Paper put forward examples for adapting and enhancing existing curricula, in the spirit of development and innovation. The European Commission's SOCRATES COMENIUS programme was a pan-European initiative with similar aims. Projects promoting this practical and pragmatic approach to the integration of a European dimension into the curriculum form the evidence base for my study.

There is in all this an implicit or explicit expectation that a European dimension in the curriculum will lead to a raising of awareness about Europe, a change of attitude towards Europe and other Europeans, even a change of identity, an

assumption of a European identity. The terms 'awareness', attitude' and 'identity' are regularly used in association with this interpretation of the European dimension. It is interesting that the terms used and the issues arising, described in vague language and as wishes rather than actual aims, are less to do with cognitive learning, more to do with relationships and emotions in respect of Europe, an entity which in the official documentation is itself described variously and inconsistently. 'Awareness', 'attitude' and 'identity' in respect of Europe are some of the concepts that I will examine in the context of a European dimension in education.

## 1.2 The role of the transnational project

The DES Green Paper proposed that

> ... the European dimension should equip young people with the knowledge, skills and attitudes they will need to live and work alongside other Europeans both in the UK and elsewhere and prepare them to participate in Europe's future as citizens, both of a nation and of a wider European community. (1992c: 4)

This appears to be a call for the rational, critical debate promoted by Bell (1996), Nordenbo (1995) and others. The Paper's recommendations pre-suppose that staff 'helping young people' (not just vocational education and training staff but, for example, youth workers) are in a position to stimulate such discussion from an informed and potentially unbiased perspective. Yet, just as a survey revealed a lack of confidence among trainee teachers concerning citizenship education (THES, 31/1/97: 7), so trainee and other teachers may be

supposed to be concerned about their ability to introduce a European dimension. One might ask how they, especially the non-linguists and others with limited experience of other cultures, are to acquire an appreciation of the European dimension, to a point of feeling sufficiently confident to be able to help young people appreciate the same. Even for new entrants to the teaching profession, the treatment of a European dimension in their training programme may be cursory, if it exists at all. In-service training on the European dimension exists, but it is inconsistently provided, and may not be top of the agenda of priorities for staff. Early findings by Convery et al (1996) highlight these concerns. So the questions arises as to how the European dimension may be integrated into the curriculum. From this point on I shall consider this question in the context of the post-16 sector, Further Education.

For an apparently simple solution, it is true that 'bolt-on' curriculum packs exist, but taught by non-specialists as, for example, a GNVQ Additional Unit, it may be the case that they are not effective even at the most basic level of raising awareness about European History, Geography and EU institutions. A more effective approach is for the curriculum to be pervaded by a European dimension, that, like Equal Opportunities before it, becomes a part of the whole, not an optional extra, and which students may perceive as a relevant enhancement of their chosen subject studies. This is the model preferred by the UK government (DES, 1992c), but it has implications for staff in terms of its delivery.

One way for a European dimension to be developed is for staff to work in partnership with colleagues in other countries and from other cultures. They may gain experience and expertise, either exclusive to one subject or on a cross-curricular theme, by becoming involved in a European 'transnational' project. 'Transnational' means multinational within the European Union. The adjective is used to describe, for example, partnerships comprising representatives of at least three EU member states, and implies co-operation in the pursuit of a common aim. Transnational projects are currently one of the simplest means of bringing together staff and students from different countries and cultures in Europe.

The conditions and indicative content for transnational projects are set by the CEC, and through programmes such as SOCRATES, LEONARDO DA VINCI, ESF EMPLOYMENT and others, staff have the opportunity to undertake joint curriculum development work compliant with criteria which insist on:

- a minimum of three partner countries involved (not exclusively EU member states; provision is made for partners from EFTA, Central and Eastern Europe, Mediterranean and Council of Europe countries to be involved);
- work demonstrably linked to local educational need;
- innovative work;
- activities which encompass exchanges of ideas, approaches and materials across the countries;
- tangible results - such as teaching materials - produced within a clearly-specified time-scale, usually no more than three years.

Transnational projects happen also to be one of the few opportunities for financially-supported curriculum development open to staff in FE. As I outlined above, teaching staff may be considered to be the key resource for the

introduction and promotion of the European dimension. As participation in transnational projects seems at present to be one of the few more readily available means to help them equip themselves for the task, this study will focus on professional development of staff in FE through their involvement in a transnational project. The transnational projects concerned will be considered in detail in later chapters.

## 1.3 The professional development of staff involved in a transnational project

It is my belief that without some understanding on their own part of what constitutes a European dimension, staff cannot be expected to assist others in acquiring whatever it represents or to work effectively on the innovative curriculum development required as a vehicle for a European dimension. I have explained that formal opportunities for staff to develop such an understanding are limited. It is interesting to consider how they develop their understanding, and whether, if staff do pursue development of a European dimension in the curriculum through a transnational project, it entails learning for them.

For the staff involved in the projects which I chose as the evidence base for this study, it is, for all but two, the first time that they have worked in regular contact with colleagues from other countries. It may therefore be supposed that working on the project will affect their awareness about Europe and other cultures, in other words, their awareness will be enhanced, their store of

knowledge added to. This is the supposition put forward in the 1992 DES Green Paper and one of the aims of my thesis will be to establish what evidence for this can be found.

Staff undertaking transnational projects are in a position of having to extend their existing experience, in however limited a fashion. It is to be imagined that learning in this context may affect their concepts, attitudes, perhaps also their behaviour, in a variety of ways and in respect of a range of topics. I will investigate the evidence for this.

It may be that this kind of learning, provoked by the catalyst of exposure to different cultures, bring about changes in their interpretations of their experience, to the point that they feel that their identity is affected. They may feel that they acquire an additional social identity, a 'European' identity. I will seek their reflections on these matters.

Finally, notwithstanding the supposition that staff who voluntarily become involved in a transnational development project are in some way in a state of 'preparedness' for learning (Taylor, 1994), it may be the case that through learning stimulated in this, specifically transnational, context, their awareness is enhanced, their concepts, behaviour and attitudes altered, even their sense of identity affected, in a way which will serve them in approaching better: 1) promoting in others, principally their students, an appreciation of the European dimension, through their, now informed, development of the European

dimension in the curriculum; and 2) other new learning required of them in the future in the context of their professional activity. This last is a significant point in FE in the UK, where change is the order of the day and staff, now more than ever before, need strategies to enable them to make the most of new opportunities, and to take charge of change. From the data gathered I hope to discover whether involvement in a transnational project may not only encourage and support staff in integrating a European dimension into the curriculum, but may also equip them with a broader experience base, and the confidence, reflexivity and expertise to enhance the quality of their professional work.

### 1.4 Assessing the impact of the transnational project

It was stated in the DES Green Paper that 'it will be important ... to assess the attitudinal changes and to establish what perceptions students and staff have of other European countries and peoples' (1992c: 20), and suggested that 'the LEA will need strategies to monitor the effectiveness of the European dimension' (1992c: 13). As there is no documentation on this it may be assumed that it is rarely done. It cannot in any case be carried out by the LEA now for FE colleges, independent of LEA control since 1993. There is no specific reference to the European dimension in the criteria for assessment and monitoring in connection with the Further Education Council inspection procedures. At best it forms an implicit part, if anything, of the general criteria on the range and responsiveness of a college's curriculum.

In Chapter 3 it will be seen that well-founded theories and terminologies to do with cognitive and affective development and the psychology of learning may be allied to the everyday terminology in official documentation on the European dimension, where words such as 'awareness', 'attitude' and 'identity' are used to describe the desired changes to be brought about by the inclusion of a European dimension in the curriculum. This will help to clarify the issues in order to analyse whether staff are in a position to develop the European dimension.

As part of a discussion of cultural relativism, Coulby & Jones present a case for staff understanding what they present to students (1996: 178). It might then reasonably be argued that staff should have some understanding themselves of the European dimension before endeavouring to incorporate it in the curriculum and pass it on to others. It has been shown that the expected results from the European dimension, defined as a dimension rather than curriculum content, go beyond factual knowledge about Europe, i.e. beyond the level which might be described as awareness, to a wish to generate change, and that the change might be to people's concepts and attitudes, even their identity. While no causal relationship is sought between involvement in a transnational project and a change in staff concepts, attitude or identity, it is nonetheless anticipated that work on a transnational project will add something to the range of perspectives experienced by the individuals concerned. In practice this study will look for evidence of perception of those changes in staff involved in transnational projects.

Changes in thinking during involvement in a transnational project may affect not only someone's concepts, attitudes, behaviour and identity, but may also enhance the individual's abilities to deal with new challenges and to lead change, if only at the level of the development of a European dimension within the curriculum. This will also be a focus for the study.

If the European dimension is supposed, as one of its outcomes, to bring about a change in (young) people's attitudes and give them a European identity, then its assessment should surely be designed to assess such changes. There is no evidence of this at present although certain early studies are emerging which seek to assess changes in awareness and attitude among school students involved in transnational projects, often where the students' work on the European dimension is associated with learning a foreign language (Adams et al, 1996; Convery et al, 1997). On the other hand, there seems to be no work on change among teaching staff, as will be the focus here.

As far as students are concerned the GCSE in European Studies is arguably the most comprehensive formal educational treatment of the European dimension, but it is a single subject, not integrated into the curriculum in general, not compulsory, and its assessment takes account only of factual information absorbed by students. This might be construed as an assessment of awareness, but does not enter the realm of attitudinal or identity change. Neither National Vocational Qualifications nor General National Vocational Qualifications take

any account of the European dimension as an integrated theme. In the GNVQ framework, where the European dimension exists specifically as an Additional Unit (for example, the unit 'Living and Working in Europe') assessment is again based only on the students' presentation of factual information. In syllabuses adapted and amended by individual institutions as part of transnational projects, such as the Higher National Diploma in European Tourism Management[2], again assessment only takes account of factual information.

As far as staff are concerned, where the development of a European dimension in the curriculum is stated as an aim for a transnational project, then evidence is demanded for project reports, often in the form of an example of teaching materials developed. No programme requires an assessment of the impact on staff of participation in such projects, other than as a global comment, in narrative evaluation reports, on the 'added value' of working with partners from other countries. There is an urgent need to assess the impact on staff involved in transnational projects, as they will in turn have an impact on others, and also because they are supposedly developing the European dimension in the curriculum which will lead students to learn and thereby reflect on and enhance their own awareness, concepts, attitudes, behaviour and identities. As Bonney-Rust states

> 'a very fundamental effect on the ... student's life comes through the medium of teachers. It is the teacher's broader vision and wider education which can (and does) revise attitudes' (1996: 50).

[2] A programme developed jointly through a transnational project with partners in 6 other countries under the former PETRA programme, and validated by EDEXCEL as a nationally-recognised award.

## 1.5 The thesis in outline

It has been shown that in official documentation there is an expectation, occasionally made explicit, that a European dimension in education will alter people's perceptions. This dimension has not been clearly defined, nor has the assumption been assessed for evidence. Transnational projects have been identified as a practical means of developing a European dimension in the curriculum, and of giving staff a chance not only to learn factual information but also to broaden their perspective, to the point of enhancing their awareness about other countries and cultures, encouraging them to reflect on their concepts, attitudes and behaviour in respect of other cultures, and to reflect on their own identities, which may in turn fit them better to support others in doing the same. This is the context for my research.

These issues may be formulated as overall research questions. It is hypothesised that involvement in a European transnational project will:

- increase staff knowledge of factual information about other countries and cultures;
- enhance their awareness about other countries and cultures;
- encourage them to be reflective about their own concepts, attitudes and behaviour;
- encourage them to reflect about their own social identities and those of others;
- increase their professional capacity, notably in respect of integrating a European dimension into the curriculum.

Through a study of FE staff involved in transnational projects this research aims to shed light on these issues. Evidence of staff learning will be sought from

documentary sources such as project reports. Staff will be encouraged to reflect by recording entries in a learning journal and to research their own learning by completing a repertory grid exercise. The journals and grids will also serve as preparation for semi-structured interviews. These data may reveal perceived changes in awareness, concepts, attitudes and behaviour, even identity.

Part I of my thesis gives the context for the study and the theoretical background to the empirical research. Part II describes and discusses the research design and process and the analysis of the data. In Part III I summarise the findings, relate them to the research questions and make recommendations concerning the potential for further study. There follow a bibliography and a number of appendices, detailed below.

In Chapter 1, I have introduced the topic and set out the research questions. I turn in Chapter 2 to a consideration of the term 'European dimension' and its various interpretations in education. I explain what transnational projects are, what relevance they have to the 'European dimension', and how they are central to the study. At this point I give the reasons for undertaking empirical research. In Chapter 3 I summarise the literature on the evaluation of transnational projects, focusing in particular on the issue of professional development. I set out the key theories relevant to the aims of the study: schema theory and theories of attitude and identity change in an intercultural environment, and the chapter ends with a summary of the themes under consideration. I move from theory to practice in Chapter 4: first, describing my chosen research paradigm,

then the way in which I selected and designed the research tools, and how I chose the participants, and finally, giving a detailed account of how I carried out the research. Chapter 5 follows a similar format: I discuss the method of analysis before describing the process, and the final section of the chapter deals with the findings. At the beginning of Chapter 6 I summarise the study, re-state the research questions and consider to what extent the findings may provide evidence to answer them. No study is perfect, and I discuss the limitations of my empirical research before making suggestions for further study in this field.

As is customary, I have included a comprehensive bibliography. Apart from a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms, the appendices relate to the empirical data collection process and comprise: the research tools as presented to the participants; the timetable for the process of data collection and 'taking back' to the participants; photocopies of the participants' repertory grids and learning journals, completed in handwriting; and a copy of some of the typed interview transcripts.

Fundamentally my study aims to begin to answer the question posed at the end of the DES Green Paper:

> To what extent has the European dimension affected the thinking and approaches of staff? (1992c: 22)

## Chapter 2 The 'European dimension'

As pointed out in Chapter 1, the European dimension is an important phrase, often used, but neither clarified nor consistently defined. Having outlined the background for my research I propose now to consider in more detail the interpretations placed on this phrase.

### 2.1 Interpretations of the European dimension in education

Ryba has asked the question 'what is the European dimension?' (1995: 33). It is a concept used by a variety of individuals and organisations and seems to be differently defined each time.

The Council of Europe, founded in 1949, promotes the Europeanisation of education in the context of European citizenship. It has conducted a review of history text-books (Council of Europe, 1986, cited in Phillips, 1995: 65) and has been responsible for certain tangible results affecting the curriculum, for example, the Modern Languages "Common European Framework" (1997). It is through such changes in the curriculum that the Europeanisation of education will come about. Yet in Chapter 1, I demonstrated that the Europeanisation of education is not necessarily to be interpreted as the same thing as the European dimension in education.

In the Official Journal of the European Communities the views of the Standing Council of Ministers of Education were that the European dimension in education should be

> an element contributing to the development of the [European] Community [and to the] objective of creating a unified internal market, [and should help to] strengthen in young people a sense of European identity. (C 177/5, 06/07/88)

So, alongside the economic and political goals of closer integration the issue of identity was raised. In 1991 the Standing Conference of Ministers of Education in the Council of Europe spoke of a need to help young people be 'conscious of their common European identity' (DES, 1992c: 2), a notion which has been criticised by Nordenbo, among others, as replacing nationalism with 'Euro-centrism' (1995: 38), encouraging young people to exchange one set of uncritical and exclusive values for another.

Ryba (1995) gives a comprehensive summary of the history of European dimension policy and the discussion at European level. It is his view that the European dimension of education does not and should not constitute a 'Europeanisation of education' (1995: 27) as I outlined it in Chapter 1, and he highlights the fact that to date it is diversity rather than unity which has dominated development (1995: 26) in a context where there is a concern not only to promote a European dimension but also to retain regional and cultural differences and national identities. This diversity and plurality of identities is in

direct contrast to the supposed 'Eurocentrism' against which both Ryba and Nordenbo protest.

At the national level, the UK DES Green Paper on the European dimension (1992c), while not defining the concept itself, gave perhaps the most explicit list ever published for the UK of aims which the European dimension in education was expected to achieve:

> - helping pupils and students to acquire a view of Europe as a multi-cultural, multi-lingual community which includes the UK;
> - encouraging awareness of the variety of European histories, geographies, and cultures;
> - preparing young people to take part in the economic and social development of Europe and making them aware of the opportunities and challenges that arise;
> - encouraging and improving competence in other European languages;
> - imparting knowledge of political, economic and social developments, past, present and future, including knowledge about the origins, workings and role of the EC;
> - promoting a sense of European identity, through first-hand experience of other countries where appropriate;
> - promoting an understanding of the EC's interdependence with the rest of Europe, and with the rest of the world. (DES, 1992c: 2)

The Paper went on to suggest content for the National Curriculum then under discussion for students pre-16, and for the new General National Vocational Qualifications post-16, also to advocate in-service training on the European dimension, and finished by noting that

> ... evaluation will need to identify and assess organisational and curricular changes. It will also be important, if more difficult, to

> assess the attitudinal changes and to establish what perceptions students and staff have of other European countries and peoples. (1992c: 20).

These were recommendations to Local Education Authorities. A study of available documentation, and over 10 years experience in the field suggest that they have remained recommendations, and at best, where they may have been implemented, there has been no systematic evaluation of the approaches and achievements. This is stated by Convey in his comments on recent United Kingdom Centre for European Education research into teacher education and the European dimension:

> ... it was [rare] to find any resolute evaluation of Europe-related courses and activities, and so few people knew what was going on within and outside an institution, what was successful and what was not. (1995:83)

That the then DES nonetheless expected the European dimension in the curriculum to do more than furnish young people with factual knowledge about Europe is clear. Bell has identified this:

> ...developing a European dimension was not simply about the content of teaching about Europe but also about the process of becoming a European citizen. (1995: 11)

His colleague Heidemann goes so far as to interpret this as the process of developing a European identity (1996: 62).

The DES Green Paper exhorts LEAs to ask 'what effect has [the policy] had on students' knowledge and understanding about Europe and their attitudes to Europe'. (1992c: 22). Adams, Evans & Raffan's (1996) report is the first significant study published in the UK which sets out to answer these questions. I treat the report in detail in Chapter 3.

The Commission of the European Communities' Green Paper on the European dimension in education (COM (93) 457 final), published post-Maastricht and taking advantage of the new Article 126 powers for the CEC to have some say in the educational syllabuses of the different European Union member states, sets out in Chapter Two 'The European Dimension and its Objectives'. The notion of 'European citizenship' recurs (ibid.: 3), and the learning of foreign languages acquires a sudden prominence (ibid.: 4). However, the European dimension is not defined, only its potential effects are listed, and these include 'socialisation in a European context' (ibid.: 6). Whereas other effects to be produced by the integration of a European dimension into the curriculum are in the realm of cognitive educational experience (such as the learning of facts about the history and geography of European Union member states) here, an affective educational experience in the notion of socialisation is added to the list.

The Commission's Green Paper also considers how staff might be prepared to deliver the European dimension. There are exhortations to in-service training and networking among professionals to bring about change. However, there are

criticisms of this approach, such as the somewhat cynical view taken by McLean:

> for the integrationist strategy of Jean Monnet to create institutions which would change the mind-sets of people is least likely to work in the area of teaching and learning where historical views of what is worth learning and how it should be done are powerfully established. (1995: 29)

I have already stated in Chapter 1 that the European dimension in the curriculum is not the same as a European curriculum. The European dimension in education may be accepted to be a dimension rather than a European curriculum in entirety, and to be applied across the curriculum. Bell (1995), Crossley (1984), Ryba (1995), Morrell (1996) and Convey (1996), among others, have indicated that whereas the concept exists, the results of its implementation may be variously described and may be regionally, even institutionally specific: 'much remains to be done' (Bell, 1995:156).

Ryba speaks of 'complacency at an official level about what is being achieved' (1995: 34). Indeed his view may be upheld, when one reads that without any systematic evaluation of the effects of a European dimension in education, the Commission still felt able, in its 1996 Green Paper, to comment on 'a growing European consciousness instilled through greater awareness of others as a result of exposure to new cultures and societies' (COM (96) 462: 1). In my study I will consider that assertion in the light of empirical evidence, focusing on staff, given their centrality in creating a European dimension in the curriculum for

students, and their consequent need themselves first to experience and be influenced by a European dimension.

## 2.2 Transnational projects as a vehicle for professional development

As I outlined in the introductory chapter, I am interested in looking at professional development which may come about through involvement in transnational projects in the FE sector in the UK, in other words, I am looking at the learning which staff feel they experience during their involvement in such a project. Although a large number of transnational projects are conducted in the sector each year, there is to my knowledge no body of published research or literature yet on this topic.

Although I am concerned with professional development solely in the context of transnational work, and in respect of the key questions which I listed in Chapter 1, I will look briefly first at professional development in general in the UK's FE sector in the period during which I conducted my research.

Since 1993 some of the few published documents concerned with research into FE have been the Coombe Lodge Reports, based on action research, case studies and reflections by practitioners. To an extent, they document the climate in the sector in the 1990s and the issues for professional development. The sector underwent rapid and significant change in the 1990s, presenting staff with a challenging environment in which to work, and with the need to reflect upon

and enhance their own personal skills and experience in order to rise to the challenge and participate with confidence in all the changes taking place. It was my experience that staff in the sector were exhorted repeatedly to become agents for change.

Ralph (1995), referring to Fullan (1991), took issue with the concept 'change agent', preferring the term 'change support agent', shifting the emphasis from a directive to a more interactive, promotional role for lecturers and others in respect of change. She advocated a change of culture in colleges, to that of a creative learning organisation, and the involvement of staff at all levels in the learning process and in the processes of change.

> The learning organisation develops out of the praxis and growth of its members and its promotion does not require a 'right first time' culture. What it does require is that change support agents develop the confidence and honesty to acknowledge and learn from their mistakes and that the organisation recognises, applauds and uses to advantage the integrity and creativity of this approach. (Ralph, 1995: 535)

My reason for discussing this aspect of professional development in the sector is that it is my belief that transnational projects offer a framework in which staff may have opportunities to create, try out and evaluate new developments in education, and to learn from others, and from their own reflections, in the process. The empirical data for this study may offer evidence for this.

I am aware that there are, however, complex issues to consider when discussing professional development and change in the educational environment. The topic

is very broad and I do not feel that it is relevant to discuss it in detail here, but I do believe that it is worth drawing a contrast between transnational projects, where innovation and change are paramount, and which involve at least an implicit need for professional enhancement, with other formats for change.

For example, Waugh and Godfrey's study (1995) of teachers' perceptions of the introduction of the Unit Curriculum System in Western Australia reveals the concern of staff in a changing system, staff at junior levels feeling that change was imposed upon them. The research indicated that implementation had not been thought through, adequate resources had not been provided and communications at all levels were poor. This confirms Fullan's assertion that:

> When change is imposed from the outside, it is bitterly resented ... Even when voluntarily engaged in, change is threatening and confusing ... Ultimately transformation of subjective realities is the essence of change. (1991: 35 - 6)

Gorringe and Toogood (1994) also raise these issues in the context of changes in culture in a FE college. Staff did not feel involved in the change which was the basis for their studies, they gave little evidence of learning and, while paying lip-service to the change, preferred to concentrate their efforts on preserving the familiar.

By contrast, involvement in carefully planned transnational projects, consistent with an institution's policies, can provide a framework for staff to encounter the unfamiliar in a positive context, to learn and to be instrumental in bringing

about change, over which they have 'ownership', and which may be to the benefit of their institution and all served by it. Involvement in and ownership of such projects encourage staff not to adopt the 'change but no change' approach documented by all writers on change and which Crossley explores, recognising that the 'autonomy of the decision-makers at different levels of the system' (1995: 106) is vital to their participation in the change process.

> There is a widely recognised need for managers in the post-compulsory sector who can more effectively manage innovation, adaptation and change. (1994: 196)

It is my view that transnational projects can promote the professional development which enables staff to rise to these challenges. There may be evidence for this in the empirical data.

Transnational projects differ from other projects, for which the criteria are also development and change, in the opportunities which they offer for professional development. Transnational projects represent one of the most practically feasible means of enabling staff to come into contact with colleagues in other countries and work with them in a sustained way. 'Transnational' is a word coined by the CEC to describe partnerships of institutions and individuals from more than one country. The term means more than 'international', having connotations of co-operation as a minimum requirement, and there is an expectation that the working together required for a transnational project will go beyond a mere exchanging of information to genuine joint working, a coming-together of people and ideas to reach a working compromise and agreed joint

position. This necessitates an understanding of the position of partners from other countries and cultures, and a willingness to co-operate, to be sufficiently open-minded as to consider and work with ideas and approaches different from those which the UK partners might have envisaged. That the term transnational embraces these implicit notions is not stated. Experience shows however that transnational projects function best when this is the interpretation of the working framework which is held by all the partners. For staff involved in such projects, meeting the implicit requirements of this framework may already imply professional development on their part.

## 2.3 Conclusion

Up to this point I have shown that the 'European dimension' and similar concepts are evidently part of education policy at both European and national levels, even though the definition and operation are unsatisfactory. I have also argued that professional development is a crucial pre-condition for successful implementation of such policy. Thirdly I have suggested that, despite recommendations, evaluation of policy and assessment of learning in this area has been rudimentary. The main purpose of this thesis is then to begin to fill this gap.

Ryba asks 'if we are seeking to change attitudes ... how far can we say we've progressed? (1995: 34). I have demonstrated that there is complacency at an official level about what is being achieved through transnational projects, little

evidence of generalisation even at the national level, and no systematic evaluation of progress undertaken to date. My modest study aims to add some empirical evidence and analysis to the debate.

In order to do this I felt that an empirical study was needed, for which I had to reach certain decisions about methodology. It is to this that I shall turn in the next chapter.

## Chapter 3 Theoretical framework

Having set the context for my research and outlined what I understand a European transnational project to be, I consider in this chapter the literature relating to transnational projects and their evaluation. I then detail theories which might be useful in evaluating professional development in association with a transnational project and give the reasons for my choice of theoretical framework for this study.

### 3.1 Evaluating transnational projects

As I am carrying out an evaluation of an aspect of learning during transnational project work, I need to look at evaluative studies which have already been conducted in the field. It is my experience that evaluation reports on transnational projects barely mention the learning undertaken by those who run the projects. Where they do, the focus is on operational aspects: checklists of skills in project management, 'do's and don'ts' for staff new to planning and administering project timetables, partnerships and budgets (e.g. Blackley, 1995; Blackley, Goddard & Seymour, 1995). As Convery *et al* point out, there is a paucity of evaluative research carried out on these projects independently of European institutions (1997: 12), and the sponsors' evaluative reports focus on the projects' outcomes, detailing, mostly in quantitative and statistical terms, the tangible products and the achievements by the projects' beneficiaries, should they have any. The number of

transnational programmes sponsored by the various Directorates General of the European Commission is very large.

Evaluation of a major body of transnational projects part-funded by the CEC in the period 1989-1994 produced 'Good Practice Guides' containing case study material, but all from the perspective of the programme and project objectives. They did not touch on the issue of professional development, required, desired or even incidental.

One evaluation report focusing on aspects of professional development in connection with a transnational project has recently become available. I discuss this study, co-ordinated in Wales (Burns & Adamson, 1998) later. In general, however, although formal evaluation is a requirement for all sponsored transnational projects, evaluative studies which I understand from anecdotal evidence to have been carried out and which touch on the theme of professional development rarely come into the public domain.

As far as other sources are concerned, some learning by staff participants in transnational projects is mentioned briefly in handbooks published by the Industrial Common Ownership Movement. Learning is defined in terms of skills and categorised, for example, under headings such as 'strategic, direct, partnership and affirmation' (Blackley, 1995). Quotations from case studies in Blackley (1995) and in reports on former IRIS (IRIS[1], 1995) and PETRA[2] (Employment Department, 1995) projects are some of the most explicit references published about learning by staff from participation in transnational projects, and about the impact that projects have within their institutions. A few examples will suffice:

> The exchange of expertise was multi-lateral. For example the partner in Hamburg is now radically rethinking its structure and organisation as a result of learning from partners in Dublin and Edinburgh. Project 745 (Blackley, 1995: 48)

> The development of the technical staff involved in the project should not be underestimated. Their interaction with European counterparts provided valuable experience which will inevitably permeate back into the curriculum and culture of the College. Project 2105 (Blackley, 1995: 65)

However, these comments are asides, rather than the main focus of the reports from which they are taken. In my study I aim to shed light on the learning experiences of staff as a central issue.

---

[1] A networking programme sponsored by the EC to promote training and employment opportunities for women.

[2] A programme sponsored by the EC to promote transnational projects developing innovative approaches to vocational education and training.

My comments here are confined to those programmes under which the projects were running which formed the evidence base for my empirical research: the European Social Fund EMPLOYMENT Programme (DGV) and the LEONARDO DA VINCI and SOCRATES Programmes (DGXXII).

In recent years there has been increased emphasis on the requirement for more formal, and preferably external, evaluation of three-year development projects operating under the ESF EMPLOYMENT Programme. However, very few of the completed reports on evaluative studies carried out in this context are ever published or disseminated. One exception, which has recently come into the public domain, is the 12-page report by Burns and Adamson on their evaluation of a 1995 - 1997 YOUTHSTART project. It is also exceptional in that it specifically addresses 'the effects of participation in the project for the partner institutions and their staff' (1998: 1). This external qualitative evaluation of a project run in Wales under the ESF YOUTHSTART Programme was published in February 1998. Of the six conclusions to the executive summary of their report, three might be considered significant in the context of this thesis. They state that:

- The Project presented a major opportunity for personal and staff development in terms of teaching skills, competence acquisition and confidence raising;
- The Project provided a context for a highly developed process of team building which continues to benefit Pontypridd College as an institution;

- The Project presented Pontypridd staff with a unique opportunity for critical reflection and self-comparison with transnational partners. (Burns & Adamson, 1998: 1)

Direct quotations in the report are taken from the semi-structured interviews conducted with the project staff and support the authors' summary. However, the researchers did not focus on the transnational aspect of the project in carrying out their study, choosing rather to consider general aspects staff development in respect of generic skills in project planning and management. It is my view that the majority of their findings could have been generated by a similar evaluation of a non-transnational project. Cultural, linguistic and communication issues receive only superficial attention in the report. Yet my empirical data will reveal in Chapter 5 how significant these are. Only one published statement from a project participant refers directly to the communication issues raised by the transnational aspect of the work:

> ... during the initial exchange visits **there was a great language** [terminology] **divide between us. It took me six months to work out what it was they meant when they spoke**[3], this was not helped by the vast amount of available information to take in during the visits to X. I was translating this information to staff in Ireland and I had to direct them as to what to look out for when they visited X. I think this process could have been improved if the staff from Ireland would have visited X first, before the training began, so they would have their own experience of the college, which would have helped them to make sense of the training materials. (Burns & Adamson, 1998: 9)

[3] Wherever text within quotations appears highlighted in 'bold' typeface, here and in subsequent chapters, it is my added emphasis.

The project's partners were in Ireland and Denmark. It is interesting to note that the colleague quoted above is speaking of communications problems between Ireland and Wales, two countries where it is supposed that the same language, English, is spoken. Burns and Adamson comment that 'whilst there is little evidence of serious language barriers in the conventional linguistic sense there are indications that the different educational cultures and practices create initial barriers to effective communication' (1998:9). The issue is not examined further in the report.

However, while a consideration of changes in staff awareness, attitudes, behaviour and identity, in relation to a European dimension, was not a purpose of Burns & Adamson's study, I was interested to see that some of the staff involved in the project express views about the learning process which they experienced, and which do touch on this issue:

> **I had to be reflexive** and pull myself together all the time because these [staff within partner institutions] are intelligent people, and listening skills [sic]and to re-evaluate the whole process of learning across all levels, **there was a constant development, self development, change and process including cultural** [sic]. (Burns & Adamson, 1998: 4)

While the report discusses the significance of this, and other, evidence for the personal and professional development of the staff concerned, there is no examination of the cross-cultural dimension to the learning experience.

Of the very limited amount of research undertaken into the learning which takes place by those involved in European transnational projects, the major study published to date in the UK focuses on learning by pupils, not staff, although a small number of interviews was carried out with the staff concerned (Convery *et al*, 1997). In respect of the staff, the research team notes that 'virtually none of the teachers interviewed had been on an in-service training course directly linked to the introduction of the European dimension ...' (1997: 34), and raises for discussion the issue of staff training for work on transnational projects and the integration of a European dimension in the curriculum.

Convery *et al* (1997: 56) identify five challenges to traditional notions of citizenship, five challenges to those becoming and educating others to become European citizens:

- lack of loyalty to one's fellow citizens within the EU;
- unprecedented mobility within the EU;
- nation states' inadequacy in dealing with their citizens' needs;
- 'cultural transmission' (similarities in attitude and behaviour according to social grouping rather than nationality);
- individualized social, moral and cultural values.

They do not discuss these with reference to their empirical data, asking only

> Is it the case that the increasing presence of a supranational state offers a more desirable alternative? There is some evidence of this in our pupil data from Germany and Italy but it is neither clear cut nor conclusive. (Convery *et al*, 1997:57)

Adams, Evans & Raffan (1996) have produced an early pilot study for an eventual full-scale evaluative report on the SOCRATES COMENIUS Programme Action 1, European Education Partnerships, sponsoring eventual three-year projects which began in 1995-96 and end in summer 1999. An explicit aim of the programme is the development of a European dimension within the curriculum for the students concerned. One key question in Adams *et al*'s enquiry is:

> What effect does participation in these projects have on school staff? (1996: 2)

Their early report is not able to give much evidence to answer the question. Responses to the first series of questionnaires reveal merely that staff engaged in a transnational project said it had given them 'a creative lift' and new ideas (1996: 3). However, this early finding does suggest that for staff involved in transnational projects their experiences may have some impact on their thinking, may occasion some change in their concepts. It is to this notion that I turn now.

### 3.2 Changes in concepts

It is reasonable to assume that the experiences of staff involved in transnational projects prompt, at the very least, pause for thought on their part, and that staff taking up such an opportunity to extend their professional experience will learn, formally, informally, even unwittingly. As I have stated in the earlier chapters, my interest is in exploring what and how staff feel they learn from the experience of working together with colleagues from other cultures, in looking at the notion of a European dimension and the personal and professional development which may arise from that. So, I need to consider theories which may help me in formulating a view about that, and in psychological terms, I need to find a way of understanding better and operationalising my research participants' concepts about their experiences. In this section I shall be considering theories helpful for those purposes.

At the very outset of my literature search, and in looking across the disciplines of international education and of learning psychology, I came upon the work of Whalley (1997), which I found addressed a number of the themes with which I was concerned. This led me to the work of Mezirow (1991, 1994) and thence to Kim (1984, 1988) and Taylor (1994). All have written on issues of learning psychology and social identity in an international context. They have also all developed further the theories of learning proposed by Kolb and his followers. I deal with their theories in a later section of this chapter.

I am also aware of the literature on the phenomenon described as 'culture shock' (e.g. Tajfel, 1982; Furnham & Bochner, 1986). However, authors on this topic are interested in how individuals adjust, psychologically and socially, to living abroad over shorter or longer periods of time, and although time spent abroad in the context of a transnational project could be examined in this way, it is not what I am concerned with.

Claxton has defined a theory as:

> ... a description. It is a way of representing something in terms of something else so as to render it less complex, and therefore more predictable ... a picture or a model or a metaphor or ... a language. (1984: 2)

He summarises the psychology of learning as creating 'theories about how people's theories change and develop' (1984: 8) and writes of a 'personal map' of the way in which we see things. For Claxton, the 'map' is a diagrammatic representation of our concepts. For any one person, the 'map' is unique to that individual and specific to the cultural context in which the individual exists. Claxton gives an illustration of the individual and culturally-specific nature of our 'maps' which I find is both memorable for a linguist and pertinent in the context of my research.

> For each of us it looks as if our language is the natural one. ...The French call it l'eau; the Italians aqua; the Germans Wasser; whereas we English call it exactly what it is ... water. (1984: 3)

Claxton suggests that the process of learning is an adding to and adapting of our personal map, our cognitive framework, our 'memory structures' or schemata:

> Most adult learning can be characterized as an attempt to fit the new knowledge ... into the memory structures already present - to use the existing memory schemes to guide the formation of new schemas[4]. (Lyndsay & Norman, 1977: 532)

Our 'personal maps', 'memory structures', our concepts about the way we see the world, may be interpreted as the 'schemata' of schema theory.

Let us consider schema theory. It is not necessarily a part of learning psychology, but rather a theory as to how people's concepts, people's 'pattern of meanings' (Geertz, 1975: 89) are interrelated. Given that I might expect people's concepts to be modified as a consequence of participation in a transnational project, I am using schema theory as a means of considering the same. To this extent, as I will show, it can be a useful basis for discussing learning.

Standard reference works on psychology give the 'schema' as a concept in cognitive, developmental and social psychology (Lindsay & Norman, 1977; Stratton & Hayes, 1993; Hayes, 1994), a concept which may be described as:

---

[4] The plural of 'schema' is variously given as 'schemas' or schemata'. I use 'schemata'.

> ... a cognitive framework which we build up through experience, and use to guide and direct our actions. (Hayes, 1994: 532)

Rumelhart gives a more detailed definition:

> ... a data structure for representing generic concepts in memory ... a schema contains, as part of its specification, the network of interrelations that is believed normally hold among the constituents of the concept in question [including] those underlying objects, situations, events, sequences of events, actions and sequences of actions. (1980: 34)

Rumelhart identifies three modes of learning which make up schema theory:

- 'accretion' - traces of experience, processed by schemata and laid down in memory;
- 'tuning' - modification and/or extension of an existing schema to fit it to new experience, possibly leading to 'concept generalisation'; and
- 'restructuring' - new schemata created first through 'patterned generation' (learning by analogy), then through 'schema induction'. (1980: 34 - 54)

These find an echo in the work of Mezirow, whose transformative learning theory posits four stages of learning. Mezirow defines his term 'meaning scheme' as 'the particular knowledge, beliefs, value judgements, and feelings that become articulated in an interpretation' (Mezirow, 1991: 44). This might be taken to be another expression of the term 'schema'.

**Figure 1 Mezirow's four stages of learning**

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| *NORM* | Stage 1 | Learning through existing meaning schemes. | Applying own usual frames of reference to new and bewildering circumstances. |
| | Stage 2 | Learning new meaning schemes. | Extending the scope of existing meaning schemes, deploying stereotypes in new circumstances, or modifying stereotypes. |
| | Stage 3 | Learning through transformation of meaning schemes. | Reflecting on assumptions, experience, and a growing sense of inadequacy concerning old ways of seeing and understanding meaning. |
| *CHANGE* | Stage 4 | Learning through perspective transformation. | Critical re-assessment of assumptions that support meaning schemes. |

His theory is premised on adults learning as a result of their being presented with new information, and reflects Maslow's theory of humanistic psychology, whereby both cognitive and affective traits are explored. Taylor takes issue with Mezirow's sequential progression of stages, proposing instead that adults learn in a more muddled fashion than Mezirow implies (1994: 172). The debate between Mezirow and Taylor continues at present.

Whalley (1997) has applied and extended Mezirow's theory in an intercultural context. He uses schema theory as the framework for examining the phenomenon of intercultural learning, considering to what extent people's interpretation of their experiences alters their concepts, and has an impact on their attitudes and identity. Whalley's study analysed data from journals kept over three months by Canadian students living and studying for a time in Japan, and Japanese students living and studying for a time in Canada. His aim was to refine the four stages of Mezirow's theory. In the final analysis, he argued, echoing Taylor (1994), that his evidence spoke against Mezirow's implied linear structure of progression through a series of stages, finding rather that his research participants' records of their experience showed a mix of different forms of learning at different times. He also found sufficient evidence in his data for a fifth form of learning. Whalley's findings are summarised below: I have highlighted the differences between these findings and Mezirow's theory.

**Figure 2 Whalley's and Mezirow's theories**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Learning through existing meaning schemes. | |
| 2 | Learning new meaning schemes. | 2.1 Learning through new meaning schemes by extending stereotypes.<br>2.2 Learning through new meaning schemes by modifying stereotypes. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 3 | Learning through transformation of meaning schemes. | 3.1 **Transforming meaning schemes through rejecting stereotypes.**[5]<br>3.2 **Transforming meaning schemes through recasting basic categories.**<br>3.3 **Transforming meaning schemes through learning elements of non-verbal communication.**<br>3.4 **Transforming meaning schemes through learning language.** |
| 4 | Learning through perspective transformation. | 4.1 **Transforming perspectives through a single incident.**<br>4.2 **Transforming perspectives through cumulative incidents.** |
| **5** | **Learning through resisting transformation.** | 5.1 **Resisting the transformation of meaning schemes.**<br>5.2 **Resisting the transformation of meaning perspectives.** |

The elements in the third form of learning concerned with cultural stereotyping, language and communication, are clearly particularly significant in the international context of Whalley's work.

As I stated above, what I am doing in this chapter is looking at different theories which might be useful to me in analysing my data. So, having looked at schema theory, and related theories in a specifically intercultural context, as means of explaining changes in people's concepts, I shall now consider a number of other theories from the same general area before deciding which ones I shall use. I now

---

[5] 'Bold' typeface here indicates Whalley's additions to Mezirow's original framework.

turn to a consideration of theories underpinning the study of changes in attitude and identity.

### 3.3 Changes in attitude and identity

I am addressing this issue because, as I demonstrated Chapters 1 and 2, in much of the literature from European bodies, in particular the European Commission, the terms 'attitude' and 'identity' are used freely but without theoretical underpinning.

Tajfel & Fraser state that

> attitudes can be conceived as an individual's summing up in various ways of his experience and that this summing up helps in his adaptation to the social events which he encounters. (1978: 33)

A change in someone's attitudes denotes, according to Tajfel and Fraser, a reaction to information, 'selected, distorted, misunderstood, invented, ignored' (1978: 33). They detail the cognitive processes of 'assimilation' and 'accommodation', developed by Piaget and accepted as central to attitude change. Similarities with schema theory as learning theory as proposed by Rumelhart may be seen.

> Assimilation: a new item of information is ... made to fit in with the background of experience we already possess.
>
> Accommodation: changes in the ways in which we organize our past experience when new information is obtained. (Tajfel & Fraser, 1978: 304).

Studying people's attitudes necessitates recognising that they are embedded in a system of norms and values. Different groups of people have different norms and values. Tajfel and Fraser state that

> a person will bring about change or be changed himself through contact with others. (1978: 94)

This reference to the interaction between groups leads me to the consideration of social identities. One of the Commission's claims for the European dimension is that it could/should lead to the development of a new 'European identity', so I need to look at theory of social identity as a way of clarifying this claim and what it might mean, in order that I may then seek evidence for it in my empirical data.

### 3.3.1 Social identity

Writing in 1979, Habermas developed a critical social theory, drawing on his experience as a philosopher and sociologist and welcoming scientific rigour in methodology, allied to hermeneutic 'interpretative understanding of social action' (1979: xi). He considered the key to understanding of the learning process to be 'understanding of meaning rather than delineation of causality' (Mezirow, 1991: 86). In other words, he expounded an approach through interpretation, in contrast to previous explanatory theories of cause and effect; and was a proponent of

hermeneutic as opposed to explanatory modes of enquiry. Discussing the issue of attitude and identity change he states that

> a given modification might be regarded either as a learning process and regeneration of the original system, or a process of dissolution and transformation into a new system. (1979: xvi)

So a change in one's attitude is linked to learning and to the potential for a change in one's identity. Billig pinpoints a common misconception that one's identity is somehow 'within the body or the mind of the individual' (1995: 7). According to Habermas (1979: xix) one's identity is a product of self-development intertwined with social development. Berger and Luckman express succinctly the notion that identity formation and development is a process and an interaction:

> Identity is a phenomenon that emerges from the dialectic between the individual and society. (1967: 195)

Social identity theory describes the various aspects of this interactive process. Key concepts are the group, and the individual's relationship with the group (Billig, 1995: 61), which is constantly shifting and changing.

Wetherell has written at length on the difference between personal identity and social identity and what happens to people's sense of themselves when they become members of groups (1996: 33). She explains the way in which individuals 'switch on different identities' according to the way in which they wish to be perceived by a

particular group at a given moment. Barth (1969: 14) has written of the self-ascription of identity, the passing from one group allegiance to another. Smith speaks of the changes in an individual's circumstances provoking a change in group identification, and points out that the different identities to which the individual adheres vary in importance at different times and under different circumstances (1991: 20).

All underline the fact that all individuals have a multiplicity of identities, they have loyalties to a wide variety of groups (Bonney-Rust, 1995: 15). As Kramsch has said:

> Words like 'national' or 'personal' identity are deceptive. Persons and nations are the locus of multiple, often contradictory, identities that come to the fore differently at different times. (1996: 99)

The notion of reflection, on one's environment, experience, interactions with others, is core to the continual development of one's identities. Habermas takes Piaget's concept of 'decentration' and posits that, for an individual to develop a sense of identity, the individual must realise his or her potential for 'critical self-reflection', or, as Mezirow explains it (1991: 71) 'when a person becomes decentered, 'communicatively achieved understanding' replaces the willingness to take for granted the 'normatively ascribed agreement' prescribed by the background convictions of the lifeworld'. For the process of attempting to make meaning of new events, an 'openness to different perspectives' is required (Mezirow, 1991: 85).

Reflection is a notion not only in the area of social identity theory, but also in learning theory. Adults presented with events new to their experience may reflect on them in the light of their experience to date, and their interpretations of the new experience demonstrate their learning, and also change their understanding of what they had learned previously. In other words, they can develop not only understanding but critical understanding. As Giddens states:

> Each one of us not only 'has', but lives a biography reflexively organised in terms of flow of social and psychological information about possible ways of life [experiencing] a temporal unfolding of self-identity. (1991: 14)

There are therefore links between the notion of change and new identities and learning stimulated by new environments.

Building on Habermas and the Frankfurt School, Mezirow describes a theory in which validity testing, rationality and argumentation combine to produce 'communicative competence'(Mezirow, 1991: 71), whereby individuals negotiate their own meanings and thereby become self-determining. People learn the skills required for testing their meanings, their interpretations of the social world, against those of others, thereby re-defining or confirming their interpretations, their meanings, and refining, in the process, the different facets of their social identity, in a constant process of interaction and negotiation with others.

In this study I am interested to see whether this process takes place among my participants in a cross-cultural context, i.e. whether they feel that they have redefined their social identity through testing their meanings and interpretations of the social world when in contact with people from different cultural backgrounds. For that reason I am considering here theory of culture learning.

### 3.3.2 Culture learning

Work on transnational projects is, according to the European Commission, leading to 'a growing European consciousness instilled through greater awareness of others as a result of exposure to new cultures and societies' (COM (96) 462: 1). So, it is necessary to use theory of culture learning and acquisition of intercultural competence to define this area more precisely, with a view to analysing the empirical data for evidence which might attest the presence or otherwise of intercultural competence.

The notion of 'culture' is closely associated with social identity theory. The groups or categories which Barth's (1969) work explores are ethnic groups which exhibit observable common cultural traits. His interest is in the way in which distinct ethnic groups are preserved, despite, or as he posits, precisely because they come into contact with other ethnic groups. His view is that a group has prescriptions, understood by all members, about social interaction, and that the prescriptions

preserve stability within the group and difference between it and any other. There are agreed codes about how group members may interact with members of a different group, but at the same time, there are other codes about how one has to remain separate.

> ... a dichotomization of others as strangers, as members of another ethnic group, implies a recognition of limitations on shared understandings, differences in criteria for judgement of value and performance, and a restriction of interaction to sectors of assumed common understanding and mutual interest. (1969: 15)

Whereas Geertz is concerned with analysing the shared meanings ('patterns of meanings', 1975: 89) which hold a group together and are their culture, in the sense of what they share beliefs about and their interpretations of the world (which in the individual appear as schemata), Barth is interested in how groups interact when they come into contact with one another and which symbols they use to differentiate themselves from others. Barth's view implies that, within Europe, there will always be groups which define themselves by contrast with others, and therefore a 'European identity' is unlikely, but it also implies that 'European identity' is meaningful as a notion by contrast with other identities of the same order, real or imagined, such as 'African' or 'Asian'.

Barth is of the opinion that group boundaries will be maintained, consequently that an over-arching, integrative 'single community', such as that suggested by the CEC's interest in the promotion of a 'European identity' is highly unlikely to come

about (1969: 16). That is not to say that learning about other cultures, 'culture learning', does not facilitate interaction between different ethnic groups. Consistent with other writers on social identity theory, Barth points out that in the process of cultural evolution, it is possible for the individual to learn from new experience and for their identity to change. Barth sees this as more likely to come about through interaction rather than through contemplation (1969: 29).

Kolb (1984), on the other hand, argues for transformation of experience through both action and reflection, or contemplation. He maintains that 'learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience' (1984: 38). In this, he builds on Piaget's theory of experiential learning, but emphasises the importance of reflection as well as action. Learning is a process, not a series of outcomes, and as such the dynamic of reflection is vital. He further distinguishes between learning through apprehension and learning through comprehension, what I would characterise as 'receptive' versus 'interactive' learning. In Kolb's view, the process of learning leads to adaptive flexibility and integrative development (1984: 213). The skills of adaptation and integration are important for the process of working with colleagues in other countries. It will be interesting to see whether there is evidence in the data for skill acquisition of this nature among my research participants.

Studies have been undertaken which examine experience and learning as a result of time spent abroad in another culture (Byram & Alred, 1992; Kim, 1988 & 1992;

Taylor, 1994; Whalley, 1997) and whereas time spent abroad is not necessarily, or even usually, a main part of a transnational project, the findings and theories developed as a result are relevant. Individuals involved in transnational projects are often required to spend brief periods of time abroad, working with their transnational partners. Although they may not live abroad for any length of time, they are nonetheless in the position of making observations about their host country and culture, perceiving difference and, if only to a limited extent, adapting to the prevailing circumstances in order to survive.

Work on a transnational project is in close co-operation with colleagues from other countries and cultures, even when the work largely takes place in the home country, at a distance from the transnational colleagues. While many of the most obvious aspects of 'culture shock' will not be experienced under these circumstances, there are still elements of learning about other culture(s) which may be as novel and potentially disorientating for the project's participants, for example, differences in working times and practices, in forms of address. The empirical data may yield evidence for this.

Furnham and Bochner have developed a 'culture learning theory' (1986) embracing both cognitive and affective learning. I have detailed above the theory of culture learning developed by Whalley (1997), and which is an extension of Mezirow's theory of transformative learning to the intercultural context. Whalley writes of a process of socialisation into the new culture, what Geertz (1973), and more

recently, Byram refer to as 'tertiary socialisation' (1991: 374) and Kim as 'acculturation' (1992:20), and of the adopting of an 'interculture', whereby the individual outside the cultural/ethnic group in question has learned sufficient to guess at correct practice in the strange culture. These theories detail the affective and cognitive elements of the culture learning process. Mezirow highlights as well the importance of the conative element in stimulating reflection and learning for change, in other words, the extent to which individuals want to change is, he feels, related to the extent to which they do actually change. He notes that the 'final stage' of learning involves the development of new skills, understandings and behaviours (1991: 174).

Kim (1992) has developed a theory identifying five elements in the acquisition of intercultural identity:

- the acceptance of the original and the new cultural elements;
- increased scope, depth and perspective in perception;
- increased self-knowledge, self-trust and self-directedness;
- an increased inner resilience that facilitates further development;
- and an increased creative resourcefulness to deal with new challenges. (Kim, 1992: 22)

Taylor (1994) reports on a study in which he collected data to test this theory. He summarises the development in an individual of an 'evolving intercultural identity' as

> ... greater inclusiveness of other points of view, contextual relativism, and recognising the commonality of humankind. (Taylor, 1994: 167)

Within the frame of reference developed by Kim (1992), Taylor (1994) and others, following on from Habermas, Byram (1997) has developed a theory of intercultural competence consisting in the learner's developing five 'savoirs': knowledge, skills, attitudes and values, the ability to learn and the ability to reflect critically on the learner's familiar culture. He has recently developed these further into a series of objectives which might form the basis for a programme of development of intercultural competence. I list them here:

**Figure 3 Byram's Teaching, Learning and Assessment Objectives for Intercultural Competence**

| | |
|---|---|
| Attitudes | Curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own |
| Knowledge | Of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction |
| Skills of interpreting and relating | Ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own |
| Skills of discovery and interaction | Ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitude and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction |
| Critical cultural awareness/political education | An ability to evaluate, critically and on the basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries |

(Byram, 1997: 57 - 64)

Byram posits that

> A learner possessing sociocultural competence will be able to interpret and bring different cultural systems into relation with one another, to interpret socially distinctive variations within a foreign cultural system, and to manage the dysfunctions and resistance peculiar to intercultural communication ... (1997: 13)

For all those I have detailed here, communication in the cross-cultural context is an issue. There would appear to be common accord among researchers in this field about the different knowledge and skills which an intercultural learner acquires, yet as Kim points out:

> in spite of the overall progress made so far in the status of intercultural communication as an area of study, there have yet to emerge coherent conceptual paradigms of intercultural communication. (1984: 13)

It will be interesting to see if my research participants' reflections add anything to the discussion.

Risager (1996) brings yet another perspective to the debate about culture learning, examining the relationship, or lack of it, between foreign language learning and culture learning. Byram is of the opinion that 'you cannot, other than artificially, separate language-learning from culture learning' (Buttjes & Byram, 1990: 18). The same might be true in reverse. For the research participants in Kim, Whalley, Byram and Risager's studies, learning of a foreign language was a major objective. This is not the case for the participants in my study. Byram considers that

> ... intercultural competence is the expression of self-identity in communicative situations which transcend national barriers. (Buttjes & Byram, 1990: 157)

Given that my participants did not possess foreign language skills appropriate to the cultures they encountered they might be hindered from becoming 'interculturally communicatively competent', but might nonetheless develop a level of 'intercultural competence'.

In her 1988 work, Kim summarises the findings of other researchers in this field in respect of the personality attributes which are useful in developing intercultural competence. She lists the following:

- risk-taking or tolerance for ambiguity (Fiske & Maddi, 1961)
- gregariousness (Bradburn, 1969)
- hardiness, resilience (Quisumbing, 1982)
- 'internal locus of control' (Yum, 1987)
- Also: extroversion, positiveness, respect for others, empathy, open-mindedness, self-control, flexibility. (Kim, 1988: 133)

There may be evidence in the data for views among my participants which would accord with this, and would indicate that they became to some extent 'interculturally competent'.

## 3.4 Intercultural competence, professional enhancement and the European dimension

I am interested to discover to what extent the experience of participation in a transnational project not only affects the thinking of staff, but also their professional capacity. I want to find out what staff gain in this respect that they would not gain, for example, from involvement in a development project at regional or national level.

Shearn (1995) views the notion of intercultural competence from a different perspective from the researchers I have detailed above. Having conducted research into the enhanced operational capacity of UK company employees who spend time on secondment abroad, he lists a number of positive personal and professional development objectives which staff appear to fulfil:

> ... staff have a broad outlook and acquire a number of skills which are additional to their core discipline, ... project management, team-working, computing and statistical analysis, interpersonal skills and financial awareness ... [and an] increased ability to understand the European perspective. (1995: 141)

It is clear that Shearn believes the staff he interviewed have enhanced their professional capacity through working in a different cultural context. The data may reveal this to be the case for my participants too.

Langer holds the view that exposure to other cultures promotes a greater 'mindfulness', by which he seems to refer to an aspect of intercultural competence, and in turn an enhanced professional capability:

> People are more likely to be mindful and to have accurate perceptions when they are attending to the unfamiliar ... than when they are dealing with the familiar. ... mindfulness can increase productivity, satisfaction, flexibility, innovation and leadership abilities. (1989: 133 quoted in Mezirow, 1991: 115)

If people learn from encountering difference, I am seeking to know how different the difference has to be for individuals to be sufficiently challenged so that it affects their thinking in the way that Josselson and Lieblich indicate in their analysis of the experiences of teachers who have participated in a country-to-country exchange.

> Exposure to and participation in different experiences challenged some of their understandings and provided opportunities for them to extend their thinking and construct new meanings. (1995: 249)

It may be that, having undergone and learned from their experience of difference in a European context, a member of staff would feel better equipped to begin passing on a European dimension, through curriculum change, to students. Edelhoff maintains that

> teachers who are meant to educate learners towards international learning must be international learners themselves. (1989, in Hughes, 1996: 131)

Yet seeking to promote appreciation and enjoyment of other cultures is easier said than done. It requires receptivity and reflexivity, and in particular a willingness to reflect critically on one's own attitude and culture (Jones, 1996: 12). That may be the change in attitudes and identity which participation in transnational projects bring about.

## 3.5 Summary

I have considered a number of theories relating to the psychology of learning, social identity, attitude and identity change and the acquisition of intercultural competence. All are in some measure significant for this study, which is an account of how staff

- acquire new concepts and new cultural learning,
- modify and/or add to their existing social identities,
- gain particular intercultural skills,

and how these in turn affect their perspective on and analysis of their existing social/shared meanings and their professional qualities.

Concerning the acquisition of new concepts, I have demonstrated that schema theory will be useful for looking at how people might feel that their concepts have changed as a consequence of participation in a transnational project.

Given the cross-cultural context for the empirical study, it is fair to anticipate that the participants may have undertaken new cultural learning. Again, schema theory is relevant for exploring this area. It may also be linked directly to the notion of intercultural competence. Byram has asserted that 'schema analysis would lead to an account of concepts and their interrelationships which are the shared meanings of a particular culture' (1989: 109) and that 'it is likely that the psychology of cultural cognition in the native culture will throw light on the psychology of experience from exposure to other cultures' (1989: 5). In other words, schema theory may be adapted to give an interpretation of learning in the context of cross-cultural experience. I will be drawing on Byram's interpretation of schema theory in the form of his (1997) framework of 'savoirs', or the knowledge and skills required for intercultural competence. This framework is in a line of development from Kolb's notions of adaptation and integration.

I shall also be referring to theory of social identity as developed by Habermas and his followers, especially Kim (1992) and Taylor (1994), to look at my participants' perceptions of changes in their attitudes and identity. I will further be seeking to link this to Byram's concept of 'tertiary socialisation' (1991: 374), Kim's 'acculturation' (1992: 20), the adopting of an 'interculture', or the development of intercultural competence.

Taylor (1994) felt that from the results of his study,

> 'the most significant change indicative of an evolving intercultural identity was the change in the participants' perspective'. (1994: 167)

I shall be looking for evidence from the data for a view on these points.

My combination of theories and concepts is then as follows:

| Theory/concept | Purpose |
|---|---|
| schema theory | to map the participants' views, and to map their schemata of 'Language and Communication', 'Europe and being European', 'Learning' and 'Socialisation', as well as noting their views concerning changes in their concepts |
| social identity theory | to consider what changes in social identity my participants feel they may have experienced in a cross-cultural context, and whether or not they have acquired an intercultural identity |
| Byram's framework of intercultural competence | to consider to what extent my participants feel they may have acquired the knowledge and skills to become interculturally competent |

So, having outlined my theoretical base, my purpose in the next chapter is to look at data collection issues.

## Chapter 4 Paradigm and methodology, participants and process

### 4.1 The interpretative paradigm

In wishing to find out about my research participants' interactions with their foreign colleagues and their understanding of the same I was to be endeavouring to interpret social phenomena, not as objective, external, pre-ordained matters but as 'socially constructed' by the individuals concerned (Hammersley, 1993). I had therefore to select an appropriate paradigm in which to work.

As I stated in Chapter 1, the purpose of my research was to collect data about FE staff experiences in order to find out

- whether staff engaged in transnational projects learned from their experiences;
- whether, having worked with colleagues from elsewhere in the European Union, they could identify differences in their own awareness, attitudes, behaviour and/or identity in respect of other countries or cultures; and
- whether they felt that such differences equipped them to function better in their professional role, either specifically in introducing a European dimension into the curriculum, or in more general terms.

In other words, I sought to understand 'to what extent has the European dimension affected the thinking and approaches of staff?' (DES, 1992c: 22).

Studies in the field of intercultural understanding, communication and competence are 'supra-disciplinary' (Kim, 1984: 14) and draw on elements of

anthropology, sociology, psychology and social-psychology; they may be classed as social science research. There are two paradigms for social science research, positivist and hermeneutic, i.e. for nomothetic or ideographic purposes.

One approach is the ethnomethodological, a holistic-contextual-qualitative model, owing much to constructivism and phenomenology. This follows the anti-positivist, ideographic or interpretative paradigm, 'based upon the assumption that social reality is created and sustained through subjective and intersubjective experience of the actors in the scene' (Morgan: 1980, quoted in Gudykunst & Kim, 1984: 170). This paradigm is usually associated, although not exclusively, with qualitative research methods.

It would have been possible to formulate my assumptions as a hypothesis to test, and in theory I might have conducted a controlled experiment to try to provide an answer to the question, but that was not my aim. My aim was not to test an assertion that people learn from their experiences in undertaking transnational projects, but to seek an interpretation of people's own understanding of their learning. The research exercise was 'to understand someone else's construction of reality through the words they use' (Zarate, Byram, & Murphy-Lejeune, 1996: 12), while recognising that 'ethnographic truths are 'partial' truths that we construct in relation to our identity, to the constructed truth of our informants and to our limited experience and interests' (Clifford & Marcus, 1986: 7).

Taking into account the nature of the question and Habermas' view that 'any methodology that systematically neglects the interpretative schemata through which social action is itself mediated ... is doomed to failure' (1979: xi), I chose to work in the interpretative paradigm, the ‚Verstehen' purpose seeming more appropriate than the ‚Erklären' purpose of the normative paradigm (Gudykust & Kim, 1984: 31). While the latter offered wider generalisability for eventual findings, I preferred to engage in 'not an experimental science in search of law but an interpretative one in search of meaning' (Geertz, 1973: 5). As Filstead states

> more often than not, the researcher in the quantitative paradigm is concerned with discovering, verifying or identifying causal relationships among concepts that derive from an a priori theoretical scheme.... By way of contrast, a qualitative researcher ... prefers the 'theory' to emerge from the data itself. (quoted in Cook & Reichardt, 1979: 37-8)

I wanted to take a heuristic approach, giving voice to my participants in their own language, while recognising that whichever way I chose to present the data would influence the interpretation. By focusing on reflective thinking I intended to encourage the research participants to interpret their experiences in their own words and analyse them to discover the underlying 'structure of signification' (Geertz, 1973: 9), 'setting down the meaning particular social actions have for the actors whose actions they are (Ryle's 'thick description') and stating ... what the knowledge thus attained demonstrates about ... social life as such' (Geertz, 1973: 27).

Another reason for doing the research, and doing it this way, was that 'it is not so much what happens to people but how they interpret and explain what happens to them that determines their actions, their hopes, their contentment and emotional well-being, and their performance' (Mezirow, 1991: xiii). The last is critical: I am concerned here also to consider to what extent involvement in transnational projects helps colleagues cope with change, gives them confidence and new skills, extends their professional capacity, and helps them to interpret and explain their experiences.

## 4.2 Data collection methods and instruments

As I was seeking understanding of meaning rather than delineation of causality (Mezirow, 1991) I chose qualitative, hermeneutic research methods as they offer 'a mode of investigation that shares the metatheoretical assumptions of the interpretative paradigm' (Ting-Toomey, 1984: 169), they 'can provide theoretically grounded, analytical accounts of 'what happens' in ways which statistical methods cannot accomplish' (Finch, 1985:113).

I designed research instruments to maximise opportunities for the research participants to interpret their learning experiences in their own words. Having chosen the methodology and the instruments, their appropriateness was confirmed again on reading Mezirow (1990, in Mezirow, 1991: 221) who advocates research into 'changes evidenced in learning journals, repertory grids ...'.

Although I could have used the survey method (Bell et al, 1984: 32-37), any series of questions designed to elicit the information required would have been so complex that the data was better collected by other methods (Cohen & Manion, 1989: 106-116). It might have jeopardised my research to have relied on a method so dependent on the willing co-operation at a distance of a large number of people, on their interpretation of and ability to respond to questions, and a method which yields quantitative data. A survey would not have been appropriate for gathering the sort of data I sought, where I felt spontaneity and the participants' use of language was important. I also deliberately limited the number of participants, following Beail's view that 'an intensive study of individuals is the route par excellence for developing and testing general propositions concerning behaviour or experience' (1985: 244).

A multi-method approach reduced the possibility of my obtaining biased data, or data generated by any one method. It also allowed triangulation and gave added weight to my findings. The methods I used were:

- a 'culture learning journal';
- a repertory grid exercise; and
- semi-structured interviews.

These were supported by a review of appropriate documentary evidence, such as project submissions and reports, bearing in mind that their primary purpose was not for this research study, and exercising due caution in interpreting the material (Habermas, 1979: xii). I had interviewed a number of the participants

on a similar theme twelve months previously, as part of a smaller and less ambitious exercise which served as a pilot phase, clarifying my methods and focus. This gave me the opportunity for triangulation over time and a limited amount of longitudinal analysis, i.e. a comparison of some of my participants' views at the very outset of their project and one year later. I kept a research diary throughout (Burgess, 1985: 10; Bell et al, 1984: 199-204), to facilitate the collation and analysis of data, and to assist my reflection on the research process.

The data generated by my study are of limited external validity and generalisability, but given the comparisons I make among the participants, there is high internal validity and reliability. The potential deficit in generalisability and objectivity, in view of the small number of participants and potential interviewer bias, is inevitable (Sapsford & Evans, 1981:46).

Using learning journals, a repertory grid exercise and semi-structured interviews gave the participants the opportunity to describe their experiences and their consequent learning in their own terms and thereby gave them a further opportunity for learning, by using the research instruments to promote their critical self-reflection (Mezirow, 1991: 87) and articulation to an interested party (i.e. me), an 'opportunity to narrate and reflect upon the narration, to analyse and interpret in unique circumstances what [might] otherwise be left unsaid' (Byram, 1996: 85): something they would probably not otherwise have

had the chance to do. I considered that this might be helpful to them in their evaluation of their experiences.

I adapted the culture learning journal, with permission, from a design used by Whalley as a culture learning journal for his Ph D thesis research. I intended it to give the participants a vehicle for recording their learning experiences, through their involvement in their transnational project, and a chance to reflect on them at a later stage, over a period of five months in total.

The learning journal is an instrument which promotes a form of account, a diary which a participant keeps over an agreed period of time, and which may also offer them the opportunity to return to an earlier entry and record a reflection on the same at a later date. The journal affords the researcher documentary evidence to use in support of other evidence, it is a means of triangulation of method, and while it is written for the researcher, it may be more discursive than interview data, given the relatively free time-frame for the journal's completion. Given that participants are encouraged, within the framework of the journal, to reflect on observations they have made at earlier dates, the method allows some triangulation over time. It may be said that the journal allows triangulation of investigator. By reflecting on their earlier journal entries and commenting on their earlier experience, the participants effectively researched themselves, as well as being researched (interviewed) by me, thus generating a second 'level' of data.

I asked my participants to record entries over a period of five months, on a weekly basis, and to reflect on each entry after approximately one month and record their reflections. I asked them to focus on learning which had come about directly as a result of involvement in their transnational project. My instructions were:

> (1) Record an interesting, puzzling or irritating event, or anything which has caused you to pause and reflect during the week;
> (2) Try to interpret or explain the experience approximately one month later.

An example of the culture learning journal used for my study may be seen at Appendix 1 and my accompanying letter to participants at Appendix 2.

There is evidence that the tendency towards reflective and critical thinking diminishes once people are away from formal education (Kitchener & King, 1990), and I felt that a gentle introductory exercise would be appropriate as a prompt to colleagues to engage in this form of thinking. I expected the data generated from this exercise to answer principally the question concerning the participants' learning, and to what extent it might be considered to have had an impact on their thinking.

In order to gain access to data which might shed light on the issue of the participants' views of their changed awareness, attitudes and/or behaviour, I chose to use a repertory grid exercise, modelled on the grid used by Byram and Alred (1992) for their research into foreign language assistants' cultural learning

experiences during their year abroad. The repertory grid exercise was to promote critical self-reflection as a preparation for other aspects of the data-gathering process and as a basis for interview.

Kelly's Repertory Grid technique (Kelly, 1955; Fransella & Bannister, 1977; Yorke, 1978, 1985; Beail, 1985) is a common research tool in psychology when the researcher wishes to dig below surface concepts and gain an understanding of the subject's constructs. Used in psychology in its own right, repertory grid technique has been taken over for use in other disciplines as a means to an end, in this instance, as the basis for a semi-structured interview. As Cohen and Manion point out (1989: 347) 'repertory grid ... is ... adaptable to the problem of identifying changes in individuals that occur as the result of some educational process'. I designed the grid using the simplest, 'minimum context card form ... [or] triadic method' (Beail, 1985: 4), and I asked the research participants to provide their own elements and bi-polar constructs, based on examples which I gave in their instructions. The examples I gave were carefully designed so that they would be 'expressed in the form X - Y rather than X - Not X', as advised by Yorke (1978: 66). It is valid either to provide or to elicit elements and constructs: here I elicited them, as I felt it was important to be sure that the elements and constructs used fell within the respective subject's 'range of convenience' (Fransella & Bannister, 1977: 13). I asked the participants to complete the construct cards first, then to complete the grid itself.

It was not my intention to pursue exhaustive analysis of the repertory grid with the participants, as the purpose of my research exercise was not a psychological profile of each participant. Nor did I feel it necessary to undertake statistical analysis of the grid results, as described in a number of repertory grid manuals (e.g. Beail, 1985). Instead, following the model used by Byram and Alred (1992), I intended using the grid in a semi-structured interview with each participant as the basis for a 'learning conversation' (Harri-Augstein & Thomas, 1991) and a means, through 'cognitive mirroring' (Beail, 1985: 271) of encouraging the participants to reflect on changes in themselves, their attitudes and behaviour, as a result of their learning experiences in their project. Designing the repertory grid was a challenging process, in particular, to be sure so to word the instructions as to minimise the risk of the participants not understanding what was expected of them. I was aware that for my participants, not immersed in the discourse, the explanations would have to be easy to follow. An example of the repertory grid which I used for this study is given at Appendix 3 and my accompanying letter to participants at Appendix 4.

I completed the design of both the journal and the grid bearing in mind the ultimate format for the analysis, which follows the narrative approach (see, for example, Spradley, 1979; Josselson & Lieblich, 1995; Whalley, 1997; Byram and Alred, 1992), in which the participants' words are interlaced with comment to point out the similarities and differences which constitute their learning. The grid was

> ... a flexible strategy of discovery ... its object is to carry on a guided conversation and to elicit rich, detailed materials that can be used in qualitative analysis. (Lofland, 1971: 76)

The interviews were the key final element in my data collection process, as 'it has been argued that the interview can be the main instrument of investigation, and compensate for a relatively short period of participant-observation' (Byram, Duffy & Murphy-Lejeune, 1996), or in this case, completion of a learning journal.

A structured interview (Cohen & Manion, 1989: 309) would not have afforded me the opportunity to modify the process as it developed, and as I wished to proceed in a spirit of flexible, open-minded exploration I chose to use a semi-structured interview format. While the questions arose from the interest I had in conducting the research and remained broadly the same for all participants, the more open format gave me the flexibility to adapt the content, sequence and wording during the individual interviews (Kerlinger, cited in Cohen & Manion, 1989: 309). I wanted the interview to be less a directive question-and-answer session, more a learning conversation, as

> only learners know what they are thinking, feeling, deciding, perceiving and doing when they are learning; and most of them are not very good at observing their own experiences. Fewer have a working language in which to report their learning processes, discuss them and consciously reflect upon them. (Harri-Augstein & Thomas, 1991: 25).

I recognised that my interlocutors would be expressing an interpretation of meaning situated within a personal frame of reference. The interviewees would

be engaging in dialogue as they and I attempted to 'fit' our 'questions and responses to the developing discourse' (Mishler, 1993: 47). I needed to take account of this, of the potential for interviewer bias, of the complexities of interview transcription and the potential for overlooking significant linguistic and paralinguistic features, and all the pitfalls identified by Spradley (1979). In the analysis it was my intention to 'seek to understand the respondent's utterances as employed and intended by the users ... within the ... context ... and the relationship of the interviewer and respondent' (Cicourel, 1967: 78).
I was to conduct the interviews myself, considering my experience to date as a modern languages oral examiner and in research interviewing to have prepared me for the role. I also intended recording the interviews, with the consent of the interviewees, for analysis. The recording transcripts were vital to the "long, preliminary soak" advocated by Hall (cited in Smith, 1975: 15) as an approach to the analysis of the content and the discourse of each interview. I designed a schedule for the pilot semi-structured interview, with a sheet of explanations for the interviewee. I showed the list of questions to the pilot interviewees as a means of helping them to understand the context for our discussion.

Through the semi-structured interview I also hoped to generate data which might answer, or at least illuminate, the last of the three research points, concerning change among the participants to a point where they felt it might have an impact on their professional capacity, whether it be the informed inclusion of a European dimension in the curriculum for their students, or in a wider sense.

### 4.3 The research participants

As the source of empirical data for my study I chose four transnational projects, because the staff involved in those projects had, with two exceptions, no prior experience of working with colleagues from other countries. I assumed that their learning from the project, in particular in respect of the European dimension, would be the more marked and easy to identify.

The four projects I chose represent something of the range of innovative development activity which transnational projects may support. The first was YOUTHTRAIN, a two-and-a-half year curriculum development project, to December 1997, under the European Social Fund Community Initiative EMPLOYMENT Programme YOUTHSTART strand. As stated by the then Employment Department in the Guidance for Applications, YOUTHSTART

> aims to improve the labour market entry opportunities for young people under 20 years of age, through the creation and development, on a transnational basis, of pilot projects of an innovatory nature. (1995: 48)

YOUTHTRAIN was devised by Nusquam[1] College in partnership with its local Youth Service and had as its objectives:

- to develop, obtain accreditation for and deliver an innovatory, modular vocational training programme in youthwork, including APL (Accreditation of Prior Learning) and workplace assessment; and

[1] This is my fictitious name for the FE college where I conducted my research.

- to train youthwork mentors, including training in workplace support and assessment.

The project was carried out in partnership with organisations in three other European countries: France, Spain and Germany. During the life of the project over 145 young people in one region of the UK received training and 45 obtained a qualification at NVQ Level II. 30 youth-workers received mentor training, then cascaded their training to other youth-workers in the region and beyond. The new NVQ Level II qualification, accredited through the Open College, became a routine part of college and Youth Service provision, giving disaffected youngsters recognition for activities undertaken outside the institutional framework of post-16 education and providing them with a route back into formal education, training and employment.

The second project, 'Europe via Email for Entry Level[2] Students' (1996 - 1999) is part-funded under Chapter II, COMENIUS, of the SOCRATES Programme, which in the Guidelines for Applicants (EC, 1997: 42) states as its objectives to:

- promote co-operation between schools;
- encourage contacts among pupils in different countries and **promote the European dimension** of their education;
- encourage the mobility of school teachers;
- **promote an improvement in knowledge of the cultures and language of European countries** by means of supporting partnerships between schools to enable them to develop a European Education Partnership (EEP).

The COMENIUS chapter is relatively new in European funding, following the ratification of the Treaty on European Union ('Maastricht') which, under Article

126, permitted EC involvement for the first time in education, not just vocational training. The chapter, unmodified in the EC's 'Amsterdam Treaty' of 1997, has as a priority the support of pre-16 schools, eligible in 1995 for the first time for European funding for project development. Projects from post-16 institutions seeking funding from this chapter must be particularly innovative to obtain support. European Education Partnerships operate on a 'contractor/sub-contractor' basis, one school or college taking on the role of contractor and co-ordinator on behalf of a partnership comprising schools and colleges in no fewer than three European countries. EEPs are intended to link schools and colleges with similar curriculum areas so that the students may work together on topics of joint interest. European funding support is available for staff mobility only, not for traditional student exchanges. Student contact is promoted using new communications technologies, such as fax and email.

The Entry Level EEP had as its objectives from the outset:

- integration of a European dimension into provision for students with learning difficulties by
- establishing an electronic communications forum between the partners to permit direct communication between students on themes of common interest, in particular,
- promoting independence, and
- promotion of staff interchanges and the sharing of good practice in relation to the students' curriculum content, delivery, assessment and progression.

The preparatory phase involved a team of two staff from Nusquam College, who made visits to both Sweden and Belgium in order to negotiate the planning for

[2] Nusquam College designation for students categorised as having 'Special Needs'.

the EEP with colleagues in a post-16 Special Needs educational establishment in each country. The EEP itself, which began in August 1996 and was to run for three years, is piloting developments with two student groups in each country, 100 students in total, young people aged 16-25 with mild to moderate learning difficulties and disabilities. The culmination of the first year was a 'European Day' in May 1997, when the student groups communicated in real-time as they participated in a series of interactive activities with a transnational dimension. Dissemination to other groups and other institutions was planned, with the intention that the EEP eventually become an integrated part of the curriculum each year for all Special Needs students in the partner organisations, and many beyond.

The third project is also a COMENIUS EEP, 'Acid Rain Across Europe'. Unlike the Entry Level EEP it is planned to be a cross-curricular project, bridging the academic/vocational divide and involving staff and students from the subject areas Biology, Geography, Psychology, Chemistry and Nursery Nursing, co-operating together with their counterparts in Sweden and Majorca to undertake transnational research surveys into the attitudes towards and education about acid rain in each country. As with the Entry Level EEP, planning for the project entailed preparatory visits by staff and it is the preparatory phase, a part-funded COMENIUS transnational project in itself, which is the focus for my study.

The final project (1995 - 1999) is part-financed under the LEONARDO DA VINCI programme, a programme which supports developments in vocational education and training, and which has as its aims to:

> improve the quality and innovative capacity of vocational training in Europe ... act as a catalyst for change ... foster innovation .. develop life-long learning ...address issues of importance ... **such as the intercultural dimension**. (Vademecum of the LEONARDO DA VINCI Programme, 1997: 4)

The pilot project NETFORM is a research and development exercise, with partners in Sweden and the Netherlands, to develop joint self-access and self-assessed training for first-line managers in post-compulsory vocational education and training. It has as a parallel aim the creation of a self-help transnational peer support network for staff. Staff are to use email, and eventually video-conferencing, to support work shadowing with their peers in other countries as a means to enhancing professional abilities among those staff new to managerial responsibilities and whose previous education and experience has not prepared them for the complexities of, for example, team management in times of change.

I chose these

- to demonstrate the range of developments possible through transnational projects;
- for pragmatic reasons, in that they were running throughout the period when I could collect data;

- as each has as an explicit aim the development of the European dimension in the curriculum;
- because none has as an aim the exchange of students, leaving staff free to concentrate on curriculum development rather than the logistics of moving young people from country to country; and
- because they are all being developed by staff who, with two exceptions, had never had any previous professional contact with countries outside the UK.

In identifying the staff to participate in the research exercise, I considered the issues of gender and ethnicity balance. The twelve eventual interviewees, including those involved in the pilot exercise, were all white, all but one female, four from academic subjects, eight from vocational and all at middle management level or below. I had identified a second male participant, who carried out preparatory work on both the learning journal and the repertory grid, but for personal reasons he withdrew from the research exercise before the agreed interview date. In terms of ethnicity the group reflects the staff population at Nusquam College, which, at the time I collected the data, among c. 600 staff had only three from the ethnic minority communities. My examination of transnational projects in the college revealed that most were undertaken by staff at a level below senior management, by vocational, rather than academic subject tutors, and in non-capital intensive programme areas. The gender profile of those groups within the college was, at the time, overwhelmingly female.

Two of the staff chosen to be interviewed had previous experience of work on a transnational project prior to the one in which they were involved at the time of the research. One subsequently withdrew. The participants were in all senses a selected sample: I considered it neither practical nor possible within my time-scale and budget to attempt to contact or work with a representative sample. The fact that all the staff concerned were working indirectly to me, as the college's central co-ordinator of transnational projects, raises ethical questions which are addressed below, but in practical terms, meant that access was not a problem.

### 4.4 The research process in action

Consistent with ethical requirements (Bottery, 1992; Finch, quoted in Hammersley, 1993) I negotiated with my colleagues to explain the purpose of my research and the audience for my findings, to secure their co-operation, and to ensure confidentiality. I confirmed that the participants would see the first draft of the data analysis and that I would encourage them to amend it where necessary to give what they felt to be an accurate reflection of their views. In order to preserve the participants' anonymity, and to make the reporting process more accessible, I gave each of the participants a code name, and referred to them only by that name thereafter in any recorded or written work. The interviewees' anonymity was preserved, and the interview recordings were later destroyed.

Although the data collection period coincided with a stressful period at Nusquam College the staff involved continued, with only two exceptions, with the research. One member of staff withdrew early in the exercise, as detailed above. A second member of staff who did not complete the full exercise was required to take on an increased workload at short notice and apologised for not being in a position to put the research exercise higher among her priorities.

Having identified the staff who would participate in the pilot exercises and the main research, I drew up a schedule for the distribution of the research instruments, an indicative timetable for distribution, and a timetable for myself for checking that the participants had understood their instructions and were completing their repertory grids and learning journals. I also drew up a provisional timetable for completing interviews and taking the data back for comment. This timetable may be seen at Appendix 5.

I conducted a small pilot exercise. Two staff who were not to be participants in the full study undertook to keep the learning journal for two months, to complete and comment on the repertory grid and to be interviewed.

Insofar as the journal was concerned, the pilot phase was of limited use as the respondents did not complete the journal, despite my requests, but confined themselves to commenting on its layout and terminology. Minor changes which I made to the journal following the pilot exercise were to include the word 'European' in the heading on each page, and to specify an indicative time

interval ('weeks') between the original entries, on the left-hand side of the page, and reflections on them, on the right-hand side. Although I would have liked to have begun the pilot again, time was pressing, and I was anxious to distribute the journal to the research participants proper, reasoning that I could identify and amend any flaws in the design at the first check on the main participants within the first 2 - 3 weeks of their receiving the journal to begin weekly entries. As it happened, I made no further amendments.

Having made two checks on each of the pilot research participants, and having been assured that they were completing the journal, I drafted the repertory grid exercise (see Appendix 3) and the letter of instructions to accompany it (see Appendix 4). I would have liked to have spent time with each of the research participants, explaining the grid exercise to them in a preliminary interview. In practice, for both the pilot and the main exercise, I had to explain by telephone, the result of time constraints on all. I remain uncertain as to whether face-to-face explanation of the process would have resulted in a greater number of completed repertory grids.

The first pilot subject to tackle the repertory grid and take part in the semi-structured interview was Norman. Undertaking the interview with Norman was a sobering exercise. At first all went well: I was in time, the location was suitable, the telephone was diverted, the cassette recorder was set up with spare cassettes to hand, and we had an afternoon ahead of us, neither of us having further appointments that day. However, as I opened the discussion it became

apparent that, despite repeated assurances to me beforehand, Norman had not understood the repertory grid instructions, and had not completed the grid in full. While I am normally a confident interviewer, this threw me, and I spent an unnecessarily lengthy time with Norman, trying to fill in the grid together. When I realised how much time was passing I abandoned the grid and focused instead on the preliminary construct cards which he had completed. From that point, the interview took on more of the nature of a learning conversation. I learned from that pilot interview and the subsequent one, that, despite the fact that it was only a means to an end, I was focusing too much on the repertory grid, and not enough on the constructs in columns 3 and 4, and on what my interlocutors were saying about their learning experiences.

My second pilot subject was Rita, who completed the grid in record time, then bore out my concerns about my respondents' understanding of what was required when she telephoned to say:

> I did it in a hurry, I hadn't read the instructions properly, and I've put everything into the two categories you gave in the examples, formal and informal learning. I got to the end and then I realised what I'd done and I thought 'Bugger this!' Then I thought, 'no, I want to do it again, because it's really interesting. But it's tricky, isn't it?

Disconcerting in itself, the episode justified, for me, the choice of this research instrument and illustrated the way in which it was already prompting my colleagues to engage in critical reflection. Having to supply Rita with a second

set of repertory grid materials proved again for me that field research is far more time-consuming than is ever anticipated.

In my interview with Rita, it became clear that the schedule which I had prepared was too lengthy and complex for me, and served only to confuse my participants when I showed it to them. Reading, further reflection and discussion with Byram and Alred, on whose model I had drawn for the exercise, led to my devising a series of much simpler prompt cards for my use in the interviews. I accepted that 'finding the right question to ask is more difficult than answering it' (Merton, 1959, cited in Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983: 34). By this stage I had decided that, whereas micro-cassettes and a hand-held micro-cassette recorder were discreet and easy to transport, they did not lend themselves easily to the transcription process. I switched to full-size cassettes and hired secretarial assistance to make a first transcript of my recordings. Although I would lose the detailed working-through to make sense of the recording, I felt I could recoup that by checking the initial transcript against the recording for accuracy, and could begin the 'long soak' through that process.

All twelve of the staff I approached agreed to participate in the research exercise. One withdrew very early in the process as a result of pressure of work. I replaced her with a participant from a 'reserve list' which I had drawn up in advance. Two other participants withdrew three months into the main exercise, at which point I considered it no longer viable to replace them. Jo handed over all entries to date in her learning journal, and although the entries were sketchy

and not necessarily focused on her transnational project, I was grateful, as she was one of the two participants whom I had interviewed a year earlier for a similar exercise and I was keen to see whether or not it was possible to discern any change in her views twelve months' hence. My second male participant, Jack, withdrew during the same period: the circumstances of his departure from college made him feel that he could not hand over any of the material he had recorded, as, despite my reassurances, he feared that the views he had expressed in his learning journal might not remain confidential.

It was at this point that I decided to include the responses from my two pilot study participants alongside the data I was gathering from my main study participants, reasoning firstly that I ought to try to include at least one male participant's views, and that if I were including one set of data from the pilot study, I might as well include both.

The main data collection exercise was scheduled to take place over five months during the Spring and Summer terms of the 1996-97 academic year. I had selected this period as being less pressured than the Autumn term. What I could not have foreseen was that the college decided in February to make 50 staff compulsorily redundant. I was fortunate in that only one of my participants, Jo, was directly affected, but the sensitive climate and increased workload for remaining staff made it a difficult time to be placing (as I felt) additional burdens on my colleagues' shoulders.

By mid-February, however, I had distributed the learning journals to all my participants except Lucy, the 'reserve', who received her learning journal in the first week of March. I checked with all that they were completing the journals, both one month and two months after distributing the documents. Three months into the process I collected in a copy of all learning journal entries to date, to give me an opportunity to consider whether my proposed methods of analysis would prove workable.

One participant contacted me: I recorded in my research diary feeling 'pathetically grateful to Sonia for taking the time and effort to ask in detail about what I wanted in the journal' (Research diary,11/02/97). I wondered, however, whether her question revealed the extent to which Sonia's journal (and the others?) were written with an agenda for me, rather than for their own benefit. I questioned whether I would be sufficiently objective in analysing Sonia's journal entries while my feelings of obligation towards her lingered. Many ethnographic reports document the effects of the researcher on the researched, and the potential bias consequent upon this, but there is little evidence of reflection among practitioners concerning the effects of the researched on the researcher and their potential consequences.

Prompted by Betty, who came to show me her first month's journal entries, I attended a team meeting for the COMENIUS EEP, following which three of my participants took the opportunity to discuss together with me and with each other their experience of keeping the journal. It was not possible to organise

this kind of group experience for any of the other participants. However, my regular checks reassured me:

> *Jo: 10/03/97:* I thought it would be a chore, but it's actually nice to reflect.

and gave me food for thought:

> It must vary as to when in the project you do it [the journal exercise], as to how stressed you are. (Rita, comment noted in Research diary 24/03/97)

I sent out to all my participants the repertory grid and instructions for its completion, and followed up with a telephone conversation with each participant to answer questions and clarify details.

The most difficult part of the next stage was agreeing a date with each participant for the main interview, not only because of routine time constraints, but also because of my afore-mentioned reluctance to engage my colleagues in additional commitments of time and effort. My research diary records agonising before each request for an interview, yet all were met with a positive response. For example:

> *29/04/97* Worked with Gina all afternoon. Intended asking her for a date for the interview but hadn't the courage as we were both worn out by 18.00 - the last thing to do was to start asking her to do more work for me.
> *03/05/97* It's OK. Gina rang and I plucked up courage to ask her. We've fixed a date.

Most of the interviews had to be re-arranged at least once, meaning that they took place over a period from 13/06/97 to 11/08/97. I dispatched the revised interview schedule to all and spent time learning lessons from the pilot interviews so that my technique in instigating a learning conversation might improve.

All participants saw the interview as the end of the research exercise for them, despite agreement at the outset that the learning journal be kept for five months. On reflection I feel that the additional work for my colleagues was indeed a significant burden and that I was affected by this to the point where Susie, at the end of the first of the main interviews, handed all her materials to me - including the learning journal complete for three months only - with a sigh of relief and I was not sufficiently distanced to feel that I could insist she keep it and carry the exercise through to the end. It is open to questions as to whether this would have been different had my participants been unknown to me, or if the research had been on behalf of a sponsor rather than for my own interest.

In and between the interviews I made a brief profile for myself of all the participants, noting any potentially relevant information I had gleaned about them, before, during and after the interviews, and when speaking to them on other occasions. I considered that details about their foreign language learning capabilities and experiences, family circumstances, holiday habits, etc. might prove illuminating should a statement in their data prove opaque. I pondered as

to whether this was strictly ethical, and whether I would I eventually use this information. Given that it unavoidably formed something of my impression of each participant, I wondered whether I could be said not to be using it, whether or not I did so consciously.

In preparing for the interviews I relied in part on my experience as an oral examiner, remembering to have ready in advance small but important items such as spare cassettes, and taking in the advice given by my pilot interviewees, including practicalities like 'Do not disturb' signs.

During the pilot interviews I had noted that the repertory grid exercise seemed 'to focus my participants' minds, then unfocus them' (Research diary, 03/02/97). I recognised that this could be more an issue of my lack of interviewing skill than one pertaining to the grid, and made every effort to focus more closely on what my participants were saying, rather than on the grid. Reflecting some days after one research diary entry enabled me to realise that, although I was endeavouring not to have an overt influence on my interlocutors' responses, my subconscious desire for them to produce 'useful material' might be more obvious to them than I realised.

> Not happy with the results so far - all seem to point to travel, face-to-face meeting being fun, and not much else. (Research diary, 06/05/97)

At that stage in the exercise I had not understood the potential for data, which might seem less promising at first glance, to yield interesting findings when

analysed for interpretation rather than surface statement. I return to this in Chapter 5.

The first main interview, with Susie, went well, although she had barely touched the repertory grid exercise. Having learned from the pilot interview with Norman I discarded the grid and we focused instead on the issues raised on the prompt cards which I had refined out of the original pilot interview schedule. Susie relaxed as the interview progressed and by half way through the one-and-a-half hours, it is clear from the transcript that she was narrating and reflecting on events during the project as much for herself as for me.

At the end of the second interview, with Ida, I noted in my research diary her parting comments. It had proved the case with the pilot interviewees too that some of their apparently most pertinent statements came after I had switched the cassette recorder off.

> Ida: 24/06/97 (noted in research diary): The more staff do this [participate in transnational projects] the better, because it helps us realise what a good job we are doing. For me this year, the trips have been something to look forward to, a balance to the downsizing and the sadness here. More staff should do it, because then they'd realise what a good job we do.

Lucy's interview is recorded in my research diary as 'enjoyable' (25/06/97). By this time I was more confident in allowing my participants to speak freely and was myself becoming more proficient in 'probing' for additional explanations or

interpretations of their utterances. The evidence may be seen in the interview transcripts given at Appendix 8.

I was relieved to find an experienced transcriber to convert my interview recordings into written records. Although I had transcribed the two pilot interviews, I did not have the time to transcribe the ten main interviews. This had a discernible effect on my interviewing technique as I ceased to be concerned necessarily to keep to the one-and-a-half-hour maximum time limit I had set on each interview, which had initially had more to do with fears about quantities of data to be transcribed than about optimum timing from the participants' point-of-view. Each participant had agreed to be interviewed for two hours, and I now felt free to use the full two hours where appropriate.

Mandy and Gina's interviews yielded much of interest. Both had successfully completed the repertory grid and I noted:

> It's probably disparaging but there has to be a correlation between the interviewee's level of formal education and the way in which they're able to cope with the Rep. Grid, possibly even also the interview and the journal? (Research diary 07/07/97)

Elsie's interview was next. By this stage I had received the first interview transcript and listened again to the recording - of Ida's interview - to check against the first draft of the transcript for errors or misunderstandings. It was helpful to me to know the participants and their projects, in that names of foreign colleagues and places, technical and jargon expressions about FE and European projects had in many cases defeated the transcriber, yet I was able to

correct these details to give a complete version of each interview. Had I not known the participants and projects, and given the time lapse between the interviews and the review of the first draft of their transcription, I should have had to take the data back more than once to the participants, for minor detail, rather than being able to use the time more profitably, when I did take the data back, to focus on ensuring that I had a version of their interpretation of events which accorded with their recollections and feelings.

The last interviews, with Jude, Sonia and Betty, took place in August, shortly after which I completed the checking of the recording transcripts, first on my own, then with my participants. In spite of my best intentions, my own bias was evident:

> Frustrated at the lack of 'nuggets' and at my own lack of probing. Mind you, I always thought Ida's would be one of the less useful interviews. (Research diary, 27/07/97)
> Betty's interview was very good, as expected. (Research diary, 11/08/97)

Having now collected the data, had it transcribed where necessary and checked it all, I was ready to begin the analysis, excited at the prospect of discovering which, if any, of the frameworks outlined in Chapter 3, would give best 'fit' with the 'grounded theory' (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) of my data.

In the analysis, I shall make a 'move from data towards theory' (Hammersley, 1993: 19), looking for 'similarities and differences in emerging patterns' in the data (Mezirow, 1991: 221) and 'examining possible interpretations through

discourse rather than aiming at a single final certainty through hypothesis testing and deductive logic' (Mezirow, 1991: 222). All interpretations will necessarily be provisional and will be open to re-interpretation with each new subject's experiences.

All research into human thinking and behaviour involves change, a reaction concerning the very fact of participating in a research exercise, and in the interpretative paradigm, researchers attempt to take note of this and to account for it in the research process and analysis. As Clifford & Marcus state:

> Ethnography decodes and recodes, telling the grounds of collective order and diversity, inclusion and exclusion. ... It describes processes of innovation and structuration, and is itself part of these processes. (Clifford & Marcus, 1986: 2)

The relationship between the researcher and the researched, the nature of their interaction during the research process, and the participants' reflections on this and on the nature of their part in the exercise are worthy of note.

As I worked through the early pilot data I realised that I had had certain expectations about the research process and the eventual findings, and about the extent to which I might encourage my participants to yield material which I would find useful.

> Concerned about the journals. I feel they (especially Elsie and Ida) will use them as a vehicle to grouse about the lack of resources and 'get back at the management'. Perhaps they need a clarifying sheet to remind them that it's the transnational elements that they should

> focus on? The interviews (where I will have more directional control) will be better. (Research diary, 22/01/97)

My feelings about the potential usefulness of the data for my purposes undoubtedly affected my interviewing technique, one obvious way in which I influenced my colleagues, however inadvertently.

> Comment on interview technique: in Jude's transcript (p. 4: line 24) I'm very directive. Realistic pressure of time, but needs disclosing as a fault - interference on my part. Oh, dear - I really have put words into my interviewees' mouths! (And thoughts into their heads ...?[3] Betty, p. 6, line 4?). (Research diary, 15 - 19/04/98)

That my colleagues also influenced me during the interviews is clear, although the fact that I was not consciously aware of it at the time can be seen from the following:

> Gina's transcript (p. 8) reminded me of the feminist view of the pitfalls of interviewing - the interviewee's finding a sympathetic ear + going on at length about all sorts of (sometimes) irrelevant things. Exploitation? Of whom? By whom? Or does it just betoken trust and a real 'learning/reflexive conversation'?. (Research diary, 19/01/98)

My determination early in the analysis to find words and phrases which I would have used myself to express, for example, a cultural learning experience, led me to read Ida's interview transcript and note:

> Of limited value at first going through. (Research diary, 27/07/97)

[3] ... in a quotation from my data indicates a pause.

Yet re-reading it twelve months later, and in the light of comparison now with the other interview transcripts, I was more able to focus on Ida's own words and phrases, which to my amazement yielded significant evidence, although even then I noted:

> Ida's interview very hard to analyse, partly 'cos of my own (negative) feelings towards her for being so self-centred and full of her own importance! I want people to be pro-transnational and positive, I react against Ida's views and attitudes and am tempted to report her data very negatively. (Research diary, 06 - 08/08/98)

I had a similar change of heart concerning Norman's interview which, reviewed twelve months on, showed evidence of learning and a sophistication in terms of intercultural competence which I had overlooked before. As he had not said things in the way I had anticipated hearing them, I had at first, I think arrogantly, been deaf to his interpretation of his experience. This was a profound realisation for me, and caused me to review all my data again with humility.

> NORMAN - I had a pre-conceived notion that his data wouldn't yield much (because I perceive him as dim) yet some of his statements were among the most illuminating and betrayed a real intercultural competence. (Research diary, 08/08/98)

During the analysis it became clear to me that I had subconsciously, and perhaps naïvely, expected my participants to view their projects as overwhelmingly positive experiences. They did, but they also noted negative aspects of their experiences, and these views were not always what I expected or wanted to hear. In the formal analysis phase I realised that this was leading to my making a

biased selection of data and I had to stand back from the process and review the data again from a more inclusive point-of-view.

Many of my colleagues commented on the experience of participating in the research exercise. Paradoxically, their express wish to please me, usually stated at the end of the interview, dismayed me and made me wonder to what extent that wish had coloured their part in our conversation.

> I've really enjoyed the discussion and I hope what I've said has been useful for you (Norman, 29/04/97)

Indeed, their meta-comments on the interview process suggested that most (all?) were very conscious of the purpose of our conversation, despite my efforts to encourage them to speak freely.

> Have you got all that? It's a bit different from ordinary conversations about the project. (Norman, 29/04/97)

> Shall I mention something that I was amazed at really? ... Do you want to know something that I thought as [sic] quite irritating? (Ida, 24/06/97)

> I can't remember what word you asked me to think about in the beginning but I found that very 'refreshing' if you want another word. (Mandy, 07/07/97)

> I ... feel I've been guided through this quite well. I mean I've made reference to all the things that I've written or all the things that I've thought about which I don't know whether I'm supposed to do or not but it seemed appropriate from the questions. (Mandy, 07/07/97)

> Oh, yes. We digress. (Gina, 08/07/97)

They were also evidently conscious of the fact that their words might be carried to another audience, although I had repeatedly explained the purpose of the exercise and that the data would be anonymous. All were anxious to have been seen to have done their best in the exercise, to be perceived as able to deliver a fair and balanced judgement.

> I don't know that Holland's a very touristy country anyway - sorry, that's a bit damning, isn't it? (Mandy, 07/07/97)

> Isn't that a nasty thing to say? ... oh, God, this sounds awful ... I mean, this isn't going to go any further, is it? (Jude, 02/07/97)

> And when I read back over this [Learning Journal] I thought I just seemed like a completely grumpy person who ... only writes negative things down but that's not the way I want it to come across. (Gina, 08/07/97)

Some were at pains to make excuses for any potential perceived shortcomings in the data they provided, having evidently formed in their own minds a view of the 'level' of contribution expected from them. Did I generate that view in them?

> Perhaps I should have done the whole thing in trial [filling in the Repertory Grid] and then gone back and done it, which I didn't do. (Rita, 06/05/97)

> I haven't done a wide survey since I was at university. I mean I do know how they work but it's just finding the time. ... as you know,

> I've got one group out and another group starting and it's been absolute hell this last month. (Ida, 24/06/97)

> I have to admit I did it [filled in the Repertory Grid] last night with one eye on the tennis ... I think that if I'd have read through the instructions more carefully in the first place ... (Jude, 02/07/97)

> I don't have a university degree ... I know I've got my accountancy qualifications but they're my sort of 'tools of the trade' if you like ... but ... with a degree if you've gone through that you've also gone through something to do with learning about learning. (Gina, 08/07/97)

However, my colleagues also made comments about the research exercise which I viewed as positive: they stated in their own words, and without any prompting, what I had anticipated to be one of the benefits of the methodology I had chosen, namely the opportunity for the participants to become critically reflective about their own learning, to research themselves, in effect. For this reason I consider it worthwhile including some relatively long quotations at this point.

> I suppose this is a reflection on the ... how research has to be conducted ... but being given a free reign to mentally flag up the things that seemed significant to me and then unpicking them a little bit to try and give it a little bit more interpretation or structure ... had been more rewarding than I would have thought ... when I started thinking about it there was a lot in there, and I wouldn't have thought that you would go ... take part in a European project for other than professional benefits, or benefits for the students or the institution. ... But if you start to look at it a little bit beneath the surface then ... it has potential for a lot of personal growth really. (Sonia, 23/07/97)

> I think I also learned something from it, you know, by having to ask myself questions which I haven't perhaps asked in that way before. (Betty, 11/08/97)

> I'd sort of identified that as part of a start of a continuous learning process [finding out about email] ... which is fairly obvious but when you actually have to write it down [in the Learning Journal], it does make it stand out a little bit. (Betty, 11/08/97)

I am now going to consider the findings in detail, but before I do, let us hear from Rita, whose words sum up best the fact that my colleagues, as well as me, gained from the exercise.

> The whole exercise makes you think about what it's done for you, you know. (Rita, 06/05/97)

## Chapter 5 Analysis of the findings

Having explained the data collection process, I now intend looking at the data in detail, using the concepts from Chapter 3 as the basis for analysis. The reader will remember that the purpose of my study is to find out whether FE staff perceive any change in their thinking and learning during their involvement in a transnational project. In particular I am looking for evidence relating to:

1. awareness about other European countries and cultures;
2. awareness about, even alterations in, attitude and behaviour, when working with colleagues from other European countries and cultures;
3. the development of additional social identities;
4. the development of intercultural competence.

These themes also relate back to the aims, explicit or otherwise, of the various European bodies which promote transnational projects, and - however they define it - a 'European identity'. They may further be linked to Byram's framework for 'intercultural competence', which I discussed in Chapter 3, in that, in the list above:

1. = knowledge
2. = attitudes, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction
3. = critical cultural awareness (Byram, 1997: 57 - 64)

### 5.1 The method of analysis

Given that I collected the qualitative data using instruments appropriate to hermeneutic research, it seemed logical also to use a method of analysis appropriate to the interpretative paradigm. I kept the eventual method of analysis in mind from the outset, taking into account Spradley's view that the

> goal is to employ methods of analysis that lead to discovering ... [the] organization of cultural knowledge. (1979: 24)

The approach I adopted was that of grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), preferring my eventual theory to emerge from the data rather than precede it. The method of analysis was to support this approach. Many researchers have written about the mechanics of analysing qualitative data, for example: Geertz, 1973; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Miles & Huberman, 1984; LeCompte & Preissle, 1993. All have a concern that the researcher should not impose meaning on the participants' statements ('shallow domain analysis', Spradley, 1979: 102), but rather seek to identify and make explicit the meaning within their statements, or, as Beail (1985: xi) puts it, endeavour to 'stand in the shoes of others'. With this in mind, I aim to present the data insofar as possible in my participants' own words.

From their words I then need to tease out the concepts and conceptual categories, which are not always evident at face value. A number of models have been put forward, principally in the field of ethnographic research, for the process of systematic examination, or mapping, of concepts and conceptual categories (Spradley, 1979; Werner & Schoepfle, 1987; Tesch, 1990; Mertens, 1998). Tesch gives a summary of the models for qualitative analysis divided

into four groups according to the researcher's focus of interest, progressing down the list from more to less structured and formal, more quantitative to more qualitative, less to more 'humanistic'.

1. the characteristics of language
   a) as communication
      i) with regard to its content
      ii) with regard to its process
   b) as it mirrors culture
      i) in terms of the cognitive structures
      ii) in terms of the interactive process
2. the discovery of regularities
   a) as the identification and categorization of elements and the establishment of their connections
   b) as the identification of patterns
3. the comprehension of the meaning of text or action
   a) through the discovery of themes
   b) through interpretation
4. reflection

(Tesch, 1990: 78).

For the researcher interested in the characteristics of language as it mirrors culture, as I am, the methods proposed are from the fields of ethnoscience or structural ethnography:

> The two approaches are distinguished merely by a greater emphasis among ethnoscientists on reduction as an analysis principle and the view that the application of statistical procedures constitutes a desirable expansion of their work, while structural ethnographers pay more attention to the definitional meanings in language and see their work as culminating in the discovery of cultural themes as larger patterns within or 'world views' of cultures. (Tesch, 1990: 81).

According to Spradley (1979), a structural ethnographer, ethnography may be defined as a theory of culture, and culture as a set of principles for drawing up

the cognitive map which an individual or a group uses to interpret their reality. Werner, an ethnoscientist, describes ethnography as a description, a translation, an expert system and data base, and a high-fidelity sketch, an abstract of reality (Werner & Schoepfle, 1987: 22). Both Werner and Spradley agree that by asking questions of the data it is possible to categorise the participants' words and phrases in such a way that their view of the world, their understanding of meaning, is revealed as a pattern. Tesch describes the analyst's task as being

> ... to deduce the structure of the culture's cognitive universe from [the] data. (1990: 82)

Spradley advocates a systematic process to begin to draw up the map, or 'unravel the meaning system of the cultural scene in its own terms' (1979: 132). Within the body of data the researcher uses a staged series of analytical tasks to identify 'domains' in the participants' thinking (1979:105). These might be seen as main categories or themes.

The elements which make up a domain are the 'folk terms' expressed by the participants (Spradley, 1979: 108), a folk term being the way in which someone refers to something they have experienced. It is vital to remember that even in the same language, words have different meanings for different individuals, and using the phrase 'folk term' is a useful reminder that a meaning ascribed to a word by one individual may be different from that ascribed by another. Hermeneutic research aims to demonstrate those meanings without distorting

the participants' individual interpretation. That is what I endeavour to do later in this chapter.

Carrying out a taxonomic analysis (Spradley, 1979: 137) reveals the way in which folk terms relate to the domain, and how they relate to one another. For example, terms might be 'cover terms', or 'terms being used from more than one thing' (Spradley, 1979: 104), (I thought of these as category headings) and might then need to be further 'unpicked'. Or terms might be grouped in 'subsets' (Spradley, 1979: 144), sub-categories or sub-themes.

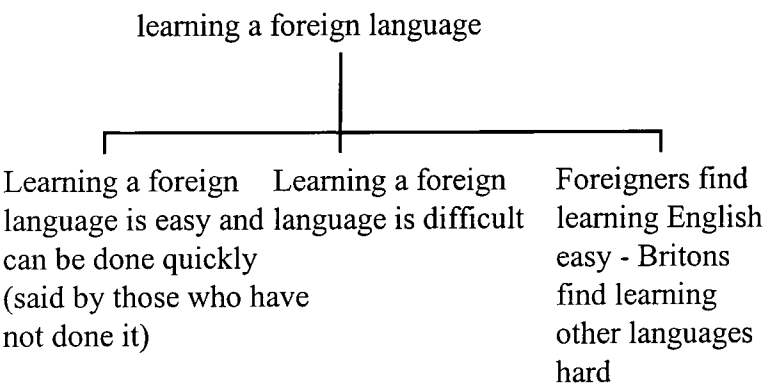
> By asking such questions as 'what kinds of X are there?' or 'Is X a kind of Y?' a cultural domain can be explored systematically. As soon as the ethnographer identifies at least two taxonomic levels, he or she can ask for more examples. (Werner & Schoepfle, 1987: 72)

This is how a researcher may work out the concepts which participants have about a particular topic and how those concepts are grouped into categories and sub-categories, distinct or interrelated. The researcher may consequently build up a picture of the participants' understanding of meaning by revealing the structuring of their concepts, a structure of which the participants themselves may not be aware. I describe the reality of undertaking this process later in this chapter.

There is a clear link between domain analysis and schema theory, which I discussed in Chapter 3. The participants' schemata are defined by Rumelhart (1980) as data structures for representing generic concepts in memory and which

represent the network of interrelationships between the constituents of the concept held by the individual. So, the taxonomy of the participants' folk terms makes explicit the interrelationships within their schemata. I will show this through a series of diagrams.

Identifying the semantic relationship between the folk terms (Spradley, 1979: 108), or componential analysis, is a further stage in building a diagrammatic representation of the way in which an individual or group interprets meaning, and thereby, their experience. For example, as far as my participants are concerned, their notion about 'learning a foreign language' breaks down into three interrelated elements:




To begin to gain an overview of their interpretations of their experiences as a whole, Spradley suggests cultural theme analysis, or visualising the relationships between domains, main categories or themes (1979: 197). The method which Spradley suggests is to list the cultural themes (my categories), then ask questions of yourself, or of the research participants if there is the opportunity, to identify how the themes are linked, for example, whether two themes are contrasts one with the other, or whether they are linked together

within a broader theme which has not been explicitly mentioned. Here I found that a certain amount of creative thinking was required, as Spradley indicates:

> On the basis of my own familiarity with this culture I can see the contrast which I think my informant would see. (1979: 198)

My participants, like Spradley's, did not always make reference to neatly contrasting categories or overarching category headings. It was my job to endeavour to supply the 'empty categories' on the basis of the evidence I had and my knowledge of the culture. These empty categories feature in my diagrams alongside the categories mentioned by my participants.

I first took my participants' statements, the text from their repertory grid notes, Learning Journal entries and interviews, and built up their concepts as a form of map in order to see how they thought about their experiences in taking part in their transnational project. Secondly, I adopted the role of interpreter and decoded the symbols (words, phrases, metaphors) used by the participants. I identified the coding rules or 'meaning systems' (Spradley, 1979: 99) underlying their statements. In other words, I made explicit the thinking lying behind their statements. Finally, because one of my research questions is to identify the effect of transnational experience on their thinking, I looked within the participants' statements for their accounts of their perception of change in their concepts, change which they attributed to their experience of working on their transnational project.

As the analysis is central to my interpretation of the eventual findings I have devoted the next section to an account of the process, taking to heart the critical point made by Miles and Huberman (1984:16) that 'analysis methods are rarely reported in detail'.

## 5.2 The process of analysis

> ... cultural analysis is ... guessing at meanings, assessing the guesses and drawing explanatory conclusions from the better guesses. (Geertz, 1967: 20)

As Spradley has stated, the process of analysis is iterative rather than sequential. It was not a neatly ordered, staged process, but a much more organic process involving me in covering the ground again and again over a lengthy period, with later thoughts and data lending new insight to my review of data collected early on.

> From the beginning of data collection the qualitative analyst is beginning to decide what things *mean*, is noting regularities, patterns, explanations, possible configurations, causal flows and propositions. ... Conclusions are also *verified* as the analyst proceeds. (Spradley, 1979: 22).

My analysis began well before the main research. As part of the pilot study I was already looking for patterns and categories: comparing, contrasting, aggregating, ordering, establishing linkages and speculating about the early data (LeCompte & Preissle, 1994: 235). This analysis informed the main research. As soon as I designed the main study I was making 'analytic choices' (Spradley, 1979: 21) and beginning the process of data reduction, deciding, for example,

who was to participate in the research, how many people to involve, how long they should spend on completing their Learning Journals, how long the semi-structured interviews should take, and so on. I have described much of the detail of this process in Chapter 4.

The analytic choices and reduction continued: at each stage of collecting my data I processed it, consciously reducing it to a more readily-accessible format for closer examination and cross-referencing in due course. For example, I sifted through each Learning Journal, Repertory Grid and interview again and again, focusing each time on a different theme, copying the participants' phrases into new theme-related documents, minus any writings or recorded utterances which I deemed irrelevant to the theme. I word-processed, coded and stored all data on computer disk with back-up copies, with each item and any subsequent reflections or additions dated. Part of this process was the substitution of pseudonyms for all people and places, to protect the participants' anonymity. I recorded each stage of the analysis in my research diary, a glance through which reveals that my comments on the preliminary analysis, reflections in passing, interwove the continuing data collection process. For example:

> 'European' seems to mean 'continental European' for most of my research subjects. They see British and European as clearly distinct on the one hand, yet will happily say that they 'feel/are European'. (Research diary, 04/08/97, two main interviews still to be conducted.)

Where participants had completed a Repertory Grid as part of the pilot exercise I collected in their hand-written notes and discussed them with Byram and Alred,

whose approach I had emulated in the design, for their advice on analysis. This process is described below.

At the end of the interview with each participant I took from them their completed repertory grid and Learning Journal. For the pragmatic reasons which I explained in the previous chapter, I decided to have the recordings of the interviews typed up for me, rather than transcribe the material myself. While I had intended to use the transcription process as my initial close reflection on the data, I recognised that time constraints were too great, and that I would glean as much from checking the eventual transcripts against the recordings, which I did. The transcriber produced a verbatim reproduction of the material on audio-cassette, including both my statements and those of my interlocutor in each case. I devised with the transcriber an agreed code for the representation of pauses, emphases, ironic intonation, puzzlement, laughter. When I read the transcripts myself for the first time, the level of correction required was minimal: names of places and people, the occasional educational term or term related to the specialist vocabulary of transnational project work.

I had kept a brief note of each participant's behaviour during their interview, detailing body posture (relaxed, tense, defensive, confident) and gesture. However, I chose not to comment on these aspects of paralanguage and non-verbal behaviour as my observations could only be at the level of a layman in the field of behavioural psychology and there was in any case no evidence base, such as video-recording, to check or independently verify my observations.

While waiting for each transcription, I continued my work on the data from the grids and journals. Following Byram and Alred's advice I took each individual's grid and circled words or phrases which seemed to me, in the context of learning through involvement in a transnational project, to be significant or to beg further explanation. I then took the grid and journal data back to the participants to ask them to clarify points I had noted as being unclear or ambiguous to me. I also took the interview transcripts back to the participants, asking them again to clarify or explain any apparent ambiguities. Later I would take all the circled items from both pilot and main study grids and journals and begin to group them in potential themes or categories, in other words, making a preliminary domain analysis (Spradley, 1979). Using the same 'circling and noting' process I was able to cross-reference both similar and contrasting statements made by individuals on different occasions in their grids and/or journals.

In particular I looked for change over time in the journal entries, where participants had been encouraged to reflect on entries approximately four weeks later and note any reflections on their previous statements. Concerning the interviews, I looked for change in two ways: change over time, by noting any relevant statements made by my main study participants when I had interviewed them for an earlier pilot study, and change as expressed by the participants during interviews: 'evolution', as one participant chose to express her interpretation of change.

Finally I had all my data assembled and could engage in one last 'tidying up', as Romagnano has put it (quoted in LeCompte & Preissle, 1993: 235) prior to identifying the schemata of my participants' concepts. This was an exciting moment: although I had an inkling of some of the views generally held by most of the participants, it was absorbing and intriguing to dig below the surface meaning of their words and seek out the underlying concepts.

I started by reading the grids and journals through again and noting any themes or categories - potential domains - which seemed to emerge, either because of a number of references by one person, or because of individual references by a number of different people. Interspersed with working through the journals I read again those researchers who had also sought 'meaning systems' in this field (Byram, 1989; Whalley, 1997; Kim, 1988; Taylor, 1994; Convery, 1997). Where they had made statements which seemed to echo what my participants were saying, I noted them for future reference. I then worked through each grid and journal and typed up my participants' actual words and phrases under the emergent category headings and made a first attempt at putting the categories into 'families' of super-ordinate and sub-ordinate themes. I read through the grids and journals again to check that I had not missed anything significant.

It was almost a year since I completed the last research interview when I began their detailed analysis. Analysis of the interviews was to complement my earlier analysis of the grids and journals, giving triangulation of method. I had decided

to analyse the research interviews in the same way that I had analysed the grids and journals, and without reference to that analysis or my early tentative categorisations and conclusions, i.e., trying to approach the interview data in as open a frame of mind as possible. This was not easy, especially as the categorisations from my work on the grids and journals were still fresh in my mind, and, as Spradley states:

> the ethnographer ... comes to the research with a large repertoire of analytic categories that are difficult to set aside. (1979: 102)

Norman's interview, which was the first one I conducted, seemed on first reading not to yield much of interest. However, as I worked on through the other interviews, it became *more* interesting by comparison. Tesch has noted that 'the main intellectual tool is comparison' in this form of hermeneutic research (1990: 96) and I found this to be the case. Ida's interview was extremely hard to work on, as her statements in the interview made me very ill-disposed towards her. Was it because she was not 'saying what I wanted'? Or was it because I sensed an underlying antagonism towards Betty, one of my 'good' interviewees? In the end I decided it was because I felt a growing personal antipathy towards someone who was so clearly not particularly interculturally competent, despite all the opportunities she had had to become so. I had anticipated the analytical process as being clinical, detached, objective, and was surprised at the way in which my own feelings threatened to colour my interpretation of the data.

I kept taking a break from the analysis so that I did not miss significant words or phrases. I re-read the interviews periodically without making any notes, the 'long soak' advocated by Hall (1975), to remind myself of the time, the context, the people, and to refresh my enthusiasm.

Betty's interview, the last to be analysed, yielded a considerable amount of useful data. It prompted me to go back once more through the earlier interviews. When I re-read Norman's interview yet again, I found that, despite my earlier negative appraisal, his interview actually yielded a large number of very interesting statements, many hinting at a level of intercultural competence that I would have missed if I had a) not read it all through at least once again, and b) not been in a position to compare his statements with those of - particularly - Ida, whose apparent lack of intercultural competence was stark by contrast.

I read through each interview noting interesting comments, then again to highlight what I felt were the key words and phrases, which were eventually to become sub-themes or sub-categories within the domains. I debated as to whether to report on the participants as individuals or as a group; either approach would have been valid and interesting. Although I analysed each individual's grid, journal and interview data separately, I chose to treat my participants as a group, noting the responses of individuals separately only when they provided counter-examples to the majority. I discuss the justification for this in section 5.3.

A second exciting phase was the integration of my initial analysis of the grids and journals and my analysis of the interviews. Up to this point I had made a conscious effort not to relate any of my findings to any specific existing framework of 'meaning schemes', although instances of similarity with the frameworks set out by both Byram (1996) and Whalley (1997) had sprung to mind unbidden.

Having integrated the two main bodies of data it was now time to refine and present the analysis of my findings, which is given below.

## 5.3 The main findings: learning through work on a European transnational project

As Spradley has said:

> A good ethnographic translation shows; a poor one only tells (1979: 210).

I have chosen to present my findings partly with the aid of diagrams, of my reading of the participants' interpretations of their learning experiences in working on a European transnational project. The diagrams represent group schemata and therefore contain some contradictory views. They are not tree diagrams or hierarchies, just an attempt to show relationships between the participants' concepts.

These diagrams represent the 'surface understanding of a culture ... as a whole' (Spradley, 1979: 134). My justification for treating my participants as a group rests on the following:

- they are people who have had a very similar experience
- they see themselves as a group, distinct from colleagues not involved in such work
- they are seen by others as a group

This is in keeping with the theory concerning social groups developed by Barth (1969), which I discussed in Chapter 3. Also, because they are a social group they have shared meanings in the way that Geertz (1975) discusses. I referred to this as well in Chapter 3.

It is generally agreed that it is not possible to carry out an exhaustive study of a whole culture, even the culture of a small social group such as the one here, so in keeping with standard ethnographic practice I chose for some time to focus on only three domains for intensive study. However, I eventually also added a fourth, and for me very significant domain, for the reasons I discuss below.

The rationale for my choice of the initial three domains was as follows: in Chapter 2 I set out the explicit and implicit aims of the European Commission and other bodies concerned with the European dimension in the curriculum. These aims include

- helping pupils and students to acquire a view of Europe as a multi-cultural, multi-lingual community which includes the UK;

- encouraging and improving competence in other European languages;
- promoting a sense of European identity, through first-hand experience of other countries where appropriate. (DES, 1992c: 2)

The domains yielded by the data and listed below appeared to relate to these aims and it is for this reason that I chose to discuss these, rather than other domains, in detail:

- Language and Communication;
- Europe and Europeans;
- Learning.

However, there is one further domain which emerged from the data, was unexpected, and to which there is no reference in the aims listed above:

- Socialising.

I chose to discuss this domain in addition to the other three as it permeates them all and would seem to be a significant factor in the development of individuals' intercultural awareness and competence in the context of transnational projects. I have to confess that it also confounded my preconceptions about the nature of my colleagues' involvement in transnational projects. I noted in the previous chapter my disappointment in the early Learning Journal data:

> Not happy with the results so far - all seem to point to travel, face-to-face meeting being fun, and not much else. (Research diary, 06/05/97)

I had not understood myself the significance of the social aspect in respect of the relationship with transnational colleagues and the success or otherwise of the projects. Deemed within my work environment as the supposed expert on transnational projects, I was as guilty as those outside the frame of reference of viewing comments on 'fun' as somehow inappropriate in what I had thought of as an exclusively serious work setting, and indeed in what I had perceived to be a 'formal' research setting. Yet again, the researcher could be said to have learned a significant lesson from the researched, and even if the content were not of great import (which I feel it is) I was humbled by the experience and would in any case feel obliged to include this domain now in the interpretation of my findings.

Under each domain I drew together all the statements, phrases, words recorded by the participants which seemed to belong in that domain. Although it is not possible to say that each individual thinks everything within the domain, they do say similar things, so to this extent it is possible to treat them together, as they would appear to share schemata. Sometimes there are logical places in this and the other schemata for which I have sought evidence but not found it, the 'empty categories' I referred to earlier. However, as all ethnographic accounts are partial accounts (Clifford & Marcus, 1986), I have nonetheless included these empty categories in my endeavour to present the schemata here. As Clifford states

> There is no whole picture that can be 'filled in', since the perception and filling in of a gap lead to the awareness of other gaps. (Clifford & Marcus, 1986: 18)

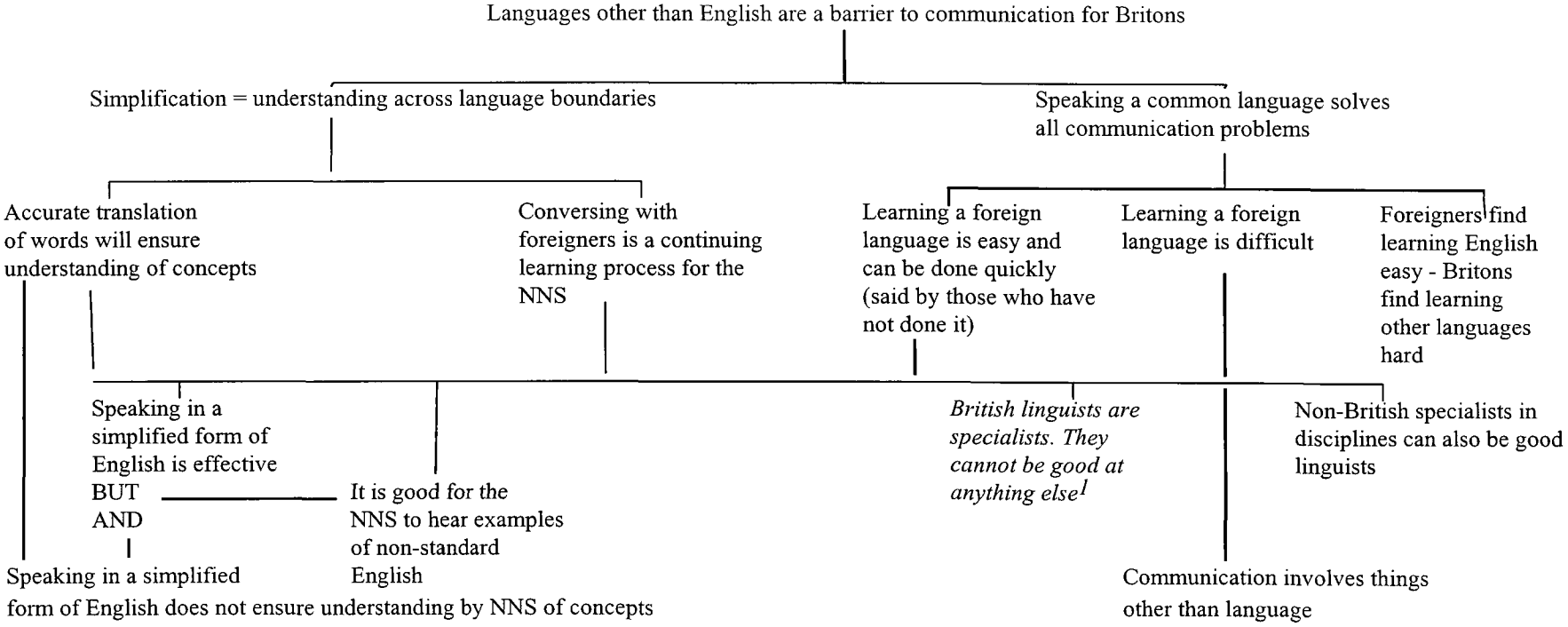
I had decided not to conduct a longitudinal study, as the practical issues would have made the data collection process virtually impossible for me. In turn, this meant that I felt I was not going to be able to comment on 'change' as such in my participants, as I would have no earlier data from the same group with which to compare later findings. However, in working through the data I do have, I discovered that a number of my participants make explicit reference to change which they have perceived in themselves over the time they have been involved in their transnational project. They speak of personal and professional development. As I consider this to be both valid and relevant in respect of the concepts being examined, I include a separate section after the main findings where I discuss my participants' statements about change in themselves.

So, we come now to my analysis of the data, taking each of the four key domains in turn.

### 5.3.1 Language and Communication

Within the domain, this is the schema which the participants have about Language and Communication with non-native speakers (NNS) of English:

**Figure 4 Language and Communication**




[1]Italics in this and the other tables denotes an 'empty category', i.e. a category for which there is no evidence in the data.

I have used the words of my participants to illustrate their schema 'Language and Communication'. Almost all referred, either spontaneously or in response to a question, to communication problems resulting from the lack of the European partners' ability to speak English. This ethnocentric view came through in their virtually unanimous choice of the word 'barrier' to describe language. I found this ironic, in that language is supposed to be a means of communication and my participants found it to be a hindrance. In speaking of languages other than English as being a barrier to communication for Britons they express explicitly or implicitly their expectation that people from other European countries will speak our language. Lucy and Elsie say this.

> I had a rather sort of arrogant attitude that both in Sweden and in Majorca, and Berlin, **I assumed that everyone would speak English**[2] .... And in fact they couldn't. *Lucy 25/06/97*

> ... there's always that **fear when somebody picks the phone up that they're not going to speak English** at the other end. *Elsie 23/07/ 97*

Sonia even attempts to justify the view.

> We're very unfair because most of the time **we expect people to speak to us in English** ... **I feel bad about it, but it is a common language**. *Sonia 23/07/97*

As may be seen in the diagram above, there is a family of sub-categories associated with the theme that simplification will produce understanding across language boundaries. My participants had recognised that communicating with non-native speakers was not necessarily as straightforward as communicating

with English native speakers and had independently concluded that simplifying their own language would solve the problem. Speaking a simplified form of English was generally held to be an effective solution to communication problems. Jude and Lucy explain it.

> Constant checking and re-checking of **how to phrase things so as not to confuse**. *Jude LJ*
>
> It's [your English] got to be much **more simple and you have to speak slower** [sic] ...[3] *Lucy 25/06/97*

I believe Sonia articulates best the rationale which the other participants also have for the way in which they modify their language.

> A sort of Esperanto, isn't it? I don't mean it in a patronising way, but **as if you were talking to a child, you'd think quite carefully about how you say it and then you'll say it in another way as well, using different words** ... And probably **speak more slowly and use body language, gestures** ... *Sonia 23/07/97*

Jude, a linguist, is of the view that concepts can translate, provided they are reduced to words of one syllable.

> I replied **trying to make the concept as simple as possible**. *Jude 02/07/97*

She is aware that abstract concepts may be more difficult to explain than 'widgets and buttons', and paradoxically expresses the view later in the

---

[2] Bold typeface indicates a word or phrase which I consider particularly interesting or revealing.
[3] ... in quotations from my data indicates a pause.

discussion that speaking in a simplified form of English does not ensure understanding of concepts by non-native speakers of English:

> ... I think that one of the problems with the Dutch team was that **they didn't understand** what was happening a large part of the time ... Because **we weren't talking about widgets and counting buttons, we were talking about sort of complex, intellectual issues** ... *Jude 02/07/97*

This serves not only to elaborate the point but also to illustrate the fact that Jude and others in the group are able to hold seemingly contradictory views virtually simultaneously. While it is tempting to try to draw definitive conclusions from the data, it is clear that their views are constantly shifting and changing, and the best one can hope to do is to represent and interpret their views at that time as a faithful 'snapshot'. Although Jude makes the distinction between concrete and abstract concepts in terms of ease of communicating them across language boundaries, her solution for dealing with abstract and more complex issues is startlingly ethnocentric:

> I think we felt that **there ought to be** a ... not a test but **a minimum sort of standard of English required for people to be able to participate in the** [transnational] **project**. *Jude 02/07/97*

Many participants appeared to pin faith on effort in translation, one step beyond simplification, believing that accurate translation of words will ensure understanding of concepts.

> I think the problem was remembering ... to **let them translate**. *Norman 29/04/97*

> What Fabrice has sent doesn't appear at first glance to be what he should have done! **Close translation will tell**. *Susie LJ*

Only Betty expressed a more sophisticated appreciation of the difficulties of communicating across language boundaries and spoke of efforts which went beyond the level of simplification and translation.

> It's a battle to be ... **putting what I want to say** on paper and **in a way which people for whom English is a second language can understand and get the same meaning**. *Betty LJ*

She appears to make a distinction between 'understanding' and 'getting the same meaning'.

All the participants stated at least once in their contributions that they were aware of the efforts which the transnational partners were making in speaking English, and several seemed to hold the view that this was a useful learning exercise for the partners. Gina expresses best the pedagogical nature of the interchange, that it is good for non-native speakers to hear non-standard forms of English.

> I try not to [modify my English] ... **I think it's quite good for them to hear the words that we use** and not the words that are in textbooks ... so that colloquialisms ... are there **to build up their vocabulary**. *Gina 08/07/97*

When I asked for clarification of this, she explained that, having learned a foreign language herself, she appreciated it when native speakers helped her to

extend her range of idiomatic expressions, and adopted the same approach with non-native speakers of English, believing it also to be a less patronising way of communicating with them.

It is clear that Gina and others in the group believe that foreigners find learning English easy, but Britons find learning other languages hard. Elsie has been prompted to reflect on this.

> Does it come very naturally to them? Because **for me it would be extremely hard work to speak in a foreign language**. *Elsie 23/07/97*

Those who have limited experience of learning a foreign language seem to feel that learning any foreign language is easy and can be done quickly.

> Slight language problems. Resolutions: **us to learn Spanish, 2 of them to learn English**. *Lucy LJ*
>
> **One thing I haven't done** [this year] **is to learn a language**. I would have done it, if I'd had time. *Rita 06/05/97*

Yet, once they try it, they realise that learning a foreign language is difficult. Lucy's experience within her project encompassed language learning for the purpose of communicating with her transnational partners. Her view here, taken from her interview, contrasts with the view she expressed earlier in her Learning Journal (shown above):

> ... the German that we did for Berlin was absolutely fabulous, that was really good and both Stephen and I have got our NVQ 1... and I really enjoyed doing that because all of my children speak German

> (...)[4] Now the Spanish was more of a problem **because I was already learning the German, and to try to do the Spanish as well, ... I found that really hard**. *Lucy 25/06/97*

Echoing the view that language learning is hard, there seemed to be a feeling among the group that British linguists are specialists, they cannot be good at anything else. I came to this view by positing the 'empty category' as a contrast to phrases which indicated that group members believe that non-British specialists in other disciplines can also be good linguists

> **It left me aghast that somebody could operate at that level in a foreign language and** immediately have such a **... be able to critically evaluate** ... *Jude 02/07/97*

> There are some very bright people out there [in the Netherlands] and **they can discuss concepts in a foreign language and be specialists in their own field as well**. *Mandy 07/07/97*

Given the mix of nationalities and languages involved in the projects which form the evidence base for this study, it was only in one project that the happy circumstance pertained of one of the UK team having 'A' Level French, and there being French transnational partners involved. Although English was the agreed working language for the YOUTHSTART project, Susie refreshed her French and used it both during joint visits and for communicating at a distance. Not surprisingly, she was the only participant to comment on the experience of using a foreign language at this level. She speaks of the constant compromising and interpersonal awareness needed to achieve communication across language boundaries. It is not possible to know whether she is referring to an

[4] (...) in quotations from my data indicates text not given here.

unconscious modification of speaking ('accommodation theory', Giles, 1979) or to Bruner's deliberate process of 'metacognitive action', or self-correction in utterances to make oneself comprehensible to an interlocutor (Bruner, 1986: 67). Here, she is talking of herself speaking French and of her French partner trying to speak English, both of them 'building a bridge' to span the language divide.

> We can communicate however badly in another language and **people are always willing to ... build a bridge**. *Susie 13/06/97*

It would have been fascinating to have researched the transnational partners too for their views on these issues, but both pragmatic constraints and the complex issue of collecting data in different languages, translating, interpreting, ensuring a faithful interpretation, dissuaded me from this notion at an early stage.

While my participants all commented on language issues, they were also aware that communication (across language boundaries) involves things other than language. As a means of illustrating the fact that on many issues the group is indeed a group, expressing similar views, I have included a number of quotations here. In talking about paralanguage and non-verbal behaviour they comment on aspects of gesture and behaviour. Lucy comments on body language, Gina on non-verbal behaviour.

> ... it's not just using language, most of it's actually the non-verbal communication, ... **I think even how people sit, actually tells you what their attitudes to things are** ... *Lucy 25/06/97*

> **A nod doesn't necessarily mean that someone understands and agrees** with what you're saying! *Gina LJ*

Gina and Ida express a notion about face-to-face communication as opposed to communication at a distance, where the interlocutor cannot be seen. They clearly hold the view that there is more to communication than words alone.

> You know there are lots of different ways you can communicate with each other, **the fact that you're not actually sat next to somebody** and are talking to them and you can't sit with them and go through things **and have that common understanding that's aided by 'nearnesses' ... does create additional problems**. *Gina 08/07/97*

> I don't think that electronic communication is a substitute **for sitting with someone, watching the expressions on their face**. There's no warmth, no **human warmth**, is there? *Ida 24/06/97*

They also talk about language, semantics, and the understanding of shared meanings, or lack of the same:

> ... more awareness in relation to language and titles, what's in a title ... **what exactly does that mean in our system? ... it might come across inaccurately in the translation**. *Norman 29/04/97*

Norman understands that translation is not enough to convey job titles in culture-related systems. Susie understands that words, even in one language, may have different connotations for different speakers, especially when one is a non-native speaker.

> And there's always that, **even when you're both speaking English, you kind of discover months afterwards that actually they haven't understood** ... or you've totally misunderstood them, **because words have different meanings**. *Susie 13/06/97*

So, the participants talk about issues of language and communication across language boundaries in their transnational project and articulate:

- an acquisition of a degree of language awareness;
- knowledge and understanding acquired through that awareness;
- consciously modified behaviour.

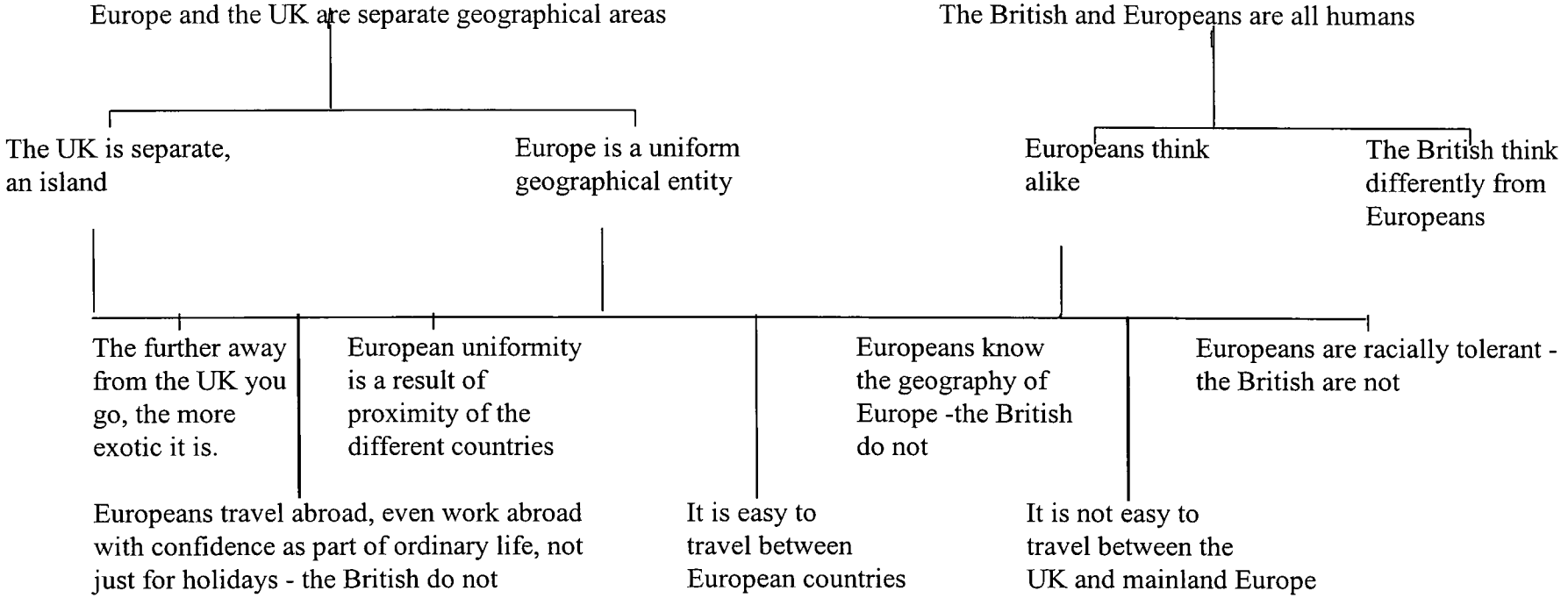
I demonstrate in the summary to this chapter how this may be linked to Byram's (1997) framework for intercultural competence, which I discussed in Chapter 3, how my participants may therefore be said to have developed aspects of their intercultural competence, and how in turn, this may also contribute to realising at least one of the aims held by the promoters of transnational projects as outlined in Chapter 2.

Now to the analysis of the second domain.

### 5.3.2 Europe and what it is to be European

Within the domain, this is the schema which the participants have:

**Figure 5 Europe and what it is to be European**



In endeavouring to represent the schema which the participants have concerning Europe and what it is to be European I consider first their concept that Europe is separate from the UK. Whatever the promoters of transnational projects might wish in advocating a Europe unified in one guise or another, my participants are of the view that distance separates the UK from the rest of Europe.

> **We are an island so inevitably to get to the transnational bit we are going to have distance involved**. That might be different for somebody who lives in Germany and is on the borders of France and Luxembourg or somewhere else. *Betty 11/08/97*

Betty clearly illustrates the notion of geographical distance separating the UK from the European continent. Mandy points out the dichotomy between Europe the geographical entity, at a distance from the UK, and Europe the concept of a common community. Both seem to suggest that it is easier for continental Europeans to feel that they are an entity than it is for the British to feel part of that entity.

> It does seem **strange to be flying to another country when we're all part of the same community**. *Mandy LJ*

Mandy goes a stage further and seems to suggest that the difference in relationships between people coming together beyond a certain distance, after a considerable journey, and between nationals from different regions of the same country, are somehow attributable to the distance.

> **It's not like driving down to Birmingham** or something and then doing the work, getting in the car and driving back up again, **you don't touch people in the same way then. So obviously distance makes that happen** ... *Mandy 07/07/97*

Susie, however, does not see the distance as a separating factor. For her, travelling beyond the UK does not reinforce the concept of distance expressed by others, the difference, but rather leads her to reflect on similarities between people from different cultural backgrounds.

> And the thing that spoke volumes to me was ... **people are the same all over the world** ... and people's willingness to accept you for ... who you are and what you do ... was great. So **where you think 'goodness, England is a kind of island all on its own out there' you suddenly realise that it isn't** and that **people from all over the world ... have the same values** ... they all want stability and happiness and success and enough money to live on ... **whatever the cultural differences**. *Susie 13/06/97*

This is typical of a 'general liberal' schema, the notion that all human beings are the same under the skin even if we look different on the surface. I referred to this appreciation of the 'commonality of humankind' in Chapter 3, when discussing the qualities which Taylor (1994) details as making up intercultural competence. So it may be said that, certainly in Taylor's view, Susie is here expressing a level of intercultural competence.

There is a feeling that mainland Europe is different to the point of being 'exotic'. Lucy illustrates the view that the further away you go, the more 'exotic' it becomes.

> I think that's the way of things south of England really, ... I mean, **the further south you get, the more attitudes change**. *Lucy, 25/06/97*

While the UK is seen as a separate geographical entity, Mandy expresses succinctly the view that Europe is seen as a uniform geographical entity.

> **I was seeing timetables at the station** [in the Netherlands] **giving details of journey times to Paris, Strasbourg, Brussels** ... I was struck by the tangibility of Europe. *Mandy 22/04/97*

> I do not think that there is much difference between France and the Netherlands. **Is Europe therefore different to England rather than differences in mainland European countries?** *Mandy LJ*

As Betty stated in the quotation given above, the distance separating the UK from mainland Europe is perceived as a far more significant difference than that between the various cultural or national regions on the continent.

Linked to the general perception that distances and differences are not very great between European countries, being European is perceived to be associated with being a confident traveller abroad. Ida has travelled abroad for years and in her view, *ergo* feels European.

> **I've always felt European ... I mean, I've travelled in Europe from being a small child** ... so it's **never been a threat** to me. *Ida 24/06/97*

Both Lucy and Rita have improved their knowledge and skills in terms of travelling abroad.

> **Getting better at organising travel in country where I don't speak language**. Came back feeling **more confident and able**. *Lucy LJ*

> Well I certainly don't mind travelling. **I'd just follow the family ... but now I know** I can just, well, for example, get foreign currency at the airport on the day. **I know exactly what to do**. It just seemed **so ridiculous that I'd made all these elaborate arrangements in the past**, and it's just not necessary! You can go, and **travel, with ease**. *Rita 06/05/97*

Rita here gives a clear instance of personal and professional development during her work on her project.

In the EC Green Paper *Education - Training - Research: The obstacles to transnational mobility* (1996), the Commission set out a number of barriers which they feel still remain as a hindrance to European unity. One of the barriers is to do with the physical difficulty, not to mention the related linguistic and social issues, of moving between countries. It may be that through participation in a transnational project staff are acquiring at least the knowledge and skills in this very practical matter which will help them to be more 'European'. I return to this in the summary to this chapter.

Most of the participants explain that travel abroad can be a normal part of life, not associated with a holiday. I understand from this that they hold the concept that being European means travelling abroad regularly for work and for reasons other than holidays, whereas for Britons, travel abroad is normally associated with holidays and leisure. Rita states her view about travelling for the project.

> And that's not just travel for the word 'travel', because **none of it's a holiday. It's all hard work**. *Rita 06/05/97*

Travelling to another country for reasons other than tourism would seem to lead to different perspectives, reflections, perhaps even an additional social identity for the individuals concerned, a 'work' identity, as opposed to a 'tourism' identity. Mandy says that it is different to travel for work than to travel as a tourist.

> And then of course **to go to countries and .... not just as a tourist I think brings in a completely different perspective** .... *Mandy 22/04/97*

Betty makes a distinction between visiting and looking at a country and working there, participating in everyday life in the country.

> ... **not <u>just</u> of visiting** and looking at the country, **feeling as if you are <u>part</u> of a small bit in that country**. *Betty 11/08/97*

Norman seems to be saying that he feels sufficiently confident now to live and work abroad.

> I could quite happily **work in some of those other countries**. *Norman 29/04/97*

Just as the European continent is perceived as an entity, separate from the UK, so Europeans are perceived to be like-minded; whereas the British think differently from them. Betty appears to be saying that her transnational partners will have different requirements, for example, for accommodation, than UK colleagues. However, this may also reflect a sophisticated level of awareness of difference in cultural expectations about even such mundane matters.

> It's **hard making decisions** about whether accommodation is suitable **when you are booking for foreign people**. *Betty LJ*

The notion of 'being European' or not is not confined to reflections on geography. Contributions from many in the group indicate that they have a heightened awareness concerning the issue of what belonging to the European Union will mean at a cultural level. Susie appears here to be expressing a fear that there may come about a level of harmonisation in the European Union which will lead to the loss of regional cultural difference. This is one of the poles of opinion generally held about political harmonisation in Europe and about which I spoke in Chapter 2.

> I think my outlook on the whole sort of European Community issue has changed and 'should we be part of Europe and shouldn't we?'. (...) I would say that **I value, our culture, the British culture ...** I mean **I don't think it's superior to any of the others** but at the same time, although **I'm saying "yes we're all the same the world over" I'm also saying I wouldn't like to lose our Englishness** .... *Susie 13/06/97*

Gina comments directly on the notion of 'being European' and while she obviously feels that she holds a relatively cosmopolitan outlook, she speaks of a greater awareness about other countries which she has developed through her experiences in her transnational project.

> I mean **I like to think that I'm fairly European anyway**, I mean **it irritates the hell out of me that there is such an insular view in this region**, in this country, that the idea about Europeans and "what do they know", "we're not doing that because they're French" and **the whole xenophobic attitude of the English annoys me intensely**. So I don't know whether I'm more European as a..... well it's not just with Europe are you, you can have Americans, Australians, I think that's pathetic [xenophobia]. But I think it can't fail to give you a deeper understanding of the countries that you work with so you kind of do take a more..... you know **if there was an article on the news now about the Swedish or Dutch local authority system or education system you're bound to**

> **prick your ears up a bit more and think "oh yes, I know something about that" and relate to it** ... *Gina 08/07/97*

She appears to say that it is knowledge about different countries and cultures which counters an insular view.

Finally, Gina and others seem to hold the view that, given the number of different countries and cultures on the European mainland, being European means being racially tolerant, whereas the British are not.

> Probably **we are more European** now, but I think **we've got to be** as well. I mean I think **we live in a multi-cultural society** now.
> *Elsie 23/07/97*

So in a sense they are transferring the notion of 'multicultural' from being something at an international level to something that they think about within their own society, i.e. at an intranational level.

> **They were just people**, for me. They weren't German, they weren't Belgian ..., to me they were people with the same sort of working ideas. **I tend to see them as people first and then as race, or colour, or whatever, later. You have to be open-minded.**
> *Norman 29/04/97*

Norman's use of the phrase 'open-minded' is significant in the context of developing intercultural awareness. This is an affective issue, in contrast to the cognitive issues associated with the practicalities of international travel.

The participants demonstrate

- increased awareness and knowledge about the geography of Europe (cognitive learning);
- modified attitudes and behaviour concerning practical matters to do with travel (affective learning);
- increased awareness, modified attitudes, even a new social identity, in relation to work abroad and with colleagues from other cultural backgrounds (affective learning).

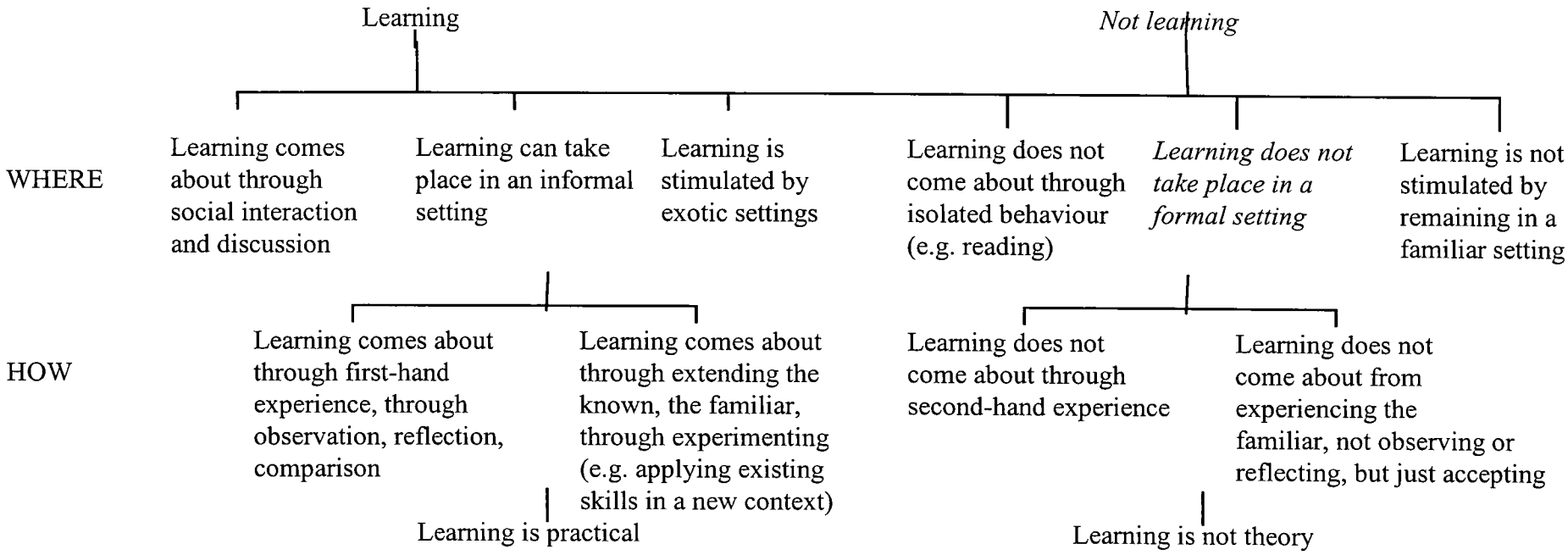
Both cognitive and affective elements are present in Byram's (1997) framework, outlined in Chapter 3, and I show in the summary to this chapter how my participants' statements relate to this framework and how both cognitive and affective aspects may have contributed to the development of intercultural competence among my research participants and to their capacity for introducing a European dimension into the curriculum.

It is not only what my participants learned through working on their transnational project, but also how they learned which I was interested to discover. It also transpired that the locus for learning was of interest. Learning is then the theme of the next domain.

### 5.3.3 Learning

Within the domain, this is the schema which the participants have about learning:

**Figure 6 Learning**



The schema shows my interpretation of the group's conceptualisation of their experience of learning in the context of working on a European transnational project. The interpretation reveals a contrast between what they view as interactive, positive, stimulating, experiential learning at 'first-hand', i.e. learning undertaken during work on their project, and receptive, theoretical, less positive, 'second-hand' learning undertaken in other contexts.

My participants articulate the view that learning comes about through social interaction and discussion. They repeatedly draw a contrast between 'paper learning' and the 'real thing'. Susie speaks of 'flat paper' as opposed to the 'living reality'.

> The value of sharing methodology and **that sort of thing comes out in conversations ... it's living, not just flat paper ... the actual living reality** of the projects are [sic] very very different and that **wouldn't appear just from a paper report**. *Susie 13/06/97*

Ida uses the phrase 'first-hand' to describe what she appears to feel is a better way to learn about people abroad.

> I just thought it would be **an opportunity to learn more about people first-hand in other countries** and ... find different ways of doing things, which I have done. *Ida 24/06/97*

Norman and Susie seem to say that information obtained in person is better than that obtained from a distance, at second-hand.

> Half of the experience was **learning about other cultures and you can't do that here sitting around an English dinner table or conference table**. *Susie 13/06/97*

> The difference is that **you get it from the horse's mouth, by being there first-hand**, spending the day with these people in the project, and **these things come out in a conversation**. *Norman 29/04/97*

This last statement by Norman and the following statement from Lucy illustrate the fact that the group is also keen to stress that learning does not necessarily come about in what one might interpret as a traditional setting, but rather that learning can take place in an informal setting.

> **Went to lunch** with SOCRATES staff in Palma - excellent.
> **Learned so much** more about Majorca. *Lucy LJ*

Whereas the previous concepts might be equally valid for staff learning through involvement in, for example, UK-only projects, the difference between such learning and learning through involvement in a transnational project is that the participants appear to feel that learning is stimulated by 'exotic' settings. Rita's comment links back to the previous domain and to the discussion concerning concepts to do with travel and distance. All are part of the general concept that learning at first-hand is somehow more valuable than theoretical learning.

> I think the interest would not have been as rewarding in a national project, because of the opportunity to travel. And **to see how other people operate in an entirely different concept** [context] to the UK. *Rita 06/05/97*

Seeing the reality of how things are done in another country would appear for Rita to be more significant than, for example, reading about working practices abroad. For Susie the contrast is between hearing about practices in other

countries, so, information received at second-hand, and actually seeing it for herself, at first-hand.

> **You wouldn't have seen the frustration** of having to work in an Italian surrounding ... or understood the German very complicated bureaucracy ... **hearing about it is not the same as seeing it in operation**. *Susie 13/06/97*

Lucy articulates the notions of excitement and novelty associated with working abroad.

> **Exciting to be in Sweden, experience new country** & thanks to Swedes offering their homes - **new customs. Came back feeling more confident and able**. Project looking very well. *Lucy LJ*

Sonia and Mandy express the learning through reflection which the group feels comes about when working in exotic settings and with colleagues from different cultural backgrounds. Sonia draws the comparison between national and transnational projects and stresses the need during the latter for reflection, for the 'unpicking' of one's own cultural concepts.

> **The added value is the difference, isn't it?** Because if you did a project like this with partners in the UK, you'd find that you'd ingrained cultural norms, that you probably wouldn't even be able to verbalise. But **because you're working with people whose cultural norms are ... different ... that means that ... you examine them and unpick them quite carefully for yourself as well.** *Sonia 23/07/97*

Mandy seems to say that it is the difference, the element of the exotic, that has stimulated her reflections.

> **It's stepping outside of what I normally do that's just made me think** about those things really. *Mandy 07/07/97*

In project reports, both those taken as part of the evidence base for this study and others, there is a clear and realised expectation that staff will make comparisons when working in other countries with partners from different cultural backgrounds. Here, the participants, prompted by the repertory grid exercise, have given thought to the way in which they have learned and hold the concept that learning comes about through first-hand experience, through observation, reflection, comparison. By contrast, they imply, some even state, that learning does not come about through theoretical work alone, that first-hand information is more exciting, more interesting.

> It's given me **a lot more first-hand knowledge** and a lot more information **to make my programmes,** if you like, in relation to European Awareness, **more enjoyable**. I mean ... **it's more interesting, for the students to tune into, rather than just** straightforward issues and just **dry, factual information**. *Norman 29/04/97*

The value of first-hand experience is variously stated. Norman draws a distinction between dry, factual theory and 'alive', 'realistic' first-hand experience.

> Because of doing a degree at... University, of course, on policy areas ... **I got a good understanding of European social policy issues, and, erm, it was nice to have that reinforced**, erm, that the demographic trends and the problems in the partnership countries were very similar to the UK.... **Sometimes that's just a concept that we have**, and sometimes, **unless you actually hear from them**

**themselves ....It makes it more alive, doesn't it? More realistic?** *Norman 29/04/97*

The concept of learning by observation is stated implicitly by Gina:

> They're [Netherlands and Sweden] not 'behind' us. **People in different countries learn in different ways.** *Gina RG*

and explicitly by Rita, who again stresses the value of seeing working practices in person.

> Well, you realise that they've got the same problems, and **you look at** the way they're dealing with them. *Rita 06/05/97*

Through their own observations 'on the spot', staff were able to test and review received wisdom in their specialist fields, comparing and contrasting what they had read or heard with the evidence before them. Yet again the contrast is between reading and seeing or experiencing, between theory and live reality.

> We hear so much on the media about English standards are far behind our European counterparts and ... about education in Germany being absolutely perfect and **when you work alongside people ... you realise that** actually we have got an excellent system. *Susie 13/06/97*

> **So although we hear an awful lot** about Norway and Sweden ... having good models [in Special Needs education] ... **I don't see it happening over there**. *Sonia 23/07/97*

> You can read about it in the paper ... but you're **reading about it, you're not experiencing it.** *Norman 29/04/97*

The group feels that learning may come about through reflection.

> I guess **it's about confidence and about recognising how much you actually know** ... so it was **a coming together** for me of that and the transnational project. *Susie 13/06/97*

> Things that they said made you reflect on it [everyday life] ... made you certainly think about, 'that's not the way it works here' ... so **maybe I didn't think differently, but I certainly reflected** on it. *Gina 08/07/97*

Mandy seems to be unsure as to whether learning through observation and reflection is in some way different from learning which leads to some tangible change.

> Staff rooms [in Sweden] are about rooms where people can meet in a less formal atmosphere and promote discussion ... so **that was something I'd ... if not learned, at least I'd observed and reflected on**. *Mandy 07/07/97*

Susie and Betty, however, are quite clear about the potential benefit to the individual from learning which results from observation and reflection.

> ... the **opportunities you get for reflection** about other individuals' experiences and their ... life and how **reflects on ... your perspective** about your institution, about your life, about you as an individual ... **an opportunity for you to ... be introspective and use the experiences you've had to extend your own development**. *Sonia 23/07/97*

> It has been a **constant learning process**. And **you learn in a positive way**, and whatever you learn you can sort of ... **compare and contrast with your own practice**. *Betty 11/08/97*

Learning through observation, reflection and comparison might be said to be receptive, whereas the participants hold a further concept about learning which

might be said to be interactive, namely, that learning comes about through extending the known, the familiar, through experimenting.

> Well, I think, a lot of the things you do, you do without realising it, in such a 'learning' or 'developing' way. It's probably **using skills that you already have, but in a different concept** [sic - context]. *Norman 29/04/97*

The point which Norman makes is that learning may involve using the same skills in a different context. Gina expresses a similar view.

> I mean I think this has really opened my eyes in some ways as to **how IT can work with work ... actually applying it in a work situation**. I think this has given me the opportunity to do <u>that</u>, that I might not otherwise have had. You know I could always email people in ... Scotland and Birmingham ... but **to actually send people spreadsheets** ... It was really funny to see Excel spreadsheets in Swedish, you know, Blad 1, Blad 2 and 'golly, this is Swedish, this is!' And 'I'm working on Ruud's spreadsheet that he was working on only seconds ago over in the Netherlands!' *Gina 08/07/97*

Mandy, however, talks about learning about new topics in a different context, and about the opportunity for 'play' and 'experimentation'.

> I don't see it as a massive sea-change but it's allowing me, or **enabling me, to do things that I don't normally get involved with in a <u>safe</u> context**, I think. Because it's new ground for managers in the Netherlands and Sweden ... I don't feel that I'm up against trying to prove myself in this country ... I think it has just given me **the opportunity to play around with things in a different context.** *Mandy 07/07/97*

As I reported in Chapter 4, the research exercise prompted my participants to articulate explicitly not only the content of any learning they considered they had experienced through involvement in their project, but also the way in which

they felt they had learned. For some, notably Sonia, Betty, Gina, Mandy and Norman, it was clear from their contributions that their learning was affecting their work in a wider context. This is significant evidence for the view that involvement in a transnational project may entail professional development. Norman speaks at length on this topic, and also indicates how he feels his 'first-hand learning' has enhanced his professional performance in respect of integrating a European dimension into the curriculum.

> I think I **updated** [my theoretical knowledge], **and it made it more realistic.** You can talk to students about European input, and **you're talking from a more knowledgeable base**, with more down-to-earth factual information, rather than just straightforward giving a lecture. *Norman 29/04/97*

I believe this may be the learning which the promoters of transnational projects wish to see, although as I explained in earlier chapters, little if any evaluation of this aspect of such projects has yet been undertaken. I discuss this further in the summary to this chapter.

It could be argued that much of the learning of which the participants speak might have come about just as readily in a non-transnational context. However, Rita was not the only participant who tried to explain the difference between working on a national project and on a transnational project, in terms of the contrast between competition and teamwork.

> There's a real difference [between English and transnational project]. I mean, **in the English ones, the British ones,**

> everybody's trying to discuss how good <u>their</u> project is. The FEDA[5] projects, **there's quite a lot of competition. Whereas this is team work.** The FEDA ones, you're sort of saying 'ooh, we did this and that was marvellous, and we did that last year, and we've got this sort of set-up at our college', whereas the transnational ones, in the evening, after you've met people all day, people don't tend to talk about the project, they talk about other things, like their family, and **you get to know people on a more personal basis, more friendly.** *Rita 06/05/97*

It was her insistence on the social aspects of transnational project work which first irritated, then intrigued me, particularly as more and more of the participants spoke of the importance of socialising.

[5] The Further Education Development Agency: a national body for the promotion of development in the sector.

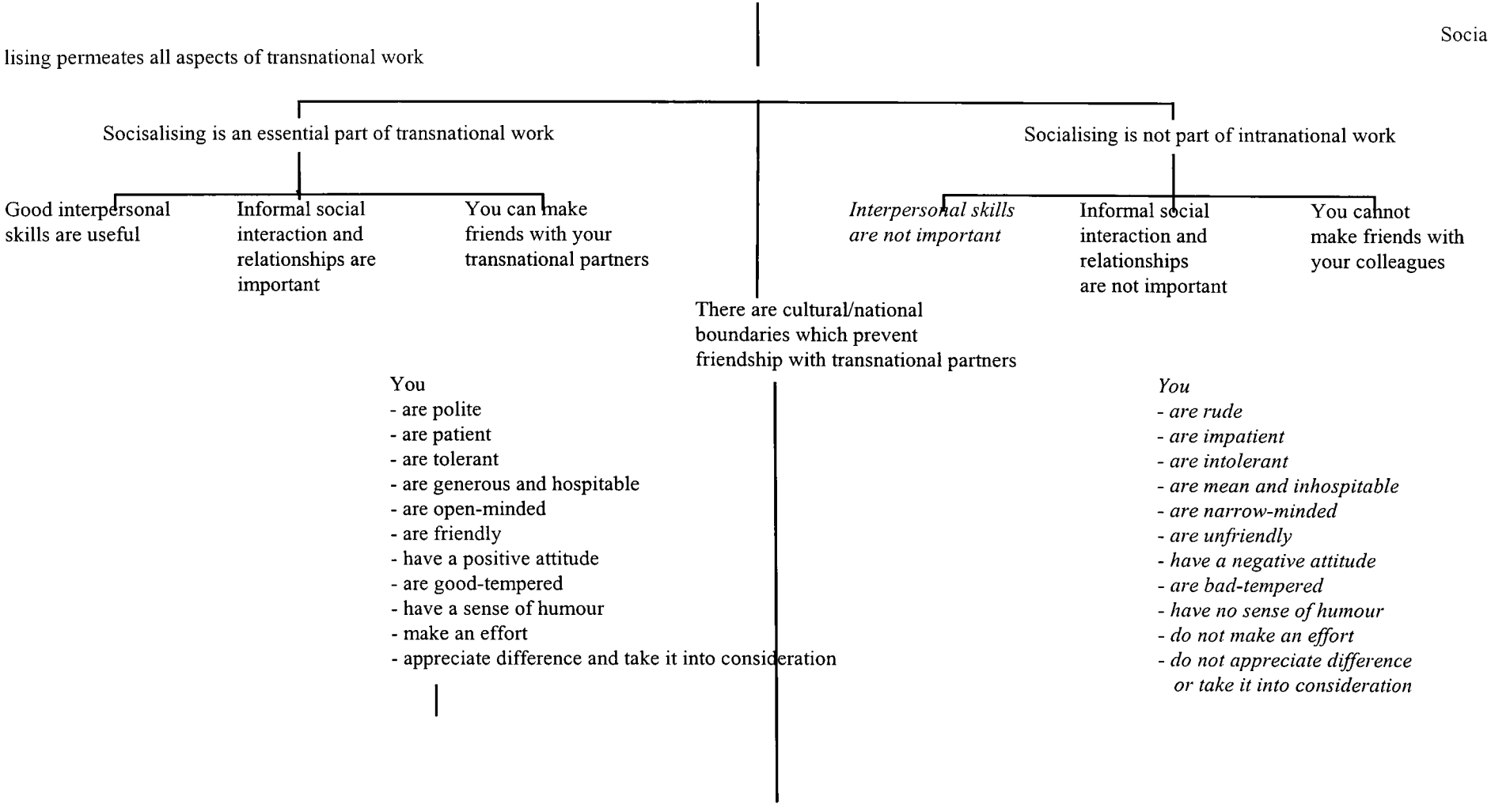
### 5.3.4 Socialising

I was not surprised to find the three domains/schemata discussed above, given the European Commission's agenda and the statements by the EC and other European bodies, which I detailed in Chapters 1 and 2, concerning the importance of language learning, the development of European awareness, and the expectation that transnational projects will bring about learning among the participants. However, as I stated in the introductory section to this chapter, the fourth major domain which emerged from the data did come as a surprise. As far as I am aware, no official documentation promotes the importance of social interaction between transnational project partners. Indeed, in the light of recent allegations of fraud in connection with such projects, it might even be said that social interaction could be frowned upon. Yet it is clear that it is a vital aspect of the projects, contributing significantly to the partners' perceptions of their achievements.

In the first three schemata there are certain aspects, for example, the concept that learning is linked to experience and may come about in an informal setting, that language and communication is viewed through the perspective of having to communicate, which point to the fact that socialising permeates everything. The first three schemata may be viewed as independent patterns of meaning on separate themes, whereas the fourth schema is both a category in its own right and a theme which interweaves the others.

Within the domain, this is the schema which the participants have about socialising:

**Figure 7 Socialising**



Socialising with colleagues is not 'normal'
You are 'on duty', representing your country

My interpretation of the group's conceptualisation of their experience of socialising in the context of working on a European transnational project reveals that the participants place a high value on social interaction linked to the success or otherwise of their joint professional activities with the transnational partners. It is clear that this aspect of the transnational work was unexpected, for some a pleasure, for others a burden, if only in respect of the time commitment, but socialising was recognised by all as indispensable for the development of the working relationship with their project partners. While the categories in the schema which refer to international work are not always filled, not always directly stated in the words of the participants, it is clear that the 'negative image', shown on the right-hand side of the diagram, exists as part of their shared concepts concerning socialising.

Let us focus on the left-hand side of the diagram and consider the more positive concepts which the group have about socialising. It is clear that they regard socialising as an essential part of a transnational project, and for this, that good interpersonal skills are helpful, and that they take an interest in their transnational partners. Here they express in different ways the importance of socialisation and joint social activity to reinforce the team spirit for work on the project.

> **Social interactivity** a definite requirement. *Mandy RG*

> **Importance of socialisation**, mix of business and pleasure. *Norman RG*

> **Dinner** [with the transnational partners] on 10th April was a pleasant and relaxed affair. ... **reinforced team spirit** I think as we began to open those Johari windows further (or at least I felt we did!) *Jude LJ*

> **In social gatherings ... people felt a lot more comfortable** ... and people relaxed. *Susie 13/06/97*

Gina hints at a view held by several of the group, that socialising itself can sometimes be a kind of work. 'On parade', with its connotations of being smart, alert, ready for action, would seem to indicate that Gina cannot relax during this kind of social activity. This contrasts with Susie's view, given above.

> How does Anne cope with all this 'out of work' stuff? **Working at home** [in the evening] **is one thing, constantly being 'on parade' is another**. *Gina LJ*

Betty sees the time commitment from a different perspective. Like Gina, she would seem to find the socialising hard work, 'tiring', certainly not relaxing.

> ... **the Belgian people have made us extremely welcome**, in fact perhaps **in many ways at the moment it's going a bit overboard**! Because to start with they made us very welcome, but the day finished at five o'clock ... now **they feel they have to entertain us until none or ten o'clock at night**, and it suddenly has become ... **very tiring**. *Betty 11/08/97*

Being familiar with this feeling myself, I asked those who touched on this issue in their interview to clarify the concept further. Curiously, this revealed a concept held by several in the group concerning representation of one's country. Jude expresses it in the most explicit fashion.

> I think that if we'd been dealing with UK colleges it would have been a lot easier for people to express ... their irritation or frustration. I think that when you are dealing with partners from different countries **you feel as if you really have to try and maintain a good relationship all the time** ... maybe because **you are representing your country**. *Jude 02/07/97*

> ... **you're what they're seeing of your country** and you want to make the best impression possible. *Jude 02/07/97*

The same concept is expressed from a different perspective by Betty. Whereas among the UK team members when alone there is an element of rivalry, they present a united front when working with their transnational partners.

> The meetings with my [UK] colleagues ... there might be ... in terms of professional rivalry ... a bit of scoring ... **I haven't had that feeling with them in the meetings with the Belgians and the Swedish people** ... everybody played to their strengths. *Betty 11/08/97*

This and subsequent quotations here illustrate, by being examples of the opposite, the empty categories on the right-hand side of the Socialising schema.

What might be interpreted as a disadvantage, in terms of time and effort, a burden, is outweighed for Rita and others by the relationships developed.

> You **don't sit up 'til the early hours of the morning in a national project** and have the same **interest in your colleagues**. *Rita 06/05/97*

> Contact with Rob during his workshadowing placement here. **It was good to see a 'real foreign person' involved** in the project as **at a distance it gets easy to generalise** about the 'Dutch team' or the Swedish team. *Jude LJ*

In some cases there is a move from categorising people by nationality to seeing them as individuals whom it is possible to know.

> An excellent transnational meeting - **it's amazing how humour crosses linguistic boundaries once you get to know people** *Susie LJ*

There are also crucial events which indicate that individuals are known in terms other than nationality.

> Spoke to Johanna in Germany this week. Feel as if I've always known her - it's great. **It's amazing how that kind of relationship transcends all cultural, national boundaries**. *Susie LJ*

> Johanna phoned last night - really looking forward to seeing them all. Harald is not going to be there as his wife is very poorly. He has been one of our mainstays - it will seem incomplete without him. **It's funny - I know more about some of our** [transnational] **partners than I do people I've worked with for years!** *Susie LJ*

Susie appears to be surprised at the concept that it is possible to develop close friendships with people from other countries and cultures.

While there is some ambivalence about the extent to which it is possible to make friends with transnational partners, the concept of 'being friendly', and its importance for the success of a given project, is never in question.

> I think it's the, erm, **the friendliness**, that got us to where we wanted to be, from the early stage. It wasn't a pure, a business meeting, it was **a friendly, get-together discussion**, with a group of people that obviously had the same aims in mind. *Norman 29/04/97*

The terms 'friendly' and 'being friendly' appear frequently. It is interesting to note that there is evidence in the data that the participants have reflected on what it is to be interculturally competent, not from a socio-cultural or socio-linguistic perspective, but in everyday psychological terms. 'Being friendly' is one of the key qualities which might be said to characterise the 'interculturally competent operator'.

> Elke would laugh and say ... you know, it was done in a nice **friendly** way. *Norman 29/04/97*

Other useful characteristics are illustrated below in the words of the participants. I have highlighted the key words in each case.

> Transnational meetings - frustrating at times, require **patience** and **perseverance**. A **diplomatic approach** sometimes needed. Bring increased awareness of other cultures. A **sense of humour** is important. Surprising ease of communication and increased confidence in working relationships. *Rita LJ*

> There was generally a feeling that you'd **overcome the disagreements** before the end of a session. *Susie 13/06/97*

> The social side ... the importance of socialisation [sic], and mixing business with pleasure ... using the word lightly. You know, the drink, the coffee breaks, the getting to know each other, the pleasurable side of it. And ... that also links into having the ability, and the knowledge of **interpersonal relationship skills** .... They're quite important. I think that's quite an important aspect. *Norman 29/04/97*

> [*How has the relationship developed?*] Fax, telephone, keeping in touch with them on a very regular basis. And **having a friendly attitude** towards whatever discussion you're having at any particular time. And **fulfilling what you say you're going to do, making sure it happens**. Not just talking about things. The follow-through. *Norman 29/04/97*

Susie summarises the significance of socialising for these projects:

> **What it's about is relationships** and personality and a willingness to communicate ... it's **forming a good personal relationship** because then you think 'we can sort the rest out afterwards'. *Susie 13/06/97*

There is one further intriguing concept to emerge from the data in connection with this domain, and that has to do with the notion of a 'third culture', a 'third place'. Kramsch develops this notion in detail (1993), describing a culture which is neither one nor the other, but something in-between. Able to stand back and appreciate their own culture from an objective and critical perspective, some of the participants also demonstrate a wish to 'fit in' with their transnational partners' culture(s) and thereby effectively create a 'third culture' in the cracks between the piano keys, as it were. Jude articulates a concept to which many of the others refer obliquely, namely the comparing and contrasting undertaken in general conversation to work out one's place in the 'third culture':

> You're talking ... you're trying to get a feel for how their culture equates to yours ... **you're trying to contextualise yourself ... in the foreign culture** and see how <u>you</u> would get on. *Jude 02/07/97*

This is evidence of intercultural competence, as demonstrated in Byram's (1997) framework, and links to Kramsch's notion of a 'third culture' in that the intercultural competence is that which people use in the 'third place'. My participants express concepts to do with the creation of their own 'third place', which they inhabit with their transnational project partners. Both Jude and Lucy

speak of the concept that developing a relationship with hitherto unknown colleagues can be a liberating experience.

The third place is not just metaphorical but can also be geographical.

> Because **you are away from everything you know** and you've got to be with this person which accelerates the getting-to-know-you process by years, doesn't it? *Jude 02/07/97*

> **You're like a captive audience** ... and you have to get on with them ... you are under extreme pressure when you are trying to be interesting and polite ... on the other hand **it can be a rewarding experience**. *Jude 02/07/97*

Another metaphor used is that of travelling, being 'on a plane'.

> It's like .. **the syndrome of somebody you meet on a plane** ... for those couple of hours and you'll probably never see them again ... so **it doesn't matter** [what you say/reveal]. *Jude 02/07/97*

This notion that this experience is liberating is articulated as being 'adrift', another travel or journey metaphor.

> And I found there you see that whereas in England I have some sort of standing where I live and people know how I am and treat me accordingly, **as soon as you go somewhere completely different**, of course you don't have any reputation or anything and **you are just completely adrift and free.** *Lucy 25/06/97*

They also appear to be saying that the cross-cultural social grouping which they have created generates its own loyalties and expectations of behaviour from group members.

> **I didn't want to be negative** in the face of the Belgian and Swedish enthusiasm. *Betty LJ*

Betty seems to be saying that she has obligations towards her transnational partners, that there are expectations about reciprocal behaviour.

That the relationships formed between project team members and across national boundaries can be surprisingly strong is stated by Sonia.

> Received letter giving news of Jos' son's suicide. **Surprised at the impact and the ties which had developed** between staff from the 3 countries during the life of the project. *Sonia LJ*

The concept that the international project team has its own group identity is clearly expressed here by Gina. 'In-jokes' are only possible when a group has a distinct identity.

> ... you don't have 'in-jokes' ... well, you do a bit, **there were 'in-jokes'** to some extent that we laughed about in Holland, like Jaap's driving. *Gina 08/07/97*

Betty also speaks about the concept of group identity. Her notion here implies that the project partners' wives are intruding into something self-confined, a closed group. She speaks of her Belgian team members having loyalties not only to their wives but also to the project team, and about the conflict in loyalties which her colleagues experience when trying to operate in two groups at once.

> I think another thing which has perhaps been **a little bit of a barrier** has been that **the Belgians have taken their wives with them** more. That **does make it a little bit of a difficulty in getting to them**. ... Lieven and Jos are then sort of ... **slightly with divided loyalties when their wives are there** ... I mean, they've [the wives] never ever come into meetings, **they've never intruded** there, **but it can affect leisure time**. *Betty 11/08/97*

This is in keeping with the theories proposed by Barth (1969) and Geertz (1975), which I discussed in Chapter 3, concerning social identity. Elsie talks of the same notion from a different perspective, and clearly feels that there is a group into which she would like to integrate her family. This might be interpreted as an attempt by Elsie to minimise conflict between the group identities and loyalties which she has.

> **When you have visitors** here ... I think perhaps **it's nice to have your own family involved so that they understand**. *Elsie 23/07/97*

The question then arises as to whether these characteristics, of 'intercultural speaker', 'intercultural operator', or of someone able to cope in a 'third place', are what the sponsors of transnational projects are seeking to promote.

It is impossible to know whether the characteristics to do with being interculturally competent have developed just as a result of involvement in a transnational project, but as the participants all talk about it, it may be fair to say they have at least become aware of this change or development in themselves. I shall consider now what evidence of change I have found in the data.

### 5.3.5 Evidence of change

> Given the difficulty, experienced by some teachers, of changing frames of reference, one of the primary tasks in the development of cross-cultural competence should be not so much to fill in one frame with different contents, but, rather, to make explicit the boundaries of the frame and try out a different one. (Kramsch, 1993: 223)

The reader will recall that I began the study with the aim of answering, at least in part, the question posed by the then DES:

> To what extent has the European dimension affected the thinking and approaches of staff? (1992c:22)

I am also interested to see to what extent staff may feel they have changed, in the sense of having acquired new awareness, altered their attitudes and behaviour, even acquired new social identities, in respect of other European countries and cultures, all of which are aims promoted by the sponsors of transnational projects.

If all evidence of change is put together, there are indications from a number of participants about change and development. So it is not just an individual, idiosyncratic phenomenon. Rather, it is likely that it is a consequence of experience from working on a transnational project and might be applicable to the whole group and beyond. As I explained in Chapter 4, I did not set up a 'pre-/post-' design for the data collection, but I have at this time analysed the 'post-' experience of my participants. So while I cannot carry out an analysis of change, I can analyse people's sense or perception of change in themselves.

I shall look at the evidence for change from two different perspectives. Firstly, that of intercultural competence, with a view to seeing to what extent my participants might be said to have acquired it, and secondly, from the perspective of the aims of the European transnational project sponsors, to see whether or not my participants' accounts of their experiences reveal that their awareness, attitudes, behaviour, even identity, have been affected by their involvement in their project.

The evidence for change is particularly significant in relation to theories of intercultural competence, as described in Chapter 3. I feel it is helpful to remind the reader here of the framework developed by Byram (1997) which sets out what he considers to be the key elements of intercultural competence:

| | |
|---|---|
| Attitudes | Curiosity and openness, readiness to suspend disbelief about other cultures and belief about one's own |
| Knowledge | Of social groups and their products and practices in one's own and in one's interlocutor's country, and of the general processes of societal and individual interaction |
| Skills of interpreting and relating | Ability to interpret a document or event from another culture, to explain it and relate it to documents or events from one's own |
| Skills of discovery and interaction | Ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge, attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication and interaction |
| Critical cultural | An ability to evaluate critically and on the |

| | |
|---|---|
| awareness/political education | basis of explicit criteria, perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures and countries |

(Byram, 1997: 57 - 64)

This framework was conceived for the purpose of designing and developing objectives for teaching, learning and assessment of intercultural competence in a formal educational setting, and specifically, in conjunction with language teaching. However, it is interesting to see to what extent the change, of which my research participants speak, relates to this framework.

In Chapter 3 I introduced the notion of schema theory and what it means in an intercultural context. So when the participants give evidence of, for example, the fact that abstract concepts do not translate readily from one language to another, one can say it's a change of schemata. While I cannot maintain that this has come about solely through their involvement in their transnational project, the fact that they speak of such changes in themselves in this context might suggest that it is their experience, both in the project and in the research exercise. This change may be illustrated clearly by looking at the evidence which the data yielded concerning the domain language and communication.

There is evidence that the participants' concepts about language and communication are challenged during their involvement in their transnational project. The element of reflection and refinement of the participants' views as expressed in the development of the schemata analysed in earlier sections may be illustrated thus:

**Figure 8 Less/more refined views of issues**

| Less refined view of issues | More refined view of issues |
|---|---|
| Simplification is the nature of understanding across language boundaries. Speak slowly and clearly and they'll understand. | Understanding involves more than just words. Some appreciation of the culture is needed. |
| Translation of words = translation of concepts. | Concepts are hard to translate across cultures. An appreciation of cultural background, systems, etc. is needed. |
| Everyone speaks English, if only to a basic level. | Everyone doesn't speak English, even at a basic level. |
| It's easy to learn a foreign language and doesn't take long. | You might be able to pick up a few basic phrases for getting about, but really learning the language can't be done in a 2-week crash course for beginners. |
| Linguists can't be anything else. | People can be all kinds of things and speak well one foreign language (English) or more. |
| Communication problems are solved when there is a common language. | Shared cultural content is needed for there to be shared meaning. |
| | Communication entails doing things you might not normally do - suspending cultural norms. |

It may be seen in the group's schemata that, while there is no crude 'before/after', it is possible to identify a heightened awareness, even if only to a modest extent, of the elements which constitute the beginnings of intercultural competence. Even though their foreign language abilities may not have changed, at least their awareness is greater concerning the potential pitfalls in intercultural communication. At best there is evidence that within the group there are those who demonstrate critical cultural awareness, an integral part of intercultural competence. This may be illustrated by the following example:

> You can make statements, **you can appear as if you all have an agreement**, but then **if you don't have a full understanding of where the other people have come from** , which in many ways is quite different, **you can end up with different outcomes** *Betty 11/08/97*

Betty demonstrates her growing critical cultural awareness, and developing intercultural competence, in that she understands the need not only for care with language in communication but also for an appreciation of different cultural backgrounds if a statement is to be successfully shared by all in the transnational group.

Concerning this domain and the domains 'Europe and what it is to be European', 'Learning' and 'Socialising', the schemata data give evidence for change in terms of the participants' developing Byram's (1997) five elements of intercultural competence.

A number of the participants give evidence for different levels of critical cultural awareness, standing back from their own cultural perspective and looking more objectively at the differences which they encounter in other cultures.

First there is the stage of establishing difference as acceptable.

> I was there [in Sweden] to be interested, to look and see what I could learn, **realising that it was different from England, not better, not worse, but different, and there was value in finding that out for the difference's sake**. *Betty 11/08/97*

Then there is a stage of casting doubt and scrutinising the value of one's own culture.

> Why do we think they [Netherlands and Sweden] are behind and **who necessarily says that the way we are doing it is at the forefront?** *Gina 08/07/97*

> I think differently in a sense that ... I can see that **some of the working practices in those two countries are more desirable than what we have here** ... *Mandy 07/07/97*

Then there is a stage of changing one's behaviour.

> In Sweden I spent a lot of time thinking about the way we approach pollution here ... **And I realised that** Sweden ... has far more concern for conservation and preservation than we appear to have. **I use the bottle bank now, which I didn't do before I went there**. *Ida 24/06/97*

Several speak of the 'open-mindedness' which they feel is a pre-requisite for success in transnational projects, and of which Kim (1988) speaks in the summary of personality attributes which are useful for the development of intercultural competence, and which I listed in Chapter 3. This tolerance of difference is evidence for intercultural competence in the area of attitudes and the suspension of disbelief. Here, Ida articulates her awareness about her own changed attitude.

> I am more able to accept that **things are done differently in Belgium**. *Ida LJ*

Mandy's curiosity, which leads her to learn about working practices in another culture, and her readiness to suspend belief about her own show her intercultural competence in the area of attitudes.

> I <u>think</u> differently in a sense that ... **I can see that some of the working practices in those two countries are more desirable than what we have here** ... *Mandy 07/07/97*

The participants' notice of 'otherness', or difference, indicates that they have increased their knowledge of factual information about other countries and cultures and thereby shows evidence for intercultural competence in terms of knowledge, skills of interpreting and relating, and skills of discovery and interaction.

> I **was fairly vague** about the **geography of Europe** and **also, sort of, attitudes**, of other ...I mean, I know you've only got a very small number of people to observe, but, **their approach to work** ... their manner, that's been very interesting. *Rita 06/05/97*

Rita indicates here and elsewhere that her knowledge of the geography of Europe has improved. She speaks of observing the practices of others and of discovering the way in which they work. She later reflects on this and relates it to working practices in her own institution. When Rita talks about 'observing', what she is doing is talking explicitly about how she has developed skills of learning by observing.

Ida demonstrates clearly her skills of interpreting and relating. While it is stretching a point to say that she has interpreted an event from another culture, explaining and relating it in terms of her own, she has certainly observed, reflected and interpreted an activity which she has now incorporated into her own life. I have used the following quotation already to illustrate an earlier, different point. This serves to show that the same utterance by a participant may provide evidence for different aspects of their experience, the aspects being artificial separations.

> **In Sweden I spent a lot of time thinking about the way we approach pollution here** ... And I realised that Sweden ... has far more concern for conservation and preservation than we appear to have. I use the bottle bank now, which I didn't do before I went there. *Ida 24/06/97*

Betty articulates clearly her learning and competence in the skills of discovery and interaction.

> I've run team meetings for the teams on my own course, but actually **to handle that with three nationalities in a foreign environment,**

> **I found challenging, but I think I've dealt with it OK**. And my line manager ... said to me out of the blue '**haven't you come a long way in the past two or three years?**', so it ... ties in with that. *Betty 11/08/97*

Betty has learned to manage meetings in a multi-national setting, she has discovered differences in working practices and is able to put this knowledge to use in successful intercultural interaction. Her line manager confirms Betty's own understanding of her professional development while working on the project.

As for the last of Byram's (1997) five elements of intercultural competence, none of the participants is so obliging as to speak or write of critical evaluation on the basis of explicit critieria. However, the absence of such data should not be taken as an indication that some would not have been capable of carrying out such an analysis, had they been so minded.

Now to relate this evidence of change in the participants to the aims of the project sponsors.

If we take the same handful of quotations, recognising that there is in the data much more evidence along the same lines, we can re-categorise the participants' statements to demonstrate to what extent they may have developed in the ways desired by European project sponsors. The schemata data is evidence that most participants have acquired new knowledge which could be said to be an

enhanced awareness, if we interpret it in the sense that their involvement in a European transnational project has:

- increased their knowledge of factual information about other countries and cultures;
- enhanced their awareness about other countries and cultures;
- encouraged them to be reflective about their own concepts, attitudes and behaviour;
- encouraged them to reflect about their own social identities and those of others;
- increased their professional capacity, notably in respect of integrating a European dimension into the curriculum.

Let us take first the aspect of increased factual knowledge. Rita is clearly indicating that her knowledge of the geography of Europe has improved.

> I **was** fairly vague about the geography of Europe ... *Rita 06/05/97*

Now to the aspect of change in awareness. Most participants speak of an increased awareness in respect of other European cultural practices. Rita speaks of her observations of difference and heightened awareness about working practices in other countries.

> ... and also, sort of, attitudes, of other ...I mean, I know you've only got a very small number of people to observe, but, **their approach to work ... their manner, that's been very interesting**. *Rita 06/05/97*

One of the aims of several of the European bodies is to bring about in people a greater knowledge of European geography and everyday working practices. Rita is not the only participant who seems to have achieved this.

There is also evidence from the data that most participants have in some way reflected on and altered their attitudes and behaviour.

> **I am more able to accept** that things are done differently in Belgium. *Ida LJ*

Ida has developed a more tolerant attitude, in that she can accept now that her way of working is not necessarily the only one. Like Gina, she has been prompted to reflect on her own and other practice. Here, Gina reflects critically on her own previously held views.

> Why do we think they [Netherlands and Sweden] are behind and **who necessarily says that the way we are doing it is at the forefront?** *Gina 08/07/97*

> They're [Netherlands and Sweden] not 'behind' us. **People in different countries learn in different ways.** *Gina LJ*

Like Gina, Betty has appreciated that recognition and tolerance of difference is not a value judgement, just a different way of looking at the world.

> I was there [in Sweden] to be interested, to look and see what I could learn, realising that **it was different from England, not better, not worse, but different**, and there was value in finding that out for the difference's sake. *Betty 11/08/97*

Mandy takes the reflection one step further and is prompted to make a critical comparison between practice in her own country and abroad, being sufficiently objective as to favour the latter.

> I think differently in a sense that ... **I can see that some of the working practices in those two countries are more desirable than what we have here** ... *Mandy 07/07/97*

It is not only attitudes which are altered. Ida has reflected and altered her behaviour on the basis of activity which she has observed in a different country.

> In Sweden I spent a lot of time thinking about the way we approach pollution here ... And I realised that Sweden ... has far more concern for conservation and preservation than we appear to have. **I use the bottle bank now, which I didn't do before I went there.** *Ida 24/06/97*

Lucy has also learned that the English way of doing things is not the only one, and has learned to adjust to the way of life in another country, in other words, to adapt her behaviour to the less rigid perceptions of time and punctuality in Majorca.

> **Adjusted to Majorcan way of life.** Coach didn't turn up so had to re-schedule. *Lucy LJ*

Then we come to the issue of a change in identity, the acquisition of a 'European identity', which I discussed in Chapter 3. I have already demonstrated that there is evidence in the data for my participants' having developed a sense of belonging to Kramsch's (1993) 'third culture', of having developed a 'third-place identity'. Using social identity theory as propounded by Barth (1969) and Geertz (1975), I think it is fair to say that there is evidence for the majority of the members of the group that they have redefined their social identities through testing their meanings and interpretations of the social world during their work with their transnational partners. While they may not have acquired a 'European identity', they do seem to have acquired a sense of belonging to a transnational group, which may be different from both national

identity and European identity, or indeed it may be a way of defining 'European identity', which is not defined consistently anywhere by those bodies which seek to promote its acquisition.

So, in answer to the question posed by the then DES about the way in which the European dimension has affected the thinking of staff, the data would seem to show that being involved in a transnational project creates change in people's concepts and attitudes. I would also assert, on the basis of the evidence analysed here, that a number of these participants have acquired a degree of intercultural competence. It would seem that it is possible to become interculturally competent without necessarily acquiring a European identity, even in the limited sense in which it would seem to be interpreted by the European Commission and other bodies promoting its acquisition. Tolerance, open-mindedness, curiosity, confidence in travelling abroad, awareness at least that language and communication are not just a matter of simplifying one's English, learning which fosters a broader perspective concerning the individual's values and a critical cultural awareness. These are the elements which indicate intercultural awareness.

To summarise, the participants demonstrate:

- an acquisition of a degree of language awareness;
- knowledge and understanding acquired through that awareness;
- consciously modified behaviour when speaking to non-native speakers of English;

- increased awareness and knowledge about the geography of Europe;
- modified attitudes and behaviour concerning practical matters to do with travel abroad;
- increased awareness, modified attitudes, even a new social identity, in relation to work abroad and with colleagues from other cultural backgrounds;
- confidence in living and working in a 'third culture'.

This personal and professional development may be said to enhance their professional performance. There has been evidence shown in each of the domains, in the participants' own words, of their increased confidence, capability in working situations, ability to deal with the unknown and the unexpected - Kolb's adaptive flexibility and integrative development (1984: 213) - also evidence that they feel much better equipped to introduce a European dimension into the curriculum. I include again at this point a quotation from Betty, speaking here about her enhanced professional capabilities with respect to her transnational project.

> I've run team meetings for the teams on my own course, but actually to handle that with three nationalities in a foreign environment, I found challenging, but I think I've dealt with it OK. And my line manager ... said to me out of the blue 'haven't you come a long way in the past two or three years?', so it ... ties in with that. *Betty 11/08/97*

Moreover, she illustrates how involvement in her transnational project has affected, in a positive sense, *all* aspects of her professional practice. She speaks

of the 'buzz' this project has given her, the enthusiasm which has reached all parts of her work.

> I think it's given me a buzz at a time when things have been difficult career-wise ... within FE. I haven't wanted to apply for promotion ... but **this has given me the extension and the buzz to maintain an interest across the whole of my professional practice**. *Betty 11/08/97*

In the final chapter I shall summarise the findings of my study and their significance in respect of my original research questions. I shall also discuss the merits of research of this kind and include some practical recommendations. Finally, I shall consider the conclusions which my participants reach about transnational projects and the professional development they entail.

# Chapter 6 Transnational projects, intercultural learning, and the European dimension

> ... different perspectives can act as aids in the reframing of personal experience, heightening one's consciousness, one's understanding of this experience. The more perspectives, then, in one's armoury, the less likelihood there is of parochialism and insularity, the more likely one is to be able to resonate with other people's feelings, perceptions and understandings. (Morgan, 1993, quoted in Bottery, 1994: 4)

## 6.1 Summary of the study

In Chapter 1 I outlined the questions which framed my research. I intended to explore my research participants' concepts about what, and how, they learned during their work on transnational European projects, and, through analysing their concepts, I wanted to see whether or not they felt that they

- increased their knowledge of factual information about other countries and cultures;
- enhanced their awareness about other countries and cultures;
- were encouraged to be reflective about their own concepts, attitudes and behaviour;
- were encouraged to reflect about their own social identities and those of others;
- increased their professional capacity, notably in respect of integrating a European dimension into the curriculum.

My reason for focusing on these issues was, as I explained in Chapter 2, that assumptions are made by a number of national and supranational bodies concerning the potential objectives to be achieved by the 'European dimension'. In the absence of any significant reports on the topic in the public domain to date, the purpose was to see:

> To what extent has the European dimension affected the thinking and approaches of staff? (DES, 1992c: 22)

I chose to carry out hermeneutic research for the reasons which I detailed in Chapter 3, believing the interpretative paradigm to be consistent with my research aims, and the methods and tools which I employed were appropriate to this. I was seeking qualitative, rather than quantitative data, and even given the practical constraints of time and resources which I discussed in detail in Chapter 4, my empirical research generated a considerable amount of original data, a selection of which may be seen in the appendices to this document. I drew on the experience of others in the field of intercultural research (Byram & Alred, 1992; Whalley, 1997) in designing my data collection instruments: the Learning Journal, Repertory Grid and semi-structured interview schedules. These may also be seen in the appendices, along with the overall timetable for the data collection exercise. My approach allowed some triangulation of method, of time, and of person, in the sense that my participants were to some extent - in particular through completing their Learning Journals and repertory grids - researching themselves as well as being interviewed by me.

In the early planning stages for my study my choice of research instruments was closely related to the method of analysis I would subsequently use. Spradley (1979) was a significant influence in all respects, but especially concerning the way in which I carried out my domain analysis, the process and content of which I discussed in detail in Chapter 5. For the analysis, also reported in

Chapter 5, I drew on the work of Barth (1969), Byram (1997) and Geertz (1975) for theories which would give structure to my findings. In Chapter 5 I showed my findings in diagrams which were my attempt to represent the concepts which could be identified in participants' talk and writing about their experience of their work on European transnational projects. My interpretation of their concepts and the relationships between those concepts was further illustrated by the words of the participants themselves. Finally, it was from their own words that I drew examples to support the view expressed by my participants, that working on their transnational project had brought about some change in them, at the level of awareness, attitude and behaviour, even identity. I discuss the findings and their significance later in this chapter.

## 6.2 Reflections on the process and the limitations of the study

Carrying out a larger-scale study of this nature and at this level had been a long-cherished ambition. However, the fact that I was not financially sponsored to undertake my research had both positive and negative consequences. On the one hand, there was no 'hidden agenda' to my enquiries: I was quite simply fascinated to find out what and how people involved in transnational projects might learn. On the other hand, devising and conducting a study of this kind in addition to full-time work meant that I was limited by certain practical constraints, notably of time and resources.

While it would have been very satisfying to have conducted a nation-wide study, even more so an ambitious international study, I had to content myself with research in my local environment and rely on my colleagues' co-operation for generating my empirical data. I took account of these issues in designing and conducting the study. For example, I knew from the outset that my research would generate data for qualitative rather than quantitative analysis, if only because of the small numbers of participants likely to be involved. However, recognition of this meant that I worked very much on the detail of my participants' concepts and I feel confident that I have presented an acceptable interpretation of their schemata, have been able to 'stand in their shoes', as it were, and gain a privileged insight into the way in which they see the world. My interest was in interpreting meaning, not just observing and recording. Quantitative studies do not yield this depth of analysis, and as Honess says

> An intensive study of individuals is the route par excellence for developing and testing general propositions concerning behaviour or experience. (Honess, quoted in Beail, 1985: 244)

Being obliged to draw my research participants from among my close colleagues had both advantages and disadvantages during the fieldwork, many of which I discussed in Chapter 4. As Goward discusses in detail

> Ethnographic fieldwork is subjective both in the sense that the ethnographers report selectively what they are predisposed to see, hear and record from the flood of words and events which wash over them every day in the field; and in the sense that the kind and quality of information which comes their way depends to a very large extent ... on the kind and quality of relationships between anthropologists and their informants. (in Ellen, 1997: 100 - 118)

Advantages were: access to my participants was generally not a problem, I knew their projects and therefore also the people, places and issues about which they talked. I experienced the 'empathy' between researcher and researched of which von Wright has spoken (1971: 28), but this may at times be a disadvantage. I continue to wonder to what extent my relationship with my participants hindered, rather than helped, the interview and analysis processes. I have said something on this topic in Chapter 4, but return to it here as I do feel it was a limitation to my study, and not only because I was the only researcher, and therefore had no opportunity for standardisation or comparison of any kind of my findings with those of anyone else. For example, I considered, and still consider, the best of the 'learning conversations' to have been with Gina and Betty, probably the two participants I knew best and had worked most with at the time. I am not convinced that I have been able to eliminate my personal bias from either the ways in which I conducted the interviews with them, or the way in which I analysed data they produced. By analogy, that may mean that I did not treat data from other participants in quite the same 'positive light'. Ackeroyd, in Ellen (1997: 143) outlines some of the salient ethical issues which ethnographers face, but it is Sarsby (in Ellen, 1997: 129) who speaks of the particular difficulties which insider ethnographers have, and of the balance to be struck between empathy and detachment.

The dangers of biased research lurked seemingly at every juncture: I did not include Rita's comment below as part of the detailed analysis in Chapter 5, not

because I did not want to, but because it did not fit into any of the positive categories/themes I had identified. When I first heard and then read and re-read Rita's response to my question, all I could hear or see was the negative.

> *[Would you say that you're better placed to function now in your professional role?]*
>
> Well, **it's broadened my knowledge of different systems. But I had a very broad remit before**. So different educational and administrative systems in different countries. And here. Yes, it must have, **must have made me more effective in some ways. But less effective in others** because I'm so pressured to get everything done! **My time management skills must have improved!** *(Rita 06/05/97)*

Yet many months later, I was prompted by a third party to see the positive: Rita is saying that, in working on a transnational project she has more work to do and does some less well, but not as badly as she would if her time management had not improved.

Perhaps I should have included her comment earlier, in the analysis. Powney and Watts have noted that

> Analysis is every bit as much an act of constructing interpretations as is the interview session itself, and the analyst will bring to it some interpretation of the data, if only by a process of selection. (1987: 143)

There are very few negative comments at all from any of the participants, other than one or two in the Learning Journals, where perhaps the lack of face-to-face contact with me meant they could be more honest. I wonder to what extent I was really able to find out my participants' views, to what extent they were

'doctored' for my consumption, and whether I, as a known interviewer, made the 'social acceptability' factor stronger. Goward reports the frustration of a number of ethnographers in this respect:

> Berreman, for example, discovered that some people ... were more concerned about creating the "right" impression on him than others. (Goward, in Ellen, 1997: 116)

However, I do believe that mine is a fair representation of my participants' views. Ellen (1997) has summarised work in this area and highlights the importance of participants' rights to consultation and feedback (Ellen, 1997: 149). I took account of this and have consulted my participants, who are satisfied that they have been fairly portrayed. They are also satisfied that the level of anonymity in my writing up (Ellen: 138) is sufficient to protect their identities.

All I can say at this point is that I was aware of this potential bias throughout and have endeavoured to 'come clean' about it, as being the most that I can do to eradicate its effects on my findings.

Reflection, even introspection, was a feature of this study, both for me and for my participants. I have no doubt myself about the significant value I have drawn from the exercise in furthering my own learning, in that it has fostered in me an

> ... emergence of a new self-awareness born out of an awareness of the relative nature of values and of the universal aspect of human nature. (Yoshikawa, 1978, quoted in Kim, 1988: 145)

In my conclusions about the value of this kind of research I would add that it has undoubtedly been of benefit to my participants too. During the research process they have engaged in 'cognitive mirroring', exploring their own structures of meaning (Thomas & Harri-Augstein, in Beail, 1985: 271), and they have been afforded an

> ... opportunity to narrate and reflect upon the narration, to analyse and interpret (Byram, in Zarate *et al*, 1996: 85)

### 6.3 The findings and their significance

When I analysed my empirical data I found that my participants held concepts and schemata about certain key elements of their work on European transnational projects. There was sufficient evidence in common to merit treating them as a group, as I discussed in Chapter 5, and while there are always difficulties about generalising from data drawn from a study of a small group, my study nonetheless has a high level of internal validity and undoubtedly sheds light on the issues which I set out to explore.

My participants' concepts and schemata would seem relate to some extent to the expectations of the 'European dimension' which are held by the various European project sponsoring bodies. As I discussed in Chapter 2, these bodies, such as the various Directorates of the European Commission and the Council

of Europe, speak of wishing to promote changes in people's awareness, attitudes and identity. It would indeed seem to be the case that taking part in a transnational project promotes this sort of change among the individuals concerned. However, the European bodies wish that such change in individuals should lead to their associating more strongly with Europe. There is no conclusive evidence for this in my findings.

When my participants reflected on their experiences they articulated concepts clearly showing that they had been prompted to reflect, learn, enhance their awareness, even adapt and change their attitude and behaviour in respect of three major areas: Language and Communication, Europe and what it is to be European, and Learning. It is fair to say that I might have expected to find evidence for this. The various European bodies speak of wishing to promote greater awareness about and knowledge of other European languages and a better understanding of cultural differences. And given the novel nature of the experiences of the participants during their projects - all but two had never before worked with colleagues from different countries - I might also reasonably have expected to find evidence for Learning among my participants.

What completely took me by surprise was the importance of Socialising. There is nothing in the documentation from the European bodies to suggest just how important this aspect of the projects is for the achievement of all the aims which those bodies seek to promote. Moreover, it was when I examined in detail my participants' schema for Socialising that I found the most revealing evidence for

their feeling that they had adopted additional new social identities. It is going too far to say that they acquired a 'European' identity, but several in the group clearly expressed views which showed that they had acquired additional social identities. This quotation from Betty demonstrates this, as she speaks of the concept of in-group loyalty, which I discussed in Chapter 5.

> Because I **knew how important it was to [the Belgian] school** ... to have these things happening and as they'd ... put a lot of work and effort into things **it was not fair to hold back.** *Betty 11/08/97*

In my discussion of the (very limited) literature in this field, I detailed in Chapter 3 the study reported by Convery *et al* (1997). Betty's statement would appear to stand in direct contrast to the view expressed by Convery *et al* as a challenge to developing the notion of European citizenship. They hold the view that:

> what is manifestly lacking however is a sense of loyalty to one's fellow (European) citizens and the obligations that pertain thereto. (Convery *et al*, 1997: 56)

However, they do not refer to their empirical data in making this assertion. I would counter it, as my participants certainly expressed notions of loyalty and a sense of mutual obligation towards their fellow project partners in other countries. This would seem to indicate that participation in a transnational project fosters the development of a sense of supranational loyalty to fellows, even if this may not be described as a sense of 'European identity'. This sense of loyalty may be in keeping with another notion held by Convery *et al*, namely, that

> It is possible that a middle-class professional Briton may have closer cultural affinities with his/her French counterpart than with a working-class Briton. (Convery *et al*, 1997: 57)

Again, they make no reference to their data. My participants' statements and writings would certainly appear to give support to this view. Through their work on their projects my participants have shared a set of experiences, ideas and beliefs with their European partners as a consequence of their profession. The issue here is not one of 'middle' or 'working' class, but of professional identity which in this case is very much perceived as no longer limited by national boundaries.

So, do staff who work on a transnational project feel that their awareness, attitudes, behaviour and identity have changed? The evidence from my data reveals a 'Yes' to the first three elements, even a 'Yes' to the fourth, but they have not necessarily acquired a 'European identity'. They do, however, appear to have acquired a 'transnational professional identity'. Let us hear again from Betty.

> **I'm not sure if I feel more 'European'**. I feel a sort of (this is a bit trite!) a sort of ..... buzz, of being a woman of the .... of European countries, a bit cosmopolitan, with a bit here and a bit there, and **a bit of culture here, a bit of understanding there**, a bit of food from here, **a bit of language** from there, **a bit of fashion, a bit of .....you know, how the education works**, .... how the employment market works..... Yes, **I wouldn't say I feel more 'European', but 'cosmopolitan' might be the word**. *Betty 11/08/97*

I am not sure that this is what the transnational project promoters are seeking. The development of a less insular, more cosmopolitan outlook should surely be seen as positive, although the fact that it is a sense of 'cosmopolitan identity' rather than 'European identity' suggests that those who develop it are going beyond the Euro-centric views of the project promoters to acquire an altogether broader perspective on the world. However, this may mean that they will in turn become critical, not only of a national stance but also of a Euro-centric stance.

As I discussed in Chapter 2, the European bodies speak variously of encouraging the development of a 'sense of European identity', a consciousness of a 'common European identity', among both staff and the young people with whom they work. I could not find evidence in my data for my participants' feeling that they had developed in this way. However, I did find evidence for a notion on their part that they had gained a view of Europe as a multi-cultural, multi-lingual community which includes the UK, also that they had felt prompted to improve their understanding of other European languages. These are two of the aims stated by the then DES in their Green Paper (1992c: 2). It is my belief that this broadening of outlook would have come about whatever the mix of project partner nationalities. The widening of perspective of which my participants speak and write appears not to be confined to considerations of Europe, but rather to be a much more general development of critical appreciation of differences and similarities between people from different cultural backgrounds, and of the skills needed to promote the furtherance of joint endeavours in a positive context. They also speak and write of their

feeling better equipped to pass on these views and their understanding to young people and others.

The significance to their development of this perspective and these skills should not be underestimated. In Chapter 3 I discussed the small body of literature on evaluation in this field. To date there has been no major evaluative study of the impact of transnational projects on staff in FE, yet a lot of time and money is invested in this activity. There are two main issues here, both illustrated in my findings.

Firstly, this form of evaluative research, promoting reflection among participants, can bring to light and raise for discussion a number of personal and professional development outcomes, which when analysed, demonstrate a wide range of benefits accruing to the individual, their students and, by default, the institution. More routine identification of these benefits would support arguments for the cost-effectiveness of involvement in transnational projects.

Secondly, involvement in transnational projects fosters the development of certain attitudes and skills: those of intercultural competence. Staff who develop in this way have much to offer their institution. In Chapter 3 I discussed Crossley's (1994) views concerning change within the sector and the need for staff capable of managing innovation, adaptation and change. My data demonstrate that the participants feel that they develop these professional

capacities during their work on their transnational project, for all that they do not state it in the terms which Crossley uses.

These benefits have not been identified before. It is my view that transnational project work is marginalised within FE institutions, in large part because little is known about its outcomes. More research of this nature would support its continuation and closer integration into the institutions' main activities, as well as a recognition, long overdue in my opinion, of the major role it can play in professional development.

Here, then, is a summary of my findings, which in turn lead me to make certain recommendations.

**Figure 9 Summary of the findings**

| The participants expressed the view that during work on their European transnational project they ... | The evidence for this may be seen in my representations in Chapter 5 of their schemata about ... | This may be seen as evidence for intercultural competence, in terms of Byram's (1997) framework, as follows ... |
|---|---|---|
| • increased their knowledge of factual information about other countries and cultures; | Europe and what it is to be European | Knowledge |
| • enhanced their awareness of other countries and cultures; | Europe and what it is to be European | Knowledge |
| • were encouraged to be reflective about their own concepts, attitude and behaviour; | Language and Communication, Learning | Knowledge, Attitudes, Skills of interpreting and relating, Skills of discovery and interaction, Critical cultural awareness |
| • were encouraged to reflect about their own social identities and those of others; | Learning, Socialising | Skills of interpreting and relating, Skills of discovery and interaction |
| • increased their professional capacity, notably in respect of integrating a European dimension into the curriculum. | Learning, Europe and what it is to be European, Socialising. | Knowledge, Attitudes, Skills of interpreting and relating, Skills of discovery and interaction, Critical cultural awareness |

## 6.4 Recommendations

The reflections expressed by my participants, and my interpretation of their description of their experiences, may serve two purposes:

1) to point to ways in which they might pass on their experience, and its benefits, to others, especially their students, and

2) to indicate how staff might prepare themselves for participation in such projects.

As my research was not designed to investigate the above, and I did not elicit my participants' views on the topics, the recommendations expressed here are speculative. I link them to Byram's (1997) framework for the acquisition of intercultural competence.

### Passing on the experience to students - four key areas

#### 1 Language and Communication: the incentive to reflect

Even though they worked almost exclusively in English on their projects, my participants were prompted to be reflective about their own concepts, attitudes, behaviour, even their own social identities and those of others. Much of the reflection came about through observation of working practices and during informal discussions with partners. I would suggest that one way of promoting this level of reflection among students might be to provide a framework for them to develop personal relationships with their peers from other countries and cultures and to help them develop the incentive to exchange not only factual

information but personal views and reflections. In this way they might begin to develop skills of intercultural competence in the areas of attitudes, maybe even of critical cultural awareness.

## 2 Europe and what it is to be European: face-to-face contact

Face-to-face contact with peers from other countries and cultures has undoubtedly been significant for my participants, as has the opportunity to discuss, compare and contrast experiences in both formal and informal settings, in the context of work towards a common goal. I therefore suggest that one way in which staff might pass on their experience to their students would be to arrange such face-to-face contact for them, and offer a framework in which students might exchange their experiences with those of their peers in other countries. Where travel proves difficult, communications technologies may be used to promote interpersonal contact over long distances between those whose horizon might otherwise be set at their national border. In particular such facilities as computerised interactive chat-lines and video-conferences, promote such contact. I believe face-to-face contact may in turn encourage the development of skills of intercultural competence in the areas of knowledge, of discovery and interaction, and of interpreting and relating. COMENIUS EEPs provide an excellent vehicle for this sort of development. Indeed, staff engaged in the Entry Level EEP were establishing links of this nature for their students as my study drew to a close.

## 3 Learning: first-hand v. theory

My participants speak of the contrast they experience between theoretical learning and 'real' learning at first-hand, the latter being more significant. While opportunities to travel to other countries remain constrained by practical considerations, and may not therefore be made available to all, the Internet can bring the more distant world closer. Links to partner institutions and the use of communications technologies for curriculum purposes, combined with the sympathetic integration of material gained by staff at first-hand, can promote the acquisition of intercultural competence in at least the area of knowledge.

**4 Socialising: the importance of informal contacts**

As my colleagues made me aware through their reflections on the schema 'Socialising', so I would in turn recommend that attention be given to the interpersonal aspects of transnational links, to the fostering of informal contacts, which are as important, if not more important than the formal, for the development of intercultural competence.

**Professional development**

Training for staff embarking on transnational projects has generally focused on pragmatic principles of project management, and in this way has been little different from preparation for participation in national projects. Training has also largely been confined to 'pre-project', with a top-up towards the end of the project's reporting period, confined to demonstrating formats for reporting on project budgets and outcomes. I discussed in Chapter 3 the various training manuals for transnational project co-ordinators.

My findings suggest that, in addition, a transnational project professional development programme might include the elements listed here.

**Pre-project**

- 'Brainstorming' on general knowledge related to the country/countries with which staff are to be involved, e.g. Sweden.
- Use of the information gleaned as a basis for discussion of stereo-types and prejudices, positive and negative, e.g. Swedish education practice for vocational students with Special Needs is superior to that found in the UK.
- Comparisons with stereotypes and prejudices about the UK, concerning similar topic areas.
- Discussion of the personal and professional qualities known to be helpful in promoting successful transnational projects, e.g. willingness to be flexible, sociable, patient, tolerant, need to be efficient, reliable, positive, prepared to compromise.
- Identification of strengths and weaknesses, in respect of the above, among the team, negotiation about roles and about ways of addressing individual weaknesses if appropriate.
- Discussion of language and communication to promote awareness about non-verbal communication norms and expectations among speakers of English. Sensitisation to potential issues when communicating with non-native speakers of English.

**On project**

- Review of all the above in the light of experience.
- Use of devices (e.g. learning diary) for reflection in respect of each area.
- Examples given of development of skills of intercultural competence.
- Suggestions made for ways in which they might enhance professional practice.
- Record of all discussion and dissemination of same by participants to relevant audiences, e.g. new project teams, colleagues not involved in transnational work.

**Post-project**

- Summary of skills of intercultural competence acquired.
- Action plan for their dissemination and integration, where appropriate, into professional practice.
- Examples of good practice drawn up.

- Review of the initial pre-project training programme to refine and improve it for future participants

These recommendations reflect the fact that my participants seemed, through their involvement in their project, to have discovered for themselves that:

> Ultimately, we cannot achieve the cultural humility required to live in a turbulent culturally diverse world unless we can see cultural assumptions within ourselves ... In the end, cultural understanding and cultural learning start with self-insight. (Schein, 1992, quoted in Watson & Garrett, 1994: 74)

and that

> An awareness of language and how speakers employ communication strategies could become a positive contribution ... to intercultural awareness in a European context. (Convery *et al*, 1997: 68)

also that

> If individuals successfully overcome the multitude of challenges and frustrations and undergo the consequent alteration of their internal conditions along the way, they are likely to develop a mental, emotional and behavioral capacity that is more open, flexible and resilient than that of people who have limited exposure to the challenges of cross-cultural adaptation. (Kim, 1988: 145)

As a final recommendation, it would be interesting now to carry out a longitudinal study: to go back and conduct the same study with the same people, and see if further evidence of change were forthcoming. Or carry out a comparison with staff working on a national project, to see to what extent the internationality of the work makes a difference, to what extent the list above might be specific to transnational projects. Then again, a further research project might look at how the learning that takes place, and the changes in staff

awareness/attitude/behaviour/identity, affect their approach to other changes and development in their professional life. Brooks (1989, in Mezirow, 1991: 180) has suggested that adults who have successfully undertaken this sort of learning are better able to cope with/initiate/lead/manage change in other aspects of their work thereafter.

For now, though, I hope to have shown that staff engaged in European transnational projects, especially when prompted to reflect on their experiences, perceive changes in their awareness, attitude and behaviour in respect of other cultures, and some express the notion that they have acquired new social identities. Some also evidently become more interculturally competent, and some feel as a consequence more able to promote intercultural awareness and competence among their students. Perhaps a more systematic approach to the evaluation of transnational projects from this perspective might indeed demonstrate that they are a good vehicle for achieving a considerable amount of professional development and at least some of the aims of their sponsors.

## THESIS BIBLIOGRAPHY


Adams, T., Evans, M. & Raffan, J. (1996) *A Pilot Study Evaluation of UK-co-ordinated SOCRATES: COMENIUS Action 1 School-based Partnership Programmes,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Advisory Group on Citizenship (1998) *Education for citizenship and the teaching of democracy in schools*, London: QCA.

Alred, G. (1996) *Being Abroad - Becoming a Linguist: as discussion of the psychosocial effects of the Year Abroad*, Lancaster University: Centre for Research in Language Education.

Ball, S. J. (1994) *Education Reform*, London: Falmer Press.

Barth, F. (Ed) (1969) *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries*, London: Allen & Unwyn.

Beail, N. (Ed) (1985) *Repertory Grid Technique and Personal Constructs: applications in Clinical and Educational Settings*, London: Croom Helm.

Becher, U. A. J. (1996) European Citizenship and Historical Learning, *Evaluation and Research in Education,* 10 (2&3), pp. 79 - 87.

Bell, G. M. (1995) *Educating European Citizens: Citizenship values and the European dimension*, London: Fulton.

Bell, G. M. (1997) Being at the Heart of Europe?, *Management in Education*, 11(2), pp. 25 - 27.

Bell, J. (1987) *Doing your research project: A Guide for First-time Researchers in Education and Social Science*, Milton Keynes: O.U.P.

Bell, J., Bush, T., Fox, A., Goodey, J. & Goulding, S. (Eds) (1984) *Conducting small-scale investigations in educational management,* London: Harper & Row.

Bennett, N. (1973) *E341 Methods of Educational Enquiry Block 2: Research Design*, Milton Keynes: O.U.P.

Berger, P. L. & Luckman, T. (1967) *The Social Construction of Reality: A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge,* London: Allen Lane.

Biehler, R. F. (1978) *Psychology Applied to Teaching*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

Billig, M. (1995) *Banal Nationalism,* London: Sage.

Blackley, S. (1995) *Managing Innovative Transnational Projects: A Guide to Good Practice and a complete Directory of British EUROFORM Projects*, Leeds: ICOM.

Blackley, S., Goddard, M. & Seymour, H. (1995) *Innovative and Transnational Projects: A guide for organisations running projects supported by the European Structural Funds, Community Action Programmes, or other European Commission sources*, Leeds: ICOM.

Bonney-Rust, W. (1995) *The Global Student,* London: AVCI.

Borger, R. & Seaborne, A. E. M. (1966) *The Psychology of Learning*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Bottery, M. (1992) *The Ethics of Educational Management*, London: Cassell.

Bottery, M. (1994) Education and the Convergence of Management Codes, *Educational Studies,* 20,(3), pp. 329 - 343.

Breakwell, G. (Ed) (1983) *Threatened Identities,* Chichester: John Wiley & Sons.

Bruner, J. (1986) *Actual minds, Possible worlds,* Cambridge, MA: Harvard U.P.

Bruner, J. (1990) *Acts of Meaning,* Cambridge, MA: Harvard U.P.

Bulmer, M. (1979) *DE 304 Research Methods in Education and the Social Sciences Block 2A: Beginning Research*, Milton Keynes: O.U.P.

Burgess, R. (Ed) (1985) *Issues in Educational Research: Qualitative Methods*, London: Falmer.

Burns, D. & Adamson, D. (1998) *Evaluation of YOUTHSTART Project: MOL & OIGE: Transfer of a Flexible Curricular Model designed to enable disaffected and disadvantaged youths to enter the Labour Market with basic skills*, Glamorgan: University of Glamorgan.

Buttjes, D. & Byram, M. S. (Eds) (1990) *Mediating Languages and Culture: Towards an Intercultural Theory of Foreign Language Education,* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Byram, M. S. (1989) *Cultural Studies in Foreign Language Education,* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Byram, M. S. (1995) *'Us and them' and Foreign Language Learning*, Durham University Inaugural Lecture.

Byram, M. S. (Ed) (1996) *Education for European Citizenship*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Byram, M. S. (Ed) (1997) *Face-to-face. Learning 'language-and-culture' through visits and exchanges,* London: CILT.

Byram, M. S. (1997) *Teaching and Assessing Intercultural Communicative Competence*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Byram, M. S., Esarte-Sarries, V. & Taylor, S. (1991) *Cultural Studies and Language Learning,* Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Byram, M. S., Zarate, G. & Neuner, G. (1997) *Sociocultural competence in language learning and teaching: Studies towards a Common European Framework of reference for language learning and teaching,* Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Byram, M. S. & Alred, G. (1992) *Residence Abroad and the Cultural Perceptions of Foreign Language Students in Higher Education.* Report to the Economic and Social Research Council.

Byram, M. S. & Fleming, M. (Eds) (1998) *Language Learning in Intercultural Perspective: Approaches through drama and ethnography*, Cambridge.: CUP.

Caldwell, B. J., & Spinks, J. M. (1992) *The Self-Managing School*, London: Falmer Press.

Callender, C. (1995) *Running Training Schemes for Women: A Good Practice Guide and Directory of NOW Projects 1990-1994*, Leeds: ICOM.

Carnall, C. (1991) *Managing Change: Self-Development for Managers*, London: Routledge.

Chitty, C., (1992) *The Education System transformed,* Manchester: Baseline Books.

Claxton, G. (1984) *Live and Learn: An Introduction to the Psychology of Growth and Change in Everyday Life*, London: Harper Row.

Clifford, J. & Marcus, G. (Eds) (1986) *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Clifford, J. & Marcus, G. (Eds) (1986) *Writing culture: the poetics and politics of ethnography*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Codd, J. (1994) Educational Reform and the Contradictory Discourses of Evaluation, *Evaluation and Research in Education,* 8(1 & 2), pp. 41-54.

Cohen, L. & Manion, L. (1989) *Research Methods in Education*, London: Routledge.

Collins, H. (1993) *European Vocational Education Systems: A guide to vocational education and training in the European Community*, London: Kogan Page.

Commission of the European Communities (1988) *Resolution of the Council and the Ministers of Education meeting within the Council on the European dimension in education,* Brussels: Official Journal of the European Communities C 177/5.

Commission of the European Communities (1993) *Green Paper on the European Dimension of Education,* Brussels: COM (93) 457 final.

Convery, A., Evans, M., Green, S., Macaro, E. & Mellor, J. (1997) *Pupils' Perceptions of Europe: Identity and Education,* London: Cassell.

Convey, A. (1996) The European Dimension in Teacher Education, in Phillips, D. (Ed) *Aspects of the European Dimension in Education: Oxford Studies in Comparative education 5(2),* Oxford: Triangle Books, pp. 77 - 98.

Cook, T. D. & Reichardt, C. S. (Eds) (1979) *Qualitative and Quantitative Methods in Evaluation Research*, London: Sage.

Coulby, D. & Bash, L. (Eds) (1989) *The Education Reform Act: Competition and Control*, London: Cassell.

Coulby, D. & Bash, L. (1991) *The 1988 Education Act in Action*, London: Cassell.

Coulby, D. & Jones, C. (1996) Post-modernity, Education and European Identities, *Comparative Education,* 32 (2), pp. 171 - 184.

Council of Europe (1997) *Final Declaration of the Second Summit of the Council of Europe 10 - 11 October 1997*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Crossley, M. (1995) Strategies for Curriculum Change and the Question of International Transfer, *Journal for Curriculum Studies,* 16 (1), pp. 75 - 88.

Crossley, M. & Vulliamy, G. (1984) Case-Study research methods and comparative education, *Comparative Education,* 20(2), pp. 193-207.

Daft, R. L. & Becker, S. W. (1978) *Innovation in Organizations: Innovation Adoption in School Organizations,* New York: Elsevier.

Davidson Lund, A. M. (1992) Case study from Wakefield College, in Rowles, D. (Ed) *European Awareness Development Projects 1991/92: Report No. 3,* London: Central Bureau, pp. 43 - 45.

Davidson Lund, A. M. (1994) Benefits for Adult Trainees and Trainers Resulting from Participation in EU-funded Transnational Projects, in Malcolm, J. & Jones, M. F. (Eds) *Training from Europe: Policy and Practice*, Leeds: University of Leeds.

Dearing, R. (1994) *Strategic Planning in FE: the impact of incorporation: Mendip Papers MP061*, Bristol: Further Education Staff College.

Department of Education and Science (1988) *Education Reform Act*, London: HMSO.

Department of Education and Science (1991) *Education and Training for the 21st century Vols. I and II,* London: HMSO.

Department of Education and Science (1992a) *Further and Higher Education Act*, London: HMSO.

Department of Education and Science (1992b) *The Education (Government of Further Education Corporations) (Former Sixth Form Colleges) Regulations 1992*, London: HMSO.

Department of Education and Science (1992c) *Policy Models: A Guide to developing and implementing European dimension policies in LEA s, schools and colleges,* London: DES.

Department of Education and Science (1993) *Further choice and quality: The Charter for Further Education*, London: HMSO.

Earley, P. (1993) Developing competence in schools: A critique of standards-based approaches to management development, *Educational Management and Administration,* 21(4), pp. 233 - 244.

Edelhoff, G. (1989) *Teacher training memoranda for promoting interculturalism*, Strasbourg: Council of Europe.

Ellen, R. F. (Ed) (1984) *Ethnographic Research: A Guide to General Conduct*, London: Academic Press.

Elliott, G. & Crossley, M. (1994) Qualitative Research, Educational Management and the Incorporation of the Further Education Sector, *Educational Management and Administration,* 22(3), pp. 189-197.

Employment Department (1995) *FORCE UK: FORCE Project Case Studies*, Sheffield: Employment Department.

Employment Department (1995) *PETRA in the UK: Achievements and Challenges*, London: Employment Department.

Employment Department (1995) *European Social Fund: Community Initiative EMPLOYMENT; Guidance for Applications (1995 - 1997)*, London: ESF Unit.

EC Green Paper *Education -Training - Research: The obstacles to transnational mobility,* Brussels: CEC (COM (96) 462 final 02.10.1996.

EC (1997) *Towards a Europe of knowledge,* Brussels, CEC (COM (97) 563 final).

EC Task Force on Education, Training, Youth, (1995) *Promoting the initiative and creativity of young people,* Luxembourg: Official Office for the Publications of the European Communities (OOPEC).

EC Task Force for Education, Training and Youth (DGV) (1995) *Key data on Education in the European Union*, Luxembourg: OOPEC.

EC Task Force on Education, Training, Youth, (1996) *SOCRATES: Guidelines for applicants,* Luxembourg: OOPEC.

EC Task Force on Education, Training, Youth, (1997) *Accomplishing Europe through Education and Training,* Luxembourg: OOPEC.

Falchikov, N. (1993) Attitudes and values of lecturing staff: tradition, innovation and change, *Higher Education,* 25, pp. 487 - 510.

Farr, R. M. & Moscovici, S. (Eds) (1984) *Social Representations,* Cambridge: C. U. P.

Finch, in Burgess, R. (Ed) (1985) *Issues in Educational Research: Qualitative Methods*, London: Falmer: 113.

Finegold, D., et al (1990) *A British "Baccalaureat": Ending the Division between Education and Training*, London: Institute for Public Policy Research.

Finegold, D. (1992) Education training and Economic Performance in Comparative Perspective, *Oxford Studies in Comparative Education*, 1, pp. 57-68.

Finlay, I. (1994) Around the World in Vocational Education, *Management in Education,* 8(3), pp. 24-25.

Flude, M., & Hammer (Eds) (1990) *The Education Reform Act 1988: Its origins and implications*, London: Falmer Press.

Frain, J. (1993) *The changing culture of a college*, London: Falmer Press.

Fransella, F & Bannister, D. (1977) *A Manual for Repertory Grid Technique,* London: Academic Press.

Freeney, M., Duckworth, S. & Parkinson, M. (1995) *Accessible Training: Improving Access to Training for Disabled Trainees*, Leeds: ICOM.

Fullan, M. G. (1991) *The New Meaning of Educational Change*, London: Cassell.

Fullan, M. G. (1993) *Change Forces, Probing the Depths of Educational Reform*, London: Falmer Press.

Furnham, A. & Bochner, S. (1986) *Culture Shock: Psychological reactions to unfamiliar environments*, London:Routledge.

Further Education Funding Council (1992) *Funding Learning*, London: FEFC.

Further Education Funding Council (1994) *College Strategic Plans, Circular 94/30*, Coventry: FEFC.

Further Education Funding Council (1994) *Measuring Achievement, Circular 94/31*, Coventry: FEFC.

FEFC Inspectorate (1994) *Post-16 Vocational Education and Training in Sweden*, London: FEFC.

Frykholm, C.-U. & Nitzler, D. (1993) Working life as a pedagogical discourse: empirical studies of vocational and career education based on theories of Bourdieu and Bernstein, *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 25(5), pp. 433-444.

Further Education Unit (1993) *Challenges for Colleges: Developing a corporate approach to curriculum and strategic planning*, London: FEU.

Garrahan, P.& Stewart, P. (1992) *The Nissan Enigma: Flexibility at Work in a Local Economy*, London: Mansell.

Geertz, C. (1973) *The Interpretation of Cultures,* New York: Basic Books.

Giddens, A. (1991) *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age,* Stanford, Stanford U.P.

Giles, H. & St Clair, R. (Eds) (1979) *Language and Social Psychology*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Gill, J.& Johnson, P. (1991) *Research methods for Managers*, London: Paul Chapman.

Glaser, B. & Strauss, A. L. (1967) *The discovery of grounded theory: Strategies for qualitative research*, Chicago: Aldine.

Gomm, R. & Woods, P. (Eds) (1994) *Educational Research: In Action, Vol. I*, London: Paul Chapman.

Goodman, J. (1995) Change without Difference: School Restructuring in Historical Perspective, *Harvard Educational Review*, 65(10), pp. 1 - 29.

Gordon, J. (1995) An Innovative Approach to the Comparison of Qualifications in Europe: the regional perspective, *European Journal of Education* 30 (3), pp. 277-293.

Gorringe, R. & Toogood, P. (Eds) (1994) Changing the Culture of a College, *Coombe Lodge Reports,* 24(3), Bristol: Further Education Staff College.

Grace, G. (1989) Education Policy Studies: Developments in Britain in the 1970's and 1980's, *New Zealand Journal of Educational Studies,* 24(1), pp. 87-93.

Graystone, J. (1992) *FE incorporation checklist for managers*, Bristol: Further Education Staff College.

Graystone, J. (1993) *Governing Incorporated Colleges, Mendip Paper MP036*, Bristol: Further Education Staff College.

Gudykunst, W. B. & Kim, Y. Y. (Eds) (1984) *Methods for Intercultural Communication Research*, London: Sage.

Guthrie, J. W. & Pierce, L. C. (1990) The International Economic and National Education Reform: a comparison of educational reforms in the United States and Great Britain, *Oxford Review of Education,* 16(2), pp. 179 - 206.

Habermas, J. (1971) *Toward a rational society: student protest, science and politics,* London: Heinemann.

Habermas, J. (1979) *Communication and the evolution of society,* London: Heinemann.

Haldane, C. & Ball, M. (1995) *HORIZON: A Good Practice Guide and Directory of Projects: Great Britain 1991/1994*, London: NCVO.

Hall, S. (1975) Introduction, in Smith, A. C. H. *Paper Voices: The Popular Press and Social Change 1935-1965* , London: Chatto and Windus, pp. 11-24.

Hall, V. (1994) *Further Education in the United Kingdom*, Bristol: Collins Educational/The Staff College.

Hamilton, D. et al (Eds) (1977) *Beyond the Numbers Game: a Reader in Educational Evaluation*, London: Macmillan.

Hammersley, M. (Ed) (1993) *Social Research: Philosophy, Politics and Practice*, London: Sage.

Hammersley, M. & Atkinson, P. (1983) *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, London: Routledge.

Hammersley, M. (Ed) (1994) *Educational Research: Current Issues Vol. II*, London: Paul Chapman.

Hargreaves, D. H.& Hopkins, D. (1991) *The Empowered School: The management and practice of development planning*, London: Cassell.

Hargreaves, D. H. (1994) *The Mosaic of Learning: Schools and Teachers for the Next Century*, London: Demos.

Harri-Augstein, S. & Thomas, L. (1991) *Learning Conversations: The self-organised way to personal and organisational growth*, London: Routledge.

Hayes, N. (1994) *Foundations of Psychology: An Introductory Text*, London: Routledge.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate (1993) *Management and Effectiveness in Further Education*, London: Department for Education.

Hewitt, J. P. (1976) *Self and Society: A Symbolic Interactionist Social Psychology*, Boston: Alleyn & Bacon.

Heyneman, S. (1991) Introduction, *Oxford Studies in Comparative Education*, 1, p. 7.

Hofstede, G. (1991) *Cultures and Organizations: Software of the Mind: Intercultural Co-operation and its Importance for Survival*, London: McGraw Hill.

Hughes, M. (1996) Citizenship 2000: Promoting the European Dimension, *Evaluation and Research in Education*, 10 (2&3), p. 128.

Institute of Public Policy Research (1993) *Education, A Different Version: An Alternative White Paper*, London: IPPR.

IRIS (1995) *A Practical Guide to Transnational Partnerships*, IRIS: Brussels.

Jenkins, B. & Sofos, S. A. (Eds) (1996) *Nation and Identity in Contemporary Europe*, London: Routledge.

Jennings, R. E. (1984) *Going corporate in Local Education Authorities*, Aldershot: Gower Publishing.

Jones, J. (1996) Developing intercultural competence within MFL learning, *Links,* 15, London: CILT, pp. 10 - 12.

Josselson, R. & Lieblich, A. (Eds) (1995) *Interpreting Experience: Vol. 3: The Narrative Study of Lives,* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kelly, G. A. (1955) *The Psychology of Personal Constructs,* Vols. I & II, New York: Norton & Co.

Kim, in Gudykunst, W. B. & Kim, Y. Y. (Eds) (1984) *Methods for Intercultural Communication Research*, London: Sage: 14.

Kim, Y. Y. (1988) *Communication and Cross-Cultural Adaptation, An Integrative Theory*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Kim, Y. Y. (1992) *Development of intercultural identity*, paper presented at the annual conference of the International Communication Association, Miami, Florida, USA.

King, E. (1974) *Post-compulsory education I - A New Analysis in Western Europe*, London: Sage.

King, E. (1975) *Post-compulsory education II - The Way Ahead*, London: Sage.

King, E. (1979) *Other Schools and Ours: comparative studies for today*, London: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

King, K. (1993) Technical and Vocational Education and Training in an international context, *The Vocational Aspect of Education,* 45(3), pp. 201-227.

Kolb, D. A. (1984) *Experiential Learning: experience as a source of learning and development*, Eaglewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice Hall.

Kramsch, C. (1991) *Interaction et discours dans la classe de langue,* Paris: Didier/Hatier.

Kramsch, C. (1993) *Context and Culture in Language Teaching,* Oxford: O.U.P.

Lambert, S., (Ed) (1988) *Managing Tertiary and Sixth Form Colleges*, Harlow: Longman.

LeCompte, M. D., Millroy, W. & Preissle, J. (Eds) (1992) *The Handbook of Qualitative Research in Education*, San Diego: Academic Press.

LeCompte, M. D. & Preissle, J. (1993) *Ethnography and Qualitative Design in Educational Research*, San Diego: Academic Press.

Lewis, R. W. (1979) *DE 304 Research Methods in Education and the Social Sciences Block 2B: Beginning Research*, Milton Keynes: O.U.P.

Limb, A. (Ed) (1992) *The road to incorporation*, Swindon: Association of Colleges of Further and Higher Education.

Lomax, P. (Ed) (1991) Managing better schools and colleges: An action research way, *BERA Dialogues No. 5*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

Lyndsay, P. H. & Norman, D. A. (1977) *An Introduction to Psychology*, London: Academic Press.

MacFarlane, E. (1993) *Education 16-19 in transition*, London: Routledge.

Maclure, S. (Ed) (1989) *Education Re-Formed*, London: Hodder & Stoughton.

Mallinson, V. (1975) *An Introduction to the Study of Comparative Education*, London: Heinemann.

Marris, P. (1974) *Loss and Change*, London: Routledge.

McCalman, J.& Paton, R. A. (1992) *Change Management: A Guide to Effective Implementation*, London: Paul Chapman.

McClean, M. (1995) The European Union and the Curriculum, in Phillips, D. (Ed) *Aspects of the European Dimension in Education: Oxford Studies in Comparative education 5(2)*, Oxford: Triangle Books, pp. 29 - 46.

McKernan, J., (1991) *Curriculum Action Research: A Handbook of Methods and Resources for the Reflective Practitioner*, London: Kogan Page.

McNay, I. (Ed) (1992) *Visions of post-compulsory education*, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.

Meikle, J. College lecturers face job shake-up, in *The Guardian*, 7.3.95.

Mercer, D. (Ed) (1992) *Managing the external environment: A Strategic Response*, London: Sage.

Mertens, D. M. (1998) *Research Methods in Education and Psychology: Integrating diversity with quantitative and qualitative approaches*, London: Sage.

Mezirow, J. (1991) *Transformative dimensions of Adult Learning*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Mezirow, J. (1994) Understanding transformation theory, *Adult Education Quarterly,* 44(4), pp. 222-231.

Michael, S., Holdaway, E.& Young, C. (1994) Institutional Responsiveness; A Study of Administrators' Perceptions, *Educational Management and Administration,* 22(1), pp. 54 - 62.

Miles, M. B. & Huberman, A. M. (1984) *Qualitative Data Analysis: A sourcebook of new methods*, London: Sage.

Mintzberg, H. (1989) *Mintzberg on Management: Inside our strange world of organizations*, New York: Collier MacMillan.

Mintzberg, H. (1994) *The Rise and Fall of Strategic Planning,* New York: Prentice Hall.

Mishler, E. G. (1993) *Research Interviewing: Context and Narrative,* Harvard, Harvard U.P.

Montané, M. & Bordas, I. (Eds) (1993) *The European Dimension in Secondary Education for teachers and teacher educators,* Barcelona: Collegi de Doctors i Llicenciato en Filosofia i Lletres en Ciències de Catalunya.

Moore, B., Nuttall, D. & Willmott, A. (1973) *E341 Methods of Educational Enquiry Block 3: Data Collection*, Milton Keynes: O.U.P.

Morrell, F. (1996) *Continent Isolated: A Study of the European Dimension in the National Curriculum in England,* London: Federal Trust for Education and Research.

Morris, B. (Ed) (1990, *Central and Local Control of Education after the Education Reform Act 1988*, Harlow: Longman.

Morrison, K. (1993) *Planning and Accomplishing School-centred Evaluation*, Dereham: Peter Francis.

Moschonas, A. (1998) *Education and Training in the European Union*, Aldershot: Ashgate.

Nash, I. White Paper signals post-16 free-for-all, in *TES*, 26.5.95, p.6.

Nisbet, J. & Watt, J. (1984) Case Study, in Bell, J. et al (Eds) *Conducting Small-Scale Investigations in Educational Management*, London: PCP.

Nordenbo, S. E. (1995) What is implied by a 'European curriculum'? Issues of Euro-centrism and, Rationality and Education *Oxford Review of Education* 21 (1), pp. 37-45.

O'Hare, M. (1988) *Innovate! How to gain and sustain competitive advantage*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Open University School of Education (1988) *E325; Block 6; The School's external relations*, Buckingham: O.U.P.

Ouston, J. (1993) Management Competences, School Effectiveness and Educational Management, *Education Management and Administration* 21(4), pp. 212 - 222.

Ozga, J. (Ed) (1993) *Women in Educational Management*, Buckingham: O.U.P.

Parlett, M. (1982) Illuminative Evaluation, in Reason, P. & Rowan, J. (Eds) *Human Inquiry,* Oxford: Wiley & Sons.

Peters, T. (1985) *A Passion for Excellence, the Leadership Difference*, Glasgow: Harper Collins.

Peters, T. (1989) *Thriving on Chaos*, London: Pan Books.

Peters, T.& Waterman, R. H. (1982) *In search of Excellence*, New York: Harper Row.

Phillips, D. (1991) Introduction, *Oxford Studies in Comparative Education*, 1, p.7.

Phillips, D. (1995) Aspects of the European Dimension in Education, *Oxford Studies in Comparative education 5(2)*, Oxford: Triangle Books.

Pondy, L. R., Boland, R. J. Jr. & Thomas, H. (Eds) (1988) *Managing Ambiguity and Change*, Chichester: Wilsey.

Powney, J. & Watts, M. (1987) *Interviewing in educational research*, London: Routledge & Keegan Paul.

Ralph, M. (1995) Developing the college as a learning organization, *Coombe Lodge Reports* 24(7/8), Blagdon: Staff College.

Ransome, S. Holding the line, in *FE NOW!* Issue 164.95, p.13.

Ranson, S. (1990) From 1944 to 1988: Education, Citizenship and Democracy, in Flude, M., & Hammer (Eds) (1990) *The Education Reform Act 1988: Its origins and implications*, London: Falmer Press.

Ray, S. (Ed) (1995) *A Guide to Best Practice*, London: UK PETRA National Co-ordination Unit.

Richardson, W., Woolhouse, J. and Finegold, D. (1993) *The Reform of post-16 education and training in England and Wales*, Harlow: Longman.

Risager, K. (1998) Language teaching and the process of European integration. In Byram, M. S. & Fleming, M. (Eds) *Language Learning in Intercultural Perspective: Approaches through drama and ethnography*, Cambridge: CUP, pp. 242 - 254.

Rist, R. C. & Joyce, M. K. (1995) Qualitative Research and Implementation Evaluation: A Path to Organizational Learning, *International Journal of Educational Research,* 33(2), pp. 127-136.

Rowles, D. (Ed) (1992) *European Awareness Development Projects 1991/92: Report No. 3*, London: Central Bureau.

Rumelhart, D. E. (1980) Schemata: the building blocks of cognition. In Spiro, R. J. *et al* (Eds) *Theoretical Issues in Reading Comprehension*, Hillsdale, N. J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Ryba, R. (1994) Developing a World Perspective on the Education and Training of Young Adults: an appreciation of Edmund King's contribution to the field of international post-compulsory education, *Comparative Education* 30(1), pp. 13-23.

Ryba, R. (1995) Unity in Diversity: the enigma of the European dimension in education, *Oxford Review of Education* 21 (1), pp. 25-35.

Ryba, R. (1995) Is Progress Towards the Development of the European Dimension in Education satisfactory?, in Phillips, D. (Ed) *Aspects of the European Dimension in Education: Oxford Studies in Comparative education 5(2),* Oxford: Triangle Books, pp. 63 - 76.

Salter, B. and Tapper, T. (1981) *Education, Politics and the State: The Theory and Practice of Educational Change,* London: Grant McIntyre.

Sapsford, R. J. & Evans, J. (1981) *DE304 Block 8: Evaluation of Research*, Milton Keynes: O.U.P.

Senge, P. M. (1993) *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*, London: Century Business.

Shearn, D. (1995) Professional Mobility in Europe: reflection and comment on the need for professional staff to undertake assignments in other countries for the purpose of career development, in Phillips, D. (Ed) *Aspects of the European Dimension in Education: Oxford Studies in Comparative education 5(2),* Oxford: Triangle Books, pp. 139 - 145.

Sherlock, M. (1997) *The International Campus,* Lecture at the opening of new premises at Sheffield Hallam University, 26 February 1997.

Silver, M. (Ed) (1991) *Competent to Manage: Approaches to management training and development*, London: Routledge.

Simons, H. W. & Billig, M. (Eds) (1994) After Postmodernism: *Reconstructing ideology critique*, London: Sage.

Slavin, R. E. (1984) *Research Methods in Education: A Practical Guide,* New Jersey: Prentice & Hall.

Smith, A. D. (1991) *National Identity,* London: Penguin.

Smithers, A. and Robinson, P. (1993), *Changing Colleges: FE in the market place*, Manchester: CIHE.

Spradley, J. P. (1979) *The ethnographic interview,* New York: Holt, Rhinehart & Winston.

Stoer, S. R. & Cortesão, L. (1995) Critical inter/multicultural education and the process of transnationalisation: a view from the semiperiphery *Journal of Education Policy* 10 (4), pp. 373-384.

Strain, M. (1996) Rationality, Autonomy and the Social Context of Educational Management *Educational Management and Administration* 24 (1), pp. 49-63.

Strath, I. & Le Métais, J. (1994), in K. Hopkins *et al*, *Into the Heart of Europe: Educational Dimension,* Slough: NFER.

Stratton, P. & Hayes, N. (1993) *A Student's Dictionary of Psychology*, London: Edward Arnold.

Tajfel, H. (Ed) (1982) *Social Identity and Intergroup Relations*, Cambridge: Cambridge U. P.

Tajfel, H. & Fraser, C. (Eds) (1978) *Introducing social psychology,* Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

Tate, N. (1997) National Identity and the School Curriculum, *Leeds University CPSE Newsletter,* 11, pp. 1 - 4.

Taylor, E. W. (1994) Intercultural Competency: A Transformative Learning Process, *Adult Education Quarterly,* 44 (3), pp. 154-174.

Taylor, W. H. (1993) Educating British Children for European Citizenship, *European Journal of Education,* 28 (4), pp. 437-444.

Tesch, R. (1990) *Qualitative Research: Analysis Types and Software Tools*, London: Falmer Press.

Ting-Toomey, in Gudykunst, W. B. & Kim, Y. Y. (Eds) (1984) *Methods for Intercultural Communication Research*, London: Sage, p. 169.

Trethewy, A. R. (1976) *Introducing Comparative Education,* Oxford: Pergamon Press.

Tushman, M. L.& Moore, W. L. (1982) *Readings in the Management of Innovation*, New York: Harper Row.

Unwin, L. (1990) Learning to live under water: The 1988 Education Reform Act and its Implication for Further and Adult Education, in Flude, M., & Hammer (Eds) (1990) *The Education Reform Act 1988: Its origins and implications*, London: Falmer Press, pp. 241 - 255.

Utley, A. Managers get more macho, in *THES,* 9.6.95, p.6.

Ward Schofield, J. (1993) Increasing the Generalizability of Qualitative Research, in Hammersley, M. (Ed) (1993) *Social Research: Philosophy, Politics and Practice*, London: Sage, pp. 200 - 225.

Warren, N. (Ed) (1977) *Syudies in cross-cultural psychology,* Vol. 1, London: Academic Press.

Watson, K. (1994) Technical and Vocational Education in Developing Countries: Western paradigms and comparative methodology, *Comparative Education,* 30(1), pp. 39-47.

Watson, L. & Garrett, V. (1994) Issues around Partnership: reflections on a European teaching programme in higher education, *British Journal of In-service Education* (20) 1, pp. 73 - 80.

Waugh, R. & Godfrey, J. (1995) Understanding teachers' receptivity to system-wide educational change, *Journal of Educational Administration* 33 (3), pp. 38 - 54.

Werner, O. & Schoepfle, G. M. (1987) *Ethnographic Analysis and Data Management*, London: Sage, Vols. 1 & 2.

Wetherell, M. (Ed) (1996) *Identities, groups and social issues,* London: Sage/Open University.

Whalley, T. (1997) Culture Learning as Transformative Learning, in Byram, M. S. (Ed) *Face-to-face. Learning 'language-and-culture' through visits and exchanges,* London: CILT.

Wickens, P. (1987) *The Road to Nissan: Flexibility, Quality, Teamwork,* Houndmills: MacMillan.

Wildemeersch, D. & Jansen, T. (1992) *Adult education, experiential learning and social change: the post-modern challenge,* 'sGravenhage: VUGA.

Wilson, D. N. (1994) Comparative Study of Reforms in Post-compulsory Education and Training of Young Adults, *Comparative Education* 30(1), pp. 31-37.

von Wright, G. H., in Hammersley, M. (Ed) (1993) *Social Research: Philosophy, Politics and Practice*, London: Sage, pp. 9 - 13.

Wringe, C. (1996) The role of foreign language learning in education for European citizenship in Byram, M. S. (Ed) Education for European Citizenship, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, p. 168.

Young, B. L. (1982) The role of illuminative evaluation in curriculum change: a case study from Indonesia, unpublished London university Ph.D. thesis.

Young, M. (1993) A Curriculum for the 21st century?: Towards a new basis for overcoming academic/vocational divisions, *British Journal of Educational Studies* 41(3), pp. 203 - 222.

Youngman, M. B. (1979) *Analysing Social and Educational Research Data,* London: McGraw-Hill.

Zarate, G., Byram, M. & Murphy-Lejeune, E. (Eds) (1996) Cultural Representation in Language Learning and Teacher Training, in *Language, Culture and Curriculum: Special Issue*, 9(1), Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

White Paper on Competitiveness aims to raise educational standards, (unattrib.) in *Furthering Education* Issue No. 4, Autumn 1994, p.8.

Survival of the fittest: new budgets for further education colleges, (unattrib.) in *Furthering Education* Issue No. 4, Autumn 1994, p.9.

**Glossary of terms and acronyms**

| | |
|---|---|
| CEC | Commission of the European Communities. |
| DG | Directorate General of the Commission of the European Communities. The 22 departments within the Commission. |
| DES | Department of Education and Science. |
| CEDEFOP | The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, an organisation created in 1976 to promote and develop vocational training of young people and adults, primarily through Europe-wide co-ordination of analysis and research activities. |
| COMENIUS, EMPLOYMENT, IRIS, LEONARDO DA VINCI, LINGUA, PETRA, SOCRATES | Programmes sponsored by the European Commission to promote transnational partnership and development projects. |
| EDEXCEL | Nationally-recognised vocational awarding body. |
| EEP | European Education Partnership. (Action 1 projects under the SOCRATES COMENIUS programme.) |
| EFTA | European Free Trade Association. |
| ESF | European Social Fund. |
| EU | European Union. |
| FE | Further Education. |
| FEDA | The Further Education Development Agency: a national body for the promotion of development in the sector. |
| GCSE | General Certificate of Secondary Education. |
| GNVQ | General National Vocational Qualification. |
| LEA | Local Education Authority. |
| NVQ | National Vocational Qualification. |
| THES | Times Higher Education Supplement. |
| UKCEE | The United Kingdom Centre for European Education is one of the central research and co-ordination agencies for European activities in education in the UK. |